

13956.

CEYLON IN OUR TIMES

1894—1969

A CEYLON COLD STORES LTD. DIAMOND JUBILEE PUBLICATION

942.103
CEY
SL/PR



CEYLON IN OUR TIMES

1894 to 1969

A CEYLON COLD STORES LTD. PUBLICATION
TO MARK ITS DIAMOND JUBILEE

Foreword

In the public image we are a firm dealing in soft drinks, milk, butter, ice-cream, ham, bacon and so on—from the necessities of a daily diet to the niceties of a bon vivant's palate.

1969 marks our diamond jubilee. To commemorate the occasion we are publishing not just our story, but the story of our times.

We have set our story in the diadem of the more colourful history of this lovely Island.

The chapter on 1894 is, we believe, the first attempt in this country to convey the atmosphere of a single year. It is superfluous to say that Ceylon was different then, but this chapter shows *how* different it was.

The chapter on the difficulties planters and other up-country residents experienced in the pre-refrigeration days gives an insight into the social history of Ceylon in the Victoria era. Those who look at the past through a golden haze might change their minds about what is popularly known as the good old days.

The decision to develop Colombo harbour instead of Galle, the development of road and rail transport, and the introduction of motor vehicles were of crucial importance in the growth of all Colombo based firms and are the subject of another chapter.

A writer on Ceylon usually begins with a residual background of Knox, Tennent, Cordiner, Bennet, Pridham, Bertolacci, etc., but these much quoted sources have been ignored in this book.

The primary sources have largely been diaries, directories, magazines, memoirs, minutes, pamphlets, periodicals, and the Press. To facilitate reading footnotes have been omitted but sources are indicated in the text.

December 1969.

This book is dedicated to the
pioneers who founded this Company
and all others who contributed to its
growth over the past 75 years,

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGES
1. 1894 AND ALL THAT	I-20
2. ANTS (TOASTED) AND AXLE GREASE FOR DINNER	21-32
3. "WE MET AS WE NEVER MET BEFORE"	33-52
4. THE MERCANTILE MODEL TO FOLLOW	53-69
5. MINI ICEBERGS AND VICTORIANA ..	70-83
6. ARRIVIDERCI TWENTIETH CENTURY ..	84-99
7. A BOOM BEGINS AT FORTY ..	100-109
8. PEACE . . . PROGRESS . . . PROSPERITY	110-123
9. TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD ..	124-128
10. CEYLON SINCE INDEPENDENCE ..	129-140
11. THE STEEL AND STALK REVOLUTIONS	141-152

CHAPTER ONE

1894 And All That

George Orwell looked apprehensively into the future and saw Britain under totalitarian rule in 1984.

The Ceylon Cold Stores looks forward confidently to its centenary in 1994. But the content of this chapter is 1894, when the Ceylon Cold Stores (then known as The New Colombo Ice Co. Ltd.) was begun.

Some men peer into the future, others belittle the present and pine for the past. In 1894 Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, the immortal Ceylonese (then Mr. P. Arunachalam, Registrar-General), despaired of 'modern' civilisation. "Under the influence of this civilisation" he told a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch), "the more educated a man becomes the more his wants increase, the more comforts and luxuries he requires, and he devotes all his time to making money in order to supply the increased needs of himself and his family. Simplicity of life disappears as well as leisure."

"The problem," he said, was not peculiar to Ceylon, "but owing to the smallness of our community and the absence of a class of hereditary wealth or learning, the effect is more marked here in the field of literary and scientific work."

"That man," he said, "would indeed be a benefactor of his race who showed this age how to combine the highest degree of culture with the greatest simplicity of life."

Then, as now, people grumbled about the cost of living although the phrase had not been coined.

A Government Agent recorded these prices for posterity in 1894. His informant must have been his Office Assistant, cook or wife, for Government Agents did not go marketing in 1894. An egg cost $1\frac{1}{2}$ cts., paddy was Re. 1/- per bushel and rice Rs. 3/- per bushel. Manioc was 1 cent a pound and coconuts 5 cts. each. Fish was 10 cts. a pound and oysters were 20 cts. per dozen. Large prawns were 5 cts. each, ducks 50 cts. each and beef 18 cts. a pound. Mutton was 25 cts. a pound and venison 15 cts. A bottle of milk was 10 cts. (vide Administrative Report of F. C. Fisher, G.A., Eastern Province).

The prices of the times were reflected in the scale of customs duties. The main direct taxes then were the poll tax (Rs. 1.50 per adult annually) and road tolls.

The import duties on foodstuffs in 1894 were as follows:

Bacon, butter, cheese and hams	Rs. 3/- per cwt.
Fish dried and salted	50 cts. per cwt.
Onions	17 cts. per cwt.
Potatoes	38 cts. per cwt.
Rice, wheat, peas and beans	29 cts. per bushel.
Ginger	Rs. 3/- per cwt.
Cattle and livestock were exempt.	

"The Ceylon Review," a periodical published by Mr. Isaac Thambiah protested in vain that items which the poor needed, such as rice and sugar, were comparatively heavily taxed when compared with ham, the food of the rich. A hundredweight of ham worth Rs. 100/- was taxed only Rs. 3/-, while a hundredweight of sugar which cost only Rs. 16.80 paid the same duty. The Review also pointed out that many requirements of the rich such as meats, fish and vegetables were untaxed, as also were luxuries such as horses, pearls, cards, corks, music, etc.

The increasing availability of opium was one of the major social problems of the day. After a largely attended public meeting, petitions were submitted to the Governor and the Legislative Council. The "Ceylon Independent," a popular newspaper of the time, strongly supported the movement.

A body known as the Ceylon Parliamentary Society, which discussed topics of the day, held a meeting at Wesley Hall which urged that the sale of opium be regulated, while some members of the Society called for the registration of opium takers. In the Legislative Council, Mr. A. de A. Seneviratne presented a petition, signed by 27,000 persons on the subject. The petition demanded the control of the sale and importation of opium.

The Legislative Council in those days was presided over by the Governor. Of the 10 official members and 8 unofficials, only 4 (of the 18) were Ceylonese.

The ex-officio members were the Lieutenant Governor and Colonial Secretary, the Major General commanding the Forces, the Attorney General (Mr. P. Ramanathan was acting A.G. and the only Ceylonese official in 1894), the Auditor-General, the Colonial Treasurer, the Government Agents of the Western and Central Provinces, the Principal Collector of Customs and the Principal Medical Officer (this was Dr. W. G. Kynsey). The road that commemorates his name incongruously connects the General Hospital and the General Cemetery at Kanatte.

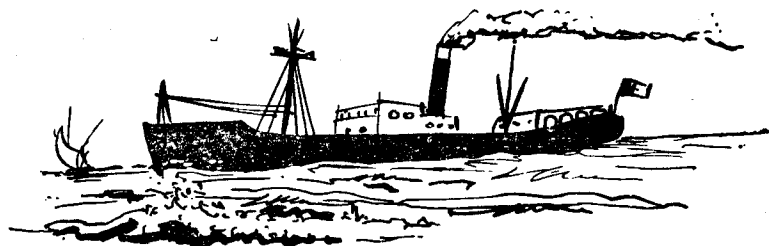
The unofficial members were Dr. P. D. Anthonisz, Burgher Representative, Mr. W. Mitchel, Mercantile Representative, Mr. A. de A. Seneviratne, Sinhalese Representative, Sir J. J. Grinlinton, European Representative, Mr. T. B. Panabokke (Kandyan Sinhalese),

Mr. M. C. Abdul Rahim (Muhammedan Representative), Mr. P. Coomar Swamy (Tamil Representative) and Mr. G. F. Walker, Planting Representative.

In the Year 1894 the Legislative Council held 16 meetings. Business commenced at 2 p.m. and generally ended about 4.30 or 5 p.m.

MAIL DAY

The P & O 'Mail Day' was then an event and when the Council adjourned on January 31st until 2 p.m. on February 15th which was a mail day, the Governor said he felt sure members would have despatched their mails by the time the Council began its sittings.



There was no opposition in 1894, but the Unofficial members often filled this role. When the Government sought in 1894 to compensate the (British) Civil Servants for a fall in the exchange value of the rupee the Unofficial members said that the (Ceylonese) "Subordinate" Government employees should also be compensated.

"Everyone of those employed", said Dr. P. D. Anthonisz, "uses imported articles—hats, watches, umbrellas, penknives, imported boots and shoes, clothing made of wool, silk and calico and also articles of food and drink." He was supported by Mr. T. B. Panabokke who said, "The natives also send their children to England for their education".

The two man protest succeeded for the question was referred to a Committee of all the unofficial members. On the recommendation of this committee the "subordinates" were allowed a more favourable rate of conversion.

All the excitement that is evoked by Budget Day was then centred in a Governor's Address at the opening of a session.

A new session began on October 24th, 1894, and in his address the Governor, Sir Arthur Elibank Havelock, said that despite the abolition of the paddy tax (for which Mr. George Wall, who had died in 1893, deserves the credit) and a fall in land sales and customs duty, the revenue realised was satisfactory. The total revenue then was Rs. 18,051,950. Imports amounted to Rs. 78,113,092 and exports totalled Rs. 79,723,590. However the Governor deplored "the diminished purchasing power of the rupee". In rather tortuous language he said, "If the progress of the colony is not to be stayed, and a policy of starvation introduced pernicious in its effects, liabilities to be discharged in gold must be incurred". So much then, as now, for devaluation.

It was an age when every able bodied person had to work on the road or commute the labour by payment under the Thoroughfares Ordinance. The Governor told the Council that 525,913 persons commuted their liability, while 10,909 persons performed labour.

Railway extension was then a topic of the day and the Governor announced that plans were being finalised for a line from Kurunegala to Jaffna and from Galle to Matara.

An Establishments Commission to report on ways and means of reducing expenditure was sitting and

the Governor said he had no intention of anticipating their findings.

The Council in its reply or vote of thanks said it cordially agreed that "a refusal to incur a liability for gold charges to meet expenditure designed to encourage the progress of the Island is to be deprecated, but they would urge the advisability of restricting such expenditure as far as may be compatible with the true interests of the Colony, and the provision of funds for necessary reproductive works by local loans".

On the military contribution it pointed out that "the Garrison required for local purposes was fixed in 1884 at 400 men only" and added that "a loyal dependency like Ceylon is entitled to the most favourable terms from the motherland".

In 1894 Ceylon schoolboys were fined one cent each time they spoke in Sinhalese at school. This happened not only in colleges like Royal and St. Thomas' but also at Ananda (then in Maliban Street, Pettah, and known simply as The Buddhist Boys' School). The money raised was used to finance the cricket club. (See The Buddhist Schools' Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1894).

The magazine itself was started during the upsurge in interest in Buddhist activities following the earlier visits to Ceylon by Colonel Olcott. An editorial note said, "Considering that the number of Buddhist schools in the Island is rapidly increasing and that almost all the leading schools have magazines of their own, the want of a magazine for the Buddhist schools was felt from a long time."

Those were the days of the Cambridge Senior and among the Ananda boys who had passed the examination was the name of Mr. D. J. Wimalasurendre. He was destined to become the architect of the Laksapana

hydro-electric scheme. In that year the young boy who later proved one of the nation's greatest benefactors, joined the Technical School.

The Principal of Ananda College in that year was Mr. A. E. Buultjens, an old Thomian, who was an educationist, historian, oriental scholar and linguist. He was also a pioneer of the labour movement and helped to form the first trade union when the late Mr. A. E. Goonesingha, was then a three year old toddler.

The Principal of the Kandy Buddhist School, later known as Dharmaraja College, was Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka, the Buddhist scholar and politician who later became the Chairman of the Board of Ministers under the Donoughmore Constitution.

ENGLISH AS SHE WAS WROTE

In the days of English, more English and still more English, the Buddhist School Magazine advised its readers to speak English with a correct accent. Students were advised to say *company* and not *company*, *circumstances* and not *circumstances*, *energies* and not *energies* and so on.

Among the 'laughable blunders' of the boys of a higher form, which the Magazine published, were these howlers:

"A large building was erecting opposite to Queen's House."

"A marriage was took place."

"He asked him as a fun what did the bear tell you with a murmur."

To the chagrin of the culprits their initials were published along with their compositions.

The Principal of Royal College was among those who deplored the low standards in English at the College prize day on October 10th, 1894, and the Governor ordered the Director of Public Instruction to issue a circular which he did on December 22nd, 1894, drawing attention to the Royal Principal's views. (For details see *The Octagon*, Vol. I, No. 1, Kandy, May 1895).

The Director said the Governor viewed "with the gravest displeasure the apparently imperfect manner in which English elementary education is at present being imparted in many of the grant-in-aid private schools of this colony."

"The Principal alludes particularly to the practice now so prevalent of promoting boys to higher classes regardless of their qualifications for such advancement and refers to the want in Ceylon of properly trained elementary teachers."

The dutiful Director observed that "His Excellency trusts that the mere fact of his causing this subject to be brought to the notice of Managers will be the means of considerably improving the existing system under which English elementary education is now being imparted." He added as a sting in the tail that failure to improve could be fraught with the danger of eligibility for the annual grant being reviewed."

The Principal of Royal College was in those days a power in the land. His most trenchant comment, not referred to in the circular was "It would be impossible for boys to be worse taught than the majority of those who present themselves for admission here."

The Royal Principal's views did not go unchallenged. Writing in the first issue of "*The Octagon*" an educationist said the Royal Principal's remarks may have been true of the small number (157) who sought

admission to Royal in 1893, "but they are not necessarily, nor in all respects true of the thousands who have entered other schools."

Taking the battle into the Royal Principal's camp, this educationist spoke of "the unusual importance attached to the Principal of Royal College" and mordantly added, "We are not aware that the Principal of Royal College exercised a semi-official control over the education of this Colony, nor that it is part of his duty to offer general criticism on the state of education in Ceylon once a year." (Subsequent Principals of Royal carried on regardless).

The chief handicap to the spread of Buddhist education was "the quarter mile rule" introduced by Mr. J. B. Cull, Director of Public Instruction, which prohibited the building of new schools within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of any existing school. Since the Christians had already established schools in the most populous areas, the restriction told heavily on the Buddhists.

Mr. A. E. Buultjens, Editor of "*The Buddhist*", campaigned vigorously against this regulation in his capacity as Superintendent of Buddhist Schools and was supported in the Legislative Council by the Hon. T. B. Panabokke. Mr. Buultjens carried on correspondence with the Secretary of State for Colonies. He was partially successful in this campaign to the extent that the regulation was not made retrospective as originally intended, and also in his protests against the construction of Government buildings in close proximity to sacred and historical Buddhist shrines at Anuradhapura.

The prescribed textbooks in those days were the works of Scott, Addison, Goldsmith, Macaulay, etc. and English readers.

The entirely "English" character of the texts prompted a parent of a Royal College pupil to ask (in the Monthly Literary Register) why a local reader could not be produced to replace Longman's with subjects which could (only) be appreciated by an English boy in an English school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Despite handicaps Buddhist education made remarkable progress and this was commented on by the Bishop of Colombo at the Anglican Conference. He said, "Buddhist schools are rapidly increasing. The number of Buddhist schools registered as grant-in-aid schools was in 1888 twelve with an average attendance of 546; in 1891 it was 19 with an average of 1,220 and the number of schools in 1894 is forty."

In 1894 a site was chosen for St. Joseph's College. The Ceylon Review stated that "The promoters of the new Catholic College to be called St. Joseph's have secured one of the best sites in Ceylon for a public school—Lake House—bought from Mrs. F. C. Loos." The Papal Delegate, Mgr. Zaleski, laid the foundation stone on December 15th.

Schools fees then ranged from 50 cents to Rs. 8/-. Boarders were accepted at Rs. 10/- and Rs. 25/- per month. Most schools advertised for pupils and boarders. Classes in music, French and German were inducements to enrolment.

In 1894 Ladies' College was established. The City College founded by Mr. S. G. Lee received recognition from Calcutta University; the private school started by Mr. L. E. Blaze, which had developed into Kingswood College was taken over by the Wesleyan Mission, and Mrs. Mary Musaeus Higgins established Musaeus College in Rosmead Place.

While education was gradually spreading throughout the country, Mr. John M. Ferguson, observed that "twice as much is annually spent on 'intoxicating drink' in Ceylon as on 'education and the teaching of Christianity'—It is an English education that the nation both Sinhalese and Tamil crave after."

DRESS AND NAME REFORM

1894 saw the Anagarika Dharmapala launch a dress and name reform movement at a meeting at the Floral Hall, Racquet Court, Colombo on December 9th. As Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society he wrote, "In view of the degeneracy of the Sinhalese in imitating European dresses and names, the importance of securing the support of influential gentlemen to the proposed reform is at present greatly felt. The modern low-country Sinhalese are at present known by hybrid surnames such as Perera, Silva, Jansz, Dias, Almeida, Fernando, Caberal, (sic) Abrew, Peiris, Saram, Salgado, Alphonso and C. and they wore a dress as unmeaning as it is extravagant." Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka made "an enthusiastic and lengthy speech" on the subject and the meeting decided to canvass support for its aims among leading Buddhists.



The case for "self-government" was urged in 1894 by Mr. H. A. P. Sandarasagara in "The Ceylon Review" (Vol. 3, No. 2). He said the people of Ceylon had "stood the test and have not been found wanting." He said municipal institutions had been a success and "we

are therefore in no way unprepared to take part in the wider expansion of our liberties whereby we may obtain the right to govern ourselves..... Wealth, rank and learning are beginning to adjust station in society. Freed from the dead weights of national prejudices and failings, the march of progress will be by jumps and strides." The same review was not as enthusiastic editorially. It warned that "Until the leading races—the Burghers, the Tamils and the Sinhalese—can so closely come together, not necessarily coalesce as to meet without racial prejudice and agree upon aim and oneness of purpose, it is a risky experiment to recommend self-government."

In 1894 words like sex, prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism were used neither in the press nor periodicals, but "immoral" covered a multitude of sins.

Rev. T. J. Stockley of the Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Chapel wrote to the "British Weekly" about moral dangers to young Englishman coming out east. The "Ceylon Review" (September Issue) retorted "The morality of Ceylon is surely not so bad as that of Mr. Stockley's own country. Colombo cannot supply materials to another Kingsley for an 'Alton Locke', in vain will poets have to seek occasions here that may call forth a melancholy "Bridge of Sighs" or a pathetic 'Song of the Shirt' Makay cannot thrive here, nor can the author of "Darkest England" find statistics in Ceylon for a similar work so full of shocking illustrations."

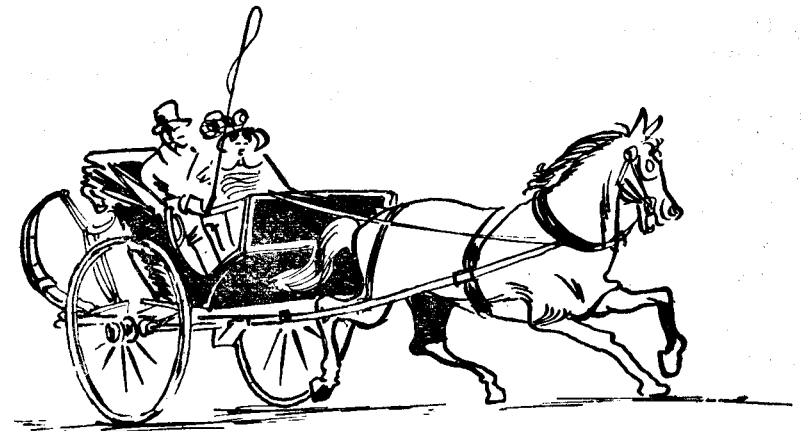
Colombo in 1894 was so vastly different to the metropolis as it is today bursting at the seams of its Municipal limits that when Mr. Peter de Abrew a Buddhist benefactor offered a free site in Brownrigg Street, Cinnamon Gardens, for a school, he had to indicate its location on a surveyor's map. The offer was accepted but soon afterwards a trustee objected that "the site is quite out of the way and not in a central

locality." The Trustees decided to refer the eligibility of the site and locality to the Women's Educational Society. Meanwhile Mr. de Abrew solved the problem by withdrawing his offer. (The Buddhist, February 1894).

Dr. Neubaur, a German, left this picture of Colombo harbour in 1894. "Here the colossal Australian steamers, with their many hundred passengers; there returning from furthest Asia the China and Japan boats; between them the Indian vessels with their dark skinned picturesquely clad crews; there again the small Sinhalese craft, colliers with hundreds of coolies, a crowd of boats crammed to the gunwhale with pedlars wares; and finally the small gondolas, which afford communication with shore."

A FOREST OF CARRIAGES

Dr. Neubaur stayed at the best and largest hotel in Colombo, the Grand Oriental Hotel, then under German management. He observed that he had to fight his way "through a forest of carriages".



For the first time under British rule Vesak was celebrated with 'grandeur' in 1894. "The sides of the streets", according to "The Buddhist" were profusely

decorated with palm leaves and evergreens and artistic pandals were erected at several junctions of the City. The illuminations were very satisfactory, the grandest being in the Fort opposite the shops of the Buddhist jewellers. Colonel Olcott, then on his first visit to Ceylon after Wesak had been declared a public holiday, addressed devotees at Kelaniya temple and then toured the Fort and Pettah to see 'the grand illuminations'.

In the field of archaeology the indefatigable Mr. H. C. P. Bell climbed Sigiriya. Mr. Bell's coolies "went up like cats, carrying his camera fixed on their backs, and he took photographs of two pokunas at the top and a view of the Matale hills from the highest point".

1894 was a quiet year for the Royal Asiatic Society—the club of the intelligentsia— which was then preparing for its golden jubilee due to be held the following year. In his annual report Mr. J. Harward, Honorary Secretary, complained that the library situated in the Colombo Museum premises was overcrowded. In 1969 the same problem was solved by shifting the R.A.S. from the University of Ceylon at Thurstan Road to the spacious former bar of the Ceylon Turf Club in the 'Grandstand Campus'.

The newspapers published in 1894 were the Times of Ceylon, The Observer, The Independent, and the Examiner.

"The Ceylon Review" deplored a tendency towards 'abusive journalism' in the national press. It praised the editorial content of newspapers but said that editors permitted "the ventilation of pure abuse by fawning correspondents, platitudinous penny-a-liners, paragraphists and other scribblers".

"The Buddhist" observed that the attitude of the daily newspapers towards itself had changed 'from

contempt and indifference" to "sufferance and non-antagonism".

In 1894 "The Times of Ceylon" became the sole property of Mr. H. H. Capper and Mr. F. Capper.

An Australian, Mr. Alfred Burke, succeeded Mr. Geddes as Editor of the "Catholic Messenger".

"The Examiner" was bought by Dr. Van Geyzel and Mr. Frederik Dornhorst.

The "Ceylon Sporting Gazette" ceased publication.

1894 was not a vintage year for publications but "An essay on the brief causes of diseases and their prophylactic treatment" by C. Thamodrampillay— medical practitioner— (Times of Ceylon steam press, 1894) was hailed as the first book of its kind by a Ceylonese.

In 1894 as in 1969 there was a fair amount of emigration. Businessmen, clerks, store-keepers, etc. left 'Dear Old Lanka' for the Australian colonies, Burma, Siam, the Straits, America, East and South Africa. "Only a few days ago I had a letter from Mr. D. Allis Perera of how a little colony of Sinhalese are getting on in S. Africa", said Mr. J. Ferguson in an address to the Y.M.C.A.

SINHALESE IN AUSTRALIA

In 1894 there was also a prosperous if not populous community of Sinhalese Buddhists in Australia. Throughout the year "The Buddhist" in its issues acknowledged gifts from "Sinhalese Buddhists" in Homebush, Queensland towards pinkamas, presentations of Ata-pirikaras, the Wesak celebrations, construction of schools, etc.

A clue to their emigration to Australia is found in the September, 1894, issue which says that they had gone to Australia "for the sake of employment".

Those were the days when Indian labour spilled into Ceylon. To the many gruesome and horrifying stories of the conditions in which these labourers came over can be added this personal reminiscence of Col. Olcott of a sea voyage from Tuticorin to Colombo. Col. Olcott had a cabin to himself but of the Indian labourers he says "The Indian coolies going over to work on Ceylon plantations, some hundreds of them were all lumped together like a tin of worms for bait" (See Olcott's "Old Diary leaves 1893—1896").

1894 was a landmark in the history of transport in Ceylon. The year saw the completion of work on the Kelani bridge, the river being spanned earlier by a bridge of boats.

Carriages were the main mode of transport between towns and in Colombo a ferry service was operated between Slave Island and the Pettah. The ferry operated every five minutes and the fare was 2 cts.

Sir Hercules Robinson (1866—1871) had decreed "for Nawalapitiya and finality" as far as railway extensions went but in 1894 lines were laid from Haputale to Bandarawela, from Polgahawela to Kurunegala, and from Ambalangoda to Galle.

Electricity was introduced in the billiard room at the Bristol Hotel in 1894. The electricity was produced by a gas engine driven dynamo. The Grand Oriental Hotel successfully carried out experiments with incandescent gas, while a gas engine was fitted in the offices of the Observer.

Mr. J. J. Todman arrived to advise Bousteads on the introduction of electricity in Colombo.

The Colombo Tramways Agreement was signed and a successful experiment was carried out in a telegraph service between Colombo-Trincomalee.

Labour costs were low. In 1894 Mr. Ferguson wrote, "In the Galle districts we have heard of Sinhalese women being glad to pluck tea leaf for so low a wage as 12½ cts. a day. This must be the lowest rate in the Island".

THE UPLAND TORTOISE

In 1894 the famous Upland tortoise was shifted from Mutwal to Victoria Park. A correspondent of the Monthly Literary Register complained that the idea of putting him in a muddy malarious pond was a mistake. "As I patted him on the head I seemed to feel it was the last time I would see him there," he wrote.

The correspondent's instinct was right. The tortoise died a few days later. After his death the controversy of his origin and species was resumed and still goes on 75 years later.

1894 witnessed the formation of the Wild Life Society of Ceylon which is now nine years older than the Fauna Preservative Society of the United Kingdom, but eleven years younger than the Bombay Natural History Society.

In 1894 Cargills celebrated its 50th anniversary and its generous offer to erect two wards at the Colombo General Hospital at a cost of Rs. 6,000 was accepted by the Government.

Of course accidents were news. "The Lady Gordon", a coastal steamer, ran aground in the North. Five persons died and cargo worth Rs. 800,000 was damaged. Lightning caused extensive damage at the Nuwara Eliya Hotel. At Bathford Estate, Dickoya, the Superintendent, Mr. Holford had "the hair of his head singed"—A narrow shave. On February 3rd an earthquake was felt at Point Pedro.

Then as now Public Servants were warned against "communicating with the newspapers".

The Ceylon Telegraph Office informed customers that the accuracy of messages was not guaranteed in the transmission of telegrams.

The railway for its part did not guarantee that "trains will arrive and depart at times specified in the time bill".

THE SHANTY PROBLEM

Shanties were a problem. They were called 'rookeries'. The Observer urged the Public Health authorities to demolish them as they were "inevitable causes of ill-health and disease".

The Planters' Association was concerned about the sale of "rubbishy teas".

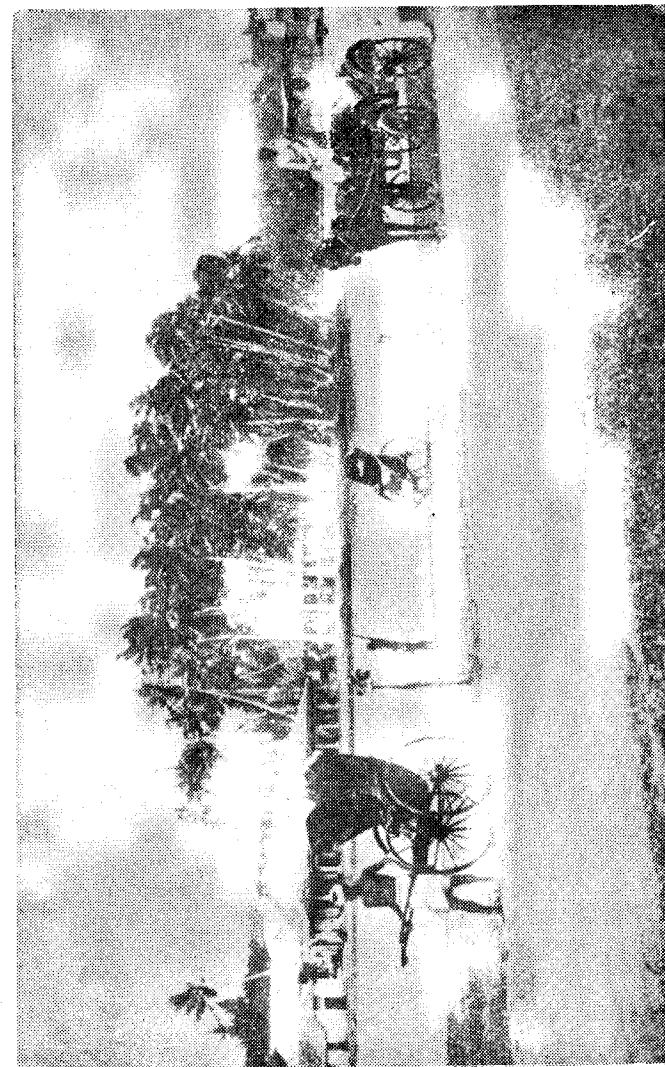
Then as now the Royal-Thomian match was a main social event. In their annual encounter played on the C.C.C. grounds, St. Thomas' won by 72 runs. O. G. de Alwis took 7 for 21 for the winners.

