

## TRUE UNITY AND PROGRESS

*[Address to Sinhala Maha Sabha on 5th September, 1942, at Pattalagedera, Veyangoda.]*

In inaugurating the two-day annual sessions of the Sabha, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, President of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, delivered an address in the course of which he explained the ideals of the Maha Sabha movement. After retracing the origin and development of the Sabha, Mr. Bandaranaike said their purpose was two-fold—to unite the Sinhalese and to work in co-operation with other communities. In both these objects they had achieved a reasonable measure of success.

In the political sphere they were convinced that their own conception of nationalism alone could bring about true unity and progress in the country. In the economic sphere their chief problem was the problem of poverty of the vast majority of the people. Every step necessary must be taken to ensure for all a proper standard of living, and it was probably on socialistic lines that it would be possible to achieve that object.

The next ingredient in their movement was that of religion, not one particular religion but all religions. They realized the value of the religious idea in the long march of human progress, particularly amongst Eastern peoples like themselves. Many of their normal activities, he continued, had to be cut short during the last year. Their chief work was in connection with the proposed Indo-Ceylon Pact. The Sabha, which clearly saw the defects of that Pact, organized meetings throughout the country to explain its true implications to the people. Consideration of the Pact had been postponed till the conclusion of the war, which was surely the wisest course.

Speaking of the resolutions to be moved, Mr. Bandaranaike said the first resolution was an important one. They had for a number of years been passing resolutions asking for Dominion Status, and, after the war started, they had been requesting the Secretary of State to make a declaration that that status would be granted to Ceylon after the war. The present position was that in view of the various conflicting opinions expressed in the State Council in the discussion on the Governor's Memorandum on Reforms just before the outbreak of the war, the Secretary of State was not prepared to make any declaration for the moment, but would go into the whole question of Reforms as soon after the war as possible.

England and America had formulated in the Atlantic Charter a Charter for the freedom of one section of mankind. It would be a magnificent act of statesmanship if England, America, Russia and China would formulate an Eastern Charter for all Eastern peoples.

The third resolution, continued Mr. Bandaranaike, referred to an action already taken by India. They had partially lifted the ban imposed upon the immigration to Ceylon of unskilled workers. The ban had been lifted in regard to Indians already here, to enable them to go back to India and return to Ceylon.

They did not know what would be the result of that action, but they must be ready to take steps to meet any difficulty that might arise. They wanted friendship between the two countries, but friendship based on justice. What they should both aim at, if possible, was to suspend controversial action until the war was over. He hoped India would not force them into a position which would compel them to deviate from that policy.

Although not on the agenda, there were two other matters, Mr. Bandaranaike said, about which they might introduce resolutions if they so wished. One was the need to prepare for reconstructive measures after the war.

Another matter that the Sabha should concentrate on was the formation of a Gramasanwardhana Samitiya in every village. A number of these already existed and were very helpful, particularly in connection with the Food Drive.

(From "The Nation" of 12th September, 1942)

## POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

*[Address delivered by Mr. Bandaranaike, as President of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, to the Annual Session of the Maha Sabha held at Anuradhapura on Saturday, 17th July 1943.]*

Fellow Delegates,

Since we last met, I am glad to say that a great change has taken place in the entire outlook of the war. Then it was still a grim struggle for survival—it was still a matter of doubt whether free institutions and human progress would be possible or whether the world would sink again into a new Dark Age of oppression and slavery. Now I think it can be said without undue optimism

that the battle for survival is won : we are entering on the last phase of the war, which may well be drawn out and tedious, of utterly stamping out the dying embers of totalitarian barbarism. Let us not make the serious mistake of thinking that all is over bar the shouting, and that we can now take things easy. As far as Ceylon is concerned, economic conditions may well become much worse before they begin to improve. Ceylon will also very probably be again in the front line of the war in the East. A year ago we were in the front line in the resistance to the advance of the Japanese : we are now likely to be in the front line in the advance against the Japanese. We must therefore all be ready for further hardships and sacrifice before victory is 'finally won.

In times like these the normal activities of every political party have to be greatly curtailed. But I am glad to say that our Sabha has been making quiet but steady progress within the last year.

The question of Constitutional Reforms is occupying the minds of all of us. It will be remembered that, last year, we passed a resolution asking Britain as well as the other Allied Nations to make a Declaration that the Atlantic Charter applies to the East as well as to the West. To this request the Secretary of State has sent the disappointing reply that the British Government does not consider this an appropriate time to make such a Declaration. It will also be recollected that we passed a resolution asking the Secretary of State to give us an assurance that Dominion Status will be conferred upon us after the war. One of our

02

Hon. Secretaries, Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, moved a motion to this effect in the State Council, which was passed by a very large majority. The Ministers fully supported this motion and strongly pressed for its acceptance by the Secretary of State.

The British Government finally made a Declaration last May, which, as interpreted by the Ministers in a statement made to the State Council, although falling short of full Dominion Status, might prove reasonably satisfactory, if the Ministers' interpretation is given full effect to. The Secretary of State has not said that any part of this interpretation is unacceptable, and the Ministers will now attempt to frame a suitable Constitution. As you know we have always stood not only for the unity and progress of the Sinhalese but for friendship and co-operation among the various sections of the people. To try and achieve this latter object, we set up a National Committee, which almost all sections gladly joined. The Sabha should without delay, in consultation with other sections of the people through the National Committee, take steps to formulate a Constitution and press for its acceptance both by the Ministers and later by the State Council. The first motion deals with this matter. If it is passed, the Executive Committee should without delay appoint a sub-committee for the purpose.

It is necessary to obtain as much unity as possible on the question of Reforms. Whatever parties there may be with divergent views on other matters, I shall welcome any move to secure united action on this question.

Quite as important as this subject is the question of PostWar Reconstruction. You will remember that we passed a resolution regarding this last year. Subsequently the Board of Ministers appointed a sub-committee consisting of Mr. Corea and myself to report on what steps should be taken. We recommended that a representative Reconstruction and Planning Committee should be immediately set up to prepare schemes dealing with this subject. Although we reported last February, the suggestion made by us has not yet been given effect to. The Sabha should take steps to prepare its own schemes and press for their acceptance. The second resolution refers to this matter.

The third resolution deals with certain disquieting tendencies in elections. Although we have the widest franchise, certain malpractices that are being increasingly indulged in, such as bribery and corruption, intimidation,

03

and impersonation, are preventing a free and correct expression of the will of the people. A very unsatisfactory and dangerous situation is thereby created, and it is the duty of all political parties and leaders to take vigorous action to stop these evils.

The fourth resolution, which deals with a motion of which notice has been given in the State Council by Dr. A. P. de Zoysa, is included in our agenda as it is one which many of our associations has sent up. This matter is greatly exercising the public mind at the moment, and I have no doubt that many delegates would like to express their views on it.

The fifth resolution asks for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into bribery and corruption in the public services. I think all will agree that it is very desirable. In conclusion I need only say that I am more convinced than ever that our movement alone can really achieve not only the unity and progress of the Sinhalese but the true unity of the various sections of the people of this country. In our hands, therefore, lie the future progress and prosperity of Ceylon. Let us march forward together with determination and confidence.

*(From "The Nation" of 24th July, 1943)*

ol

### **REFORMS AND NATIONAL PROBLEMS**

*The following is the text of the Address delivered by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, President of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, at its Annual Session held at Anairadhapura on Saturday, 24th June, 1944:*

Fellow Delegates,

I should like to say a few words about the progress of the War. It is moving inexorably to its appointed end—the destruction of the Axis Powers. Germany seems to be at the last gasp, and it is possible that the War in Europe may be over this year. Japan's downfall may not take so long, after the conclusion of the War in the West., as was thought at one time.

While concentrating on bringing the War to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible, it is becoming more and more necessary to consider and make adequate provision for the many serious post-war problems that are bound to arise. The question of post-war reconstruction is being dealt with, but progress seems to be slow. This problem needs much more urgent and effective attention.

Another matter that wants careful watching is this. There is in my opinion a real danger that, although the Germans, the Italians and the Japanese may be beaten, there may be a subtle recrudescence of the very thing which we have been fighting to destroy—the spirit of Nazism. If this were to happen, it would indeed be a cruel tragedy.

The most important problems that are facing us at the moment are the questions of Constitutional Reform and of the Supply of Food. Regarding Reforms, the Ministers have taken the first step contemplated in the Declaration of the British Government of May 1943. They have prepared a draft Constitution and sent it to the Secretary of State, who has now to take the next step of appointing a Commission to examine the draft. The Ministers have strongly pressed that this and the other necessary steps should be taken without delay and without waiting for the conclusion of the war. It is hoped that the Secretary of State will agree to this. The first resolution deals with this matter.

You all know the very difficult situation about food. Every possible step must be taken to increase food production in this country. Even such imports as we are getting

02

will depend to some extent on our efforts to produce food in our own country. One of the difficulties is the scarcity of labour. No one likes the idea of the conscription of labour, and before such a step is resorted to, every effort must be made to secure voluntary labour. It has recently been suggested that, following the example of Australia, a part of the Civil Defence Force might be demobilised for food production work. This suggestion is worthy of consideration. The fifth resolution deals with this matter.

We have drawn attention more than once to the malpractices and irregularities in connection with elections. The most important thing to be done is to alter the method of voting. The second resolution deals with this.

The Report of the Select Committee on Education is a very important and valuable document and many of its recommendations are likely to result in great benefit to the people. But if these benefits are to be fully obtained, certain amendments appear to be desirable. The third resolution deals with this subject.

The thorny problem regarding non-Ceylonese is in a curious state. The Indo-Ceylon Pact is as dead as the dodo. Two Ordinances for the registration of non-Ceylonese and the restriction of

immigration were introduced in the State Council and reached the Committee Stage. Further proceedings were then abruptly stopped, pending negotiations for the Pact. For the last three years these Bills have been in cold storage in the Committee Stage. This is an unheard of situation, and there is no reason why these Bills should not be proceeded with at once without any further delay. The fourth resolution deals with this.

Mr. Henry Wallace, the Vice-President of the United States of America, recently stated at Chungking : " In Asia, there are other political and social entities now in a state of Colonial dependency, whose aspirations to Self-Government should receive prompt and positive attention after Victory ". We welcome these words on the part of such a representative American as Mr. Wallace. I have no doubt that it will be possible for us to obtain a really satisfactory

03

measure of freedom, provided there is a reasonable degree of unity and co-operation amongst ourselves, particularly among the more progressive elements. I appeal to all for this co-operation.

Meanwhile, as our party gains in power and importance, our responsibilities also increase. At this time in particular, the country needs the greatest possible service from all. If our Sabha is to render that service, we must work unitedly, work enthusiastically, work for the cause rather than the person. Let us do so.

*(From "The Nation" of 1st July, 1944)*

01

### **WHY THE SINHALA MAHA SABHA ?**

*A special session of the Sinhala Maha Sabha was held on Saturday, 10th February, 1945, at the Town Hall, Colombo. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who presided over the Session, delivered the following Address :*

Fellow Delegates,

This Special Session of our Sabha has been summoned to make clear our position regarding the constitutional issues that have arisen. Hitherto since our Annual Session last June the Executive Committee has been able to act in accordance with your decisions made by yourselves earlier, and to make certain further decisions. The position now is sufficiently clear to enable us to do this. You will permit me at this stage to remind you once again, as the subject is very relevant to the matters you will have to discuss today, of the reasons why our Sabha was started, and the objects for which it has been striving.

Although there was a certain degree of unity and organised public opinion in the early stages of the new reform movement, roughly between 1918 and 1923, the situation began to deteriorate rapidly after that ; not only did disunity begin to manifest itself among the different communities, and indeed within each community, but the vigour and enthusiasm of public opinion began to wane.

We felt that the true and wise course to adopt was this : first to try and unite the Sinhalese, and then to try and win the confidence of other Ceylonese communities, and, with the co-operation of all progressive parties in the country, to put up a united front against reactionaries at home and imperialism and exploitation on the part of non-Ceylonese.

We have been striving to achieve these objects since the beginning of our Sabha. Sinhalese, Kandyan and Low Country, of all castes and religions, are members of our Sabha ; we formed a national committee in the effort to secure inter-communal harmony; and we offered to cooperate with such Parties as the National Congress, in order to attain our common purposes.

02

The opposition and misrepresentation we have had to encounter from various quarters, you all know ; opposition which has hitherto prevented us from completely achieving our objects. But

what is the position today ? Those Sinhalese who earlier opposed us on the ground that no particular effect to unite the Sinhalese was necessary, now freely admit how necessary this -is; those who wanted no agreement with other Ceylonese communities, I think are now beginning to revise their views ; and the National Congress, which some years ago rejected our offer of co-operation, are now beginning to realise the vital need for such co-operation. I take this opportunity of thanking the Congress for passing a resolution at their annual Session held recently, supporting the Constitution Bill which I have introduced in the State Council.

This change of heart has come almost too late. It has come after Dunkirk. It has only come when people have been faced with the stark reality of an unholy, but very formidable and well organised, alliance between certain sections of the Ceylonese minorities, the Europeans and the Indians, and certain local reactionaries, whose objects are nothing short of " 50-50 " representation and the enthronement and entrenchment of imperialism and exploitation, and the protection of vested interests.

If we had been able to achieve the object for which our Sabha has been striving, this situation would never have arisen.

In order that you might clearly understand the present constitutional position, I have to make a brief historical survey. The Donoughmore Commissioners claimed that their Constitution would to a great extent place the elected representatives of this country in a position to exercise complete control over the internal affairs of the island.

But many people realised that this was not likely to be so, that the Constitution had certain serious defects. That Constitution was accepted by way of trial. Soon after its inauguration in 1931, Mr. E. W. Perera moved a number of motions in the State Council for its amendment, the effect of which amounted to the conferment of Dominion Status on this country. These motions were passed. The then Board of Ministers proceeded to prepare certain memoranda based on Mr. Perera's motions, and forwarded them to the Secretary of State. In 1933 Sir D. B. Jayatileke introduced a motion for the acceptance of the proposals embodied in these memoranda. This motion also was passed.

03

Meanwhile, a new Council was elected. Governor Caldecott, at the request of the Secretary of State, held an investigation and sent a despatch to the Secretary of State regarding necessary amendments to the Constitution. In 1939, the Legal Secretary moved a number of resolutions, based on the Governor's proposals. Various amendments to these motions were passed again having the effect of Dominion Status. Then the war intervened. Later, our Sabha passed a motion, demanding Dominion Status and our Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, moved a motion in pursuance of this decision in 1942. This motion was passed without division, and the Ministers forwarded it to the Secretary of State, supporting it.

