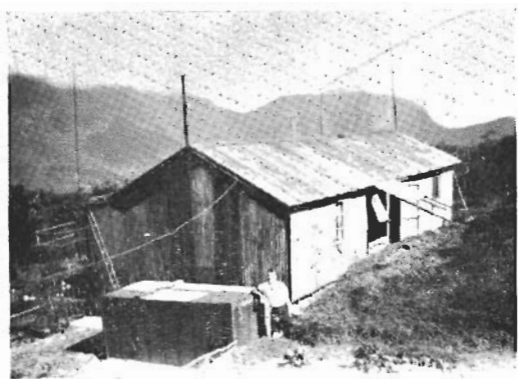


RANGALA WIRELESS STATION

CEYLON'S EAST-WEST V.H.F. LINK



The many Sparkers and Buntings, who have worked the T.P.s' between Trincomalee and Ceylon West, may be interested to know that, after nine years, Rangala Wireless Station has closed down. Its place has been taken by a new station at Lagalla fitted with latest type automatic Marconi 48 channel equipment, 10 channels for telephones and the remainder for teleprinters.

This station acted as a V.H.F. link for T.P.'s between Trinco and Ceylon West Receiving Station. It was situated on the Central group of mountains, and on a particular range, called "The Knuckles", at a height of 5,600 feet, 26 miles from Kandy. The distances from the station to Trinco and Ceylon West are 85 miles and 63 miles respectively.

The first equipment used were R.A.F. T1131 transmitters and P38 receivers, the transmitters being later changed to Type 87's. These transmitters have been almost continuously in operation since being installed five years ago. The aerials for this set up were horizontal Rhombics. Used as a radio phone between either Trinco or Ceylon West, results were generally very good.

Power was supplied by two 15 KVA Lister Diesel generators with a small Coventry Cub generator (5.6 KVA) as a standby.

The station was situated in the jungle, about two miles from the nearest road, and all stores and diesel fuel had to be carried by elephant or estate labourers over the last part of the journey. The fuel was carried in five gallon drums on the heads of the labourers.

The staff comprised two telegraphists, one cook and a diesel mechanic, with two labourers for keeping the camp site clean and generally doing the heavy work. The accommodation consisted of a bed-sitting room for the telegraphists, and another room at the opposite end of the shack for the Asians (cook and diesel mechanic). The middle room of the shack was used for the radio gear. It was an "all electric" home with electric cooker, refrigerator and fires. (The average temperature being 55 degs. to 65 degs.)

Except for the times when the monsoons changed, the station was practically always obscured in cloud and the rainfall was very high.

The actual closing down was quite a strain, due to language difficulty and to the number of labourers, who milled around looking for stores to be carried

to the roadside, and seeing what they could take for themselves. The cost of closing the Station was 3,712 Rupees. (£278 10s.).

It took 20 days to close the station, and 53 labourers were employed. They carried loads ranging from 20 to 200 lbs., and were paid 2 rupees for every 50 lbs. Six 5-ton trucks were used to transport the stores from the roadside to Trincomalee. Elephants were also used and these carried approximately a ton each trip.