

## THE SILVER JUBILEE PRIZE GIVING (12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1967)

### Speech/Report of the Headmaster Mr. Frank Jayasinghe

Let me first of all, on behalf of the staff and boys extend to you a very warm welcome. Some of you would have travelled far and would have experienced much inconvenience in order to be with us at this happy occasion. We are really and truly grateful to all of you for your presence this afternoon.

Sir, it is totally unnecessary to introduce you to any gathering of Thomians. Your name has become synonymous with that of S. Thomas' College. You were Warden of S. Thomas' College from 1932 - 59 and it was under your leadership that this branch was started at Gurutalawa in 1942. Sir, you are one who has spent most of your life for S. Thomas' College and you dedicated all your talents and energy to that one cause. You have served this country as one of the greatest and most fearless educationists that Ceylon ever saw. Your great courage and devotion and integrity have inspired many of your pupils, and all who came in contact with you. Sir, we want you to know that we are indeed grateful to you for all that you have done for S. Thomas' College, for Gurutalawa, and for the cause of education in Ceylon. In asking you to be our Chief Guest at this Jubilee Prize Giving - the highest honour that we could confer on you, we are showing you our deep gratitude and respect. We therefore welcome you this evening as a person whom we delight to honour, a distinguished educationist and as one to whom S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa, owes her very existence.

This is the very first occasion that the Ven. C.L. Abeynaike and Mrs. Abeynaike are with us at Gurutalawa. The Rev. Abeynaike is one of our wisest and most experienced educationists. His long years of experience as Manager of Anglican Schools and his active service on innumerable boards, including our Board of Governors, makes him one to whom we naturally turn for advice.

It is no exaggeration when I say that Mrs. Abeynaike is one of the most simple, yet most charming ladies that I have ever met. Her simplicity and charm has won her the hearts of all who came in contact with her. Being involved in almost as many Christian activities as her husband, it is not surprising that they didn't find the time to come to Gurutalawa all these years. We are extremely glad that you were able to come and that our boys will be receiving their Prizes from you later in the evening.

We welcome you both with great love and great joy.

We are glad to welcome the members of the Board of Governors who are here with us today. All the trouble they have taken over Gurutalawa, all the interest they have shown is greatly appreciated.

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome to Gurutalawa Mr. P.B. Ratnayake, The Director of Education, Nuwara-Eliya. We have always had very cordial relationships with the Department and their personnel. I am sure that Mr. Ratnayake would be a good friend of the school, and give us all the necessary help and guidance. On our part, we assure you that we would do whatever we could to help you in what you are trying to do with regard to education in this part of the country.

I need hardly say how happy we are to have with us Rev. A.J.C. Selvaratnam, Warden S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia, Mr. S.L.A. Ratnayake, Headmaster, S. Thomas; Prep. School, Bandarawela; and Mr. J.S.L. Fernando, Headmaster, S. Thomas' Prep. School, Kollupitiya. We extend to them a very warm welcome.

At an occasion such as a Silver Jubilee of any institution one of the first things we must do is to remember those who have given of their best to the institution.

We remember Mr. & Mrs. Leslie de Saram who gifted this campus to the school. They have preferred to remain anonymous but we cannot help referring to them today as this institution would not be here today, if not for their generosity.

As I mentioned earlier, Canon de Saram was the Warden when he decided to shift a section of S. Thomas' College to Gurutalawa. We are indeed very glad that he is the present Manager of the School and that he is our Chief Guest today.

We remember Dr. R.L. Hayman, who was the first Headmaster when the school started in 1942. He built the school with the help of the boys who came over in the early days. I am very glad that some of the first batch of boys are present with us today. We have heard often how Dr. & Mrs. Hayman built the school against great odds-especially during the war days-when building materials and even daily requirements were almost impossible to get. All these buildings that stand today, the swimming pool, and this beautiful campus bear testimony to the selfless service of Dr. & Mrs. Hayman.