Then as now tea was the main prop of the economy. Exports had risen from 160,000 pounds in 1880 to 46 million pounds in 1894. Tea exports were ten times the value of coffee. "Should tea collapse", wrote Mr. Ferguson "or even fall in prosperity, woe for the revenue".

There was talk of overproduction. "The only obstacle", wrote Mr. Ferguson, "is the dread of overproduction, of prices falling so low as to leave no margin of profit, for Ceylon planters have had the experience of this in respect of cinchona bark and some other products".

The remedy advocated then as now, was trade with other countries.

Sir John Muir of James Finlays in Calcutta arrived here to discuss Indo-Ceylonese co-operation in promoting tea sales in America.



*Other times—other modes of transport. A picture of Lake Road, Colombo, in 1900.
(By courtesy of Mr. A. W. Lorenz-André.)*

1894 saw the formation of the Colombo Tea Traders Association. The first public sale of tea had taken place earlier in 1883 at the office of Somerville & Co.

Then as now there was an awareness of Ceylon's tourist potential. "Every winter now brings us an instalment of visitors from Europe and America", observed a contemporary journal.

The question of whether the medical profession was overcrowded and whether that was the reason for reducing salaries of licentiates of the Medical College from Rs. 75 to Rs. 50 was posed by the Ceylon Review.

Then as now Ceylon imported rice. Mr. Ferguson bemoaned rice imports saying it was 'the craze of Sinhalese youths for jobs as quill drivers' that made rice imports necessary. "It is the planting industry that pays for it", he said.

Ceylon's rice imports in 1894 were six million bushels. "Blot out the planting requirements, directly and indirectly, and the imports would fall to perhaps a million bushels, a little more than it was in 1817 when Ceylon was a mere military dependency", wrote Mr. Ferguson.

Then as now stray dogs were a nuisance. The Colombo Mayor, Mr. C. E. D. Pennycuick, was a humanitarian who observed that the destruction of dogs "by drowning them in the lake has long struck me as being objectionable". He took steps to construct the existing gas chamber.

One hundred and sixty gunners arrived to strengthen the garrison in Colombo.

Cocoa stealing was a big problem. The Governor told the Legislative Council that there had been a drop in cocoa stealing in four districts, where the Whipping Ordinance had been brought into operation.

'Cocoa Wine' was advertised as "the best stimulant to the muscles and nervous system" while insurance companies charged Europeans in Ceylon a special premium for 'tropical residence'.

Odd items in the news were that a trout weighing $7\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. was caught in Nuwara Eliya. In the same year 40,000 trout were imported for the fishing streams in Nuwara Eliya.

And a Professor Van Tassel made a parachute descent of 7,000 feet in Colombo.

In 1894 Mr. J. Ferguson was a colossus on the local scene. He looked back on Ceylon as it was when he arrived 30 years earlier and was gratified. From his personal Christian standpoint he recalled "Then native Christians were like fireflies twinkling in the darkness.... The deadness and apathy of 30 years ago have disappeared".

Speaking as a businessman he observed, "How much Railways have done here and in India to breakdown caste, dispel ignorance and even foster brotherliness"

CHAPTER TWO

Ants (toasted) and Axle Grease for Dinner

The popular notion of Ceylon in the Victorian era when the Ceylon Cold Stores story begins is that it was a period when men and women enjoyed the best things in life without the worries of income tax or wealth tax, and import or exchange controls.

Whether the rich were richer then than they are now, or the poor poorer is debatable. Yet it is a fact that even the richest then did not enjoy material comforts from electricity to refrigeration which even the lower income groups can afford today.

The eighteen nineties and the first half of the present century saw a parallel growth in the history of firms such as Ceylon Cold Stores and the planting industry. The planters were particularly unfortunate in the pre-refrigeration era.

One of the earliest accounts of planting life in Ceylon is provided by R. W. J. (since identified as R. W. Jenkins) in a pamphlet titled "Ceylon in the Forties and Eighties".

Jenkins recalled that "Planters in those days got all their supplies from Nuwara Eliya, stinking beef and mouldy bread being their most frequent fare". This was certainly no exaggeration.

Major Clutterbuck recalling his reminiscences of planting life, wrote that in the 1870's bread generally reached planters when it was about ten days old,

mildewed and full of ants. "Toasted was the best way of eating it, as this killed the ants and made them more digestible too".

On June 19th, 1871, the Civil Servants sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Colonies urging higher salaries. One of the main arguments adduced was that "Food rapidly deteriorated in this climate and the waste is very great".

"They would urge that such things as beer, clothes, oilmanstores and many household requisites have to be obtained from Europe and can only be got thence at enormously increased rates". (This plea incidentally was unsuccessful. See C. Dickman's "The Ceylon Civil Service Manual—Government Press 1872").

Mr. R. D. Ormsby, an engineer of the Public Works Department, recalling service up-country wrote, "Once a week the beef cooly was despatched with a tin box on his head, 20 or 30 miles to go and return the next day with enough beef, bread, currys, oil and Co. to last a week". On one occasion a beef box boy did not return being held up by floods. The planters of the area went to his hut but he was not there. There was nothing to it except to shoot a passing goat and skin it for mutton.

BREAD BY POST

"Many outlying districts were worse off, no bread being obtainable except by post. The substitutes being biscuits in tins or rice rottis, a terrible species of cake". The writer remembered with a shudder the so-called Danish butter in purple coloured tins. These, on being opened, revealed on top a lot of yellow liquid like oil and beneath a layer of white grit, when well mixed a compound very like that used for greasing the axles of railway waggon resulted.

He says that in Batticaloa 'Barren cows' occasionally provided a bonus of fresh beef. A paper for bookings was circulated. The Government Agent got sirloin, the District Judge another choice cut and when it finally reached him (the District Engineer) only the tail and horns were left. (See Bingham's History of the Public Works Department).

A planter Mr. William Forsythe recalled how "we used to send to Nawalapitiya for supplies and meat generally arrived in an advanced stage of decomposition".

To those who might have asked why planters did not eat tinned foods, the answer provided by Mr. Forsythe was that the tins were generally 'bulged'. They tasted "Nasty" and in any case tinned foods were a luxury beyond S.D's".

More recently Col. T. Y. Wright recalling his earliest days in his book "Ceylon in my times", wrote that "One was lucky if the contents of the (beef) box had not gone bad".

R. W. J., referred to earlier, has an interesting anecdote about Resthouses in the days of the pioneers. "A planter was lucky", he said, "if he did not get hit in the eye with the sticks and stones that were flying about aimed at the unfortunate poultry, one of which screaming, feathered, skinned, half an hour later would be served up for dinner fried in coconut oil. This 'sudden death' was served up with some sweet potatoes, and some sort of vegetable, or egg, curry and rice and a hard biscuit was the usual dinner".

ICE AS A STATUS SYMBOL

The tables of well-to-do families in Victorian times were loaded with delicacies, but ice was so scarce that to have it at home gave Ceylonese then something to

talk about and record, as they did in their diaries. The diaries of Edmund Roland Gooneratne, John Gerard Perera, John Godfried Cornelis Pieris, etc. throw light on the tantalising fare rich families had in their daily meals. They also shed light on one of the status symbols of Ceylon in that era—the serving of ice. (Vide Notes on Some Sinhalese Families. From the diaries of E. R. Gooneratne. Edited by P. E. Pieris. Published Times of Ceylon).

“Turkey, hare, pig, a good Australian sheep, green peas, carrots and the like” were the menu at a small party for two guests. Chinese fruits, English biscuits, roasted mutton, salmon, stewed eels and English veal also figured frequently in accounts of meals.

But ice was difficult to get and more difficult to keep. Mr. Gooneratne noted how “Peter..... and them were feasting on the 20 lbs. of ice which were brought from Galle but only about 7 remained. They drank it with brandy”.

If the ice available did not melt that too was regarded as noteworthy. On one occasion Mr. Gooneratne recorded how “Two pounds of ice were brought; made some Sherry Cobles, grandpapa and mama also drank some. Invited Abraham and Francis to dinner. There was a little piece of ice left”.

Other entries made by Gooneratne about ice are about how he “got 2 lbs. of ice and afterwards drank it”. And of a visit to “the Ice House (where he) “drank some ice”.

Dr. Pieris observed that “in pre-refrigeration days sea fish in any shape was a rare luxury. Ra Siha Deviyo at Sitawake was supplied with fresh fish daily from Migamuva by fifteen careas who acted as express runners. In 1898, a leading Sinhalese at Ratnapura when inviting a visitor to dinner exclaimed, “You are in luck, salt fish tonight”.

“Diya hakura is a pungent sauce made from fish, and is used diluted with lime juice to flavour the plateful of plain boiled rice. (For details see Deraniyagala; Cured Marine Products of Ceylon. Ceylon Journal of Science. Vol. 5).

Cooly runners in relays were also evidently used in pre-refrigeration times in supplying fowls in areas where they were scarce.

Pieris Mohottiar’s correspondence records this request from Mr. H. A. Evatt, an engineer stationed at Ambanpitiya. “You would oblige me much if you could send me up a cooly load of good fowls as I find great difficulty in procuring them here”. Dr. Pieris comments that “the absence of poultry among the villages in Sinhale” in contrast to “what was available where European influence had lasted longer”.

Then, as now, there was a craze for imported goods in food, dress, household requisites, etc. In his Presidential address to the Ceylon Reform Society, the great Mr. Ananda Coomaraswamy deplored the fact that women of Ceylon decorated themselves with the baubles of Birmingham. The word “choli” was not mentioned in polite circles then. Mr. Coomaraswamy however deplored the fact that Ceylonese women stomped about awkwardly in “high heel shoes, and breathe uncomfortably in straps, under a blouse whose line of junction with a training skirt is more than needfully conspicuous. Above is a much befeathered hat; accessory, a little commonplace machine made trinketry from Birmingham. Her brother in yellow boots, check suit, and straw hat is her match. These are not extreme types, but the commonest types”.

Among the very, very few who practised what they preached were Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who switched from topee to turban, and Mr. E. W. Perera, who sported a black and white Kalutara hat. Mr. E. B.

Denham, as always, had a down to earth explanation. He said that if Western dress was widely assimilated, it was only because "the convenience of the western costume is generally recognised".

"The combination of trousers and a cloth, which was fashionable a few years ago, is rarely seen". (Denham's Census Report— 1911)

IMPORTS FOR THE FELLAHS

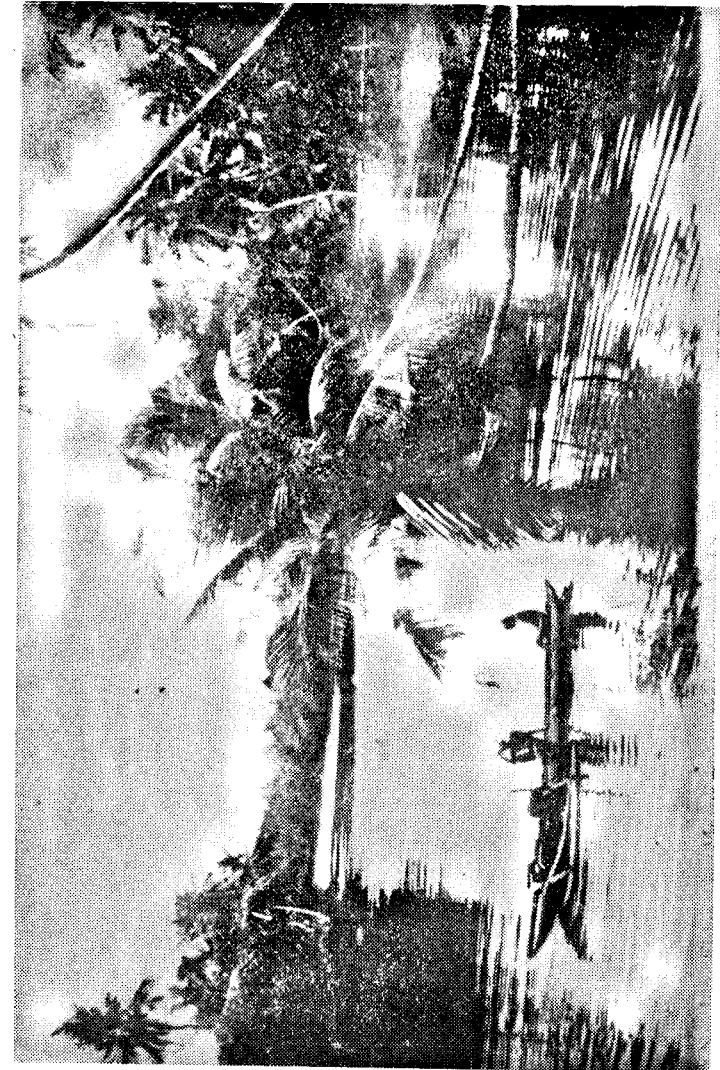
John Ferguson bemoaned the fact that Ceylon depended on other countries for her rice and curry-stuffs. "Why cannot Ceylon", he asked find her own curzystuffs, onions and potatoes. He said it was the anomalies of trade which "no fellah" could understand that Ceylon should import arecanuts, soap, salt, fruits, cardamoms, dried fish, candles, bricks, tiles and corks.

It was the boast of firms such as the Colombo Apothecaries that its oilmanstores were obtained from "Crosse and Blackwell and other first class houses only".

Imported goods reached the remotest villages.

Surveying the first decade of the present century, Mr. E. B. Denham observed in his Census report that earlier a gun, cart or hackery had been "the sign of the well to do villager". These status symbols were gradually replaced by "sewing machines and gramophones" as "the hall mark of respectability and wealth in the villages". The gramophone is to be heard everywhere and has completely taken the place of the rabana".

In the villages children played with imported toys. "Even the village urchin has his coloured rubber ball and humming top, and the poorest family can without any severe deprivation expend a trifle in procuring a toy", wrote Denham.



*A picture of tranquillity—fishing by moonlight on the Beira Lake. A view from Bridge Street.
(By courtesy of Mr. A. W. Lorenz-Andrée.)*

The growth of the tea industry and the development of transport over this period saw the emergence of a new feature in social life—the development of clubs.

The Ceylon Turf Club which was started in 1848 was largely responsible for the formation of one of the Island's oldest clubs, the Colombo Club. In 1869 the Colombo Assembly Rooms Company and the C.T.C. decided to construct a permanent building (opposite Galle Face Green where race meets were then held) to be used as a grandstand and for social occasions. It was first used as a grandstand in 1870 and was then used for functions such as The Turf Club Ball and St. Andrew's Day Dinner. The Colombo Club was formally inaugurated in 1871 for the promotion of "social intercourse among gentlemen". The fact that the premises were however used for social gatherings at which women were however present made a correspondent, who signed as 'Bookworm', complain in the Press that "many who make use of such institutions do so with the desire of withdrawing from the society of ladies.....". He railed against the "fitting to and fro of fair forms and the strains of sweet music, neither of which (very excellent in their proper place) are calculated to assist that concentration of mind which the habitués of a club expect to secure".

'Bookworm' need hardly have worried. When the Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1921, it had become a place of retirement for men only.

Planters in Kandy had started an ABC Club in 1870, which later became the Kandy Sports Club.

Those who were interested in hunting and shooting started a Horn Club restricted to those who owned horses or hounds. It was so named because its members sported scarves with pins in the shape of a hunting horn. When other sports such as cricket, football, tennis and golf became more popular than hunting,

membership was opened to persons interested in these sports as well. In 1894 the Club donated a cup for racing. One of the first Ceylonese to win the cup was Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike. He won it in 1908.

THE KENNEL CLUB AT "TEMPLE TREES"

The eighteen nineties saw the birth of another of Ceylon's oldest clubs, the Ceylon Kennel Club. The inaugural meeting was held at "Temple Trees", then a private residence, after the first ever dog show at the Race-course in 1899 had attracted 203 entries.

1894 saw the formation of the Colombo Ladies Golf Club.

The 'big match', as far as the European planting community was concerned, was Dimbulla vs Dickoya. At first no scores were kept, but in 1908 "one of the old brigade" writing in the Times of Ceylon X'mas Number gave the tally as "Matches played 73. Won by Dimbulla 37, won by Dickoya 31. Drawn 5". He was intrigued by the fact that as the years went by the scores became bigger.

To the cricket minded it may be of interest that, in 1882, Dickoya won by one run. An even more exciting match was played in 1887, when E. E. Mackenzie "played every ball bowled for the last half hour" by scoring singles in the last ball of each over. Mackenzie was playing for a draw and succeeded.

Sport meets were another diversion from the thottam and a practice that has now died out was to hold menagerie races. Goats, rabbits, dogs, turkey, sheep, chickens, ducks, cats, dogs and even elephants were entered. It was not always that the rabbit won.

The eighteen nineties and the first decade of the present century saw an increasing degree of Ceylonisation in various fields of sport.

The first ever European-Ceylonese cricket match had been played in 1887 but cricket became popular among the Ceylonese generally, rather than only among the elite, after the publication of a handbook dealing exclusively with cricket by The Times of Ceylon in 1901. The author of the handbook was Mr. P. L. Bartholomeusz, of the staff of The Times of Ceylon. A second edition of this handbook referred to other sports as well and subsequent editions contained news on racing too.

The interest Ceylonese took in cricket at this stage led to the inauguration of the Government Service cricket competition in 1907, while the Mercantile Cricket Association was formed in 1911. When a visiting M.C.C. team played against "Ceylon" in 1882 the Ceylon team consisted entirely of Englishmen, but as more and more Ceylonese took to cricket they began to be chosen for representative games against Britain, Australian, and Asian neighbouring countries. The establishment of The Ceylon Cricket Association in 1922 placed the popularity of the game on a very sound foundation.

Racing too was an entirely British sport in the last century—first among the military and then among the civilians. The publication of the first racing calendar called "The Ceylon Turf Calendar and Guide" in 1894 led to wealthier Ceylonese taking an interest in racing and a sensation was created when Mr. E. L. F. de Soysa's Arab "Magna Carta" beat better fancied Australian horses owned by British turfites in the Island.

The growing prosperity of the tea industry led to race meets being held in the outstations too and a democratisation of the racing fraternity with "Gandhi enclosures" being built for tea estate workers who became numerically at least the biggest patrons of the sport of kings.

Amateur theatricals were a favourite form of relaxation and a "Colombo Lady" recalling the 1890's in the Times of Ceylon X'mas Number of 1905 wrote, "The first theatricals I ever saw in Ceylon took place at Adam's Peak Hotel, Hatton. There is plenty of talent up-country but it is difficult to get at, the men available for acting being as rare as Kohinoor diamonds. They chose 'Petticoat Perfidy', a little play with little possibilities of dullness if at all encouraged, but the stage manageress one of the cleverest hands at making bricks without straw I ever met, took that play, made one or two alterations, worked up the end, rubbed and scrubbed it, until it shone like a new pin and went like greased lightning on the night. The 'Colombo Lady' recalled that stages were made of tea boxes and costumes were made out of towels and sheets.

The United Club in Nuwara Eliya and the Darrawella Club were among the up-country pioneers in theatricals. Of the Nuwara Eliya performances 'A Colombo Lady' wrote, "Taking the cast all round, the Ceylon performance was superior to the London one"—The play was "Popping the Question".

In the following year (1906), "A Colombo Amateur" wrote on "Amateur Theatricals in Ceylon in 1906" and remarked that Nuwara Eliya had a larger share of successful presentations than Colombo. By then Nuwara Eliya had its own Dramatic Club.

Many of the imposing clubs of today started as tents or cadjan sheds. A tent pitched on "Charsley House", the residence of Mr. Ralph Tatham, was the first club house of the Colombo Garden Club. The tent was replaced by a cadjan shed before a pavilion was erected.

The growth of the tea industry saw a change in food and drink habits. In the first decade of the present century tea and milk gradually replaced rice congee

and rice water. Aerated waters also became more popular. The pioneer salesmen of Ceylon Cold Stores were by then at work. Denham records that "The cost of Kola Champagne or cream soda, which are perhaps the most popular variety, is from 10 cts. to 25 cts."

Meanwhile he also noted that "tinned soups, meats, sardines and tinned fish can be purchased in the bazaar of any large village".

For the more sophisticated European folk of Colombo and other towns delectable imported foods were advertised in the newspapers. Greek and Italian macaroni, spaghetti, vermicelli and soup pastes, Greek and Italian genuine olive oils. French, Italian, Norwegian and Canadian sardines in oil. Italian tunny fish, Concentrated tomato sauce. French and Italian olives, capers, etc., crab meat, cocktail sausages, fish and meat paste, etc. were widely advertised.

The Ceylonese generally remained inveterate rice eaters until the Second World War saw the introduction of rice rationing.

THE EMPIRE OF RICE

As the late Mr. J. P. de Fonseka observed, "There are meats and there is fish, but these are dependencies, mere colonies subserving the great empire of rice". He recalled Prof. Haeckel's saying that the Sinhalese man's vision of heaven was a place supplied with an infinite variety of rice and curry.

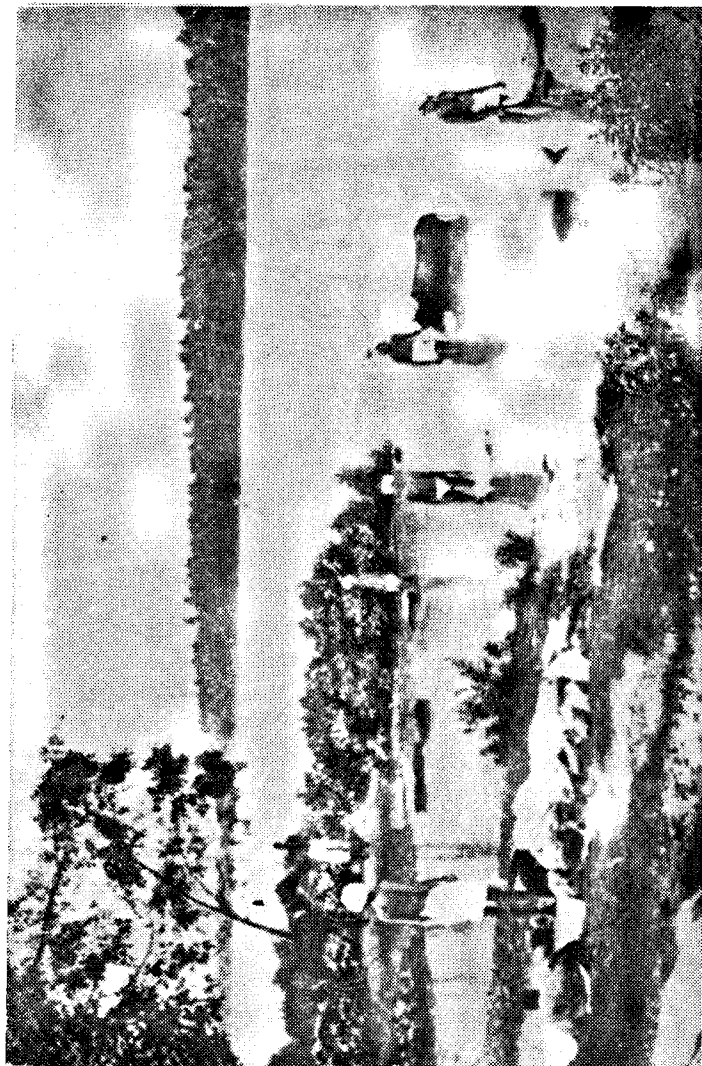
The hotness (chillie wise) of Ceylonese curries was a favourite topic of conversation and writing among the European population and some Europeans at least had an idea that curries helped digestion. Thus the German Dr. Neubaur wrote in the Monthly Literary Register (May 1894) that curry was a "pungent, spicy preparation

to which a great importance is attached because of its supposed favourable effects upon the digestion in the tropics”.

Prices remained low until the Second World War. A typical advertisement of the thirties lists these prices of food:—

A plate of Buriani	36	cts.
Fowl cooked or fried	Rs. 1.62	„
Mutton chops	15	„
Mutton Kurume	12	„
Mutton liver	12	„
Fish, fried or cooked	06	„
Breakfast with fowl	50	„
Rice with mutton curry	35	„
Rice with beef curry	25	„
A pound of potato	04	„
Boiled egg	10	„
Fried egg	15	„
Wattalapam	10	„
Ice cream	15	„
Rose sherbert	10	„
Cream sherbert	25	„
Sugar wafer	05	„
Glass of cocoa	25	„

Nuwara Eliya beer in the nineteen thirties was Rs. 6.50 a dozen or just over 50 cts. a bottle. Whisky which was Rs. 2/- a bottle in the twenties went up to Rs. 4.50 in the immediate pre-war period owing to higher customs duties.



*Man and bear dip into the cool waters of the Lake. A picture taken from Vauxhall Street seventy years ago.
(By courtesy of Mr. A. W. Lorenz-Andrie).*

CHAPTER THREE

“We met as we never met before”

The things that did not happen in a country's history are sometimes of more significance than events that took place.

How different Ceylon's present position would have been if the proposal to import Chinese labour for the plantations materialised, or if the Colonial Office agreed with the idea that Ceylon should be federated or annexed to India—a view that prevailed till as recently as the thirties.

The Colonial Office had an epoch making and historic decision to make in deciding on whether Galle or Colombo harbours should be developed.

The parent company of Ceylon Cold Stores and other firms would have been Galle based and not Colombo based if the Colonial Office favoured Galle.

Pitt had decades earlier described Trincomalee as “the most valuable colonial possession on the globe”, but this was from a security point of view.

Commercially the choice was Colombo or Galle. The Colonial Office chose Colombo and a new chapter in Ceylon's history began.

The Colombo lobby beat the Galle lobby just before the Galle Municipal Council came into existence.

In fact the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Carnarvon favoured Galle as late as 1866, but the Governor in Colombo, Sir Hercules Robinson

favoured Colombo. He persuaded the Colonial Office that Colombo should be developed on the technical advice of the Master Attendant, Captain Donnan.

Apart from the argument that Colombo harbour was free from the rocks outside Galle, Capt. Donnan said that Colombo was only 30 miles off the direct course from Aden to Galle, and 18 miles from the direct course from Galle to Bombay.

A vital paragraph in Capt. Donnan's report was as follows: "I submit that Colombo is a more accessible port than Galle for sailing vessels and for steamers. The former class of vessels in making for the port of Colombo have not the treacherous currents to contend with that exist off Galle and sometimes sweep them far to leeward of the port, giving them a month's additional work to regain their former positions, and the latter class of vessels have no occasion, when making for the port, to keep under steam as they are obliged to do at Galle, for they can enter at any time of the night in Colombo roads".

In his excellent book on "The Customs and its Cognate Institutions" (published in 1913), Mr. Horace E. de Kretser refers to the technical advice of Capt. Donnan as being a decisive factor. In fact there was another engineer who played a leading role in the choice of Colombo. This was Sir Guildford Molesworth. In 1869, a project for a breakwater in Galle had been formulated by the Admiralty Director of Works. It was Sir Guildford (see 'Ceylon in the Sixties' by Sir G. Molesworth, Times of Ceylon Annual, 1922) who pointed out that the plan was based on the false assumption that "the water of the S-W Monsoon always entered the (Galle) harbour in a southerly direction".

"The proposed breakwater", he said "would not afford the slightest protection to the ships in Harbour".

Sir William Gregory, a Governor of the times had a grim experience of Galle's dangerous approach when the ship bringing his personal possessions floundered on a reef. Sir William told the colonial office that Galle could not accommodate the increasing number of ships after the opening of the Suez Canal, which this year celebrates its centenary in the sad circumstance of being unoperative. The "Wm. Miller" was the first ship to call at Colombo after coming through the Suez.

