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DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON.

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THE PRESIDENT'S FOUNDER'S DAY SPEECH

Members of the Dutch Burgher Union,

This is our Day of Remembrance. To-day, as in previous years, we have gathered here to pay tribute to and honour the memory of the late Mr. R. G. Anthonisz, the Founder of the Union, whose portrait you see yonder.

37 years ago the late Mr. Anthonisz, that great and simple man, assisted by a few others had the foresight to realize that unless our Community was united by an Association of this nature we were in danger of losing our identity and place in the well-being of the Country.

We older members who had the privilege of meeting and knowing him will not forget him—to you younger members his is but a name, but just as you were taught in History to remember great men, I ask you to think of Mr. Anthonisz as one who strove his utmost to up-lift and keep the Community together.

We are to-day passing through critical times and at no period in the history of the Community has it been so necessary for us to keep together and maintain our identity.

Just as an Englishman, a Frenchman, a Sinhalese or a Tamil is proud of his identity and holds it sacred, so is a Dutch-Burgher. We are proud of the tradition and culture left to us as our heritage

by our forbears the Dutch. There is however, one important difference between the Europeans who live here and ourselves, and that is to us Ceylon is the land of our adoption—i.e. our home, and as such although we are Dutch Burghers we are not unmindful of the fact that we are also Ceylonese.

Our relationship with the other Communities has always been cordial and I trust will always remain so. Although I say it myself I think we have earned a reputation for our integrity, intelligence and good citizenship, and the other Communities may rest assured that we are ready to help them for we are as keen as they are to see the Country advance, so long as it is in the right direction.

We have with us to-day a few representatives of the other Communities and I wish them to know that we are very happy to have them with us on this memorable day. We also have the Founder's Son-in-law, Mr. Koch who is here on a holiday from Australia. We are very pleased to see him.

At our Founder's Day celebrations we make it a point to refresh our minds of our past history and what we stand for. To-day we have our good friend Col. W. E. V. de Rooy to tell us about the history of our Union. As I told you once before Col. de Rooy is to a great extent responsible for the construction of this nice building in which we meet to-day. I have great pleasure in calling upon Col. de Rooy to address us.

[Mr. de Rooy's address will be printed in the D.B.U. Journal. Copies will be sent to all members with a later issue of the Bulletin].

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Sir,

Pressure of professional business has prevented my replying earlier to Mr. W. J. A. vanLangenberg's letter which appeared in the September number of the Bulletin as a rejoinder to one from me which appeared in the Bulletin for August.

The animadversions contained in my letter of August might, I suggest, very well form the subject of a discussion to be arranged by the Literary and Ethical Committee and I shall be very glad indeed to attend and lead the attack if Mr. van Langenberg will take the opposite side. But I would like, very briefly, to make one or two observations on Mr. van Langenberg's letter. They are:—
 (1) I had no intention whatever of being patronising when I referred to the pleasant relaxations of dancing and bridge playing, and I shall be glad if your readers will accept my assurance that I had no such idea. As Mr. J. R. Toussaint, in his letter published in the October number of the Bulletin, pointed out, I wished merely to draw attention to the bias that apparently exists in favour of the lighter types of recreation at the expense of the more thoughtful and serious types of relaxation and the serious consequences that follow

on such a weightage. (2) My letter was intended as a warning, before the position is irretrievably lost, against our allowing to continue, the spirit of complacency and indifference that appears to have spread over our outlook as a Community and (3) I desired to arouse within us, if I could, an appreciation of the urgent necessity for a keen and sustained interest in affairs that affect us as much, if not more by reason of the smallness of our numbers and of our peculiar position in the social and economic structure of this Island, as the other permanent inhabitants of this Island.

The recommendations of the Soulbury Commission are now a matter of public knowledge, and so is the statement of policy on Constitutional Reform for our Island and the decision of the British Government thereon. In their Report, the Commissioners, after referring to the fact that our Community, in the early days of British rule, formed a valuable link between the British on the one hand and the Sinhalese and the Tamils on the other; and that members of the Burgher Community subsequently played a leading part in the social and political development of the Island, pointed out that the spread of education, the closer contact with European thought and industry and the more recent national aspirations have "combined to diminish the dominant position at one time held by the Burghers in the public and professional life of Ceylon".

