

# APPROPRIATION BILL, 1954-5

## Extracts from the Speech of the Hon. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Minister of Agriculture and Food

(Hansard Vol. 18 No. 4, Part 1, 20 July, 1954)

**The Hon. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene :**  
I would now go on to deal with the important departments that come under my Ministry for I think it is my duty to give a very full Ministerial statement as to the work that those departments are doing and the policies that we intend they should carry out in the coming year.

### Plantation Crops

Let me first deal with the three major commodities upon which the prosperity of Ceylon so largely depends today, namely, tea, rubber and coconut. These commodities are also fortunately fetching the highest prices they have fetched for quite a long time. This has helped us in reducing considerably the deficit in the current Budget.

### Tea

As far as the tea industry is concerned, in the year 1953 we produced and exported more tea than ever before. We have the Tea Research Institute which is financed by State funds. We have recently given them an extra cess. The Institute is doing very valuable work in finding out the causes of the diseases that affect the tea industry and the remedies that help to do away with those diseases.

The tea industry is a highly developed and highly industrialized one. It needs very little help from the State. As a matter of fact, the State gets a large amount of help from the industry, about which some of the hon. Appointed Members have been complaining. We are taking special steps to help the smallholder. In the tea industry, unlike in the other industries, the smallholder does not own a large portion of the acreage. Only about 80,000 acres are under the ownership of smallholders. We have, through this

House, given funds for the creation of co-operative societies of smallholders of tea. We have permitted the Tea Research Institute to create a Smallholders Advisory Board. Through that Board and the co-operatives we are organizing the smallholders of tea so that they may be able to utilize the best methods of tea cultivation, prevent erosion of their land, produce their tea and sell it at a reasonable price without being exploited by the green leaf factory owner. That movement has just started and most of the hon. Members of this House living in the tea smallholders' areas are members of the Board. I trust that that Board will have the help of the State to organize and assist the smallholder in the tea industry.

The Blister Blight campaign is bearing fruit and we need not think that Blister Blight would cause any serious damage to the tea industry today.

We have changed the sliding scale of duties in December and gone back to the fixed scale of duties. If we did not change it possibly the tea industry would be paying more by way of duties because the sliding scale on the new rise in the price of tea would have brought us more money. But that does not matter. With the fixed scale we leave much less room for operation by dishonest men. It has already brought in a tidy sum to the State.

The tea industry hardly needs too much attention. It is so well organized as to be able to look after itself, and it also looks after us.

### Rubber

The rubber industry is now going through a period of replanting with State aid. Those facts are before the House and before the

country. We hope to plant an extent of 65,000 acres in 5 years with high yielding clones. In the year 1953, we replanted about 8,000 acres in rubber. We hope to replant more this year. As the years go on, with our nurseries producing the proper type of seed and clone, we hope to increase the acreage and complete the 65,000 acres in 5 years.

The production of rubber has kept up to the normal scale. Last year the production was 98,610 tons which is in keeping with the normal scale of production. It is an index that the rubber owner is getting an economic price.

With regard to the diseases that affect the rubber industry, particularly odium, we have tried out spraying with wet sulphur. Experiments are being conducted with the spraying of wet sulphur by helicopter. It has been successful in certain areas and, wherever possible, we will use the most modern methods in trying to keep down the oidium disease.

### Coconut

Now I come to coconut which is primarily a Ceylonese industry. As you know, a large portion of the coconut industry about 70-75 per cent., of the acreage, is owned by smallholders. Much has been spoken about the rehabilitation of the coconut industry. I would like to divide the problem of rehabilitation into two sections: first, replanting; secondly, reconditioning. Replanting means either the uprooting of old trees and planting new seeds of a high-yielding variety, or planting altogether new land with high-yielding varieties of seeds. We have given all the aid that the Coconut Research Institute has asked for, not only by granting their estimates of Rs. 500,000, but also by increasing the cess to the very amount they asked for, so that their scheme of providing high-yielding seedlings could be carried out without any obstruction or delay. We hope to replant almost 5,000 to 10,000 acres a year during a period of years so that at least that portion of the land under coconut will have high-yields. We have taken land under the Land Acquisition Act throughout the Island where we hope to create certain colonization schemes for cultivation of coconut. With the help of the Minister of Lands and Land

Development we have acquired a piece of land in the very heart of a big jungle in the Chilaw area, which we hope to plant with high-yielding nuts, so that there may not be the danger of pollution with trees of not such good yielding variety. I hope that that campaign would be carried out as fast as possible by the Coconut Research Institute.

Reconditioning is a matter which requires very careful consideration. By reconditioning I mean the provision of subsidies for smallholders for the purchase of manure and barbed wire, for the purpose of applying contours on the land for preventing erosion. As I said, 70 to 80 per cent., of the coconut estates are owned by smallholders and are not managed in the proper way so as to produce the highest yields. This aspect of reconditioning requires very careful consideration. I am therefore in touch with the planting associations in the coconut areas, the Members of Parliament and the Minister of Commerce to find out what we could do in the matter, because otherwise money can easily be thrown away. You can give millions and millions of rupees for buying barbed wire, for subsidization of manure, and so on, but that money may not be utilized in the proper way. I am therefore carefully considering the matter before I place before this House a scheme for the reconditioning of the coconut estates that need reconditioning. I am stressing this point because it might be thought that we have not started a scheme for rehabilitation.

As I said, rehabilitation consists of two parts: replanting with high yielding nuts and reconditioning. Replanting is being carried out as fast as the Coconut Research Institute can do it with all the money they have asked for. Opening up of new lands is also being done on colonization schemes. We are providing all the facilities. I do not think any organization can go faster. With regard to reconditioning, that matter needs careful consideration and it is being attended to by the State.

### Minor Crops

Leaving these three main industries, there are a large number of minor products such as cocoa, cardamoms, citronella and coffee. I cannot deal with them individually. But I

would like to mention that on a suggestion made by the hon. Member for Maskeliya (Mr. P. H. C. Silva), I hope to create a Minor Products Advisory Board consisting of members of the Central Board of Agriculture as well as others, so that they may advise the Department of Agriculture and the Ministry about the proper way of assisting these minor products. I hope that ultimately this Board will develop into some institute like the ones which help the three major products, tea, rubber and coconut. This question is still in its exploratory stage. I trust that at the next meeting of the Central Board of Agriculture the Minor Products Advisory Board would be created.

