

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING POLICY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Today's grave concern for the problem of youth is of fairly recent origin. Two decades back hardly anybody spoke of it. There was, of course, the problem of adolescence but that was a different animal - it was one of adjustment and transition and was mostly a concern of the psychologist. There was no conflict between the interests of the adolescent and those of the adult; there was no generation gap to worry about. But today it is very different. Right round the world the youth appear to be wanting to tell the adults "You are messing up things, and in consequence we too suffer. For Heaven's sake if you cannot manage the affairs of the country allow us to take over."

What developments of the last two to three decades have brought about these changes? Why are the youth unwilling to integrate themselves into the existing social order and to try to reform it from within? Why are they hostile to the existing order? Or, as one would expect, are both sides to blame? Is adult society unwilling to adjust itself to accommodate the surge of new blood flowing from the democratic revolution and the educational revolution of the post-war years? These are difficult questions to answer. However, in our part of the world we can recognise a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, the young person who obtains a position in government service or in a major private sector institution and, on the other, the young person living with his parents and numerous siblings in humble circumstances with no permanent employment other than to assist the family with subsistence cultivation (if the family has land to cultivate). It is appropriate at this point to touch upon the problems of both these groups of young people although the bulk of this paper will be concerned with the problems of the latter group - those not in 'permanent' employment.

### (a) Problems of young people entering government service or other 'permanent' employment

It is dangerous to draw facile comparisons between one society and another. However, as a first approximation one might say that the problems facing young people engaged in higher studies for the professions or in 'permanent' employment are broadly similar in Asia and in the more 'developed' societies. Young people following intensive courses of academic studies undergo considerable strain, on account of difficulties in their work, fears of failure, financial problems, etc. They may be torn between rebellion against the 'system' and the urge to find a

secure place within it. Their studies cut them off from the community at large, which in their working life they are often paid to serve. This alienation from the bulk of the population is also serious at the personal level in the case of students whose own origins are humble, since they may be torn between loyalty to their traditional culture and adherence to the middle class urbanised values of a university or college. These problems are perhaps especially acute in a 'developing' society but they are to be found throughout the world.

As regards this group of young people who have obtained or are moving towards employment, the problems are thus not too dissimilar from those found in the more 'developed' countries, about which there has been much discussion. There is already a fund of experience to draw upon in respect of different approaches to their needs - recreational, cultural, personal, etc. For this reason the present paper will hereafter leave this group aside. It is indeed important that schemes of voluntary service during college vacations, etc. be devised to help bridge the gap between this privileged group and the community at large, and schemes for voluntary service by employed youth would also be of value. To say nothing more about this topic is emphatically not to deny its importance; however, the problems facing the other group of youth, who constitute the majority, have been less thoroughly analysed, since these problems have only recently come to the fore. To this group we now turn.

(b) Problems of young people remaining in their community of origin, obtaining humble employment or none

Let us now consider the magnitude of the youth problem facing Asia today. In a country as small as Ceylon, with a total population of about 12 million, there are no less than 2.3 million young people in the age-group 14-25. As regards educational status roughly four-fifths of these will have completed several years of schooling; roughly one-half will have completed six to eight years of primary education and about one in three will have completed the junior secondary course leading to the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level). In contrast less than 4 per cent will follow a course at university, technical college or teachers' college, and one might conjecture that a total of 10-15 per cent gain 'permanent' employment in government service or with major private sector employers. What of the rest, especially those with a completed primary or junior secondary education? This question is being asked with increasing urgency, not only in Ceylon but in all parts of Asia and elsewhere.

Two major problem areas may be noted in connection with this group who do not find employment in the 'modern' sector. First, what special schemes might be set up to provide employment suitable for these young people? What are the possibilities of setting them to work, either individually or on a collective basis, on land presently not in use or not used for intensive cultivation? That is, what place should agricultural settlement schemes play in remedying the problems of youth unemployment or underemployment? Or again, what is the case for a Youth Service or Youth Corps of some kind, in which young people undertake development work for a certain number of years? Another alternative would be to build up a programme of employment or supplementary employment for youth residing in their homes. This would have the advantages of maintaining the social structure of the family and of lower costs. Can one bring about social 'change from within' using this approach?

