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DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON.

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A QUESTION OF PERSPECTIVE.

We publish this month an article entitled. "What is the Union doing for its Youngsters?" We agree that the Union should, within limits, try to influence the outlook of the children of the community, provided it is the right kind of influence. That is important. There are grave doubts whether the Union knows what is right and what is wrong in the matter.

The present is difficult, the future obscure. Some people still hanker after the old order of things. Till we know what we want, and decide how we are going to work for it, it will be pernicious to attempt a scheme for "hall-marking" the minds of our children. We dare not risk turning out a generation of anachronisms and misfits.

The youth of the community have been on the mat before. We hold no brief for them, they are capable of defending themselves. But it is necessary to remind extremists at both ends that the matter should be looked at in the correct perspective. There are at least three schools of thought to contend with: the confirmed pessimists who see nothing but ruin ahead, brought about both by internal and external forces; the smug ones who do not say that everything is fine but behave as though it were; and the ones who do not think at all.

It is said that the community has lost ground heavily. The present is compared with the past, when we played a leading part in the affairs of this Island. Such a comparison is not fair. Was our former prominence entirely of our own making, or were there historical and other

circumstances that helped? Would it not be fairer to the present generation to say that our forefathers possessed advantages that we lack, just as the young men of other communities to-day have advantages that their grandfathers never possessed? Examination pass lists, appointments to and promotions in the Government Service, the order of precedence in the professions—all these are cited as evidence of the way in which we are losing ground. But is not this inevitable? No person in his senses will assert that the best brains in the country are in our heads. The schools and the University have large numbers of promising youngsters drawn from all communities. Considering the numerical distribution of the population among communities, that is as it should be.

But this does not mean that we should sit back and do nothing. Let us by all means equip ourselves and our children for the struggle. It is not a question of prestige or privilege for the community, it is a question of bread and butter. And it is also a question of doing our best in the interests of this country which is our home.

The will of the people is establishing itself all over the world as never before. Ceylon will be no exception, let us be certain of that. In a letter published in this number, Mr. J. A. Martensz urges closer collaboration with the other communities in promoting the happiness of the people. This is excellent advice. It cannot be followed if we draw our children out of the general stream and confine them in a back-water which in all probability will become sluggish in course of time.

What is the Union Doing for its Youngsters?

A STRAIGHT TALK BY "MEDDLESOME MIKE".

The answer to the above question can regretfully be summed up in three letters—N I X. If the aims and objects for which the Union were formed do not include the training of its youth then the most vital requirement of our time has not been envisaged and therefore not been provided for.

The Jesuit priests, than whom perhaps there are no greater men of learning, are reported to have said, "Give us a boy for the first ten years of his life and you can do what you like with him afterwards"—or words to that effect.

They were confident that they could so mould a boy's character during his tender years that nothing could ever uproot the principles which their training would have ingrained in his make-up—and those principles would manifest themselves and govern his future actions no matter what his environment or what other influences he comes up against.

The Union caters for the social amenities of its grown-ups. A Whist drive and a Guest night dance can be counted on every month, but the Union makes no provision for its youngsters. As a planting V. A. might say, "The mature areas are well cared for, but the new clearings—the future asset of the property—are badly neglected and weeds predominate".

Our lads introduce themselves to the Union and come under its sphere of influence to some extent, via the dance floor—when their characters have, according to Jesuit ideas, already been moulded.

Some nasty things have been said of the Burgher youth once he reaches the—to put it politely—dance floor age, and it must be admitted with sorrow, not without some reason.

IT MUST BE THE JOB OF THE UNION TO HELP OUR YOUTH TO LIVE DOWN AND GIVE THE LIE TO SUCH DISPARAGING STATEMENTS.

The Union cannot, of-course, mother our lads during their years of innocence, but it can start something to help mould their characters and their physique and send them out into the world as ambassadors of the community to win back the respect which it appears to be losing fast in the eyes of the other communities. What can the Union do about it?

No better means of training can perhaps be adopted, than by the inauguration of a Scout Cub Patrol. There are men in the community who have the experience and the capability to impart the necessary training and would doubtless not grudge a couple of hours of their time twice a week or so to help in the great work. If necessary, outside assistance will readily be forthcoming.

Boxing and physical training classes must be started; there is perhaps no better compeller of respect than a grand physique and the ability to hold one's own physically.

