

EDITORIAL COMMENT

A Place for Science and Technology

It is heartening and encouraging to note that Science and Technology have at last been given their due place by the Head of the State, with the setting up directly under His Excellency the President himself, of an Advisory Council of Scientists and Technologists. In this connection we are deeply grateful to our Sister Association, the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science of which a number of our own members hold membership for so patiently and consistently pursuing action over the years on the objectives for a National Science and Technology Policy for Sri Lanka laid down by His Excellency the President as early as 1978 at the Annual Sessions of that Association.

This newly formed Advisory Council is expected to set priorities for all development programmes involving science and technology, and to provide the scientific and technological thinking to Government Planning. It is hoped that the Presidential Advisory Council (PAC) whilst having direct access to the Executive President himself, will be able to tender balanced, independent scientific and technological advice, without fear or favour. The PAC should ensure that its members, drawn from the local scientific and technological community, who have to implement government decisions, will thus have a sense of satisfaction of having participated in decision making. This would be a policy most appropriate to a democratic country like Sri Lanka. Government's recognition of the creative ability of the scientist and the technologist, and the setting up of a congenial environment for his work, should deter scientists and technologists from going for greener pastures abroad. If incentives such as higher salaries, better working conditions, special allowances, merit awards, housing and transport facilities, etc., be provided for those who remain behind in the service of their motherland, it should be possible to retain the cream of the professionals concerned within the country. This would be vital not only for the development of Sri Lanka, but also for the establishment of a sound economic foundation.

Members will be happy to know that the Development Committee and the Council of the Institution are actively pursuing the question of adequate representation of engineers in the PAC to provide the necessary input into the decision-making process. We trust our efforts would be fruitful and that there will be contentment amongst the membership in this regard in the near future.

Editor