

PRIZE DAY - 1985

Speech/ Report of Head Master Mr. Patrick Gunawardena

The Honourable Minister of Lands & Land Development and Mahaveli Development, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, the Venerable Archdeacon, Members of the Board of Governors, Old Boys, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great joy to welcome Mr. Gamini Dissanayake to preside at our Annual Prize Distribution and invite him to distribute the awards.

Three days ago, you presided at a similar function at our parent school at Mt. Lavinia. We are especially grateful to you that in spite of the very tight schedule of engagements you have somehow found the time to be with us this morning.

It is our delight that our Chief Guest is a very distinguished Old Boy of Trinity College, our friendly sister school, and one who was awarded the "General Lion", the highest honour that Trinity can confer on any of her sons.

I, personally, have every reason to be proud of him as I consider myself as much an Old Boy of Trinity as I am of S. Thomas', having been a boarder during the first 6 years of my school life at Trinity from Squealery to Ryde.

We also felicitate you today as one of the most illustrious members of the Cabinet and one who has been assigned a task of far-reaching magnitude. In your Ministerial capacity, you could go down in the history of our country as the man who succeeded in taming the unpredictable Mahaveli and harnessed it for the colonization of the dry zone and the agricultural and industrial development of our island home, for this year we witnessed the ceremonial opening of two major development projects, the Victoria and Kotmale dams.

The glamour, pageantry and grandeur of each occasion were an eloquent expression of their significance and the continuing prosperity of our country.

As ardent Cricket enthusiasts, while we, our students and members of the Staff, pay a tribute to our National Cricket team for their historic Test Victory against India, we will never forget you, Honoured Sir, who as President of the Board of Control for Cricket left no stone unturned to foster the image of Sri Lankan Cricket at an international level and the dedication and zeal with which you moved to popularize this great game of Cricket in our country.

We greet you today as one who we are proud to set up as an example to our boys as one who has shone in school and has rendered a great service to our country in several major fields.

It is a great privilege to have him with us this morning and we welcome him with warm affection to our midst.

I must also offer a hearty welcome to the members of the Board of Governors who are present here today. They are always deeply interested in the affairs of the school, and their readiness to assist the College is spontaneous. We acknowledge it with deep gratitude.

We also welcome the Manager of our School, Mr. Gerald de Alwis and Assistant Manager, Mr. Leslie Habaragoda. They have been a great source of strength to me. I must acknowledge with grateful thanks all the advice and encouragement I have received from them.

To our parents, Old Boys and well-wishers who are here with us today we extend a sincere welcome. Your interest in the school, your active cooperation and your presence at school functions of this nature are of great value to us.

Unfortunately today, schools are judged as good or bad by the percentage of Distinctions, Credits and passes at the Ordinary Level and Advanced Level Examinations as well as the numbers selected for University Entrance.

No questions are asked at all about the human quality of those who pass out of schools into the Universities and the adult community, their ability to adjust to decent social life as well as their sense of social responsibility, discipline, leadership and service.

Schools like ours are striving to impart what we like to call a total or integral education. That is, the education of the whole personality of the child. His mind, body and heart with a special stress on the development of the moral or spiritual component of his nature which in the long run will serve to motivate and regulate his conduct in relation to this world and the world hereafter.

It is our firm conviction that this type of education with a holistic approach is the only definitive long-term answer to our shameful racial conflicts, as well as other evils that our society is ridden with, such as bribery, corruption, jealousy, intrigue, drug addiction, economic exploitation, insensitivity to human poverty and suffering and rampant indiscipline which has beset our land.

This is indeed what education is all about.

To ask what kind of education we wish to have in our country's schools now is to ask what is the future of Sri Lanka 20 years from now and what kind of world do we want to live in 20 years from now.

I believe this question is uppermost in the minds of all our parents who keep on pressurizing the school to take adequate measures to ensure that their sons acquire, through their education here, a high degree of competency in English which they believe will serve not only as a common factor that will bind the different races and religions together but will also help their sons to cultivate a

wide reading habit which engenders a liberal and broadminded attitude towards national and political issues as well as a proper understanding of them.

Furthermore in a developing nation we need people with an English education, and it is the duty of our schools to ensure that every child gets an opportunity to gain a high degree of proficiency and fluency in the language to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

It will enrich their lives, provide them with opportunities of better job opportunities and assist our development.