Mr. C.H. Davidson was the Headmaster from 1945 - 1947. His was a most difficult period as the main college was restarted at Mt. Lavinia and the numbers at Gurutalawa were badly depleted. It was Mr. Davidson's perseverance that kept the school going and gradually started the school on its forward march.

We remember the late Rev. Canon A.J. Foster, who in his own simple way added a tremendous amount to the tone of this place. I am sure that Old Boys will agree that his devoted and noble life was a great source of encouragement and inspiration to many of them. It was Canon Foster who built the new set of classrooms in 1963.

Mr. A.K. Chapman who was acting Headmaster during the difficult period immediately after the death of Canon Foster and Mr. Kingsley Dassanaïke who was acting Headmaster after Mr. Chapman both gave of their best to the College.

We think of all of them with deep gratitude and realize how very incompetent our efforts are when compared to all what they have done for this place.

Mr. F.B. Fernando, the Bursar, who was one of the pioneers at Gurutalawa, completed 25 years of devoted service to the school. Here is a man who has grown with the school, who has come to love the school and to whom the school is the main concern. We congratulate him and at the same time thank him profusely for 25 years of loyal service.

Mr. R.P. Simon Perera who moved in with the school too has completed 25 years of service at Gurutalawa. He used to walk regularly to Badulla and Nuwara-Eliya in the early days to attend to College work such as banking etc. He is still very active and would not listen to us when we ask him to go slow on account of his age. We congratulate him too and thank him for the long years of loyal service to the College.

Today, we live in a rapidly changing world. The advances made in the field of Science and Technology are so spectacular and so numerous that it has become almost impossible to keep pace with these discoveries. We talk of being in the Atomic Age, The Space Age, The Cybernetic Age and the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) Age. At the same time education must keep pace with these astounding technological and scientific advances. Change is very necessary and already drastic changes are being made in school programmes, and in teaching methods all over the world. Julian Huxley, whom I admire very much for his clarity of thought, talking of education in his book, "Essays of a Humanist" says, "Most educational systems are highly resistant to change, because they are controlled by dogmatic religious organizations, or because they are closely linked with the established social order, or just because of inherent conservatism. Today we need a radical change of system and clearly the new system must itself be evolutionary, not change resistant but change promoting. It must transform as well as transmit." That education with a technological bias is now an urgent national need in our country is quite clear. I for one agree whole heartedly with the Minister that drastic change is necessary. His efforts in this direction are indeed laudable. But an important fact that we have all overlooked is, any form of research before we adopt a new system. Just because there is need for change we introduce a new system and find that we are in a greater muddle, as the system has not been backed by any systematic research. Sweden switched over to 'comprehensives' after a thorough survey conducted for over 5 years by Dr. Nils-Eric Svenson, Head of the Institute of Educational Research of Sweden's National Educational Board. In England research for the Nuffield Mathematics Project, which is now gaining popularity, was started 2 years ago when the Nuffield

Foundation set up the research, and development project headed by Dr. Geoffrey Mathews, on the teaching of mathematics to children aged 5-13. Teachers' centres for discussion and training were established all over the country, research was done into specific points, some of it in cooperation with Professor Piaget at Geneva, and a series of teachers' guides were prepared. These guides, embodying the ideas gathered from many successful teachers, were first issued in trial editions. The final versions will therefore incorporate the 'feed back' from the thousands of teachers who have tried them out. Apart from similar projects carried out by various other foundations, the Department of Education & Science in England sets apart about £1,000,000 a year for educational research. Thus, they are able to carry out over a hundred projects. Reports on Education such as Crowther, Newsom, Robbins, Brymor Jones, and Plowden were the results. The National Committee for Audio-Visual Aids in Education keeps the teachers informed of the latest Audio-Visual Aids and of new progress made in Educational Technology. This summer a number of educational institutes would be organizing seminars and courses for teachers. I was intrigued by a course on Educational Technology advertised by the Loughborough College of Education for this summer. The course will include, Programmed learning, Closed circuit Television, Overhead projection, Reading machines, Teaching machines, Programme writing, Film strip and slide preparation and projection, Group learning consoles etc. etc.