## Annual Crops

### Paddy

I come then to the other major commodity, that is, paddy. With regard to the cultivation of paddy, we are introducing, for the first time in this Budget, certain steps that have been under contemplation for several years. Hon. Members will be glad to know that we intend to create the nucleus of a paddy research institute. There has been an agitation by several Members for several years in that regard and I have been able to persuade the Director of Agriculture that it is very necessary that a paddy research institute should be created. For a beginning we are separating by way of a Committee stage Amendment, all those research officers who deal with paddy research and putting them under a separate head called the "Paddy Research Section of the Department of Agriculture." I have been in correspondence with the Government of Japan asking them for the loan of the services of one of the recognized paddy experts in the world, Dr. Mitsui. If his services are available, he would be the first head of this institute or the chief adviser of this institute. We hope to create ultimately two institutes: one in the North-Central Province, and one in the wet zone. The dry zone institute most probably would be located at Maha Iluppalama where we have the Dry Farming Research Scheme which is largely financed by the New Zealand Government. The other would most probably be at Kurunegala in the

Batalagoda area in some part closer to the wet zone; but, certainly, one would be at Maha Iluppalama.

I hope that with the creation of a paddy research institute there would be an emphasis on paddy cultivation; as far as the research side is concerned, there would be investigation into the best methods of paddy cultivation, into the best types of seed that are available, and even investigations into the question of storage and the distribution of paddy. I do not say that these things are not being done, but it would not be fair to the industry if we created these institutes in the other three commodities like tea, rubber and coconut and not in the main product under cultivation in Ceylon, paddy.

One of the obstacles that hinder the proper cultivation of paddy in Ceylon is undoubtedly the question of land tenure; land is owned in too small areas or it is owned by a few absentee landlords who give it out under the various systems of cultivation prevalent in Ceylon. We hope to remedy that, firstly by the Paddy Lands Act. That Act has been in operation in two parts of Ceylon, namely in the Hambantota area and the Batticaloa area. The Act requires certain amendments because of the fact that I cannot put it into operation except in a large specified area like a D. R. O's area or a Revenue Officer's area. I cannot put it into application in a smaller area. I am watching the operation of the Act with a view to proposing the necessary amendments. It would take about a year and once we see the working of the Act we will apply it after amendment to smaller areas or bring up the Act for further amendment if it is considered necessary.

In the Hambantota area there has been strong objection to the operation of this Act by the owners of land. They have said that the tenants had got into possession and are ruining the land because the latter feel that there is no obligation on their part to look after the land properly. All that they wish to feel is that they are the owners of the land with which they could do whatever they wish. Two special officers have been posted at Hambantota to study the operation of the Act and to report to the Ministry what amendments are necessary and on how the Act is working.

The second main factor in increased paddy cultivation is undoubtedly intensive cultivation; that is, all the methods that we are now familiar with such as transplanting, harrowing, weeding, manuring and the choice of seed. Every one of these methods is now being employed on a very wide scale. If hon. Members would read the reports of the Director of Agriculture and the Director of Food Production for last year they will see the extents that are being brought under cultivation with transplanting, harrowing, weeding and manuring. The State gives very liberal subsidies for the purpose of manuring with proper manure. We have found out the proper manure required for use in the various areas of the Island. We have discovered about forty types of pureline seeds and also which type of seeds are best suited for the various parts of the Island. We have evolved a method of distributing that seed. It is working fairly satisfactorily in the North-Central Province but not as satisfactorily in the other areas. However, it should work satisfactorily in other areas too. I am glad to inform you that the latest information I have from the Paddy Research Section of the Department of Agriculture is that they have now evolved a new type of seed, one from Indonesia, which gives an average of about 80 bushels of paddy per acre. It is far and above the yield which other varieties in Ceylon give today, but as we improve in the evolution of that seed and as we distribute it, I hope our yield will increase.

The next thing we are doing is the introduction of the Japanese method of rice cultivation. I have explained to the House what that method is. It has brought fruitful results in India and special officers have been directed to undertake the study of the Japanese methods with a view to propagating it throughout India. We ourselves have sent three officers to Japan who will be back by the end of the year and we hope to get down a few Japanese families to show us their methods. Where we have tried out those methods in our State farms, there has been an undoubted increase of yields and even private individuals who tried out those methods have told us that those methods have yielded better results than the Ceylon methods.

Now I come to the most important part of the intensive cultivation programme of the Government and that is the Guaranteed Purchase Scheme. That scheme which gives an economic income to the peasants has been, I think, the cause of the cultivation of larger areas of paddy and the use of intensive methods of cultivation. We are giving the peasant Rs. 12 for a bushel of paddy which works out to 80 cents a measure of rice. The world price today is 55 cents. The Ceylon peasant gets 80 cents for a measure of rice. A large amount of paddy was produced last year which was four times the amount produced in the previous year. I must say that we are now ready to take over all the paddy that the peasant wants us to buy. We had one or two difficulties. Firstly, we had the difficulty of storage. For that I think the blame should lie largely on the shoulders of the Treasury. When I was there, applications were made by the Ministry of Agriculture on several occasions that money should be provided for stores; but the Treasury, looking at it purely from the figures provided to them at that time of production, thought that it was not necessary; but this year the paddy given to the State was four times what was offered to us last year.

Not purely due to increased production. It was due to various reasons; may be the fact that we increased the price of rationed rice and there was so much of demand outside and the peasants felt that the Government price of Rs. 12 a bushel was better than what the trader gave them. One need not dispute it. The fact is we are offered four times the rice offered to us in 1952. The plan evolved for buying this rice was a voluntary purchase scheme under the Co-operative Agricultural Producers Societies. In deficit areas those societies are few in number and do not function so well as we hope they would. But in the surplus areas these societies are functioning fairly well. In the year 1953 the number of, what are called C. A. P. & S. Societies, was 729 with a membership of 170,314. In Jaffna, owing to the purchase of onions and chillies under the guaranteed price scheme, they are performing a very useful function. On my last visit there I found these societies were flourishing. They were putting up their own

offices, purchasing their own tractors, carrying out mechanized cultivation and they were, generally speaking, in every way prosperous. In the Eastern Province and the North-Central Province I understand that they are doing very well.

The State has given them aid to the extent of Rs. 45 million—not a small sum. Of the Rs. 45 million, Rs. 27 million has been paid back and we are hoping that at least a large portion of the balance would come back when the crops are good.

We are hoping that this voluntary peasant organization of C. A. P. & S. Societies would be able to purchase paddy on behalf of the State. Only parts of the Island have failed to organize such societies, and I was wondering whether I could not fall back on the headman system to purchase the paddy because if the State says: "We will purchase your paddy at Rs. 12 per bushel" every bushel which the peasant wishes to sell must be bought by us. We must have an organization in order that this may be done satisfactorily. We have not got all the C. A. P. & S. Societies we require. I have therefore asked my officers to circularize the District Agricultural Committees and find out whether it would be possible for the headman to play a part purely as voluntary purchasers as was done under the compulsory purchase scheme.

It is necessary that there must be a proper organization. If a peasant wishes to sell his paddy there is the C. A. P. & S. Society of which he is a member. If the C. A. P. & S. Society cannot buy, there is the headman who comes under the Government Agent or the Revenue Officer who is part and parcel of the Food Commissioner's Department.

