

## DEATH OF PRIME MINISTER OF CEYLON

Tributes in the House of Representatives by the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies and the Leader of the Opposition, the Rt. Hon. H.V. Evatt

Mr. Speaker, before the business of the House begins I wish to refer very briefly to the tragic loss that has been suffered by our sister member of the Commonwealth, Ceylon, by the assassination of her Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike. I knew him, of course, very well. At an earlier date I knew his distinguished predecessor, Don Stephen Senanayake, who was accidentally killed. Now this horrible event has occurred. I took steps at once to send expressions of sympathy from the Australian Government and from this Parliament, but I am perfectly certain that the House would like me to associate it with an expression, not only of horror at this crime, but also of the profoundest sympathy with the people and the Government of Ceylon.

It is unfortunately true that in the early days of independence some turbulence manifests itself. We have had this tragic event in Ceylon and on an earlier occasion, in Pakistan, when that very great man, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated. Of course, it is a particularly severe blow for Ceylon to have lost, by sudden death, two of her Prime Ministers in the very brief history of her independence. The existence of turbulence, danger and disorder is, I believe, something that we always must bear in mind when we consider the history of these new and independent countries. It emphasises the fact that we must have a great deal of sympathy for them and show a great deal of understanding. On this occasion, our sympathy goes out very strongly to the family of Mr. Bandaranaike and to the people of Ceylon.

This was a tragic event. One can only hope that it will not leave too deep a mark on the future history of a country with which we are so closely linked, and with which we have always enjoyed the most friendly associations.

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Dr. Evatt:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a word or two in support of the Prime Minister. Ceylon is a nation that is very close to Australia. Our friendly relationships with Ceylon were confirmed during the war. This tragic event must arouse our sympathy for the people of Ceylon.

I think that everybody must have been struck with the heroic qualities that were displayed by Mr. Bandaranaike in speaking to the people of Ceylon from the operating room, and even urging that some patience be shown with the alleged assassin. It appears also that he defended his wife against assassination.

As the Prime Minister has pointed out, in three nations, all previously British colonies and now belonging to the British Commonwealth of Nations, such sad events have occurred. There has been the assassination of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, of the Prime Minister of Ceylon, and of that very great and extraordinary man, Mahatma Gandhi, during the critical period of the history of India and Pakistan. The road to democracy is sometimes strewn with great difficulties and our best course is to give our sympathy and understanding to these people and their leaders. I entirely join in the message proposed by the Prime Minister.

Canberra,  
29th September, 1959