Finally the British Government made the declaration of 1943. This declaration fell far short of Dominion Status. Defence and foreign affairs are kept solely in the hands of the British Government, and various important subjects, such as shipping, currency, etc., cannot be dealt with by us, but must be reserved for the sanction of the Secretary of State. This was really a very unsatisfactory document. The Atlantic Charter framed by Messrs. Roosevelt and Churchill, laid down, as one of the freedoms for which they were fighting, the freedom of a country to choose the form of Government it wished to have. It is true that Mr. Churchill later said that the Charter did not apply to India, Mr. Roosevelt as well as other leading American statesmen made it clear that they considered it applied to the whole world. Our Sabha passed a Resolution, asking for a Pacific Charter to apply to Asiatic countries two years ago. It is interesting to note that very lately a conference at "Hot Springs" in the United States of America has framed such a Charter, recognising the principle of freedom for Asiatic countries. Meanwhile Britain had promised freedom to India and even to Burma. We had no reason at all to be satisfied with the 1943 Declaration.

It is true that the Ministers accepted the Declaration subject only to various wide interpretations. This is not a course which I myself recommended. But I acquiesced in the view of the majority of the Ministers, and therefore I take on myself my share of responsibility for that action.

As I rather feared, the Secretary of State, on the very first occasion when he had to express a definite view on these interpretations, i.e. when appointing a Commission, showed that he did not accept the very first of the Ministers'

s-

interpretations. What likelihood there is of his accepting even the majority of the other interpretations can be gauged from this. The Ministers decided to non-cooperate with the Commission and withdrew their draft. But the Commission was appointed, has arrived in Ceylon and is at work.

I do not wish to say anything to hurt the feelings of those patriotic persons who have thronged so eagerly before the Commission. But I wish to draw attention to the correctness of the state of affairs, which I envisaged at 'The Village Committees' Conference before the Commission began its work. Most of the evidence given does not concern the vital question of self Government, but deals chiefly with the desire of some to retain effective Imperial control, of others to get more communal or personal seas, and of still others to protect reactionary vested interests. There seems to be a melancholy comradeship between these various interests.

I cannot refrain from referring to the Income Tax Payers' Association. I understand this new Club of Queer Trades is also preparing to give evidence before the Commission. If this is true, where in the world does there exist an Association of this sort dabbling in politics and the framing of Constitutions ? But, perhaps, these people are so ashamed of the comparatively low level of Ceylon Income Tax, that they wished to urge its increase. However, this gives a pointer to the whole sorry show that is proceeding.

It would be more to the point, if someone started a Pauper's Union and its members marched before the Commission in their tens of thousands.

Well, in this state of affairs, what was to be done ? It seemed to some of us that even at the eleventh hour, the wisest course was to try and get a just agreement amongst ourselves, and put up a united front against these forces of imperialism and reaction. We held a conference of members of the State Council, but failed to come to an agreement.

What remains to be done ? There was no point in giving evidence before the Soulbury Commission. That Commission was strictly limited to a consideration of proposals within the 1943 declaration, not even the Declaration as interpreted by the Ministers, because the Secretary of State had already rejected the very first interpretation.

**OS**

The only thing to do was to frame a constitution as we wanted it, and to move it as a Bill in the State Council. The Deputy Speaker moved a motion to this effect last November, and a few weeks ago, on behalf of the Ministers, I presented a Bill in Council. The Bill is still being discussed.

The Bill provides for a Status similar to that of the Dominions. This Status would confer on us the same powers in internal and external affairs that England herself possesses, with the power to secede from the Commonwealth if we decide to do so. It is a Status which, for the reasons I have explained above, we can reasonably claim and Britain can reasonably grant. The question could be asked, what happens if the British Government rejects the Bill ? We would have made it clear to the country and the British Government what we demand, and we shall be able to mobilise what strength we can to carry on the struggle for the freedom we desire, whatever Constitution they choose to foist on us.

If we did not take this step, but all trooped before the Commission, consider what the position would be. We would be giving evidence on the implicit understanding that we accepted the 1943 Declaration (minus even the Ministers' interpretations). Any Constitution recommended by the Commission, however unsatisfactory, but which no doubt by legal quibbling can be shown to be strictly within the Declaration, we would have to accept. And we would be in a hopeless position later to object and take up a strong attitude on a mere question of interpretation.

One point remains. It may be asked whether, even if we do not make Constitutional proposals of our own to the Commission, we should not correct any false impressions that might be created in their mind by others who have given evidence. If we are not giving evidence on the main issue of freedom (indeed the Commission has no power to hear us outside the Declaration), is it worthwhile to give evidence on the lesser issue ? Indeed, it is not necessary, for all that need be said can and will be said on the floor of the House in the course of the discussion on my Bill. The Commissioners will, no doubt, carefully follow those proceedings. I shall not delay you longer. You will have seen, from what I have said, the need for the first resolution, rejecting the Declaration, and, following thereon,

refraining from putting any proposals before the Commission ; and for the second, supporting the Bill now placed before the Council.

The third resolution provides for the possibility that still exists of coming to some just and reasonable agreement amongst ourselves before the Bill is finally passed. By the fourth resolution, we are again making clear our attitude regarding the important problem of non-Ceylonese which, although not directly connected with the new Constitution, has an important bearing on it. One last word. Let us realise that, when all is said and done, such a thing as a people's freedom is not one that can be lightly achieved by merely giving dinners or memoranda to Commissions. It can only be obtained by our unity, sincerity, service and sacrifice. Let us work in that spirit, and we can have same hope for the future.

#### THE SRI LANKA BILL

*At the Annual Session of the Sinhala Maha Sabha held at Kandy on Saturday, 18th August 1945, the President, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Minister of Local Administration and Acting Leader of the State Council, delivered the following Address:*

The Annual Session is normally held in June. This year we postponed it for a short time in the hope that we would be in a position to discuss any constitutional proposals made by the British Government. But as there is delay in this matter, we decided to hold our Annual Session now, and later to call a special session as soon as the need arises.

I wish at the outset to refer to the conclusion of the War. This War, perhaps the most terrible in the history of mankind, has now come to an end, and we rejoice with all Allied Nations at that fact. The shadow of Fascist domination which threatened the world, and the degrading slavery which an Axis victory would have meant for us all, has passed away, let us hope for ever.

The war has been won, but peace yet remains to be achieved. There are many grave problems that face us now-politically, the problem of winning our freedom ; economically, the problems of providing for all, employment, social security, adequate health and educational facilities, housing and food. How our Sabha intends to deal with these various problems, I will explain later.

You all know the lead that the Sabha has given in the matter of political freedom. I introduced, with the approval of my colleagues on the Board of Ministers, the Constitutional Bill (popularly known as the Sri Lanka Bill) in the State Council. As you know, this Bill was passed by an overwhelming majority, and many members of minority communities voted for it. In thanking these members for their patriotic action on behalf of our Sabha, I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude for the co-operation and support of other political parties-the Ceylon National Congress, the Muslim League, the Moors Association and the Ceylon Indian Congress whose members voted for the Bill. I believe Mr. Rajakulandran, who also supported the Bill, is a member of the Ceylon Tamil Congress. The Bill, as you know, was disallowed by His Majesty's Government. Our

02

Executive Committee passed a motion of protest against the disallowance and has demanded from the new British Government that it be re-considered and approved. We have heard from the Secretary of State that our cable has been received.

The Soulbury Commission's Report has not yet been published. Meanwhile, Mr. Senanayake, the Leader of the State Council, has gone to England on a personal invitation by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for discussions. When the Soulbury Report is published, and proposals are made by the British Government for constitutional changes, we shall have to consider carefully the whole position and the action that it would be necessary to take. What is needed at the moment is the creation of public opinion and the attempt to secure unity among all progressive elements of the various parties as well as sections of the people of this country, in order that as far as possible a united front may be secured in the struggle for freedom.

A charge has been made against the Sinhala Maha Sabha that it is not wide enough and that it might prevent cooperation and unity between the majority and the minority communities. We always contended that this was false, and that the correct approach to our problems was that of our Sabha i.e., while uniting the Sinhalese, to obtain the confidence and co-operation of the other communities. Events have shown that we have been correct in our attitude. Not only are Sinhalese of all communities and religions members of the Sabha, but the minorities have more confidence in our Sabha than in most other parties. Personally, I have been greatly touched and impressed by the goodwill that has been shown by members of all communities to my election as Acting Leader.

Any fears that may remain should be removed by the fifth resolution, by which it is proposed to authorize the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to try and secure a

united front by co-operating with other parties and other sections of the people of the country, with regard not only to elections but also to the formation of a Government after the election. After this motion is passed, we hope to discuss details with other parties and come to a satisfactory arrangement.

03

In the economic sphere, the Sabha's attitude is definitely socialistic. Among other amenities of life, it is our object to secure for all full employment, social security, free education, and adequate health and housing facilities. The second resolution deals with this matter.

In order to secure these objects, it is necessary in the first place so to adjust taxation as to remove the present serious inequalities in fortune and opportunity. The third resolution deals with this.

In the second place, it is necessary greatly to increase the national wealth, by planned agriculture and planned industries. Planning must necessarily involve a great measure of State control and even nationalization in the case of certain major industries.

Field Marshal Smuts, in the troubled period just before the outbreak of this War, used a striking phrase-" Mankind has struck its tents and is on the march". That can be used more appropriately today. Mankind has struck its tents and is on the march from an arid and exhausted land of war, poverty, unemployment, and ynorance towards a land of peace and prosperity for all ; it does not intend, this time, to be deceived by a mere mirage of fair hopes and promises that melt into nothingness, but is determined grimly to march until the real goal is reached. The recent General Election in England was a sympton of this spirit. Although one British Government may not differ fundamentally from another in its policy towards dependencies, still we have reason to be glad that a party is in power, which, at least in its professions, is progressive.

In that onward march, to which I have referred, our Sabha must take its due place, and play its part worthily.

*(From " The Nation " o f 25th August, 1945)*

#### A UNITED DEMAND FOR DOMINION STATUS \*

*Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Minister for Local Administration and President of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, placed the following Memorandum on the constitutional position before a meeting of the Sabha held on the 21st October, 1945. The Sabha, after considering the Memorandum, decided to accept the recommendation contained therein:*

#### I.-Introduction

I have prepared this memorandum for the consideration of the Committee of the Sinhala Maha Sabha at the meeting to be held on Sunday, the 21st October, 1945.

My intention at this stage is to bring to the notice of the Sabha as well as the public, as clearly as possible, some of the more important issues involved in the Constitutional situation. I am not suggesting any definite decisions at present, as we shall have to await the views of the British Government before we are in a position to reach final decisions ourselves. The Secretary of State for the Colonies has announced that the decisions of His Majesty's Government, based on a consideration of the Soulbury Report and Mr. Senanayake's representations, will be made early. We are expecting this communication before the Council meets on November 6th. At this stage I am only concerned with bringing before you what appear to me to be the most important issues involved on the material available to us at present in order to ensure that when final decisions are reached in such an important matter as Constitutional changes involving the welfare of this country for many years to come, you will be in a position to reach those decisions after due consideration of all the relevant points and thus avoid being influenced by comparatively less important considerations or by possible misconceptions and misunderstandings.

#### II.-Exploitation by British Interests of Internal Discord in Ceylon

The first point I would wish you to bear in mind is the clever and adroit manner in which British interests have exploited to their own advantage the situation in this country.

• See also " The Constitutional Situation ", Page 205.

02

Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam and others of his way of thought were encouraged by Members of the State Council such as Mr. Black, influential members of the European Community and the " Times of Ceylon " (which is usually identified with European interests), to put forward their

demand for "Fifty-Fifty". It will be remembered that the Constitution put forward by Mr. Ponnambalam, and the Association of which he is President, was a very reactionary one and embodied limitations that in some respects went even further than the limitations contemplated in the Declaration of 1943. It is not unreasonable to raise the question whether a sacrifice of a demand for a real measure of freedom for Ceylon was not made in the hope of enlisting European support for the " Fifty-Fifty " demand.

Once the bogey of " Fifty-Fifty " had thus been cleverly foisted on our political stage, one wonders whether some others of the opposite camp were not impelled to give up their demands for a real measure of freedom in the hope thereby of defeating the " Fifty-Fifty " claim. The net result at least we know-the majority have been offered the consolation that even if the Soulbury Constitution falls far short of their demands in the direction of freedom, at least the " Fifty-Fifty " demand has not been granted ; the minorities can have the consolation that even if they have not succeeded in getting " Fifty-Fifty ", sufficient power is concentrated in the hands of the British Government to prevent " domination " by the Sinhalese. Neither the majority nor the minorities have got what they want: the British Government alone has proved the victor as all the power that they need remains in their hands. This is what I mean by saying that clever use has been made of our own differences for the British Government to get its own way, and the strategy employed bears a family resemblance to the tactics used in such countries as India.

Of course, it would appear that European interests generally are satisfied with the Soulbury Constitution. This is not to be wondered at, but we can well imagine what the feelings of the " Fifty-Fifty " brigade must be, who were so relying on the backing of European interests.

The one lesson we have to learn from all these sorry happenings is that it is always wiser for us to settle our own differences among ourselves without placing any hopes on outsiders to settle them for us.

03

#### UL-The Soulbury Constitution

The Constitution falls into two parts : (a) The form of the Constitution, and (b) The powers of the Constitution.

I should like to deal with both these aspects.

##### (Q) THE FORM OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The Commissioners have followed very closely the Sri Lanka Bill in dealing with the form of the Constitution. The Sri Lanka Bill itself, it will be remembered, generally followed the lines of the Ministers' Original Draft in this, respect.

It is presumed that the Commissioners, in taking this line, have paid due regard to the wishes of the large majority of the Members of the State Council (including a number of minority members) who voted for the Bill. We have no objection to the recommendations of the Soulbury Commission with regard to this part of the Constitution, although objection must be taken to their definite recommendation of a Second Chamber.

The Second Chamber which they recommend will probably chiefly serve the purpose of enabling a few fossils to have the satisfaction of calling themselves Senators. Beyond this and a certain nuisance value, it is difficult to imagine what particularly useful or effective purpose it will serve. Half the Second Chamber is to be nominated by the Governor and the other half to be elected by members of the First Chamber. The powers are restricted chiefly to delay. Even the power of initiation is not likely to be in fact effective. If the Commissioners felt that it was necessary to foist a Second Chamber on us for these purposes, all we can say is that we can well do without such a Chamber at all.

In dealing with this aspect of the Constitution, the one really valuable thing the Commissioners have done is the definite rejection of the " Fifty-Fifty " demand and all that this demand involved. Let it be remembered that the " Fifty-Fifty " champions wanted this "Commission, and therefore should be prepared to abide by its decision" at least as far as this claim goes.