Important questions arise too as regards the aims and objectives of the educational programmes that these young people follow in the schools. Can an educational programme be devised that will avoid the formation of unrealistic aspirations for 'white-collar' work? a programme that will in contrast bring the coming generation to find new forms of productive employment by means of which they may derive personal benefit and furthermore assist in the work of national development? This is a matter to which we are paying a great deal of attention in Ceylon. The traditional school curricula are so much a world apart from the life of the village community, and they are so much imbued with the ethos of 'white-collar' life, that they are dysfunctional for the young people who have to join in the life of the village community when they leave school. These young people have become book-oriented and see the solution to their problems in very theoretical terms; they can be attracted by highly facile solutions to complex social problems, as was attested by the actions of a group of Ceylon youth launching a programme of crime and destruction under the illusion that it was a revolutionary movement. Is it possible to bring about that other kind of revolution, in which education will lead young people to take up work in such fields as horticulture, fishing or small-scale industries, so that they can make a genuinely positive contribution to the national welfare? Educationists must at least take up this challenge and do their best to bring about this latter revolution. There are so many questions but so few answers that one can give with confidence. Some tentative thinking on these matters is the best one can offer and this is what follows.

## II. THE CREATION OF OUTLETS FOR UNEMPLOYED OR UNDER-EMPLOYED YOUTH: SOME ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

### (a) Settlement schemes

Ceylon has seen youth settlement schemes of varying degrees of success, and no doubt the same is true of most countries in Asia. The factors which go to make success or failure would well repay investigation, since these schemes provide a relatively straightforward way of providing employment for young people. The chief disadvantage is the cost per youth placed. This is very high in a country like Ceylon where the uncultivated land lies in the dry zone and can only be brought into use as the major irrigation projects are completed. Moreover, the youth settlement programme has the disadvantage of separating young people from a balanced social group - the family and neighbours, who act to some extent as a stabilising force under normal circumstances, and who can also provide invaluable support in times of personal stress. In view of the high unit costs of the settlement approach and these other difficulties, it would seem that its role in solving the youth problems of Asia is limited. Nevertheless, it would be useful to include some carefully planned employment projects for youth in the settlement programmes associated with new irrigation schemes.

### (b) National Service schemes

The experience of African countries provides a stimulating example here (see 'Youth and Development in Africa', published by the Commonwealth Secretariat, 1970). Yet once again social and financial difficulties arise. Is it wise to separate young people from their home surroundings and bring them together for a full-time programme of National Service? And how many young people could be included in a scheme of this kind, in which full residential costs are incurred? Not very many, in fact, as compared to the magnitude of the youth problem of today. One solution which has been tried in Ceylon is the operation of a National Service scheme in which young people undertake Youth Service work while living in their homes. Projects such as construction of roads, minor irrigation works, reafforestation, etc., were organised by a District Youth Service Panel, with the local Government Agent in the Chair. Each youth was given a National Service Credit Card, which constituted a cumulative record of his work; in addition, he was awarded a cash allowance of three Rupees a day. The

accumulation of credits of National Service would be a pre-requisite for short residential training courses to be organised at a later date for a limited number of youth. This kind of programme has considerable potential as a way of lifting the immediate problems of unemployed youth, but places a severe strain on the cash flow of the Government. The disadvantages are that the young people do not have the opportunity of continuous service - they can work only when the District Council has thought up projects that groups of youth can undertake - and that these projects do not usually provide the kind of training that will help the young people later to take up work on their own account, growing certain new crops or setting up a 'cottage' industry.

