

PRIZE GIVING 1974

Speech/Report of Headmaster Mr.M L C Illangakoon

Mr. & Mrs. Weerakoon, Canon de Saram, Members of the Board of Governors, Old Boys, Parents and Friends.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all here today for our annual prize giving. The fact that you have come here at great inconvenience and expense shows the abiding interest you have in this College.

Mr. Weerakoon hardly needs an introduction to a gathering consisting mainly of Old Thomians. He is an Old Boy of St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia and S. Thomas' College, Guruthalawa, where he shone at his studies and as a cricketer. After a brilliant career at the University of Ceylon, he came back to Guruthalawa as a teacher, from where he entered the exclusive circles of the Ceylon Civil Service with the rare achievement of scoring the maximum possible marks in the "viva". After obtaining his Masters Degree in Sociology at the University of Michigan, he had the distinction of serving as the brilliant and trusted secretary to five Prime Ministers and after that, as a shining example of what a provincial administrator should be. I never had the pleasure of working directly with Mr. Weerakoon while he was serving as government Agent at Ampara, Baticaloa and now at Galle, but our fields of interest used to touch at one point, the welfare of the farmers of this country. Technical officers do not as a rule have a very high regard for the bureaucracy, but the one outstanding exception was Mr. Weerakoon. His humanitarian approach to the problems of farmers, his grasp of technical details which many others in their ignorance would have brushed aside as irrelevant, his ability to coordinate and transform ideas and visions into workable programs which received the enthusiastic support of farmers. These were his qualities which impressed us all and made us pay the highest respect to his views. Your deeds at Ampara during the unfortunate disturbances of 1971 won you praise even in the National State Assembly, where praise for public servants is a very rare commodity. Thus, Mr. Weerakoon, it is truly with great pleasure and pride that we present you to our students today as one of the finest products of St. Thomas' College, and a model of what we would like our students to become. Mrs. Weerakoon, our pleasure at having you with us today and our thanks for consenting to distribute our prizes is equally sincere.

It is with a certain amount of difference that makes this report today in the presence of Canon de Saram, who was at the time I was at St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, my greatly feared and greatly respected Warden, and after I left

school, an equally respected and greatly loved friend. I welcome you here today, Sir, not only as our Manager, but as the embodiment of the Thomian tradition from our beginnings at Mutwal, through Mount Lavinia to Guruthalawa. We sincerely wish that your visits here would be more frequent. I am happy that at least a few members of our board of Governors are here today. We see them all too rarely. We wish that you would not only read our reports, but would visit us on occasion and see for yourselves what is happening here. It would be a source of great encouragement to us if you could have at least one of your board meetings at Guruthalawa. To all of you other Old Boys, Parents and Friends of this college, I bid a sincere welcome.

Right at the commencement of this report I would wish to place on record the gratitude we in this College have to express to Mr. E. L. Perera, who was headmaster here from September 1968 to the 15th of April, 1974. He was in-charge of this College during a difficult period, when changes were taking place in the field of education. His long experience in this field, and more specially his knowledge of the New Mathematics, helped the College greatly during this difficult period of transition. It was also during his time as Headmaster that the two newest buildings in these premises came into existence. The Dr. Hayman Testimonial Science Laboratory and the Canon Foster Memorial Hall, where we are assembled today. We wish Mr. Perera many happy years of retired life at Mount Lavinia.

I am not an educationalist, and although education is a field in which everybody feels he is an expert, I do not propose in this report to venture into fields with which I am not sufficiently acquainted as yet. Nor am I going to make any weighty pronouncements on educational policy. All I propose to say in this report is what we, as a school, have done over the past year, what we expect to do over the next few years, and what problems we are likely to face in view of changing conditions in this country.