I think it will be useful if this purchase scheme for paddy is put under the Food Commissioner. It is now under the Marketing Commissioner. This is necessary because the Food Commissioner is the authority who imports and distributes. It is under the Food Commissioner that the various provincial officers function as Government Agents for the purpose of distribution. It is they who have got to see to the collection and distribution but the key to the solution is that the headman should also be made a sort of purchasing agent. That was my own view. I do not know what the District Agricultural

Committees would report. When their reports do come back we will try and evolve some scheme with the help of Parliament.

But what I do want to achieve is this and I have not been able to achieve it this year. A peasant who has an extra bushel of paddy which he wishes to sell to the State, wherever he is, should be able to dispose of it at Rs. 12 without being exploited by traders who may offer him less.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there was the recent crop survey of Mr. Koshal who was lent to us by an International Organization. I need not comment on that report except to say that for the *maha* of 1952-53 his calculation was that our production per acre averaged 26 bushels of paddy per acre throughout the Island.

Our short term plans therefore, for the increase of paddy, were, as I have outlined, the provision of better seed, the provision of better implements such as ploughs, intensive cultivation by the adoption of such means as manuring, harrowing, transplanting and so on. Then there is also subsidization of fertilizers and construction of irrigation schemes—not these big irrigation schemes of the Minister of Lands and Land Developments, but small schemes. We have given instructions to the Director of Food Production that he should release all money available for repair and construction of small irrigation schemes. We have also taken steps in regard to the subsidization of wells, particularly in Vavuniya and the Northern Province, where more cultivation is so necessary. Then there is subsidization of farmers through the purchase of paddy through C. A. P. & S. Societies. Then there are competitions organized and propaganda carried out. We are giving special aid for organizing exhibitions and for carrying out propaganda so that the cultivator may feel that the State is taking some interest in him and showing him the best methods.

I should like to announce that in December, 1955, we will be organizing an All-Island Food and Agriculture Exhibition which will show the agricultural progress in Ceylon from 1931 to date and the latest methods being used as well as the result and progress achieved by the use of those methods.

There are two other matters which need a little attention. Firstly, there is the question of pest control, and secondly, the question of mechanized cultivation.

Now, pest control is assuming large proportions in Ceylon. There is no doubt that unless you make the most advanced methods of pest control available to the peasant all the other steps we are taking of intensive cultivation and subsidies will be of no avail if pests destroy all the efforts he puts in during the year.

We found recently in the Hambantota area that a pest called the pentatomid bug was attacking large extents of fields on the right and left banks of the Walawe Ganga. We utilized the most modern methods. We sent out a helicopter which surveyed the area affected by this pest. If it was necessary the helicopter was to be used in order to spray insecticides and germicides which are in use today. Whether it was used or not I do not know. But if necessary helicopters would be used throughout the Island.

We have, with the aid of Canada under the Colombo Plan received a large amount of material, such as, mobile vans of the most modern types together with sprayers and chemicals. It is my intention to open up ten pests control units for the various provinces in the Island. Two of these units will be stationed in the Eastern Province—one for Trincomalee and one for Batticaloa—the remainder will be kept at various key points in the Island.

Today, we have only one unit in Peradeniya and there is too much centralization. When a pest attacks a cultivation the District Agricultural Officer or Government Agent has to get in touch with Peradeniya and by the time the unit leaves Peradeniya and gets to work in the affected area the pest has destroyed the entire cultivation.

We hope to effect some decentralization with the aid of this equipment from Canada. There will be a unit in each province and the Chief Agricultural Officer will have trained personnel under his command together with chemicals and so on, so that this unit could proceed immediately to the battlefield in order to fight the pest.

I have written to the Hon. Minister of Lands and Land Development asking him

to make available in the larger colonization schemes small airstrips so that I could send Auster airplanes if they are necessary for the fighting of pests.

Finally, I want to say a few words about mechanized paddy cultivation. This is a question on which there has been agitation both in the Press and on public platforms. I would like to say that from the inquiries and investigations I have made mechanized cultivation has not only come to stay in Ceylon but I think it is doing well.

There are four units of mechanized cultivation in Ceylon. There is firstly the private individual over whom I have no control. He orders his own tractors and works them or he hires them as he wishes. That is entirely his private concern.

The Director of Food Production was gifted with about 190 tractors through the good offices of the Australian Government under the Colombo Plan. Now some of these tractors have been given to Agricultural Committees and some to the Gal Oya Board. Some others have been given to various Government departments and the balance is being made use of through the Director of Food Production by the various tractor units throughout the Island. The major tractor unit, the Kangaroo, is stationed at Anuradhapura. These tractors are given out on hire. Certain scales of hire have been laid down for these tractors. We are training engineers, technicians and drivers to work these tractors. If the driver will treat his machine with consideration, mechanized cultivation can be made a success. The Director of Food Production is now putting his tractor units into proper order.

The third is the provision of tractor units through the C. A. P. & S. Societies. There has been much criticism about these tractors. Some of them were given to the tractor unit by the Fordson Agency and the Ferguson Agency, and it is reported that some of these units are not functioning well. But from the report I have obtained, specially from the F. A. O. Expert dealing with tractor cultivation in Ceylon, I am satisfied with the position. He says that he was surprised at the amount of work done by

these tractors during the last few years. Since October, 1952, 48,000 acres have been ploughed with tractors, the cost of labour on the land so ploughed and the other work done can be estimated at over a million rupees.

There were almost 250 tractors functioning through C. A. P. & S. Societies in 1953, and the tractor units amounted to 11. Our idea is to make these tractors owned outright by smaller units so that the peasant can easily hire out tractors without tractors having practically to go 10, 15, 20 or sometimes even 40 miles from their station to the destination and back again. That will avoid much deterioration of the machines besides saving on travelling expenses. Of course, when there were many tractors in our hands in the years 1952 and 1953—tractors being new to Ceylon—one could not have expected them to function properly and as effectively as they did in highly-developed countries; but now that we know what a tractor can do, we are trying to evolve implements for tractors which are suited to the conditions in Ceylon. I have created a Mechanized Advisory Board in the Ministry of Agriculture composed of representatives of the C. A. P. & S. Societies, the Director of Food Production, the Department of Agriculture and other private individuals interested in tractor cultivation; and from that Board I hope to draw the necessary knowledge and experience to put mechanized cultivation on a proper footing.

The final unit is that of the Agricultural Department. It is a very small unit dealing with tractor cultivation on Government farms. We also have our main unit of the engineering department now stationed at Ganoruwa, in Peradeniya, and it is performing good service. That is the story about mechanized cultivation. I am only giving the history of these problems on very general lines because I deal with it in more detail during the Committee stage.