It would seem, nevertheless, that a Youth Service scheme based on home residence can play a useful role in national development. The energies of youth can be harnessed to undertake tasks of value to the locality and this will indeed stimulate the people of the locality to think more constructively about what needs to be done. The young people earn an allowance, gain working experience and have the companionship of others of their own age. This type of 'public works' programme can, however, only be justified, under conditions of economic stringency, to the extent that the costs incurred bring economic as well as other benefits. The area in which investment must be mainly concentrated is in the creation of permanent forms of employment for the large number of young people entering the labour force each year. Some suggestions in this respect follow in the next section.

### (c) Home-based production projects

Considerations of cost thus favour the system in which young people continue to reside with their families and perhaps to participate in cultivation of the family paddy land, etc. (if any). The youth employment programme would simply provide new productive avenues which young people might take up over and above the range of economic activities already pursued by the family. Suppose that the family has some uncultivated 'high land' as well as a paddy field. The youth employment programme would provide the seed or cuttings, fertilisers, weedicide, equipment, credit, marketing facilities and training so that this land could be brought into use for the cultivation of chillies or onions (both normally imported by Ceylon using precious foreign exchange) or pineapples, etc. (which could be exported) or for rearing chickens, etc. If the family has no land to spare, land could be made specially available for intensive cultivation by young people, on a rental basis. Alternatively, a fine handicrafts or small-scale production

programme might be set up, so that using simple equipment the young people could produce goods for the domestic or tourist markets or for export. Again the programme would need to be carefully organised in terms of economically viable occupational activities, markets, equipment and materials, training, etc. It has to be admitted that for this programme to succeed there has to be an organisation that will all the while engage in work leading to increased efficiency in the existing occupations or work out new occupational possibilities appropriate for the resources of the community. Such an organisation has been recently set up in Ceylon in the Divisional Development Councils under the Ministry of Employment and Planning. Some further suggestions as regards organisation are given later.

The advantage of this programme is that it builds upon the existing social structure and yet moves forward to meet the needs of the times. It starts from the premise that parents will not deny food and lodging to their children while they are setting up some new productive enterprise on their own account. The costs of the scheme are thus confined to such subsidies on equipment, materials, marketing facilities, etc. as may be deemed appropriate, and the costs of organisation. It would be possible to provide all equipment, etc. on credit but of course there are difficulties in full recovery of loans. As regards organisation, costs might be lowered by using the school system as the centre for a number of the youth employment programmes.

The cost argument therefore favours a youth employment programme designed to establish youth in gainful employment in their own community. As noted earlier, this also avoids various social problems: young men gathered together in isolated communities who may become frustrated with society and with their own personal situation, or the young wife coping with a sick child on a settlement miles away from her own family and friends. The need for young people to have companionship in their work can be met by the organisation of youth co-operatives, etc. in the locality concerned.

The rest of this paper is devoted to a more detailed analysis of the feasibility of this approach. The first point to be considered is the need for a fundamental restructuring of the educational programme, such that young people are prepared, attitudinally and in more specific ways, to undertake productive work on their own account or in youth co-operatives located in their own community. The provision of training, raw materials, equipment, etc. will also present a major organisational challenge. These issues are now considered.

### III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING: THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

We now turn to the matter of education and training, and in particular to the design of education and training for those young people who do not find places at university, technical college or teachers' college, and who do not obtain employment in government service, etc. This group represents the majority of youth in a country like Ceylon. The questions to be considered here are, first, what can be done, in the course of formal schooling, to assist this group of young people to find means of gainful employment? And second, what is the role of training schemes in preparing out-of-school youth for gainful work?

The point of departure for the discussion presented here is the principle, noted earlier, that avenues of productive employment for the majority must be built up in their home locality. This represents a real challenge. Perhaps the locality is one in which there is little economic activity besides shifting cultivation, where water is scarce and electricity non-existent. In this environment, young people with 8, 10 or 12 years of formal education have to be helped to find a way of life that will meet their material needs and that will also not run counter to their aspirations but rather bring them personal fulfilment. This challenge increasingly faces nearly all the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It lies at the heart of the recent tragic occurrences in Ceylon.