At present we have 433 students on roll, of this number, 330 are resident boarders, while 39 live in approved boardings in or just outside the College grounds. In fact we have only 64 boys who can really be called day boys. Of the total College staff of 36, all reside within the College premises or just outside. I quote these figures because they have an important bearing on the character of this College, to which I shall turn later. During this past year Mr. J. de S. Jayasinghe completed 25 years of loyal services on the tutorial staff of this College. He is the third to do so, the other two being Mr. A. K. Chapman, who has left Sri Lanka to make his home in Australia, and Mr. F. B. Fernando, who is still with us as Bursar. This College is fortunate to have two such members on its staff. During the past year, the following members of the staff left us : Mr. E.R. Tennakoon, to take up a post in the Ceylon Tobacco Company, Mr. L.S.S. Kularatne, for further studies in agriculture and farming in England, Mr. PL. Paramasamy, to join the Education

Department, Mr. D. Hapugoda, to study architecture in China, Mr. M.D.A. Weerasooriya, to live in retirement, Mr. J.S. David, to take up the post of Principal of the Nuffield School for the Deaf and Blind at Kaithady, and Mr. S.K. Simon. During the same time, the following new members of the staff took up duties : Mr. N.G. Gooneratne, Mr. T.S. Amidon, Mr. B.I. de Silva, Mr. S.A. Thurairatnam, Mr. M.P. Wijesekera, Mr. N.A. Jayawickrema, and Mr. S.B. Lazarus. I have to record my gratitude to the staff for the unstinting cooperation they have given me in the administration of this College and for the keen interest they have taken in the welfare of the students.

Our examination results at the last December G.C.E. (O) level were very fair. 81 students were presented for this examination. 53 in the Sinhala Medium. 21 in the Tamil medium and 7 in the English medium. They obtained 25 distinctions, mainly in English, Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. 204 credits, mainly in English and Physics and 229 passes. Subject-wise, the College had 100% passes in Tamil and Art, 94% passes in Sinhala, 93% passes in English, 92% passes in Christianity, 90% passes in Islam, 89% passes in Geography, 86% passes in Special Sinhala, 82% passes in Physics, 81% passes in Biology, 76% passes in Applied Mathematics, 75% passes in History, 69% passes in Buddhism, 67% passes in Arithmetic, 60% passes in Pure Mathematics, 59% passes in Agricultural Science, 52% passes in Chemistry and 50% passes in Sinhala Literature.

An outstanding occasion last year was the visit paid to the College by Dr. and Mrs. Hayman and Miss Foster, sister of the late Canon. A.J. Foster. They stayed with us on two occasions during their stay in Sri Lanka and it was a pleasure and a privilege to have them. From letters I have had from them since, it appears that they consider their stay at Gurutalawa one of the highlight of their stay in this country. During their first stay with us, they were able to participate in the official opening of the Canon, Foster Memorial Hall and the annual celebrations of the Old Boys Day. The assistance given to us on this occasion and at all times by our Old Boys is difficult to detail, but I cannot help picking out three of our Old Boys for very special thanks. They are Mr. P.S. Duleep Kumar, Mr. M.A. Navaz Caffoor and Mr. K.D. Arthur Perera. Their help and advice given unstintingly at all times has been a tremendous encouragement to us at this College, and we thank them sincerely.

At times it has been very difficult to keep our students provided with what we consider an adequate diet. Whenever such difficulties arose, we have taken the students into our confidence and explained our difficulties to them very clearly. Invariably the boys have been very understanding and the students' Food Committee has been very helpful with their suggestions. I would like the boys to know that the staff and I have been very appreciative of their understanding and cooperation. At the same time, I would wish to place on record our thanks to Mr. Lyn Divitotawela, Deputy Chairman of the Paddy Marketing Board, the Chairman

and other Directors of the Board, and the Regional Manager at Badulla, for obtaining an allocation of off ration rice for the use of the college hostel, the Divisional Revenue Officer, Welimada, and his staff for coming to our aid whenever the flour situation became acute, and to the many parents who have helped us by providing rice and other food substitutes to the hostel. I would wish to appeal to those other parents who neither supply rice and other food substitutes nor send their children's ration books to the college to please do so as soon as possible, because it is very unfair to feed their children on the rations of other children.

We have given our boys every encouragement to participate as fully as possible in religious activities whether these children are Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, or Moslems. Various members of the staff have helped in these arrangements. But religious worship in our own chapel has still to depend upon a visiting chaplain from Bandarawela, who comes here twice a month. In spite of the fact that we fully appreciate the services of Rev. Gamini Serasinghe and Rev. Alfred Chinniah, this present arrangement is not satisfactory in a place such as Gurutalawa, where the large majority of our students are boarders and away from their homes. There are many strains and stresses that a boy is subject to under these conditions, and there are many problems that a boy would wish to discuss with someone other than the Headmaster or members of the teaching staff. Those of you who are old boys and were here at the time that the late Canon Foster was chaplain here would recollect the unique nature of the services he rendered to the boys of this college, irrespective of whether they were Christians, Buddhists, Hindus or Moslems. I personally consider that a resident chaplain is very necessary at Gurutalawa, not only for the conducting of religious worship more frequently in our chapel, but even more so for the guidance and counselling of our students. We would all be very grateful to His Lordship the Bishop if, in spite of difficulties, he could see his way to appoint a resident chaplain to this college as soon as possible.

