

Rampala of CGR remembered

The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka (IESL) is planning to commemorate Sri Lanka's legendary General Manager of Railway, late Engineer B. D. Rampala. The 2008 B. D. Rampala Memorial Lecture is to be delivered by Eng. (Dr.) P. Ramachandran of the University of Moratuwa on the 17th of November at 5.15 p.m. at the IESL Auditorium at 120/15, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7.

The lecture entitled "Significance of Railway Transportation in Supply Chain Management".

The CGR, was established to cater for the needs of the economy that era. All vital positions at CGR were held by Europeans for almost a century. Engineer B. D. Rampala who joined the CGR after completing his engineering education, recorded a first by becoming the first Chief Mechanical Engineer in 1949.

Culminating his career at CGR, Eng. B. D. Rampala was elevated to the

position of General Manager of Railway (GMR) in 1955, the position he held until 1970. The history of the CGR notes him not only as the longest serving General Manager of Railway, but



also as a GMR who introduced many revolutionary changes and innovations that enhanced the image and turnover of the CGR while providing a better service to the public.

The enhancements made during the "Rampala Era" made his name synony-

mous with the railway. Long distance express train services such as Yaldevi, Udarata Menike and Ruhunu Kumari which were introduced in mid 50s and proved extreme success in terms of

revenue and service have been his brain children. In 1960s, he took the initiative to dieselize the entire fleet of steam engines that were becoming obsolete and inefficient. The whole operation was carried out successfully under his skilful guidance improving the train service to a great extent.

The centralized traffic control system for the suburban service was also among many modernizations introduced by Eng. B. D. Ramapala as the GMR.

It is said that he was dubbed as the 'Cleverest Engineer East of Suez' after correcting a technical defect in hydraulic transmission of a batch of locomotives imported to the country when the experts from the manufacturing company failed to find a solution.

Being a good engineer did not stop him being a good manager. He had been a good manager and a strict disciplinarian. Anecdotes of this engineering colossus are still doing the rounds in workshops as well as offices of CGR.

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ISL and PA

24/11/08 Remembering B.D. Rampala

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