Such a major challenge must be confronted in every possible way. In particular it must be confronted in the design of the school curriculum, so that children are as far as possible prepared to see their life-situation in a positive way as the microcosm of a situation which confronts the whole 'developing' world, in which they may help to pioneer a solution. It must be confronted also by the national and local administration, so that young people out of school are provided with the opportunity to undertake productive work, given the necessary training and guidance.

(a) 'Pre-Occupational Studies' for junior  
secondary pupils

It is now widely recognised that existing school curricula are in urgent need of radical revision. Essentially they were designed to prepare the 'few' for clerical and professional work. They comprise compartmentalised, highly academic subject matter



and have thus become obsolete and dysfunctional in an age when the 'many' enrol for formal schooling. The school curriculum still bears little or no relationship to the life of the community from which the pupils are drawn, and to which the majority must now inevitably return. The net effect is often the alienation of the pupil from his environment - the young man with the General Certificate of Education who waits in shirt and trousers 'unemployed' while his father does the heavy work of cultivation. The curriculum has done nothing to show him the desperate economic situation with which the country is faced or the fact that his generation must set to and invent new forms of productive activity, whether through intensive cultivation of cash crops for export or small scale manufacture. Nor has he been introduced to the skills and knowledge that such activities would require.

This problem is at last beginning to receive the attention it deserves. The experiment in Maharashtra, India, described in the volume "Maharashtra Action Research Project in Occupational Education and Training - Report and Papers of the programming workshop held at Poona, September 25-27, 1969 - Institute of Education, Poona, 30", provides some useful food for thought. In Ceylon, a major programme of curriculum redesign has begun to overcome this problem. The aim is to offer all children a common five year programme of elementary education, devoted to the development of the basic skills in language, number, etc. with the maximum of environmental studies and practical creative activities. The next four years will constitute the junior secondary stage, and here major changes are in store. Instead of a highly academic junior secondary programme divided between specialised science and arts streams (science facilities being concentrated mainly in urban areas), there will be a common programme of general education in which all pupils follow courses in the sciences, social studies, etc. These subjects will in future be taught in their specific application to the economic and social problems facing the country, and the occupational profile available in the school community. Biology should lead on to a discussion of how the principles concerned affect the country's major crops, and so on. In addition, a major slice of the curriculum, up to 20% of the time-table, will be devoted to a new subject which we have named 'Pre-Occupational Studies'. For children aged 11 and 12, this will entail the investigation of the wide variety of occupations to be found in the locality. For children aged 13 and 14, it will entail the intensive and systematic study of some of the principal occupations in the neighbourhood concerned. It may be useful here to look a little more closely at the rationale for introducing this programme. First, what are the objectives that one might hope to achieve?

One might begin with the negative goal. The programme should at the very least prevent pupils from thinking that by attending secondary school they can forget about their home environment because they can look forward to escaping from it. They will know the facts about what forms of employment are available, about the number of vacancies arising in different fields, and so forth, since they will have visited different kinds of workplaces and talked over and studied the different occupational areas in situ.

Of course, one aspires also to more positive goals. The objective really sought is to open the pupils' eyes to the opportunities for them to play a vital part in the life of the community, either by taking up and performing with especial efficiency or skill the activities that are already to be found there, or by taking up new activities that will meet a presently unfulfilled demand for goods and services. Children in Ceylon, for example, will become aware of the problems facing the country, that much foreign exchange is spent on the import of food, and that the traditional exports face a declining market, as regards terms of trade. They will learn of the scope for intensive cash crop cultivation in their neighbourhood, and those living in coastal areas will learn about the scope for taking to fishing, perhaps with mechanised boats. Pupils will also learn something of the operation of small scale industries. Further, they will see in practice the support Government provides for new ventures by way of credit, etc. An important element in the philosophy behind the 'Occupational Studies' programme is that there is no question of training each child for some particular skill, such as carpentry. There has been altogether too much of providing courses in elementary carpentry, weaving, etc. to children who have no possibility of taking up such a trade in their locality; moreover, the country may well be adequately supplied with these traditional skills. In Ceylon, carpentry co-operatives cannot find enough work and the handloom industry is being contained at its present size because the market for handwoven sarongs, bed-sheets, saris, etc. is saturated. In any case, even if one knew the skills for which vacancies would arise in each locality one would not know, in a freely operating labour market, which of the children would be entering which occupations - fishing, cultivation, brickmaking, etc. So the strategic advantage lies with introducing all the pupils to a number of occupations relevant to the locality. This has the merit that pupils cannot feel disappointed (and cause difficulties to the Government) if there is no employment available in the field in which they have 'specialised'. It gives the pupils a general background so that