04

##### (b) THE POWERS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

This is really the more important aspect of the Constitution. In this matter there is nothing surprising about the recommendations of the Commissioners. They were restricted by their Terms of Reference to the limitations of the Declaration of 1943.

The Teal question is whether the limitations contemplated in the Declaration of 1943 can be considered satisfactory. Let-it be remembered that important political bodies such as the Sinhala Maha Sabha, the Ceylon National Congress, etc., have specifically rejected the limitations of the Declaration and that the State Council has also impliedly rejected them by passing the Sri Lanka Bill.

Even Mr. Senanayake has now clearly stated " it was now generally agreed that the strictive clauses were unsatisfactory ". He also stated that we had now gone beyond the position contemplated when the Declaration of 1943 was made, and argued very strongly why the Declaration of 1943 was not now acceptable (vide Note on Representations made by Mr. Senanayake to the Secretary of State, published in the "Daily News" of October 2, 1945). Mr. Senanayake's position would, therefore, appear to be not only that the Declaration of 1943 was unacceptable but also the Soulbury Report which is based on this Declaration. This unacceptability would presumably also apply to the Interpretation of the Declaration made by the Ministers soon after the Declaration was made.

The Soulbury Commissioners have certainly interpreted the limitations set out in the Declaration far more narrowly than in the Ministers' Interpretation.

The crucial question is really the question of our economic freedom. It is doubtful whether the New Constitution confers any greater economic freedom on us than is contained in the present Constitution. It is arguable that in certain respects it may perhaps be even worse e.g. regarding power to impose tariffs. It should also be borne in mind that in the present condition of our country, what is really required by way of a Constitutional advance m•.)st refer to economic matters, For, if we are to secure for our people, as far as possible, a reasonable standard of living, jobs for as many as possible, adequate wages and

OS

(b) THE POWERS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

This is really the more important aspect of the Constitution. In this matter there is nothing surprising about the recommendations of the Commissioners. They were restricted by their Terms of Reference to the limitations of the Declaration of 1943.

The Teal question is whether the limitations contemplated in the Declaration of 1943 can be considered satisfactory. Let-it be remembered that important political bodies such as the Sinhala Maha Sabha, the Ceylon National Congress, etc., have specifically rejected the limitations of the Declaration, and that the State Council has also impliedly rejected them by passing the Sri Lanka Bill.

Even Mr. Senanayake has now clearly stated " it was now generally agreed that the strictive clauses were unsatisfactory ". He also stated that we had now gone beyond the position contemplated when the Declaration of 1943 was made, and argued very strongly why the Declaration of 1943 was not now acceptable (vide Note on Representations made by Mr. Senanayake to the Secretary of State, published in the "Daily News" of October 2, 1945). Mr. Senanayake's position would, therefore, appear to be not only that the Declaration of 1943 was unacceptable but also the Soulbury Report which is based on this Declaration. This unacceptability would presumably also apply to the Interpretation of the Declaration made by the Ministers soon after the Declaration was made.

The Soulbury Commissioners have certainly interpreted the limitations set out in the Declaration far more narrowly than in the Ministers' Interpretation.

The crucial question is really the question of our economic freedom. It is doubtful whether the New Constitution confers any greater economic freedom on us than is contained in the present Constitution. It is arguable that in certain respects it may perhaps be even worse e.g. regarding power to impose tariffs. It should also be borne in mind that in the present condition of our country, what is really required by way of a Constitutional advance m'-7st refer to economic matters, For, if we are to secure for our people, as far as possible, a reasonable standard of living, jobs for as many as possible, adequate wages and

OS

measures of social security, the real benefits of the Free Education Scheme, necessary health measures, housing, etc., it is imperative considerably to increase the National Wealth. This can only be done if we had a satisfactory measure of economic freedom. It should be carefully considered whether the limitations contemplated under the New Constitution confer on us sufficient economic power to do these things ; whether it is any advance in this regard on the Donoughmore Constitution ; and whether there is any reasonable chance of getting satisfactory further advance early, once this Constitution is accepted.

Let it be remembered that the Donoughmore Constitution was accepted as an experiment. It was possible to raise the question of its amendment soon after its inauguration, as indeed it was, when Mr. E. W. Perera moved his motion. The New Constitution will not be an experiment but may be considered as more or less a final settlement of our constitutional position or at least a settlement for 25 or 30 years to come. If this is so, the position needs very careful consideration.

#### **IV. -What Should We Do?**

Mr. Senanayake, on his return from England, gave an interview to the press in which he stated that he felt if there were a united demand in this country we could get Dominion Status. Coming from the Leader of the State Council fresh from his discussions with the Secretary of State, the fullest weight must necessarily be attached to this statement. It would appear from this statement that he is of the opinion that the present is a good opportunity for us to get the substance of Dominion Status, provided only there is sufficient unity for the purpose. As far as I know the facts at present, my own view inclines in the same direction.

Now that the Soulbury Commissioners have given their findings on the communal issue, it may be possible that some reasonable and just arrangement can be reached between the majority and minority communities which would enable them to stand shoulder to shoulder in the demand for Dominion Status. If this is so, it has to be considered carefully whether the wiser course may not be this :

to reject this Constitution (presuming that His

07

Majesty's Government will not make any important change in the Soulbury Constitution) and put up a united demand for Dominion Status. It should of course be understood that this course of action would be based on three assumptions :

- (1) Renunciation by the minorities, once and for all, of such demands as the " Fifty Fifty " demand.
- (2) An agreement being reached that is considered to be reasonable and fair by both the majority and the minority communities.
- (3) A **firm and united demand for Dominion Status.**

The alternative is to accept this Constitution. Those who would support this point of view argue that the Soulbury Constitution provides some advance on the Donoughmore Constitution, and it would be wise to accept this and work up later for further advance. In considering this attitude we must examine what the advances really are. In the first place there is the abolition of the Executive Committee system and the introduction of the Cabinet System. This may or may not be an improvement, but it is really only a change in the form of the Constitution and therefore is not a matter of vital importance. In the second place there is the abolition of the Officers of State and the Governor's paramount powers. This is certainly an advance, but, in view of the fact that the most important matters are now to be treated as Reserved Subjects, the real value of this advance has to be carefully considered. The argument is, of course, also urged by some that the communal question has been settled favourably to one school of thought.

Another matter that must be considered is the point referred to earlier i.e. whether the New Constitution once accepted would be capable of further change within a reasonable time or whether it is likely to be considered a settlement of our Constitutional questions for an indefinite period.

#### **V.-Conclusion**

I have stated as briefly as possible what appears to me to be the main issues that confront us at present. These require further careful and detailed examination. I would earnestly request you all to bring your minds to bear on these issues.

In the meanwhile. I would recommend that the Sabha should reiterate its demand for the powers contemplated in the Sri Lanka Bill, including the power to decide on a Second Chamber, while approving otherwise generally of the structure of the Constitution recommended by the Soulbury Report, and that we await the decision of His Majesty's Government before reaching final decisions ourselves. Meanwhile (following Mr. Senanayake's own line of thinking referred to above) it seems very desirable to explore the possibility of creating unity amongst ourselves here on a reasonable basis with a view to putting forward a united demand for Dominion Status:

### **TOWARDS DOMINION STATUS**

*[Address delivered by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, President, at Galle on Saturday, 27th July, 1946, at the Annual Session of the Sinhala Maha Sabha.]*

Since our meeting last year at Kandy, there have been some important happenings to which I must now refer in some detail.

A new Constitution has been promulgated, and the elections for the new Parliament will be held next year. The new Constitution generally follows the recommendation of the Soulbury Report, with a few unimportant changes introduced by the Secretary of State.

It is a fact that this Constitution is disappointing, and falls far short of what we had a right to expect, although it is an advance in some respects on the existing Constitution. After fifteen years of the Donoughmore Constitution, the next step should at least have been full Dominion Status.

You will remember how hard our Sabha tried to secure a fuller measure of freedom—the conference of members of the State Council, over which I presided, the boycott of the Soulbury Commission, the Sri Lanka Bill introduced by me. Unfortunately, there was such a lack of agreement and unity amongst the various parties and sections of the people that in the end we were compelled to acquiesce in the proposed Constitution for the present.

You will remember that even Mr. Senanayake's motion for the acceptance of the Secretary of State's proposals contained an expression of disappointment with the unsatisfactory nature of those proposals. I think that the position has now been sufficiently cleared to enable us to reach agreement amongst ourselves and achieve in a very short time our freedom. No more Commissions from abroad will be required to settle our constitutional problems for us.

But let us not make the mistake of imagining that we will get a larger measure of freedom as a matter of course. There are some Ceylonese, particularly when they are abroad, who announce with easy optimism that in two years or three we will get full Dominion Status. I have no such optimism. I think that if we are to get more freedom, a very determined effort on our part is necessary. We must achieve unity and agreement amongst ourselves, and be ready to take the action necessary for the attainment of that object. The first resolution deals with this subject.

I now come to the formation of the new United National Party, which our Sabha has joined. I should like at the outset to make a few general remarks about the form of government introduced by the new Constitution. We are to have the British form with all the conventions and traditions of their parliamentary cabinet system. ~

This system can only work smoothly and successfully under what is known as the two party system i.e. the existence in fact, or in effect, of really only two parties, one or the other of which is sure to obtain an absolute majority in an election. Whichever party gets a majority is able, generally, to carry on government until the next general election, thus ensuring security and stability of government. It was the fact that, accidentally, there existed in England a two party system for many years (Cavaliers and Roundheads, Tories and Whigs, Conservatives and Liberals) which produced, and ensured, the successful working of their parliamentary government. When no one party can secure an absolute majority, various serious difficulties arise, as happened in the case of France. There is another point, which I only propose to touch upon here. It seems to me that not only the two party idea is necessary for the successful working of the British System, but the further factor that there is no fundamental difference of ideology between the two parties. When this arises, then it becomes necessary for one or the other party to continue in power indefinitely (if government chaos is to be avoided). That is why Professor Laski wants the Labour Party to continue in power for at least twenty years. This then becomes really a one party government, which is rather different from what has hitherto been understood by the British System.

However that may be, the point we have to bear in mind is that, if the new Constitution is to have a reasonable chance of being worked successfully, we too must in effect have a two party system. As the conditions here do not permit of just two parties, the next best thing is the formation, roughly, of two coalitions of parties and groups that can reasonably work together. Generally speaking, today, as the position in the Continent of Europe shows, there are no reactionaries—at least avowed reactionaries. The difference is between extreme, revolutionary leftists, and more moderate leftists.

We can see makings of the two groups in Ceylon. I, of course, do not take seriously the party of which Dr. Nell is the head, or more correctly the figure-head. But it is interesting to note that even these people have had to appear in the ill-fitting garb of a Swaraj Party, and have been constrained to put forward a radical and progressive policy. The next point to be borne in mind is that the Sinhala Maha Sabha, whose membership is restricted to Sinhalese, must contemplate some sort of coalition for government purposes. We have always made this clear: we made it clear when we gave evidence before Sir Andrew Caldecott (when he was preparing his memorandum on, reforms), and we made it clear when we formed the National Committee.

At the Annual Session at Kandy, the following resolution was passed :  
" In order to secure the greatest possible unity in our struggle for freedom, this Sabha authorises the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to come to any reasonable arrangements with any other Party or Parties and with any other sections as well for the formation of a government thereafter "

When I was invited to participate in discussions in which members of the Ceylon National Congress, Muslim League, Moors' Association, Tamils, Kandyans, etc. took part, I did so in pursuance of this resolution. When these talks resulted in the formation of the United National Party, I placed these proposals before our Executive Committee, which, after a full discussion, accepted them. The new Party is in effect a coalition Party. It will be seen from its manifesto, that its policy and programme is one with which we can agree.

There is another point that must be realised. In the not distant future, we shall have to face some very important and serious problems-the problem of achieving our political freedom, the problem of securing for our people a satisfactory standard of living, and the problem of solving the Indian question. These problems cannot be solved by a narrow party government, but by a broad-based National Government. Some people think that the Sabha (as well as other parties) are now dead or dying, because they have joined the new Party. This is not so, and the Sabha must continue its work as vigorously as possible, and increase its strength to the fullest. We are ready to co-operate loyally and honourably with the other parties and groups that are in the new party. In turn, we expect to receive just and honourable treatment from the others. If and when it is no longer possible for us honourably to continue in this party, we shall leave it. I hope this contingency

04

will not arise. Some people say the new party is merely Mr. Senanayake's party, or that of a caucus. It is nothing of the sort. The party which was heralded sometime ago by Colonel Kotelawela at Kurunegala and Mr. Molamure at Ratnapura, never came into being. On the contrary, Mr. Senanayake consented to join the Party formed by the various groups referred to above. From the personal point of view, I am satisfied, after many talks with Mr. Senanayake, that he is not actuated by petty or selfish motives either with reference to himself or a caucus of his relations and inmates. I feel that he will act with justice and fairness. That is why I agreed to accept his leadership and work with him in the interests of the country as a whole. As the decision to join this Party was reached in pursuance of your own motion passed last year at Kandy, and with the full concurrence of the Executive Committee, motions in conflict with that decision are out of order, and cannot be discussed today. In the interests of the country generally and of our Sabha itself, we should all do our best to honourably co-operate with each other in the new Party. If at any time, it does not become possible to do so, we shall take appropriate action.

I wish to say a few words about the Indian problem. It is to be regretted that recent events have caused the situation, bad as it was before, to deteriorate seriously. Although I do not wish at this stage to adopt the attitude of " I told you so", I cannot refrain from pointing out that, if my advice had been followed after the breakdown of the Delhi negotiations i.e. to proceed with Bills for the Restriction of Immigration and the Registration of non-Ceylonese, the situation might have been better. For, what is the present position? The Bills are still in cold storage in the Committee Stage of the State Council, and the subsequent negotiations not only proved abortive, but even aggravated the situation.

I do not wish to say anything here that might be construed or misconstrued as adding to the tension of the situation. No one knows better than myself the whole history of this problem, and I wish to say that its solution, in a way to safeguard our legitimate interests (while acting fairly to Indians in Ceylon) as well as to preserve what India considers to be her honour in this matter, is quite possible. We have a resolution dealing with this subject.

I have already referred to two of the resolutions you will be discussing today-with reference to our freedom and the Indian problem. The third resolution deals with an

OS

equally important matter ; it reiterates our policy in securing for the people a proper standard of living. In the extent to which we succeed or fail in doing this will be the real success or failure of the new Constitution and the new government.

The fourth resolution refers to a matter, about which many resolutions have been submitted. As far as is reasonably possible, the Sabha will try to see that the widespread grievances of teachers regarding the proposed salary scales are redressed. The fifth resolution deals with the adoption of our national languages as official languages. This has already been adopted by the State Council, and it is a policy that has our fullest support.