COLOMBO FOREVER

The die was cast in Colombo's favour when the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) laid the foundation for a breakwater in December 1877.

A vivid picture of how even strong men quailed at the prospect of landing in the open roadstead that Colombo harbour then was, is provided by Mr. William Howard Russel of the Times (London), better known for his coverage of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny.

Mr. Russel wrote in "The Prince of Wales Tour". (London 1877) that "On such occasions the admirals and senior officers are the first to come on board to pay their respects. It was somewhat too rough in the open roadstead for spectators in fine clothes to come out in shore boats. The Governor's aide-de-camp put out from a little bay sheltered by a reef on which the surf broke with fury, sending showers of spray high in the air, and causing some uneasiness as to our going on shore: but the pilot told us that the jetty and platform where the Prince would land were protected from the swell".

The Governor, Sir William Gregory speaking on the occasion said, "This work, we confidently believe and

trust, will make Colombo one of the greatest and most prosperous cities in the East".

A choir of 1,000 children, trained by Mr. Vincent Van Langenberg, sang an ode for the occasion and the Bishop's Commissary, Rev. Ireland Jones recited a prayer composed for the occasion.

Work was finally completed by 1884 and the cost was £705,207. By 1891 expansion had become necessary and new arms were added to the breakwater at a cost of £488,975. The tonnage of ships using the port, which had earlier been negligible, rose to 606,200 tons in 1871 and 8,919,148 tons in 1911. Harbour revenue increased from Rs. 63,290 in 1871 to Rs. 259,949 by 1911.

The completion of the harbour work was officially celebrated on May 1st, 1912. The Governor, Sir Henry McCallum said "Today is red letter day for the colony, it is a day which will stand forward well in its annals".

He painted a picturesque word description of the scene in Colombo harbour before the works whose completion they were celebrating. "The roadstead was fully exposed to both monsoons as you may well imagine. Then there were great delays in both landing and taking in of cargo and they were delays which were attended with much danger. Wrecks were then not unknown between this and Galle. Behind me was a surf beaten shore occupied by fishermen in little huts such as we see now in different parts of the Island. Groves of coconuts extended down to the waters edge. The Pettah was coming into existence and a number of merchants had settled here. These were in the good old times of coffee and the merchant stores were attached to their houses of business here in Colombo. The railway had just been opened between Colombo and Kandy. What was then a surf swept water space now comprises one the finest, if not the finest artificial

harbours in the world (applause). The same engineers who designed this harbour have also designed that at Dover."

CHEAPEST IN THE WORLD

Another distinction of Colombo harbour which Sir Henry touched on was that the total cost of Rs. 45,000,000 or 3 million sterling made Colombo "the most cheaply constructed artificial harbour in the world for its size, accommodation and equipment".

The improvement in Colombo harbour promoted travel round the Island by sea. Early in the present century sea transport was widely used and in 1910 the Government signed an agreement with the Ceylon Steamship Company Limited for a steamer service round the Island. One of the signatories for the Government was Mr. Alexander Ransford Slater, Principal Assistant Secretary. The ports served were Galle, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Kalkudah, Trincomalee, Point Pedro, Kayts, Kankasanturai and Paumben. The ships used were the Lady Blake and Lady McCallum, which were both 230 feet in length and 37 feet in breadth. The service was patronised by ordinary passengers as well as troops, Supreme Court staff and officers on duty at the Pearl Fisheries.

Colombo port made a big leap forward with the Port Development Scheme which began as a doodle by Col. P. A. J. Hernu on his blotting pad. The scheme was completed in 1956. But in one respect at least there has been very little progress between the last century and the present.

Newspapers monotonously publish stories about the establishment of a Port Trust. The idea has been under consideration since the 1890's. It was mentioned again in the 1969 speech from the throne.

In 1897, an official committee which inquired into "the alleged delays and difficulties in landing and shipping cargo and coal at the Port of Colombo" recommended the establishment of a Port Trust.

Its recommendation was welcomed by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce which suggested a Harbour Board if a Port Trust was impracticable as the Harbour was in a state of transition. In 1898, such a Board was appointed and in 1906 the Chamber revived the question of a Port Trust. The Government ruled that the work on the harbour had still not been completed but it agreed to increase the strength of the Harbour Board by adding 2 members, one recommended by the Chamber, and one nominated by the Governor.

In 1911, the Chamber of Commerce again revived the question, but Sir Henry McCallum in his address to the Legislative Council on April 3rd said, "When in England I made inquiries as to Port Trusts in other parts of the world, and found that the conditions governing them differ essentially from the local conditions in Ceylon. Colombo harbour has been constructed entirely at the expense of the Government and is neither more nor less than a Government dock. There are no lands or river banks to be developed on which funds could be raised by the Trust on mortgage for any further works of improvement. At present the South West breakwater is practically the only available asset and this can hardly be considered a tangible form of security for intending investors".

The Harbour Board was replaced by the Colombo Port Commission in 1913. The harbour has changed beyond recognition since then and successive Governments have agreed in principle to the establishment of a Port Trust, but it still remains a prospect in newspaper headlines.

RAILWAY

One of the factors that swung official opinion in favour of Colombo instead of Galle as the premier commercial port was the existence of the Colombo-Kandy railway (opened in 1867). It was the railway that ushered the era of progress and made Ceylon's plantation commodities competitive in world markets.

Until the railway came to Ceylon transport of commercial products was by coolies or bullock carts. In 1877 when the railway network had proved a paying proposition, Mr. Alexander Brown told younger members of the Planters' Association of the days when "we had to transport our coffee on coolie heads for 30 miles on end.....The coolies (God bless them) were wonderful carriers and they generally travelled through clumps of forest so that their heads were protected. (See P. A. Minutes 1877).

Transport from Kandy to Colombo was by bullock carts which travelled in convoys at night. The planters were, in a sense, at the mercy of the carters and contractors.

When the P.A. celebrated its golden jubilee in 1904, Mr. William Leake, who had been Chairman of the P.A. from 1863-1873 recalled the bad old days. "For the Planters of the present day, when railways traverse the Central Province from west to east and well metalled roads penetrate the most remote districts, a strong effort of imagination is needed to realize the 'semi-civilised' condition of the country forty years ago. The overflowing coffee crops poured into Kandy from every quarter during the later months of the year, there to be stored, for few of the up country cartmen were willing to extend their journey to Colombo. When the Kandy stores were filled to repletion the Colombo cartmen, seeing their opportunity, demanded higher rates; and up would go the cart hire to Colombo

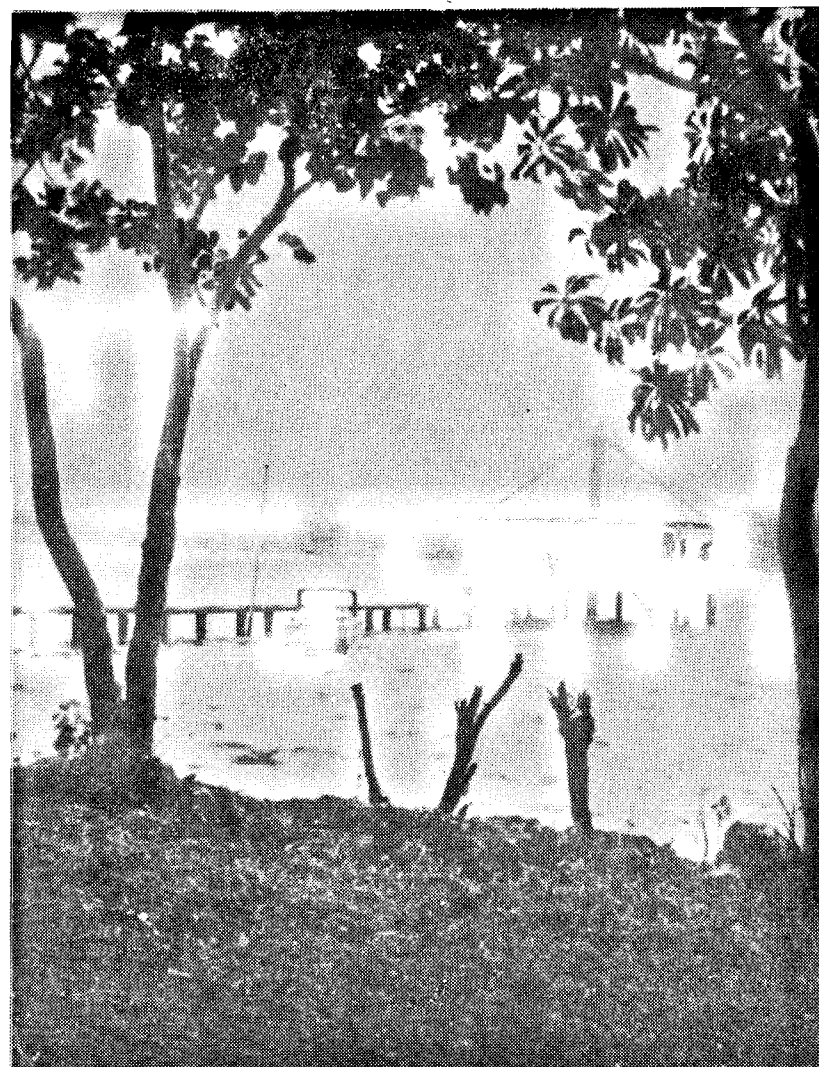
by leaps and bounds, from 4½ d, say 20 cts., per bushel, the normal rate, to 9d, say 40 cts. One year I can remember, when the pinch began, the various Kandy Agents met and agreed unanimously that a limit must be put to these demands. The cartmen were vociferously claiming a rise of another 1½ d, and would accept nothing less. The upshot, if not encouraging for further combinations, was at least comic. One of the combining Agents, taking advantage of the position, let it be known quietly that he was not averse to making the required concession. Before the rest of us got an inkling of what was going on, every cart in the town was loaded with our friends' parchment coffee and his stores were empty ready to receive further deliveries from the estates".

"Under such circumstances, when the transport of coffee from the estates store to Colombo was often a business of many weeks, sometimes even of months, the state of the roads was a question of the very first importance".

AN UNSPEAKABLE ADVANTAGE

The Planters' Association had been formed in Kandy in 1854 and one of its first acts was to urge on the Government the need for railway communication between the hill country and the coast. A Memorial on the subject stated that "to obtain the unspeakable advantage of a railway, the planting community would consent that an export duty be placed on coffee to meet any amount in excess of which the Government may be able to pay".

Sir Henry Ward spotlighted the financial magnitude of the problem in a speech to the Legislative Council on July 4th, 1855 in these terms. "To have a railway you must have a loan. The interest of that loan must be guaranteed by the Colonial Government, not out of the



Another flashback to the past—the "Seemava" used by Buddhist Monks on the Beira Lake at a point opposite the road to the Empire Theatre. Today just a few stumps of the pier remain.

(By courtesy of Mr. A. W. Lorenz-Andrée).

general revenue for that cannot be done... but out of fresh taxation. That taxation must provide interest at 6 per cent upon whatever sum you may require, for a term of 20-25 years—against which however you will have to set the railway receipts as soon as the line is opened”.

After legislation had been placed before the Legislative Council the planters submitted a memorandum that the costs of the project should be gone into closely. Capt. H. C. Bird voiced the views of the planters when he said “It may seem at first sight, somewhat inconsistent that any objections should be offered on it (the legislation).A railway we shall want. It cannot be said, in justice to the planters, that they do not want a railway. A railway to the community who can afford to pay for it, is a step in advance, a step in the right direction. But this advantage, we apprehend may be purchased at too high a cost—a cost higher than we can bear. It may involve sacrifices under which we might long groan”.

The petitions, memorials and letters in the press, editorials, etc. of the period would have covered the distance from Colombo to Kandy several times over. Those were the days when Governors personally presided over debates and participated in them. A weary Sir Henry Ward is on record as saying “of those arguments, and of letters, petitions and resolutions in which they are embodied I wish to speak with the most perfect respect. But I beg the Council to recollect that petitions are not infallible, public meetings are not infallible, Chambers of Commerce are not infallible”. And he added with obvious sarcasm, “Even Planters’ Associations are not infallible—Heaven have mercy on us, if they are so”.

What the P.A. and the Governor and everyone who added his two cents worth to the controversy of the day did not know— and they can hardly be blamed for

not being clairvoyant—was that the Colombo-Kandy railway was to prove one of the most lucrative in the world, but it did not save the coffee industry, which was destined to be wiped out by a bug.

The Railway Bill got through by a narrow majority of 9 votes to 7. The losers even petitioned Queen Victoria.

It was only after the railway had proved its usefulness by decades of service that the critics were silenced. In 1907 the publisher of a pamphlet, "Railways in Ceylon-Colombo", A. M. & J. Ferguson (1907) observed that "There has never been in the history of Ceylon as a British colony, so unanimous an opinion among all classes and races of the intelligent portion of the community as to the urgent necessity of railway extension as has existed for the past 12 months. *There is not a single dissentient vote.*

The cutting of the first sod for the Ceylon Railway on August 3rd, 1858, by Sir Henry Ward was one of the most glittering social events of the last century. The ceremony took place at Maligakande which in that age was spelt as "Malicaha Kande". The Bishop of Colombo, as usual, invoked blessings, the Royal Artillery fired a salute, and Governor Ward turned the first sod at what proved to be an auspicious time, "half past five exactly". The Ceylon Railway Company had constructed a special pavilion for 600 invitees. This pavilion was compared to the crystal Palace. The decorative flags bore the words, "Railways," "Roads", "Civilisation", "Progress" and "God bless Queen Victoria". (See "The Ceylon Railway" by G. F. Perera, Observer Press, 1925).

Enthusiasm over the project evaporated when the preliminary work exceeded estimates of expenditure. While the haggling went on the P.A. urged that the contract be taken out of the hands of the Company

and a similar opinion was expressed by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. Their demands were supported by a select committee of the Legislative Council and in 1861, the Government took over the business of the Company at a cost of £ 368,000.

ENTER THE IRON HORSE

After months of lobbying by vested interests in Kandy and Colombo a fresh contract was signed and the lowest tender of £873,000 by Mr. W. F. Faviell was accepted. The difficulties involved in construction included a construction disaster at Gongitota in which 36 workers died and this led to a breakdown in Mr. Faviell's health. Fortunately for Ceylon, he recovered and personally drove the first train or "iron horse" up to Bogambara. The Government reimbursed Mr. Faviell with an additional £58,000, which he had spent on the work and "all classes and races of the people of Ceylon" showed their appreciation by gifting him an elaborately decorated bowl at a cost of £600.

Planters had no qualms in sending their produce to Colombo by rail but were slow to trust their lives to the "Iron Horse".

Mr. Molesworth (later Sir Guildford), the engineer, allayed public fears. "For myself" he wrote (in the Ferguson Directory), "I always feel far more safe, when dashing along in an express train at the rate of 60 m.p.h., or as I have done on the trial of an engine at 75 or 80 m.p.h., than when travelling in an English stage coach from Colombo to Kandy. In the railway the safety of the passenger depends on the temper of the steel, or the strength of the iron or brass, whilst in the coach it depends on the temper of the horses, and very uncertain it is, and the strength of the harness.

The Kandy Railway proved an instant success. The first year of operation in 1868 yielded a profit of £85,000. The following year the export duty on coffee,

levied during construction was repealed and with profits from the railway being paid into general revenue the era of extensions began. The Colonial Office in London acted cautiously in approving extensions but in Colombo there were gentlemen known as "The Honourable, the General European member", "The Hon. the Planting member", and the "Hon. the Mercantile member" to urge new routes and extensions of existing routes.

The Railways revolutionised life in Ceylon, not only by providing cheap transport for commercial products but in making the good things in life available in Colombo available to the planter up-country. The era of the eagerly awaited "Beef-box" from Elephant House had dawned.

Planters were also able to make regular trips to Colombo. RWJ in his memoirs of Ceylon recalled how "Old Wood" had laboured on an estate in Uva for 30 years without once coming to Colombo.

Even planters closer to Colombo in the Kelani Valley district felt feelings of seclusion since no women attended their tamashas. It was after the Railway had made inroads into every part of the Island that they composed drinking ditties one of which ran

"In eighteen hundred and eighty four,
We met as we'd never met before
with laugh and chaff and drink galore
Until the day after tomorrow.

ROADS

Lord Mountbatten confessed recently that he was horrified while being last Governor-General of India to learn that a retinue of 333 employees had to be shifted when he switched a venue of talks with Mr. Nehru from New Delhi to Simla.

Ceylon's first Governor Frederic North had a much bigger entourage on his first tour of Ceylon. It included 160 palanquin bearers, 400 coolies, 2 elephants, 6 horses and 50 lascars (See History of the Public Works Department, Ceylon, 1796-1913 by P. M. Bingham—Govt. Press 1921.) The enormous entourage was necessitated by the almost complete absence of roads.

Percival in his "Account of Ceylon" (1803) lists three roads. Trincomalee to Mannar, Mannar to Colombo, and Colombo to Port de Galle.

Even fifty years later roads were so few and travel was so slow that the Governor Viscount Torrington pleaded with the Colonial Secretary not to turn down his travel claims because "To move I am obliged to take everything, kitchen, cook, beds servants, and often I may say house".

Distances in those days were measured in 'Leagues'—the equivalent of six miles, and tappal services were maintained by runners.

A mail coach service to Kandy was started in 1831 and in keeping with the absence of any prohibitory restraints at the time, the Governor was the biggest shareholder. The road to Kandy at that time (via Hanwella) was eighty five miles long. Two light four wheeled carriages operated daily on the route. The outward journey was at 4 a.m. and the return 4 p.m. Running time each way was 12 hours.

Capt. Dawson who had played so vital a role in the construction of the Kandy road was immortalised with a commemorative monument of granite, 125 feet in height.

The 1840's saw considerable progress in road construction—in the metalling of existing roads and in the construction of bridges. At the same time roads were also showing signs of wear and maintenance was, as it

still is, a major problem. In 1848 Major Skinner described the first 35 miles of the Colombo-Kandy road as being in a "very precarious condition." Skinner urged that the Colombo-Galle road—"being the high road from Colombo to all parts of the world" ought not to be neglected. He urged that the annual expenditure on this road should be a minimum of £2,000. In fact it was £1,500.

Many roads required iron bridges and Skinner acted on his own initiative while on leave in the U.K. in 1856 in ordering a dozen. An increase in the strength of the Pioneer Divisions from 1,200 to 2,000 men enabled more attention to roads and in 1857 Governor Ward was able to tell the Legislative Council, "118 miles of road from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya are in perfect order" and that "large improvements have been effected upon the road between Badulla and Nuwara Eliya."

More and more money was being spent on roads. In 1856 the expenditure on the P.W.D. was £115,908, "or nearly one fourth of the revenue" as Governor Ward told the Legislative Council.

Governor Ward found that the state of most rest-houses was "disgraceful" and sanctioned extra expenditure. He also introduced a tariff of charges and stopped the practice of Government officials staying free of charge at resthouses—"Let everyone who uses a resthouse pay, from the Governor downwards, and no man who knows what it is to find shelter in the jungle, at fixed distances, for himself and his horse and servants, especially in rainy weather, will grudge a reasonable return, for so great a blessing", he decreed.

Governor Ward directed the Government Agents of the Central and Eastern Provinces to recommend a scale of charges and observed that, "it would only lead to disappointment to promise supplies of food,

other than of the commonest description, yet the rest-house keepers should be directed to make arrangements for providing rice and fowls, as these may be found in the poorest localities.

Expenditure on roads increased so steeply from £54,919 in 1850 to £207,203 in 1863 that in 1863 a Commission was appointed to inquire into expenditure on roads.

In 1863 the Island had a total of 2,096 miles of roads of which 564 miles were metalled, 456 were gravelled, and 1,076 were ungravelled.

Major Skinner who had arrived in Ceylon in 1819 retired amidst general encomiums in 1867. During his career Ceylon had been transferred from a military base into an emporium of commerce and the country's revenue had increased from £460,000 in 1821 to £1,000,000 in 1867.

Death took a heavy toll in the pioneering days. Skinner in his "Fifty Years in Ceylon" refers to dysentery as "the disease of the country". He describes how persons, suspect of having contracted cholera, were simply left to die. "Directly persons were attacked, they were banished from their houses. Sometimes a temporary shed was built for them, in which they were placed with a little cooked food, to take their chance of recovery. Many poor creatures thus deserted were attacked and torn to pieces before life was extinct. Some of them on being turned out of their homes, tried to crawl up the fort, in the hope of being buried when they died".

Skinner contracted "jungle fever" (probably malaria). When he contracted the disease himself the treatment was as follows. "My doctor bled me till there was scarcely a drop of blood left in my body: he then gave me 40 grains of calomel and in the evening as the fever was still raging he ordered me to be taken out to the yard

of my quarters, laid on a bare rattan couch and buckets of cold water thrown over me for about 20 minutes". To make matters worse he heard the melancholy call of an owl, named by the natives as the "Devil Bird" because its cry is a precursor of death. Skinner survived the water treatment and the devil bird!

Skinner had functioned as "Commissioner of Roads". His successor Mr. (later Sir) Guildford Lindsay Molesworth was designated Director of Public Works. Mr. Molesworth gratefully observed that he had to acknowledge "a legacy of much that is valuable and needs no change".

Skinner had been one of the earliest advocates of railways and he served in Ceylon to see the railway a reality; personally however he had the misfortune of losing his belongings when two railway trucks caught fire and a claim he made for compensation was rejected.

Meanwhile Mr. Molesworth and his immediate successors, Mr. James Robert Mosse and Mr. John Fleming Churchill used phrases like "exceedingly good", and "excellent condition" to describe the state of the main trunk roads with major links existing between the main towns.

THE BULLOCK CART ERA

The provision of roads saw the rise in importance of bullock carts as a mode of transport. Mr. Churchill in his official papers described how bullocks carts which weighed about 10 cwt. carried loads of three tons drawn by two bullocks. Single bulls pulled loads weighing about two tons.

"Bullock carts" wrote Mr. Churchill, "always travel in gangs, mostly at night, sometimes as many as twenty together in a line, following exactly the same track, the result of which is that a deep rut is soon formed in a road made of the very hardest and best metal".



The earliest aerated water bottle. It bears the marking "Clarke-Romer and Co., Ceylon, Soda Water." By courtesy of Mr. T. Ferdinands, who recovered it from a wrecked ship off the Little Basses.

Mr. MacBrides tenure of office (1885-1896) saw the beginning of the end of the era of horse and carriage. "It is said" he wrote, "that in the near future the clatter of the horse's hooves shall no longer be heard in the fashionable drives! and this is certainly an age in which it is not safe to question any forecast in mechanics. Nowhere in the world are there better roads than in Ceylon, where road maintenance has been reduced to a science".

In bureaucratic style he argued that if horseless carriages did materialise, they should come under the Public Works Department!

His observations were that "The introduction of horseless carriages into Ceylon for the conveyance of passengers and mails from Matale to Anuradhapura and Jaffna, Kurunegala to Puttalam, Colombo to Puttalam, Colombo to Ratnapura, Kurunegala to Trincomalee, Badulla to Batticaloa and Matara to Hambantota would be attended with immense convenience to the travelling public and residents at the outstations named. Moreover the ill treated coach horse, and rigid, badly built, uncomfortable coach would soon disappear, and be respectively seen and felt no more. Ceylon is not a horse breeding country and in consequence the natives know nothing of horses or how to treat them, hence a miserable life for the horse once he becomes the property of a coach contractor".

"If horseless carriages are introduced, they should, I am of opinion, be under the direction of the Public Works Department, the Factory Engineer being appointed Superintendent. At each important station a mechanic (blacksmith) trained at the Government Factory in the adjustment of repair of oil motors, should be attached to the Department of Works and

Government could, I think, without more risk than the railway service involves, convey the mails throughout the country and passengers as well"

In 1896 Mr. R. D. Ormsby was appointed acting Director and was the target of complaints by planters who were then taking to riding on bicycles instead of on horseback. Ruddy roads jolted the planters and frayed their tempers if not the seats of their pants. At a Planters' Association meeting in Kandy, a planter who spoke in defence of the P.W.D. roads was shouted down and told to come to the next meeting on a 'cycle.

The advent of motor transport saw officials debating whether the roads should be improved for the new mode of conveyance, or whether motor vehicles should be made to suit the state of the roads!

Mr. F. A. Cooper who was Director of the P.W.D. from 1897-1913 wrote in his administration report for 1909 that "it is quite unreasonable to raise a cry for better roads until vehicles have been made to suit the present roads as far as practicable. To make all the roads perfect would be an extremely expensive matter, while to design and build the vehicles with larger wheels is by no means so, and the difficulty is confined to a certain amount of trouble to the designer".

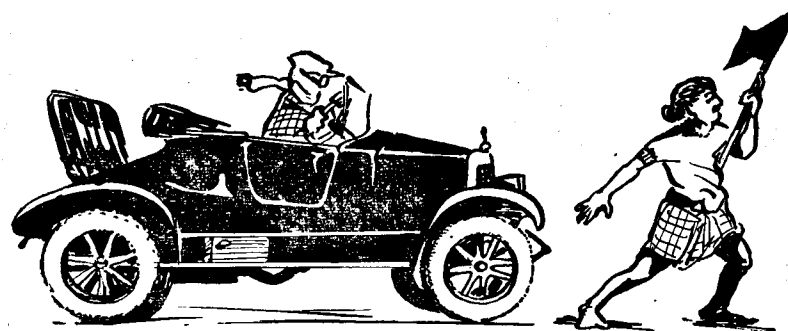
CARS AND CONSTERNATION

If the introduction of 'cycles in 1896 aroused a certain amount of cynical amusement, the advent of motor cycles and cars caused consternation.

Horses are temperamental animals and carriage travel was not without travail. Molesworth recalled how once a fire was started under a horse that refused to budge. But the carriage it was that caught fire.

A writer in the first issue of The Times of Ceylon Annual X'mas Number (1904) says that "to Mr. C. Harn of Messrs. Bohringer belongs the distinction of

importing the first motor cycle into Ceylon. His experience was not a happy one for he met the usual lot of pioneers. Lack of petrol was his grievance. None but Hansa steamers would then bring it out, but the law forbade it altogether. However the difficulty was overcome. The car was a harder matter. The petrol trouble favoured steam cars, and Mr. Money imported the first car, a locomobile. The inevitable litigant



claimed damages for a frightened horse and a pair of broken shafts. The car survived the law courts and attracted the interest of Sir Hector Macdonald (who) saw its military possibilities. Such a welcome led to the importation of two more locomobiles".

Then came the invasion which swept away red tape and assured a satisfactory supply of petrol. Car followed car and the expert advice was given by The Times of Ceylon. The writer goes on to list 21 cars but only two Ceylonese names, Mr. E. L. F. de Soysa and Mr. N. D. B. Silva figure among car owners.

By 1905 The Times of Ceylon X'mas Number commented on the formation of the Ceylon Automobile Club and the holding of reliability trials. Most significantly it added, "We have all ridden in a car at some time or another during the year".

To Mr. E. L. F. de Soysa and Mr. N. D. B. Silva goes the credit of being the first Ceylonese to own motor cars, of an even older vintage than the vehicles which now participate in the annual "Great Race", organised by The Times of Ceylon for "old crocks".

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mercantile Model to Follow

Seventy five years is just a span in the life of a nation, but a diamond jubilee is a landmark in the history of a firm.

The Ceylon Cold Stores which celebrates its diamond jubilee this year doffs a respectful hat to its seniors in service to the nation.

Throughout British rule, and in the post-Independence period the mercantile sector has constantly striven to improve its standards of efficiency, expertise, and enterprise.

The diamond jubilee year of the Ceylon Cold Stores has seen the mercantile sector move into the computer era.

Generations of Governors, officials, and statesmen have all paid tribute to the mercantile sector which can claim as Pericles, claimed in the fifth century B.C.—"We do not imitate—we are a model for others to follow."

The birth of the Ceylon mercantile community can be traced to the eighteen forties which saw the establishment of Mackwoods (1841), George Steuarts (1844), Cargills (1844), J. M. Robertson's (1845) and Brodie's (1846).

Mackwoods was founded by the brothers, William and Francis who were officers on ships that called at Galle. William set up business as a merchant on July 18th, 1841, and Francis joined him three years

later. When William retired to England in 1863 the firm was managing the affairs of 60 estates. His second wife, Hannah, lived to see the diamond jubilee of the firm her husband founded, and died in 1916. Generations of Mackwoods were associated with the firm which passed into Ceylonese hands in the post-Independence period.

Mackwoods are the second most senior firm in the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce which was started in 1839 by a group of individual businessmen.