### Other Crops

With regard to the subsidiary crops, such as yams, *kurahan*, vegetables, the story is an unhappy one. With regard to onions, we know that the Northern Province produces

about 75 to 80 per cent. of our requirements. We have stopped altogether the imports of onions from India. We hope that by better cultivation, by choosing the better seasons we may be soon able to be 100 per cent. self-sufficient as regards onions

We also produce chillies to meet about 40 to 50 per cent. of our requirements. But this has not proved as successful a crop as onions. For yams and vegetables—particularly vegetables—we have now a scheme worked out by the Marketing Department to help the vegetable producer by having mobile vans going to various places and shops selling vegetables and buying local produce for supply to hospitals. That is an attempt to help the cultivator to produce vegetables on a planned scale. During certain seasons, there is nothing but *vatakka* available. Two years ago the Marketing Department had to buy tons and tons of *vatakka* and just destroy it because it could not be sold. People would not take *vatakka* even if we paid them money. Production of vegetables should be planned, and that aspect of the matter has also been considered.

I come to the question of tobacco. I must say that we are having trouble with the Tobacco Pact with India because under that Pact we are not allowed to raise the duty on *beedies* or even to restrict the inflow of *beedies* into Ceylon. India has not purchased all the tobacco she promised to purchase and, with the recent tax on Ceylon-grown tobacco, we find that the tobacco cultivator, who was once doing well, is in for a hard time. I have written to the Prime Minister that as soon as possible this Pact with India should be abrogated. As we have to go on till 1955, we should either completely ban *beedies* coming into Ceylon or put a heavy duty on it, so that it may be possible to continue cultivating tobacco with profit. The finest tobacco is grown in Ganewatte and even in the Jaffna area. The cultivator was given all the help by the tobacco companies, which constructed flues and introduced other methods which helped the cultivation of tobacco. The cultivator is not going to do anything next year because of *beedies* coming in. We will abrogate that fact with India as soon as we can and help the local cultivator.

### Department of Agriculture

As regards major products and minor products, I should like to speak a few words on the Agricultural Department, its administration, and composition. I have asked the Director of Agriculture to consider, in consultation with his senior officers, whether we cannot split up the department into two main sections or departments. One section or department should purely deal with agricultural research. I find that there are very highly qualified research men in the Agricultural Department whose only ambition is to become the Director of Agriculture, or gain promotion as senior agricultural officers and deputies. When they become purely administrative officers, they are tied down to their desks; and deal with transfers and appointments, we lose the best brains which have been devoted to research.

So, if we can create an Agricultural Research Department with its headquarters at Peradeniya, where men can spend their whole time doing research work and not be worried about filling administrative offices, I can take away from the Agricultural Department those officers who will apply that research to extension services. For example, the district agricultural officers work in the field and provide extension services to the peasants, who are benefited by the research carried out by these men.

I can combine the extension services of the Agricultural Department with the Department of Food Production and call it the Department of Agriculture and Food Production and thus have two departments—the Department of Agricultural Research and the Department of Agriculture and Food Production. This suggestion is being investigated by the Director of Agriculture in consultation with his staff officers; and in the course of the new budgetary year, I may be able to place proposals before the Cabinet and this House for consideration.

### Research

With regard to research, one of the most important research schemes is now being carried out at Maha Iluppalama near Anuradhapura. That is a dry farming research

station. That scheme deals with almost two million acres of non-irrigable land. If proper methods of cultivation cannot be introduced on that land, I do not think we can become self-sufficient in regard to food. This research station is financed by the New Zealand Government, to whom I wish to offer thanks, with a sum of almost four or five million rupees. Hon. Members can see for themselves the progress made under that scheme. I think we will be able to open early next year the first stage of the Dry Farming Research Scheme at Maha Iluppalama. Very important and extensive experiments are being carried on there with regard to land and water utilization and the crops that can be raised. I have already stated that I hope to install there the first Paddy Research Institute.

Then there is general research being conducted on various soils, pests and plants at Peradeniya, and of course we have our specialized research institutes for the tea, rubber and coconut industries.

### Extension and Farms

With regard to extension services for the purpose of application of all this research to the work of the peasants, we depend largely on the District Agricultural Officers of whom there is one in each Province. They are the men who organize the entire agricultural work in the Provinces, who see that the peasants get their subsidies and other help from the Department through the Food Production Officers and through Agricultural Instructors and Overseers, and who see to it that the results of research at the head are put into fruitful practice.

We have in that connection also the various farms controlled by the Department of Agriculture. Now these farms have been the subject of much criticism and, I think, the criticism is justified. But it is not fair to blame the Department of Agriculture, because many of these farms are either colonization schemes or food production schemes which were started during the war and were later handed over wholesale to the Department although the Department did not want them. Fortunately for me, the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture

visited some of these farms, a Treasury Committee visited some of the other farms, and I am now acting on their very valuable reports. Many of these farms which have not been considered necessary are being closed down, others are being reorganized, and I trust very soon that the farms now being managed by the Department of Agriculture would, wherever it is considered they should pay, be a paying proposition.

We are dividing the farms into various heads. There are the animal husbandry farms which deal with the breeding of animals, special breeds being raised at different places: for instance we are seeking to make the Ridiyagama farm a buffalo breeding centre; at Nikaweratiya we are seeking to breed draught cattle; at Polonnaruwa we are hoping to breed only various types of Indian cattle, and at Ambawela and Bopatalawa we are trying to introduce the various European types of cattle. At Karagoda-Uyangoda in Matara we are trying to improve the pure Sinhala breed.

The improvement of animal husbandry cannot be done in a year or two; it takes time. As far as the officers are concerned, they have informed me that they cannot yet say what is the special stock variety that can be introduced into Ceylon or what is the best type suitable for us. Whether it is the pure Sinhala cattle that can be developed by proper breeding to produce the necessary milk, or whether it is the cross breed between the European and the Sinhala or between the Indian and Sinhala varieties, the officers have not yet been able to decide; experiments are still going on. I have also had discussions with the experts on the question whether the "Cape" breed, which is a cross between cattle introduced from Europe by the Dutch and the Ceylon cattle, can be taken as the standard type to be adopted in Ceylon. They tell me that they are unable to say yet because experiments are not yet concluded; they are still going on. As far as animal husbandry farms are concerned, though one should not expect them to pay, still they are beginning to pay under the care of a Danish expert, Mr. Ankar, who is seeing to it that the animals are properly managed and that the full amount of milk available is produced. The milk is sold to

various hospitals, and hon. Members will see in the Report of the Director of Agriculture statistics in regard to the animal husbandry farms which indicate that all of them without exception, I think, are now paying their way.