While the value of physical training is emphasized, it would be criminal to neglect the mental training of our lads, especially in view of the new system of education which is coming into being, with all its implications. **THE UNION MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.** There are any number of experienced educationalists in the community to call upon.

Pessimists might argue that there will not be sufficient response from members in sending their boys for training owing to transport difficulties. This can be negated by starting regular school classes for the boys of the Troop at the same time.

Starting modestly with two forms, these can be added to as the boys move up in their studies and the foundation can be laid for the **BURGHER COLLEGE** which members are already beginning to strain their eyes to see taking form—where our boys will be trained in the best traditions of the English Public Schools. There is no need to add that such a scheme will be welcomed by all members of the Union and will unhesitatingly be supported to the best of their ability.

The Planting profession and the Banks, the higher branches of which were formerly closed to Ceylonese are opening their portals to decent young men. The Union must see to it that our young men are sent out "hall-marked"—the community must not be let down. It must set the standard by which Burghers of the future will be judged, and to be known as a product of the D.B.U. College might well become the "open sesame" to positions of trust and responsibility. Would that the spirit of fanaticism for their cause with which the Nazi Youth were

imbued could be instilled into our Youth and directed into the right channels—for the honour and the betterment of our Community!

In conclusion, the future of the Union—nay of the whole community—will some day be in the hands of our youngsters of to-day. Are we not then concerning ourselves over much with the non-essentials and neglecting what should be the most vital business of the Union?

It is not too late to rectify the omission:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I was most interested to read the programme drawn up by the Literary and Ethical Committee of the Union and join with the Hon. Mr. A. E. Keuneman, whose opinion is not to be disregarded, in congratulating the Committee in the choice of subjects for discussion. At the same time, one ponders with disappointment and some degree of apprehension to learn of the difficulty the Committee has had in securing the services of an Honorary Secretary to work the programme. Is this not a state of affairs indicating the lack of real interest in the more serious things of life which is what matters in the sphere of human endeavour? There is no lack of talent amongst us, and in the ranks of the young men of our community there are many who we look forward to seeing in the forefront of things and of the struggle for place and position in the affairs of this country—political, professional, technical and occupational—and who will adorn with credit any position of responsibility and authority that may offer. But are we sufficiently alive to the situation and appreciative of our own ability and fitness? I suppose we are, but we are rather inclined to take things for granted and to live in the past when the acknowledged advantages we had over other communities then placed our great men in the position of leaders. We have in a large measure failed to realise the strides the young men of the other communities forming the permanent population of this Island have made and that they have outstripped us in many things.

I very much fear that a spirit of complacency which attacked us many years ago has got such a hold on our lives and characters that we are inclined to look more on the lighter side of things and to shut our eyes to the unpleasant realisation, which we subconsciously have, that we are being left behind in the race for position and power and are becoming what is conveyed by that nasty expression—backnumbers!

We really must bestir ourselves and take a deeper and keener interest in the more serious things of life if we are to get anywhere at all, and here we have at hand a means whereby we may cultivate that habit and get into the way of thinking about and discussing serious problems and subjects.

In the same number of the Bulletin I have read announcements regarding such pleasurable events as Guest Nights and bridge, choral and dramatic groups. Very nice and proper, but should those things take up such a large slice out of our social life? Cannot we devote some of our leisure, which we devote to social matters, to the serious problems suggested by the Literary and Ethical Committee and to support that Com-

mittee in its efforts to promote the welfare and interests of the Community in matters that count. In writing as I do, I have no desire whatever to decry or belittle the good that the lighter side of the Union is doing; on the other hand I support that side to the fullest. We live, however, in the times when it is essential, absolutely essential, that we should show and take a greater interest in the good government and the affairs of this Island, which is our Home, and devote time to collaborating—much more closely than we have done during the past few decades—with the other communities living here, in shaping its destiny and promoting the happiness of its people. We can and are well able to do so if we will only bestir ourselves and make up our minds not to live such a circumscribed and, I am afraid, ostrich-like life unappreciative of the great and serious changes—changes which will affect our lives as sure as night follows day—that are taking place so rapidly.

I would ask your readers' forbearance for the downright nature of the language I have employed, but would ask them to accept my assurance that I have no wish to be unduly censorious but only desire to stress a point of view which has not, in my opinion, received sufficient consideration at our hands.

I would also crave your forgiveness for the length of this letter.

