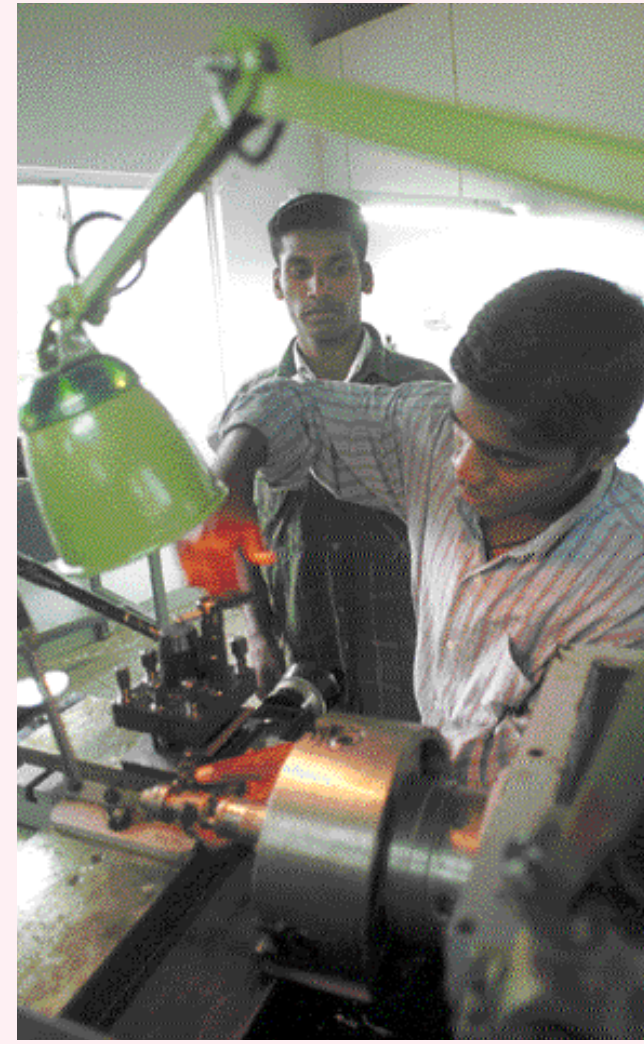


Turning point in the Tea Industry



THALAWAKELE: High production costs and a labour problem faced by the Sri Lankan Tea industry today has escalated the closing of small scale tea factories, and using tea factory buildings for hotels and schools. The labour problem is due to estate workers not encouraging their children to learn their old profession due to the low pay. They encourage their children to pursue higher studies or even follow technical and vocational training classes in order to find better jobs in Sri Lanka or abroad.

This sad situation is due to the fact that a tea plucker can earn less than Rs.200 as daily wage. This is also if he/she has worked every day. There are some days when there is no work and they work less than twenty days per month.

This discourages new comers to enter the trade to pluck tea leaves.

Due to the lack of trained tea pluckers harvest waste is very high. To accelerate high quality harvesting they should pluck the Two Leaves & the Bud at an appropriate time. We have reached a turning point in our tea industry. If we do not find new low cost methods to the labour problem and production, the survival of the Tea Industry in Sri Lanka could be at risk.

