

SRI LANKA

Stamp

Bulletin No. 85

Commemorative Issue

THE LATE

Mr. GEORGE E. De SILVA



1980. 06. 08

**Philatelic Bureau
Posts & Telecommunications Department
Ceylinco House
Colombo 1**

STAMP BULLETIN No. 85

Ministry of Posts and
Telecommunications,
Lotus Road,
Colombo 1.
Sri Lanka.
8th June, 1980.

A commemorative stamp in the denomination of Rs. 1.60 will be issued to-day by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in honour of the Late Mr. George E. De Silva.

Mr. George Edmund De Silva, was born on 8th June 1879, and educated at Nuwara-Eliya. An Anglican priest taught him to read and write English. Later he took up residence in Hulftsdorp to become a Lawyer. In Hulftsdorp he entered into the vigorous intellectual and Political life of the turn of the century. He debated politics with the men who were to become famous throughout the century. He was to return to these circles while fighting his titanic battles in the Central Province, both to join A. E. Goonasinghe in the Labour Party, and later, as an all island figure to be President of the National Congress with J. R. Jayewardene, and S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike as joint Secretaries. In 1921 and 1925 he contested and won the Central Province Rural Seat in the Legislative Council. He served the Kandy Town as an elected Member of the Municipal Council for

over 20 years and was responsible for Municipal Reforms and the introduction of the River Pumping Scheme to solve Kandy's pressing water problem.

His greatest work however was for the Kandyan Sinhalese oppressed by feudalism. History had to wait till George E. De Silva came to Kandy in 1907 for Colebrooke's abolition of feudalism to become a reality for the Kandyan masses. It was in the political field we saw George E. De Silva, in his stature as a national leader. The growth of national consciousness that followed the riots of 1915 saw him in the vanguard of the movement for political reform.

An outstanding contribution of George E. De Silva, towards the Political development of this Island was his persistent efforts to secure universal franchise. In spite of vehement opposition he urged this demand before the Donoughmore Commission and even proceeded to England to pursue the agitation along with his wife, the Late Mrs. George E. De Silva, who took a prominent part in securing the franchise for the women in this country. His mission ultimately succeeded and the grant of universal franchise was no doubt a great forward step in our advancement as a free people. He was the path-finder of the common man and an architect of a new social order based on Man's humanity to Man.

In 1918 when the Ceylon National Congress was formed to secure for us a free and Independent Lanka, George E. De Silva was one of its pioneer

members. He was elected President on four occasions and it was under his leadership that the Congress accepted both the Donoughmore and Soulbury Constitutions in the years 1930 and 1946 respectively.

In 1942 he was elected Minister of Health and in-charge of this portfolio he rendered invaluable service effecting a radical reform in the Health, Medical and Sanitary services of the island. He inaugurated the scheme of Training Nurses in Sinhala and Tamil. These Nurses were recruited from village schools. From the Delft Island in the North to Dondra in the South, in the fever stricken jungles of the Dry Zone he provided Rural Hospitals and Maternity Homes, Maternity Clinics and Child Welfare Centres. Most of these were philanthropic endowements.

It was consequent to a motion of his that the King's Palace at Kandy ceased to be occupied by colonial bureaucrats and became a National Museum.

The shifting of the University site to Peradeniya with its unique scenic setting was the result of his agitation.

The Bank of Ceylon owes its genesis to George E. De Silva. As a result of a motion introduced by him in the State Council a Commission was appointed. One of the benefits that accrued to the people of this country from this commission was the founding of the Bank of Ceylon.

Finally as a preliminary to the grant of Independence when the United National Party was formed by the Late Mr. D. S. Senanayake, George E. De Silva, was one of his most trusted colleagues and Minister in the first Cabinet of free Lanka.

He passed away on 12.03.1950, leaving the memory of a national leader who dedicated his life to the welfare of the people as a moral duty.

Technical Details

<i>Date of Issue</i>	: 1980.06.08
<i>Denomination</i>	: Rs. 1.60
<i>Colours</i>	: Black, Bluish-Grey, Bluish Red, Flash Colour. Brown, Green, Yellow.
<i>Designer</i>	: A. Rasiah
<i>Format</i>	: Vertical
<i>Size</i>	: 29X36 mm.
<i>Printing Process</i>	: Offset
<i>Sheet Composition</i>	: 100 stamps per sheet
<i>Printers</i>	: Veb Wertpapierdruckerei of G.D.R.
<i>Paper and Gum</i>	: Glossy Chrome stamp paper without water- mark with Synthetic gum.

Official First Day Covers

The Philatelic Bureau will provide a specially designed First Day Cover and a First Day of Issue Postmark.

Terms of Sale

Overseas orders for supply of the new stamp and First Day Covers should be addressed with full particulars to the Director, Philatelic Bureau, 4th Floor, Ceylinco House, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka, and should be accompanied by Mail Transfer International Money Order, British Postal Order or Bank Draft drawn on the Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, or any other Bank in Sri Lanka, payable to the Director, Philatelic Bureau. Uncertified Personal cheques are not acceptable. Telephone : 25588, 26163, 26177.

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