The last resolution deals with an injustice arising out of the provision in the Order in Council, disqualifying from membership of Parliament a person sentenced to imprisonment for an offence. As worded, it differs from the proposal of the Board of Ministers in their draft constitution, from the corresponding provision of the Sri Lanka Bill, and from the recommendation of the Soulbury Report. It is most unusual that a person convicted of a political offence should be disqualified from being a member of the Legislature. The provision should be immediately amended.

In the past year many new Sabhas were formed, and a number of new members have joined the Sabha. The collection of a fund for the Sabha has proceeded fairly satisfactorily. Evidence was given before the Delimitation Commission on behalf of the Sabha.

The work of the Sabha, far from being relaxed, must be carried on with greater vigour than ever.

I appeal to all existing Sabhas to redouble their activity. Many Sabhas have no detailed registers of members. This must be done in future, and as many members enrolled as possible. New Sabhas must be formed wherever they are needed, and the Sabha fund must be adequately provided.

Thus will the Sabha be able, in honourable cooperation with others, or, if such co-operation does not become possible, by itself, to make the greatest possible contribution to the welfare and progress of our country.

### **BENEFITS OF DEIVIQCIIAGY**

*[Presidential Address to Annual Session of Sinhala Maha Sabha in 1948.]*

**At the outset I think it necessary to recall to your memories the position that has arisen regarding the Sabha within the last three years. About a year prior to the Elections under the Soulbury Constitution discussions were held between various Groups and parties, of which the Sabha was one, in order to explore the possibility of obtaining collaboration on an agreed policy and programme with a view to securing as much unity as possible in the country and the formation of a stable Government when we were on the threshold of freedom. Out of these discussions emerged the U. N. P. and later we were able to form the present Government after the last General Elections. In both the original formation of the U. N. P. and the subsequent formation of this Government I venture to think that the Sabha played a not unimportant part. I think it will also be admitted that the objects we had in view have been secured-the achievement of a reasonable measure of unity and a stable Government.**

**I wish at this point to draw attention in passing to a certain situation that has arisen regarding some other Parties. The Ceylon National Congress which together with us originally joined in forming the U. N. P., appears now to be breaking that connection with the intention of working as a separate Party. There are in the Cabinet today two Leaders of two Parties which have no connection at all with the U. N. P., and which indeed seem, at least in certain respects, not to be at one with the U. N. P. I refer to the Ceylon Tamil Congress and the Labour Party.**

**As for the Sabha it has always loyally abided by the conditions laid down in Rule 3 (2) of the Constitution of the United National Party under which it became connected with the U. N. P. Although it might be thought that this has placed the Sabha in a somewhat disadvantageous position as compared with the other Parties just mentioned it was a sacrifice in the best interests of the country. The Sabha, I have no doubt, will always continue to act in the best interests of the country, in the future also.**

**The next point to which I wish to draw your attention is that the change in the country's status within the last two years also involves a certain change in the work that**

a Party like the Sabha can most usefully do in the best interests of the country. Before we were free, all Parties naturally concentrated on the political issue of obtaining our freedom. Now that we have gained our freedom the emphasis naturally shifts to concentration on social, economic, cultural and similar problems, particularly in the case of an association like our Sabha ; in other words we have now to address ourselves to the task of doing all we can to protect the freedom we have gained and to secure for all our people the fullest benefits of our newly regained freedom.

In the last two years, as it was a period of change in which it was not very clear what would be the most useful work we could do to help in securing the objects just mentioned, the Sabha was somewhat dormant. Now the position is becoming clearer, and the help we can give in the directions mentioned is becoming manifest.

Another point that deserves to be borne in mind, and which arises as a result of our changed status, is this. Formerly there was a tendency to expect Government to do everything and the public did not have much opportunity to play their full part in the affairs of the country. Today it has become very necessary, if we are to obtain the fullest benefits of freedom, for the public to play their due part in the country's affairs. To achieve this object the public must be enabled to attain the fullest knowledge and understanding of the various problems that confront us, a vigorous and well-informed public opinion must be created and the full co-operation of the public mobilised in the work that faces the country. Every association as well as every individual should assist in this task. I have no doubt, as far as our Sabha is concerned, that there is a great deal of valuable work that we can do for our country, particularly in this direction.

The first resolution which you will discuss today is divided into various parts, summarising the various things which are most urgent and vital if we are to help in securing for our people the real benefits of our newly regained freedom.

Politically we must all strive to ensure to all our people the fundamental concepts of Democracy. One of the Chief defects of our previous status of subordination was that the vast mass of the people, deprived of the various freedoms inherent in democracy, had no opportunity of gaining that self-respect, capacity for sacrifice and united action, initiative and enterprise, without which no real progress can be achieved. Not only does the servile mentality still continue to a great extent, but today there is a danger of even a worse form of servitude under some totalitarian system of either the Left or the Right. We are certainly opposed to the Totalitarianism of Communism but we also have to be most vigilant in preventing a trend towards Fascism or semi-Fascism which might creep upon us almost unawares, while the bogey of Communism is being played up. Let us remember that democracy can really be defended and fostered only by democratic methods ; that the end does not justify the means, and that indeed the means very often are an end in themselves. In a free democratic society, just as there is no room for Totalitarian Communism, so also there is no room for fascistic tendencies.

The country should be grateful to the Prime Minister for re-affirming some of the essentials of democracy for which we stand, at the recent [U. N. P. Rally](#). He stated quite rightly that a democratic Leader is not one who is placed above and apart from the people but is himself one with the people. He also drew attention to the value and importance of *bona fide* criticism in any democratic society.

Not only is the true spirit of democracy necessary if we are to achieve real progress, but Ceylon amongst all countries of Asia is best fitted to make a success of democracy. In doing so we can not only benefit ourselves but encourage the whole democratic movement in Asia, and in fact prove to be a valuable link between East and West.

If these purposes are to be achieved it is necessary for all associations to help in educating the public to understand fully the benefits as well as the responsibilities of democracy, so that they will be in a position to defend and foster democratic principles.

Economically the vast mass of our people are living below the poverty line. We must do all we can, mobilising for the purpose the fullest resources of the country to give all our people as high a standard of living, of health, of education, and of social security as possible.

Culturally we must take steps to foster our National Literatures and Languages and to see that the National Languages occupy that position in our country which is their due in any free land

Socially it is most necessary for us to work for the removal of caste distinctions and to create unity and friendship amongst the various communities of the country. This has always been the object of our Sabha and will always continue to be so.

There are two social evils that need attention, the evils of gambling and drink.

Anyone who goes to the Racecourse and sees the many thousands of poor people who go there and lose all their money cannot but agree that some action is necessary. Today, particularly in the worsening financial position when people cannot afford to throw money away in gambling, what is happening is nothing short of a crime. Racing as a sport for lovers of horses (my father himself was one such) is one thing, but as an activity creating the situation that exists today can scarcely

receive general approval. I think that racing may with advantage be abolished in this country. I hope I am not a rigid puritan. I am myself suggesting that the State should run under proper supervision and control Lotteries to help certain social services. Not only will this help such services, but no one is likely to be ruined by buying a ticket or two in such a Sweep, but what is happening on the Racecourse today is quite a different matter. Two or three days ago I came to learn of an interesting experience. A woman was weeping bitterly on the road surrounded by a small crowd of people. When questioned she stated that her husband gave her ten rupees to pay arrears of rent for the house in which they lived. She lost this money at the races and was bitten as a result by her not unjustifiably angry mate. The story happened to be true.

On the question of drink and the desirability or otherwise of governmental action to introduce Prohibition or partial or gradual Prohibition, I should like to tell you certain things which I learnt recently in Madras. On my way to Delhi recently I had to stop at Madras. I was very interested to learn the results of the experiment of Prohibition which is being tried there. As you know total prohibition has been in operation in Madras for about a year. I obtained the views of a number of people who were neither strongly for or against Prohibition. They all told me that although at present there was a certain amount of bootlegging, etc. particularly as Provinces bordering Madras

OS

had not yet adopted prohibition, certain appreciable benefits were already to be seen. There was definite evidence of a fall in crime and also of an improvement in the standard of living of the poor.

I quite admit that in a matter of this sort education of the public and voluntary effort are very necessary, but it has to be carefully considered whether side by side with that some reasonable governmental action is also not necessary. Of course in the case of those who may not feel that drink is an evil no further consideration of the matter is needed ; but for those who feel otherwise the matter requires most urgent and serious consideration.

We believe that it is essential for mankind, particularly in dealing with the confused and troubled problems of today, to look up to the guiding light of Religion. In Asia, perhaps far more so than in the West, religion still has some real meaning to our people, our age-long philosophies and religions must be fostered and strengthened in every way. If we do this and combine that with the other matters mentioned above we shall be able to fashion a way of life between both godless Communism and perhaps an almost equally godless Capitalism of the Western World which will provide salvation not only for ourselves but perhaps for others as well. I feel, and I think you will agree with me, that the Sabha can and should contribute all in its power in helping to achieve these objects. Some of the methods in which it can help in these matters are indicated in the resolution and I appeal for the help of all of you in the work that lies before us.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ONE-PARTY GOVERNMENT [*Presidential Address to Annual Session of Sinhal Maha Sabha at Madampe in 1951*]

I wish to draw your attention to a situation that has arisen in this country, the full implications of which are perhaps not yet realised by many people. As you know, ours is a democratic parliamentary form of Government. Under such a system in any country an important requisite would be the existence of two or more parties, any one of which could reasonably form a Government. Indeed this is the position that has existed in all countries with democratic parliamentary systems. The need for this can easily be understood. One of the chief factors of such a system of Government is the right vested in the people to choose a Government and to change it, in order to give effect to a policy that is in accordance with public opinion and the wishes of a majority of the voters from time to time. This is an essential ingredient of the democratic system. On the other hand, different parties, with their different policies and programmes, try to reflect as closely as possible public opinion and the changing needs of the people. In all other countries with democratic parliamentary systems such parties have existed.

In Ceylon a peculiar position has arisen. There is in fact only one party, as all the important opposition parties are those which, owing to their Marxist beliefs, have no faith in either democracy or the parliamentary system as we understand those terms. In these circumstances there is a really no democratic parliamentary opposition to the party in power. The implications of this situation can easily be realised. On the one hand the people, who believe in a democratic parliamentary system, are deprived of the fundamental democratic right of choosing from two or

more parties than one which is most in accord with public opinion. On the other hand, the party in power might naturally tend to be inadequately sensitive to public opinion, because they know that there is really no democratic opposition to be feared, and no real alternative to themselves, and that the voters are in effect presented with a Hobson's choice. Such a situation would be unsatisfactory in any democratic country.

In the absence of more than one powerful democratic party, therefore, it is necessary for that one party to be more sensitive and responsive to public opinion than any one party would normally be in a country where there are two or more parties. Indeed in such circumstances such a party would be entitled to re-consider its policies and programmes from time to time and fashion them to suit public opinion and changing needs to a far greater extent than would otherwise be the case. This is more or less the position that exists in our country today.

You will recall that chiefly with a view to obtaining stability of Government the Sinhala Maha Sabha joined in forming the U. N. P., before the last General Election. This step helped in achieving that object, and it became possible to form a reasonably stable Government. The U. N. P. was undoubtedly, and is still to a great extent, therefore, a coalition representing different shades of opinion varying from Socialism to Conservatism. Another point that must be borne in mind is this. At the last General Election, soon after the conclusion of the last War and our emergence from Colonial status to freedom, many issues, both International and national, still remained blurred and indistinct. So that there was naturally a certain vagueness in the policies and programmes enunciated before the last election. If you refer to the manifesto of the U. N. P. issued before the last election, you notice an understandable tendency to state policies and programmes in rather general terms.

The position today has greatly changed. Many issues, both on the international and national plane, have emerged with far greater distinctness and clarity, and the public today expect from all parties clear and precise answers to equally clear questions, on both policies and programmes. It is far less possible today than it was in 1947 to satisfy the people with policies that are of a somewhat vague and nebulous nature.

There is a further point that must be borne in mind, that the next General Election will be a very crucial one, and a great responsibility rests on all voters in the exercise of their votes. For, the fate of our country for some years to come, and the general direction and trend of our progress and development, may well be decided by the results of the next General Election. Voters, therefore, will have to decide what precisely they want and see to it that their wishes are properly reflected in the manner they exercise their votes.

I do not wish to deal in detail with the resolutions, which you will be discussing this afternoon. They speak for themselves and you will observe that they are all important. The Executive Committee of our Sabha decided to place these

03

resolutions before you. The resolutions themselves are based on a number of resolutions sent up by branches of our Sabha as well as individual members, for consideration.

As the Sabha is connected with the U. N. P. under Rule 3 (2) of the Constitution of the U. N. P., the Sabha earnestly requests the U. N. P. carefully to consider, accept and implement these resolutions. The Sabha hopes that the U. N. P. will be able reasonably to agree to the spirit underlying these resolutions and to accept them, if not precisely as they stand, at least in a manner satisfactorily to give effect to the purposes in view. When the views of the U. N. P. are known on these resolutions, a special session of the Sabha will be held to consider the situation. I wish to make it quite clear that the Sabha is holding out no threat and is issuing no ultimatum. Members of the Sabha feel very strongly that the policy generally adumbrated in these resolutions is essential for the progress and well being of our country, and they have no doubt that they will receive the careful and sympathetic consideration of the U. N. P.

I am sure many of you would ask me the question: What will be the position if the U. N. P. refuses to agree to any reasonable extent to either the spirit or the letter of these resolutions? My answer is that you will be afforded a full opportunity of considering that situation if or when it arises, and of deciding upon what action you would wish to take. I need only say that the Sabha attaches the utmost importance from its own point of view to the substance of the policy underlying these resolutions. Meanwhile, it is necessary for the Sabha to revive its branches and form new ones wherever possible.

I thank you once again for your continuing interest in the work of the Sabha and appeal to you all to redouble your work and your enthusiasm, because by so doing, particularly at this time, you can render a most valuable service to our country and our people.

*THE SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY*

*( Speech made at the inauguration of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party on 2nd September, 1951 )*

I venture to think that this is an occasion of some importance in the political history of our country. It not only marks the birth of a new Political Party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, but it also ushers in, in many ways, a new political era. I am certain that it is consciousness of this fact that has drawn to this meeting such large numbers of citizens of all races, religions, and classes from all parts of the country.

The starting of a new political party, of course, need not necessarily have such a significance. Why it is so in this case, I wish to explain to you in some detail.