The most senior firm in the Chamber is George Steuarts which joined the then infant Chamber in 1846. The founder of this firm James Steuart also had marine connexions being the owner of a ship, "The Mediterranean".

He first worked in Colombo as the Master Attendant, while his brother Joseph, was Master Attendant at Dover. Joseph, James, and a third brother George, began business together as a family firm in 1844. The firm joined the Chamber of Commerce in 1846. Mackwoods did so the following year.

Cargills began business in 1844 as Milne and Co. after its founder, Mr. William Milne. In 1850 the name was changed to Milne, Cargill and Co. and in 1860 when Mr. Milne retired the shop became known as Cargill and Co. after Mr. D. S. Cargill. In 1890 Cargills bought the goodwill and stocks of Maitland and Co. which owned "The Medical Hall" in the Fort which was the scene of many convivial parties. The Medical Hall's stocks of liquids also contained brews more potent than what the doctors of the time recommended.

J. M. Robertson and Co. was started in 1845 as a firm of estate agents and merchants. Initially it was controlled by the Baring Brothers but Mr. J. M. Robertson took over in 1859.

Brodie and Co. was started in 1846 as Brodie, Bogue and Co., and the firm's name was changed to Brodie and Co. in 1867.

The eighteen fifties saw a number of new firms entering the business scene. They were Delmege and Forsythe (1850), Volkarts (1851), Lee Hedges (1852), Walkers (1854), Walker and Greig (1854), the Mercantile Bank (1854), Carsons (1857) and Millers (1858).

The earliest history of Delmege and Forsythe goes back to the business begun in Galle by Mr. H. J. Reid. Among the original partners of the firm were Mr. E. T. Delmege, Mr. M. T. Delmege, and Mr. A. Forsythe. They carried on business as general merchants, in marine, fire and life insurance and as agents of the Brocklebank Line.

Volkarts was formed in Colombo in 1851 by Mr. C. A. Frei. Its earliest activities were the export of coffee, coconut oil, cinnamon and pearls. Mr. Salomon Volkart joined the firm as a partner in 1877.

The history of Lee Hedges and Co. goes back to 1852 when Mr. W. D. Lee began business as a merchant. In 1866 Mr. J. R. Hedges joined him. The firm was one of many that turned to tea after the coffee crash.

In 1912, Mr. A. S. Berwick, Mr. E. R. Waldock and Mr. C. S. Burns who constituted a break away group from Aitken Spence and Co., purchased a controlling interest in Lee Hedges and in 1917 the firm became a limited liability company. Mr. Berwick had a very long connection with the firm for he was a Director when the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce celebrated its centenary on March 25th, 1939.

Walkers have played a prominent part in the mercantile sector for no less than 14 Walkers figure in the pages of Sir Thomas Villiers "Mercantile Lore". Walker, Sons and Co. began business in Kandy, then

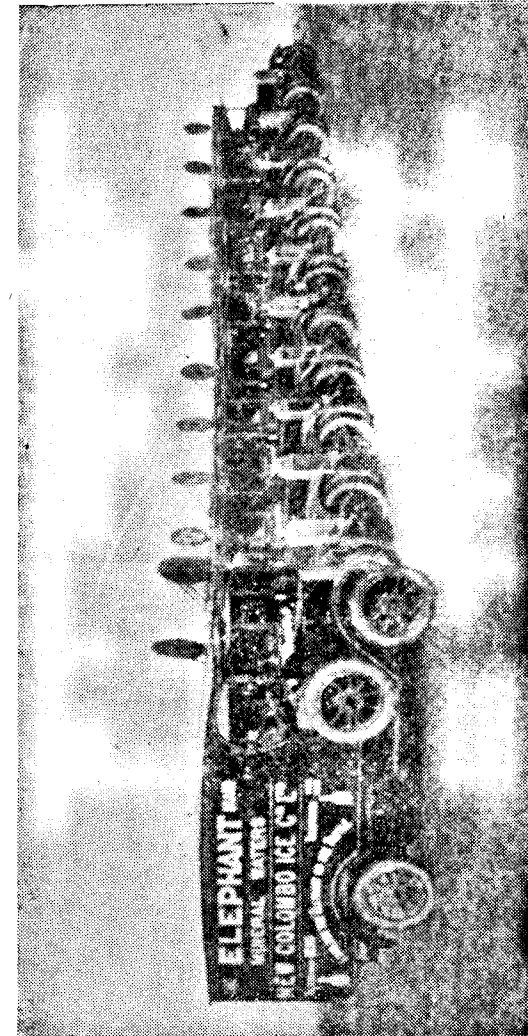
the heart of the coffee growing industry, at Trincomalee Street. Its founder was Mr. John Walker, a man who was a century ahead of his time in the treatment of his employees. He was the first Ceylonese employer to introduce a provident fund, profit sharing and medical assistance for his staff. He devised several improvements to the machinery used on coffee estates. The family tradition of Walkers in Walkers is maintained today by Mr. A. C. Walker, who is General Manager of the firm.

Walker and Greig which was also started in 1854 began as a branch of Walker Sons and Co. The firm had a full page advertisement when the Ceylon Observer celebrated its centenary on February 4th, 1934 which it devoted not to its own achievements but to landmarks in Ceylon's history since its inception. The events it listed were,

- 1854 First meeting of the Planters' Association.
- 1858 First telegraph, superseding carrier pigeons.
- 1863 First ice making machine installed in Colombo.
- 1864 First railway engine imported.
- 1867 First train to Kandy.
- 1869 Suez Canal opened.
- 1880 First telephone installed.
- 1883 First public tea sale.
- 1902 First motor car imported.

Someone on the staff of Walker and Greig Ltd. certainly had a flair for history.

The Mercantile Bank has the distinction of being the oldest bank in Ceylon having been established as the Chartered Mercantile Bank in 1854. Its earliest years were difficult years owing to competition from banks which have subsequently closed but it stood up to even "cut throat" measures by its rivals and later a policy of live and let live prevailed.



*The first vehicles that motor sped the wares of Elephant House displacing the era of bullock cart deliveries in 1925.
(Picture by Courtesy of Times of Ceylon library.)*

The Bank's first Accountant, Mr. H. D. Andree wrote an invaluable account of the earliest banks in Ceylon which appeared as a special chapter in the Fergusons Directory for a number of years.

In 1857 Mr. R. B. Carson and Mr. T. Wright began a firm known as Carson and Co. The firm secured several estate and shipping agencies and also had a large coal business for ship's bunkers. In the days when Ceylon had only one textile mill, Carsons did an extensive business in the import of textiles from Manchester.

The history of Millers begins with the establishment of a shop in Kandy by Mr. W. M. Miller in 1859. The firm's name underwent many changes with changes in partnership until it became Miller and Co. in 1862. The firm's original premises in Kandy were in Mollegoda House which was later reconverted as an extension to Queen's Hotel, Kandy.

Ceylonese and Indians were among those who initiated firms in the eighteen sixties. Don Carolis' was started in 1860 and Moosajees in 1861. E. John and Co. started in 1865 and in the following year Leechman's and Cargo Boat Despatch Company started business.

In 1860 Mudaliyar Hewavitarana started a furniture firm whose fame became international and won export orders from many countries. From Mudaliyar Hewavitarana, the firm was passed on to his son, Edmund, who with the assistance of his brothers, Simon, and Dr. C. A. Hewavitarana put the firm on a very sound footing.

The founder of Moosajee's was Mr. H. M. Moosajee, a Borah, whose stables did considerable business at a time when horse and carriage was the chief form of transport. The firm had 150 horses and 125 carriages. With the passing of the years and changes in the

economy Moosajee's have diversified their business and are today contributing to the Government's food drive in addition to their forage and other lines of business.

E. John and Co. was begun by Mr. E. John who came to Ceylon to start a branch for the Mercantile Bank in Kandy. He later held banking posts in India after which he returned to Ceylon and established himself as a bill broker in 1865.

Leechman and Co. was started in 1866 by Mr. G. B. Leechman (Snr). who was joined by his brothers, W. C. and C. A. The firm was among the first to introduce cinchona cultivation which the authorities at one stage thought could replace coffee. Leechman's later pioneered the introduction of tea, as well as rubber.

The Cargo Boat Despatch Co. which began in 1866 has the honour of being almost as old as the port of Colombo in a commercial sense. The firm which became a limited liability company in 1936 made a significant contribution to the war effort in both world wars.

The eighteen seventies saw the formation of a large number of companies. They were Aitken Spence (1870), the Colombo Gas and Water Co. (1872), Siedles (1872), Freudenburgs (1873), James Finlays (1873), Brown and Co. (1875), Caves (1876), Colombo Commercial (1876), the G. O. H. (1877), Bosanquet and Skrine (1877) and Julius and Creasy (1879) all of whom were active infants in the business world at the time.

The origin of Aitken Spence dates back to a branch in Galle known as Clark, Spence and Co. In 1871 a new partnership of Briton, Aitken and Co. was started by Mr. F. C. Briton, E. Aitken, T. Clarke and P. G. Spence. Aitken, Spence and Co. was formed in 1874 and became a limited liability company in 1932.

Gas light lit the world in the Victorian era and the Colombo Gas and Water Co. was started on August 10th, 1872. When electricity began to replace gas the Company judiciously acquired interests in electricity. The first institution to accept the firm's offer of electrical illumination was the Kandy Municipal Council and the firm did extensive electrical work too until the Kandy Council took over the distribution of electricity in 1922.

The firm of Siedles was started by Mr. Louis Siedle who was an authority on gems and other precious stones—a gift that has come down generations. When the Prince of Wales visited Ceylon he turned to Mr. Louis Siedle for expert advice.

Among the leading German colonists (who had a club of their own) in Colombo was Mr. Philipp Freudenburg. His original interest in Ceylon was in coffee but after the opening of the Suez Canal he foresaw the possibilities of lucrative trade between Ceylon and Europe. Apart from shipping interests he also invested in an oil mill and manure works. He was appointed German Consul in 1876. The Mills he owned in Hulftsdorp had been installed in 1835. In 1898 these mills were demolished by fire and new plant installed.

The Colombo branch of James Finlays was opened in 1873 under the name of Finlay, Muir and Co. This old Scottish firm can trace its genealogy back to Mr. James Finlay who was born in 1727 when maritime Ceylon was ruled by the Dutch. In 1949 the firm he founded celebrated its second centenary. Today the parent firm is 220 years old and like another illustrious Scotsman, Johnny Walker is still going strong.

Brown and Co. was established in 1875. It expanded its activities as estate and general agencies largely through being the agents for the eagerly sought

Ruston-Hornby engines. Brown's is also one of many highly respected British firms which passed into Ceylonese hands in the post-Independence period and with the change of ownership it saw a remarkable expansion as a "Group".

Caves was begun in 1876 by Mr. H. W. Cave who in a less materialistic age was also an importer of religious books. Mr. Cave, himself a deeply religious man, was Secretary to the Bishop of Colombo, Dr. Reginald Coppleston, and was also Editor of the Colombo Diocesan Gazette. Mr. Cave wrote himself into the history of Ceylon by writing books on Ceylon that are now collectors items.

The Colombo Commercial Company was founded in London by Mr. John Brown in 1876 to acquire coffee estates and to export their produce. After the coffee crash the firm switched to tea, and also to the manufacture of tea machinery for estates both in Ceylon and abroad. The firm expanded rapidly under Mr. Alfred Brown, a son of the founder, and the name of Colombo Commercial rings bells both in London and Colombo.

In 1875 when the Prince of Wales visited Colombo there was an acute shortage of hotel accommodation. William Howard Russel, of The Times (London) wrote a book on "The Prince of Wales tour" (London, 1877) in which he referred to this problem. The following year construction work began on what was known as the Grand Oriental Hotel. It is a curious fact that Russel in his book frequently referred to Ceylon as "Taprobane". Of their first day in Ceylon, Russel wrote "Taprobane was sulky and refused to put on smiles for her visitor", in reference to the weather.

No one then could have visualised a time when the hotel that was to arise out of the Royal Visit would pass into Ceylonese hands and become known as "The Hotel Taprobane".

Skrine and Co. was started by Mr. D. W. H. Skrine in 1877. Bosanquet and Co. was started by Mr. Richard Arthur Bosanquet, a coffee planter in 1881. The marriage of Bosanquet and Skrine took place as recently as in 1930. Bosanquet and Co. took over the business of George Wall and Co. Wall was perhaps the greatest Englishman who ever came to Ceylon in the British period.

Julius and Creasy are a legal and not a mercantile firm but the early history of the firm merits inclusion here as Julius and Creasy have always been the legal advisers of the Ceylon Cold Stores. There has always been a representative of this distinguished legal firm on the board of Directors of Cold Stores.

Mr. V. A. Julius, the founder of the firm was a man of many accomplishments. As a relaxation from legal problems Mr. Julius studied nature and wild life. He was an authority on the subject and was picked by Mr. Arnold Wright, Editor of "Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon" (London, 1907) to contribute the chapter on "Fauna".

In Colombo his main recreation was rowing. He was a member of the Ceylon team that defeated Calcutta in 1882 and won the Rowing Club Challenge Cup in 1881, 1882, and 1883.

Like partners in other professional firms, Mr. Julius shunned the limelight but since his firm played a dominant role in mercantile affairs in an advisory legal capacity, Sir Thomas Villiers painted a first hand picture of Mr. Julius and his associates in "Mercantile Lore".

Sir Thomas described Mr. Julius, Mr. J. H. de Saram and Mr. F. C. Loos as "the three great lawyers who received the affection and esteem of the whole mercantile community."

"Their little offices near the Law Courts, (and) the untidy office in Queen Street, with a large table covered with documents of all sorts and kinds. De Saram in his sandals, Julius with a pipe in his mouth, working long hours, but as each constituent came to see him, ready to pick up from the pile, the particular bundle which appertained to the estate which the client had come to see him about.....".

Mr. Julius died in the United Kingdom in December, 1929. "A Ceylon Causerie" of January 1930 in reporting the event recorded that "With the recent retirement of Mr. Sydney Julius, no one bearing the name of Julius is left in the firm".

Mr. Henry Creasy, the co-founder of the firm, was a member of the Legislative Council for a number of years. He was a son of Sir Edward Creasy, a former Chief Justice of Ceylon, who was the author of "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World".

Mr. and Mrs. Creasy had two sons. Frank Creasy was associated with Colombo Commercial for 32 years. During the first world war he served with the R.A.F. doing artillery spotting, while the other son, Col. R. H. Creasy, served in the Devonshire Regiment.

In the eighteen eighties Whittalls (1880), Forbes and Walker (1881), the National Bank (1882), E. B. Creasy (1882), the Colombo Apothecaries (1883), the Galle Face Hotel (1884), Bousteads (1886), the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mill (1888) and F. X. Pereira (1888) joined the charmed circle of commerce.

Although the history of Whittalls is assumed to have begun in 1880 the firm can trace its origin to that of Kier, Dundas and Co. which began in 1854. It became known as Whittall and Co. in 1880 when Mr. James Whittall, a British businessman came to Ceylon from

Cairo. His stay in Ceylon was short but he maintained his Ceylon connexions as President of the Ceylon Association in London from 1888 to 1893.

Forbes and Walker was established in 1881 by James Forbes and George Chapman Walker. Forbes had been a planter before he took to estate agency, while Chapman who had come to Ceylon with the military became a civilian and served with Armitage Brothers which was not a success.

The National Bank of India which had begun business in India in 1863 opened a branch in Colombo in 1882. It started with a modest office in Baillie Street. The office was on the ground floor while the Accountant, Mr. W. Touch lived on the first storey. The Bank's first Manager was Mr. C. E. Thomson.

E. B. Creasy was founded in 1882 by Mr. E. B. Creasy, and as in the case of many other firms, his son also E. B. Creasy later took over the firm's business. The second Mr. E. B. Creasy's son succeeded his father, and he too was known as E. B. Creasy.

The Colombo Apothecaries originated in Slave Island with Mr. T. N. E. D. Halloran who had earlier worked with Bisset and Co., a firm of chemists in Galle, as its first Manager. As the business prospered a new office and shop was acquired on its present site in the Fort. Various new lines of business were followed but the firm retained its original name of The Colombo Apothecaries.

In 1884 Major Lamb who was Secretary of the Colombo Club rented a bungalow from Mr. F. C. Loos, which was in close proximity to the Club but on the seaside. The new venture was a success and an adjoining bungalow occupied by Dr. Tothill was acquired for expansion.

Mr. Tom Walker, who was the first Managing Director of the New Colombo Ice Co., played a leading role in the establishment of the Galle Face Hotel and was its Managing Director for the first three decades of this century.

Boustead Brothers was formed in 1886 and played a leading role in transforming Ceylon from the gas light era to the age of electricity. The firm was initially an estate agency but Mr. E. G. Money who joined it in 1892 was an engineer who played a big part in the firm's interests in tramways and electricity. It received a contract to construct tramways from the Colombo Municipal Council in 1896. In 1900 the firm operated a ferry boat service across the Colombo Lake. This had earlier been run by F. E. Steuart and Co. Bousteads added three new boats to the service. The firm's large scale venture into electrical operations led to the formation of a separate company called The Colombo Electric Tramways and Lighting Company Ltd. This firm was responsible for the spread of electricity until the Government bought its electrical plant in 1927 for the sum of £ 245,000.

The Colombo Municipal Council bought the tramways from the parent firm in 1944 for Rs. 3,663,000. The Council replaced the trams with trolley buses but they were uneconomical and the service was stopped in 1965 when the Ceylon Transport Board took over transport in all parts of the city of Colombo.

The Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mill Ltd. was established in 1888 by Sir William Mitchell but the following year the business was bought by Mr. Ahmed-bhoy Habibhoy, a leading member of the Khoja community from Bombay. In its earliest years when the employment of children was a common practice boys were paid from 12½ cents to 25 cents a day while women were paid from 30 cents to 50 cents a day.

F. X. Pereira and Sons was started in 1888 by Mr. Francis X. Pereira who came to Ceylon from Tuticorin. He was a businessman unlike thousands of his compatriots who also came to Ceylon from Tuticorin to work on the tea plantations. The firm he established had the distinction of being appointed drapers to the Governor, Sir West Ridgeway, and Lady Ridgeway. When Mr. Pereira died in 1906 his five sons took over the family business.

In the early nineties just before the Ceylon Cold Stores, or The New Colombo Ice Company as it was then known was formed a number of firms just pipped the Cold Stores in the antiquarian stakes. They were Liptons (1890), Bois Brothers (1891), Hayleys (1892), Chartered Bank (1892), the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank (1892), Plates (1892), Gordon Frazers (1892) and Harrison and Crossfield (1892).

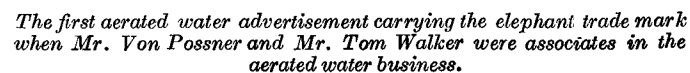
Tommy Lipton began life as a grocer's boy in Glasgow and blossomed in manhood into an empire builder. On his first visit to Ceylon he is reported to have said "We could grow tea here". That remark, or rather the resolve, was to have momentous consequences for Ceylon. Lipton made Ceylon and tea synonymous. Old British expatriates still affectionately refer to Ceylon as "Liptons tea garden". Lipton was pre-eminent among the men who laid the foundations of Ceylon's prosperity and the name of Lipton will forever remain a household name in Ceylon and the world.

Bois Brothers whose intimate association with the Ceylon Cold Stores is described elsewhere in this book was started by Mr. Percy Bois who began his Ceylon career with Alston, Scott and Co., in 1875. In 1882 his brother Sir Stanley Bois came to Ceylon and also joined Alston, Scott and Co. When this firm closed down in 1891 the two brothers started business as Bois Brothers and Co.

As tea estates increased in number and size, Bois Brothers became agents for a large number of tea estates. They secured similar agencies as the rubber industry expanded, and also became agents for the Ceylon Company of Pearl Fisheries Ltd. The brothers were joined by Mr. J. E. Alston, and on Mr. Alston's death in 1906, Mr. W. Sutherland Ross, a brother in law of Sir Stanley joined the firm.

In the days when Ceylon had no diplomatic service, Sir Stanley represented Ceylon as Commissioner-General at the St. Louis Exhibition in 1894. It was for his services in this connexion that he was knighted.

During his long and varied career, Sir Stanley had the honour of being returned uncontested to the Fort ward in the Colombo Municipal Council in 1910. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in its report for that year recorded the useful work being done for the capital by members with mercantile interests. "The identity of commercial and municipal interests is becoming more fully recognised" it reported.



Hayleys can trace its beginnings to Charles P. Hayley and Co., established in Galle in 1876. Hayley directed the firm's operations until his eldest son, Alec joined him in 1892. Another son, Steuart Pickering joined the firm in 1901.

The Chartered Bank was originally represented in Colombo by A. and B. Scott, and later by Alston Scott and Co. As the latter firm's fortunes declined a branch of the Bank was opened within the premises of Alston, Scott and Co., and this was later converted into a branch institution of the parent bank in 1892 with its own premises at Baillie Street. Mr. T. J. Anderson was the first Manager.

The Bank made steady progress as the national economy improved with the expansion of the tea industry and in 1927 the Chartered Bank bought 75 per cent of the shares of the P. and O. Banking Corporation and it purchased the remaining shares in 1938.

There has been a very happy and mutually profitable association between the Chartered Bank and the Ceylon Cold Stores. The changes in the financial structure of the Cold Stores, dealt with elsewhere in this book, have been carried out by the harmonious co-operation that has prevailed between the Cold Stores and the Chartered Bank.

The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank was originally represented in Ceylon by Delmege, Reid and Co. It opened its own branch in Colombo in July, 1892. Unlike many of the other banks in Colombo which have their headquarters in the U.K. the Hongkong Bank, as its name reveals has its headquarters in Hongkong.

Platés is today best known as a firm of photographers but earlier in the present century it also did

business in house decoration, furniture, and cinematography. It had a library in "Iceland House" while its printing and process department published "A Ceylon Causerie" and "Plate's Annual" which had an appreciative circle of readers both in Ceylon and abroad. In the nineteen twenties the firm printed about half a million picture post cards of Ceylon scenes annually.

Gordon Frazer was a tea merchant in Mincing Lane who came to Ceylon in 1891. He teamed with Mr. D. R. Buchanan and in 1892 they formed Buchanan, Frazer and Co. The association was short lived for in 1895 Mr. Frazer and Mr. G. E. Woodman formed Gordon Frazer and Co. Mr. Buchanan carried on his business alone until he emigrated to South Africa where he died in 1900. Mr. Gordon Frazer died in military service in Egypt in 1916.

Harrison and Crossfield was founded in London in 1844 but it spread to Ceylon only in 1892. Its founders were Mr. James Backhouse Crossfield, a son of the founder of the firm in London, and Mr. Arthur Lampard. The firm became a limited liability company in 1908.

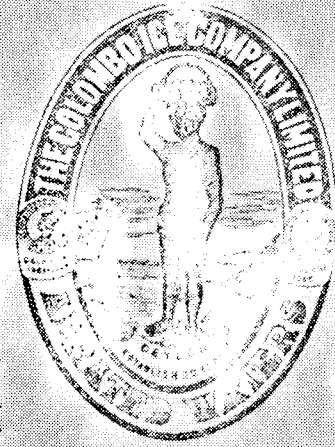
Although Ford, Rhodes, and Thornton, came into existence after the Ceylon Cold Stores, the beginnings of the firm which has acted as auditors for several decades to Cold Stores, makes an appropriate footnote to this survey.

Auditors are the back room boys of commerce and successive generations of partners have managed to keep out of books, handbooks, manuals, journals, and newspapers which provide so much of the raw material of history.

Mr. Donald Gunasekera, who was an employee of the firm between 1910 and 1915 recalled that Mr. F. P. Church, F.S.A.A. and M.A. began a firm of auditors

Colombo Ice Company, Limited.
ESTABLISHED 1866.
OFFICE & MANUFACTORY:
SLAVE ISLAND,
COLOMBO.

ICE
Retail price, delivered, 3 cents per lb. and we are prepared to supply a truck with ice at Rs. 50 per ton in any quantity delivered on board.



AIR-TESTED WATERS AND FRUIT DRINKS
At the following prices—
Soda Water at 75c per doz. each; Rt per doz. credit.
Fruit Water at 75c per doz. each; Rt per doz. credit.
Lemonade at 75c per doz. each; Rt per doz. credit.
Raspberry Syrup at 75c per doz. each; Rt per doz. credit.
Lemon Syrup at 75c per doz. each; Rt per doz. credit.

The Company's carts will call daily on anyone who desires it.

TERMS.
Cash, or one month's credit to regular Customers, and discount allowed to wholesale Customers, and to Hotels, Messes, Restaurants and large consumers.
The Company's Works are open day and night for the convenience of Customers.

R. CLIVE,
Engineer and Manager.

A boy carrying a basket of Soda—the first trade mark used by the Colombo Ice Company Ltd. established in 1866.

in 1908. He was joined by Mr. J. A. Sheppard, C.A. who had earlier been with the Ceylon Wharfage Co. Their office was in Caves which was then in Queen Street, near the Clock Tower.

Mr. Church amalgamated his business with Messrs. Ford, Rhodes, and Ford, a firm of Accountants and Auditors in London and the firm became known as Ford, Rhodes, and Church, the partners at that time were Mr. Church, Mr. H. D. Thornton, Mr. M. J. Hardin and Mr. P. H. Fraser, all Chartered Accountants.

The partnership underwent another change in 1913 when Mr. Church joined Whittall and Co., as a partner. Mr. Thornton then became the senior partner and remained in that position until he retired in 1939.

The other partners too had long associations with the firm. Mr. James Ford, who also found time to serve in the Legislative Council, qualified as an accountant in 1880. He was about 80 years old when he died in 1932.

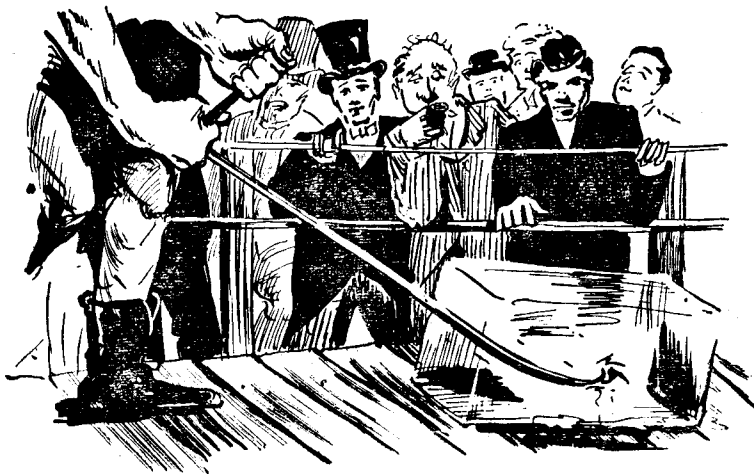
Mr. Arthur John Rhodes had a lot to do with the opening of associated firms in South Africa, Ceylon, India, and Australia.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mini Icebergs and Victoriana

The first imports of ice into Ceylon were in the nature of mini icebergs at a time when Coffee was King. The arrival of the ice ships bearing huge, white glittering chunks of ice created tremendous interest among the social elite of the day, who as seen earlier in this book, regarded the eating of ice as something noteworthy in their diaries and letters.

Sir Thomas Villiers in his work, "Mercantile Lore" relates how a group of Colombo residents met on June 26th, 1847 to discuss the import of ice, and the first shipment finally arrived from America on April 11th, 1848, the year in which Europe was convulsed in revolutions while Ceylon too had its own little "rebellion".



The ice was auctioned at the wharf and buyers of blocks folded them into thick blankets and sped home as fast as their horse carriages would take them. The purchase of ice by anyone was news that spread along the conversational grapevine and invitations to parties where iced drinks were served were the equivalent of this century's cocktail party circuit.

Before ice boxes, and later refrigerators, came into use, ice was stored in large holes dug in the ground. The last traces of such an ice pit vanished when "Bishop's House", Kollupitiya was demolished for the construction of a hotel. Ice was also used in the last century for cooling reception halls. This was done by placing large blocks of ice at corners of rooms, and other points, to produce a cooling effect.

Ceylon continued to import all its requirements of ice until 1863 when the first ice making machine was imported and local production began on a small scale.

The production of ice on a large commercial scale began with the formation of The Colombo Ice Company in 1866. Its premises in Glenie Street became known as the "Ice Kompaniya" a name that lingers over a century later—for many elders still refer to the Ceylon Cold Stores as the "Ice Kompaniya" and over the same period the entire district has officially become known as Kompaniveedia.

ON THE BANKS OF THE BEIRA

The location of the firm on the banks of the Beira was influenced by the fact that the Lake was then a vital link in communications in Colombo. The company whose initial capital was £ 1,600 had two steam engines of 8 and 9 horse power each, and a total of 22 employees. A German engineer, Arthur Von Possner, was the Manager of the firm.