The variety of games and extra-curricular activities available to the boys at this college is very large. I do not propose to detail all these activities, because that is done in the report which is available with you. But I would like to draw your attention to some activities which are new and not so common. The college Agricultural Club has been reorganized on the basis of projects, and various projects are undertaken by groups of boys, who keep accounts of their expenditure and income and hope to run these projects on a profit-making basis. These projects are very varied in nature. For example, 24 boys are engaged in five projects concerned with vegetable cultivation, six boys are engaged in three projects concerned with the cultivation of flowers, 14 boys are engaged in four bee-keeping projects, 23 boys engaged in six rabbit rearing projects, 5 boys are engaged in one project of rearing day-old chicks, and 7 boys are engaged in three projects of rearing calves. At the same time, a large number of boys are engaged in woodworking projects concerned with making a variety of articles. A group of senior boys are engaged in a

“Shramadana” project of building two classrooms for our pre-vocational subjects, agriculture and dancing, under the guidance and direction of some members of the staff. They are doing all the work from levelling the site and making the bricks in our brick-making machine, to laying the foundations and doing the masonry and carpentry work involved. The scouts who are raising money to go to a camp have started collecting waste paper for sale, incidentally keeping the grounds free of litter, and also undertake various jobs on the school farm for which we would otherwise have had to engage labour. All these activities are undertaken outside of class hours, and in addition to or sometimes in place of games.

This variety of extra-curricular activities combined with the location of this college in the midst of a farm in a place such as Gurutalawa confer on us a number of advantages not enjoyed by many other schools. Our small numbers enable us virtually to know each boy personally and to cater individually to his wants. Our staff being completely resident are able to provide a helping hand to students when they want it in their studies, and participate fully and actively in the extra-curricular interests of the boys. Boys are able to select the games they wish to participate in from a wide field, and for those boys who are not inclined to take part in active games, there are other organized activities on the farm, the woodwork shop, scouting, hiking, bird-watching etc. Scouting, hiking and the study of nature become much more meaningful in our location at Gurutalawa, because we live here much more close to nature, and the boys are provided with facilities to work out in the fields and with their hands. Weekly cinema shows provided in the school itself break the monotony and the feeling of isolation engendered by our location. We, in this college, are thus a comparatively happy community, with not too many stresses and strains.

But we are aware that these very advantages, this idyllic life in a comparatively self-contained and closed community could develop into a serious setback to our education. The majority of our boys are largely sheltered from the storms and stresses that beset the average individual in his daily life at present in this country. The travails of a society in transition are strange to them. I wonder whether this is a good thing for the boys of this college. True enough, when they leave here they will probably take with them very happy memories of their school life. But are we training our boys for the life they will have to lead in the outside world after they leave this school? At times I doubt it. We have tried to bring the outside world into this college as much as possible and to establish links with the community in which we live. Under the new education scheme, the school and the surrounding community are supposed to work in close cooperation. It would be a great advantage to us if we could establish such a close union. But our location at Gurutalawa has made this very difficult. We have not given up trying, however, and we hope that with goodwill on both sides we will be able to establish such a liaison in the near future.

Another problem faces us, in common with most other schools. But our unique character makes this problem more acute in our case. I refer to the proposal to terminate secondary education at Grade 9, and allow only those boys who qualify at the National Certificate of General Education examination to go on for higher studies. We are still uncertain as to the standard or quality of this examination. But, whatever the character of this examination may be, it is certain that a large number of students are doomed to finish their general education at Grade 9, at about the age of 14 or 15. The prevocational studies we do here, woodwork and agriculture are insufficient to fit these boys into gainful and useful employment. So where does the future of these boys lie? In one particular case at this college, this new situation means that we will have only Grades 6 to 9. For our existence as a school we need to have a certain minimum number on our roll, and since we will be having no Grade 10 from 1975, we will have to expand in other ways for our very survival. The Board of Governors has already given thought to this new situation that faces this college, and very soon we shall let you know how we intend to overcome this situation.