At the outset it is important for you to understand clearly the nature and trend of what we may call the Freedom Movement in our recent history. This Movement may be said to have really started with the Temperance Movement of about 40 years ago. It is true that this campaign was primarily intended to deal with a social evil, but as it was directed against the policy of the British Government in regard to a certain subject i. e. Excise, it possessed certain elements of a national movement against Colonial Government. At the start a great deal of public enthusiasm was aroused and there was the possibility of the creation of a mass movement against foreign rule. Unfortunately the leaders of the campaign allowed it to peter out, and what eventually became of it we all know now.

Later came the Riots of 1915. There, too, there was an opportunity to create a real People's Movement for the Achievement of Freedom. Here again the opportunity was missed and the Ceylon National Congress, which was the outcome of the happenings of 1915, soon deteriorated into a caucus at the top.

Most of our leaders were satisfied with the Legislative Council of 1924. Resolutions and Memoranda to Downing Street were the weapons that were preferred to the creation of a real Mass Movement. It is interesting to compare the manner in which the unjust Excise Policy of the British Government and the shootings of 1915 were utilised in Ceylon in the fight for Freedom with the manner in which comparable happenings in India such as the unjust Salt Laws and the shootings of Jallianwallah Bagh were used by the Indian Leaders. In India they were utilized for the erection of a People's Campaign for Freedom, while here they only provided the opportunity for the efforts of a handful at the top.

The Donoughmore Commission did not come to Ceylon as the result of any insistent demand by the people or even of our leaders but as the result of a request made by the then Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, who was dissatisfied with the working of the Legislative Council.

It will be remembered that the Donoughmore Constitution was accepted by the Legislative Council by the barest possible majority.

The Soulbury Commission was sent out against the wishes of a large majority of the State Council, and as it was boycotted by a large section of the people including the Ministers (except the present Prime Minister who had secret discussions with the Commissioners), the Soulbury Constitution also really did not represent the people's wishes.

When this Constitution was inaugurated, a Labour Government was in power in England and Freedom was being given to Burma and Dominion Status to India and Pakistan. Mr. Senanayake and a few of his advisers such as Sir Oliver Goonetilleke and Sir Ivor Jennings took this opportunity to get the Soulbury Constitution amended to bring our status to that of a Dominion. These amendments were nofirst placed either before Parliament or the country and were prepared according to Mr. Senanayake's personal views.

It will be thus seen that unlike other countries such as India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, Ireland, etc. which advanced to Freedom through the instrumentality of Mass Movements based on clear-cut principles and policies, our Freedom Movement was really one proceeding from the top

and cut off to a great extent from the masses. The importance of this fact must be clearly understood. It has created a feeling in the minds of some people that our freedom is not something that the people have obtained but one that a few individuals have succeeded in getting, and one therefore that is looked upon to a great extent as the private property of these individuals, the benefits of which should be chiefly enjoyed by them. It is this psychology that is chiefly responsible for the nepotism and cliquism which are rampant today and for the reluctance to deal effectively with the many important problems that face us, a free country today, particularly in the context of the present trend of world affairs.

At this point you will forgive me for dealing with some matters that have a personal flavour. I do so both because Mr. Senanayake and some of his supporters are giving an entirely inaccurate and misleading version of these matters, and also because a correct version of them is necessary for a proper understanding of the present situation.

Let it be remembered that a little time before the last General Election, Mr. Senanayake, having earlier resigned from the Ceylon National Congress, had no party alignment at all and was just an individual, though no doubt powerful, politician. There were at the time certain parties of which the Sinhala Maha Sabha was one of the most powerful. It would have been much more advantageous to me personally to have faced the elections through the Sinhala Maha Sabha. Though it meant a personal sacrifice, I felt that it was in the interests of the country to combine with various other Parties in the effort to secure that stability of Government which was needed at the beginning of the working of the Free Constitution. The Sabha agreed with this view and we joined in forming the U. N. P. It was on my proposal that Mr. Senanayake was elected President of that Party. If you will glance at the Manifesto of the U. N. P. that was issued at that time, you will find every kind of progressive policy outlined. In addition, therefore, to securing a stable Government, we naturally expected this policy to be satisfactorily implemented. Unfortunately what happened in practice was that the reactionary elements gained control of both the

Further to these main principles and the policies enunciated in our Manifesto, there are a number of important resolutions that will be placed before you today. These resolutions speak for themselves and it is not necessary for me to refer to them in detail here.

In the few months that have elapsed since the last general election, there is a complaint that our Party was not very active. Immediately after a general election, there is a tendency for all Parties to take careful stock of the situation and to consider carefully their policies and programmes and reorganization for the future. By doing so I do not think we have lost anything.

I am greatly encouraged to see that there is no diminution of the popular support for our Party ; indeed it is greater today than ever before. The time is now come for us to reorganize our work carefully both at the centre and in the local Branches, to carry out propaganda throughout the country, to spread the work of our Women's Section and our Youth Section, and to collect the necessary funds for our work. The Committee for the coming year will undertake this work ; and I appeal to **all** of you to assist in that work in every possible manner.

A most attractive souvenir has been produced, and I hope you will all buy as many copies as possible. You will not only be helping the Party funds by doing so, but you will find that in the souvenir there are a number of valuable and instructive articles on various matters of national policy.

I wish to thank all those who helped in the production of the souvenir : those who kindly wrote articles ; those who helped in producing it, amongst whom I wish to make mention of Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, who took a great deal of trouble ; Mr. Bernard Aluwihare ; the Oriental Press, which printed the magazine; and all those who in various ways helped in its production.

I wish now to make few general comments.

The world position is as unsettled as ever, and we appear to be no nearer a lasting peace than we have been for some years. It is perhaps true that today there is not so much fear of another World War breaking out as there was a year or two ago. But this is poor consolation, as the so-called cold war seems to be as bitter as ever.

OS

**It is interesting to note that Stalin seems to be basing *his* new Russian policy on conflicts between the " Imperialist " Western Powers. This position is not so unjustifiable as it may appear at first**

sight. The unity of the so-called democratic Western world is more a fiction today than a fact, for it is rent by various conflicts, actual as well as potential-political, economic and racial.

Politically, there are conflicts proceeding against Imperialist domination in Morocco, in Tunis, in Kenya, in Malaya and Indo-China. Economically, the fight between the dollar and sterling, the producing countries and the manufacturing countries, the attempt to prevent economic domination by powerful nations, e.g. the U. S. A. and Britain, are only too apparent. Persia's effort to break away from the stranglehold of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company; Ceylon's long-term rubber-rice agreement with China; the efforts of producing under-developed countries at industrialization ; the attempts at the recent Imperial Conference in London to reconcile two conflicting purposes-to build up an economic position and strengthen sterling as against the dominance of the U. S. A. and of the dollar, and to do so (be it noted) with the help of the U. S. A.-are all symptoms of economic disharmony in the Western world. Racially the troubles in South Africa and Kenya, Malaya and IndoChina, and even Korea and Persia have all a racial (in addition to a political) flavour, and are signs of the struggle of the coloured peoples against the white Western races.

Africa, the Middle East and Asia are all in a state of unrest owing to these conflicts. Stalin, like the witches in Macbeth, may therefore stand aside and stir up this cauldron and mutter to himself :  
" Double, double toil and trouble.

Fire burn ; and cauldron bubble. "

His hope, therefore, that the conflicts of the Western world will play *his* game for him is by no means without justification. Meanwhile, these conflicts are reflected in the proceedings of the U. N. O., a body that is fast reaching the position of an international academic debating society.

In such a situation you will see the wisdom of our Party's policy of keeping aloof from power blocs in the world, of preserving an attitude of neutrality, and of trying to get closer to the countries of South-East Asia with which we have geographical, strategic, economic and cultural ties.

06

I should now like to say a word about the position in Ceylon. It has never been my habit to let criticism of individuals or Parties degenerate into abuse or personal disparagement. I only desire here to draw your attention to certain important considerations.

The trouble with the U. N. P. and the Government, of which the U. N. P. is the dominant factor, has always been a lack of a clear-cut policy based upon any definite political ideology and a planned programme in pursuance of such policy.

Between 1947 and 1952, owing to the boom prices of our chief products, tea, rubber and coconut, it was possible for the Government to avoid crises and carry on a day-to-day existence without serious trouble. But the position is now entirely changed. Although the Finance Minister announced in his Budget speech so late as last July that the financial position was sound, that there would be a surplus at the end of the last financial year and only a deficit of Rs. 35,000,000-odd at the end of the present year, and that it was necessary to increase taxation for this year, within a month of the passing of the Budget the rice ration was cut, the price of sugar was increased and direct and indirect taxation also increased. The year 1951-52 closed, not with a surplus, but with a deficit of Rs. 281,000,000 and in spite of the drastic cuts in budgetary proposals for expenditure, the present year is also likely to close with a deficit of between Rs. 100,000,000 and Rs. 300,000,000.

All this is a very sad commentary on the financial policy of the Government. It is probable that the situation will worsen rather than improve, and that the present position is rather the beginning than the end of the financial troubles of the Government. Indeed, although the Government was returned to power with a large majority, it has been faced with various troubles from the very outset, and its handling of these situations can hardly be claimed to reflect credit on it even by its friends.

I need only refer to the refusal to entertain a reasonable request for an investigation into such a matter of public importance as allegations of Election irregularities ; the handling of such a situation as arose from the great public scandal caused by the publication of the so-called " Premier Stakes ", and even the handling of the trade agreement with China, when all the confidential documents connected with the negotiations appeared in the papers even before

07

the conclusion of Cabinet discussions and Ministers mistook public platforms for Cabinet meetings in expressing views directly or indirectly regarding the proposed agreement before the Cabinet itself came to a decision.

This was not all: the Finance Minister hailed the Report of the World Bank Mission (before its publication) in his Budget speech as the basis of the future economic policy of the Government. When that Report was published, more than one Minister attacked various recommendations and expressions of view in the Report in the bitterest terms, not only in this country but even abroad, and that too before the Cabinet had considered the Report.

All these things do not augur well for the present Government as a coherent, cohesive whole with a clear-cut policy and programme, tackling effectively any grave problems that are now arising in the country. As far as I am concerned on the Opposition Benches, I have given the Government the assurance that in tackling those problems any steps they propose to take of which we can approve, we are ready to give our fullest support to, in the interests of the country. That is how an Opposition would and should function in a democratic country. In turn, I hope the Government will also consult us before taking decisions on matters of national importance.

In this regard I wish to say a word about a report that appeared in the papers that the Prime Minister, at the recent Conference in London, wanted the Queen to be entitled Queen of Ceylon, although the vast majority of the Dominions wished the title to be only Head of the Commonwealth. It is difficult for me to believe that Mr. Dudley Senanayake would have taken such a step if he considered that it prejudiced our position in any way. But it does seem to me that this step may prejudice our position (1) by precluding our Country from becoming a Republic, even within the Commonwealth like India; (2) by making our country subject directly to the Queen of England. In any case, in a matter of this kind it would have been the correct course for Mr. Senanayake to have consulted Parliament before confronting the country with *fait accompli*. I trust that Mr. Senanayake will, as early as possible, make a full statement on this subject.

Finally, I should like to say something about our relations with other Parties. I have earlier made clear the policies for which our Party stands. Our Party is a middle party

08

and as such, understandably, we are liable to criticism by both extremes. Certain Conservative elements charge us with being too closely connected with extremist Parties on the Left, while certain of the latter charge us with being merely a "Label".

Regarding the former, a misunderstanding apparently arose or was created by the fact that in connection with the last General Election we attempted to eliminate as far as possible contests between Opposition Parties in the same electorate in order to try and secure for this country a progressive Government. While doing so we made it clear that we stood by our policy and programme and would not participate in any Government that deviated from that policy and programme.

Regarding the other charge, that we are merely a "Label", it will be seen from what I have said that this is merely a libel, and that we have a positive, concrete policy and programme that differ from those of all other Parties and are more likely to solve our problems to the satisfaction of our people than those of any others. Before the last elections we had not sufficient time to build up our Party to be able to contest seats throughout the country. That position is now changed and we have the opportunity of carrying our message throughout the country so that the people can have the opportunity of a Democratic Government formed by our Party if we succeed in winning their confidence.

The past five years, though a period of tragically neglected opportunities, was one of comparative peace and prosperity. Without being unduly pessimistic, I think the future is likely to be an increasingly dark and difficult time for us all, amid the deepening tension and unrest in the world and the mounting financial and other troubles in our own country. Our nation will be placed in circumstances of increasing difficulty with the task of preserving Democracy, of avoiding unbroilment in power politics, and in securing the national, cultural and spiritual progress of our people. In performing these tasks our Party can and will play an important part. It is more than a fight for us: it is a Crusade. We have the people's confidence; let us go forward with courage and in a spirit of humbleness, sacrifice, and service, and we shall not fail.

#### A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

*[Address to Annual Session of S. L. F. P. in 1958]*

We are meeting today at this ancient and historic place - Kelaniya, which is hallowed by so many memories that are dear to our people. This is one of the places visited by the Euddha on a mission of peace. It is also remembered by the name of Vihara Maha Devi, whose courage and patriotism not only helped in saving the people of Ke'aniya from disaster but who was also the mother and inspirer of the hero King Dutugemunu.

As our Party also happens to be the Government Party, I do not think it would be out of place for me to refer at this Party Session to the work of the Government in the past year. There is no

doubt that the last year was one of considerable difficulty in various directions. The breach between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities of the country had widened to such an extent that the Federal Party, with the support of a large section of the Tamil community, had made all arrangements to launch a so-called Satyagraha Movement last August. If this had, in fact, taken place, not only in the northern and eastern provinces but in various other parts of the country serious troubles would have arisen, many people would have suffered, various economic problems would have been gravely aggravated, and good will and amity between the Sinhalese and Tamils destroyed for many years to come. Happily, this misfortune was averted. In the discussions which the leaders of the Federal Party had with me an honourable solution was reached. Regarding the language issue, while Sinhalese will be the only official language of the country, recognition will be accorded to the reasonable use of the Tamil language. You will remember that this was the policy stated by us in our Manifesto before the General Elections, and is a position repeated by me when I moved the Sinhala Only Bill in Parliament. Regarding the claim for a Federal Government, it has been decided that the country should continue under one Government as hitherto, but that decentralisation at the administrative level could take place through Regional Councils. Here, too, you will remember that we have always stood for the establishment of Regional Councils. When the Bills regarding these two matters are prepared, the public will be able to see the detailed provisions for themselves and I can assure you that various fears and doubts that have been expressed in certain quarters will be found to be unwarranted.

The campaign which certain small elements of the Sinhalese started after my discussions with the Federal Party with the object of creating trouble and embarrassing the Government, as you all know, proved an ignominious failure. You will thus see that communal harmony has been restored to a great extent with honour and self-respect. Such harmony and friendship is absolutely necessary if we are to solve the grave economic problems that face our country.

