

The Ceylon Survey Department

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Surveyor General

(A brief account of the Ceylon Survey Department, covering the period 1906-1931, contributed by Mr. A. H. G. Dawson, late Surveyor General appears in the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary edition of the Transactions for 1931).

The progress made by the Survey Department during the past fifty years is shown in the maps and bar charts appended hereto under the following categories :—

- (a) Engineering Surveys ;
- (b) Block Surveys ;
- (c) Sporadic Surveys ;
- (d) Air Surveys.

Explanatory notes under each category are given below : -

(a) ENGINEERING SURVEYS

These three-dimensional surveys for planning land development under major irrigation schemes and village tanks were started in 1932 and were carried out progressively except during the war period. With a modest progress of 2,240 acres in the first year, the peak was reached in 1951 with a progress of 239,922 acres.

The bar chart shows the annual progress up to the end of this year and the map attached to it shows the location, name and the extent of the major surveys.

The total extent dealt with up to the end of this year is 2,164,446 acres.

(b) BLOCK SURVEYS

The above surveys were started with a view primarily for the settlement of claims and determination of the area of land which is absolutely the property of the Crown.

These surveys were started in 1897 for the implementation of the Waste Lands Ordinance, No. 1 of 1897. From 1898 to 1905 block surveys were carried out and the plans were produced on the scale of 8 chains to an inch.

Since 1905 considerable technical improvements were made and plans were drawn on a larger scale—viz. 4 chains to an inch. By the end of 1908—2,133,215 acres of block surveys were completed. In 1910 under the Crown Landmarks Ordinance, No. 7 of 1909, further improvements on the surveys were made by definition of all Crown boundaries with landmarks.

These surveys formed a major activity of the Department up to 1931, when they were progressively reduced in order to release staff for engineering surveys and as settlements of villages already surveyed were awaiting settlement. There was a cessation of this type of survey during a part of the second war period. From 1953 activity in this class of surveys was revived beginning with 53,100 acres during the first year and reaching 139,000 acres in 1955.

The bar chart shows the annual progress, and the map attached to it shows the location of the areas surveyed from 1905 to 1955. The total extent so far block surveyed being 5,322,139 acres.

(c) SPORADIC SURVEYS

These surveys comprise several scattered work. Some of the more important items are blocking out surveys, town surveys, acquisition surveys and contour surveys under village tanks. They are distributed over the Island and their extents vary from a few acres to several hundred acres per project.

The bar chart shows the annual progress.

The total extent surveyed for the period 1905-1955 is 2,109,833 acres.

(d) AIR SURVEYS

Air survey is a recent activity of the Department and was started for trial and investigation in 1952. Air surveys can be used with advantage for small and medium scale mapping and air photographs for regional town planning, and for investigations with regard to forestry, geology and soil conservation. For experimental purposes a few pilot projects, some at Government expense and others under the Colombo Plan Scheme, were carried out and as a result, an application has been made for the establishment of a complete Air Survey Branch in this Department.

A map showing the location of the areas photographed so far is attached. The total extent of the coverage is 2,133,150 acres.