It is partly in this context that we intend to develop the college farm to become a farm worthy of being called such. We have six very clear objectives before us in this programme of development. First, we want this farm to provide the needed earning experiences for our boys who study agriculture. Second, we need to grow as much as possible of our requirements of food, thus saving money which we could use for the development of the school in other ways. Third, we hope to earn a substantial profit from this farm and thus provide an annual income to the college. Fourth, we intend to demonstrate to our boys learning farming the economic potential for small-scale intensive farming. Fifth, we propose to develop our farm, combining forestry with crop and animal husbandry, in such a way as to teach our boys the importance of the conservation of natural resources, the indigenous fauna and flora of this area, the fertility of our soils, and that very precious commodity in this area, water. Sixth and finally, if the Board of Governors so decide, we expect to undertake the further training of those boys who are unable to go on for further studies, and teach them farming in distinction to agriculture. We feel confident that all these objectives can be achieved within the 35 acres of our college grounds and the 15 acres leased to us by the government. We have made a study of the problems involved and made our plans accordingly.

You will agree that this is an ambitious plan, and, necessarily in our circumstances, a long-range plan. We earnestly hope that petty jealousies and envy will not interfere with our purpose. We hope that the government will understand that our motives are not selfish, and that we are but attempting to do on our own resources what the state schools themselves are hoping to do with the aid of foreign and local assistance. The biggest obstacle we have to overcome is the shortage of implements and equipment. I want to appeal to all parents, old boys and other

friends of this college, not for financial support for this programme, but for assistance and aid in the form of all kinds of agricultural implements and equipment which are very difficult to come by and also very expensive.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have tried to give you in this report some idea of our present position, the problems and difficulties that face us, and our plans to develop towards a brighter future. We are all citizens of Sri Lanka and we believe that our children's future lies right here in this country where our forefathers have lived and died. We all want a better and a happier future for our children and we believe that they are entitled to gainful employment when they have finished their education to a life of self-realization, free of want and fear what we hope to do in this College is to teach your sons to be loyal and useful citizens of Sri Lanka. Not to look ahead to a life of ease devoted to the amassment of personal wealth, but to realize that "no man is an island" that individual happiness cannot be obtained without happiness for all, and to work unselfishly to the maximum of each one's capacity to make our country a better and a happier place to live in. Paraphrasing the words of the late President Kennedy, let us not wait to see what our country can do for us, but rather, let us see what we can do for our country.

Speech Of Chief Guest Mr. Bradman Weerakoon

Reverend Sirs, The Headmaster, Members of the Board of Governors, Old Boys, Ladies & Gentlemen and present boys,

At the outset I must thank the Headmaster very much indeed for the great honour that he has done me and my wife in inviting us to come here as Chief Guests on the occasion of the Prize Giving of the College. I must confess that when I received this invitation while I was G.A. Bataloa, I had the feeling that some mistake might have been made and I therefore accepted the invitation with great speed, lest he might change his mind. I am delighted and honoured to be chosen Chief Guest. I think it is a thought that stirs up in the mind of every boy when he goes to school that perhaps some day, in some distant future it might fall to his lot to be Chief Guest, at his school. That is the reason why I am so sincerely delighted and I have accepted with such pleasure.

Mr. Headmaster you referred in your very kind words of introduction to my history and I must congratulate you on the research work that you have done, some part of that I had already forgotten. You reminded me that I had scored the maximum possible marks at the viva for the Civil Service, that is really something that had escaped my mind for quite some time, and I now recall that one of the questions that I had been asked at that famous viva had some relation to my life at Gurutalawa. One of those questions happened to be of all things about potato cultivation. You can't imagine or anticipate the type of questions that these people give you at this viva's and this happened to be a gentleman who was interested in potatoes. Fortunately, I remembered that in our walks around Gurutalawa there had been some potatoes grown at a place called Rahangala. So I said, Yes, I know all about potatoes, and I went on for quite a few minutes talking about, soils and climate and rainfall and so on for potatoes. So, that is one of the very useful things that came out of my Gurutalawa experience. You also referred Mr. Headmaster to the fact that our paths had not crossed in public service, the loss really is mine. I knew of you because I had known you as a senior student in school. You were a few years senior to us and you were one of the people we looked up to for leadership at that time. I am sorry that in our respective paths I as a bureaucrat and you as a technical officer, we did not meet, but as you said we were both interested in one central person, namely the farmers of this country whom we were both trying to help. I know that under your leadership Sir, and with your experience and training in agriculture this school will once again demonstrate a unique quality that it has in which farming or agriculture had a very important place. As we all know this was a farm, a farm to which in 1942 I had the privilege, along with 40 others to come and start a branch of S. Thomas' College. I think you know the history of that. In 1942 the war had broken out. S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia was taken over for a