The dislocations caused by the Suez crisis had a number of adverse economic repercussions on us. There were delays in regard to both our imports as well as exports which are a serious matter for a country like ours whose economy at present is very much an import-export economy.

There was a certain amount of unrest in the labour sphere both in the public sector and the private sector and a number of strikes took place. These were all dealt with in a spirit of patience and understanding and no serious occurrence took place.

Towards the end of 1957 we suffered from a serious flood disaster. The immediate problems that arose from this disaster were dealt with to general satisfaction and we are now grappling with the problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Meanwhile, to add to our other difficulties, our opponents, in whatever sphere and whatever way they were, we have been carrying on a ceaseless campaign against us. That section of the Press which is opposed to this Government, our political opponents, various disreputable and frustrated elements, vested interests that harbour various fears, and even so-called astrologers, engage merrily in this game, and like the witches in "Macbeth" dance round the hellish cauldron chanting their words of black magic

'Double, double toil and trouble

Fire burn ; and cauldron bubble'.

The purpose presumably is, on the one hand to prevent the Government settling down to tasks of economic development and other measures of progress, and on the other, to create in the public mind a feeling of dissatisfaction and

doubt. However, all these manoeuvres have not proved of much success and I, for one, feel that, if they have the effect of keeping the Government on its toes and alert, some useful purpose may be served even by such mischievous manoeuvres as these.

In spite of all these difficulties, I can claim, with a certain amount of pardonable pride, that our record of achievement has also been fairly satisfactory. In Foreign Affairs, we have established friendly relations with many countries and have concluded advantageous Cultural, Trade and Economic Aid Agreements with many of them. We have gained the regard of all countries, whatever be their ideologies, as was shown by the ready assistance rendered to us in the recent flood disaster. We have taken over the Bases of Trincomalee and Katunayake by friendly arrangement with the British Government. This step has not only completed our freedom but has secured for us certain economic advantages by making available the harbour of Trincomalee to civilian shipping and the airport of Katunayake for the use of civilian planes.

A Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament has been appointed to consider necessary amendments to the Constitution. A Bill is being prepared for the implementation of the recommendations of the Select Committee on Election law.

In Agriculture, the passing of the Paddy Lands Bill will benefit many lakhs of our peasantry and might well be claimed as the Peasants' Charter.

In Land and Land Development, many schemes of irrigation works are in hand and others will be taken up early which, when completed, will to a great extent solve the problem of landlessness. A Bill has been introduced to prevent the fragmentation of estates.

In Industries, there is provision in this year's Budget for such important industries as textiles, sugar, salt, fisheries, ilmenite, etc., which will provide a sound basis for the efficient industrialisation of the country. Greater attention is also being paid to cottage industries.

Steps are being taken to improve the postal services and the establishment of sub-post offices and the reorganization of the Information Department and Radio Ceylon.

Steps have been taken to set up machinery for the implementation of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission.

04

In Labour, various repressible Public Service Regulations have been repealed, various amendments introduced to labour laws, and it has been decided to repeal the Stay-in Strikes Act. The Bill for a National Provident Fund is now before Parliament and, I hope, will soon be passed. We sent an officer to India to discuss with the Indian authorities the question of reform of the Public Services, and his report will receive consideration by the Cabinet early.

The Planning Machinery is now at full work and we will have the assistance of various experts from abroad with an international reputation in the preparation of a National Plan of Economic Development.

The bus services have been nationalised, the port will be nationalised very early and other schemes of nationalisation, required for the economic progress of the country will be undertaken. Steps are being taken to explore sources of hydro-electric power in this country, and provision has also been made for the improvement of existing roads and for the taking over of a large number of new roads by the P.W.D.

A Committee has been set up to make recommendations for the establishment of a SaQana Council and its report is expected early. Greatly increased grants are given to Pirivenas and Sunday Schools for the teaching of religion. The Bills to raise the status of certain Pirivenas to that of a University are ready and will be introduced very early. A Commission has been appointed to report on the University of Ceylon. In the educational sphere, emphasis is being given to the teaching of science subjects and technical training which are so necessary for the economic advancement of the country, and for the first time H.S.C. classes have been started in the Swabasha medium.

In Health, various steps have been taken both to improve Ayurveda and to step up the rest of the health services both on the preventive side as well as the curative side.

Regarding bribery and corruption, as the present machinery is unsatisfactory, a new Bill is being drafted to deal with this subject more effectively and efficiently.

A Bill has been passed in Parliament to set up machinery, particularly in our rural areas, for Conciliation, which will be a great help to the people who now have to indulge in litigation in Courts, sometimes at great expense.

It will thus be seen that, although a great deal of work remains to be done, the Government has done many things in the past year which the country can consider reasonably satisfactory. It will also be seen that most of the Resolutions passed at our Session last year have already been implemented.

I cannot refrain from commenting on a recent article by Mr. Patrick Gordon-Walker. Mr. Gordon-Walker is a good friend of mine. Presumably, judging by his own standard, he seems to think that I am a Democrat and a Liberal (rather than a Socialist). He himself, if I may say so, is nothing more than an armchair Radical Liberal, who, having no place in the Liberal Party, which is almost extinct, hangs on to the Labour Party, though he does not appear to cut much ice in that Party either. I cannot refrain from deploring the tendency of certain British politicians to express patronising views on the politics and politicians of some of our countries. They apparently cannot forget that we were at one time their colonies and think that this gives them a right to patronise us in this way. I think it would be in the interests of the friendly relations between Britain and some of our countries if British politicians restrained themselves from indulging in this type of action. But there is one point in his article which deserves careful attention. He says "The future stability of democracy in Ceylon depends upon a continued leftward trend in politics". I would recommend this statement for the careful study of some of

our so-called political pundits who are so afraid that the leftward trends of the present Government might lead us to Communism. They seem to have no objection to our being a Democratic Socialist Party provided only that there is no socialism about it. In passing, I wish to observe the tendency of every Party today to call itself socialist.

There are important Resolutions to be moved at this Session. I do not wish, at this stage, to comment on them in detail as those who speak on the Resolutions will do so. Originally, it was our intention, like last year, to move Resolutions regarding the various activities of Government to enable all the Ministers to give explanations. But the Resolutions Committee came to the conclusion that this was not possible within the time we have for our Session and decided on the Resolutions that are before you. There is an important Resolution re-stating the policy of our Party. This has become necessary because some little confusion seems to have arisen lately on this subject. There

46

**is another Resolution for the appointment of a Sub-Committee of our Party in consultation with members of the Government Party who are not members of the S. L. F. P., to draw up a programme for the next three years in conformity with our policy. When this is done, I trust that a certain amount of confusion that now exists in the minds of the public, as well as certain sections of our own Party as well as the Government Party in Parliament, will disappear. Other Resolutions deal with Foreign Affairs, the Indian Question, and the Cost of Living. There is also an important Resolution regarding the reorganisation of our Party.**

**Our opponents, having tried unsuccessfully, various methods of discrediting our Government, now seem to be attempting a campaign to divide the Government against itself to show that there are differences between S. L. F. P. members and those members of the Government who do not belong to our Party, as well as differences within the S. L. F. P. itself. In every way, attempts are made by exaggeration, distortion, and misrepresentation, to spotlight these differences and to try and bring about a break-up of the Government from within. We must be very alert to this campaign that is proceeding and be very careful not to allow it to succeed. It will, indeed, be a tragedy if, having successfully overcome opposition and difficulties from outside, we were to succumb to a campaign calculated to create internal disruption within our own ranks. Let us remember that the people of this country, with courage and determination, overthrew a reactionary regime and reposed confidence in us by electing us to power. We must never forget the responsibility we owe to the people of the country. It is our sacred duty to stabilise and strengthen the victory which the people have gained and of which we are the trustees so that no occasion may arise in the future for the people to say that owing to our own differences and weaknesses we have betrayed them. Even in regards to our Session on this occasion, many of our opponents are waiting with keen anticipation in the hope that sharp quarrels and differences will arise at this Session itself. I appeal to all of you, in the conduct of the business of this Session, to display that restraint and dignity and unity which is necessary to strengthen the confidence of the people in us and to enable us to perform effectively the grave tasks on behalf of the country which the people have entrusted to us. It is necessary for each one of us, whether it be an ordinary member of the Party or a Member of Parliament,**

or a Minister, or Prime Minister, to address ourselves to the tasks that face us with a sense of devotion; and even dedication, with a spirit of humility, service and sacrifice. In this way alone shall we be able to discharge effectively and efficiently the grave tasks entrusted to us by the people and win for ourselves the gratitude not only of the present generation but of generations to come.

In this spirit let us address ourselves not only to the work of this Session but the work that faces us in the coming year, both in our Party and in the Government of our country.

#### A RE-STATEMENT OF OUR POLICIES

*[Text of the Presidential Address made by Mr. Bandaranaike on 16th May, 1959, at the Annual Session at Kurunegala of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.]*

In the last year, the country was faced with two serious troubles. The growing communal tension between Sinhalese and Tamils exploded into widespread disorder towards the end of last May, which necessitated the declaration of a State of Emergency. The situation was brought under control fairly quickly, and the deplorable happenings during this time may at least have produced one good result. It would have served to remind everyone, even extremists, of the grave results of carrying communal differences too far. I do not think that there is likely to be a recurrence of such happenings in the future.

In the field of labour, continuing strikes which proved so damaging to the country's economy, culminated on the 3rd of March last year in the attempt to call a General Strike for one day on the issue of the Public Security (Amendment) Act. This attempt proved a failure and many workers, both in the public sector as well as the private sector, refused to participate in it and carried on their work. This proves that workers today are beginning to think for themselves and are increasingly refusing to be dictated to against their own wishes.

Thus, both in the communal sphere and the labour sphere, out of the troubles the country experienced in the last year, a healthy situation, I think, has arisen. I wish to refer here to an event that we must all welcome with appreciation and satisfaction. In a certain segment of the private sector, employers and employees have reached a gentleman's agreement both with regard to their conditions of service as well as the non-resort to the strike weapon in the manner in which it had been used in recent times. If this trend can further extend, it will be of benefit not only to those concerned but also to the country generally.

The Joint Select Committee of Parliament on the Constitution has advanced very far in its work. On an interim report presented to and accepted by Parliament, a Delimitation Commission has been appointed which is at work at

02

present to delimit electoral areas for Parliamentary Elections in a more equitable manner than exists at present. The Act to amend the Electoral Law has been passed by Parliament and provides for fairer elections as well as the extension of the franchise to those over 18 years of age. The passing of the Workers' Provident Fund Act, which is now being implemented, will confer great benefits on many thousands of workers in the private sector. The Port has been nationalised and there is a distinct improvement in the work in the Port already. There is no doubt that there are still many defects to be remedied in the Nationalised Services, but I am confident that these are being overcome and the people will, before long, obtain the full benefits of these steps that have been taken by the Government.

Though there has been delay in the preparation and issue of a National Plan by the Planning Council, I am glad to say that this is almost ready now and will be completed in a week or two. This will provide the entire picture of the work contemplated both in development as well as social services for five to ten years to come, and will indicate the steps necessary to be taken to provide full employment for our people.

The Reports of important Commissions should also be ready before long—the Salaries Commission, the Wage Structure Commission, and the Sasana Commission. These Commissions are dealing with subjects of far-reaching importance—the wages of workers both in the public and private sectors and matters pertaining to the Buddha Sasana in Ceylon. The Report of the University Commission should be available early and also the Commission on Shipping Companies in Ceylon.

The elevation of two Pirivenas, the Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Pirivenas, to the status of Universities is another important step that has been taken. Regulations have been approved by Parliament considerably increasing grants to Pirivenas.

It will thus be seen that during the last year, the Government has to its credit a number of important achievements and a number of matters of even greater importance are

03

likely to be accomplished in the short period of this Parliament's life that remains. Thus when the General Election comes in the normal course, I think I can say with a reasonable degree of confidence that, in spite of the many difficulties that faced the country during the lifetime of the present Parliament, the Government has been able to accomplish many things of far-reaching importance and value to the people.

I think it may be useful here to re-state our policies on certain vital questions. In foreign affairs, we stand firmly by our policy of neutralism and co-existence; of non-alignment with power blocs, and the preservation of friendly relations with all countries, while following our own way of life. We shall not tolerate any pressures or attempts to interfere with our internal affairs.

Another problem to which we, as well as other countries in similar circumstances, have to address our minds, is the problem of achieving harmony amid diversities of race, religion and language. The wisest principle to be followed in these cases, I am convinced, is the following: while recognizing the rights of the majority, to extend justice to the minorities. We gave effect to this principle in the manner in which we solved the language issue. We made the language of the vast majority, the Sinhalese, the official language of the country, and we provided for the use of the language of the minority, the Tamils, in such matters as education, examinations for the Public Service, correspondence, etc.

I wish also to re-state the basic policies of our Party. Politically, we are democratic, as we believe that the democratic way of life is the most suitable for human progress. Economically, we believe in the socialist approach, as we are of opinion that it is only in this way that justice can be done to the mass of the people. A third factor in our policy is our belief that cultural and religious values must be preserved and fostered.

It will have been seen that we are opposed to both Communism and Fascism, to Capitalism and Materialism. Our Party stands against any attempt to impose any of these on the people of this country.

04

I wish to say a few words about the Resolutions which you will be discussing today. The first deals with a matter of great economic importance not only to ourselves but to all underdeveloped countries in the Afro-Asian region. It will be remembered that the Bandung Conference was one of great importance not only for our countries but for the whole world. It was intended at the time that a second Conference should be held two years later, but this was postponed as many members felt that owing to political differences between certain members, such a Conference with the same range of subjects would be undesirable at present. I suggested to the Colombo Powers that we might consider holding a Conference amongst our countries to discuss economic problems that are common to us all. This proposal has been, accepted by a large majority of the countries concerned and very shortly a preliminary of the Colombo Powers to discuss preliminary arrangements. If agreement is reached, it will perhaps be possible to hold this Conference towards the end of this year.

Some of the subjects that we could usefully discuss are those of food production, particularly rice production in our region, and the attempt to obtain for our agricultural products such as tea, rubber, coconuts, etc. some stabilisation of prices. At present many of our countries are, to a great extent, dependent on the income derived from such products, and serious variations of price create an unstable economy. Another matter that might be discussed is the question of shipping. There are very few countries in our region that have any mercantile shipping, with the result that we are entirely dependent upon shipping combines and the freight rates they choose to charge from time to time. This situation also creates serious economic difficulties for us. Another matter may be some reasonable industrial planning at regional level in order to avoid uneconomic industrialisation.