SURVEY DEPARTMENT

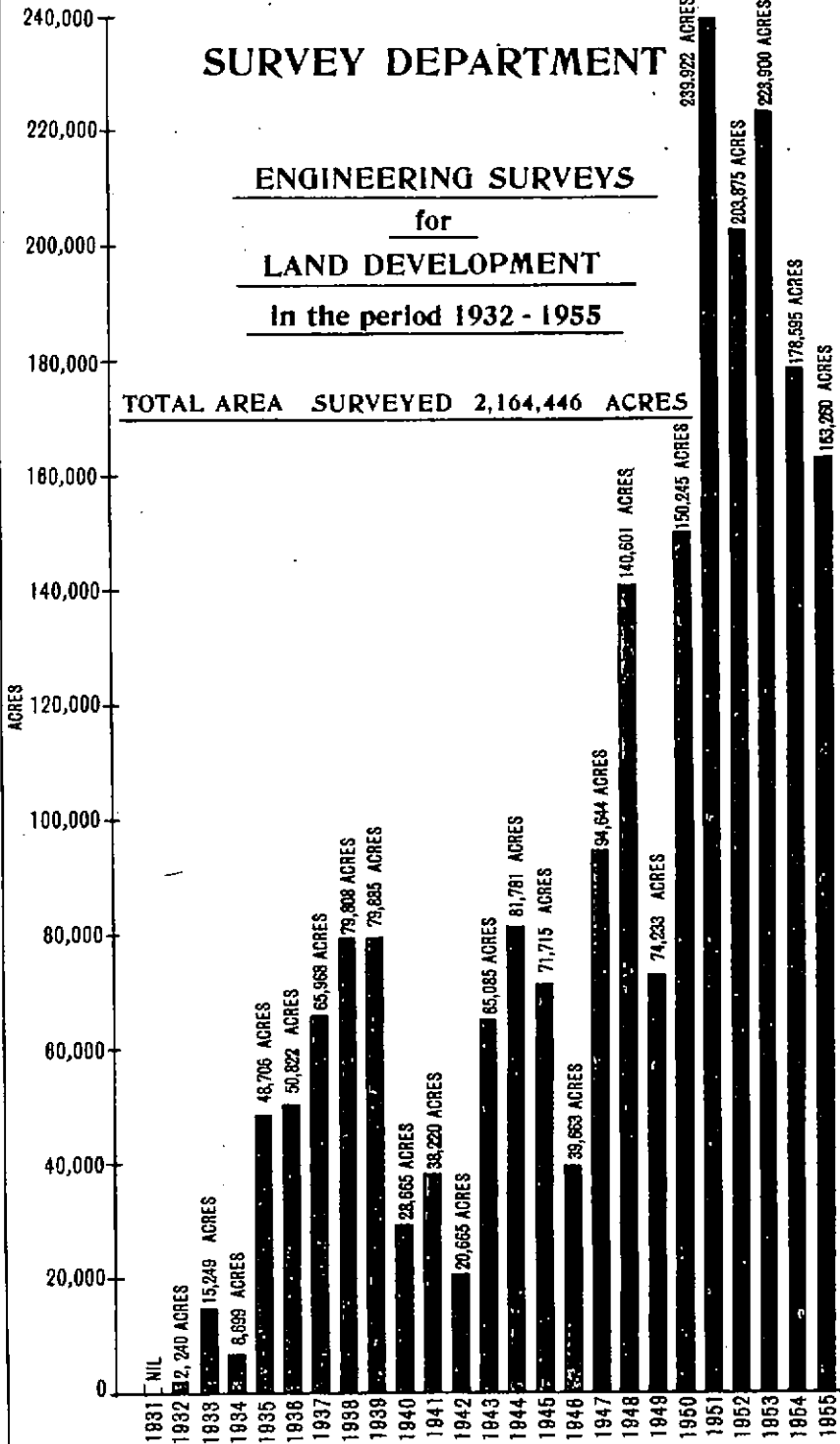
ENGINEERING SURVEYS

for

LAND DEVELOPMENT

In the period 1932 - 1955

TOTAL AREA SURVEYED 2,164,446 ACRES



SURVEY DEPARTMENT

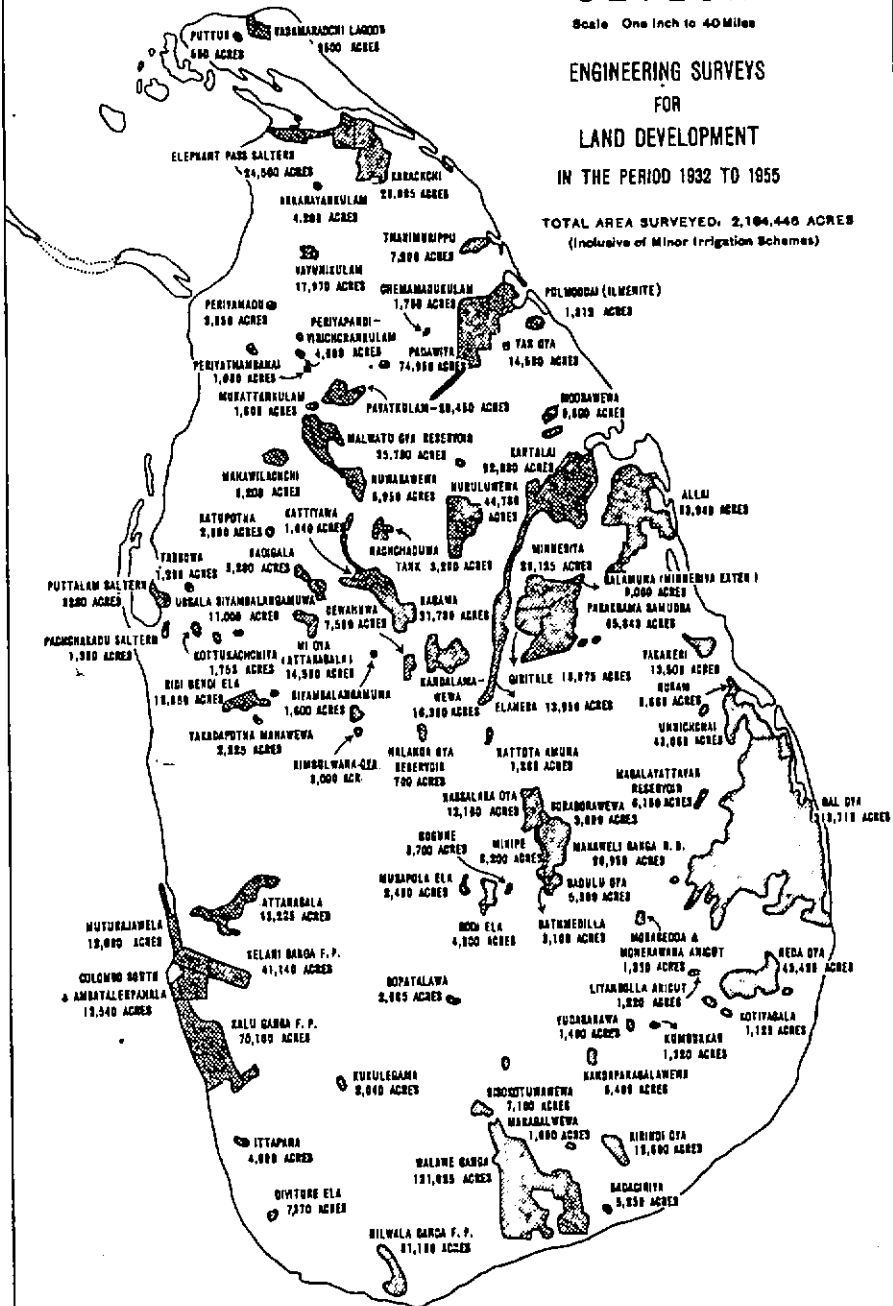
CEYLON

Scale One Inch to 40 Miles

ENGINEERING SURVEYS FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT

IN THE PERIOD 1932 TO 1955

TOTAL AREA SURVEYED: 2,104,446 ACRES
(Inclusive of Minor Irrigation Schemes)

