

first enters the lobby which gives an introduction of the arrival of the Dutch to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) then steps into the passage where he will first see the original painting of a VOC fleet of ships loaded with merchandise, which was donated to this museum at its opening ceremony by the Director of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. Then the typical Dutch brass chandelier with eighteen light points hanging in the passage. The next room gives the details of the socio-economic and cultural background of the Kandyan Kingdom during the Dutch Period. Then the "Dutch Room" full of important objects belonging to the period of the Dutch East India Company Administration. Further there is a model living room, a bed room and a dining room with exquisite antique Dutch furniture. The Archives room gives the history of the Dutch period in Sri Lanka with a number of photographic reproductions of documents. Religious artifacts are exhibited in the room before the last, the last being, appropriately enough, the "Hall of Death", exhibiting the Dutch tombstones and inscriptions.

The museum located in the busiest part of the city (95, Prince Street, Pettah) and therefore one would find it difficult to approach the building by vehicle during peak-hours of the day, 7.30-5.30 p.m. It is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except on Fridays, Saturdays and Public holidays. Entrance fee is Rs. 20/= per head. Visitors could get more information from the Netherlands Alumni Association office which is also located in the same building.

K.D. Paranavitana,
Sri Lanka.

LETTERS FROM READERS

A LETTER FROM THE U.S.A.

August 26, 1982.

I enclose our present statement defining the tropical forest history project. Would you want to print that? It might be one way of identifying others who are working on

related issues. I am hoping to produce a conference along those lines in 1984 somewhere in Europe.

The conference would bring together the forestry studies with strong representation of university people. Meanwhile, in 1983 we will be holding two other seminars which will touch on these issues. First is the conference on Forest Use and the World Economy which John Richards and I will chair at Duke next April 14-16. Second is a seminar on the history of Latin American forest exploitation, which I am organizing for the October 18-20 meetings of the Society of American Foresters, in Portland, Oregon. I feel that this, too, shows the importance of encouraging related work in Europe on the history of Third World natural resources exploitation.

Could you ask *Itinerario* readers to send me any thoughts they may have about all this? From now until February 6 I shall be at: A.I.I.S., D-176 Defence Colony, New Delhi 110024, India. Then after three weeks in England on my way home, I can be reached at: Department of History, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan 48063, U.S.A.

Best regards,

Richard Tucker,
Professor of History
and Environmental Studies

We are most happy to print Professor Tucker's statement - and here it is:

Research Project on the History of Tropical Forests

Under the auspices of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, a project on the history of human exploitation of tropical forests was established in September, 1981. Its purpose is to encourage research and publication on the history of forest utilization and deforestation in tropical regions, as well as on the political, economic and sociological context of forest use. The project will develop a network of forestry specialists and university researchers in the social and natural sciences whose work addresses the historical background of tropical forest use.

The project addresses several broad subject areas. One is

the historical development of tropical forestry management, including changes in timber technology, the purposes of forestry management, the character of decision-makers including forestry officials and timber merchants, legal aspects of foresters' authority and governments' power to regulate timber harvests, and forestry's relations to other natural resource management systems such as soil and water, pasture lands and commodity cropping.

A second subject area concerns the political and economic contexts of forestry use in the tropics, including the full historical span of forest use: pre-European, colonial and post-colonial eras. The study of economic systems will encompass the impact of market economies associated with taxation systems and cash cropping, regional and international commodity markets, the timber trade and its capitalization, the composition of the labor force, and related pressures arising from urbanization and population growth. A special concern is the relationship between forest use and the socio-economic structure of local communities, both subsistence systems in pre-market economies and rural populations under the impact of modern capital.

Finally, these human factors are to be related to long-run changes in the patterns of forest cover and the ecology of forested land. The project will attempt to contribute to the discussion of issues such as changing global biomass and trends in atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations.

Chairman of the group is Richard Tucker, Professor of History and Environmental Studies, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan 48063, U.S.A. The project is organizing a series of conferences and seminars on various dimensions of tropical forest history. We invite inquiries, suggestions or participation from all interested professionals.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE

We are happy to announce that three members of the Centre recently have published theses that are of direct or indirect interest to *Itinerario's* readership. In the case of Lequin's thesis, the editors were able to lay hold of Prof.