The next Resolution is also one of great importance. It is proposed to appoint a suitable Commission to inquire into the position of the Press in this country. A very large number of people feel that the present position of the Press in Ceylon is most unsatisfactory. It amounts to almost a monopoly which is most unhealthy in any democratic country because far worse than political dictatorship is a situation amounting to the dictatorship of a Press monopoly. In

QS

various ways, this Press monopoly, if it does not approve of a Government elected to power by the votes of the people can, by various exaggerations, distortions, and misrepresentations, create an almost impossible position for such a Government. Therefore, the position arises that only a Government of which this Press chooses to approve, can function satisfactorily. The third Resolution refers to the official language and draws the attention of the Government to the need of pressing on with necessary extensions to the use of the official language, particularly in our Courts of Law. The fourth Resolution deals with a certain confused position that exists today regarding the spheres of the State and private enterprise in regard to trade and requests that in pursuance of the policy of the Government this position should be clarified in the interests of all

concerned. The fifth Resolution draws attention to the vital subject, of National Planning. As you know, a new and far-reaching scheme of taxation has already been passed by Parliament. This is, perhaps, the most socialist measure the Government has yet implemented-and will provide a far more equitable system of taxation. When the reports of the Salaries Commission and Wage-Structure Commission, and Cost of Living Committee, are available and implemented, the defects and grievances of the workers both in the public sector and private sector should, to a great extent, be satisfactorily solved, thus enabling the country's economic development to proceed more quickly and more efficiently than at present. The long awaited Report of the Planning Council will, as I stated earlier, be available in a week or two's time.

I wish to say a few words about a matter that has been agitating the public mind in the last few weeks. Our Government, as you know, is composed of elements whose views may, and do no doubt quite *bona fide*, differ in certain matters. This situation naturally produces difficulties. We have had difficulties arising from this cause during the last three years and, quite recently, they took rather a serious turn. We are dealing with this problem patiently and with understanding and I am glad to announce to you that I have come to a certain decision which I hope, will solve this problem for the lifetime of this Parliament. There is one paramount need we must all hear in mind at this time, and that is not to take any hasty or impulsive step which would result in a complete breakdown of the Government at this stage. This would be a tragedy for the whole country.

I do

06

not think it necessary for any speakers to go into the subject of the recent trouble at this Conference and I appeal to you in the interests of all of us (and the country generally) to refrain from doing so.

In pursuance of the new scheme of re-organisation of our Party, various steps have been taken in the last year, though a very great deal of work has to be done in the course of the present year. The whole Youth Section of our Party has been reorganised and is working with vigour and enthusiasm. We also intend to organise a Women's Section and I appeal to all women who support our point of view to join and help us in making this Section a success. In addition, the general work of the Party such as the reorganisation of existing branches, the organisation of new branches, where needed, propaganda, and the collection of funds are all necessary in the coming year. I appeal to all of you, on behalf of the people as well as our Party, for your goodwill, co-operation and support, so that the vast majority of the people of our country, who really are in support of our views, can make those views effective in all spheres of national activity.

oi

## THE PARLIAMENTARY MACHINE

*[Summary of Speech made, on the general debate of the Report of the Secretary-General, at the thirty-eighth annual conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, at Berne in August 1952. The speech received great applause and was hailed by many delegates as the best contribution to the debate.]*

The Report of the Secretary-General is comprehensive and lucid. But, woven into its texture, are three threads of gloom and despondency. The first is his lengthy review of the ideological conflict. How can this problem be solved? There is, of course, no simple or easy solution. In my opinion, the first need is to realise that ideologies were made for man and not man for ideologies. The next is the realisation of the fact that perhaps the only unchanging thing in the world is the certainty of change. We must adopt, therefore, what is most beneficial to man from time to time, according to changing circumstances. We must not only lift iron curtains from the frontiers of countries, but also from the minds of men.

The second thread that runs through the Report is the Problem of Peace. Pilate once asked the important and interesting question "What is truth?". I feel like asking "What is Peace?". We have recently passed through the horrors of a hot war, and are now in the grip of the horrors of a cold war. We now appear to be moving forward to the culminating horror of all-the horror of peace, an illusory peace, whose only effect will be another world slump, involving misery to millions. One of the wisest sayings in recent times was that of the late Mr. Litvinov that peace is one and indivisible. The truth is that the factors that make for real peace do not yet exist. The

third lament of the Secretary-General is the futility of the efforts made to secure peace. Is this surprising? The efforts in that direction hitherto have consisted of one side or the other trying to protect itself as effectively as possible against the possible aggression of the others.

I wish to say that in the essential achievement of a real peace, probably Asia, the teeming, starving millions of Asia from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, will play an important, perhaps decisive, part.

02

The Third Force has been referred to in the Report. I am a firm believer in the Third Force, and I think Asia can and should be the Third Force between the capitalism and its truly negative child, the communism of the West. To me the third force means a combination of democracy, socialism and the spiritual values, that we have treasured through the ages. We talk glibly of democracy and freedom. Let us before we try to remove the mote from the eyes of others, remove the speck from our own.

Let us eliminate the feeling of racial and colour prejudice that still exists in the so-called free world. Let us sweep out the last traces of the colonial spirit that is still so rampant—whether it be in Morocco or Tunisia, the Sudan or Abadan, Malaya or Indo-China.

Let us raise the standard of living of the poverty-stricken millions of Asia.

A large part of Asia, under the guise of democratic, parliamentary Government, is really swinging today uneasily between semi-fascism and semi-communism. The parliamentary system is the machine through which democracy works. If the machine breaks down, the three systems may also collapse. Suitable amendments to the Parliamentary system must therefore be devised in the light of conditions today.

I think the Inter-Parliamentary Union can make useful contributions to all these problems. Hitherto it has devoted most of its attention to problems of Europe. The emphasis must now shift to Asia.

ot

## PRESS DICTATORSHIP

*[Address to the Press Association of Ceylon on 10th January, 1959]*

It has given me the greatest pleasure to have accepted the invitation of the Press Association of Ceylon and to be present here at this most enjoyable dinner. The Chairman stated that perhaps this was the first occasion that I attended a function of a Press Association. It is not altogether so. I have had the privilege both in this country and in other countries of attending similar functions of Press proprietors, editors, press dukes, barons and so forth. Certainly this is the first occasion I have had the pleasure of attending a function of those in the lower rung of the Press industry, if I may call it an industry. This Association is chiefly composed of reporters, correspondents, and also, I believe, of the lower rungs of the editorial staff.

The Chairman referred to the responsibilities of the Press—the responsibilities of the Press in guiding public opinion and in reflecting public opinion. Very true, that responsibility is particularly important in a country like this where we have something approaching a press monopoly. One of the most unhealthy features in this democracy of Sri Lanka is this existence of what in fact amounts to press dictatorship, a press monopoly. I cannot help being amused at times when the Press, or certain sections of it; accuse me of dictatorial tendency, dictatorial action, shout out and scream out their adherence to the principle of democracy when, as a matter of fact, their own position provides one of the most pernicious and vicious dictatorships the world, particularly the democratic world, can possibly know. That is a dictatorship of the Press. It is one of the worst types of dictatorship. A political dictator, well, there you know where he is, so that you know where you are, but with Press dictatorship you do not know. The ordinary public do not know where they are with Press dictatorship. A political leader makes his speech. They know well that it is his view. But when something appears in a newspaper, people do not attribute it to an individual. It is something impersonal and therefore has a greater force. There are various methods by which a newspaper concern can put forward ideas and views in a way that does not become apparent to the reading public. If I say something, they know that it is my view. They know what value to attach to it. If my good friend,

**Dr. N. M. Perera, says something, they know that it is Dr. N. M Perera's view and they know what value to attach to that.**

But in a newspaper, by various methods of omission, of commission, of a slight twist here, a slight distortion there, by letters addressed to the Press usually under the title 'Pro Bono Publico', generally manufactured in the Press office itself, by various articles and by various editorial stratagems, a wrong impression can be created in the minds of the public. Therefore, you will realise the great responsibility that lies on the shoulders of the Press especially in a country where there is something approaching a Press dictatorship and a Press monopoly as we have in this country. Of course, all those newspapers concerned may well turn round and say it is not their fault. Others are welcome to start newspapers if they wished. Of course, that is perfectly true; but in a small country like ours it is not easy to have a large number of daily newspapers as in other big countries like England or America or any other western country where every shade of opinion is represented in different papers.

My good friend, Lord Beaverbrook, for instance, is representing the extreme reactionary Conservative imperialist point of view in the Daily Express. Another Conservative newspaper is the Daily Telegraph. Generally the News Chronicle, the Manchester Guardian and an independent paper like The Times, a Labour paper like the Daily Herald and even a Communist paper like the Daily Worker, represent their own point of view. So all shades of opinion are represented. Similarly in various other countries. But here it is not so. And I would like to say this. That those who blame politically the Government of being guilty of undemocratic thinking or acting should be careful of how they throw stones when they reside in fragile glass houses themselves - the glass house of a much worse type of dictatorship than any political dictatorship can be, that is, the dictatorship of the Press.

Of course the Press has influence; but I wonder sometimes how far that influence really extends. Judging from my own case, the Press, or a certain important influential section of the Press of this country, has generally been hostile to me during the whole of the 30 years of my public career; but it seems to have done me much more good than otherwise. I know of a number of blue-eyed babies of the Press who have crashed. In my case I seem to be going on and

03

on without being particularly affected. Those may be exceptional cases. I do not know how far the Press does, and can be able to wield influence and, therefore, the responsibility that lies on the Press for honesty and integrity, for honest reporting and honest comment, is greater than it is in any other sphere of public activity.

This Association is an Association, as I said, primarily of reporters and correspondents. They play a very important part. I know that the task of reporting is a very difficult one. I was wondering to myself if I had been engaged in similar activities of the sort you are engaged in, and it struck me that I had done so. When I was at Oxford, we had an undergraduate weekly paper known as 'Oxford Isis' and sometimes its Editor used to ask me to report the proceedings of the Oxford Union. I found it very interesting. I found that the best method of reporting was this. I never took down anything that the speaker said while he spoke. I listened to him carefully and, with a certain measure of intelligence, I followed what the fellow was driving at and what he was really trying to say, and tried to express the spirit of his speech in my report. Now that kind of reporting is very difficult, i.e., you must be sufficiently intelligent to be able to follow the speaker with intelligence. To understand what he really is saying or making or trying to make and to reproduce that and not merely to write down a few sentences that he may utter in his speeches. Of course, that kind of reporting is extremely difficult; but it is important.

Coming to another point that was mentioned by the Chairman today. Reporting is a very difficult task. In the first place, the unfortunate reporter has to bear in mind the policy of the editor of the newspaper which he serves. He would, therefore, naturally be expected to pick out things in the speech that would be welcome from the point of view of editorial policy rather than make a fair and impartial report of the speech which he is supposed to be taking down. No doubt you suffer from that **difficulty**. Sometimes the speech is made in Sinhalese. You have to listen to the Sinhalese speech and put it down in English for the English newspapers. That is a very difficult task. I think, therefore, that there is a good case for some Diploma course in Journalism at the University of Ceylon and in other Universities that may exist in Ceylon or may be created in the future. I think it is a very sound idea indeed. I should think that the Press concerns should also welcome such a training course before picking their reporters. If your Association wishes to pursue that idea, the Government can be of some

04

help in the matter. Of course, our Universities as you know are independent institutions that are created by special Statute. The Government cannot dictate to them over any particular Faculty. But if it is felt that the Government can help, we shall be very glad to give you every help possible for the establishment of either a Degree or a Diploma in Journalism.

Another matter that was mentioned was that you have not got some place, some office, some home of your own. It is intended to start a Press Club. That, too, is a very good idea and if there is anything that the Government can do to help you in that, certainly we will be glad to help. Meanwhile, I should point out that our Government has already taken certain steps that have greatly ameliorated the conditions of service of those who are engaged in such work as you are engaged in. The Shop and Office Employees' Act has been extended to cover pressmen, too, and they enjoy an eight-hour day and certain other measures which have ensured a certain degree of security for you as well as a certain degree of necessary relief in the arduous work you are doing. I do not know how the eight-hour week really works out. Sometimes I see some of the reporters hanging about at my gate with some people interested even at 10, 11, 12 o'clock in the night, and even in the morning, at 1 o'clock. I really do not know how those Pressmen manage to get their eight hours. It is a very strenuous job you are doing. Very often I had to drive them away by saying that the talks are proceeding very satisfactorily and no further statement can be awaited. And these poor devils hanging outside my gates at one or two o'clock in the morning have to be satisfied with nothing more than that. Of course, I give them a lemonade if it is available at that late hour and cigarettes and something like that. But I know how my heart bleeds for them.

Both those steps that you suggest are very valuable and in that, if we can do anything to help you, we shall gladly do so. I promise that on behalf of the Government. Of course, there are other steps. You have formed an Association. I do not know whether you are a Trade Union yet. I do not know whether you are going to engage in some strike. I have got

OS

so salted in strikes in the last two and a half years, you know, that I shall be very glad to be of assistance in settling your strikes (*laughter*), putting the thumbscrew on your editors or proprietors if the need arises, just as much as I had to put the thumbscrew on so many people engaged in strikes in this country in the past two years to bring some friendly and amicable settlement. You should not have any fear that I am really inciting you to go on strike. But, of course, you all have rights. We are told that this is a democratic country. You must be prepared to fight by legitimate democratic methods to ensure your democratic rights.

I thank you very much for the kind invitation you have issued to me to be present amongst you. It has been a great pleasure to be amongst you. I wish your Association all sur.ceFS and prosperity in the future.

### THREE Ls FOR. PUBLIC SERVANTS

[Address to Postmasters' Association of *Ceylon on 14th Se~)tember. 1958.*]

This is a meeting of Postmasters and the Chairman has very kindly given us some brief explanation of why this special general meeting has been called. It is really that you should consider some problems arising from a very important and crucial matter that is facinrt most public servants today. In other words it is the prob'em of their efficient work, satisfactory service to the people and at the same time the preserving of healthy trade union traditions. This is a most important problem that faces all public servants and the trade unions in which they are. That you are addressing yourselves to this prob'em is very encouraging and I sincerely hone that other sections of public servants in the country also will proceed quite dispassionately and impartially to consider the problem and the various issues involved in the problem.

I should like to give you, what in my opinion is a certain background against which public servants might consider th~se issues. As you know, we only regained our freedom ten years ago, in February, 1948. Prior to that we were under one form or another of Western colonial rule. Portuguese, Dutch and British. I have tried to point out on various occasions what colonial rule has meant to us. politically, economically and socially, what freedom should mean to us and how we might proceed to make freedom not merely a word but a reality. I do not wish to cover that wide ground with you. Here •: ou are concerned with this subject insofar as it affects public servants.