No Educational Research of any appreciable standard has been carried out in Ceylon so far. I am aware of the fact that the Education Department is trying out various schemes of work for the teaching of Science in the G.C.E. forms and the teaching of all subjects at Grade VI, VII & VIII, but here we are trying to introduce to Ceylon what some other country has found to be best for that country through long years of Educational Research. I am very glad that the new Science Faculty to be opened next September at the Vidyalkara University will be doing something on the lines that I am trying to explain. Explaining the programme Professor Wolff who is the Professor of Physics at the Vidyalkara University says - "The educational programmes at Vidyalkara have been especially designed to serve the needs and overcome the particular problems in Ceylon rather than directly imitate foreign systems. Tried and proven educational methods have been selected from various countries and adapted to serve the needs of Science in Ceylon. The objective throughout has been to teach a strong core of fundamental science principles, while at the same time relating these principles to the needs of the economy of Ceylon. Following this plan, Vidyalkara graduates will benefit personally from high employability and the nation will benefit from high productivity as a result of the graduate's efforts." This effort is in the sphere of Higher Education. Basic Education is even more important. I would therefore urge the authorities to establish in Ceylon a permanent body for Educational Research, whose main task will be to plan out a system of education which while keeping pace with modern scientific and technological advancements will essentially be one geared to the nation's needs and economy. I would imagine, the first task of such a body would be to organize

conferences of proven educationists in the country, to launch out on research on the educational needs of the country, and to formulate a theory of education that would be of benefit to the nation. Of course this body for Educational Research must be absolutely free of political influence. What happened to the famous textbook committee should never happen to a body for Educational Research. The theory of education that such a body puts forth should not be coloured by the political theory of the party in power. It should embody what is best for the nation irrespective of what political party is in power. Then only could Ceylon have a permanent, planned, education, backed by scientific research. To quote Huxley again, writing in the Courier on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO (Huxley was the Director General from 1946-1948), he poses the question "Are you examining scientifically your problems of government and of social and economic organizations, with the aid of advice from the best specialists, and in a dispassionate spirit of science, or are you treating them as they arise on an essentially political basis and in the light only of emotional or material interest?" A fine question for our politicians to answer.

The year under review was, if I may say so, one of steady progress. We have achieved higher standards of discipline and most of our boys are settling down to their studies with greater interest. It is time that even a boy who is just 10+ should realize that unless by sheer hard work he rises to the highest rung in education, whatever the field may be, the future prospects of employment are bleak. At Gurutalawa the emphasis is slowly but steadily shifting to studies from sports. This does not mean that we are neglecting sports. Our boys did very well in sports, as you will see further on in this report, but I am very keen that our boys should maintain the proper balance between studies and sports, not only when an examination is round the corner but at all times.

## **Speech of Chief Guest Rev. Canon R.S. De Saram,**

Mr. Jayasinghe, Members of the Staff and Boys of the School,

I thank you all very much for the honour you have done me by asking me to be your chief guest on this very special occasion. As the Headmaster says in his report such an invitation is the highest honour a school can award to any one and I very much appreciate it.

Thank you also Mr. Jayasinghe for all the kind things you have said about me. It was a great blessing to me to be associated so closely with S. Thomas' for many years as a boy, and a great honour and privilege to have been able to work in it, and for it, on the staff in later years. I was fortunate in being allotted this work; I was fortunate in those on the staff who were my colleagues, in the loyalty and support of the Old Boys, and in the boys who were members of the school in those years. It is to them that the greatest praise and gratitude is due for anything that was good when I was there.