they can take the initiative in introducing new crops and new industries, as is essential if the unemployment crisis facing Asia today is to be resolved. There must, of course, be a Government scheme to support the introduction of these new fields of employment. But, as regards the orientation of the young person to take advantage of these new opportunities, this scheme will do all that the education system can do to help solve the problem. What will be the content of the 'Occupational Studies' course? Here, one can give only a tentative answer. Because of the need to match the subject matter taught to the occupational potential of each area, and because of the need to match the programme to the resource endowments of the school, it seems essential to use a highly decentralised system of curriculum development for this work. It seems wisest to ask interested teachers to develop units for particular occupational areas and, having tried them out, to bring their observations and materials for round-table discussion with Ministry of Education Curriculum Development Officials. In Ceylon, we have reached this stage. Sample teaching units dealing with the topics of fishing, paddy cultivation, the construction of roofs, etc. have been prepared, and volunteer schools are now being asked to try out these ideas and to develop curricular units dealing with other occupational areas. An important feature is that the material is presented in an intellectually challenging manner and not diluted to be cognitively anaemic elementary vocational training. We are beginning with materials for ages 11 and 12, but after a few months' experience with pilot exercises at this level, we shall begin curriculum development work for 13 and 14 year olds. This will require a new type of course, an amalgam of classroom and out-of-school studies, with as much practical work and on-site observation as can be organised, provided that it forms part of a coherent whole. There will have to be a new type of examination also, since 'Occupational Studies' is to be a compulsory examination subject at the school-leaving examination (at age 14); a detailed report of the pupil's investigations of each occupational area will have to be submitted for assessment, to supplement the written examination paper.

It is expected that each pupil will complete a certain workload of study, covering perhaps five to ten occupational areas, during his 13th and 14th years. It will be necessary to give different workload ratings to different areas, as, for example, fishing - a rating of 20, tobacco cultivation - a rating of 4, retail trade - a rating of 6, etc. In this way, each school will be free to use its own human and material resources, and the resources of the farmers and craftsmen in the community around, to give the

pupils the best introduction possible to the opportunities for productive work that they may seek to take up on leaving school. It is hoped that local expertise can be drawn into the scheme through assistance both in the school and in giving instruction to pupils as they visit various work-places. Ideally, the hard and fast barrier between teachers and others should be broken down over the years. We might even visualise a time when the present practice of "once a teacher, always a teacher" ceases to be, and at least a part of the teaching profession is manned by successful 'practitioners' in the different occupations who come in to serve as teachers for a period of time and then return to their jobs. Ideally the school should serve the community as a whole, acting as a centre of innovation and improvement in regard to the different productive activities of the country.

(b) In-service or other training

It is our view that pupils who have completed this course of 'Occupational Studies' will have the appropriate know-how and attitudes such that they will easily be able to learn any new skills required to take up a particular occupation which is being introduced in their district. The essence of the problem is not, in our view, that the Ministry of Education must initiate courses in pineapple cultivation for out-of-school youth. Rather, the education authorities in a certain district must form part of a team with other governmental agencies in that area, to provide pineapple shoots, fertiliser, credit, marketing facilities etc., to specific selected young persons. Given this institutional basis, the Ministry of Education will not find it hard to provide or arrange instruction in pineapple cultivation, nor will the young persons find the course of instruction difficult to follow.