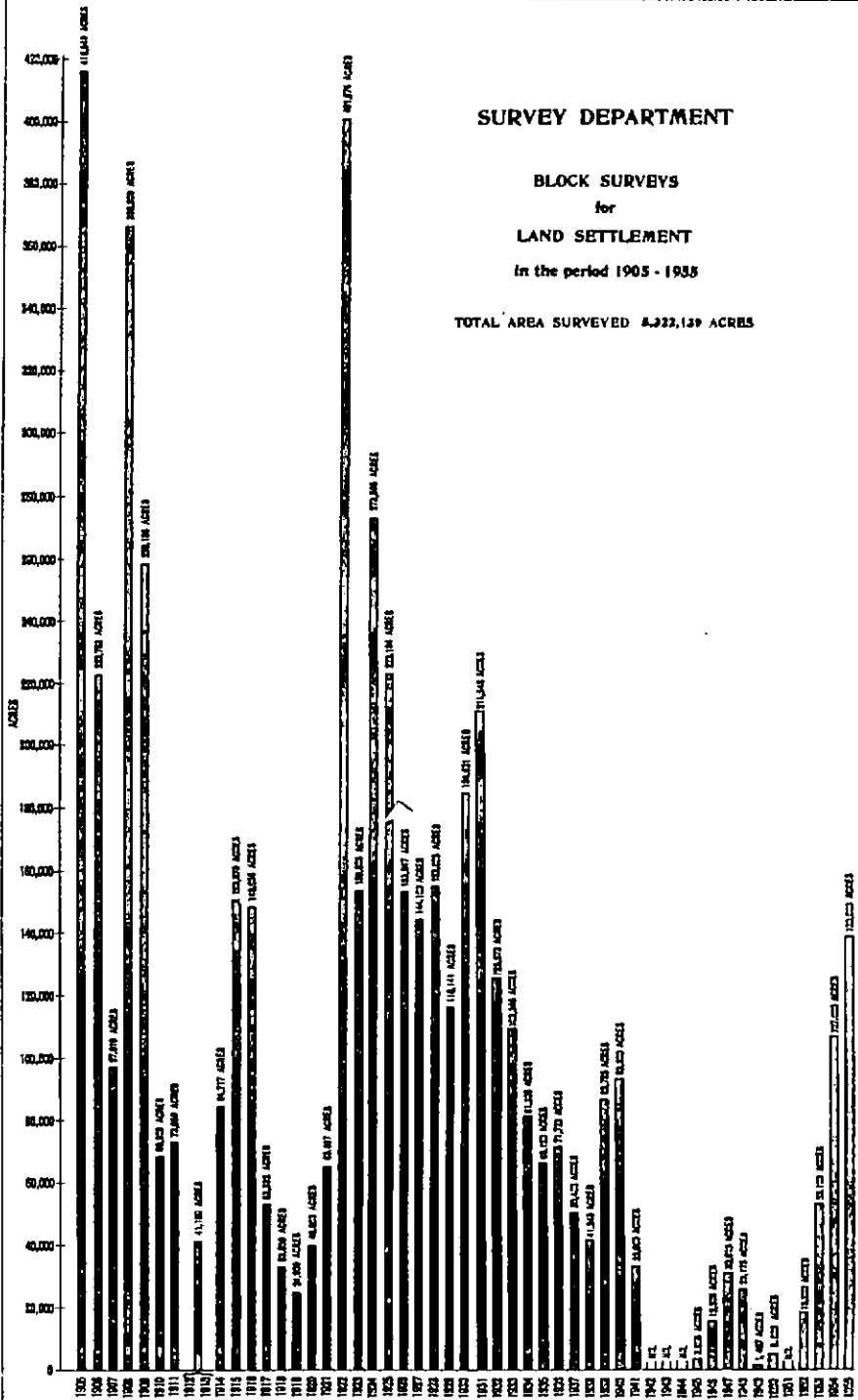


Extents of Major Irrigation Schemes only have been given on Map

SURVEY DEPARTMENT

BLOCK SURVEYS for LAND SETTLEMENT in the period 1905 - 1935

TOTAL AREA SURVEYED 8,322,139 ACRES



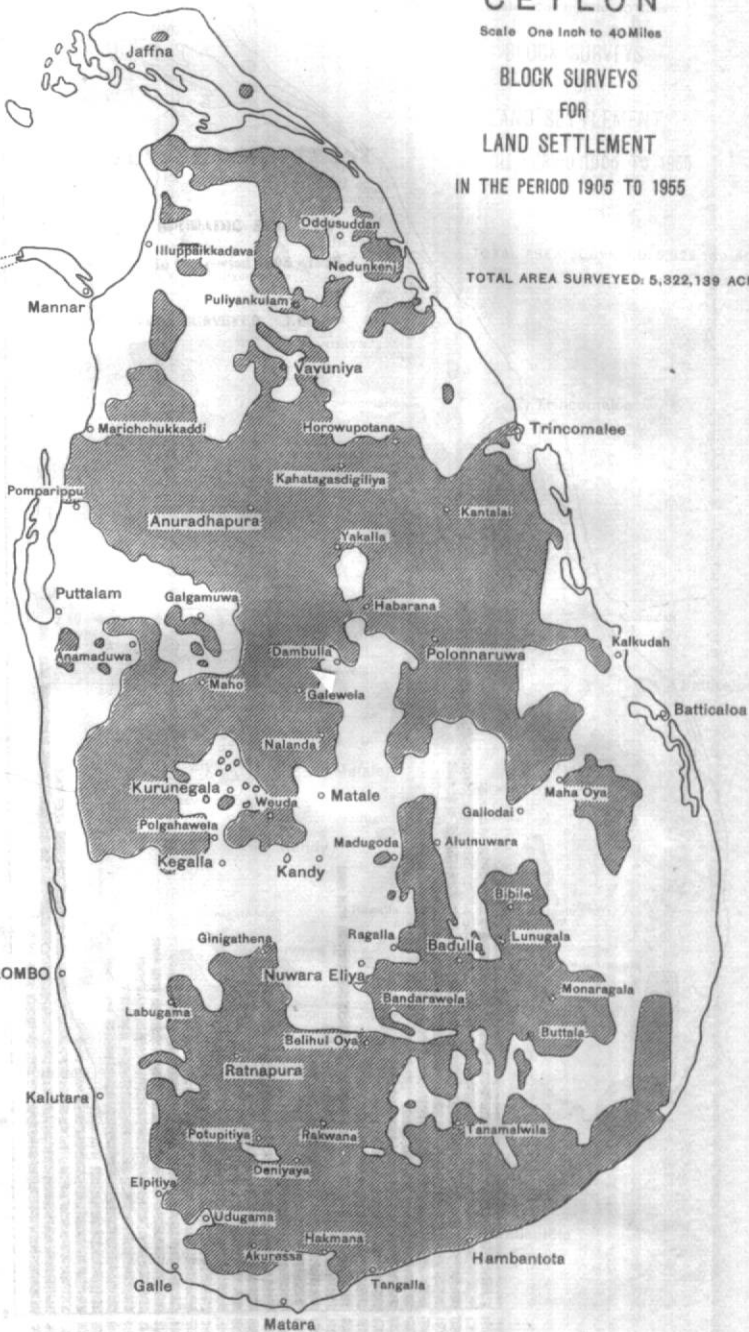
SURVEY DEPARTMENT

CEYLON

Scale One Inch to 40 Miles

BLOCK SURVEYS
FOR
LAND SETTLEMENT
IN THE PERIOD 1905 TO 1955