Other farms are attached to educational institutions, for example the Horana farm, the Labuduwa farm and the Peradeniya farm. One cannot expect those farms to pay because they provide the practical farm schools for boys and girls and are managed by the Department of Agriculture. My ambition is to see that each Province has one Farm School for boys and one for girls. We have a large number already throughout the Island and in the new Budget you will see that I hope to open a Farm School in the N. C. P. at Kagama and one at Bibile in Uva. We cannot open all these at once; we want the necessary trained personnel, the grounds and buildings, but wherever possible I am trying to achieve this ambition of a boys' school and a girls' school in each province, and I want to raise the standard of these schools to the standard reached by the Peradeniya Boys' Farm School and the Kundasale Girls' Farm School. Of the others only the Girls' Farm School at Walpita comes up to the required standard. The rest are not provided with special lecturers nor equipped with proper quarters for students to reside; they do practical work on these farms, for which they are paid, and they only get a course of an year's duration. One cannot say that in these schools they get a proper education in agriculture; it is only an opportunity given to children of a certain type of peasant to obtain a practical course of instruction in agriculture. However, I hope gradually to raise the standard of these practical farm schools to the standard of the Peradeniya and Kundasale schools. I should like to mention, in passing, that I have directed that in the Kundasale Farm School the girls should all pay a fee from January next year.

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is the very important question of soil conservation. We have now got the necessary trained men. In the Kotmale valley we have divided the area into a number of sections; there are trained officers already in the field

in contact with the estate owners and with the peasants and showing them the proper methods of soil conservation.

Those are some of the matters that come under the Department of Agriculture, in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. I must make a reference to the Central Board of Agriculture, the main advisory body which is supposed to be advising the Minister and the Department. I feel that this body does not perform its functions properly because it is so large, it meets so rarely and at its meetings the members do nothing but discuss; from the point of view of practical use the Board need not function at all. So I am hoping that the Board would split itself into a number of committees sitting in constant session like the Mechanization Advisory Committee which, I, hope, will do the same, and advise the Minister and the Department on all the problems that come within their sphere. I trust that the Minor Products Advisory Board will also function in the same way. I hope to have Boards set up in respect of two other important activities, namely, animal husbandry and poultry farming.

### Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry is a very important branch of the work of my Ministry. I have already outlined to hon. Members how in the various farms we are trying to find out what is the best type of cattle, neat cattle and buffalo, that can be introduced into Ceylon. We are seeking to increase the cadre of the Veterinary Department so that in each Province we may have sufficient men to tackle the various diseases that arise, as they arise. We are seeking to improve the standard of our cattle not only by experiments on our farms but by opening up artificial insemination centres throughout the Island. I might add that wherever we opened these the demand has been so great that we have found that our equipment and our personnel are quite inadequate for the purpose.

Many of the products of the artificial insemination centres have been most successful. We are seeking to improve the breed of cattle by having various areas demarcated as feeding centres. Stray cattle, immature cattle and bad cattle can be removed, and

the area sealed off for private cattle which can be brought there and properly looked after and managed. If a villager who has two heads of bad cattle gives them to the department, he can get back good cattle in exchange.

We need proper investigation into the diseases that prevail in Ceylon as far as animals are concerned. We require cheaper cattle food, and fortunately some companies dealing in coconut produce and fertilizers, have produced a new type of cattle food which, I think, we can put on the market at a cheap price. We need to educate the cattle owner and the poultry owner on the proper management of cattle and poultry.

One of the most important steps taken towards the improvement of animal husbandry in Ceylon has been the creation of the Milk Board; and I am happy to say that, judging from the minutes of that Board, it is setting about its work in a very businesslike and forthright fashion. If we are able to offer a guaranteed price for milk and make of milk an economic product, the standard of animals in Ceylon must naturally improve. A person with a high-yielding cow will know that it is as useful to him as a coconut or rubber tree. When the Milk Board begins its work, organizes distribution on a proper scale, enters the market and buys milk, I feel it will be a most important step taken towards the improvement of animal husbandry.

There is also the Report of Dr. Khorody which has been published, and you will see from it that he feels that, beginning with the City of Colombo, we will be able to store sufficient milk to supply the people.

I have been offered all the milk produced at the dairies at Narahenpita and Welisara which are run by the State. If you want to remove the cattle of private owners to these dairies as is done in Bombay, some distance away from the City, they can be removed to Narahenpita and Welisara; and we can immediately organize a scheme on the lines of the Bombay scheme. Those are some of the problems connected with animal husbandry and hon. Members will see that the State has not sat quiet. Within the last few months, the State has taken active steps to

improve animal husbandry in Ceylon. Animal husbandry is most important for increasing national income.

In a small country like Denmark, which has half the population of Ceylon, the income from the produce resulting from animal husbandry is twice our income from tea, rubber and coconuts. It is so also with New Zealand, a small country which depends entirely on the produce she gets from cattle. New Zealand breeds goats, cattle and poultry. Therefore why should not the peasant of Ceylon, particularly in the vast coconut-growing area and even in the tea-growing area meet our dairy requirements and produce income as they do in those countries?

When I was on circuit in Bandarawela, many of the *kanganies* and smallowners of tea told me that they could produce 3,000 to 4,000 pints of milk a day. They said that at present they were producing from 500 to 600 pints a day, and that they were unable to look after their cattle and maintain them for want of the necessary facilities.

Again, in the Kuliyaipitiya area, from 300 to 400 pints of milk are wasted daily.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the story of animal husbandry.

### Agricultural Education

Finally, I should like to say a few words about agricultural education. I have already mentioned to the House that we have practical farm schools in each Province; but they only deal with students who have passed the S. S. C. in Sinhalese or English—students from 14 plus to 18 plus. That is a problem the Minister of Education and I must look into. I must admit that I have been somewhat remiss in the matter, but teachers are being given a special agricultural course, particularly at Mirigama, to impart to them an agricultural bias. However, I do feel that we must bring in all students at a very early stage, between the ages 10 to 14 years, and give them an agricultural education. One of the greatest handicaps we are faced with today is that the student in our junior and senior schools forsakes the ways of his

father, does not want to go out into the field—may be because he learns English.

I am organizing a big demonstration in harrowing, sowing and harvesting to remedy that state of affairs. The Minister of Education has placed the services of his whole department at the service of the Agricultural Department and, in combination, we are organizing this big demonstration, which will be a sort of picnic. I have written to all the District Agricultural Committees, to all Members of Parliament, the Governor-General and the Prime Minister informing them that the next organized sowing of paddy will be ceremoniously carried out as in the days of our Sinhalese and Tamil kings. We will have the whole lot of State officials, from the Governor-General downwards, taking part in the greatest profession in the world, the *wap magala*.

### Tree Planting Campaign

Before I conclude with the agricultural section of my Ministry, I would like to ask the co-operation of all hon. Members in the tree-planting ceremony, the *vana mahoths-waya*, which we are organizing in October this year. We have decided to hold that ceremony in October this year because during that month the whole Island not only a particular part of Ceylon, will be suitable for cultivation. Planting activities can be carried out throughout the Island during October.

The Agricultural Department, the Rural Development Department, the Local Government Department, all Government departments and schools helping in this campaign, will be provided with seedlings not only of fruit trees but also of timber trees so that there may be, firstly, a love of trees inculcated in our people and, secondly, the rich timber resources which are being exploited so ruthlessly may be replaced.