military hospital and we had to disperse. So we decided to come here to this farm. So along with 40 boys and 8 teachers which worked out to a pupil to teacher ratio of 1:5 we started off here in Gurutalawa in the farm. I think you know the history of those times, but what is interesting today is, that over those thirty odd years a great deal has changed and again a great deal has remained the same. There are many facts of life here which remain unchanged and we are happy that this is so, because when we Old Boys come back here, we feel again a sense of nostalgia, a sense of belonging to a place that is really very close to the hearts of all those who have passed through here. Well, I was here as a student for about 6 years from 1942 to 1947 and then again I came back as a teacher. Another example of how Gurutalawa gets into the blood. You can't get it out of your system. A pupil keeps coming back over and over again, so it makes it a very special kind of school. I came back as a teacher at the time that we were in the University, and my good friend Mr. Duleep Kumar, who is here as a member of the board of Governors also accompanied me and our paths ran almost parallel. We came back here and we were able to enjoy some of the joys of being a teacher, the sense of involvement with children, the sense of participating in their successes and in their failures, and the reward one got when one saw a boy doing well. At that time we made the acquaintance of Mr. Jayasinghe, who is here with us in this school, having served 25 years. I think Mr. Jayasinghe joined in 1949, that was the time when we were coming back from the University for these short vacation-courses. At that time I think, we were being paid a salary of about Rs.180/= but that was quite sufficient. Then, there was the period when I came here completely as a teacher. And it was during one of those stays that another fortunate accident occurred and I was able to get a scholarship which took me to America. So, I recall those days with pleasure, the period of being student and a teacher. Any my mind goes back really to very earlier times when on speech days like this, as I told you before I would feel that perhaps some day that may be myself who is making the speech. And then I remember thinking, I wish that person up there would do two things. One that he would ask the Headmaster for a holiday and the other that he would not make a long speech. Well, I have asked the Headmaster about the holiday, and he has been very kind to say that the boys are being given 18 days holidays. About the other request, I propose to observe that too and not to make a long speech, but I must say something about the excellent and comprehensive report which was presented to us today. And about one or two ideas in it which struck me as being particularly important and significant.

There was a point you made Mr. Headmaster about the training and the travails of present society. The transition we were going through and you asked the question whether the sort of cloistered and sheltered life that Gurutalawa provides, could provide an adequate experience, an adequate point of entry into the wider society. I think that this is a very pertinent problem. Let me deal with the question of the society which really is changing at a tremendous speed just now. I think most people at any time in history, tend to think of the particular period history in which