Yours faithfully,
J. A. MARTENSZ.

Note by the Editor:—Mr. H. E. S. de Kester has been elected Honorary Secretary of the Literary and Ethical Committee.

The Choral and Dramatic Group.

This Group "with unprecedented persistence presented on July 21st for the further embarrassment of members and their friends" its third performance in twelve months. The entertainment consisted of a straight presentation of two one-act plays, preceded by two violin solos, two dances and three songs. The strong strain of originality that had marked the earlier shows and had contributed so largely to their success was missing. But there was instead the scintillating dialogue of Shaw, and a powerful appeal to the heart from the pen of Rachel Lyman Field.

Shaw's "How He Lied to Her Husband" was cleverly and ably put over by Eleanor Keuneman, Johan Leembruggen and Jim van Langenberg. In the last-named, the Group has found an actor of no mean ability, with a good stage presence, plenty of poise and a well-marked sense of timing.

The Patchwork Quilt, a Fantasy by Rachel Lyman Field, was a switch from comedy to tragedy. The right atmosphere was created from the start. Phyllis Hunter (making her debut at the D.B.U. as were most of the others in this play) took a firm grip on the sympathy of the audience with her quiet and moving portrayal of an old lady whose mind was failing. Ruth Ludovici and Harry Staples were hateful as the callous and avaricious daughter and her equally callous and avaricious husband—that is the measure of the success with which they played

their parts. There were two parts for children, taken by Ishbel and Yvette Brohier. They were an instant hit. Both showed a talent far in advance of their years, which combined with their complete lack of self-consciousness to place their performances in the top class. Marina Sansoni and Fred Loos—ghosts from the past in the flash-backs—completed an excellent cast. Special mention must be made of the coloured portrait of Emily (Yvette Brohier) which hung on the wall; and of the lighting arrangements devised and executed by Harry Staples.

The Union has every reason to be grateful to the Group, and especially to Eleanor Keuneman who gave a great deal of her time and energy to the production of both the plays.

Meetings for August, 1945.

Monday Aug. 13th	Genealogical	6-30 p.m.
" "	Finance	7-15 p.m.
Tuesday " 14th	Education	6-30 p.m.
Monday " 20th	Social Service	6-30 p.m.
" " "	Entertainment and Sport.	7-15 p.m.
Tuesday " 21st	General Committee	6-30 p.m.

Calendar of Events—August, 1945.

9th Thursday: Whist Drive 9 p.m.
16th Thursday: Members' Day 7 to 10 p.m.
25th Saturday: Dance 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Announcements.

Our Dutch friends will be pleased to know that we propose to have a function in honour of H.M. Queen Wilhelmina's birthday which falls on August 31st. The date of the function has not been fixed, but it is likely to be Thursday, August 30th or Saturday, September 1st.

In celebrating the end of the war in Europe, we celebrated the liberation of many of the peoples of Europe, without special reference to the people of Holland. The function in honour of the Dutch Queen will be an appropriate occasion on which to mark the deliverance of this section of her subjects. With the freeing of the Netherlands East Indies in sight, we shall perhaps be soon enabled to mark the complete liberation of all her territories by a function dedicated to this purpose alone.

Note the time of the Whist Drive to be held at 9 p.m. on Thursday, 9th. Tickets Re. 1/-. Names as usual, to Mr. F. W. de Vos (phone 2251 during office hours) on or before Tuesday 7th.

Tickets for the Dance on August 25th will be priced at Rs. 3/- for a gentleman and Rs. 2/- for a lady. Names of guests should be given to Mr. de Vos or the D.B.U. office on or before 6 p.m. Thursday, August 28rd.

Personal.

We regret to record the death at the age of 74 years of Henry Alexander Hepponstall.

Mr. O. L. de Kretser (Jnr.) has been promoted to Class II Grade II of the Ceylon Judicial Service with effect from June 1, 1945.

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Committee held on Tuesday, July 17th 1945, at 6-30 p.m.

Matters arising from the Minutes:—

1. The President mentioned that Mr. C. E. E. Stork had thanked the Committee for its vote of congratulation.

2. **Special Sub-Committees.** The Secretary reported that apart from sub-committees appointed for special occasions e.g. Soulbury Commission Social, he had been able to trace two sub-committees, viz.

1. Dutch Books Lending Library (Convener Mr. Geoffrey Jansz) regarding which a report was made at the General Committee Meeting of June 19th.