I have asked for assistance from other countries in this matter and I would like to inform the House that every diplomat from other countries has promised to send me trees and plants indigenous to those countries which will grow in Ceylon. That will be part of the campaign which will be commenced in October this year.

### Acknowledgments

I think it would be ungracious on my part if I did not thank the Parliamentary Advisory Committee, the Board of Agriculture and the various international organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, and all the countries interested in the Colombo Plan for the great help they are giving us to increase agricultural products in Ceylon.

### Food Imports and Distribution

Then I come to the question of food distribution and food production. I thought of dealing with food distribution first because the remarks I have made already refer, to some extent, to the question of food distribution. In regard to food distribution, the Department of the Food Commissioner (Supplies) and that of the Food Commissioner (Control and Distribution) have been amalgamated into one as the Department of the Food Commissioner. This has saved expense by way of cadre, and so on, and it is functioning quite effectively.

### Rice

First of all, I shall start with rice. The position with regard to rice is that, at the beginning of January next year, I will have in stock from our stock piles about 160,000 tons of rice. That is I have in stock almost 100,000 tons more than I need. Under the Burma and China contracts, I have to import 200,000 tons from the former and 266,000 tons from the latter. I am speaking of long tons. That makes a total of 466,000 tons which with the 160,000 tons in stock will amount to 626,000 tons. This year we have purchased under the guaranteed price scheme some 30,000 tons from the Ceylon peasants. That is four times what we purchased from them last year. That also must be added to this stock.

For our rationing scheme as well as for sales outside the ration, we need only about 460,000 tons. On these calculations, I would therefore need next year to import between 100,000 to 125,000 tons less. That is the proposition which I have placed before the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Of course,

we have had good weather this year and that is why the peasants have been able to reap as much as 30,000 tons. But even without that amount, under these two contracts and the stock pile that we have, it would be necessary for us to import about 100,000 tons less next year.

Rice prices are tumbling down in the world. Under the Burma contract, we have to purchase next year at £ 48 per ton. Under the China contract the price this year is £ 49.5.0. I have an offer of 200,000 tons of rice from Pakistan at £ 38 per ton and a mission from Thailand came here begging of us to purchase their rice at £ 38 to £ 40 per ton. I should like to say with regard to Thailand that about 1½ years ago when my food officials went to that country to buy rice, they had to wait several weeks before they could even get admission there. Now when they asked me to buy their rice I was able to confront them with the question "Will you buy my rice?" I have already sold 50,000 tons and I have some more to dispose of at whatever price I can get for it. I find that I have to dispose of it because the people are not eating this particular kind of rice.

The reason why this change has taken place is purely fortuitous, namely, the easing of the war situation in Asia. When we entered into the Burma contract, we did not know how long the China Pact would last if the Korean War assumed more evil proportions. If the Korean War had assumed more evil proportions, not only would we not have had rice from China but the cost of Burma rice would have gone up because the entire population of Asia would have had to turn to Burma for rice. Therefore, we took the precaution of entering into a contract with Burma for that 200,000 tons. Now, with this 200,000 tons from Burma and the 266,000 tons from China we will have enough for our rationing scheme as well as for selling outside the ration at cost price. It is easy to be wise after the event but Government had to take that precaution.

The reason why we took up that position was because we wanted to avoid a situation in which our people would be starving for want of rice. But now the whole position has changed. I do not know how long this

changed situation will last but if it does last, if there are no threats of war and the production of rice continues in Asia under the most favourable circumstances, then I anticipate that the price of rice will drop even below £ 38 per ton.

At the moment, the Ceylon consumer gets rice at 55 cents a measure. That is with a subsidy. If I buy rice at £ 38 to £ 40 per ton, I can sell it to our people at that price without the subsidy. Sooner or later, I hope to do away with making a profit on sugar because unlimited quantities of rice will be available and the price will come down. At the moment, under the Burma contract alone we can get all the rice we want for our rationing scheme as well for our entire needs. The reason why I cannot do away with rice rationing altogether is because I am subsidizing rice at present and that would be a blow to the people. I am buying rice at 70 cents a measure and selling it at 55 cents. At the moment, as I said, we are making a profit on sugar and it is with that profit that I am subsidizing rice. If I can buy rice at 55 cents, I can do away with rice rationing and, what is more, in time to come we may be able to stop making a profit on sugar also and go back to the good old days before the war.

I should like to mention that there has been an unprecedented rice crop in the 1953-54 season throughout Asia. It is estimated that there will be a record yield of 267,000,000 tons of rough rice, that is paddy, as compared with the previous record of 254,000,000 tons. The weather has been unusually favourable all over and there have been record harvests in India, Pakistan, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan and also in Ceylon. Production of rice in the Near East has now increased to about 13,000,000 tons over the previous year. That is the position with regard to rice production in Asia.

We cannot think too far ahead because we do not know how world conditions will change. The position today is that rice is available to the people at 55 cents a measure. Next year after the negotiations with China—As you know, the Minister of Commerce will shortly be leaving for that country—we will have to study the situation and if we can get cheaper rice we will reduce the price to

the consumer. Then we will be able to come to a decision as to what the price of rice to our people should be and for how long more rationing should continue. We can also decide whether we should continue to make a profit on sugar or whether the margin of profit could be reduced. I can assure you that whatever discussions take place they will take place in the interests of Ceylon and Ceylon alone—not in the interests of any other country. Whatever decisions we make will be made in the interests of the vast majority of the consumers in Ceylon and not any particular small interest.

### **Wheat**

With regard to wheat, the position is that there are ample quantities of that commodity for sale in the world markets. Wheat flour can be taken off control tomorrow, if necessary. In fact, I am in negotiation with the private dealers to find out whether they are prepared to take over the import and distribution of flour. It is not necessary that there should be all these controls exercised on the import and distribution of these essential commodities unless, of course, it cannot be helped. Government control means that there will be so much of leakage, corruption and all that sort of thing. Whenever the State tries to do something which is good there is so much of blame cast on it and that is why it is better to decontrol these items as soon as we possibly can.

### **Sugar**

The control of sugar also will be stopped the moment I am able to do it. I do not know what will happen if I throw it open to private traders. I shall not attempt to stop the control of sugar until I know what the exact position is with regard to supplies, price, and so on.

### **Maldivé Fish**

With regard to maldivé fish, the Government has instructed me to give up the State importation of this commodity and hand it over to private importers. I shall have to look into the question whether there will be adequate supplies to ensure an equitable distribution all round.

### The Co-operative Movement

That is with regard to importation. With regard to distribution, of local and imported food, I come to the connected question of the co-operative movement. It is through the co-operative movement that we distributed the essential commodities imported or produced in Ceylon. The co-operative movement is one of the greatest movements in Ceylon and the world. Its great ideals, and the sense of independence and patriotism it indicates in all who participate in it, have not been lost in Ceylon. The co-operative movement has helped our people to a great extent to acquire these qualities.

