

# General Election in Ceylon

THE General Election in Ceylon which was held in April 1956 resulted in the overwhelming defeat of the United National Party (U.N.P.), under the leadership of Sir John Kotelawala, by the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (Popular United Front—M.E.P.) under the leadership of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. The victorious M.E.P. is a coalition composed of four groups: (1) The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (S.L.F.P.), Mr. Bandaranaike's own party; (2) the Sinhala Basha Peramuna (Sinhalese Language Front—S.B.P.), conservative Buddhist nationalists; (3) the Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samajists Party (V.L.S.S.P.), Sinhalese extreme Trotskyites; and (4) Independents, a group of very conservative Sinhalese Buddhists. The new M.E.P. Cabinet contains eleven members of the S.L.F.P., two V.L.S.S.P. and one Independent.

Second to the M.E.P. coalition in the number of seats won was the Nava Lanka Sama Samajist Party (N.L.S.S.P.) a group of moderate Trotskyites under the leadership of Dr. N. M. Perera, who has now become Leader of the Opposition.

## Voting

The following table shows the extent of the landslide and indicates the probable composition of the new House of Representatives (the figures are unofficial).

Party	Votes	Seats Gained	Seats Lost	Seats Retained	Total Seats
M.E.P. coalition .....	1,046,362	40	—	11	51
(Bandaranaike)					
N.L.S.S.P. ....	247,204	9	—	5	14
Federalists .....	142,036	6	—	4	10
U.N.P. ....	738,551	—	52	8	8
(Kotelawala)					
Communists .....	119,715	1	—	2	3
T.R.F. ....	6,853	1	—	—	1
Tamil Congress .....	8,914	—	—	1	1
Others .....	304,189	4	5	4	8

The Federalists, the T.R.F. (Tamil Resistance Front) and Tamil Congress are all Tamil speaking groups, advocating equal official standing for their language along with Sinhalese. The M.E.P. and the U.N.P., on the other hand, want Sinhalese to be the sole official language. The N.L.S.S.P. sides with the Tamil parties on this important issue.

The pre-election manifesto of the victorious M.E.P. coalition called for:

- (1) Establishment of a republic;
- (2) Definition of "democratic and economic rights";