I enjoin all young Burghers to read and ruminare over the words quoted in the preceding paragraph. I cannot too earnestly appeal to our young men not to lose sight of the very serious responsibility that will rest on their shoulders in the very near future and not to allow another reason to be added viz. the indifference of the Burgher Community itself to its own interests and future. It is to them the Community looks to grasp and continue to carry high the torch when the hands that now hold it become too frail to bear it as it always has. To come down to the lower materialistic level, we must remember that if we fail to seize our opportunities now, the places we hold at present—professional, technical and occupational—will be lost to those who come after. The opportunities I refer to are not and will not be found in the dance hall and the bridge room—will Mr. van Langenberg please forgive me—but in the rough and tumble of life outside, and unless our young men equip themselves for the fray the prizes we now hold will be wrested from their hands and the fault will be ours entirely. I am convinced, that if we let our opportunities slip past us we shall, in a generation or two—more likely a generation—find that we shall be unable to indulge in the pleasant pastimes of dancing and bridge playing but will be compelled to engage in the sterner and degrading pursuits of picking up not the crumbs under the tables but the casts offs in the gutters.

Yours faithfully,
 J. A. MARTENSZ.

On Behalf of the Burghers Young and Old.

By C. E. FOENANDER.

The Bulletin is becoming better every month, as it raises controversial points affecting the good of the Community. The communicated articles give advice—and good advice—but putting advice into practice has not resulted. Let us do something practical. The Bulletin for April referred to poverty and distress among the Burghers and in the same strain referred to men of opulence and business ability—men who invest their money in real estate and gilt-edged securities bringing between 3 and 5% interest. What have these men of opulence and business ability done to help the Community, relieve poverty and distress, provide employment or planned employment for those in poverty and distress? Beyond giving theoretical advice, doling out Rs. 50/- here and Rs. 10/- there towards education, social service and entertainment, very little practical effort has been made to help their more unfortunate brethren by providing employment. It will be found that most of these men of business and opulence employ members of other communities rather than Burghers, the reasons advanced being that they are cheaper, work harder and that their integrity is greater than that of the Burghers.

Employment under the State and in the professions is the goal of every Burgher parent for his child. All parents labour under a mistaken impression that all their ducks are swans. Employment under the State and in the professions, unless Ceylon becomes Bolshevik, becomes more and more difficult each year. Competition is fierce and the great majority of our youth must and have to take to less illustrious methods of earning a living. The days of easy money getting, white-collar jobs and the middleman are numbered. Ceylon is recognising that he or she who wants a living must be able and willing to sow and reap. Let us therefore, if we still mean to maintain our standard of pride and race, recognise these facts and co-operate to provide education, social service, mechanical training and employment in our own community.

I suggest that we float a company, like any other limited liability company, with a capital of three lacs; the shares to be open to Burghers only.

The three lacs are to be used for the following purposes:

- (1) Purchase 250 acres of fully planted coconut with 60 acres of fallow land, making 310 acres in all. Water table to be between 10 to 15 feet.
- (2) Divide the land into 10 acre blocks, making 31 blocks in all.
- (3) One block nearest the main road to be reserved for:—
 - (a) Home for the aged,
 - (b) School,
 - (c) Factory,
 - (d) Small dwelling homes for the factory employees.

- (4) Each of the other blocks to be provided with a dwelling house, well, cowshed and poultry run. Twenty five of these blocks will be 10 acres each of coconut; 2 blocks will grow fruit, e.g., mangoes and pineapples. Two blocks will grow paddy and one block grass. Each settler will be given 2 cows and 24 birds.
- (5) The factory will buy all the produce of the settlers, who will rent the blocks from the Company. The rent to go towards the purchase price of the blocks, so that the settler will eventually own the blocks.
- (6) The factory will use the produce to turn out oil and poonac, jams, tinned fruit and preserves and give employment to the aged, either in the manufacture of jams and preserves or in knitting, darning or crocheting work. There will be a refrigerator room, and the eggs, milk, jams, preserves, oil and surplus poonac will be marketed by the Company in Colombo.
- (7) The Shareholders, like any other co-operative business, will not be entitled to more than 5% on their money.

The Burghers are well known as producers of jams and preserves and for good cooking and there is no reason why the Company should not specialise in these products so that there should be a demand throughout the country.

Twenty seven years ago, with no such demand as exists at present, I earned a decent living from 8 acres coconut, 7 acres plantain and 3 acres paddy, for which I paid a rent of Rs. 75/- per month; and having been clerk, farmer, cowboy, engineer, chemist and administrator, I cannot think of any other employment which should appeal more to our people than a farm with 2 good cows and 24 laying hens, with 10 acres of fully planted coconut and a dwelling house.

This will also afford us an opportunity for combining social service, education, employment and a decent living for the youth and aged of our community.

Another of those Appeals.