But in every nation, particularly in a nation which has been for three to four hundred years under foreign rule, there are bound to be many black sheep, and particularly in the stores movement those black sheep have crept in and have assumed power in many parts of Ceylon.

Of the 3,400 co-operative stores just now functioning in Ceylon today—originally there were about 4,000—reports indicate that 50 per cent. are below standard, in the sense that they do not have audited accounts; that annual meetings are not held; that members are uninterested, and that there are defalcations and complaints against them.

Applying those standards—a certain rigid set of standards has been laid down—I have instructed the Assistant Commissioners to go round every co-operative store, in every district, and to report by the end of July what they suggest should be done with the co-operative stores movement in their areas: whether they recommend that certain societies should be closed down—I draw a distinction between societies and stores;—whether certain societies should be liquidated; whether the stores should be run by a union; whether the union should run depots. I have asked these Assistant Commissioner what they suggest should be done with these societies that do not fall within the standards we have laid down.

I have drawn this distinction between societies and stores because it is not my intention to close down stores in the villages. I want the stores to continue to help the villagers to buy what they want.

It is the co-operative society that needs correction. It has become corrupt. In the United Kingdom they have not got 4,000 stores societies. For the whole of London they have only 3 or 4, but these stores societies have a large number of depots working under them. That helps centralization, and brings about better management and better control.

My idea, is, if possible, to limit the number of societies. I would go further and say that it would be a good thing if we can have only 26 stores societies, because there are 26 Assistant Commissioners Districts. I would limit the number to 26 large stores societies doing trade to the extent of between Rs. 20 and Rs. 30 million a year, and, through those societies, depots and stores in each village, managed by the union.

Anyway, till the end of July, until the reports come in from the Provinces, I cannot say what the results of the inquiry would be. I do not mind, once the reports have come in, a Committee of the House, composed of Government and Opposition Members, being created to examine the whole co-operative movement in Ceylon and report to the Government what should be done.

It is a people's movement, dear to the hearts of hon. Members of the Opposition who speak so much of people's movements. Here is a people's movement; let them examine the movement and tell us what is wrong with it, and we shall apply the remedies they suggest. If the Opposition would cooperate with me I shall suggest to the Cabinet that there should be a Committee of both Houses going round the Island to examine the movement and tell us what should be done about this co-operative movement which is so important to the future of Ceylon.

Apart from this stores movement, there are 76 different types of co-operative societies—transport societies, fishing societies, mat-weaving and coir societies, credit societies and so on. With the co-operative stores movement, the number will add up to 77 different types of societies, a number unequalled in the World.

Apart from the stores movement and some of the C. A. P. and S. societies, where large sums of money are involved, I do not think

any complaint can be made against the rest of the co-operative movement. I was in the Matara District about two weeks ago presiding over a meeting connected with the co-operative movement, and I feel that the Matara District is doing well, and so are some other parts of Ceylon.

But we must not hide from ourselves the fact that there is a large amount of corruption in the co-operative movement. We must seek to weed it out. We must turn the search-light on that corruption, and cure and purge the movement from the corruption that has set in.

In some countries, in Denmark for instance, and in the Baltic countries, there is no Department of Co-operative Development at all. It is not necessary, because the co-operative movement is a peoples' movement. I do not know whether that ideal can be reached here, but our Co-operative Department is doing a tremendous amount of good. Some of the junior officers, working in the wilds of Bintenne without houses to live in, go from village to village carrying out their mission of service and help.

While paying a tribute to Government Officials and the Department it would be ungracious on my part if I did not pay a tribute to the great unofficial co-operators, some of them Members of this House. There is a great co-operator behind me, the hon. Member for Panadura (Mr. D. C. W. Kannangara), and there is the hon. Member for Kalutara (Mr. Cooray). There are also great co-operators in the Eastern Province. One of the hon. Members representing Badulla is the President of a Co-operative Union. I am mentioning only a few of the Members who are great co-operators, both on the Opposition side and on the Government side. There is also, the "philosopher of the co-operative movement", the hon. Member for Vaddukoddai (Mr. Veerasingham). We are all co-operators, except in politics!

I must also pay a tribute to those men, not only of our generation but of the past generation, who built up the movement from nothing until it has become one of the wonders of the world. Unfortunately, we grew up too fast. During the War we were propelled with the speed of a jet plane, and the

movement must come down to earth, or it may disappear altogether from our ken! To bring it down to its proper foundation, I have asked for an investigation to take place. When that investigation has been made and the report is ready, if the Cabinet agrees, I shall ask that a Committee of the House be appointed to investigate and report on the future of the movement.

With regard to the C. W. E., one report has been received. It will be published. We have entrusted to Major Oldfield, a valued ex-Member of this House, the task of making a further investigation and submitting a report. When that report is published, I trust we shall be able to make up our minds as to the future of the C. W. E.

It is a great organization, and I do not want it to perish, nor do I want to liquidate it. It must go on, and with the recommendations made by these gentlemen we shall be able to cure the defects in the C. W. E.

### Marketing Department

Finally, there is the Marketing Department. This is another section of my Ministry which deals with the distribution of food. It was created during the War, and its main purpose then was, firstly, to cook meals to feed the various civil defence personnel—harbour workers, and so on—and, secondly, to help in the systematic marketing of agricultural produce.

The Department has grown from small beginnings until now it has a staff of 1,500 to 2,000. It has various schemes operating, the guaranteed purchase scheme for paddy, schemes for the purchase of onions, chillies and other products coming under the Guaranteed Purchase Scheme. We blame the Department for running its schemes at a loss, but every guaranteed purchase scheme is run at a loss, as an hon. Member pointed out. In America tons of produce are destroyed because the State buys produce at guaranteed prices and is unable to sell it at those prices. In the same way, tons of produce in Ceylon are—not destroyed, but some of it rots.

I have already mentioned the vegetable marketing scheme. It helps the producers to sell their vegetables. We are willing to assist

them as far as we can. In fact I want to help them more. But we need fleets of vans and lorries. We are going to have a number of lorries which will be sent to the various fairs and *polas* to purchase the vegetables and sell them—this is important—at fixed prices in Colombo in the slums and tenements. It will help to keep a tremendous check on the blackmarket trader.

There is also the hospital service, which was very carefully investigated by a committee of experts. They said that the Marketing Department Hospital Service should not be discontinued and that we should not get back to the contract system which is being extended daily now. There may be faults in the service, but it cannot be helped. It may be that the *kolikuttu* is not as big as it should be, or that the hen's egg has got addled. But ultimately and in the final analysis, the distribution of food to the hospitals through the Marketing Department has stood the test of time; and I doubt very much whether the public, and particularly the patients, would like to see a change.