It therefore seems useful to think of vocational education as falling into two main categories. The courses at professional, technician and craft levels, requiring two or more years of full-time study and often leading on to government service, should be confined to a carefully selected few, whose numbers should be determined by the employment opportunities in the 'organised' sector of the economy. The second variety of vocational education should be the short uncertificated course given to the young person in situ when he is prepared and equipped to begin a specific type of occupation in the less organised or 'small-scale' sector. The tutors for these latter courses might be government officers, local expert 'practitioners' of the occupation concerned, school teachers qualified in agriculture, handicrafts, etc., as appropriate. The courses would normally comprise a short spell

of full-time study, for a week or so, followed by part-time studies over the course of several months or a year, guidance being available to the young person as he grows his first crop or begins on some other productive process.

These short courses might be organised by various agencies - a youth agency, the Ministry of Agriculture and of Industries, the Ministry of Education, etc. The choice of agency is not so important, but it is essential that whichever agency bears operational responsibility for training should act in close collaboration with the other interested agencies, both at local and national level.

The possibility that the school might provide the focal centre for such training merits very careful consideration. There are disadvantages - young people may be 'fed up' with school. On the other hand, the widespread facilities provided by the school system, and the fact that the buildings are in use for only a part of the day, argue in favour of the Ministry of Education taking a leading role in the provision of training for out-of-school youth. This Ministry is also well situated to give in-service courses to selected teachers, who could take up training work on a part-time basis in addition to continuing with some conventional teaching work. In this way, a cadre of training officers could readily be made available over wide areas of the countryside. Another point is that the distinction between in-school and out-of-school studies may more easily break down if the school undertakes programmes of both kinds. It may be possible for the school to arrange with the district authorities for a certain number of pupils to take up a particular horticultural activity or small-scale craft and to be provided with the necessary facilities to begin production in a small way, even while still in their last year at school. The teacher or instructor concerned could then continue work with this group of pupils, on a one evening per week or per fortnight basis, until they were fully established in their trade.

It should be emphasised that these programmes for out-of-school youth need not be on the basis that each youth has a single 'occupation'. In the rural areas in particular there is scope for young people to supplement their 'basic' work on the family paddy fields or elsewhere by cultivating several cash crops, raising hens and undertaking some form of craft work as well, if they so wish. In this way the skill content of their work would be raised 'extensively', by undertaking a variety of skilled activities, rather than 'intensively', by merely focusing on one

particular occupational area. Some people may indeed come to see this way of life as intrinsically richer than spending each and every day behind a desk and typewriter. This would be the more so if a scheme of insurance contributions could be devised for them, to give something of the security for which state employment is so highly prized.

#### IV. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS AND PLANNING

Education and training for employment are not in themselves sufficient to resolve the problems of out-of-school youth in Asia. This is something that the educationist must never cease to emphasise. It is arguable that the provision of work-oriented courses and vocational training, though by no means a simple matter, is yet by far and away the most straightforward and easy part of the package of measures required. What is needed is the institutional support that will enable young people to undertake successfully productive work once they have been motivated and prepared for it. Clearly, if this framework of support is lacking for tomorrow's generation, who have been motivated towards productive work of the kind discussed, then their frustration will be even greater than that of today's generation, who have to some extent been alienated from such work by their 'arts' or 'science' curricula.

The possibility of engaging young people in earth-clearing, road-building and related activities through a Youth Service has been discussed earlier. It is not discussed again here since it is only an interim measure. It occupies and helps to train young people and gives them working experience for a short time, but it does not provide them with a source of income on the basis of which they may settle down, get married and raise families. The role of youth settlements was cited also. Here it is indeed possible for the young person to establish himself for his life's work, but unfortunately the number of young people who can be helped in this way is limited. This brings one back to the problem of helping the young people (about 2 million in the case of Ceylon) who are living at home. Some of them will be fully occupied as labourers, etc., or working with a family group. Many will have time on their hands.

