

A study on the Sri Lankan locomotive history revealed from "Yakada Yaka"

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Abstract

In 1864, rail was introduced to Sri Lanka by the British administration as a mode of transportation to distribute coffee from the hill country to the colonial capital, Colombo. Later, even when the tea plantation transcended the coffee plantation, railways were much needed to transport labour, machinery, food to Kandyan highlands. Moreover, even as a support for the development of the coconut and rubber, railways were expanded. Later, railways became an affordable mode of transportation for the general public to travel across the country. Back then during the British rule, Sri Lanka Railways today was known to be the "Ceylon Government Railway (CGR)". The higher officials were indeed Englishmen whereas the drivers were mainly the Burghers. However, Tamil, Malay and Sinhalese minorities were involved in the railway service as well. In this study, the fictional works of "*Yakada Yaka*": *The continuing Saga of Sonnaboy Von Bloss and the Burgher railwaymen* written by Carl Muller will be analyzed based on the historical and the chronological information the book presents. This information will be cross-checked alongside the secondary sources on locomotive and railway history to ensure the reliability of the study. As for the findings from the fiction, the railway engines that ran to distant destinations have had the names of English governors. i.e. Sir Andrew Mackenzie race upcountry. (Muller, 1994) In addition, the locomotive engines had been numbered according to the arrangement of wheels under the locomotive and tender. Apart from these facts, the lifestyle of Burgher railway men, their habits, problems they faced during work, court cases regarding the railways which are vividly portrayed in the book will be analyzed in this study.

Key Words: *Ceylon Government Railway, Locomotive History, Burgher railway men, British Period*

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