I am one of your guests today and it is no part of my duty to welcome the other guests. That has already been done by the Headmaster, but I feel I must say how glad we all are to have the Archdeacon of Colombo and Mrs. Abeynaike with us today. The Archdeacon is a very busy man. In addition to his Archidiaconal duties, he is the Principal of the Divinity School and is at present, in the Bishop's absence abroad, the Bishop's Commissary; and yet he has found time to come here today. That he can do all this with apparent ease is, I am sure due to Mrs. Abeynaike. The Archdeacon did not go to school at S. Thomas. He went to the 'other place'. But he was on our staff for a time and sent his son to us. So his connections with us are quite strong and I join with you all in welcoming them both here today.

I congratulate the Headmaster on his report and the whole school on a year of good progress.

The school is twenty five years old today. A line of a scripture comes to my mind as appropriate for the occasion "Let us now praise famous men and the fathers that begat us." We needn't trouble whether they were all famous or not, though the names of at least two of them, I mean Dr. Hayman and Father Foster, became known throughout our land. But they all certainly were the fathers that begat you. Let us remember them.

Another phrase of scripture comes to my mind. "Other men laboured and ye have entered into their labours." That is precisely so with you who are in the school today. The Headmaster has very rightly given space in his report to the beginnings of this school and its subsequent history, and expresses his thanks to all who helped. The tutorial staff, the office staff, the domestic staff and Old Boys, the generous friends and donors, the boys of the school themselves. These are not

mere words. They all did help. Just to mention a few instances – Dr. Hayman and the boys here at the time worked with their own hands in the levelling of the quadrangle. Dr. Scharenguivel, an old boy, gave his services as school doctor for many years free of charge. Mr. Shirley D’Alwis, another old boy, gave his services as architect free of charge. Of Dr. Hayman’s many generous gifts to the school I need not speak. They are well known. St. Paul’s words apply literally to him “I will most gladly spend and be spent for you.” And there was Father Foster, your Chaplain for many years till the day of his death. As the Bible says of St. Barnabas, “He was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit.” Goodness and gentleness were natural to him. All who were at the school when he was Chaplain remember him with gratitude and affection, because like Chaucer’s Poor Parson.

“This noble Example unto his sheep he gave  
That first he wrought and after that he taught”

These many others including Mr. Leslie de Saram, who gave us Gurutalawa, are the “fathers who begat you”. Remember them.

The school is twenty five years old today, but your roots go back in time more than that. They go back to 1851, and the foundation of S. Thomas’ College at Mutwal, by Bishop Chapman First Bishop of Colombo. You inherit here not only the last twenty five years but also all the 116 years of the life of S. Thomas’.

Inevitably on an occasion such as this those who address you have had to talk much of past history. Perhaps many of you boys find history, as a general thing, rather dull. But history when it really concerns you, comes alive; and this school here is the child of world events. If the Japanese had not bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941 this school would not be here today. History has its uses. I have a suggestion to make. We have the history of S. Thomas’ written by Mr. W.T. Keble up to 1936. The Jubilee Magazine carries the history on, in a way, to 1956. My suggestion is that in this your Silver Jubilee year you start on the work of bringing the history of Gurutalawa up to date. Mr. Chapman was here from the very early days and is still with you. So are Mr. F.B. Fernando and Simon Perera, and perhaps others. So you have the materials at hand. History has its uses. It has lessons to teach us. I will draw to a close by mentioning some of them.

- (1) We are one world. What happens elsewhere affects us and is our concern. We are here at Gurutalawa because of things that happened far away. We cannot shut ourselves. Nor should we try.
- (2) From the generosity and staunchness of those who helped to build this school let us learn to turn every difficulty to good account, to meet it with courage and cheerfulness. Also let us determine that what we have inherited we shall preserve and hand on to others who come after us undiminished and untarnished and if possible, increased.

- (3) To do whatever comes to us with all our heart, and with all our might, spending ourselves and being spent for it.
- (4) And lastly, as our Lord said and as so many connected with S. Thomas' have realized over the last 116 years and in the last twenty five years at Gurutalawa, to know that "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Now I must stop. I thank you again for asking me here today. I wish you all a very good holiday and every blessing for the future.