

Minister pays visit to veddah village. (1951, December 13 ). Times.

# MINISTER PAYS VISIT TO VEDDAH VILLAGE

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## Possible help promised

A REQUEST made by veddahs to meet Sir John Kotelawala, Minister of Transport and Works was turned down by the chairman of the Bintenne Village Committee so the Minister went by jeep through dense jungle and met the veddahs at their settlement in Pollebadde.

The veddahs told Sir John of their hardships and Sir John promised to place their grievances before the Ministers concerned.

Meanwhile he instructed the A.G.A. Batticaloa to give them all possible help.

Sir John then inspected the Nilobe bridge on the Mahaoya-Inginiyegala road and he opened a village committee office at Mahaoya.

At Mahaoya Mr. J. C. Appuhamy, Chairman Village Committee detailed the needs of the village and stressed the need for schools and roads to connect several outlying villages.

The Minister assured the gathering that his Government was interested in their welfare and was prepared to grant them all reasonable help towards their progress.

He stressed the need for co-operation and he said as that was a predominantly a Sinhalese area they should not run away with the idea that Sri Lanka belonged entirely to them. Tamils, Burghers and Muslims had as much a right to consider Ceylon as their motherland as the Sinhalese had, he added.

Later the Minister laid the foundation stone for the Bintenne south Village Committee building at Serankada. Sir John also opened a telegraph service to Padiatalawa post office, after which, he inspected the site for a 32-mile road from Serankada to Polonnaruwa.

On his return journey he inspected the Kalladi water supply site and the housing scheme and the railway station, Batticaloa together with Mr. M. Kanagasabay General Manager Railway.

The Minister ended a busy two-day programme with the laying of the foundation stone for the central school at Kattankudy.

Earlier Sir John held a conference at the Kachcheri where he addressed the officers of the various departments on the Colombo Exhibition and detailed arrangements made for the people from distant rural areas to attend the exhibition.