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DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON.

MONTHLY BULLETIN

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ST. NIKOLAAS' DAY.

A children's party at the Union premises is a rare event. The one held in September was an unqualified success—in striking contrast with the dismal failure of some of the parties arranged for the grown-up children, sometimes called adults.

This is evidence that the entertainment of the smaller children is a line of action that may profitably be pursued. It is also proof, if you need any, that if you make an investment in such a venture, it will pay handsome dividends in breathless excitement, shining eyes and treble squeals of delight.

The Big Party falls to be celebrated on St. Nikolaas' Day, December 5th. It has been customary for the Union to rely on the contributions of members to meet the cost of this party. Have no fear, you are not going to be deprived of the right to pay for your children's enjoyment. There is a tendency in the country to make everything free. But the Union has withstood its fatal fascination. You will pay, and we know you will like it.

Habit is a curious thing. It is quite possible that you have fallen into the habit of contributing, year after year, a sum as constant as the Northern Star, as unchanging as the Union. Let us picture the struggle in your soul. Am I, you say, to maintain the hoary tradition of sending them the same amount that I have sent

all these long years, or am I to take the unprecedented step of increasing it, as I am longing to do? If I increase it, will alarm and dependency result? Believe us, no such thing will happen. If you have ever been assailed by similar doubts, cast them aside. Progress is the watchword. To achieve that, we must outstrip the Cost of Living Index.

So please (and now quite seriously!) reach deep into your pockets, and help to make the Fete a success. It is a debt we owe to the children. Other debts can wait, can be written off, if necessary, but this one must be met in full.

The President's Visit to Galle.

The President and Mrs. de Kretser paid a visit to the members in Galle on the 18th of October.

The arrangements were in the hands of Mr. B. R. Blaze, who, with the assistance of the other members, arranged for a very pleasant function, which took the form of a "social" which was followed by an informal meeting when the different avenues of employment open to the Burghers were discussed.

Speaking to the members, the President stressed the importance of the community keeping together, particularly at a time like this. He also emphasized the necessity of increasing our membership and pointed out that we had less than 600 members out of a possible 5000. The more members we had the more we could do, and eligible persons should join the Union for the good of the Community and not for what they could get out of it.

The President promised to bring the following matters, which were brought up by the Galle members, before the General Committee:—

- (a) The desirability of having 2 General Committee meetings a year fixed on Saturdays to suit the convenience of Outstation members, and at such meetings discussing matters pertaining to the interest of the Burghers at Outstations in particular.
- (b) The desirability of once again reserving a room at the D.B.U., when one falls vacant, for the use and convenience of Outstation members visiting Colombo.

The Soulbury Report.

(Communicated)

It will be recalled that when the Soulbury Commission was in Ceylon, a memorandum embodying the views of the section of the community represented by the Union was submitted to the Commissioners, and a deputation attended on them in support. The Soulbury report, endorsed by Whitehall, has been published. It would be pertinent to assess the result, if any, achieved by the representations made.

The most vexed questions were of course those relating to the representation of the various communities in the Legislature and in the Executive. Representation in the Legislature had, previous to the introduction of the Donoughmore Reforms, been partly communal and partly territorial, but the almost total abolition of the communal principle under the Donoughmore dispensation had resulted in the return to the State Council of a comparatively small number of members of the minority communities and of a preponderant number of members of the majority community. This had given rise to the birth of a powerful body of minority opinion which basking itself on certain dicta of the Duke of Devonshire, a one-time Secretary of State for the Colonies, urged a return to the communal principle of election and the equation of the strength of the combined minorities to that of the majority community in the future Legislature.

As a corollary to this demand, this school of thought urged that "the principle of communal non-domination should be translated into the executive" and that it should be provided by statute that less than half of the members of the Cabinet should be chosen from any one community.

The Union, in the memorandum which it submitted, took the view, so far as representation in the Legislature was concerned, that in order to ensure to the minority communities an effectual voice in the government of the country, all that was necessary was to devise a scheme of representation which would ensure that there would not be a preponderant number of members of one community in the Legislature, thereby, in effect endorsing the ministerial scheme of representation which granted the minorities weightage without parity. So far as representation in the Cabinet was concerned, the Union felt constrained to urge that a specific number of seats in the Cabinet should be reserved for minority members. In regard to these two points, the Commissioners have accepted the Ministerial scheme so far as the question of the representation in the Legislature is concerned, and rejected the demand for the reservation of seats in the Cabinet for members of the minority communities.

The Donoughmore constitution had recognized the fact that the Burgher and European communities could not be made to fit into a purely territorial scheme of representation and had recommended the principle of nomination in their cases. The Union, in common with other representative Burgher associations, felt, however, that a demand should be made to the Soulbury Commissioners for the creation of a separate Burgher electorate embracing the whole Island and similar to that which had existed between the years 1928 and 1931. This view was put forward in the Union's memorandum but has been rejected as being unreservedly communal as well as on account of the administrative difficulty of determining the composition of the electorate.

Ranking only next in importance to the question of representation was the question of the form of the Legislature, the moot question here being whether the Legislature should be unicameral or bicameral. The Ministers' Draft Constitutional Scheme envisaged a unicameral Legislature with power reserved to that Legislature to create a Second Chamber.