What does colonial rule mean as far as public servants are concerned? As you know, a colonial Government in power wants to fashion the public service under it in such a manner that it proves to be an effective and efficient instrument for colonial purposes, just as much as it fashions the political machinery to serve the same purpose, or fashions the economy of the country over which it rules to serve those purposes. Similarly, the public services were also intended to serve that purpose. Let us see how it

02

operates. It is surprising that so many people in this country speak in terms of horror at the revival of our own national languages and lay so much emphasis on English. It is interesting to note that throughout the whole of British rule in the country lasting over 140 years, a very, small percentage of the people of the country knew any English at all. That percentage was less than ten per cent. of the total population. One would have thought that a far larger proportion of the people would have been educated in English. How comes it then that even under British rule, when one would have imagined the British would have liked to have spread the knowledge of English as far as possible, such a small percentage alone knew it?

That was also part of colonial policy. They did not want too many people to know English. The primary purpose they had in encouraging the teaching of English in our country was to secure a sufficient number of public servants in various spheres in this country who were expected to preserve the machinery of British administration. They were not very much concerned beyond that. That is why the proportion who learned English remained so small. Not only that. I do not think they particularly favoured people learning English too well. Just knowing enough English with that degree of half-baked education was all that was needed for their purpose in mind. The vast bulk of even that eight or nine per cent who learned English, about 90 per cent. of that nine per cent., only got a very unsatisfactory education in English, which meant just being able to speak, read and write, and so on. This really was no education at all.

That was the general trend of education under the British. Now once these English-educated people got into Government service, what was the service they got into? The service of the British Government. What did they consider themselves to be? 'Servants of the people?' You think that public servants generally looked upon themselves as servants of the people? The people seldom entered into their minds under the British Government and all that was necessary for them was to conduct themselves in a way to please the British heads of departments and carry out rules and regulations. Nothing more than that. There was also the holy of holies, the civil service. They had set up a new aristocracy, an aristocracy of the public service. Right at the top the grand dukes were the civil servants, the other were the lesser members of this new aristocracy. I remember in those days how keen people were to marry off their daughters to Government servants. How very keen they were to marry off a daughter to a civil servant, with nice fat dowries too. That was the height of ambition of many parents at one time.

Then that regime changed. We got freedom in name. I am sorry that my good friend, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, seems to be rather hurt that I said that this country really got freedom fully only two years ago. It is not in 1947 or 1948 but from 1956 onwards that there was a beginning of true freedom in this country. My good friend, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, seems to be annoyed that I said this. But it is the stark truth. I will tell you why. Though we got freedom in name in 1947-48, it was really not freedom in any true sense. This was because the previous Government was only concerned with carrying on the lines of action set by the colonial regime, which it had superseded without making freedom a reality to the people of this country. In every sphere of activity it was the same. That was fundamentally the situation that compelled me to resign, as a gulf had opened up clearly between my way of thinking and that of my good friend, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, that could not have been bridged at all. We were thinking on different lines. From the angle of the public servants, except that the public servants were now required to do puja and cow down to the new Prime Minister and his minions, there was no change of spirit in the public service even after 1947.

A peaceful revolution took place in 1956. A change takes place in many other countries after much bloodshed and fighting, but was effected here by the peaceful vote of the people. It was nevertheless a very big change.

From 1947 onwards, there was no really serious change in the public services. But trade unions were formed, trade unions which did not perhaps quite understand, I can quite appreciate the

situation, the essence of trade unionism. They were, in fact, political weapons to be directed or influenced by political forces, and those political forces, from 1947 till we assumed power, were solely restricted to opposition groups, and particularly Marxist opposition groups. Opposition parties like the Sama Samaja Party, the Communist Party, &c., took the opportunity of forming their own trade unions in the public services. They no doubt did a certain amount of good by teaching public servants to combine and to take combined action in the furtherance of their demands, but these unions had also a strong political flavour.

That was the position when we assumed power. When we assumed power, naturally the other thing also continued and still continues. But there is a completely different outlook and again I will only restrict myself to the sphere of public servants. What is the position of the public service in 'a free society?' In my view a Public Servant is called upon to combine and harmonize three loyalties ; the first of course is loyalty to the people. After all, we are all servants of the people. I, the last Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, all owe our positions to the people of this country, who in the exercise of their free votes have placed us in power. You, too, are paid by funds contributed by the people of this country.

Therefore your duty as well as mine is to the people of our country.

This was never emphasised in the colonial days or until we assumed power. I have emphasised it on every occasion and I repeat it here. Loyalty to the people comes first. That must become effective in operation. You must see to that, in the courtesy you show to the people, in the way you deal with them when they come before you in your various capacities. It is essential to perform that duty without any trace of hint or corruption.

Corruption is another thing that sprang in the colonial days. For the persons I have mentioned, the public servant was only concerned with bringing his master whatever money he could get from the people. Apparently he was quite at liberty to do so.

I say this in generality. I do not say that all public servants are that. There have been and there are good public servants who do their duty to the people. So that one of the aspects of trade union rights should be that you all combine to eliminate any corruption, any kind of partiality in your work and give satisfaction to the people. A public servant must in fact become a servant of the people. That is then the first loyalty the public servant owes to the people.

OS

The second loyalty of public servants is to the government. After all you are government servants. The government is solely an instrument of the people. The people have put the government in power. You are serving the government which has been placed in power by the public. Your allegiance is, therefore, to the government. This is a very difficult question. You know public servants, especially in democratic countries, are called upon from time to time to serve different governments that may be chosen by the votes of the people. In England, today, public servants may be serving a Conservative Government, tomorrow a Labour Government, the day after that, some other Government.

Public servants, therefore, in a democratic country are faced with the psychological difficulty of serving loyally different Governments that may be appointed according to the wishes of the people from time to time. The Governments change but the public servants do not change. That is one of the traditions we have got from the British. In America, it is different. When the Government changes, quite a fair proportion of the higher public servants changes with the Government. In our case as in England the same public servants continue. This creates a difficulty. Those public servants who have got used to the previous regime, who may have owed their place to some little assistance from some minister or another who were rejected by the people of the country, whose political views may be this, that, or the other, somewhat different from the practices of the Government that they are now called upon to serve, may find themselves pondering.

I always try to understand and appreciate the other man's point of view. I always try to do that in all my relations with human beings. The people, when they elect a government, expect it to do certain things. The carrying out effectively and efficiently of the policy of the government is in

the hands of the public servants. If they do not choose to co-operate with the Government both in the letter and in spirit in implementing Government policy, very often

06

then that policy becomes ineffective. Consider the difficulty. It is a very real one. They have got over it in countries like England. The public servants there give the fullest and most efficient service to the Government-whatever the Government. They have got used to the tradition of a constant public service. Here it is being put into practice for the first time. If Dr. N. M. Perera comes into power at the next general elections, I expect you all to give him the same co-operation. You must, or else it would be disloyalty and sabotage of the worst type. I am not saying this to raise any false hopes in Dr. Perera's mind. It is a purely hypothetical case.

The Government is now considering the question of changing public service regulations to include lack of cooperation under general inefficiency and so to retire such public servants who withhold their co-operation from the Government.

The third is loyalty to yourself. What does loyalty to yourself mean? It means combining through trade unions or other associations to look after your interests, to be vigilant to put forward your grievances and your demands, to see that they get a proper hearing and are given due consideration. However, directly or indirectly, you may be utilized for political purposes. Sometimes strikes do not appear to be quite genuine, for genuine grievances. But there are other circumstances of a political nature that are behind them. Take the last [P.S.W.T.U.F. strike. Look](#) at the fantastic demands that were put forward. Important sections of Government servants, doing important work for the people of this country, went on strike asking for these demands.

We all know trade unionism has developed throughout the world, throughout the Western world and so on. It is not a secret. But there must not be any flavour of political thinking in trade unionism.

Form your trade union and carry on independently. I am not asking you to align yourself with this Government. Certainly not. I am not asking you to talk at all about it. So that when public servants come and tell me, Sir, we are in the Freedom Party or M. E. P. or that party, I reply,

07

thank you very much, but please do not talk about it. Even I do not want to know about it. I do not want to know, and if by telling me that, you expect me to do something unfair, please do not expect me to do anything unfair, I tell them. Poor people, that is not their fault. That is what they have got used to earlier.

Carry on your trade unions. In your action you must think of the duty to yourself and the other two duties too. Do not fail to consider the duty you owe to the people, the duty you owe to the Government which you are serving on behalf of the people. Carry on independently and fearlessly. I am most anxious to encourage trade unionism in this country to the fullest possible extent. I do not want to break trade unionism as my predecessor wanted to do. On behalf of my Government, I can give you this assurance. All I am pleading for is do not prostitute trade unionism.

ot

### **THIS FETTERED FREEDOM**

*[Written for Independence Day, 4th February, 1953.]*

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, has recently been engaged in the interesting task of giving us his views on happiness, particularly happiness in the topsy-turvy world of today. Nearly two thousand years ago, a not very distinguished Roman Governor of Palestine asked a question, which has puzzled succeeding generations: "What is Truth?"

A modern Pilate could appropriately ask: "What is Freedom?" Bertrand Russell may well address his mind to this interesting topic. It is five years now since our country achieved a measure of

freedom ; today we " celebrate " its fifth anniversary. Government spokesmen will no doubt lash themselves into frenzy of eloquence on the blessings that " freedom " has brought us ; the sage of Panadura (if he will permit me to apply that description to him) has already announced that he will hoist a black flag on Independence Day; Sir Goldman Laxapathy, K.B.E., etc., etc., will probably agree that freedom has not been such a bad thing ; Ratran Singho in his village hut will probably scratch his head and say: " Freedom? I see no signs of it."

Such conflicting points of view, all expressed presumably *bona fide* make, particularly on a day such as this, some brief consideration of the subject of freedom, its theory and practice, with especial reference to our own country, a matter of some interest. There is no doubt that, of all the ideals that man has pursued persistently, that of freedom has proved more inspiring and has called forth more devotion and sacrifices than any other. Many have also achieved, in their various ways, the freedom for which they strove. The Pilgrim Fathers, for example, obtained the spiritual liberty for which they yearned, in a far Western land: democracy secured individual freedom from the tyranny of feudal monopoly; socialism seeks to free the wage slaves of capitalism from economic bondage. To the cynic, therefore, who would doubt the existence of such a thing as " freedom " at all, it will be possible to give a confident answer.

What, then, is the nature of freedom? Freedom has a spiritual and mental aspect, as well as a physical and material side. It has also a paradoxical aspect: to achieve true freedom it is often necessary to impose apparent restrictions on freedom.

02

For instance, on the spiritual plane, Buddhism achieves the acme of freedom: the human mind is liberated from subservience even to a deity. But, one's mind, in order to profit from this liberty, must itself be disciplined and controlled-not by some arbitrary, external force, it is true, but by oneself. The " freedom of the wild ass ", Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan once called it, only leads to anarchy, which is the negation of true freedom: in a word, when freedom degenerates into licence, it ceases to be freedom.

On the other hand, true freedom is also not achieved by a mere change of label, by the mere outer trappings of freedom.

For instance, in the political sphere, the mere substitution of a set of native rulers for a set of foreign rulers does not necessarily confer freedom on a people ; nor does the mere observance of the forms of democracy confer the democratic freedoms on a nation.

In our own country, what has happened? Can anyone sincerely say that, after five years of " freedom " the reality of freedom has been achieved? Has any one of the important problems, bequeathed to us by Colonial rule, been effectively solved? As I pointed out in my speech at the opening of Parliament by the Duke of Gloucester on 4th February, 1948, the securing of political freedom was not an end in itself ; it only created the opportunity for the achievement of true freedom. That opportunity has not been utilized. The Government, though free, has chosen, in the main, to follow the pattern of the previous Colonial regime. It is itself not adequately responsive or sensitive to public opinion ; public servants have not yet learned to be servants of the public ; pressing problems, created by Colonialism, political, economic, social and cultural, far from being solved, have worsened, and democracy itself runs a risk of being a label rather than a practice. Meanwhile, moral and ethical standards are fast disintegrating, and licence is rearing its ugly head in the absence of liberty.

Fettered freedom is worse than the manacles of forthright servitude. Let us dedicate ourselves on this day to the task of breaking these bonds, and of achieving the reality of freedom for us all.

#### SOME THOUGHTS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

[Article written for Independence Day, 4th February, 1955]

On the occasion of the Seventh Anniversary of the freedom that we have regained, it may be of some interest to take a glance backwards as well as forwards. Looking backwards over the past seven years, our predominant feeling must be one of infinite regret at the golden opportunities that have been missed.

More than in any other Asian country that recently regained its freedom, the circumstances in Ceylon were favourable for the achievement of rapid progress and development. Unlike in many of the other Asian countries, the War had not produced conditions of confusion and devastation: indeed far from causing us damage, the war had greatly improved our economic position.

We were thus enabled to proceed to the transition under normal conditions-there was no breakdown in law and order in the country, nor were there any internal conflicts or dissensions. Secondly, our coffers were overflowing ; not only had we built up large reserves during the war

years, but also our annual revenue had risen steeply owing to boom prices in our agricultural products.

We thus had a magnificent opportunity to make rapid strides in agricultural and industrial development, to deal with appreciable effectiveness with the problems of landlessness and unemployment and the low standards of living. We were able to deal with such social services as education and health. On the cultural plans, the conditions were favourable for an early and satisfactory settlement of such problems as the change over to Swabasha, the resuscitation of our cultural, literary and spiritual values.

Unfortunately, lack of vision and energy permitted these opportunities to slip through our fingers, and nothing of real importance has been achieved. Now, with the dwindling revenues of the country, and the steadily increasing complexity of our national problems, it is ever becoming more difficult to deal with these problems with that speed and effectiveness that were possible a few years back.

On the purely political plane, there have been many disquieting manifestations of the tendency to drift towards Fascist courses of action, culminating recently with an assault on even that last citadel of democracy, the independence of the Judiciary.

04

And now what of the future? It is obvious that our only salvation lies in the replacement of this Government with one that will bring to bear on our national problems a new vigour and energy, a new outlook based on greater responsiveness in public opinion and the needs of the people, combined with courage, vision and the true spirit of service.

I am hopeful that the next General Elections will see a desirable change in this direction. There are reassuring signs that the people are awakening to the existing situation and the need for a change, and the voters are no longer prepared to be either gulled by vain promises, to be misled by unworthy inducements, or to be frightened by threats.

There are three things that are essential to secure a correct reflection of public opinion at the next General Elections. First, it is absolutely necessary that the Elections be held impartially and fairly; secondly, Opposition groups must strain every nerve to avoid undue conflict amongst themselves; and thirdly, intensive organization and propaganda are required throughout the country.

If these objects are secured, we may hope without undue optimism for a salutary change in the not distant future.