they live as being the most important, as being the most epochs making, as being a time of great and dramatic change. But I think that all of us would agree that there has perhaps never been in Ceylon History, in recent Ceylon history since independence, a time in which society has been moving as fast as these present years. I think that in every sector of life whether it be economics, in the social area, in education, or in the political field, one has not seen a period in which things have changed so rapidly. We really are living in an era or a period when all the old values, when all the old expectations seem to have changed. There are new values being built up, new institutions coming up. All kinds of old relationships are changing, whether it be the relationship of the person with the state, the relationship of people to property, all that type of thing is undergoing very rapid change indeed. Now the question you pose I think, relates very particularly to that very dramatic type of change that is taking place today. Are we at S. Thomas' Gurutalawa teaching children to adapt to that change in society? They are going to get out in a few years time and they are, having to live in that kind of society. Now, I would like to pose another question on that, and that is, what kind of training do we give children here? As I said before, this is a rather special kind of school. It gets its special qualities by its isolation, by its being away from the main stream of life. We are in a little pocket here, in a little village, many miles away from civilization, if you want to call it that. Well, I think that judging from my own personal experience of life here at Gurutalawa, about 25 to 30 years ago, that the same conditions prevailed. We were also then isolated, but there were certain factors within the school itself which did not make us soft which did not make us un-amenable to change, or which did not give us the kind of adaptation or adaptability, which is necessary to live in society. What I am trying to say is that there were certain factors within the school, which in spite of the isolation, in spite of the sheltered nature which an outsider might see in this school, did in fact create a very self-reliance person, a person who could be independent, a person who could face up to the problems of the world, whatever those problems were. And those factors were I think the elements of that strength in the school lay really in three areas. It lay in the teachers, the teachers one had, tracing them back from Warden de Saram, from Dr. Hayman, Canon Foster and on through the period up to today. Each teacher then passed on the torch passed on the tradition, taught his pupils not merely in the classroom, but mainly outside it. How to live, how to adapt, how to adjust to society. How to face the harsh and sometimes bitter realities of life. I think that, that was quite well done by teachers, not only by precept or lecturing but by the way they lived. I think that is very important and if you have that, even if you are isolated, even if you are closed in a cocoon, you would not get soft, you won't become incapable of facing the world. The second, what I would call agent of adaptability, were really the minor staff. We never really lost touch with the Sinhala speaking or with the habits of thought which were going on, because here there is a very close association, and I hope that there is even today, between the student, the staff, and the minor staff-people like the driver, the servants. I don't like to use that

word, but they were very close with us. We played with them. Many times have we played football or volleyball. All kind of things brought us together. They were again a very significant part of this parcel which made it possible for the student to become the type of self-reliant person I am trying to talk about. Then again there were the boys themselves. We were not only from affluent groups. There were all kinds of people. Students from the town, students from the village, there are always students from the 'gama' and this added a kind of levelling influence so that you did not build up any snob values, and in the same way that you were physically brought down to size physically if anyone tried to show off I think that the boys themselves, even if the teachers didn't, would see that, that show off was brought down to size. Similarly in the social area if somebody had that kind of idea that he was too important, or that he came from a very rich or wealthy home, I think the experience of life in Gurutalawa soon brought him down. So I think, those factors within the school itself made it possible, in spite of the isolation, in spite of being cut away, made it possible for us here in Gurutalawa to create people who did not lose touch with the outside world. The outside world might have been long way off. Colombo might have been 150 miles away but that didn't make it less easy for a boy from S.T.C. Gurutalawa to get out into the world and to make good. And I think that if you look round at the numerous examples of Old Boys and the various places that they are in, one would have to agree that, that has happened throughout the history of Gurutalawa, and will undoubtedly happen in the future too.

The other question that you referred to in your speech, indirectly, I think relates to what role do you expect a school like this to play in the future. This is a private fee levying school, does it therefore fall outside the main stream of education in this country? Are we getting divorced from what is happening in the educational field? Are we out of step? I don't think we will be, because from your own report Mr. Headmaster, there were some very wonderful ideas of what you propose to do. of the type of special emphasis you hope to give Agriculture here and after the experiment, if I may say so, which you have already started which is right in line with present thinking in this country. That is the experiment of working in projects. I think that if you listened carefully to the Headmaster's speech you would have seen in that reference to various group projects. One group of boys doing poultry, one group of five doing bee-keeping, one group of eight doing something else and there I think one has touched on the hub or the centre of the problem of how Ceylon is going to fare in the future. We are moving away, in this period of transition, from individualism, we are moving away from private capital, moving away from private ownership. In our day when we did farming we looked at individual plots. I had my plot, he had his plot and so on. The whole of political thought in this country now is away from that. It is not going to be his, and mine, it is going to be ours. And I think the Headmaster's idea, whether he consciously planned it or not, is right in line with that kind of thinking. A thinking in cooperative terms of making it a group responsibility of five or six becoming in-charge of something rather than one.

