

## OBITUARY—DR. U. B. M. EKANAYAKE



The death of Dr. U. B. M. Ekanayake, Crop Protection Officer, Coconut Research Institute, occurred under tragic circumstances on 71-8-15. He was a young and promising Scientist, whose untimely death at the age of 32 is an irreparable loss not only to the Coconut Research Institute but also the Coconut Industry and the country at large.

It was only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years ago that Dr. Ekanayake returned to the CRI from Oxford after a successful academic career leading to the D.Phil. degree in Entomology. During his short period of service, the Crop Protection Division was reorganised and developed by him

to a high degree of efficiency so that it could function effectively in the control of a variety of pests and diseases that are causing damage to the coconut industry in this country.

Shortly before his death, Dr. Ekanayake, after months of hard and relentless work, finalized a programme for the control of a new pest of coconut—*Promecotheca cumingi*—that is ravaging coconut plantations in the Dehiwela-Mount Lavinia-Nugegoda area. He was collecting material for a bibliography on coconut pests and diseases, was preparing an ecological map of Ceylon, and was working on several other projects, some of which if completed would have been a lasting contribution to scientific work in this country. His untimely death has unfortunately deprived the country of the benefits of his work.

Dr. Ekanayake was a visiting lecturer at the Vidyodaya University and was a member of Ceylon Metrication Board. His interests however were not confined to scientific disciplines. He was a well read and a well informed person who took a keen and active interest in the humanities and fine arts. Painting and sculpture were his hobbies.

Dr. Ekanayake had a pleasing personality and was very popular among all sections of staff at the C.R.I.

His death leaves a void that is difficult to be filled.

A. K. GUNAPALA.