It is in the fitness of things that we should pay an enhanced attention to the raising of the standard of English teaching in an age when all countries and nations of the world have come so close together, so that our people would not be considered intellectually inferior to those in neighbouring countries.

The negligence of English in the recent past has already caused a great deal of hardship to thousand of school leavers, hence it has been the policy of private schools to give the teaching of English its rightful place in the curriculum.

We are trying our best to rise to the occasion and meet the demands of our parents but I would like our parents not to expect us to work miracles in this field for unlike our parent school where over 90% of the students are sons of Old Boys who make it a point to speak in English at home for the benefit of their children, 95% of our students come from totally non-English speaking homes, so we have to wage an up-hill struggle with compulsory after school Spoken English classes and the use of special "English Dialogues" to bring them up to a fair standard.

We can never dream of bringing them up to the standard of fluency in English in our parent school within two or three years as expected by our parents.

I am happy to state that by starting the national Certificate in English Examination, a progressive and sensible step has been taken to motivate students in the Advanced Level forms to take a greater interest in and make a deeper study of English.

Speech of Chief Guest Hon. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake Minister of Lands & Land Development and Mahavali Development

Reverend Sirs, Distinguished Headmaster, Members of the Staff, Honoured Guests, and Students of S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa.

I think it is a very rare privilege indeed to be able, within a few days to address the Parent School, if you would concede that it is the 'Parent School'; S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, and thereafter so soon this venerable institution - S. Thomas' Gurutalawa, and say for the second time "Esto Perpetua". I think it is a great privilege for me to be here with you today. I am only sorry that my wife could not be here with me because I am coming here after a circuit programme and I have not been at home for a couple of days. I must apologize also for being somewhat late. If I were to tell you that I could not get through the clouds you would wonder how so, but that is exactly the reason. We couldn't penetrate the clouds. I have told the Headmaster he could keep me as long as he wishes. A late lunch as I am quite used to, even a night if I can't get through the clouds again, because being here in this institution, as I was at S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, reminds me of nearly 15 years that I spent at my Alma Mater - Trinity College Kandy. Everything seems to be the same. The atmosphere, the sports facilities, the environment, the interrelationship between the Staff, the Principal and the students, and if I might say the attitude of the Headmaster who congratulated another master for being a good disciplinarian. Well, we don't quite agree when we were students but that seems to summarize the attitude of those who manage this institution. Though chastised on a number of occasions in the pre-fifty six days and the post-fifty six days undoubtedly great institutions, which as you say Sir, have contributed to character building, and Nation building in our country.

In my school Trinity College I learnt many things. I learnt to play, to win, and to lose. I learnt the art of debating. I learnt to print and develop my own photographs. I developed a habit of reading, spending hours in the library, though it was felt by many at that time, and even today, that reading does not really help to get through exams. Fortunately for me, I was one of those who erred into the belief that it was not quite important to get through exams. I just managed to get through my class exams, and my public exams on the first occasion that I say for them. I never even competed with my wife when she sat for law exams. She always got a first class in all her exams, I came I think at the bottom of the class, but it had a very salutary effect as Granville Williams said;

"When I was young I took to the law
And argued each case with my wife,
And the muscular strength it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life"

We had a very epochal Principal, by the name of Mr. Norman Walter. A great Englishman, who will be revisiting Sri Lanka soon; and the Principal before him accumulated a lot of money – Mr. Simmithrarachchi who was the first Sinhalese or the Sri Lanka citizen who was Principal of this institute, prior to that every one of them being an Englishman or an Irishman. Mr. Simmithrarachchi accumulated over the years a large amount of money. He never spent money. All the School fees were laboriously put into a Bank and million upon million, and million upon million, he stored this money. Mr. Norman Walter came and spent all that money. And it was said that it developed the buildings at Trinity College so much, and the toilets beyond any measure of recognition, that the boys could even go there to smoke a cigarette. It was so relaxing. Great people from different perspectives, from different values, have made these institutions.

I see the picture of Dr. Hayman, of whom I have heard so much. It was said of Dr. Hayman that he used to treat every student as a friend, and therefore as an individual. And you contrast that with some of today's schools where even the Form Master does not know the name of the students. What do you expect, 8000 students, 5 parallel classes and the boys go and the boys come, the bells are busy, the teachers are busy – God knows what they are doing they are running parallel tuition classes at home – and the children grow up hostile and alienated both from the home and the school, and sadly from society. So I think it is schools such as these which play a pivotal role. We are having a dialogue with the Department of Education, and my colleague the Hon. Minister of Education thinks like us, that we must have a great revolution in our educational policies. Of course we have got to carry the people with us. People have been trained to think in a particular way for 20 years, and they think that what they believe is the last word in everything.