The answer proposed here is more intensive use of land e.g. for cash-crop cultivation, more intensive use of the sea to provide fish for home consumption and export, and the introduction of small-scale industries and handicrafts of a kind which do not require a large capital investment. It might be said,

however, that this answer raises more questions than it answers. Some of these questions are now taken up for discussion.

(a) Identification of markets; supply of credit

It might be said that the heart of the youth problem lies in applied economics, in assessing the saleability of the different possible goods and services that young people might produce and in assessing the relative costs and difficulties of producing them. Of course, studies on this kind of topic are to be found in the planning offices of most Asian countries by now, but that has not solved our problems. What is needed is a small group of people, specifically concerned with youth employment, to work all out to draw up schemes of production and marketing for youth. This group will have to work in close co-ordination with the various development Ministries such as Agriculture, Industries, Trade, etc., so that specifications for economically viable units in the different sectors may be planned out and the details of the support needed to make them assimilable by the youth provided.

In Ceylon, the National Youth Council has general responsibility for this work, as for all other youth-related activities. In addition, a group within the Planning and Programming Unit at the Ministry of Education will address themselves to this problem, in connection with the design and implementation of the educational programmes noted earlier.

The question of markets is a key one. In some cases there is an obvious internal market. Ceylon has been importing rice, chillies, onions, dried fish, cotton, silk and other items which could be produced internally. In other spheres, the internal market may perhaps be saturated or nearly so, as in traditional handicraft production, for instance. Another internal market to be explored is the supply of 'services' by groups of trained young people. The question of export markets is also important. Various fruits, cut flowers, handicrafts, etc., could be exported if suitable arrangements were made for marketing and if sufficient supplies of goods were available regularly. How many young girls in Ceylon could be kept occupied supplying embroidered handkerchiefs to a chain store in the West! Those who are working on the side of youth must cut through red tape and get a definite series of orders that could be met by young people's producer co-operatives, spread across the length and breadth of the country.

The same goes for the supply of materials and credit. Youth is impatient and cannot wait. Land, equipment, materials, facilities or whatever is required must be brought within the reach of young people and explained to them. A young man from a poor family, fifty miles from a big town and with no influential connections, cannot be expected to find his way through the bureaucracy and produce and market his ware without adult guidance and some youthful companionship. The fact that Germans will buy cut flowers sent by air is as unrelated to his search for work as the fact that the Americans send men to the moon. Yet he could grow the flowers; he simply needs someone to give him a helping hand with seed or cuttings, general advice, and collection of the produce.

Different organisational solutions will be appropriate in different situations. It seems clear that each district should have a Youth Employment Committee specifically to deal with this problem, on which headmasters, field agents of the different Ministries, etc., would be represented, as well as members of local and national elected bodies. In Ceylon, we are exploring the possibility that the school may provide the centre for these various supporting activities. Seed and cuttings, equipment and raw materials might be brought there and the procedures for using them explained as part of a school course for 14 year olds and/or out-of-school evening course (not necessarily given by a teacher, though organised by the school staff). The school might also serve as a collection centre for produce to be sent to market.

These suggestions are radical in the context of Asian society, but then the situation facing young people in Asia is so difficult that nothing short of radical change can possibly ameliorate their problems.

(b) The training of Youth Production Officers

It is reasonable to assume that the success of in-school or out-of-school programmes designed to lead to self-employment or small group employment of youth will be increased several fold if the youth are within reach of a full-time, or at least part-time, Youth Production Officer. It would be the responsibility of this officer to co-ordinate plans for new types of production and to arrange the selection of participants, the supply of materials, equipment, etc. and the facilities for marketing. As the years pass he will have to service an increasing number of youth but the longer established groups of youth will, of course, require less attention. This officer will co-ordinate the initial training



with the dates of arrival of the where-withal for beginning the venture, and will ensure that supplementary training, e.g. on the cure of various crop diseases or the use of a new variety, is made available when required. He would also be available to counsel youth if they wished to embark upon cultural or social service activities as well as production of goods for sale and home consumption.