I think that, that too indicates in one area at least, that S.T.C. Gurutalawa is on the correct track. Now there is one area of course in which we are going to miss out. We were of course an exclusive school in that we 'Thomians' were able very often to fill very many of the important places in this country. If you look at politics, the judiciary, the medical field, everywhere you went, you found Thomians. In fact, if you look at the political field out of the Prime Ministers of independent Ceylon I think four were Thomians and one was the wife of a Thomian. So you have a lot of Thomians around. In fact in the sport field Thomians were in the Cricket teams, Football teams and so on. And I remember the year in which I entered the civil service there were four people chosen, three were Thomians, and you can believe it or not the fourth was a Royalist. So that kind of virtual monopoly, the monopoly that S. Thomas' had in various places I think is going to come to an end. I must tell you a story before I close about this Thomian connection. I happened to be in Batticaloa, once, and the Minister of Health Mr. Ariyadasa was there, his car had broken down and it was very important that he catches the train, and as you know those services are also not very good and the train service also happened to breakdown that very evening. So around about 2 o'clock in the afternoon he was faced with the problem of getting back to Colombo. A thought suddenly struck me, that I might telephone from Batticaloa to the Commander of the Air Force, who happens to be a Thomian. He is Padman Mendis. So I phoned Padman Mendis and I was able to get him at his lunch table and he told me "I don't know whether I can help you on this but there is an Air Force plane leaving China Bay and if we can get through to China Bay we might be able to get that pilot to divert to Batticaloa and pick up your Minister". So I said we would try because it was important for me, and he said "hold on a minute I will get you the man at China Bay. When he got me the man at China Bay I told him that I was so-and-so and he told me "Yes Sir, you taught me at Gurutalawa". And he happened to be a Squadron Leader whom I had happened to teach while I was here and he proved to be very helpful. He asked me whether we could be ready in about half an hour and that they would divert and pick the minister up and so that was that. That is the Thomian connection which I hope we will be able to find going on in future years too but it is possible that, that virtual monopoly that we enjoyed will soon come, if not to an end, but it will not be the same as it was earlier since there are very many more schools now and so we will have to find a different level at which to operate. So, I wish to suggest that, that different level might be one of 'quality'. Let us go therefore for quality, even if we have to curtail numbers. Let S. Thomas' become a model for the production of the kind of men which this country needs. Let it try, if it cannot go for quantity, to try for quality. In feudal France, there was a concept which the aristocracy, proclaimed which the French called 'Nobles Oblige' which means the obligation of the nobility. Now that was the obligation which the nobility by blood and birth felt that they inherited. The fact that, since they were 'Nobles' they should behave in a certain way. This did not mean that they took an attitude of patronage over others, but it meant a willingness to serve. An obligation to work, to serve, to help your country.

I am not asking Thomians to follow that same way too closely, this is not a nobility of blood, or a nobility of race but what we want is a nobility of action. If we can have that same concept of 'noble oblige', that Thomians by their upbringing here, by the fact that they Thomians, by the fact that they are the inheritors of a tradition of work, of industry, of decent living. If that can be the new quality that they take out with them when they go out into the world, when they go to outer society then I think everyone concerned with the welfare of these institution can be happy. That we have been able to produce not merely persons who have graduated in this or that but men, because the present times demand men, demands great minds, strong minds, firm faith and ready hands. I trust that those hands, those minds, those thoughts will come forth from you the son of S. Thomases.' Thank you.

Vote Of Thanks Proposed by Mr. Navas Caffoor (Treasure STCG O.B.A)

Headmaster Sir, Mr. Weerakoon, Mrs. Weerakoon, Members of the Board of Governors, Members of the Staff, Old Boys, Present Boys, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Chief Guest Mr. Bradman Weerakoon is named after a record breaking cricketer who has left his mark in history, and I can say that as a record breaker, I cannot think of anyone who has been more appropriately named. Firstly Mr. Weerakoon is one of the few people, if there any others, who got 100% marks in his Civil Service viva. Then as a Civil Servant he had the rare distinction of serving under five successive Prime Ministers and he now comes here as our Chief Guest, being the first Old Boy of this school to have been accorded this high honour. There may be many more records that Mr. Bradman Weerakoon has broken, which we know nothing about, but be that as it may, it is my great honour and privilege to welcome him here on behalf of the Old Boys of the school and all present here today, and to thank him and Mrs. Weerakoon for their distinguished presence with us. Mr. Weerakoon is one of the 42 pioneers who came to S.T.C. Gurutalawa in 1942 on the perilous journey, virtually into the unknown. I believe the bus broke down on the way and there were landslides which forced the pioneering party to make a detour and reach the school, which was then merely a bungalow, late in the night. It was a veritable baptism of fire but nothing daunted the old brigade soon began to lay the traditions, from which all alike now recognize as the glory of Gurutalawa. Mr. Weerakoon may find many changes in this place such as the new classrooms, the lab, the hall, the dormitories, toilets etc. During Mr. Weerakoon's school days, the classrooms were the steps in the corridor, and the lab was makeshift affair. There