2. Census of members of the D.B.U. and their families (Convener J. R. Blaze). Dr. Blaze reported that this Committee had never met; some of the members were no longer available; but he was calling a meeting the following week.

Dr. Sobckman enquired after the progress of the Committee appointed to compile a list of members of the community who had served overseas. Dr. H. A. Dirckze reported that very little progress had been made for a number of reasons. After some discussion, the Committee adopted Mr. C. C. Sobokman's suggestion that the matter be deferred till the end of the war, when the Chief Secretary's list would be available for extraction of the necessary information.

Elections. The President reported that Mr. H. E. S. de Kretser, Secretary of the Entertainment Committee, who had not been able to function in that capacity since his election, had volunteered to be Secretary of the Literary and Ethical Committee; and suggested that Mr. F. W. de Vos who had acted for Mr. H. E. S. de Kretser be now confirmed as Secretary of the Entertainment Committee. Carried.

Reports of Committees:—

1. Finance

- The accounts for June were tabled and passed.
- The deficit of Rs. 34/62 on the outgoing Committee's At Home in March was made up by a collection from the members present.
- The increase in the liquor tariff authorised by the Finance Committee was approved.

2. Social Service

The report of the Committee was read. The Treasurer outlined the Government Poor Relief Scheme of the Commissioner of Labour and said he was investigating the possibility of securing relief for all those on the Union list.

3. Entertainment

The report of the Committee was read. The following functions were decided upon:—

- (a) **August Dance on the 25th.**
 (b) **A function (e.g. a Garden Party) in honour of H.M. Queen Wilhelmina, to be held on August 30th or September 1st.** The other recommendations of the Entertainment Committee were passed.

4. Reference Library

1. Mr. W. J. A. La Brooy reported that Mr. C. L. H. Paulusz was preparing a list of all Dutch Books, separating what he thought should go into the Reference and Lending sections respectively. This classification would be open for approval or otherwise when ready.

2. Shelf space was required. There were old copies of Journals taking up room. Decided that the Secretary should try to find a safe resting place for them, making room for the books in the Library.

Other Business

1. Mr. E. A. vander Straaten read an extract from the July number of the Bulletin and appealed to the Editor not to lower the tone of this publication.

2. Mr. de Rooy requested the Bar Secretary to try to make more whisky available to the members who came regularly to the Union premises and thus provide a steady flow of revenue to the Union.

Contributions to Education Fund.

Hon. Mr. A. E. Keuneman Rs. 250, Miss R. de Kretser (refund of fees) Rs. 80, Mr. S. J. C. Schokman 50, Mr. C. J. Oorloff 50, Mr. C. A. Speldewiese 31, Mr. H. E. L. van Langenberg 25, Lt. Col. F. G. Smith 25, Mr. H. K. de Kretser 25, Dr. H. A. Direkze 25, Mr. H. L. Austin 20, Mr. W. J. A. van Langenberg 20, Mrs. B. C. Kelaart 12, Miss A. Spittel 12, Messrs. W. E. V. de Rooy 10, G. A. Wille 10, G. P. Keuneman 10, T. Aldons 10, J. P. Merghart 10, F. W. de Vos 10, B. H. Ohlmus 6, W. G. Woutersz 6, "Wembley" 1.—Total Rs. 698.

Education Endowment Fund.

Refund of loan (School of Agriculture)	...	Rs.	75 00
March Dance	250 00
Sale of Programmes	40 10

Total		Rs.	365 10

Contributions to Social Service Fund, 22-6-45 to 25-7-45.

Mrs. B. C. Kelaart Rs. 1, Dr. C. F. Deutrom Rs. 30, Wembley 1, Mrs. M. R. Christoffelz 1, Mr. P. H. de Kretser 2, Mrs. F. A. Anthonisz 15, Messrs. B. H. Ohlmus 1, C. H. Ohlmus 1, V. Arndt 1. *Per Mrs. W. E. V. de Rooy*:—Col. V. H. L. Anthoniaz 5, Mr. C. E. Foenander 5. Total 10. *Per Mrs. H. L. Austin*:—Dr. J. R. Blaze 100, Mr. W. W. Baling 6, Mrs. B. E. Loos 12, Mr. F. Errol Loos 6, Mr. H. S. Austin 25, Anonymous 1. Total 150.—Grand Total 213.