Aerated water production in those days was a hazardous business. The operator had to hold each



bottle stuffed in a leather bag at the time of filling lest it exploded. The bottle used in those days had an oval bottom and could not be placed upright. Bottles were therefore packed horizontally in baskets of straw. Production of aerated waters in those days was confined

to soda and lemonade and output by present day standards was minimal.

The Ceylon products, however, then as now, were of international standards and The Colombo Ice Company participated in Fairs at Melbourne and Calcutta.

It had no competition until 1875 when The Ceylon General Ice Company started business. The first Chairman of this firm was Mr. F. Newman, who was also a director of the Colombo Shipping Association and Chairman of Messrs. Armitage Brothers. The other directors of the firm were Col. Jervis of the Royal Engineers, Mr. T. Helmer, Mr. J. Northmore and Mr. James Robertson.

The Colombo Ice Company met the challenge from the new firm by acquiring an additional steam engine of 12 horse power.

The Ceylon General Ice Company which originated as an ice mill also went into the production of aerated

waters. With the growing popularity of this drink the firm acquired more plant and employed more staff.

Shortly before, or in 1880 The Colombo Ice Company acquired the business and goodwill of Mr. J. Maitland, whose name appears in its list of directors for 1880.

A vivid picture of parties in Mr. Maitland's time was provided in "The Times of Ceylon" of December 16th, 1916 by "Old Timer." This writer was Mr. E. F. Perera, the father of the famous Mr. E. W. Perera. In 1916 Mr. Perera (Snr.) recalled a Christmas party in 1869 in which he wrote that "Mr. Maitland owned a Medical Hall which sold a variety of medicated wines. Brandy then was drunk with soda. Whisky was hardly known except perhaps to those hailing from the North of the Tweed. A few connoisseurs and Sybarites aspired on pay days to Maraschinos and Seltzer".

Another significant development in the industry was in 1882 when Mr. Von Possner left The Colombo Ice Company and teamed with Mr. Tom Walker.

Both Von Possner and Walker were however rugged individualists and their partnership lasted only one year. In 1883 Von Possner left to form his own company while Mr. Walker carried on his own business.

Von Possner concentrated on aerated waters and introduced the elephant trade mark which is today a household name. It is interesting to note here that the term mineral waters is now used liberally to cover aerated waters. Originally however mineral waters referred only to the naturally effervescent waters of the famous springs in Europe known as spas whose waters had a therapeutic value. It was the waters of these spas that were originally bottled and sold as mineral waters. Aerated waters owe their origin to attempts to imitate these natural waters. Over the

years the terms became almost synonymous although aerated waters are technically speaking carbonated beverages.

VON POSSNER

The excellence of the quality of Von Possner's aerated waters can be gauged from the fact that in an exhibition at Calcutta in 1883 one of his entries won a first class certificate, while another was awarded a silver medal.

A curious feature of the aerated water industry at that time was that the three leading and competing concerns were neighbours. Von Possner's premises were just off Glenie Street, while those of the Colombo Ice Co., and Mr. Tom Walkers company were both in Glenie Street.

While Mr. Walker's business also prospered that of the Colombo Ice Company however wilted under the strain of competition. It went into liquidation and was purchased by a syndicate headed by Mr. Walker. The new business that emerged was the New Colombo Ice Co. Ltd., which changed its name to the Ceylon Cold Stores in 1941. The birthday of the firm was May 8th, 1894. The firm's initial capital was Rs. 210,000 divided into 2,100 shares of Rs. 100 each. The conversion to shares of Rs. 10 each was effected at an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders on January 16th, 1926 when each of the company's 2,100 fully paid shares was converted into ten shares of Rs. 10 each.

While Mr. Tom Walker was Managing Director, the other directors were Messrs. W. W. Mitchell, W. Saunders, V. A. Julius, G. W. Suhren, and W. Hamilton. Mr. John Guthrie was first Secretary and Mr. T. R. Greenhorne was Manager.

Mr. Walker was a strong lover of Ceylon and when he died in 1930 his will specified the creation of a Tom

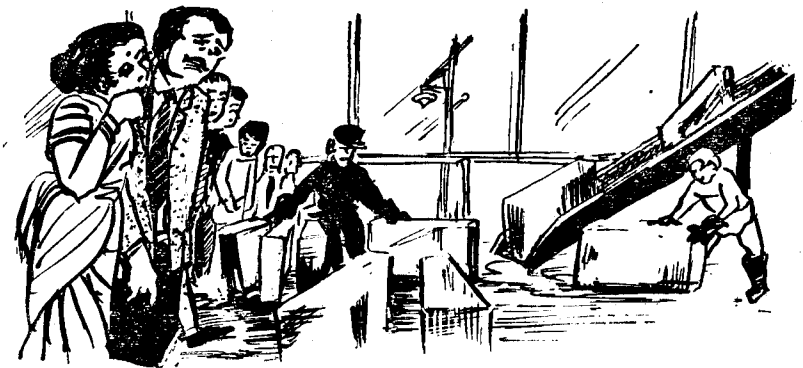


A. VON POSSNER

*Mr. Arthur Von Possner—pioneer of the aerated water industry in Ceylon.
(Reproduced from Sir Thomas Villier's "Mercantile Lore")*

Walker Trust, the funds of which were used to run "Petworth" a home for convalescents of British descent, in Nuwara Eliya.

The prospectus of The New Colombo Ice Company showed the progress that had been made in the Island in the manufacture of ice. The prospectus stated that the firm had a new ice machine which could produce six tons of ice daily, and that it was proposed to acquire another ice machine capable of producing four tons daily.



While ice and mineral waters were initially the main lines of business it was anticipated that the company would expand into the frozen food business too. The memorandum of association provided for the following wide scope of business.

"To carry on in the Island of Ceylon or elsewhere the business of ice and mineral water manufacturers, and dealers and merchants, in frozen meat and fish, butter, vegetables or other provisions, or goods, provision dealers, storekeepers and wine and spirit merchants, and also to import, buy, sell, retail, store, manufacture and deal in meat, fish, provisions, oilman-stores, general goods, wines, spirits and any other goods and articles which the Company may consider desirable

to import or deal in, and to enlarge and extend the business of the company when, and as, the Directors of the company may see fit, and to add to it any other departments of which the Directors may consider desirable”.

If the language used in the operation of The Joint Stock Companies Ordinance of 1851 was rather tortuous there was certainly no ambiguity in the declaration of intent by the founders of The New Colombo Ice Company which was registered as Joint Stock Company No. 68.

The honour of being the pioneers in the import of frozen food goes to the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company which was bought in 1934 by the New Colombo Ice Company. This firm had expanded rapidly under Mr. R. L. M. Brown, who was first Secretary and who bought up shares until he became Chairman. Mr. Brown's happiness in seeing his firm make the first imports of frozen meat from Australia in 1898 was shortlived for he unfortunately died the following year. His death necessitated the incorporation of his firm as a limited liability company.

It is of interest to note that Glenie Street the home of the aerated water industry was named after the Venerable James Moncrief Sutherland Glenie, whose name is commonly mis-spelled as Glennie.

GLENIE STREET

Glenie was the Archdeacon of Colombo but like most of the top men of his time had the coffee mania. He was reprimanded by the Secretary of State for the Colonies for making too numerous visits to his coffee plantations at Pussellawa. He retired in 1843 and devoted himself entirely to planting until his death in 1847 at the age of 64. He owned as much as 1,926 acres of land in N'Eliya alone.

The Times of Ceylon.
Largest Certified Net Daily Sale in Ceylon—Sixteen Pages

ICE LAND
COOLER SHOPPING
THE NEW SHOP
IS NOW OPEN
AN AMERICAN ICE CREAM SODA FOUNTAIN
Sparkling Iced Drink!
Delicious Ice Cream!
Fascinating Sundae!
SHOP & KEEP COOL **KEEP COOL & SHOP**

ICE LAND
TABLE DELICACIES
from all the Markets of the World can be obtained to adorn
YOUR TABLE
THE SCIENTIFICALLY EQUIPPED
COLD ROOMS

THE CEYLON ICE & COLD STORAGE CO., LTD.

SPECIALITIES:—
Fish Game Hams
Meat Cooked Meats Bacon
Poultry Pork-Pies Sausages
FRUIT.
Cheeses
Caviare
Pâté de Foie Gras

"Ice Land" at the peak of its popularity advertising across the full front page of "The Times of Ceylon".

His son, Samuel Owen Glenie, also became a padre, and also became an Archdeacon. The Colombo residence of the Glenie's now houses the printing works of the Colombo Apothecaries, where this jubilee volume was printed.

Glenie Street was then more of a residential street than a commercial area with a total of 89 houses. The landmarks in the area and its environs then were St. Andrew's Scotts Kirk, Christ Church, Galle Face and the Galle Face Hotel. The view from Slave Island as the area was then known across the Beira to the south and west was nearly uninterrupted to the sea horizon.

The Company's output in its earliest days was 700 bottles a day sold mostly on a wholesale basis to ships chandlers, hotels, clubs and shops.

At the turn of the century there were six firms in the ice and aerated water business. They were the New Colombo Ice Company, Von Possner and Co., the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co., J. P. Moreton and Co. of Keyzer Street, and J. W. Fernando and Kier, Rhys and Co. at Staple Street.

A portrait of Slave Island at the time was depicted by Mr. A. W. Andree in "The Times of Ceylon" on July 29, 1947 and is reproduced below as it reveals an almost other worldly charm.

"Approaching Slave Island from the Fort, along Parsons Road, anyone would be surprised to learn that none of the buildings on the left side was there 50 years ago. The waters of the Beira almost lapped against the garrison wall that still stands. The Regal Theatre and the National Restaurant were built on land wrested from the tortoise and the toad".

FERRY BOAT SERENADE

"From where Newnham's Playground is, a steam-boat service provided passengers quick transport to the other side of the Lake near the old Pettah Railway Station. As a boy I used to take this ferryboat to attend the choir practices at Holy Trinity Church, San Sabastian, having only to walk up the hill".

"Shorts Road was not even thought of then, but Kew Road which still exists but is hardly known bore all the traffic from the Fort to Union Place and vice versa".

"In Kew Cottage, lived the famous milliner and dressmaker, Mrs. Laura Andree, whose attractive daughter Dr. W. G. Sturgess married. The Police Station and Barracks were where they are now—this bit of land may aptly be called the police peninsula. Elephant House was not there, having been built more or less recently on reclaimed land. The water of the lake lapped almost against the Railway here, and the Slave Island Railway Station had only one platform, the other having been built on reclaimed land. Glenie Street also existed and its best known residents were the Misses Von Possner who were among the pioneers in the aerated water business".

"The two-storeyed De Soysa Buildings had just been built, and the ground floor consisted mostly of shops, eating houses and dispensaries, whose owners resided on the second floor. I well remember the Parsee physicians, Drs. Gandavia and Bannerjee, whose dispensaries displayed massive glass jars containing large live loathsome leeches which they hired out to relieve patients suffering from high blood pressure!"

"Lower down this block of buildings lived Dr. Valladares, another popular physician. Mr. Ralph Nell, a brother of Dr. Andreas Nell, also lived here.

He was well known as a repairer of precision instruments and his house was a medley of everything mechanical including clocks, watches, bicycles, compasses and chronometers. It was he who helped Mr. Andree, the photographer to give the first successful show of moving pictures to the Boer prisoners at Diyatalawa in 1901, in the distinguished presence of the Rt. Hon. Sir West Ridgeway, Governor of Ceylon. On that occasion Mr. Andree operated the machine which was the first cinematograph to be imported into Ceylon and Mr. Nell acted as breakdown mechanic".

"Where the large roundabout is today and where six roads converge stood a large banyan tree under whose spreading branches many a passing pedestrian took shelter in storm and many a Salvation Army preacher pleaded for simple souls. The Salvation Army headquarters was a building of much more modest proportions with the Biblical words: 'Behold I come quickly' writ large on one of its walls to arrest attention. At this junction stood a large house and garden which was known as Keegal's Yard. This was a carriage repair workshop owned and run by Mr. Keegal".

"Next to the Stag's Head Hotel was Mr. Andree's 'Hopetown' Studio, replete with the best photographic equipment from backgrounds and cameras to ponies and rickshaws, so that even a wet day, usually the bane of the outdoor camera man, had no fears for him. He had the appropriate settings inside his studio. It was here, under Mr. Andree that Lionel Wendt learnt his first lessons in photography".

"At the end of Lily Street, opposite the Studio, were two gateways, one leading to Mr. Wardrop's bungalow, belonging to the Commercial Company and the other to Dr. C. W. Van Geyzel's spacious house called the 'Grange' with its lovely lawn. Dr. Van Geyzel was reputed to be the best children's doctor in his day. He had a nice way with the little ones and,

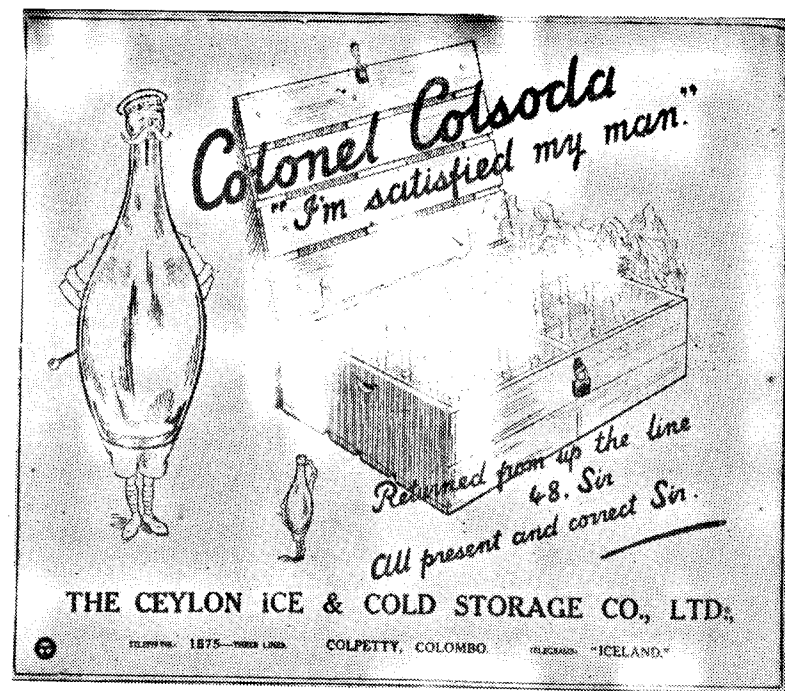
although bent, and bearded, children did not fear him because he usually opened his bag to remove even his stethoscope, only after he had first made friends with his young patients”.

“Where ‘Fountain House’ that favourite rendezvous of revellers is, was Fernando’s Aerated Water Manufactory; next to it was Pate’s, the famous farriers, and opposite was Staples House, which Brooke Bonds’ expanding enterprise embraced. Next to Staples House was ‘Hopewell’, where Mr. Edwin Joseph lived. At the Dawson Street junction, where the Colonial Motors Ltd. is today, was the big bungalow, ‘Broomsgrove’, where Dr. George Thomasz, the well-known surgeon stayed, and opposite it was the Roman Catholic Seminary with its grotto of the Virgin Mary”.

WHERE WENDT STAYED

“Next door on the same side was ‘Rokeby’, in which resided the Misses Keith, the well-known musicians and singers. A little further where the Silver Fawn Club is, lived Dentist Dr. Michael de Jong, who took out teeth in thousands. Higher up where Tuckers’ Motor Co. is, lived Mr. Justice H. L. Wendt. His bungalow was named ‘Fountain House’ which is more or less intact today but its lawn is no more. Opposite lived Crown Counsel, Mr. C. M. Fernando, whose house I remember was mobbed during the Attygalle murder case. Mr. C. M. Fernando who was chief Crown Prosecutor was the father of Mr. C. H. Z. Fernando, the well-known businessman. Mr. C. M. Fernando, was also a musician of no mean order”.

“Reclamation has robbed Lake Road of its former beauty. This was a red road that skirted a portion of the lake, with its fringe of bending bamboos, whose drooping branches kissed its drowsy waters. At the Hunupitiya end lived Mr. Jason de Mel father of Sir



*Alliteration in the art of advertising and very welcome news to the planting community.
(By courtesy of The Times of Ceylon Ltd.)*

Henry, with his plumbago works adjoining his house. The Buddhist Temple at Hunupitiya was more picturesque than it is today, with its saffron buildings and flamboyant colourfully reflected in the placid waters of the lake. Mr. Bertie Andree resided near the temple and used to enjoy an occasional outing on the lake going as far as the San Sebastian locks, and returning round about by boat".

"Vauxhall Street which also skirts a portion of the lake was equally picturesque. Here dhobies washed clothes, and carters their bulls. Mr. Willie de Kretser resided here in the old days and also Mr. Jim Mellonius. In Dawson Street lived Mr. A. L. Andree whose sportsman son, Donovan, was not yet born. The General's bungalow was in Lake Road, and General Laurence was the occupant then—that is how the road came to be "General's Lake Road".

"Malay Street was the narrowest and most crowded street in Slave Island, even 50 years ago. It was difficult for even a rickshaw puller to plough his way through the mass of humanity of this quarter. It was here that school boys, medical and law students and other revellers came in hundreds on big match and festive days to treat themselves and others to buriani rice, ba-bath, a favourite Malay dish, pittu and liver curry and stringhoppers and fowl curry! It was also here that the Malays and Moors celebrated their religious festivals with Hobson Jobson and right royal revelry, culminating in the 'Gingiwala' in which Muslim devotees walked with impunity over burning cinders of coal, to be cheered with clapping and cat-calls by a credulous crowd". What a portrait of times gone by!

1900 saw the death of Von Possner the father of the aerated water industry. He had a Ceylonese family link in that he married a Ceylonese—a Colombo Chetty, Maria Asserappa. She was a niece of John de Mello Asserappa and a cousin of Dr. D. V. Asserappa, who

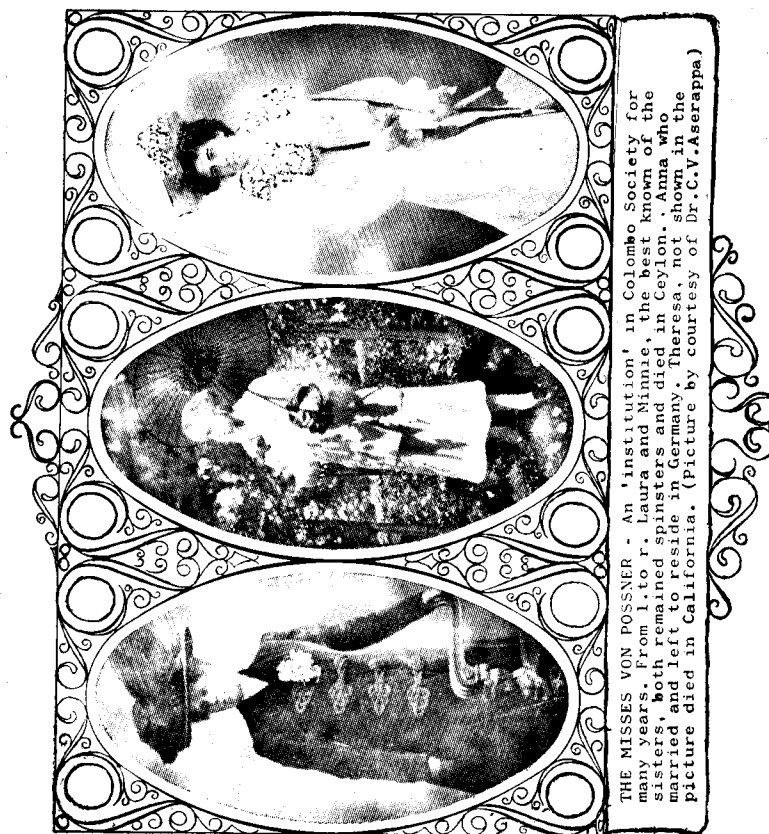
now lives in retirement at Maharagama. The Von Possners had four daughters, Laura, Wilhelmina, Anna and Theresa. Their house in Glenie Street occupied one and a half acres of land and was known as "Glenie House". Dr. Asserappa recalls that the verandah of this stately house was decorated with chinaware of which the Von Possners were assiduous collectors. In 1896 the family shifted to an equally spacious bungalow, "Fin Castle" at 213, Turret Road (now Dharmapala Mawatha) and situated at the Town Hall end.

YAKKO BOATTUWA GENENG

Mr. Von Possner lived an epicurean life in the days when there was no income tax. Dr. Asserappa remembers how Mr. Possner used to take a short ferry ride from "Glenie House" to the Galle Face Hotel across the lake, for a few drinks stronger than the aerated waters he manufactured. On one occasion instead of walking towards the ferry, he walked towards the sea and spotting a boat shouted "Yakko Boattuwa Geneng". Someone kindly put him on the correct track.

Mr. Von Possner had been associated with construction work on the Suez Canal before he came to Ceylon as an engineer in the Colombo Ice Company in 1866. His association with the aerated water business lasted till his death in 1900 at the age of 64. After his death, his wife took over the business which she continued to manage till 1919, when the business was sold to the New Colombo Ice Company. Thus the Von Possners, husband and wife were connected with the aerated water business from 1866 to 1919—a period of 53 years.

Mrs. Possner who had shifted back to Glenie House on her husband's death remained there till her death in the 1930's. "Glenie House" was purchased at an auction by Mr. C. de Mel in 1940 and was purchased



from him by the Ceylon Cold Stores in 1952. The house had unfortunately to be demolished for the expansion of the firm's aerated water business.

Two of the Possner girls, Laura and Wilhelmina, died as spinsters. Anna married a Mr. Wagner, of the then German firm of Freudenberg. Therese studied nursing at St. Bartholomeuw's Hospital in London. A patient, a Mr. Napton, married her and they settled in California. The last link between the Von Possners and Ceylon had snapped, but Arthur Von Possner's niche in Ceylon's social history is assured.

CHAPTER SIX

Arrividerci Twentieth Century

The beginning of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented rate of growth in the development of transport, the advent of the telephone, the first big strike (by carters in 1906) electricity replacing gas for lighting, and new dimensions in travel with the first arrival of an aeroplane in Ceylon in 1911.

1910 saw a big development in the Ceylon Cold Stores story when Bois Brothers and Co. were appointed agents of the firm and the rapidly growing New Colombo



Ice Company Ltd. as it was then known bought the business and plant of one of its rivals, the Galle Face Ice Co. from J. P. Morton for Rs. 45,000.

Sir Stanley Bois, Chairman of Bois Bros. became Chairman of the New Colombo Ice Company in 1910 and this initial appointment from the directorate of Bois Bros. to the directorate of the New Colombo Ice Co. was to become a standard practice in the future. From that point the Managing Director and Chairman of the New Colombo Ice Co. was to be from Bois Bros. a practice which continued up to 1963. Bois Bros. exercised a powerful influence on the company and all important directives were issued from Bois Bros. office in Queen Street in the Fort and not from Glenie Street. In 1964 the picture changed when Mr. S. D. Room, a senior executive of Cold Stores was appointed Managing Director. Thereafter following Mr. J. D. Rasiah's appointment as Managing Director, Bois Bros. (which had by then merged with Shaw Wallace & Hedges) ceased to be agents and acted as Secretaries only.

The next merger took place in 1919 by when Mr. G. C. Slater, who was to play a decisive role in the expansion of the company had become Managing Director, following the retirement of Sir Stanley Bois. Von Possners British Aerated and Mineral Water Co. which had been controlled by his widow after his death in 1900 was purchased by the New Colombo Ice Co. for Rs. 175,000 which was financed by debentures to the extent of Rs. 150,000.

The advantages of the purchase were threefold. First the acquisition of a site valued at Rs. 100,000 adjoining the company's premises and suitable for the erection of a new and up to date plant. Secondly good buildings which could be rented as stores until they were required by the company, and thirdly the acquisition of a good aerated water factory estimated to be of the value of Rs. 6,000 annually and the extinguishment of a certain amount of competition.

An era of improvements began in 1922 when the old rubber ringed bottles were replaced by crown corks. The Chairman in his address to shareholders said "the use of crown cork bottles for all types of aerated water is distinctly superior to that of the old rubber ringed Codd's bottles and I think it can only be a question of time in educating the Ceylon public up to the undoubted superior cleanliness of the crown cork bottle before all types of aerated water throughout the Island are sold in this type of bottle. Our policy of purchasing and manufacturing 'nothing but the best' is being carried out although I regret to report that the cost of first class materials as used by us in the manufacture of aerated waters is still expensive and during the year we have not been helped as formerly by a high rate of exchange".

A TALE OF TWO BOTTLES

At a time when there were no advertising agencies the New Colombo Ice Co. announced the changes from old to new in an intriguing advertisement captioned "A Tale of Two Bottles".

"Once upon a time" the advertisement ran, "there was a bottle of wierd and wonderful design. Now this bottle made of heavy coarse glass with kinks in the neck which gathered dirt as a non-rolling stone gathers moss. And it was sealed in a stopper with a rubber ring which gave unto the contents a flavour as of perished motor tyres. One day a wise man looked upon this bottle and straightaway had a brainwave. So he designed another bottle light in weight and shapely without. There were no crevices in this bottle and it was stopped with a nice clean cork.

"And on the bottle he placed an effigy of an elephant as a sign that it contained the right stuff. Then the customers rose and called his name blessed saying



The ball bottle or Codd's bottle with its marble and rubber ring stopper.

'By Gad, this is the goods'. Moral. Quench your thirst with Elephant brand mineral waters in the hygienic bottles".

The next year Mr. Slater proudly announced that "We have adapted a system of sterilising bottles, which although involving additional expenditure, is we think, a very sound innovation, and will be much appreciated by the customers of the company, who value the importance of absolute cleanliness in all matters connected with the supply of their food and drink". He said the increase in the sale of the company's products was due to public appreciation of the company's policy of using "only the purest and best ingredients".

At this meeting in 1923 Mr. Slater announced that the company intended to buy a new ice manufacturing plant driven by an internal combustion engine to replace the old ten ton steam driven plant.

The crown corks which the company introduced became popular very rapidly and by 1924 Mr. Slater observed that "there are now very few up to date hotels or clubs, where this type of bottle is not sold, and I am sure that if the general public gave a little more thought to the matter and made a comparison between the sanitary crown cork bottles and the extremely insanitary old type bottle they would always insist on being supplied with the modern bottle sealed with a crown cork".

In 1925 the problems of breakages and thefts in upcountry deliveries was solved by the introduction of locked and partitioned cases. In order to improve services to customers in Colombo too, a fleet of light weight motor vehicles was bought to replace the bullock carts used for delivery. Up to then the company owned its own bullocks and carts which were stabled

in the company's premises. Colonel Stanley Fernando, one of the company's senior customers recalls that the carter's service was efficient, if slow. "How regular



they were. There was no need to call at the company because the carters also took orders".

PROVIDENT FUND

1925 also saw a major step in the company's policy of fostering the welfare of its employees by the firm's donation of Rs. 5,000 to the staff provident fund. The Chairman told shareholders that "this new departure" had been taken in keeping with "the principle that the company should study the interests of its employees". He said the amount which the directors would donate would depend entirely on the prosperity of the company thus helping to make the interests of the shareholders and the employees coincident.

When the first motor vehicles were introduced the company owned 26 draught bulls. There was a gradual reduction in the number of carts and it was only in 1954 that the last carts and bullocks were sold. The earliest motor vans carried scales for weighing, just as the carters had done for variable orders of ice.

The same person who wrote the neatly worded tale of two bottles wrote an advertisement titled "A sad story of a bullock cart". Since the past was

past, and the change was for the better, the writer made the bullock cart era seem a little darker than it really had been.

"You know" the advertisement stated "all about the old fashioned system of delivery by bullock cart. Its speed used to make a tortoise appear as swift as a racehorse. If it was due at 11 a.m. the betting was fifty to one against its arrival by 2 p.m. And sometimes the goods had a mysterious habit of losing weight in transit. Our three times a day motor delivery service marks the end of that sad chapter. Our Manager is simply dying to put your name on the list.

Who wrote these gems of advertising in the days before streamlined and super-efficient advertising agencies came into force? There can be no certainty about this but a minute of a board meeting on April 5th, 1948 provides a clue. At that meeting Mr. B. W. J. Anthony, Chairman, told the directors that a former employee, Miss Glory Solomon had died in the U.K. He said "Miss Solomon was responsible for our advertising for many years and I am, I think, only stating the truth when I state that the excellent work put in by Glory Solomon for this company put us well in the forefront of business advertising in this country, in fact her work was in a class of its own". The directors stood in silence as a mark of respect to an employee who had shown the country that the firm's policy in everything it did was to be satisfied with nothing but the best.