A considerable number of witnesses from all communities however advocated the creation by the new Constitution of a Two-Chamber Legislature. The Union joined in this demand.

The Commissioners have advocated the creation of a Second Chamber comprising 30 members, 15 of whom are to be elected by the House of Representatives and 15 of whom are to be nominated by the Governor. The powers of the proposed Second Chamber are of course circumscribed within strict limits, in accordance with the recognised canons of constitutional law governing the matter, but it is a matter for regret that the Commissioners found themselves unable to recommend the device of joint sittings for the resolution of deadlocks between the two chambers.

The results of the representations made, while being satisfactory so far as the wider aspects of the future constitution are concerned, are admittedly disappointing so far as the question of the representation of the Community in the Legislature is concerned. We cannot hope for the continuance of the principle of nomination indefinitely, and it is significant that the Commissioners should have expressed the view that they should have liked to have been able to dispense with nomination but for the virtual impossibility of fitting the Community into a purely territorial scheme of representation.

The final instalment of reforms and the accession of the Island to the position of a full self-governing dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations may well see the disappearance of special provisions being made for the Community in the Legislature. Let us plan, therefore, for that future by breaking away from a spirit of narrow communalism and by identifying ourselves with the other communities.

Letters to the Editor

THE POLICY OF THE UNION

Dear Sir,

Start a thought upon the Burgher youth, and one is constantly reminded what the Union has not done, or is not doing for him. In resigned perplexity we then proceed to observe that the Union is lagging far behind the times. Yet, in truth, surely it is not the Union which should give excuse for everything which appears to be so upside down in the community at large? Should that not be the concern of the increasing number of intelligent persons who seem to care so little what may happen on the morrow to the community and the Burgher youth.

Three letters which appeared in these pages recently have led us to contemplate certain aspects of our future, in tranquil manner. Combining effect and cause, what seems to be happening is that we are losing our grip on that most potent bond of union among people, wherever there are, namely, Community of Race. We seem to be everywhere turning from THE CAUSE to the individual.

A spirit of restlessness seems to have left some of us, not excluding the more prominent of us, in two minds. Should we remain a Community, or should we cast ourselves into the chasm of the body politic? This is where we are on the most dangerous ground. There are however some reasonable points for optimism.

Point one... this type of restlessness is not new. It is nursed by disintegrating forces, grows by idle talk of those who ought to know better but yet dream of fusion and unification of communities, and seems to be in full flush when fertilized by revolutions in the political history of this little island. The restless yearnings for such reform have hitherto always been nipped in the bud.

Point two... that we can still fall back on the inspiration of men who roused the Community as a community to vindicate such thoughts. This is what was written nearly 45 years ago: *The Burgher who says we are one Community and tries to destroy our individuality is an idle dreamer whose policy if carried to its logical conclusion will soon breed a generation that it will be hard to categorise.**

Point three... that we can yet count on a diminished number whose endeavour it is to promote a feeling of national life, a feeling of pride in a community of which they are the component parts.

The constitution of the Island admits that the Burghers have every right, according to the rational interpretation of the term, to be identified as a distinct community in Ceylon. Nearly five generations have with perseverance and energy maintained the distinct character of the Burgher, often in the face of severe antagonistic influences which have sought to destroy our political, social and domestic conditions.

If politically our future is devoid of any hopeful sign, is that any reason why we should surrender our social and domestic independence as well? It is given to every nationality, every race and community which forms the Empire to cultivate a spirit of subordinate patriotism. Even though influences may be working today with enormous industry, on schemes and measures which threaten our existence, we can always find strength in unity of thought, and unity of feeling, in social and domestic matters. As to encouragement of good relations with other communities, we have always been the first to extend the right hand of fellowship, and there is no doubt we will continue to do so.

Yours,

R. L. B.

* The letters of Gallicus (C. L. Meurling).

The following letter will be read with interest by all members of the Union :—

Colombo,
21st September, 1945.

The Secretary,
Dutch Burgher Union,
Colombo.

Dear Sir,

May I take this opportunity on the eve of the departure of the Dutch forces from Ceylon, to thank you and all the members of the Dutch Burgher Union, on behalf of the personnel under my command, for the splendid hospitality and friendship which has been extended to them during their stay in the island.

Your kindness has gone far towards making their stay pleasant and comfortable and I am sure that they will all leave with grateful hearts and many happy memories.

Yours faithfully,
C. E. L. HELFRICH,
Admiral, R.N.N.

The St. Nikolaas' Home.

(Communicated).

In April last, two notices in these pages made reference to a movement affiliated to the Union, which ventured to provide a Home for the needy, and the aged members of "our own household." This movement has been carried a step further, and not with words and good intentions alone.

Through the munificence of Dr. R. L. Spittel, who has gifted an acre of valuable land at Kalubovila, an admirable site for the Home is assured. Several others who are also interested in this project have made donations towards this fund from time to time. The advocates of the scheme feel convinced that the great and noble cause will appeal to the large hearts of other members as well, and hope to see the erection of the Home an accomplished fact in the no distant future.

