

R. J. (Bob) Dobbs

12 Hilder Rd.,
The Gap,
Queensland,
AUSTRALIA 4061.

Rt. Rev. Duleep de Chickera,
Bishop of Colombo,
Bishop's House,
No. 370, Bullers Road,
Colombo 7.

Your Lordship, the Bishop of Colombo.

**S. Thomas' College
Gurutalawa**

I have just read a 41 page collection of 'notes' compiled by Mr Lakshman Jayatilleke, my school-mate from S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa, which has been presented to you and is due for discussion. To say the least ... I was astounded, amazed, flabbergasted and angry at what I read. If everything contained in this set of notes is true - and I have no reason whatsoever to disbelieve what my old friend Lakshman has written - the mismanagement of Guru has dropped to such dismal depths that it is going to be one massive, long drawn out task to pull it back from the fathomless morass the school has sunk to. It would be interesting to learn what is contained in that 80-page confidential report. These notes are bad enough, and I dread to imagine what that report contains.

My reaction of amazement, astonishment and anger arise from the fact that such mismanagement, corruption, nepotism, and a sense of apathy have been permitted to continue for so long and to such a degree that the whole school appears to be collapsing, both literally and metaphorically. What on earth has been going on?

Judging from Lakshman's notes, it would appear that the blame needs to be laid fairly and squarely upon the Board of Governors of the College. You yourself, Your Lordship, are only advised by this Board, and obviously appear to have been blissfully unaware of the goings on at ground level at the College. It is so very obvious from the parlous state the College is in that the Board has been ineffective and, indeed, disinterested. They are at the helm of things, and therefore the main reason for this sorry state of affairs. There is only one definite course of action that will have the desired effect – dismiss the whole lot of them from the Board. There is ample reason and background for you to be able to do so. Such action may never have been taken in the past, but there is no reason why it cannot be done now. One only needs to point to the state of affairs the College is in now. Very drastic action is required. A new, well thought out Management Committee can then be instituted to rehabilitate things and bring matters back to some form of sanity.

It is a great pity that the leadership of the OBA, STC Gurutalawa, too appear to have been in a similar state of apathy as the Board of Governors. It is heartening to note that at least at this late hour there is a group of old boys who are actively trying to do something positive to help the College. I sincerely hope that you will take their willingness to assist on board, and implement, as soon as possible, those 89 recommendations at least, contained in pages 29 – 40 of Lakshman's notes. Most of this was the norm at Guru in the good old days, and these measures have proven themselves over the years. It is just so obvious that the College administration needs to get back to these simple rules. There is, of course, much more that needs to be done but these 89 recommendations are certainly good for a start.

You have a tremendous task ahead of you, Your Lordship, the least of which is to see that the College does NOT close down due entirely to very poor and inefficient management over the last few years. It will certainly not be easy, but I am sure the position is still retrievable. I believe it requires an efficient, proven, honest and tough Administrator to work in parallel with

the Head Master to turn things around. The Head Master has enough and more on his plate to retrieve the scholastic, sporting and extra-curricular activities of the students, admit a better quality of student, lift the standard and morale of the teaching staff, and so on. The Administrator needs to take charge of the administration, management, discipline, finances, infrastructure, etc. so that he may concentrate on pulling things back and relieve the Head Master of these onerous duties for the time being. Maybe a 5 year term could be agreed upon for an Administrator, so that these matters may be handed back to the Head Master in due course, once things have been rectified.

I sincerely hope that you will actively back this group of old boys who have become involved, for the sake of re-establishing S. Thomas College, Gurutalawa, to the respected institution in the country that it once was.

Yours sincerely,

R. J. (Bob) Dobbs,
An old boy of the College.

Copies to - The Secretary, Board of Governors, S. Thomas College, Gurutalawa.
The Secretary, Old Boys ASsocation, S. Thomas College, Gurutalawa.