Then we have the Marketing Department shops in various parts of Ceylon. In Colombo there is a shop where we sell Ceylon produce—not only produce made by the Marketing Department, such as canned pineapples and fruits and coffee, which I found indigestible, but also the produce of others. The Marketing Department is doing good work in the matter of Ceylon produce which it has for sale in its shops. It has also ventured out to another field, namely, canning. It was the present Director of Agriculture who first canned pineapples and fruits in Ceylon. It has now become a thriving industry. We cannot cope with the demand, not only in Ceylon but also from outside, for our canned goods; and I think that the future of our fruit industry lies in canning. It is said that in Australia they eat the fruits they can and can what they cannot! That is the only solution.

Take our pineapple industry in Gampaha and the Siyane Korale area. They are growing so much pineapple that it just runs to waste during the pineapple season. We buy as much as we can, and can them for use here even out of season and also for selling outside Ceylon. We intend to introduce a hormone which makes the pineapple grow

out of season. That is the modern method used. If that can be done, we could have pineapples growing even out of season. Then we can gradually reduce the cost of the pineapple to the consumer and help the producer to grow pineapples even in the off season and thus develop the industry. This is the main industry of Hawaii and Singapore. But here it is still in a very incipient stage.

We are opening a new canning factory in Borella. The foundation has been laid and I trust we may be able to open it early next year. We hope to install the most modern machinery and thus be able to have it as a pilot factory for canning pineapples, *waraka*, *jambu*, *rambutan*, mangoes and other luscious fruits Ceylon is famous for, including the *Pasyala cadju*.

I am glad to say that private industry has also taken to canning. One of our well-known politicians, Mr. M. W. H. de Silva, has started such a factory in my electorate, and we are going to give him all possible help by reducing the price at which we sell sugar. It is not fair for us to sell sugar to these small industries at the heavily inflated price at which we sell to the consumers because they cannot compete with the imported stuff or with the stuff we are producing. They have produced some very good stuff which I was able to eat. I was given a few free samples—at the exhibition in Kelaniya, which the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister and I visited—of *waraka* and other edible fruits which are canned by Mr. M. W. H. de Silva and his company.

The object of the Marketing Department, as I said before, is to help systematic marketing arrangements for agricultural produce. It is not our idea to take over the entire marketing in Ceylon. That is quite impossible, for we would disrupt the entire marketing system that prevails here. We want to help orderly marketing and assist the producer to sell his goods at fair prices and not be exploited. The purposes of the Marketing Department are to give the producer a fair price, to sell local produce at a reasonable price, to provide marketing facilities, increase food production and allow the public to have the opportunity of consuming Ceylon products at a reasonable figure,

We are trying to modernize some of the marketing methods by sending some officers, under the Colombo Plan, to Australia and Canada in order to learn the best methods of producing foodstuffs and find out what are the best vehicles for the transport of foodstuffs. For example, pineapples and other perishables are transported in railway vans from Badulla to Colombo. When they come to Colombo they are not recognizable either in smell, colour or taste, because in these hot vans they are all packed and kept for hours without any ventilation. When they reach Colombo they cease to be what they were at the time they were put into the vans at the Badulla Railway Station. So, we are evolving a new type of van, and I trust the expense will not be too much.

In transporting fruits and vegetables, packing is most essential. Take the great industries of Australia and South Africa where they produce the small grape which is such a perishable, delicate article. It comes all the way to Ceylon without even a speck of dirt on the grape. That is what we must try to achieve in Ceylon. I am very sorry to say that our producers have not realized even the elements of packing and storage in the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. We are trying to inculcate that through the Marketing Department.

In regard to storage, we are trying to get a refrigeration plant so that we can keep these fruits in storage to be sold out of season. We are also trying to help the producer to plan out his production so that he need not grow *wattakka*, *wattakka*, *wattakka* in season and out of season and dump them into the Marketing Department vans to be brought to Colombo.

I should like to give just two examples of some of the difficulties we now encounter. For instance, the pineapple industry in Gampaha was faced with a very serious disease recently. Fortunately, owing to our modern methods of research and pest control, we were able to bring down the pest control unit and deal with, what is called, the mealy bug. The curious thing about this mealy bug is that it lives on the pineapple and is kept and looked after, strange to say,

by the ant. The mealy bug is cultivated by the ant. The ant carries the mealy bug from pineapple to pineapple as a milch cow and takes benefit from this mealy bug. In the course of its life the mealy bug injects poison into the pineapple which causes the pineapple to wilt.

We got down an expert from Hawaii, and as soon as he saw the mealy bug he said "This is my old friend from Hawaii, the mealy bug. In Hawaii we have the same trouble and we cured the disease." He has told us what solution should be applied. Unfortunately that germicide or bugicide is something which is fatal to man. So, we must use it most carefully with modern methods: we will have to use gloves and respirators. We are doing our best, and I trust that the mealy bug would disappear from Ceylon in a few weeks time.

We found the same trouble with regard to the pests in the orange groves of Bibile which at that time were frequented by the present hon. Member for Galle (Mr. Dahanayake). What happens is that the peasant is not interested. He does not cultivate the tree, he lets it grow. He plants the seed and lets it grow and when the fruit comes he sells it. He does not manure it, he does not look after it, he does not do anything by himself. But he wants the State to do everything for him. He can hardly be blamed if he does not look into the economics of anything because he is not an agriculturist of the modern type. So what we are proposing to do is to educate such people so that they can use modern methods of cultivation and make them consider the tree as a human, as a friend, just as much as they consider cattle to be friends, and instil into them the idea that it is only proper planting and proper care alone that would bring more fruitful results. Those are some of the ideals which we are trying to achieve in the matter of cultivation and the growing of foodstuffs and fruits in Ceylon.

Then we have also arranged with the Marketing Department to find out what the proper market prices of various commodities are and have them published in all the public places so that the consumer would not be exploited. Then we have our mobile

shops going not only to the chief towns but also to the various fairs and festivals. There is one today functioning at Kataragama which is proving to be of great service to the pilgrims there. And finally we have our Bakery which was performing a very useful service at one time but which is gradually dying down today as a result of the free midday meals that were being provided to the school children being given up. We were providing as many as 2,000 to 5,000 cooked meals a day, and today I saw in the papers that in the case of the meals supplied to one of the Government departments there was found to be a rat—maybe one of the rats which left the sinking ship, according to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I visited the kitchen only the other day—it was a surprise visit—and I found it very clean and well kept and performing a very useful service.

Those, Mr. Speaker, are some of the matters that I wish to bring to the attention

of hon. Members as far as my Ministry is concerned. I have been hardly a year in this office and during that period, unfortunately for 3 or 4 months, I was an invalid. But I have been able to get a grasp of the work and I found it most interesting, if not more interesting than the Ministry of Finance which I have handed with great happiness to my hon. Friend the Minister of Finance. I must congratulate him on the splendid way in which he introduced his Budget.

I trust that hon. Members are satisfied with what I have been able to say in a general way. I have not gone into details because when the Committee stage comes up—when the House goes into it item by item—I hope to give more factual information so that all hon. Members for one, most of them or a majority of them, would be satisfied. That is all that I have to say. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. Members for the patient way in which they have listened to my long dissertation.