We stand to-day on the brink of a serious try-out of collective security. The main object of the present venture is, as it should be, to perfect the existing organisation of the Union, which has so nobly carried on, in the service of those of the Community who are under adverse social pressure,

Since the departure of Dr. E. W. Arndt, about 7 years ago, Mr. Alex. vander Straaten officiated as Treasurer and Secretary of the fund. Personal and unavoidable circumstances prevent him, to the regret of the Committee, from carrying on. Mr. Fred Loos, has kindly consented to take his place. Any contribution readers may wish to make, should be forwarded to him, addressed: "Sunnyside", de Saram Place, Colombo.

Help Holland Fund

The following contributions are gratefully acknowledged :—

Mrs. S Siebel Rs. 500, Canon and Mrs. Lucien Jansz 25, Miss Evelyn de Vos 25, Mrs. W W Beling 13.50, Miss M Altendorff 15, Mr. and Mrs. C A Potger 100, Mr. R B Jansz 10, Mr. B W Jansz 10, Miss Olive Rode 5, Mr. G A Wille 20, Dr. and Mrs. Eric Brohier 15, Mrs. F V Foonander 21, Dr. and Mrs. L O Weinman 10, Mrs. F A Anthonisz 15, Dr. Sam de Vos 50, Mr. V C Modder 100, Dr. E L Christoffelsz 100, Dr. V R Schokman 100, Mr. C A Speldewinde 20, Mr. and Mrs. A E Keuneman 50, Mr. C E van Dort 25, Mr. S S Wallbeoff 10, Mr. T W Collette 250, Col. V H L Anthonisz 25, Mr. Donald Schokman 100, Per Miss M P Paulusz 36, Per Mr. C A Speldewinde 40, Per Mr. G F Ernst 69.50, Per Mr. C A Potger 17.50, Miss R Blaze 10, Mr. L E Blaze 10, Mr. C N Ferdinands 15, Mr. J A Martensz 25, Mrs. J E Piachaud 25, Mr. Bertie Grenier 25, Miss Phyllis van Cuylenberg 10, Rev. and Mrs. G H P Leembruggen 10, Miss Z Beven 15, Dr. R L Spittel 500, Mrs. R L Spittel 100, Mr. C J Oorloff 150, Mrs. C M Anthonisz 10, Mr. and Mrs. H K de Kretser 250, Mr. E A vander Straaten 15, Miss A Spittel 25, Mr. H vanden Driesen 50, Mr. H C de Vos 10, Mr. A C B Jonklaas 50, Mr. R D C Wendt Rs. 10.—3,092.50.

Help Holland Sweepstake and Cinema Show.

The results of the draw are :—

1st Prize—Rs. 140/- G. O'Neill, c/o D. W. Schokman.
2nd Prize—Rs. 84/- Ceylonia Poulier, Ellangowan Estate, Anamaduwā, N.W.P.
3rd Prize—Rs. 56/- D. J. Berenger, Import Control, Colombo.

The Help Holland Fund benefited to the extent of approximately Rs. 280/-.

The Cinema Show on October 4th brought a profit of approximately Rs. 347/-.

Meetings in November, 1945.

Monday,	12th	6-15 p.m.	Genealogical.
"	"	6-45 p.m.	Finance
Tuesday,	18th	6-15 p.m.	Education
Monday,	19th	6-15 p.m.	Social Service
"	"	7-00 p.m.	Entertainment and Sport.
Tuesday,	20th	6-15 p.m.	General Committee.

Events in November.

Saturday 17th, 9 to 12. Guest Night.

Thursday 22nd, 6-15. Lecture by Dr. G. Paranavitana on the policy relating to Dutch monuments.

Announcements.

Under the auspices of the Standing Committee for Historical Manuscripts and Monuments, Dr. G. Paranavitana, Archaeological Commissioner, will speak on Thursday, November 22nd, at 6-15 p.m., on the steps being taken to conserve Dutch monuments and to proclaim them as places of archaeological interest.

All members who are interested in the subject are invited to attend. It is hoped that all who can will come.

Tickets for the Guest Night will be available at Rs. 2/-. Names of guests should be notified to Mr. Bruce Collette or the office before 6 p.m. on Thursday 15th. No names will be accepted after the deadline.

Personal.

We regret to record the deaths of Messrs. D. D. Jansz and H. L. (Boydie) Bartholomeusz.

Mrs. J. N. Bruce and Mr. G. E. J. Jansz have left for England.

Contributions to Social Service Fund 9th Oct.—26th Oct., 1945.

Dr. C F Deutrom Rs. 30, Mr. H K de Kretser 5, F W S Felsing 2, B H Ohlmus 1, C H Ohlmus 1, V Arndt 1, Mrs. B C Kelaart 1, Mrs. M R Christoffelsz 1.—Total Rs. 42.

Tail Piece.

A Christian preacher in Hyde Park was interrupted by a dirty-looking individual, standing on the fringe of the crowd, who shouted, "Christianity has been in existence for two thousand years, but look at the state of the world to-day!"

Back flashed the retort: "Water has been in existence for two million years, but look at the state of your neck to-day!"