Recalling the office accommodation in those days, Mr. C. O. de Alwis Jayasinghe, a retired executive recalls that "in 1925 the office was a small upstairs room in Glenie Street, large enough to accommodate about fifty people. The Manager, the Accountant, Chief Clerk and clerical staff were all housed in this room. There were a few more clerks in the stores and

factory. The block of land on which the present general office stands was overgrown with shrubs interspersed with patches of bananas which grew luxuriantly.



Business was confined largely to the sale of ice and aerated waters. The Managing Director was a very enthusiastic and responsible person. My first contribution to the provident fund was 66 cents a month”.

It was in the following year, 1926, that the company launched boldly into new business—the supply of cold storage produce.

COLD STORES AND COLD STORAGE

Mr. Slater told shareholders that the new venture apart from being profitable would also lead to an increase in the sale of aerated waters as “a large number of the public in order to save themselves trouble, obtain all their requirements of frozen meat, ice, and aerated waters from one firm, which business we have in the past been unable to obtain owing to our not being in a position to obtain cold storage space”.

Mr. Slater said it was not the company’s intention to start “cut throat” competition with the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company which had pioneered this business and that “every endeavour would be made to work harmoniously with that firm in their mutual interests”.

Unfortunately the conciliatory tone which Mr. Slater adopted was not appreciated by the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. The Chairman of that firm took up the position that if the New Colombo Ice Company participated in cold storage operation the directors of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company “would view it as an immediate and definite cancellation of the mutual understanding which had existed for many years and in self defence the directors of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company would forthwith initiate authority of ‘cut-throat’ competition”.

Mr. Slater replied that the C.I.C.S. Company had overlooked the main reason why the New Colombo Ice Company intended to enter into this line of business which was the likely entry of an outside (Australian) firm into the market. In reply to this communication the C.I.C.S. authorities said the entry of an outside firm was most unlikely. Despite the unfriendly and even hostile attitude of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. the directors of the New Colombo Ice Co. decided to go ahead with their plans which met with almost immediate success.

In order to finance the new venture the capital of the company was increased by the issue of new shares to the value of Rs. 390,000 which was over subscribed.

Mr. Slater’s optimism was justified. At the 1929 annual meeting he announced that “the recently constructed cold stores were opened on December 1st, 1928 and the results up to date are encouraging”.

He said that "as the first class quality of all goods stocked by the company and the excellent service which we endeavour to afford to all clients are more widely known and appreciated the volume of business of this department will increase in the same way that our universal Elephant Brand table waters have done. It is earnestly hoped that the general public will realise and appreciate the advantages that have accrued to it through the enterprise of the company in initiating a cold storage department which has resulted in a very marked improvement in service as compared with a few years ago".

Soon afterwards there was another issue of Rs. 250,000 in seven per cent preference shares which was utilised for the purchase of one of the company's small rivals, the Pure Ice and Aerated Water manufactory.



Shareholders of the New Colombo Ice Company were advised that the annual business of the firm which was being bought amounted to 400 tons of ice and 157,000 dozens of aerated waters. "The attractiveness of the proposition from the view of the New Colombo Ice Company lies in the fact that we anticipate that we can produce this additional output from our Elephant House factory with very little additional cost for plant, and by increasing our production of ice and aerated waters we can materially reduce our cost of production thereby increasing our profits" stated a letter to shareholders who welcomed the new purchase.

In 1928 the company had become selling agents for The Ceylon Fisheries Ltd., a company which owned two trawlers, the "Ceylon Bulbul" and the "Nautilus". They did regular fishing expeditions and their arrival in Colombo was always eagerly awaited.

BAKING AND CATERING

In the same year baking and catering operations commenced on a small scale in a room now occupied by the transport section. A Mrs. Leisser was engaged



to produce cakes and undertake small catering orders. The following year the company took over Caves tea rooms, a popular meeting place of the elite, and Miss Irene Hartopp was appointed Manageress of the tea rooms. The Sundae tea rooms as they were renamed became a popular rendezvous until it was closed in 1962. It was the popularity of the Sundae tea rooms that led to the establishment of the Fountain Cafe where Mr. E. M. de Kretser was the first Manager. The company's printing press had been accommodated on the premises but as the cafe grew in popularity the press was moved to its present site.

In 1928 the company had also taken over The Ceylon Creameries at No. 3, Castle Street, Borella from Major Elton Lane. This was initially negotiated on a monthly rental basis with the company paying Ceylon creameries Rs. 550 a month. Mr. Slater told shareholders that "the Ceylon Creameries manufacture milk, cream, and ice cream under the most hygienic conditions in a small factory built specially for the purpose. But I regret to report that up to date the Ceylon Creameries has not attained a dividend paying position though it operated at a profit last year. As the provision of pure, unadulterated milk is of such vital importance to the health of the inhabitants of the company, I feel that it is only a question of time before every householder will insist that his supply is beyond question in the matter of purity, in which desired event the sale of Ceylon Creameries Milk which is of absolute purity, excellent quality, and reasonable in price must largely increase". In this, as in other business forecasts Mr. Slater was prophetic. In 1932 the company bought Ceylon Creameries outright and the business was transferred to the Bridge Street premises where the bakery retail shop now stands. The milk delivery service which is now conducted by motor vans was then done by cycles which called twice daily.

THE BROKEN BOTTLE BOGEY
BEATEN AND THE BOX BURGLAR BAFFLED



A BOON TO PLANTERS
THE NEW COLOMBO ICE Co LTD
SUPPLY (FREE ON RAIL COLOMBO)
STRONG PADLOCKED PARTITIONED CASES
FOR THE SAFE CARRIAGE OF THEIR
FAMOUS
ELEPHANT
BRAND
AERATED WATERS



EVERY CASE
DOUBLE SEALED

Telephone Nos.
2100/2107

Telegram -
Ceylon Colombo

ICE - AERATED WATERS - BUTTER.

A peep at the piquant past—an advertisement that tells its story.

Ceylon Creameries sold a reconstituted milk and many older employees of the firm still refer to "C.C." milk. In 1932 fresh milk was introduced from the Wester Seaton dairy run by Mrs. R. S. Spencer Schrader in Negombo. This farm later provided cream, eggs, and poultry as well. A few years later with demand increasing supplies were obtained from the Kotmale Dairy as well. The Kotmale dairy was run by Mr. and Mrs. Hall of Nawalapitiya and this dairy until recently provided part of the company's requirements. The Kotmale Dairy was the first to install a pasteurising plant.

ICE PALAM

Ice cream in bulk form was produced in four gallon buckets. For retail purposes however there were several varieties in packets. In 1935 Spencer and Co. of Madras offered the "icefruite" (icepalam) agency on a royalty at 7s, 6d a 1,000. This was accepted and sales were made throughout Colombo on cycles. By 1935 the Creamery department, as in the case of the bakery, was moved to Iceland buildings which had better equipped and modern rooms and business was carried on in those premises until 1941.

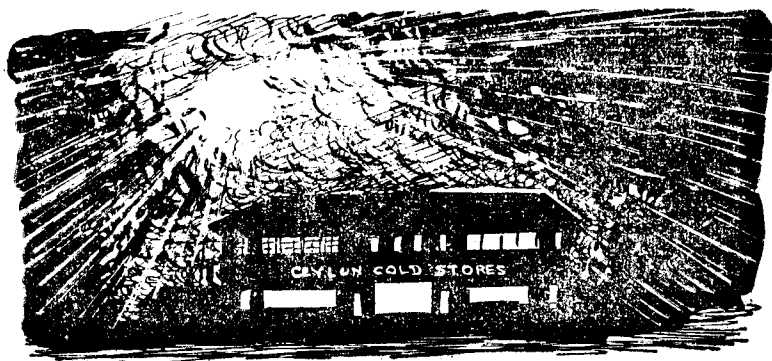
The depression of the early thirties inevitably had adverse effects on the firm. The dividend rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of 1930 dropped to 3 per cent in 1931. Mr. Slater told shareholders that "despite their restricted purchasing powers, our customers keenly appreciate the good services and low prices at which we offer our company's goods, especially that of our famous Elephant brand mineral waters, the quality of which will never be allowed to deteriorate, however depressed general trading conditions may be".

There was an intensification of the depression in 1931 and 1932. Mr. Slater observed that "the depressed market for the Island's two main products have

caused a lowering in the standard of living of all Ceylon's inhabitants which has been reflected in our business as suppliers of frozen products, mineral waters and ice... To a certain extent the goods sold by our organisation may be considered essentials of life in the East but the decline in the purchasing power of the public most decidedly affects our turnover and we can only be thankful that the decline recorded to date is no heavier". Mr. Slater emphasised that whatever economies were effected would not be at the "expense of quality and our good service to our customers which are always a paramount consideration in the firm's business".

LEAVING THE DEPRESSION BEHIND

As the business tide gradually turned for the better there was an improvement in dividends from 3 per cent in the early thirties to 4 per cent in 1934, and by



1934 Mr. Slater was able to talk of the depression in the past tense. He told shareholders that "with fair prices for our tea, and the recent marked improvement in rubber prices, we may look forward to the future with increased confidence but until the coconut industry really prospers the good trading conditions prevalent prior to the period of depression cannot be re-established".

While the country's finances were still not out of the economic woods the directors of the New Colombo Ice Co. (as Ceylon Cold Stores was still called) took the biggest step that had been taken up to then in the history of the firm. This was the purchase of the firm's biggest rival, the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company.

The first attempt had been made in 1922 but the deal then fell through as the directors of the C.I.C.S. Co. were then averse to selling.

Discussions continued on the possibility of some form of amalgamation or merger between the indefatigable Mr. Slater and Mr. Leslie de Saram on behalf of the C.I.C.S. Co.

These informal discussions later took specific form in communications between Bois Bros. on behalf of the New Colombo Ice Co. and Lewis Brown and Co. who were agents for the C.I.C.S. Co.

The main point of the negotiations was the fixation of the comparative value of the shares of the two concerns.

Bois Bros. took up the position that on the basis of the printed accounts of each company over the four preceding years a fair comparison of the share value would be one New Colombo Ice Co. share for every three of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. As a compromise however they were prepared to recommend to their shareholders the ratio of one to two.

As an alternative to amalgamation they suggested that the New Colombo Ice Co. was prepared to purchase the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. outright for Rs. 760,000 which it was pointed out would give the

shareholders of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. a return of Rs. 12 on every Rs. 10 share as against the current market value of Rs. 7.

PURCHASE OF A RIVAL

Intensive negotiations followed and it was finally decided that the New Colombo Ice Company would purchase the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. for Rs. 850,000. The ordinary capital of the New Colombo Ice was increased from Rs. 500,000 to Rs. 600,000 to partly finance the purchase. The balance capital came from reserves and an overdraft from the Chartered Bank secured by a mortgage of part of the Company's premises and plant.

Two years later an issue of ordinary shares was made available to shareholders at a premium of Rs. 2.50.

Mr. Slater had meanwhile allayed any fears that the purchase of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. Ltd., by the New Colombo Ice Co. would lead to an increase in prices. He assured shareholders and the general public that the New Colombo Ice Company had no intention of increasing prices. On the contrary it was hopeful that the utilisation of the plant of the C.I.C.S. would enable more economic production and a lowering of prices.

The sale took place on November 1st, 1934 and the New Colombo Ice Co. immediately set about overhauling the machinery and equipment that came with the acquisition, and in deploying to the best possible use the staff of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Company who also became available.

The story of the company in its formative period would be incomplete without a tribute to the Company's Factory Manager, Mr. T. R. Greenhorne who served the company from its inception, and died while on leave in the U.K. in 1925.



A step towards the present bottle—the Elephant brand bottle.

Mr. Greenhorne's extraordinary devotion to duty over a period of 30 years can be gauged from a report of an unveiling of his portrait, in the "Ceylon Observer" of July 2nd, 1925.

Mr. Slater disclosed that Mr. Greenhorne who had advised the company on the purchase of new plant for the company intended to test the machinery while in the U.K. to which he had proceeded on leave. While in the U.K. on leave he fell ill. Mr. Slater said that "in spite of being an extremely sick man he applied to his doctor for permission to leave the nursing home at which he was lying to proceed to Baxilby in Lincolnshire to witness the running test (of the plant he had ordered for the firm). His application was of course rightly refused by his Medical Attendant but it demonstrates the spirit of the devotion to duties which inspired his career".

It was on the foundation of the loyalty of men such as Mr. Greenhorne who put duty before their very lives that the Ceylon Cold Stores was established as an integral part of the national landscape.

A portrait of Mr. Greenhorne was unveiled and a red ensign covered the portrait in honour of Mr. Greenhorne's services to the Mercantile Marine.

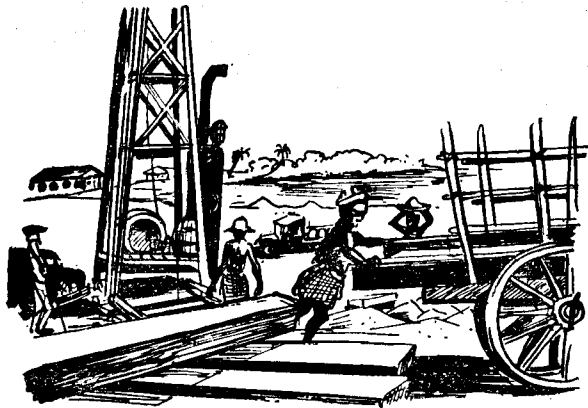
The firm showed its appreciation of Mr. Greenhorne's services in a more tangible manner by generous grants to his family.

Mr. Greenhorne was succeeded by Mr. C. M. Mathieson who also had an excellent record of service and retired in 1947.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Boom Begins at Forty

Nineteen thirty four, the year in which the New Colombo Ice Company bought its main rival, the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Ltd., was the fortieth anniversary of the firm and in the years that followed considerable progress was made in all its lines of business.



In 1935 the company installed its own Carbonic acid gas generating plant in order to cut down on heavy imports and this enabled the company to produce CO² as well as dry ice. Another major step taken in 1935 was when the firm started its own printing press.

The first Manager was Mr. F. J. Crake, now retired, who in a letter of reminiscences recalls that Mr. Slater found the company was incurring heavy expenditure on printing and stationery. It was therefore decided that the company should start its own printing press.

Mr. Crake was appointed the first Manager and machinery, types, and equipment were obtained from the U.K. and installed at "Iceland" building. The directors were invited to tour the Press and were greatly impressed by what they saw.

From year to year as the printing department progressed new machinery and types were ordered and in 1944 the press was shifted temporarily to Fountain Cafe and finally to Elephant House.

In the mid thirties Ceylon had recovered from the depression and in 1936 the firm recorded an almost one hundred per cent increase in profits from Rs. 75,494 in 1935 to Rs. 142,291. The increase was largely due to the acquisition of the business of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. and the company's own production of carbonic gas which had in the past been imported from India. The directors decided on a new issue of 60,000 shares of Rs. 10 each at a premium of Rs. 2.50 per share to expand business generally.

"Ice Firm does better" was the headline in "The Times of Ceylon" on the 1937 meeting of shareholders. The Chairman reported that the overdraft from the Chartered Bank to finance the purchase of the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. had been fully discharged thanks to excellent response to the new share issue. Profits went up to Rs. 196,054.

1936 saw the installation of the then latest type of automatic machinery for the production of aerated waters at very high speed. With war clouds looming ominously overhead and an increase in the British Navy personnel at Trincomalee, the company judiciously bought a block of land at Trincomalee for a branch there.

THE WAR YEARS

The maintenance of food and other vital supplies to Ceylon during the war years took a heavy toll of

lives and from the outset of the war the directors of the New Colombo Ice Co. made substantial donations to the Fleet Club, the B.S.S.I. the Gloucester Fund, The Times of Ceylon Send-a-Plane Fund, the War Service League, the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, the S.W.O.C. Entertainments Committee, and the Merchant Navy Comforts Service.

The minutes of Board meetings in the early months of the war show that many British executives of the firm were anxious to return to the U.K. to join the Armed Services. The Board not only allowed the release of such officers as soon as was practicable but paid their passage fares to the U.K. It is of interest to note that one of the firm's executives, Mr. M. J. Over was with the Allied troops that landed at Normandy on D Day.

Ceylonese employees who wished to evacuate their families from Colombo to outstations were given an advance of one month's pay to enable them to do so.

The war period saw an unprecedented demand for the Company's products, especially aerated waters. On one occasion the firm produced a record output of 83,328 bottles in a single working day which began at 7 a.m. on July 30th, 1940 and ended at 2 a.m. the following morning.

The opening of a branch at Trincomalee was lucrative to the company while also of benefit to the ever increasing number of military, naval, and civilian personnel stationed at the base.

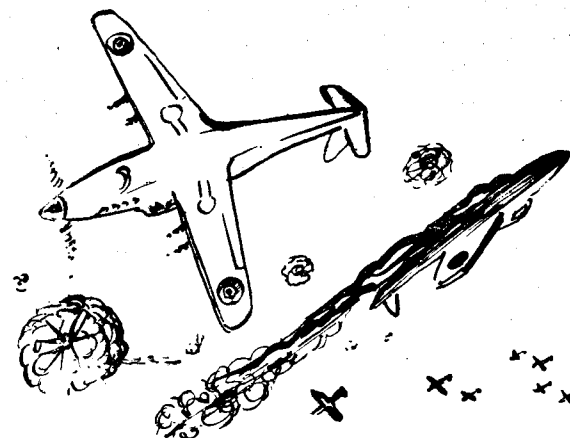
The Ceylon Cold Stores in association with Cargills, Millers, and Colombo Apothecaries introduced a form of voluntary rationing of butter, margarine, ham, and bacon imports so that more supplies would become available to the Armed Services. The gesture and the act were greatly appreciated by the military and civilian authorities.

THE WAR NEARS CEYLON

Some idea of the tension through which the directors of the firm worked in the period when the tide of war was flowing against the British in the East is reflected in the fact that Mr. Gordon Pots, Managing Director of the Singapore Cold Stores who stopped over in Ceylon en route to the U.K. after the fall of Singapore was invited to address the directors of the firm on the lessons of the fall of Singapore in February, 1942.

In the following month the Government in keeping with its policies of taking no chances declared the New Colombo Ice Co. an essential service. With the likelihood of a Japanese invasion a serious possibility, the European executives were naturally perturbed about the future of their dependants in the U.K. The directors made arrangements through the firm's bankers, the Chartered Bank for monthly payments of £ 16 to wives, £ 6 for a first child, and £ 4 for each additional child in the U.K. "in the event of enemy occupation of Ceylon".

The Japanese air raid on Easter Sunday, April 5th, 1942 inevitably created difficulties. Mr. Slater told the



directors that "practically all hawkers have bolted to India". It was under such fortuitous circumstances that the Managing Director was authorised to open a few branch establishments as an experiment. Three depots were opened at Kollupitiya, Bambalapitiya, and Wellawatte. Initially they were given a daily quota of 50 dozens of aerated waters which it was found sold out within a couple of hours. This war time practice of retail outlets was later to become a permanent peace time feature on a much wider scale.

The raid intensified the Government's fears of the possibility of a food shortage. The New Colombo Ice Co. gave the Food Controller an undertaking that it would at all times to every extent in its power, safeguard the interests of the Ceylon public as regards the supply of meat and butter, and that should at any time any difficulty be visualised in obtaining supplies, the Company will at once communicate with the Food Controller in order that he may be aware of the position and take any steps considered desirable".

A COLD STORES GUARANTEE

This was a sterling guarantee and the Food Controller was quick to express his appreciation. At a subsequent meeting between the Food Controller, the Service authorities, and the directors of the company, the Government agreed that refrigerated space for 250 tons of food would be provided if the company required such space to ensure adequate supplies for the Services and civilian population.

When petrol rationing was introduced the company introduced the system of "cash and carry" which proved to be popular and helped to conserve stocks of petrol.

At the annual general meeting in August, 1941 Mr. Slater expressed the views of the company's directors, and shareholders in a tribute to the British Royal



From left to right. Mr. R. A. Kendall (Engineer), Mr. G. T. Hale (Julius & Greasy), Mr. (later Sir) Oliver Goonetilleke (Civil Defence Commissioner), Mr. G. C. Slater (Managing Director), Mr. D. L. Harris (Chief Accountant) pictured in 1943 on the occasion of the opening of the Elephant House Staff Canteen.

Navy "through whose magnificent and ever unceasing guardianship of the seven seas, combined with the heroic service to the Merchant Navy, commerce with Great Britain, the Empire, and other countries has been made possible—on which this little colony depends for its very existence".

1941 also saw the historic change of name from the original New Colombo Ice Co. Ltd. to the Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd.

Mr. Slater told shareholders that "in view of the ever extending operations of the company, which now cover the import and wholesale and retail distribution of all kinds of meat, fish, poultry, etc. the manufacture and distribution of ice, mineral waters of every description, carbonic acid gas, ice cream, bread and cake of all kinds: the bottling and distribution of pure milk, and the business of restaurateurs and caterers, etc. the name (of the firm) was no longer an indication of its major activities". The shareholders unanimously agreed to the new name of The Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd.

The degree to which the Company co-operated in the war effort was outlined by the Chairman in a report in 1943. He said the tonnage of meat and butter handled since the war began had increased by seven hundred per cent and supplies of milk and bread had more than trebled. Despite enhanced landing costs the price of meat had been pegged at the 1941 level as part of the war effort.

Despite the exigencies of the war the Ceylon Cold Stores expanded and improved its services. Cold storage was considerably increased. Additional power units were introduced for continuous use both by night and day. The war years also saw the introduction of an entirely new bakery and creamery to meet ever increasing demands.

The war period also saw the opening of a canteen for clerks and workers on October 4th, 1943 by Sir (then Mr.) Oliver Goonetilleke, Civil Defence Commissioner. Sir Oliver knew the vital role the Ceylon Cold Stores had played in the war effort. His biographer, Sir Charles Jeffries, quotes Sir Oliver as describing Mr. Slater as "one of the most efficient sectional heads" (Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, a biography by Sir Charles Jeffries. Pall Mall Press. London, 1969).

Relations between the Civil Defence Commissioner and the Ceylon Cold Stores were always harmonious. Sir Oliver helped the Ceylon Cold Stores to help the nation in keeping its life lines going.

In July 1944 there was a shortage of beef. On representations by Mr. Slater, Sir Oliver sent the Secretary of State for Colonies a strongly worded telegram on the need for regular shipments of meat. The situation was remedied but for a period of four days Sir Oliver permitted the Ceylon Cold Stores to use part of the stocks of local beef held in cold storage until imported stocks were cleared at the port.

MEATLESS DAYS

How many people today recall the "meatless" days that were introduced during the war. They are enshrined for posterity in the minutes of a Board meeting on May 22nd, 1944. Let the minutes tell the tale "It was reported that as from May 15th, 1944, Mondays and Tuesdays of each week would be meatless days when no sales of frozen meat will take place. This step has been necessitated in order to conserve stocks of meat, and to meet the position which had arisen as a result of the introduction of four meatless days per week (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) in the public markets".



While the management of the company was doing its utmost to help the war effort the employees of the firm also made a patriotic gesture of self sacrifice. This was the practice of allowing a deduction of one day's pay each month which was devoted to war charities. By the end of 1945 about Rs. 500,000 had been raised this way.

By 1943 Mr. Slater had completed 26 years of service with the firm during which his drive and energy raised the firm to peak levels of efficiency.

THE SLATER ERA

When Mr. Slater took over the firm's affairs in 1917 it was operating at a loss. He re-organised the business and converted the loss of Rs. 12,300 in 1917 into a profit of Rs. 13,750 in 1918. The firm kept on prospering under his guidance and by 1943 its profit was in the region of one million rupees.

During the Slater regime the firm also bought up the business of many of its rivals— Von Possner's business in 1920; the Pure Ice Company in 1929; the Ceylon Creameries in 1933; the Ceylon Ice and Cold Storage Co. in 1934 and the Union Ice Co. in 1941. A branch in Kandy was opened in 1933, the Fountain Cafe was opened in 1934 when the Company also began its own printing Press, and a branch in Trincomalee was opened during the war.

In the Slater era production of mineral waters rose from 1,000 a day to an average of about 50,000 bottles a day in 1943. Daily output of ice rose in the same period from 18 tons to over 50 tons.

Mr. A. Duncum who was acting Chairman at the time Mr. Slater left recalled that "during the past 25 years the Company has paid to its shareholders dividends totalling 300 per cent, or an annual average of 12 per cent while Mr. Slater has only drawn a remuneration averaging Rs. 436 per mensem— less than the most junior assistant over the whole of that period, which I submit, I think you will agree, is quite inadequate for the services he has rendered, and it is for this reason that the other directors of the company are of the firm opinion that Mr. Slater has fully earned and is entitled to the grant that it is proposed should be paid to him".

As an expression of appreciation of his services the shareholders agreed that he should be made Overseas Agent of the company in London and they authorised the directors to pay him on retirement a sum sufficient to enable him to purchase an annuity of £ 500, such sum not to exceed £ 7,500.

When the question of his future was discussed Mr. Slater excused himself from the meeting. He returned after his matters had been discussed to a standing ovation.

Mr. Slater was one of those Britons who gave of his best to Ceylon and when the war broke out he worked frequently throughout the day and night in the interests of his firm, and in the larger interests of the war effort. Mrs. Slater, on her part, also took a keen interest in welfare facilities for the troops and was awarded an O.B.E. for her work in this connexion.

Among Mr. Slater's personal interests was the Ceylon Automobile Club of which he was President for sixteen years. The Association presented him with a fine Kandyan salver as a token of its appreciation of his work.

Mr. Slater's general interest in the welfare of the country is seen in the fact that he served as Chairman of the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board from 1934 until he left Ceylon in 1944. This board represents both tea growing and distribution interests and the fact that he was re-elected over a long period shows that he enjoyed the confidence of all sectors of the industry.

His unlimited loyalty to the Ceylon Cold Stores was proved when a leading firm offered him a directorship in 1941. Mr. Slater told his colleagues on the Board that he had declined the directorship because "of the possibility of interests clashing with Ceylon Cold Stores clientele".

Mr. Slater returned to the scene of his labours on April 26th, 1954. On a visit to Elephant House he told Mr. B. W. J. Anthony (then Chairman) that he was delighted with all he saw and was particularly gratified by the improvements that had taken place after his departure.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Peace—Progress—Prosperity

The end of the war in Europe and the East saw the company plan for peacetime consolidation and progress since increased production in the war years had taken a heavy toll of the machinery.



The war had however seen a vast increase in the clientele of the company. Three factors were largely responsible. Scarcities of food, especially beef, had made a number of Ceylonese open accounts with the Ceylon Cold Stores. British Services spending saw the

opening of cafes and hotels all over Colombo, Kandy, Trincomalee, and other towns where troops were stationed. These stimulated the demand for food and drink. The war period also saw a rise in incomes. Money was floating around like never before and in their new found affluence many people became accustomed to the high quality and purity of Ceylon Cold Stores products.

Mr. L. G. Byatt, the Chairman made a moderate assessment in his address to the shareholders in 1946

when he said "The transition period to normal conditions must inevitably register a large falling off in the total turnover but owing to the changing standards of living there is some reason to believe that the volume of business will remain what it was prior to the war.

During the war years a part of the profits amounting to one million rupees had been set aside for renewal of plant and machinery, and the services of an expert in refrigeration were obtained from the United Kingdom to advise on modernisation of machinery.

The wear and tear of the company's fleet of transport had necessitated a restriction on the opening of new accounts towards the end of the war but replacements after the war enabled the company to open new credit accounts.

The post-war period also saw the end of Government control as the sole importer of frozen meat and butter. By 1949 the reinsulation of the cold stores was completed to enable lower operating temperatures being maintained, while also effecting savings in operational costs. The following year the new creamery and the new mineral water factory were opened. Production reached a then new high on August 3rd, 1950 when with three lines in operation a record output of 1,471 dozens was produced in an eight hour working day, an average of 183 dozens per hour.

FOOD PURITY

The post-war period saw the enactment of The Pure Food and Drugs Act in 1949. The Ceylon Cold Stores which had voluntarily anticipated Government action welcomed the legislation.

A writer in "The Ceylon Fortnightly Review" (July 4th, 1952) referred to the high standards Ceylon Cold Stores had maintained in quality in an article

titled "A big business that has not lost the common touch".