This is a free society and we cannot force people to believe things in a certain way. Now for example you referred to Mr. Mudiyanse Tennakoon. A great friend of mine, now not in Parliament. I get a periodic letter from him, once a month perhaps, asking me to stop encouraging cricket. Now even if every one of you would agree with him I won't, because I think that cricket is a great sport. Not only a sport it is a philosophy. It is a way of life, it stimulates the growth of character, and I don't know why Mr. Mudiyanse Tennakoon tells me that I should stop encouraging cricket. If he were to accompany that by saying you should do more for the farmer with whom he is very very concerned. I would say to him myself that this Government has done more for the farmer than he could do in ten lifetimes. But we have to contend with individual views. Now we have the Hon. M.P. for Mahiyangana whom I had the pleasure of taking with me to China. Now what did he do? He is another individual. From the time we landed in China he was trying to find a Karate expert. From the same school, different individuals different perspectives. And I think Mr. Headmaster, if your school can produce people with heretical thinking, who think differently, who stand up for what they believe, no matter what, I think it is a great contribution that you are making to education. In some schools also, I remember, we don't encourage sneaks we have

a law amongst ourselves. "The Gods will do what has to be done by the Gods" - and by Gods we mean the Masters and "man will do what man has to do" - and that means the students.

Now Sir, having said a lot about our common traditions, I think I should say something about some of the very relevant questions that you raised during your speech. A proper speech, a serious speech, an exercise in which you raised many matters in which people like us should know something or even if we don't know something should endeavour to know something. If you asked the question are we people who belong to different religions, different races, different ethnic groups, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese. What are we? What are we basically as human beings? Should we not ask that question? I was reading the biography of Golda Mier the other day, and she said that she came as a young girl of 17 to the new State of Israel. Her parents did not come with her. She came as part of the Diaspora to build a new state of Israel. And there she was alone. Her husband was much older than her. The marriage soon ended in divorce, and she was trying to find her feet in a new society, tossed about in the sea like a cork. And in despair she said, she asked herself "What am I?" And she found it very difficult to reconcile what she felt she should do by way of social service. With her own ambitions there was something in her which told her "Reach out. Climb the ladder. You can be somebody in this new country, in this new state," So she said, "I couldn't reconcile my desire to work for society, to be anonymous, to be a slave to others, and this inner prompting which told me to go on, "Go on, you can be somebody!" Until she said she came across these words of an ancient Hebrew prophet which said "If I am not for myself who will be for me? But if I am only for myself what am I?" To reconcile what you must do with what you must do for others.

The children after some time, after they get beyond the naughty Sixth Grade or the Seventh Grade, want to do something for themselves, and excel in life. It is time that our society came to grips with this. We can't level out and make everybody to be conformists. That can never happen. This was recognized even in China. Just before or after the 'cultural revolution' when Mao Tse Tung said "Let a thousand flowers bloom." What he meant was let there be a thousand strands of individual thinking, and I think that is the way in which we should try to build up our society. To achieve the full potential of each individual you masters, and the head of the school, have a duty to find out and advise the parents in what particular aspect each child is good at.

There are the old professions, Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Architects etc etc. Now can all of us be Architects? Can all of us be Doctors? Can all of us be Engineers? Can all of us be Dentists? Can all of us be Physicians? No clearly not in the third world, or in a developed country. The choice for parents is therefore very difficult. You get the new professions. And we must understand what the new professions are. In the Soviet Union, the highest paid individual is the boiler maker. In the world do you know the highest paid persons? They are

firefighters, they are people who put out the fires which consume the petroleum that is many thousands of feet under the ground. It calls for tremendous courage but there are a few who undertake that.

So there are new professions. There is photograph. Queen Elizabeth's former brother-in-law is a professional photographer, so is Lord Litchfield, but some of our parents will throw up their hands and say "Why do you want to be a photographer, an Electrician, Agriculturist?" - the late Mr. D.S. Senanayake after having opened up thousands and thousands of acres of land was struggling during his lifetime to create one category of people called "Gentlemen Farmers". He could not achieve it because our parents did not want their children to take to agriculture. They preferred them to go and plant under a foreign planter, S.D. or P.D. or whatever you may call it. That was better for them than to get the child to plant his own land. No, it is time that we returned to the earth and took a more professional, practical view about what we should do and where our children should go.