The trouble about appeals is that they seldom appeal. There is nothing winning about them, nothing lovable. Some are self-complacent and therefore antagonize; some are highly moral and therefore uncomfortable; some are a sober recital of facts and therefore worrying. We are acutely conscious of the fact that members of the Union have in the past twelve months been subjected to a ceaseless barrage of appeals of different types and for various causes. In the main, the results have been good, and you may therefore think it time to cry halt to this business, to claim that this constant application of the sponge has absorbed

all your liquid assets. And yet, say the members of the Social Service Committee, you are not so badly off. You have so far been able to survive the vigours of the Textile Control. Your children will not go toyless this Christmas, even though they may not go into raptures over headless ducks or stuffed bunnies.

But there are people in our community who are not so fortunate, people who would be glad to have clothes which you no longer use, whose children will get a genuine thrill out of a toy which bores your youngster stiff. These people you can help. A little effort on your part is all that is needed. No doubt you are in a comfortable chair at this moment and would like to postpone your rummaging in the wardrobe for tomorrow when you think you will be a little more energetic. That will not do. You know very well you put away some garments over a year ago, thinking they would come in useful sometime in the future. You know very well you will never make a serious attempt to advertise and sell them. Go get them and send them to Mrs. A. L. B. Ferdinand, No. 7, Glenaber Place, Colpetty. Send them early so that the organisers will know what quantity they will have for distribution at 10 a.m. on December 21st.

Monuments of the Dutch East India Company.

Inviting the assistance of those who were in a position to help him to preserve the Dutch monuments in Ceylon, Dr. Paranavitana, the Archaeological Commissioner, recently told the members of the Union what had so far been done to conserve them within the terms of the Antiquities Ordinance. The talk was under the auspices of the Standing Committee for Historical Monuments and Manuscripts. The steps taken by the Secretary of the Literary Committee to bring the talk to the notice of members and the public drew a very fair gathering. At the conclusion of the talk remarks were offered by the President (Mr. H. K. de Kretser) Dr. Frank Bartholomeusz, Messrs. S. J. C. Kadirgamar, and Mr. C. L. Beling. Dr. Nell proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker. The talk was prefaced by a paper outlining the subject by Mr. R. L. Brohier which provided an appropriate background.

The scant notice we have taken of the Dutch monuments hitherto does not redound to our credit. Very definitely we are embarking on a new era, and there is much greater hope that the visible evidence of the Dutch Period, namely, The Forts and Churches, their mural inscriptions, the few buildings left of domestic type and other characteristic features of Dutch colonial architecture, will find a place in imparting the story of Ceylon's past.

Calendar of Events.

Friday, December 14th, 6-30 p.m. Nativity Play and Carols.
Tuesday, January 1st, 9 p.m. New Year's Dance.

Meetings in December, 1945.

Monday,	10th	6-15 p.m.	Genealogical.
"	"	6-45 p.m.	Finance
Tuesday,	11th	6-15 p.m.	Education
Monday,	17th	6-15 p.m.	Social Service
"	"	7-00 p.m.	Entertainment and Sport.
Tuesday,	18th	6-15 p.m.	General Committee.

Announcements.

Miss Olive Rode has kindly arranged for the showing of a Nativity Play at the Union Hall on Friday December 14th at 6-30 p.m. A collection will be made, the proceeds of which will go to the Social Service Committee for Christmas Hampers.

It has not been possible to engage a band for the 31st. The New Year's Dance will therefore be held on January 1st at 9 p.m. Tickets Rs. 5/- and 3/- may be purchased after December 20th from the D.B.U. office or from Mr. T. B. Collette, Hon. Secretary of the Entertainment Committee. Names of guests must be given in before 6 p.m. Friday 28th. The Crake Brothers Band will play.

Reference Library.

Members are requested to note that in future the Reference Library will be open only between the hours of 4 and 6 p.m.

Periodicals.

Is there any particular magazine you would like to see on the Reading Room table? The Hon. Secretary will be willing to consider ordering periodicals suggested by you provided you are willing to bear two-thirds of the cost. The periodicals will of course be your property and will be forwarded to you after a short stay in the Reading Room.

Social Service Contributions.

			Rs.	c.
C. P. Brohier	...	...	2	80
B. H. Ohlmus	...	...	1	00
C. H. Ohlmus	...	..	1	00
V. Arndt	...	...	1	00
Mrs. L. de la Harpe	...	...	5	00
H. K. de Kretser	...	...	5	00
Mrs. H. G. Wambeek	...	...	4	00
		Total	19	80

Help Holland Fund.

			Rs.	c.
Previously acknowledged	...	...	3,092	50
Mrs. Christine Wilson	...	...	20	00
Dr. J. R. Blaze	...	...	25	00
R. L. Brohier	...	...	25	00
Per Mr. V. Grenier	...	...	61	00
		Total	3,223	00