There are frequent references in the minutes which show the scrupulous scrutiny of the companies products by directors themselves. On one occasion, Mr. B. W. J. Anthony, then Chairman, complained that a part of the fats had been separated out in the milk delivered at his bungalow. The minutes tersely recorded that "a thorough investigation was being made in that connexion".

At a meeting in February 1951 a director produced, or rather tabled, a loaf of bread with a hole in the bottom. The hole was found to be due to the fact that the loaf had been placed on top of a bottle. On this occasion the minutes record that "after a very full discussion the Chairman stated that he would immediately take up the matter with the General Manager with a view to improving the delivery of bread to bungalows".

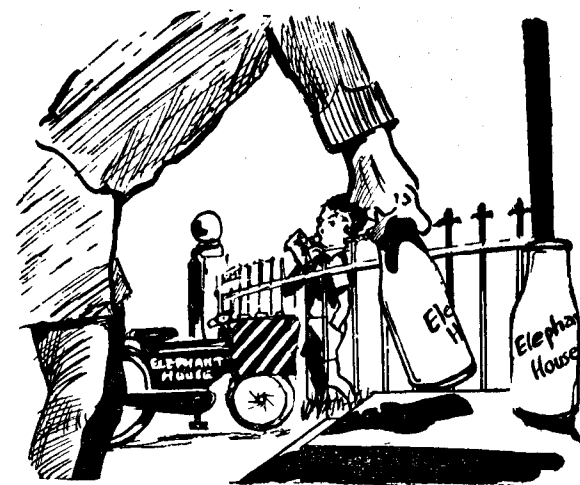
The Ceylon Cold Stores which was always ahead of legislation in ensuring the purity of its products was concerned with the possibility of bacteriological impurity in the water supplied to the firm. A number of experts such as Prof. Woolf, a retired City Microbiologist, and the Government Analyst were consulted. On the basis of these reports the directors decided they could take no chances and therefore decided to purchase sedimentation and filtration plants at the company's expense. A special meeting of the Board was held in March 1954 at which it was decided to purchase two water treatment units each with a capacity of 2,500 gallons an hour, at a cost of £ 5,800 each. This was an unexpected item of capital expenditure, but the Board, according to the official minutes "unanimously agreed that such expenditure was unavoidable if the company were to maintain their name as producers of first class mineral waters".

PURITY OF FOOD

After the equipment was installed Messrs. Permutit Ltd. who were asked to analyse the water after treatment reported that "the water is of excellent quality for the manufacture of mineral waters and compares favourably with those used in the U.K. and elsewhere. From our knowledge of the water purification plant installed, and the supervision thereof, the water should be entirely satisfactory at all times".

The civic authorities who were aware of the fact that a number of individuals were cashing in on the reputation of the Ceylon Cold Stores for the quality and purity of its products launched 22 prosecutions for illicit filling of Elephant brand bottles. Varying sentences from fines to a sentence of two months rigorous imprisonment were recorded in the cases that were launched in 1954.

Similar precautions were taken by the company to ensure the purity and excellence of the milk supplied by the company. Messrs. Bamber and Bruce testified



to the purity of the milk from Mahaberiatenne Farm while officials of the Department of Agriculture reported that the herd at Mahaberiatenne was free from tuberculin. In a letter to the General Manager of Ceylon Cold Stores, the General Manager of Anglo-Ceylon and General Estates Co. Ltd. stated that "As far as we can ascertain no such guarantee can be given for any other milk sold to the public in the Island".

The immediate post-Independence period had seen the establishment of a number of diplomatic missions which introduced a new feature in social life—the cocktail party circuit.

Many hosts naturally turned to the Ceylon Cold Stores for the catering at such parties. Many appreciative letters, and the occasional complaint, were all considered at Board meetings.

On one occasion a host at a dinner wrote that his guests were full of praise for the main meal but that the trifle was not too popular as it had been scented with rose water.

The catering room staff came out best in another complaint. This arose out of a wedding reception. Investigations revealed that the bride's parents had ordered the food to be served from a number of establishments and that the eats whose quality had been queried had not been supplied from Elephant House.

This incident led to the publication of a catering brochure which stated that the company could not ensure one hundred per cent satisfaction if it was entrusted with only a part of the catering order. The catering staff breathed a collective sigh of relief.

THE ROYAL TOUR

Relief turned to triumph when the Ceylon Cold Stores was informed that all the food supplied at

"Queen's House" during the Royal Visit in January 1954 was to be supplied by Elephant House. The entire staff of Ceylon Cold Stores from the humblest sweeper to the highest executives and the directors swung into action. Despite the Royal command the Cold Stores could not, and did not, forget its faithful customers and a notice was issued on arrangements for supplies during the period of the Royal Visit. Customers were advised to buy at least four days requirements before the Queen arrived as the traffic arrangements which the Police were enforcing could lead to a disruption of normal daily supplies. The Fountain Cafe and the Sundae tea rooms were kept open throughout to cater for the crowds that thronged Colombo during the Royal Visit.

The post-independence period also saw changes in the pattern of advertising, and the emergence of new media of advertising. In addition to the earlier conventional form of newspaper advertising the Ceylon Cold Stores advertised its products on buses, in the cinema, over the radio and by neon signs. The Zoo authorities co-operated by arranging for the recording of the tinkling of elephant bells which preceded spot announcements over the commercial service of Radio Ceylon.

In 1952 the firm's share capital was increased from Rs. 1,500,000 to Rs. 3,000,000 by the issue of 50,000 bonus shares and 100,000 ordinary shares at par which were heavily oversubscribed. The capital was utilised to acquire new machinery, erect garages and a bottle store, and extend the office premises. A mineral water factory was also built at Trincomalee.

1953 was the year of the hartal but employees of the company did not participate in it. The company made such rapid progress that by 1956 the issued ordinary capital was increased from Rs. 3,000,000 to Rs. 4,000,000.

In 1958 there was considerable industrial unrest in which the employees of the firm were also involved. It was also a year of communal unrest while the company's business at Trincomalee was affected by the closure of the British base there which was taken over by the Government together with the airbase at Katunayaka. These factors together with the increased wages made the cost of production prohibitive, resulting in the Company's decision to close the milk and bread baking sections which had become unremunerative. The Bread Baking Department only was closed on October 31st, 1959.



At an extraordinary meeting of shareholders on November 25th, 1959, the Chairman, Mr. B. W. J. Anthony, informed shareholders of discussions he had with the Prime Minister, on the closure of the bakery, and the Government's subsequent action in declaring the company "a controlled undertaking" under the provisions of the State of emergency then in force following the assassination of the late Premier, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. The shareholders unanimously passed a vote of confidence in the directors, and an industrial court upheld the firm's action, subsequently.

IMPORT CONTROL

In the early sixties the effects of import controls began to be felt in the company's plans for expansion. A project to purchase a fourth ice tank fell through owing to import controls and the firm's engineers had to effect improvements to the three existing ice tanks.

In 1962 a total ban was imposed on the import of frozen vegetables, coffee, fruits, etc. and the firm introduced local substitutes of the highest quality available. In 1963 Mr. Somers Hall told shareholders that while import licences for parts and plant had "ultimately been forthcoming, the administrative and procedural delays vis-a-vis the Government departments concerned, together with higher import costs have undoubtedly affected the sales expansion". The opening of new sales outlets in particular was held up by curbs on imports of conservators.

In 1964 the directors' borrowing powers which had been fixed at Rs. 1,000,000 in 1934 were increased to Rs. 2,500,000 to ensure that the company maintained adequate stocks owing to the vagaries of import control quotas and regulations. By 1964 only spares for plant and machinery were allowed, further restrictions were placed on the import of raw materials, and some items which had been under open general licence were brought under specific controls.

Meanwhile Mr. B. W. J. Anthony who had functioned as Chairman had retired on grounds of ill health in 1961. He had steered the company through very difficult times and the directors expressed their appreciation of his services by granting him a retiring gratuity of Rs. 25,000. Mr. Anthony, like Mr. Slater before him, had been the Chairman of the Automobile Association and played a leading role in collecting funds for the Association's imposing building just opposite the office of the Ceylon Cold Stores.

Mr. Anthony's successor was Mr. G. Somers Hall. When he took over the market value of Rs. 10 shares had fallen to Rs. 4.50 owing to unsettled business conditions. Within three years however the value of the shares doubled. "Results" said Mr. Hall "were becoming like our Christmas fare better than anticipated".

Mr. Hall was succeeded in 1964 by the present Chairman, Mr. Mallory Wijesinghe, the first Ceylonese Chairman of the firm. He has served successive terms as Chairman of the Employers' Federation, the Colombo Brokers' Association and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce where he is now Chairman for the sixth year. Mr. Wijesinghe was among the first Ceylonese directors of Ceylon Cold Stores along with Messrs. H. W. Peiris, S. N. B. Wijekoon, and S. J. Kadirgamar. The full Board in its jubilee year is M. E. Wijesinghe, B.Sc. (Eng.) (LOND.), A.M.I.C.E., A.R.C. (Chairman), H. Watson Peiris, O.B.E., S. J. Kadirgamar, Q.C., J. A. Naidoo, Solicitor, M. T. L. Fernando, A.C.A., J. D. Rasiah, B.Sc., A.C.A. (Managing Director) and M. C. B. de Silva.

In 1964 all the key personnel of the firm were Ceylonese. Mr. J. D. Rasiah, became General Manager in 1964, succeeding Mr. S. D. Room who retired in that year after twenty two years of service. In 1966, Mr. Douglas Liyanage became Deputy General Manager. In 1967 Mr. Rasiah became Managing Director.

The combination of managerial skills, the expertise of the firm's technical staff, the energy and drive of its sales division, and the devoted loyalty and co-operation of employees at every level saw the firm make rapid headway in the mid-sixties, with each year showing better results. In 1966 permission was obtained to import machinery to modernise the cold stores, and to instal a modern bottling line. In the same year the company bridged the generation gap by reviving the production of ice palam which many of today's adult customers remember as part of their childhood memories. In keeping with the faster tempo of life a quick snack service counter was opened at Fountain Cafe and it has proved extremely popular.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

The years immediately preceding the firm's diamond jubilee this year have been golden years with a glittering dividend record. Public confidence in the firm is reflected in the fact that the value of Rs. 10 shares is now Rs. 21.50 in the quotations in the share market. Earnings per ordinary share, after company taxation rose from 59 cents in 1960 to Rs. 3.95 in 1969.

Dividends declared per share increased from 50 cents in 1960 to Rs. 1.60 in 1969. In the same period net profit percentage on sales rose from 1.9 per cent, in 1960 to 5.6 per cent in 1969.

Business turnover tax was introduced in 1964 when the company paid Rs. 83,752. This figure has since risen to Rs. 1,545,638 in 1969. Tax on profits leaped from Rs. 287,500 in 1960 to an all time record of Rs. 2,045,000 in 1969. The profit after taxation which was Rs. 235,238 in 1960 was Rs. 1,556,678 in 1969. Profits before taxation rose in the same period from Rs. 522,828 to Rs. 3,601,678 in 1969. Profits in relation to total net assets employed in 1960 was 3.2 per cent. In 1969 this figure was 13.0 per cent.

Total net assets employed were Rs. 7,238,569 in 1960 and Rs. 12,172,698 in 1969. The turnover in this period of growth rose from Rs. 12,459,106 in 1960 to Rs. 28,095,414 in 1969.

It is interesting to note that in the financial year ending March 30th, 1969 the company had contributed a total of Rs. 3,565,638 to the national coffers by way of taxation.

While the welfare of employees has always been a foundation of the company's policy, recent years have witnessed considerable progress in the terms of employment and general welfare of employees. The company's canteen is one of the largest in Ceylon and wholesome

meals are provided free to workmen and clerical staff. Employees who serve on the canteen management committee co-operate with the management in maintaining a high quality menu of wholesome and hygienic meals. Newspapers and magazines are also provided at the canteen.

A welfare shop enables employees to make purchases of consumer goods at the wholesale prices at which the firm buys them. A doctor and dispenser are in attendance at the dispensary where medical attention and medicines and drugs are provided free of charge.

In addition to generous leave entitlements payments are made for any unavailed of sick and casual leave. Ex gratia payments are made to employees who fall ill for long periods.

An annual bonus, the provision of uniforms and protective clothing, the purchase of the company's products at concessionary prices, various recreational activities through the Sports Club, and regular picnics and pilgrimages are among the other facilities employees of the firm deservedly enjoy.

A new Collective Agreement with the Ceylon Mercantile Union (established 1928) in 1967 gave the clerical and other grades of staff higher salaries and generally better conditions of employment.

The Ceylon Cold Stores started a provident fund for its employees as far back as 1925. The initial donation by the firm in 1925 was Rs. 5,289.75 cents. Today the total assets of the Fund are in the region of Rs. 6,000,000.

The New Colombo Ice Co., started with a capital of Rs. 210,000. Today the Company's assets are worth over eight million rupees.

The greatest metamorphosis has been in the Company's clientele. Ceylon Cold Stores once served the

select few. Today the firm is proud of the fact that its clients are found in every town and every village for transport has paved the way to even the remotest rural areas. Today the greater portion of the Company's custom is in the rural areas.

The Company's green and white striped outlets dot every corner of the island, distributing sausages, bacon and other frozen foods, ice cream, cordials, pickles and chutneys, cakes and pastries and a host of other food products—besides the ever popular Elephant Brand soft drinks.

UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY

Providing the country's requirements in refrigeration is still a vital part of its service. Huge trucks roar over our mountains and plains transporting ice to all parts of the country. No gathering is too small or too big for the provision of the good things that come from Elephant House.

The original Glenie Street premises have swollen to well over 9 acres housing the Soft Drinks Factory, the Ice Plant, storehouses for refrigeration, an Ice Cream Factory, the Creamery, the Carbon Dioxide Plant, the Bakery, the Sales Rooms and Offices—which employ over one thousand four hundred people, including labour, clerks, staff officers and executives. Apart from this it provides indirect employment to hundreds of agents and dealers throughout the island and also to the suppliers of its locally produced raw materials. The Fountain Cafe is a very popular part of the Company and its two branches in Kandy and Trincomalee are vital extensions to the Company's islandwide service.

There are at present 14 varieties of much sought after Elephant Brand Soft Drinks on the market—the two most recently introduced being Cream Soda

and Sugar-free Slim Lime. It is estimated that at least two bottles are consumed every second of every day. Nearly 11 million bottles are constantly in circulation in this little Island of 12 million people. A new production line capable of sending out two bottles per second was installed in 1968. Yet, another production line of the same capacity was being installed at the end of 1969.

The Ice plant has a production capacity of 64 tons every 24 hours and is open throughout. The Carbon Dioxide Plant produces 3,700 pounds of gas, again working throughout 24 hours.

The Cold Store has storage space for 2,000 tons in three floors. All items requiring refrigeration by various industries are stored here. The Creamery despatches hundreds of gallons of milk to customers each day and refrigerated vans convey ice cream to all parts of the Island. Elephant House cakes are sold in retail shops everywhere.



In its Diamond jubilee year the company has reason to be proud of the fact that it now deals overwhelmingly in locally produced fare, while its clientele has undergone a transformation from the strictly limited and select customers of 1894, to a situation where every citizen and resident in the Island is a potential customer.

The firm's Diamond jubilee year has seen man, mere mortal man, land on the Moon. It would be rash to predict the state of the Universe in 1994 but the Ceylon Cold Stores looks forward to its Centenary year with the exuberant confidence that 75 years of successful business exudes.

CHAPTER NINE

To Self-sufficiency in Food

Nineteen sixty five saw the birth of an idea—the establishment of an animal husbandry project. Initially there was the search for a site. At that time Pallekelle estate which was up for sale was under the eyes of the Government for acquisition for various purposes. The Victoria division however had not been brought within the scope of acquisition plans and it was this division that the Ceylon Cold Stores bought for its animal husbandry plans.

Victoria Division is approximately 580 acres in extent. It had come into existence as an independent property when it was bought by Sir J. Cheape and Mr. A. Leburn in 1859. This was then one of the ten coffee estates in the Kandy district and was only 150 acres in extent. Those were the days when rugged British planters who could just about get the spelling of Kandy correct, christened other up-country towns as Pussilawa, Matelle, Kotmalie, Happootelle, Hewehette, etc. Meanwhile the Victoria division kept changing hands and growing in size.

In 1904 it was purchased by the Rajawella Produce Company and was incorporated as a division of Pallekelle Estate. Victoria Division was renamed Victoria estate after the Ceylon Cold Stores acquired it. The name derives from the picturesque Victoria Falls which flow into the Mahaveli river a quarter mile below the boundary of the estate. The purchase of Victoria estate was not only a major break-through for the Ceylon Cold Stores. The purchase also coincided harmoniously with the country's own drive toward self-sufficiency in food.

“Embarking on new projects of this nature even to the extent of diversifying the Company's activities is essential not only to serve the national interest but also to ensure that the Company's activities and development remain independent of the vagaries of suppliers both local and foreign” said Mr. Mallory Wijesinghe at the 1967 shareholders meeting.

He went on to say that “What was a six hundred acre cocoa cum coconut estate a year ago, is now the largest livestock farm run by the private sector in the country. The farm produces the bulk of the company's requirements of poultry and will produce by the end of 1970 all the high quality pig meat the company will require for its meat processing industry. A very large sheep herd has been established on the farm and will soon produce choice lamb and mutton comparable to the best imported meat. Production of meat is necessarily a long term project and a foundation stock is being built up gradually”.

THE AROMA OF SUCCESS

There is an aroma of success in the working of the Victoria estate. Both facts and figures tell the story. The initial plans were for the construction of a piggery and broiler farm. Piglings were to be bought from Government farms, and day old chicks from private breeders. These were to be fattened at Victoria to meet a part of the company's requirements. The piggery was to handle 50 piglings a month and the broiler farm 500 chicks each week. A serious shortage of meat in the country owing to rising prices of animal food, and the banning of meat imports at the end of 1967 called for a revision of plans. The pig operation was expanded to develop a breeding herd that would produce 500 piglings a month. High quality breeding stock was imported from Australia in 1968. By the

end of 1969 the estate was supplying the frozen produce department with 250 fattened pigs for slaughter each month.

Poultry development was escalated in a similar successful manner. By March 1968 the broiler farm was producing 2,000 broilers a week using bought-in day old chicks. By March 1969 the farm had its own poultry breeding stock imported from Canada, and its own hatchery. The breeding operation was producing 5,000 day old chicks every week. The broiler unit half a mile away was sending out 5,000 fattened broilers each week, produced, packed and hard frozen at the farm itself.

The sheep operation at Victoria commenced with the purchase of a stock of Jaffna ewes in late 1967. These nondescript animals hardly distinguishable from goats are being bred with imported rams to produce a first cross which carries much of the characteristics of the imported animal in appearance, size, and growth rate. By the end of 1969 the sheep herd had grown to over 1,000, and the woolly cross breeds outnumber the original stock that came from Jaffna.

Other activities of the farm include the rearing of turkeys and ducks. The demand for the X'mas turkey is still high although the price of this meat is also traditionally high. As the company now imports day old Turkey poults for fattening, it has been able to market the Victoria broiler turkey at a price lower than that at which imported turkey was sold. It has been able to effect a substantial saving in foreign exchange in the process. The farm now carries a stock of turkey breeders which will produce commercial poults for the fattening operation thereby effecting an even greater saving in foreign exchange.

Victoria estate with its extensive acres of coconut, cocoa, and its intensively developed livestock units

presents an ideal combination of crop and stock farming. Decomposed litter from the poultry units and the effluence from the pig units help to manure the coconut fields, while extensively cultivated pasture under coconut palms provide the ideal grazing for sheep.

EXPANSION AND PROGRESS

The road to Victoria estate ran for three miles through the Mahaberiatenne estate owned by the Anglo Ceylon and General Estates Company. From Mahaberiatenne came the high grade Tuberculin tested milk which was purchased exclusively by Elephant House for bottling and distribution. Unlike Victoria with its steep terrain and relatively small extent, Mahaberiatenne's landscape is of gently undulating land. The flat stretches of land and the lush pastures must have evoked the envy of Elephant House men who drove past on their way to Victoria. Mahaberiatenne was farm land and it was all of 1,260 acres in extent. It was the only direction in which Victoria could expand and expansion has been a corner stone of Ceylon Cold Stores policy.

In only its third year of existence Victoria was already too small to contain the company's ambitious schemes. The purchase of Mahaberiatenne was inevitable and so on November 1st, 1969 the company took possession of this property which was amalgamated with Victoria estate to form Victoria group. The announcement of this acquisition was a pleasant bonus to shareholders at the company's annual meeting on December 7th, 1969.

With Mahaberiatenne the company acquired not only control of its valued T.T. milk supply but also the challenge and the potential to expand this supply.

ACCENT ON RESEARCH

In keeping with technological trends the company has established a research laboratory where constant endeavours are made to find local substitutes for imported essences and thus conserve foreign exchange. There are plans to reverse history by exporting Elephant House cordials, canned pineapples, and passion fruit juice on a large scale.

Jams, pickles, and chutneys with the distinctive Elephant House flavour are now produced to meet the local demand. Here too exports will materialise in the near future as trade inquiries have already been received from several countries.

The Ceylon Cold Stores in its Diamond jubilee year is improving not only the livestock of this country, and raising the living standards of its people, but is also changing the landscape of this lovely Island for the better.

CHAPTER TEN

Ceylon Since Independence

The nineteenth century produced Englishmen like Alexander Johnstone, William Digby, and George Wall who were sympathetic to the demand by Ceylonese for self rule. It also produced Englishmen like the businessman Mr. G. Acland who tried to be a dictator (in the time of Governor Torrington) and Mr. R. B. Tytler, a Chairman of the Planters Association who regretted that he was not "absolute ruler" (when Sir James Longden was Governor).

Throughout the 152 years of British rule the planters genuinely felt that they knew what was best for the country. Writing in the post-Independence period in "Ceylon in my time, 1889-1949" (Colombo Apothecaries 1951) Col. T. Y. Wright, described the Planters Association as by far the best organisation in the Island. He said it had "done more for the country than any other (body) not excepting the old State Council, or the Legislative Council. If only its opinions had been carried out by the Government, the country would have been in a far better position than it is at present".

The English educated Ceylonese however, many of whom went to England for their higher education, felt confident about their ability to govern themselves.

There were moments of high drama along the path to Independence. There was that electrifying incident in 1865 when the unofficals threw out the last century's equivalent of the Speech from the Throne on the question of the military contribution. The acting

Governor, General O'Brien who was waiting at Queens House to be summoned to the Council to accept the address of thanks nearly had apoplexy when he heard of the voting.

And there was that superb moment of national unity when all communities listened in pin drop silence as Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam outlined "Our Political Needs" on April 2nd, 1917 at a meeting of the Ceylon National Association.

The nineteen thirties saw the birth of political parties. Mr. Don Stephen Senanayake grew in stature as a statesman and had astute advisers in Sir (then Mr.) Oliver Goonetilleke and the late Mr. D. R. Wijewardene.

On February 4, 1948 the day for which generations of Ceylonese had toiled dawned bright, and Ceylon was free.

The deaths of two Prime Ministers and their succession by a son and a widow have dominated Ceylon's politics since Independence.

Two parties, the United National Party and the Freedom Party have ruled throughout except for the brief caretaker Government of Mr. W. Dahanayake.

The democratic process has worked more smoothly in Ceylon than in most countries and has evoked world-wide admiration.

DEMOCRACY IN TOP GEAR

On April 15th, 1965, after the March 1965 elections the "Indian and Foreign Review" observed that "Ceylon has the exclusive distinction of being the only country in Asia so far, where the ruling party, honouring the verdict of the electorates, has handed over power to another political party through a peaceful and democratic process. The people of Ceylon should be congratulated for their political maturity and for their faith in the supremacy of democratic values".

Its architects were Sir Percy Spender (Australia) and Mr. J. R. Jayewardene. The late Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, the late Mr. Ernest Bevin, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Lester Pearson, the late Mr. Nehru, the Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, the late Mr. E. W. Doidge, and the late Mr. Ghulam Mohammed were the statesmen, who formulated the Colombo Plan. Between 1951 and 1968, 2,933 Ceylonese received training abroad in 12 countries under the Plan while Ceylon also enjoyed the services of a total of 598 experts from numerous countries.

In addition, electric power and land development in Gal-Oya, an aerial resources survey, the construction of Mutwal harbour, extension of railway facilities, the construction of Katunayake international airport, and a credit of Rs. 47,500,000 are just a few of the benefits that Ceylon has enjoyed under the Colombo Plan, appropriately named after the locale of its birth.

During Mr. Don Stephen Senanayake's premiership Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had crossed the floor and formed his own party, the Freedom Party, on Budget Day, 1950. When Mr. Senanayake died after falling off a horse while riding on Galle Face Green in March 1952, the Governor General, Lord Soulbury called on Mr. Dudley Senanayake, who had been

Minister of Agriculture in his father's Cabinet to form a Government.

Mr. Senanayake sought a mandate from the country. His father had been known as "The Father of the Nation". The nation took the son to its bosom and gave him a comfortable majority.

Mr. Senanayake's first period of office saw the signing of the Ceylon-China rice-rubber agreement. The pact has been renewed periodically and has been of immense mutual benefit to both countries.

In August the following year (1953) Ceylon had its first taste of violence in the post-Independence period. The price of rice, a touchstone in Ceylon politics, was increased, and Opposition parties called a hartal. A state of emergency, the first since Independence, was proclaimed and eight persons lost their lives when the Armed Services were called out to restore law and order.



Shortly afterwards Mr. Dudley Senanayake resigned and Sir John Kotelawala became Prime Minister.

Sir John's period of premiership saw a meeting of Asian Premier's from India, Pakistan, Burma and

Indonesia in Colombo. The Ceylon Premier flew to subsequent larger meetings at Bandung and Bogor.

Another highlight of Sir John's premiership was the visit to Ceylon by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. They had earlier been due in Ceylon in 1950 when the Queen was heir apparent but the death of King George VI in the U.K. necessitated their return to the U.K. from Africa where they were on their way to Ceylon.

The Royal tour was a resounding success. The Queen charmed Ceylonese with gestures like stopping her car to chat to Heenmenike, the bewildered wife of a rubber tapper, while the affable Duke had a smile and a quip for every occasion. The Royal visit showed that the British association with Ceylon had generated a generous fund of mutual goodwill.

INDO-CEYLON RELATIONS

Sir John also sought to solve the problem of the future of persons of Indian origin in Ceylon. He flew to New Delhi with a high powered delegation and an agreement was signed by Mr. Nehru and Sir John. The New Delhi pact subsequently ran into administrative difficulties but was indicative of the desire of the two Governments to solve this delicate question amicably.

It was in Sir John's premiership that the first rumbles of disunity over the language question were felt.

It had been common ground since Independence that the national languages would replace English. There had been some talk of parity of status but no one worked out the mathematics of parity.

In the general elections of 1956, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's coalition known as the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, or People's United Front, which

consisted of his own Freedom Party, Mr. Philip Gunewardena's Viplavakara (Revolutionary) L.S.S.P., Mr. W. Dahanayake's Basha Peramuna (Language Front) and Mr. I. M. R. A. Irriyagolle, won 51 seats in the House of Representatives which then consisted of 95 elected M.P's and six nominated M.P's. The ruling U.N.P. lost 46 seats and won 8 in this election.

Sir John lost no time in submitting his resignation and wished his successor, Mr. Bandaranaike all success.

This was the democratic process working in top gear and it evoked world wide acclamation. There were more human and more touching scenes to follow.

Popular enthusiasm over the election of a new Government was reflected when crowds surged into the chamber of the House of Representatives. The first meeting of the House of Representatives under Mr. Bandaranaike's premiership also witnessed a dramatic manifestation of the goodwill with which Ceylon's leaders have exercised the prerogative of power. After business for the day was over Mr. Bandaranaike walked across the floor to the Opposition benches and patted Sir John on the back, Victor and vanquished embraced each other. Delighted M.P's, the common man in the public galleries and the ringside spectators of history in the Press gallery cheered appreciatively as Mr. Bandaranaike and Sir John trooped out of the chamber together, arm in arm.

ABOLITION OF IMPERIAL HONOURS

Mr. Bandaranaike began his premiership by announcing the abolition of imperial honours. It was a gesture symbolic of Ceylon's desire to become a republic. The idea, or intent, of becoming a republic has been reaffirmed on numerous occasions by successive Governments but practical difficulties such as prorogation have stood in the way of fulfilment.

Two further events of historic importance in this period were the take over of the bases at Trincomalee and Katunayake. The negotiations between the Ceylon and British Government were conducted with the utmost cordiality and mutual goodwill.