But it is a difficult proposition, it is not easy! Last December when I was in Nuwara Eliya spending the holidays with the President, he asked my little son, "What do you want to do?" He had recognized his priorities very well, and pat came the answer, "I want to be a pilot". If I can't be a pilot, I want to be the President." So, children are somewhat precocious today, but even small children know that to be the President is not as important as to be a pilot. There is an American mother who said "I want my son to be the President but I do not in the process, want him to be a politician." So there is a great opportunity today with our economy being opened.

I am glad when I saw in your report, Mr. Headmaster, that you have got new societies - T.V. & Video Club and the Computer Society. As I said at Mount Lavinia, the great challenge of computers and micro-chips, of Science & Technology is just at our doorstep. It is this that we can embrace with both our hands.

You ask what is our future 20 years from now. I want to ask you a question. If fifteen point eight million people in a small country like Sri Lanka can't manage their own affairs how do one thousand million people manage their affairs in China? How do eight hundred million people manage their affairs in the Republic of India? We are thinking of nations. How is that after Charlemagne and Napoleon and De Gaulle and Adenauer the countries of Europe are dissolving their national boundaries and creating one entity called Europe. This is what you will see twenty years from now. There will be one Europe. And many countries in Asia will try to get together as they must. And in Sri Lanka do you want the Tamils and the Sinhalese to be murdering each other? There is something wrong there.

In our school the boy who was sleeping next to my bed was a Tamil. The boy who was sleeping on my right was a Muslim. We did not know caste, we did not know race, we did not know religion. Because I wanted to cut Prep on Sunday I even went to Church. It did not matter. They asked me to come and I have read the Bible much more than some Christians. I am reading the Koran now!

Indeed it leads you to one invincible truth that all religions teach you basically the same, but of course the metaphysics are different. How they explain phenomena may be different. In that sense Buddhism is not a religion. It is a philosophy. But these are things which are supra mundane. Our concern today is with the mundane, which you raised very properly. How to live together. You said about racial amity and there is a phrase here I want to clarify. In your address as a Headmaster you said referring to me 'succeeded in taming the unpredictable Mahaveli' No Sir, it is not the Mahaveli that has been unpredictable, it is the people of Sri Lanka who have been unpredictable, and you referred to an ethnic crisis. There is no ethnic crisis. What is going on, I like to tell you is a cruel, vicious terrorist war the like of which you get in the 'Bath' in Spain and Portugal. You get this terrorist war going on in Northern Ireland. If there is a racial problem we can't sit here. You wouldn't speak the way you did and I would not speak the way I am speaking.

I want to give you an example. There was a gentleman who came here in 1982. His name was David Selbourne. He was given V.I.P. treatment. I didn't know who he was. He came and met the President. He met the Hon. Minister of Trade at that time Mr. Athulathmudali. He met me. Then our President said he was going to inaugurate the G.C.E.C. or the 'Free Trade Zone' and he said "will you come with us?" so he came with us, and we discussed many things.

He asked the President "Sir, what do you expect to do with the G.C.E.C.? The President said "I like to create more employment. I like foreigners to come and invest here. I like more factories to be opened so that there will be more employment. I like electronics to come." And he said that he had read somewhere and that Mr. Arthur C Clark had told him that countries like Sri Lanka, because of computers and microchips and what you call 'software' need not go through the whole industrial revolution again. That in that sense they have the advantage in comparison to the older industrial nations. That they can go straight into the computer age. And we were discussing things of that nature. Now this David Selbourne has written an article published two weeks ago in England and in Sri Lanka in Jaffna in a paper called "The Saturday Review", in which he says, using the fact that he travelled with us in the same car that the President said that all the Tamils must be burnt. And this is what he did. So we have to meet this campaign.

Why is the Army there in the North? Why is the Army in Batticaloa and Trincomalee? It is there because terrorism is there. But we have to put up with Mr. Mudiyanse Tennakoon who is telling us not to promote cricket. If he comes

home, I have to talk to him and I have to try to persuade him. We have to put up with opposition, we have to put up with Unions. At the moment there is a strike in the Ceylon Brewery in Nuwara Eliya. They are asking me to intervene and I say, "No. They have a right to strike. You deal with the Union, this is a free country." You can print 'Saturday Reviews' and you can say David Selbourne said this and the President said this, Athulathmudali said this and Gamini Dissanayake said this, because this is a free country. If anybody is taken into custody you can go to the Supreme Court and you can get a writ to release that man. I think that these are the things that we should try to preserve in this country, and I think, in the goodness of time we will win but we must go through this process.