were no playing fields. And it is these pioneers who under the guidance of Dr. R.L. Hayman and the late Canon A.J. Foster levelled the fields which are now used for Cricket, Hockey, Soccer etc. With all the handicaps that were before them at that time, it is amazing to note that they excelled in studies as well as in games. Shramadana started in this country 25 years ago in a little village in the backwoods of Uva by the great missionary and educationist and we now have here a truly resplendent product of that spirit which has already made its impact for the greater good of our country. Mr. Weerakoon ended his school career by playing for the College Cricket eleven and in the Royal-Thomian match scored 36 not out having hit a glorious six off the bowling of Ceylon's most famous spinner, Gamini Gunasena, but I can assure you Ladies and Gentlemen, that there were no sixers in his speech today as our Chief Guest. Having left S. Thomas' Mr. Weerakoon entered the Ceylon University. While awaiting his results, he returned to Gurutalawa along with Mr. Duleep Kumar, Mr. Arthur Perera, Mr. Habaragoda and a few others and taught here for a short while. You will be amazed if I told you that they were given only a pocket allowance of Rs.50/-. Money was no criterion to these gentlemen. It was the love of their school which brought them back here, knowing that whatever they did for the school would never be enough for all that they received. He then went to the United States on a Smithmund Scholarship and obtained his Masters Degree. He took the Civil Service exam and was one of the three Thomians, out of four selected, at this examination. This is an achievement which Thomians can truly be proud of. In 1970 he was sent as G.A. Amparai where he did an excellent job of work and earned a rare tribute from his minister from the floor of the House. He is at present the G.A. Galle, and the Old Boys owe Mr. & Mrs. Weerakoon their gratitude for the excellent arrangements they made for Dr. & Mrs. Hayman and Miss Foster in their Eastern Province tour during their stay here. We are also very happy that Mrs. Weerakoon is here with us today, to give away the prizes. She, as you can all see is very charming lady and Mr. Weerakoon must be a very fortunate man to have so charming a lady as his wife. So in thanking Mr. & Mrs. Weerakoon, I once again, as I am sure everyone here would also join me, in wishing them both long life, prosperity and every good wish for the future.

Vote Of Thanks Seconded by the Head Prefect M N Rofeeq

Mr. & Mrs. Weerakoon, Headmaster, Members of the Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen and Friends,

It is my great privilege, as the Head Prefect, to second the Vote of Thanks proposed by Mr. Navaz Caffoor, an Old Boy. I heartily agree with what he said about Mr. & Mrs. Weerakoon. Mr. Weerakoon, who entered the then civil service, has been an administrator for 20 years. Many of these years were spent as Secretary to five Prime Ministers. During this time, the history of this country saw the 'winds of change' blow across. Policy changed from right to left and left to right or stayed

in the middle path, wavering of course. You have attended many international conferences and been in the background to many successful negotiations. We envy the opportunity for travel that you have had Sir, on Capitalist wings you have seen North America and Western Europe. On Socialist wings you have been to Eastern Europe and China on wings of Non-Alignment you have flown to the developing countries of Asia and Africa. I am sure Sir, that your record must have broken that of the once famous 'Roving Raju'. All your experience will certainly go to make you a very fine diplomat at the latter stages of your career. You had an excellent record in school Sir, winning many prizes as you went along. You were a school prefect, and living up to your name 'Bradman' you excelled at Cricket playing in two successive years in the Royal-Thomian. In service too, you have deviated from the conservative set up suited to earlier times and adopted creative attitudes, thus increasing your practical usefulness in office. Little wonder that the United Nations offered you an assignment in Bangladesh after the recent war. Naturally, Sir, S. Thomas' is proud of you and we are proud of your association with Gurutalawa, both as a student and as a teacher. Today, we had the pleasure of receiving our prizes from Mrs. Weerakoon. Without any doubt a lot of Mr. Weerakoon's successes must be attributed to the charming home you make for him. We are grateful to you Madam, for your presence here. On behalf of the present boys of the school, here I wish to say a big Thank You to both of you. Thank you.