TOTAL AREA SURVEYED: 5,822,139 ACRES



SU

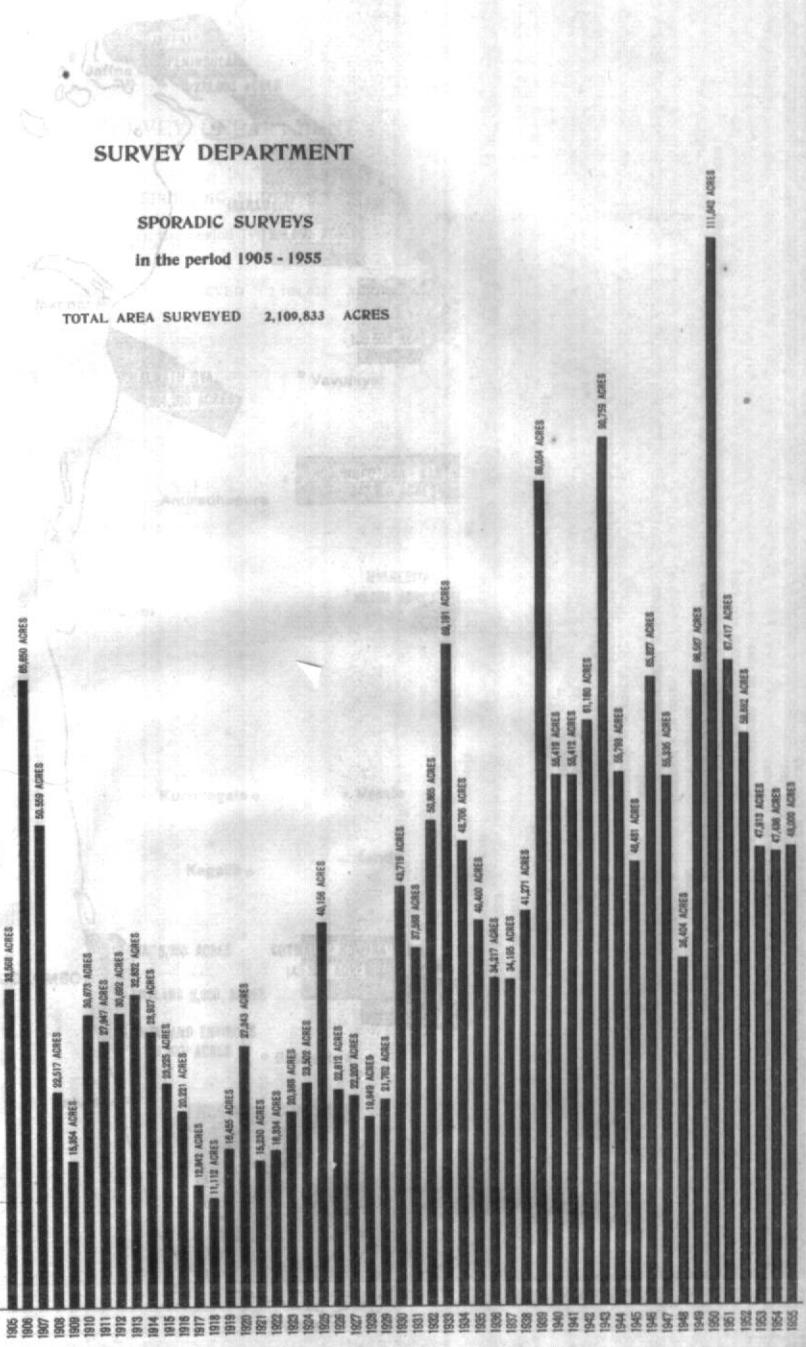
SURVEY DEPARTMENT

SPORADIC SURVEYS

in the period 1905 - 1955

TOTAL AREA SURVEYED 2,109,833 ACRES

140,000
120,000
100,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
0



SURVEY DEPARTMENT

CEYLON

Scale One Inch to 40 Miles

AIR SURVEYS

IN THE PERIOD 1952 TO 1955

TOTAL AREA PHOTOGRAPHED 2,133,150 ACRES