There are no answers. We might be able to deal with this in one month if we give up all our freedoms. If we say A can go to B. You can't move freely in this country. Regiment the whole nation like what is happening in Iran. Ask them to go to the war-front, "kill, kill, kill the innocent and the not so innocent." It does not matter. But can we come to those conclusions? I say we can't, and the greatest challenge as I said at your school in Mount Lavinia is we have the greatest potential but will we have the patience? Will we have the patience? I do hope, Sir, that we will have the patience. We have decided that whatever the problems we are going to support the President and the Government whatever the people say, to come to a lasting and a permanent solution so that everybody can be free and equal and live as brothers as you mentioned in your speech, that I think is our hope for 1986. And I have no doubt that as Sri Lanka being a blessed country, with such wonderful people like you who live together.

As I said there is no racialism in my Ministry 60% are Tamil officers! Yes 60% are Tamil officers! We look after them. The last Director of Irrigation was a Tamil officer. If I have to play all eleven in the Sri Lanka National Cricket team as Tamils, I will play all eleven as Tamils. They do some mischievous propaganda. A British M.P. came and asked me "how many Tamils have you got in your Sri Lanka Team? It is said that you are keeping Tamils out." So, I asked him, fortunately, I am a little sharp for him. I asked him "How many Scotsmen have you got in your team?" He could not give an answer to that. Then I told him that if I had to play all eleven who are Tamils in the Sri Lanka team, I will play them there is no problem. So these are the issues that we have to face. Our choice is, are we going to build? Are we going to create or are we going to postpone these issues?

You find on the walls written by the J.V.P. "remove the prohibition now". Who are these people? Do you know who they are? They burnt our society twice. They are the equals of those people who are active in Jaffna. We don't want them. Do you go and write on the walls Mr. Principal what you should do to these people who write on the walls is what you should do to a naughty boy here, remove his pants and give him six. They are doing this because they have not got this punishment. They don't know discipline. Their parents have no control over

them. This alas is what I would call the "Bandaranayaka Generation". The generation of indisciplined youth who know their rights but who don't know their obligations. You can't kill them, you have to reform them. You have to take them with you. That is a great challenge.

We have Sinhalese. They have the Tamils. We all have the same problem. People who went astray. So let us have patience as I said that through this patience I believe that all of us, with the type of leadership that you give. The educators, the humanists, we can build a new Sri Lanka. I have every hope that 20 years from now, if we don't make the serious blunder of handing over this country to lunatics who will say all sorts of things before elections, but after the elections forget everyone of them. If you elect not wizards, not clever people but sane people, decent people, this country will be one of the most contented, powerful nations in South Asia at the turn of the next century.

That is what Mahaveli is all about. You have seen the film now see the real thing. One million acres under irrigation, some of the finest head-works in Asia. This is for our children, this is not for J.R. Jayawardena. There was no politics in Mahaveli. I have always paid the highest compliments to my predecessors in office, whoever they were because they all tried to make this a reality. And I do hope that this is the foundation on which we should build. S. Thomas' Mt. Lavinia, S. Thomas' Gurutalawa, S' Thomas' Bandarawela will have a major role to play in the evolution of this dream. I wish you well. Once again during the span of three days, I say to you 'ESTO PERPETUA'.

Speech of Mr. Shantha Dimbulana Proposing the Vote of Thanks

Hon. Minister, Mr. Dissanayake, Distinguished Guests, The Headmaster and Members of the Staff, Students, Ladies & Gentlemen.

