

Sir John says: "respect other creeds" . (1952, January 26 ). Times.

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## WARNING AGAINST COMMUNALISM

TIMES 1/2/52 KURUNEGALA, Thursday.

"THERE is quite a lot of talk about religion nowadays. I for one respect all religions. It is true that Buddhism is embraced by the larger majority in this country, but that does not mean that we should object to other religions", declared Sir John Kotelawala, presiding at the fifth anniversary celebrations of the Guru-Mada Rural Welfare Society, in the Dodangaslande electorate.

Continuing Sir John said that unlike in certain other countries all communities here—Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burghers and Malays—lived peacefully. The communal cry should never be raised. One great privilege the country gave was the freedom of speech. The Government was elected by the people and it was the duty of every citizen to use his vote properly.

About 20 years ago the average age of the people in this country was 27 years, but today it had risen to 40 years. This clearly indicated that the health of the country had improved. The medical department should be complimented for this. In England the average age was 70 years. He hoped that in the near future the average age of this country would be at least 60.

It would be interesting to note, said Sir John in conclusion, that out of every three mouthfuls of food taken by each individual two were from foreign countries. It was owing to the food situation that Government embarked on the Gal Oya Scheme and other big agricultural undertakings.

He congratulated the society on its excellent work.

Among the other speakers were Mr. D. B. Welagedera, Mr. R. B. Malmiwala, Mr. A. M. Bazzir, the Rev. N. M. Moulana Saheeb and Mr. P. M. Haniffa.