In December, 1957 Ceylon suffered from disastrous floods. British and U.S. warships in the area were diverted to Ceylon with supplies of food and drugs while planes dropped parcels of food to marooned flood victims. At least 59 people died in flood waters and in landslides and the total flood damage was estimated at about Rs. 1,000 million.

The year 1957 also saw the signing of a pact between Mr. Bandaranaike and leaders of the Federal Party on outstanding issues such as the use of the Tamil language, colonisation in Tamil areas etc. Owing to opposition from within his party however Mr. Bandaranaike later abrogated the pact.

In May, 1958 Ceylon experienced widespread communal riots in which 168 lives were lost according to official figures after the riots.

The state of emergency that had been proclaimed when the riots began lasted ten months and during the period of emergency, Mr. Bandaranaike enacted The Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act in an endeavour to settle the language issue.

On September 25th, 1959 the nation was plunged into grief when Mr. Bandaranaike was assassinated in his home at Rosmead Place. Over one and a half million people filed past his body as it lay in state in the House of Representatives.

Mr. W. Dahanayake became caretaker premier as Mr. C. P. de Silva, the leader of the House of Representatives was ill in the United Kingdom. Mr. Dahanayake

nayake proclaimed a state of emergency that lasted till December 3rd, 1959.

At the Supreme Court trial in the Bandaranaike assassination case Mapitigama Buddharakitta Thero, H. P. Jayewardene a businessman, and Talduwa Somarama Thero, the assassin were sentenced to death.

In appeal a Court of five Supreme Court judges varied the death sentence of Buddharakitta Thero (who subsequently died in prison) and that of H. P. Jayewardena to life imprisonment. Somarama's death sentence was confirmed and executed.

In January 1960 Mr. Dahanayake dissolved Parliament and on March 20th, a general election was held for the first time in one day, instead of being staggered over a period of days as in previous elections.

The U.N.P. which emerged as the largest single group formed a caretaker government. An amendment to the Throne speech expressing lack of confidence in the Government was passed by 86 votes to 61 with 8 abstaining. Mr. Senanayake's Government resigned and a second general election was fixed for July.

MADAME BANDARANAIKE

The leadership of the Freedom Party had meanwhile passed from Mr. C. P. de Silva to Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike whose leadership of a political party was unprecedented, even though women had been active in politics since the early thirties. Mrs. Naysum Saravanamuttu had been elected to the State Council after the death of her husband, Dr. Rajnothi Saravanamuttu. Other women who made political history were Mrs. Ayesha Rauff, the first woman Deputy Mayor of Colombo, Lady Molamure, the first woman Deputy President of the Senate and Mrs. Vimala Wijewardene, who had been the first woman Cabinet Minister.

Under Mrs. Bandaranaike's leadership the Freedom Party won an overall majority in the House of Representatives. As Mrs. Bandaranaike had not contested a seat she was nominated to the Senate from where she operated during her term as Prime Minister.

One of the first acts of Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government was to introduce a national system of education. Under the educational reforms of 1960-1961 all denominational schools, except for 52 which opted to become private and non-fee levying schools, were brought under the management of the Director of Education, who was subsequently designated the Director General of Education.

In 1961 the Federal Party launched a satyagraha. Two lives were lost in the campaign and the state of emergency proclaimed in this connexion on April 30th 1963 lasted a total of 743 days.

The nationalisation of the foreign oil companies, the establishment of the People's Bank and the start of the Insurance Corporation were among the major events in 1962.

Early in 1962 eight senior police and armed service officers were arrested in connexion with a coup. When the trial began on July 18th in the same year the number of suspects had risen to 24.

In February 1962, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, who had been appointed the first Ceylonese Governor General in 1954 was succeeded by Mr. William Gopallawa, who was then Ceylon's Ambassador in the United States of America.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government saw the end of an era with the abolition of the Ceylon Civil Service which was replaced by a broader based Ceylon Administrative Service. Simultaneously the old order of Village

Headmen gave way to the present system of Grama Sevakas.

The outstanding events of 1964 were the formation of a United Left Front which proved to be short-lived, the formation of a coalition between the Freedom Party and the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party, and the signing of the Indo-Ceylon pact, on October 29th between the Indian Premier, Mr. Shastri and Mrs. Bandaranaike.

The status of persons of Indian origin had been the subject of discussion between the Ceylon and Indian authorities before the two countries became Independent, and was also the subject of a pact signed in New Delhi by Mr. Nehru and Sir John Kotelawala when he was Premier.

Under the 1964 agreement 525,000 persons of Indian origin are to be repatriated over a period of 20 years while 300,000 are to be given Ceylon citizenship. The future of a remaining 150,000 is to be the subject of future discussions.

February 1st, 1965 saw the country's biggest Industrial Exhibition which covered the entire extent of the former racecourse. In opening the exhibition, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, then Minister of Industries said that while the objects on show would seem simple when compared to those of the great industrial countries, they were nevertheless tangible evidence that Ceylon had "at last entered the stream of industrial technology".

On December 3rd, 1964 the final day of a debate on the Throne speech, Mr. C. P. de Silva, the leader of the House of Representatives crossed the floor of the House with 13 other M.P's and voted against the

Throne Speech which was defeated by 74 votes to 73. Shortly afterwards Parliament was dissolved and a general election fixed for March 2nd, 1965.

MR. DUDLEY SENANAYAKE

The United National Party secured the most number of seats and Mr. Dudley Senanayake formed a National Government with the assistance of smaller parties and groups represented in the House. The National Government was the biggest and most representative since Independence. The 17 member Cabinet included representatives of all the major communities and religions and a cross section of political opinion in the country.

January 1st, 1966 saw a historic change when the Christian calendar with Sunday as the weekly holiday was replaced by the Buddhist calendar in which the poya day which is based on the phases of the moon became the weekly holiday with the day preceding it being a half day, just as Saturday had been in the past.

The new Government also began negotiations with the oil companies whose assets had been taken over by the previous Government. A compromise figure of Rs. 56,000,000 was agreed on and by June 1969 Rs. 48,000,000 of this sum had been paid.

The creation of a favourable image overseas helped the Government to arrest adverse financial trends. Ceylon's external assets had fallen to Rs. 350,000,000 in 1965 while the public debt amounted to Rs. 3,438 millions. One of the steps taken by the Government to improve its standing abroad was to relax the freeze on the remission of dividends abroad which had been imposed by the previous administration.

In March 1966 a Captain of the Ceylon Army and 11 non-commissioned officers were arrested in connexion

with an alleged coup. Their trial was in progress in the second half of 1969.

1967 saw the celebration of the centenary of the tea industry which itself was despondent about falling prices, a problem which became so acute in 1969 that the Government afforded relief to producers by way of rebates, while Ceylon and other producing countries met to take action at an international level to stem the tide of falling prices.

In November 1967 the Ceylon rupee was devalued by 20 per cent following the devaluation of sterling by the U.K. Government to the extent of 14.3 per cent. On May 6th, 1968 the Foreign Exchange Entitlement Scheme was introduced giving a premium to certain foreign exchange earnings, and particularly non-traditional exports. At the same time a premium price had to be paid for selected foreign exchange payments excluding basic requirements such as food, drugs, fertilisers, fuel and small industrial units.

A senseless act of vandalism in which Ceylon's historic and world famous frescoes on Sigiriya rock were defaced shocked the nation in May 1968. However prompt technical assistance from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington and the International Centre for Study and Restoration in Rome enabled the restoration of 18 of the 19 frescoes that had been daubed with paint.

21 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

1969 has seen the 21st anniversary of Ceylon's Independence. The venue for the celebrations was in Kandy where the late Mr. Don Stephen Senanayake had unfurled the national flag on February 4th, 1948.

In an address to the nation on Independence Day the Prime Minister said "Today we are at the crossroads of a new era, in that as a free nation we are emerging from childhood to youth. We are at a stage when it is most propitious to turn our attention to national development... On the day of the anniversary of our Freedom, I call upon the nation, on the eve of its adulthood to renew and redouble its efforts in the days to come. Then the fruits of true freedom will be ours".

These are aspirations and hopes that every citizen of Ceylon shares and endorses.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Steel and Stalk Revolutions

As recently as 1948, Sir Ivor Jennings, Vice Chancellor of the Ceylon University, ridiculed the idea of industrialisation in Ceylon. "Where, and what, can Ceylon Industries sell", he asked in "The Economy of Ceylon" (Oxford University Press 1948). As a coup de grace he argued that "the industrialisation of Ceylon would require the transfer of large numbers of village labourers, accustomed to primitive sanitary conditions, to the towns". And he pressed on by saying, "It is not pleasant to contemplate what would be the standards if large numbers of the present villagers were collected in tenement blocks, especially if the sanitary arrangements of the towns were as inadequate as they are at present".

Progress on the industrial front has however been so rapid in the last decade that 1969 has seen exports of sophisticated industrial products such as locally assembled cars and refrigerators—a prospect that would have been termed ludicrous just a couple of decades ago.

The origins of industrialisation in Ceylon can be traced to a steam mill here, and a sugar or oil mill there, in the corresponding decade one century ago.

The educational pattern in Ceylon moulded on existing standards in Britain was predominantly classical in scope. "Technical" education did not extend beyond subjects like carpentry, lace making, tailoring, needle work, masonry, and even domestic service.

In 1892, the Director of Public Instruction, Mr. J. B. Cull, observed in his administration report that "the area of industrial development" had been extended but this was confined "mainly to instruction in purely local industries".

Consumer preference in everything from food to footwear was for the imported product.

In 1888, when the Wellawatte Cotton and Spinning and Weaving Mill was established, its operation was hailed as "affording the first introduction of a new and important manufacturing industry". But, the mill was destined to be a lonely mill. It remained like a solitary sentinel on the landscape and by the time the wheels of industry began to hum in the second half of this century, electricity had replaced coal as the main source of power.

CRAZE FOR WESTERN GOODS

In vain did men like the Anagarika Dharmapala, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam deplore the craze for western goods.

The abundant and cheap availability of domestic labour and the growing prosperity of the Island contributed to the increasing popularity of imported goods in the first half of this century.

The beginnings of the present industrial surge date back to 1957, when Mr. Bandaranaike's Government enacted the Industrial Corporations Act of 1957 and obtained the services of eminent economists from abroad to advise on the feasibility of industrial projects. With the development of industrialisation the Department of Industries was replaced by an Industries Unit working in close liaison with the Ministry.

The final impulse to industrialisation came with the fortuitous circumstances of declining prices for Ceylon's plantation crops. Import substitution became a matter of necessity and not choice.

There were teething troubles in that the shortage of exchange which necessitated production of consumer goods also affected allocations for raw materials, machinery, spares, etc. Exchange had to be allotted on a basis of priorities and the fact that many industries operated below capacity increased production costs.

As a matter of policy heavy industries were generally reserved for the State while the private sector was allowed to operate light industries.

The progress Ceylon had made up to 1964 was amply demonstrated in August 1964, when an Industrial Exhibition covered almost the entire area of the former race-course in Colombo. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, then Minister of Rural and Industrial Development paid a tribute to the private sector and said the manner in which the private sector had responded to the need for industrial development was "something of an economic miracle; one cannot but remember the time when the private sector sat stubbornly reluctant to invest any capital in local industry... this very same private sector was induced to invest no less than Rs. 350 million in industry during the last three years. Even my sternest critics will admit that this was a truly remarkable development". Mr. Senanayake reaffirmed on behalf of the Government that the private sector had an important part to play in the economic development of the country.

MADE IN CEYLON

By 1967, Ceylon was in the position of being able to export shirts to America, batteries to Burma, electrical goods to African countries, canned fruits to markets

all over the world, tyres to Pakistan, shoes to the Soviet Union and a variety of other industrial goods to destinations all over the world.

In 1968, there was an increase in the number of public corporations in the industrial sector from 21 to 23. The new ventures were the State Timber Corporation and the State Printing Corporation.

The State Flour Milling Corporation and the National Milk Board Condensary went into production in 1968 and the State Printing Corporation, State Fertiliser Manufacturing Corporation and the Ceylon Petroleum Refinery were preparing to go into production in 1969. The Provender Plant of the Ceylon Oils and Fats Corporation, and the reconditioned old Kiln of the Ceylon Mineral Sands Corporation, the Structural Shop of the Ceylon Steel Corporation, the Cast-Iron Foundry of the State Hardware Corporation and several fertiliser stores of the Ceylon Fertiliser Corporation were commissioned during 1967/68.

Total capital invested in the 21 state industrial corporations which existed at the end of 1967/68 was about Rs. 762.5 million. Of this about Rs. 643.9 million was in respect of activities which had commenced production. New investment during the financial year 1968/69 was about Rs. 255.6 million.

Increased industrial output has been largely responsible for the highest ever Gross National Product of 8.3 in 1968, announced by the Monetary Board in its report released in April, 1969.

Industrial production, according to the Monetary Board, showed a massive increase of Rs. 444.4 million in 1968. In the preceding years industrial output had been restricted by curbs on imports of raw materials. This situation was rectified by the liberalisation of imports of raw material under the FEECs scheme.

The food preparations industry alone recorded an increase of Rs. 119.4 millions. The total number of firms in the industrial group increased from 1,381 in 1965 to 1,804 in 1968. Employment in the industrial sector rose by 27,393 in 1968 while the total number of persons employed in industry was 101,348 persons.

The upsurge in industrial development has seen a marked improvement in living standards. While the villager now regards a transistor radio, or a cycle as a necessary status symbol, the middle class has begun to regard household goods such as fans and refrigerators, which were once regarded as luxuries, as absolute necessities. The promise of electric power for villages will become a reality in 1971 under the Maskeliya Oya Project, which will usher in higher standards of living and see the extension of industrialisation to all parts of the Island.

THE FOOD DRIVE

The first men who deplored the fact that Ceylon imported rice, which she could produce, were the Dutch Governors. They had no knowledge of the potential for irrigation in the ancient tanks that had gone into a state of disrepair, for Dutch rule was confined to the maritime areas.

The British however ruled the whole of Ceylon and certain British Governors, notably Sir Henry Ward, worked towards the restoration of the tanks.

Largely owing to the unhealthy conditions in the North Central Province, progress in tank restoration was spasmodic. Health conditions remained a problem until the nineteen thirties when Directors of Irrigation began to think of ways of increasing paddy output.

In 1934, the Director of Irrigation, Mr. B. G. Meaden, suggested in his administrative report "an increased

import duty on imported rice or a quota system designed to regulate the proportion of imported rice to locally produced grain". He warned that these steps alone would not solve the problem. New and enlarged irrigation works, the development of a larger agricultural population under improved health conditions, better transport for the marketing of produce, and education in scientific methods of cultivation were also necessary.



The problem of malaria was highlighted in the diaries and reports of officials working in the North Central Province. Malaria led to large scale resignations by British and Indian engineers, who then served in the top echelons of the technical departments.

The construction and repair of the smaller irrigation works was entrusted to Ceylonese contractors, but in 1938 the Director of Irrigation, Mr. J. H. Wilson, complained that "Most of the Tissa and Walawe contractors are unable even to sign their names, much less appreciate the terms of a highly technical contract agreement. In their eagerness to secure a contract,

and knowing that Treasury regulations demand that the lowest contract must be accepted, they cut their rates down to such an extent that a profit is impossible, and when they discover this they default . . . It is no exaggeration to say that not in one job in ten does a contractor complete the work strictly according to the agreement as to time and workmanship”.

All minor irrigation works were carried out free by the Government, but even this had a built-in handicap. Mr. F. R. G. Webb, the Irrigation Engineer in charge of the Southern Division, reported that “the prevalent idea seems to be that as the Government has money to spend freely on village schemes, why should we not obtain some of it and have a permanent masonry annicut with channels and controlling devices built for us and so save ourselves the trouble of erecting and replacing temporary dams periodically”.

Progress in the thirties was slow and in 1944, the Director of Irrigation Mr. S. G. Taylor, complained that “It is no good putting people down in the jungle and expecting them to convert it into a land flowing with milk and honey”. This realisation had led to a change in policy under which the Government opened up and prepared land before bringing colonists in. The Irrigation Department now went to the extent of building “ready made farms complete with all facilities including a brick house”. This was a crucial turning point for the better in land development.

AND NOW TRACTORS

The war years also saw the introduction of tractors from Australia, which were to revolutionise the system of paddy production that had existed from the earliest times. At first there was a shortage of personnel to operate tractors, which were unfamiliar to Ceylonese

cultivators. The employment of Italian prisoners of war filled the lacuna until Ceylonese themselves took to tractor utilisation with confidence.

The State’s provision of all basic requirements led to an improved standard of living among colonists who became economically better off than their counterparts in the villages.

As recently as 1940 Dr. B. R. Shenoy in an economic survey of the Kurunegala district, observed that “the keynote of the economy is poverty and its foundation, the low return from the land”.

This remained true of individual farmers until in agriculture, as in industry, fortuitous circumstances saw a remarkable increase in local production.

In December, 1966, the Cabinet held several successive meetings after Burma had informed the Ministry of Food that, owing to a fall in production, she could only provide half her normal supplies in 1967. Thailand also said she would halve exports owing to American purchases for Vietnam and Indonesia’s entry into the Thai market.

It was in these circumstances that the Government decided to reduce the rice ration from two measures to one measure which was given free, except for the highest income groups.

At the same time the guaranteed price of rice was increased from Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per bushel as a spur to production. Consequently the price of rice in the open market rose from Rs. 13.61 per bushel to Rs. 15.86.

In 1967 and 1968 record yields of 54.9 million bushels and 64.3 million bushels respectively were achieved. In the same period rice imports dropped from 484,000 tons to 374,000 tons.

According to "The Agricultural Development Proposals, 1966-1970," and subsequent implementation programmes a yield of 71 million bushels should be obtained in 1969. This would constitute 80% of our total requirements in contrast to the output of 56% in 1966.

The production of subsidiary foodstuffs has been considerably increased by reductions, or total bans on imports. Self-sufficiency in potatoes is a case in point, while a reduction in onion imports has stimulated local production. Production of red onions doubled between 1964 and 1968. Imports in this period dropped from 110,000 cwt. to 10,500 cwt.

The foreign exchange saving in potatoes and onions alone is about Rs. 80 million annually.

Targets have been kept by the Ministry of Land, Irrigation and Power in provision of irrigation facilities, with assistance from the Land Army and member firms of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

The success of the food drive has been largely due to two inputs—the use of improved seed paddy and fertilisers, and the enthusiastic participation of Government Agents who were allowed to prepare their own district programmes instead of being controlled from Colombo as in the past.

Issues of improved seed paddy rose from 116,654 bushels in 1966 to 340,000 (estimated) in 1969. While the varieties used, H4 and H8, have been successful there are hopes of even more spectacular yields if the present experiments with "the miracle rice I.R. 8" are successful.

The use of fertilisers has more than trebled between 1966, when 40,485 tons were used, to 122,400 (estimated) in 1969.

The North Central Province, once dreaded by colonists and officials alike, has now become the focal point of Ceylon's own green revolution.

THE BAD OLD DAYS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, recently recalled how in the bad old days of the North Central Province, Government Agents used to go to Polonnaruwa railway station and offer passengers 100 acres of land each (Times of Ceylon 23.10.1968). Today of the twenty two rice producing districts, Polonnaruwa has the highest average paddy yield and even squatters are producing rice without any assistance from the Government whatever. Encroachments are now being regularised as a matter of Government policy.

The increasing prosperity of colonists has stimulated local industrial production and services such as transport and banking. Thus while agricultural production for domestic use increased by 29% in 1968, industrial production for domestic consumption rose by 47%.

Increased agricultural production contributed substantially to the increase in the G.N.P. of 8.3 in 1968, while its contribution to the national economy can be gauged by projected estimates that the foreign exchange saving by increased food production will be Rs. 210 million by 1971.

DIVERSION TO PROSPERITY

The Diamond Jubilee year of Ceylon Cold Stores Limited saw the inauguration of Ceylon's most impressive development scheme, the Mahaveli Diversion Scheme.

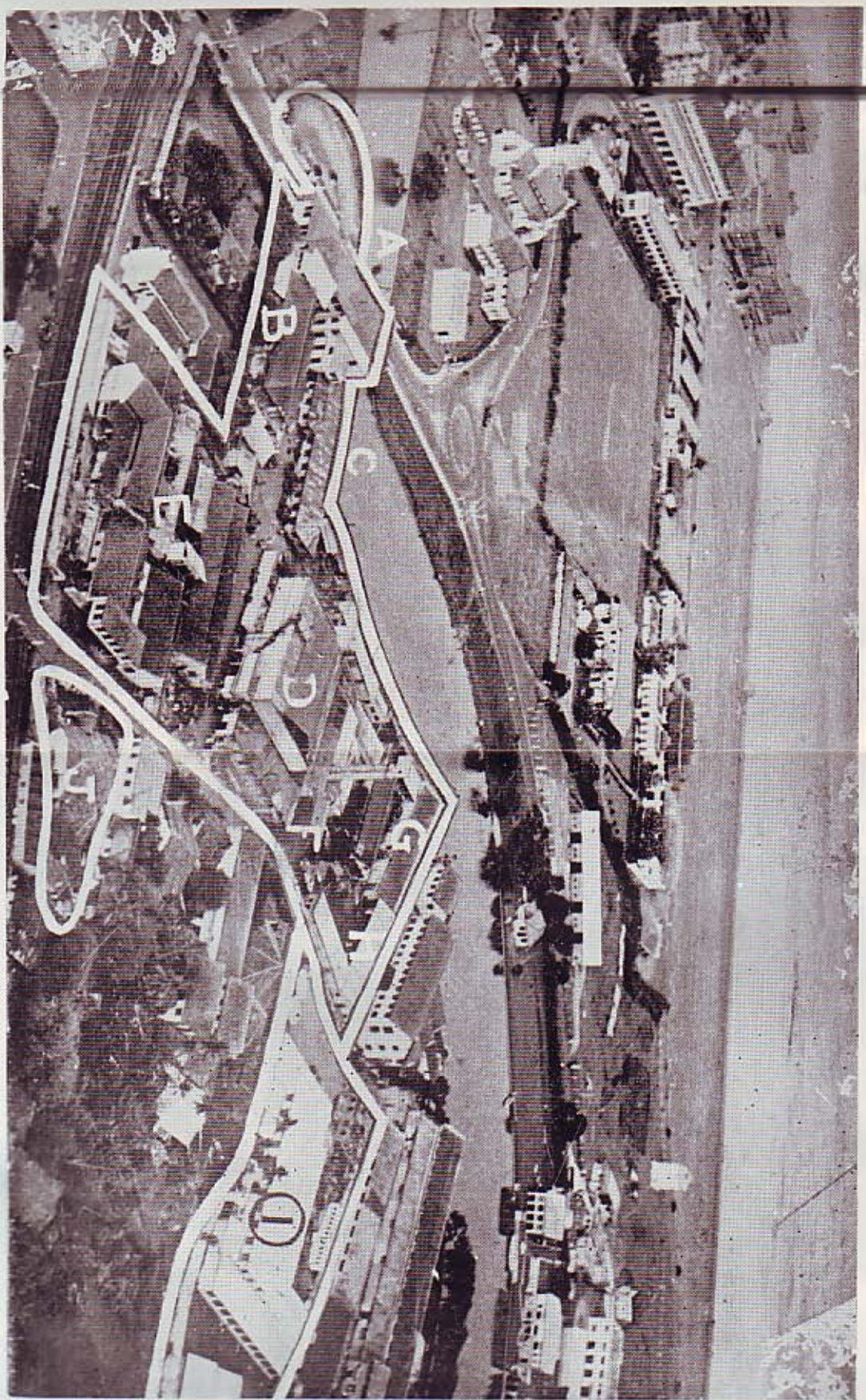
The youth of this country, and generations yet unborn will reap the green and golden wealth that will nourish the life of the nation. And so it happened that in an impulsive but symbolic gesture, the Minister

of Lands, Irrigation and Power, Mr. C. P. de Silva, clasped the hand of an eight year old girl as he watched the waters of the Mahaveli flow placidly at Polgolla where the diversion is to take place.

The Mahaveli Ganga rises in the central highlands of Ceylon and makes a long and tortuous journey to the North East coast. For 4 miles of this journey it washes the Southern boundary of Victoria Group. A quarter mile below the boundary of the Group is Victoria Falls, from which the Group takes its name and at these Falls will rise a giant dam which will impound the waters of the Mahaveli Ganga and of the Hulu Ganga for the generation of hydro-power as part of the development of the Mahaveli. The impounded water will create a magnificent artificial lake on the Northern and Eastern sides of Victoria Group extending to Teldeniya Town and to the Mahiyangana Road.

The Mahaveli Diversion Scheme itself is phased over 20 years of construction and will irrigate a total of over 650,000 acres extending well into the Northern province. This extent represents more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the total of land now irrigated by all the major irrigation schemes in the Island. The World Bank will assist in the financing of the scheme, which on present estimates is scheduled to cost Rs. 6,700 millions.

So 1969 will be written into the records of history as the year in which the Mahaveli Diversion Scheme began. It should be completed by the time Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd., celebrates its Centenary.



An aerial view of The Ceylon Cold Stores—the company in relation to its environment.

Memorabilia

- 1847 — Decision by influential Colombo residents to import Ice.
- 1848 — First consignment of natural Ice from America and New Foundland arrived in Colombo.
- 1863 — Ice making Machinery imported into Ceylon.
- 1866 — Colombo Ice Company Limited (1st Ice Company in Ceylon), established in Glenie Street.
- 1872 — Von Possner made Manager of the Colombo Ice Company.
- 1875 — Ceylon General Ice Company floated in Kollupitiya.
- 1882 — Von Possner established Ice & Aerated Water Company in association with Tom Walker.
- 1883 — Von Possner forms his own Company—“Von Possner & Company”. Elephant Brand mark used for the first time on Aerated Water bottles.
- 1894 — Colombo Ice Company goes into liquidation and “New Colombo Ice Company Limited” formed.
- 1895 — Ceylon General Ice Company enters into the Frozen Foods business.
- 1898 — Advent of Bicycles and Rickshaws.
- 1900 — Death of Arthur Von Possner. Mrs. Von Possner takes over the business.

- 1902 — First Automobile on streets of Colombo.
- 1903 — First Motorcycle on streets of Colombo.
- 1905 — Telephone communication set up.
- 1910 — Bois Brothers became Agents of the New Colombo Ice Company.
- 1911 — First Aeroplane touches down in Ceylon.
- 1919 — New Colombo Ice Company Limited purchases the Von Possner business.
- 1921 — The introduction of Crown Corks to the Aerated Water business by the New Colombo Ice Company.
- 1923 — Change from steam driven to oil driven (Internal Combustion Engine).
- 1925 — Creation of the staff Provident Fund.
- 1926 — Work commences on the present office block. Decision to enter into Frozen Produce trade.
- 1928 — Messrs. Bamber & Bruce appointed Advisory Chemists. Bakery Department, commenced operations.
- 1929 — Purchased the business of Pure Ice & Aerated Water Company—Fountain Brand Aerated Waters. Opening of Sundae Tea Rooms.
- 1933 — Ceylon Creameries purchased from Major Elton Lane. Westor Seaton Dairy commences Milk supplies. Branch in Kandy opened.
- 1934 — New Colombo Ice Company purchases Ceylon Ice & Cold Storage Company. Cafe established at Fountain House.
- 1935 — Milk supplies from Kotmale Dairy commenced. Printing Department established at Iceland. CO² Plant constructed.
- 1940 — Trincomalee branch opened.

- 1941 — Name changed to Ceylon Cold Stores Limited. Union Ice Company purchased.
- 1942 — Fountain Brand withdrawn. Air-Raid over Colombo. Present soft drinks crates introduced.
- 1943 — Company declared an essential service. Canteen opened by Civil Defence Commissioner. Commencement of a free mid-day meal to employees.
- 1946 — Iceland Building sold.
- 1949 — T.T. Milk from Mahaberiattenne Estate, Telde-niya commenced.
- 1950 — New Soft Drinks factory opened—present location. Bear brand withdrawn from circulation. Old Factory converted to a dry store.
- 1954 — Water Filtration plant installed.
- 1959 — Closure of the Bread Baking Department.
- 1960 — Creation of Sales Department. Dispensary established.
- 1962 — Welfare Shop established.
- 1965 — Re-introduction of Icepalam. Introduction of Time Clocks.
- 1966 — Opening of green & white striped outlets. Snack Bar opened at Fountain Cafe.
- 1967 — Purchase of Victoria Farm. Introduction of Punch Card accounting for customer accounts.
- 1968 — Establishment of Product Development Department.
- 1969 — Purchase of Mahaberiattenne Farm. Commencement of Victoria Group. Company's 75th Anniversary.