As an Old Boy of S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa I consider it a privilege and an honour to have been given this opportunity of proposing this vote of thanks to our distinguished guest, The Hon. Minister. Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and I must say that this opportunity is of special significance to me because I had always felt and I have always had the highest regard, respect and admiration for the Minister. I am sure these sentiments are shared by all of you today. We all know of that much quoted Shakespearean saying that "a man in his time plays many parts" and although in essence different from the one the poet meant I feel that very few men in their time have played so many parts as our distinguished chief guest. Who during a very short period of time has played so many varied parts in the affairs in the country. Not only played those parts but played them almost to perfection. We know sir that as a young lawyer you sacrificed a very promising career, a lucrative practice at the bar, when you decided to enter the field of politics. The fact that within a very short period of time after you entered Parliament you became an almost maternal figure much loved and respected not only in your constituency but also throughout the country. That fact is ample proof of your ability integrity and popularity. It was therefore no surprise to us, when his Excellency the President, renowned for his farsightedness, for his vision, decided to place you in charge on one of the most ambitious development projects in the whole of Asia- the accelerated Mahaweli Development Scheme. And now I think all of us can say boldly and without any reservations that gigantic scheme under your guidance, with your skill, has not only turned out to be a complete success, but in the process Hon. Minister your name has become synonymous with the project itself. I think it is no exaggeration to say that the people of this country for generations to come will remember you with gratitude as long as the waters of the mighty Mahaweli flows throughout this country of ours. Coupled with your achievements in the field of politics and national development is another aspect that we cannot forget or overlook. The one that was referred to by the Headmaster in his report. That is your dedication your interest, in the promotion of sports in general, and Cricket in particular in this country. We know Sir, that within a few years of your being elected to the prestigious post of the President of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka, this country was able to achieve "Test Status" in the international Cricket scene, and that was sir, due mainly to your untiring efforts. Thereafter we have witnessed the tremendous progress that the game has made in Sri Lanka. Thanks once again to your organizational skill and enthusiasm. I think Sir, in this respect our achievements have been unique because I can think of very few politicians, for that matter I can think of no politicians anywhere in the world, who have been able to combine with such ease the burdensome task of nation building with the more pleasurable world of sports. Therefore Sir, all present here today feel very glad, very proud and happy to have you in our midst and we are very thankful to you Sir for

having found the time to grace this occasion despite the fact that there are a 1001 other important affairs of state that need your immediate attention. The Prize Giving Day at S.Thomas' College Gurutalawa is always a memorable one and although times have changed and the students here today have had the privilege, the good fortune, of receiving their prizes in a more spacious modern hall than the one in which the Prize Giving was held when we were students here. One cannot fail to observe that those high traditions that were maintained in this school so many years ago are still being preserved. For this I think the credit must go entirely to the Headmaster- Mr.Gunawardena- and the staff of this school. We are glad Sir, Hon. Minister, that in your speech you referred to the fact that during your brief visit here today that you yourself have observed that tradition is being maintained here, and you Sir, were gracious enough to draw a parallel with this school and that great school of yours, Trinity College, Kandy. In conclusion I take this opportunity once again on behalf of our school to thank The Hon. Minister Mr.Gamini DIssanayake for being with us here today and also to thank all of you for your presence here today. I wish to conclude my vote of thanks wishing the Hon.Minister a very very bright future in this country's affairs and I am sure that all of you who have listened to him today will agree with me that a bright future for him would only mean a bright future for all of us who live in this country.

Thank you.

Vote of Thanks Seconded by Head Prefect Prabath Jayasundera

The Hon. Mr.Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development, Members of the Board of Governors, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen and my fellow Thomians.

It is my proud privilege to second the vote of thanks, so ably proposed by Mr.Dimbulana for the Old Boys' Association. I have the great pleasure in associating myself with all that he said about our Chief Guest. For we are extremely proud to have with us today, as our Headmaster said, one of the greatest sons of Sri Lanka as our Chief Guest. I say this because it seems to us, the youth of Sri Lanka, in this 'International Year of Youth' that as the Minister of Land , Land Development & Mahaweli Development you are building a better world, a better Sri Lanka for you and me. For the entire future of us, the land hungry and the job hungry youth, is tied up with these schemes is entirely in your hands. Only you can fulfill the dreams and ideals of our youth by building the kind of Sri Lanka in which we will have to live 15 years hence. We the youth highly appreciate what you have already achieved by completing a major part of this scheme for our success. Of few ambitious development schemes of a gigantic plan is the answer to the population explosion and the youth unemployment in our country. We hail you Sir as a dynamic worker of the Cabinet, for who else could have completed in 6 years what the planners thought would take 30 years. In addition to all these achievements your love for sports, especially cricket and the great leap that this game has taken, and the international fame we have achieved under your guidance as the President for the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka, has won the admiration of the youth of our country. Your presence with us here today Sir, is a source of great inspiration to all young Thomians. While we honour great National Heroes of the past, we must honour men of our time who have developed the natural resources of our country. Before I conclude I must appeal to the Hon.Minister for a small favour to help us develop and turf our entire playing field so that it would be a centre for the promotion of cricket and all other sports in our school as well as in all the other schools in the Welimada electorate

ESTO PERPETUA.