How will these Youth Officers be trained? There are very few trained social workers or youth workers in Ceylon, a situation we plan to remedy through staff training courses as a matter of urgency. Meanwhile, the possibility exists of allowing interested teachers to undergo an intensive course in Youth Production Work. The administrative framework of the Ministry of Education would be used for this purpose, and there would be the further advantage that these teachers might split their time between organising or co-ordinating the 'Occupational Studies' courses of a secondary school and the uncertificated vocational training courses required as an integral part of youth employment schemes. As noted earlier, this would assist in the break-down of the artificial barrier that now exists between the school and the community of which it is part.

#### (c) Organisational framework

As noted earlier, organisational arrangements must suit the national situation, but one aspect is vital- inter-agency co-operation and collaboration. The present situation, where the school-leaver is 'dropped' from the 'modern' environment of the school, where he is kept busy five days a week or more and is expected to fend for himself as regards taking up new kinds of employment not yet introduced in the locality, is quite obviously hopeless. Strong institutional support is required at this stage most of all. It is quite likely that Youth Employment Officers attached to the schools may provide a way of resolving this problem, if they are supported by an inter-agency committee determined to find markets for the goods and services that young people might produce. Whether overall administrative authority rests with the Ministry of Education, a National Youth Service or other agency is a matter to which one need not perhaps attach too much importance.

### V. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The foregoing analysis focuses on two principal difficulties which beset any attempt to resolve the problems

confronting Asian youth. It may be difficult to motivate young men and women to undertake productive work with their hands after completing eight or more years of formal education, but this motivation can surely be attained if the market for their production is assured. Secondly, the success of a youth employment programme will depend also on the vigour and skill which the cadre of Youth Production Officers can bring to their work. Yet facilities for training youth workers are limited by a lack of well qualified staff. These problems provide scope for international co-operation on a considerable scale.

First, the question of markets. The more that the more 'developed' countries of the Commonwealth or of the world at large can assist the less 'developed' countries in selling their produce for export, the more the problems of the less 'developed' countries become manageable instead of well nigh insoluble. It is difficult for a country with a massive balance of payments deficit to organise a round-the-world marketing drive, even where export markets are not limited by quota restrictions in the more 'developed' countries. The difficulty is especially acute in the case of smaller countries such as Ceylon. The possibility arises that co-operative arrangements might be reached in this respect. Would there be a place for a Commonwealth Marketing Scheme for Youth Produce from the less 'developed' countries of the Commonwealth?

The second area of co-operation would be through the training of youth workers to play a role similar to that described above as that of the Youth Production Officer. Possibly there is scope for sending persons selected for this work to follow youth leadership or social work courses in other countries. It is clear, however, that the type of youth work that cries out to be done in Asia is very different from the youth work required in the West. The possibility might therefore be explored of setting up a Commonwealth action research cum training course in Youth Production Work in a less 'developed' country, and bringing together a group of tutorial staff drawn both from the more and the less affluent societies. Such a course might cover the basic principles of group work - ideas of non-directive counselling and so forth - while at the same time the concrete problems of organising training and employment for out-of-school youth in a developing country might be studied on a project basis.

We in Ceylon must attempt to resolve both these problems - of marketing and of training - in a small way. We should be most interested to learn of relevant experience in other countries

and most appreciative of assistance that other countries may be able to provide. We should be willing to assist in the planning of a programme in this sphere and could provide facilities for getting it under way, if desired.

To conclude: the dimensions of the youth problem in Asia are almost beyond comprehension, with millions of young people, over a million even in a country as small as Ceylon, looking for means of gainful employment and finding none. Desperate situations demand radical remedies, and one may doubt whether even the structure put forward in this paper would prove adequate. One must at least try to take some steps in the direction indicated. In the resolution of the problems involved there will be much that each country can learn from the experience of others. This Conference is therefore most welcome, as it provides a forum in which our problems may be seen in a wider perspective and in which we may learn from one another's experience.