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TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

PICTURES, like the one we have on our cover this week, have been seen in exhibitions and in special publications. But the elephant on our cover this week is a special one. Some weeks ago, during the height of the EMERGENCY WILPATTU campaign of Thilo Hoffman, this elephant was wandering with a herd behind in the arid wastes of the Wilpattu National Park looking for water. There have been claims (in the press and in special bulletins) that EMERGENCY WILPATTU had brought water to the thirsty animals in the sanctuary in bowzers. There were stories that tanks had been deepened and also hints that other beneficial steps had been taken to bring drought relief to the denizens of Wilpattu. But this elephant and other animals have another story to tell: that they did not get water to quench their thirst as a result of Operation Hoffman. This elephant, for instance, had come across only two 45 gallon drums sunk into the sandy wastes of a dried-up tank into which bowser water had been poured. The water in these two drums were not enough for one single elephant, and as far as the elephant can remember these drums were replenished once in a while during the time of EMERGENCY WILPATTU—until the bowzers conked out—and that the drought relief with the water in these two drums did not help much. It is because of stories of this kind we raised the following questions in the last issue of *Tribune*. ".....is there an iota of evidence that the entire operation was not a scandalous waste of other people's money and time, and of precious imported fuel? Does anyone including the Department of Wild Life Conservation, know, or can anyone tell us (a) the numbers—even approximately—of the different animals living in the Wilpattu National Park?; (b) How many of these are known to have actually succumbed to lack of water?; (c) What quantity of water was supplied daily in the EMERGENCY operation to meet the needs of the Park?; (d) How much of this water really went to meet the domestic needs of the employees of the Wild Life Conservation Department stationed in the Park?; (e) What did the entire operation cost?" We had also commented that "we do not grudge the use by officers of the Department of part of the water supplied, as they no doubt suffered along with the animals on account of the water scarcity, but we have not heard of any casualties or fatalities resulting from water shortage among these officers or villagers of the area....." We and an interested public of environmentalists await answers from Thilo Hoffman and his band of loyalists or from the Department of Wild Life Conservation which had underwritten the EMERGENCY WILPATTU exercise. Was this Operation a blitzkrieg in the best traditions of the Nazis or was it merely a *Hemin, Hemin*, affair in the Sri Lankan manner? When answers are made available we shall examine them and comment on them. But if no answers are forthcoming within a reasonable period of time we shall also make appropriate comments on the whole business. In the meantime, relief has now come to this elephant and other animals in the form of rain. But it has, so far, not been enough to fill up all the tanks and villus, but there is hope yet that there will be more rain in the weeks and months to come. However, we do not know how long even this rain will fall in the area. In this connection *Tribune* wishes to raise a series of questions of great importance. Is it not a fact that some high Government Authority has released 25,000 square miles of reserved forest lands for cadju plantations just north of the Wilpattu Game Reserve? That bulldozers and other massive equipment are destroying jungles (and eliminating the top soil) with such haste that is not easily understandable? (That apart from economic development by the State Cadju Plantations it is probably intended to transform the "Tamil" Mannar district into a Sinhala majority area by bringing in labour and colonists from the South?) That these 25,000 acres have been released in spite of the objections raised by the technical officers of the Forest Department? That the Government Agent and other officials of the area had also been opposed to the de-foresting of this Forest Reserve? That in spite of all this, a high Government Authority has permitted the destruction of 25,000 acres of forest reserves? That knowledgeable environmentalists and climatologists say that if the 25,000 acres are cleared of the forest reserves, the whole area will become an arid wasteland long before the cadju plants come into bearing (which even if fully grown cannot attract convectional or any other kind of rain)? That this corner of Sri Lanka is the region which gets the lowest annual rainfall and the removal of 25,000 acres of forest cover will soon make the region a virtual desert? That thereafter the Wilpattu National Park will get even less rain? That it is time that some higher governmental authority puts a stop to this rape of forest reserves in the Mannar District?

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Budget Perspectives

THE BUDGET will be presented on Wednesday, November 3. It will not be possible for *Tribune* to examine or comment on the Budget proposals in this issue. It is only in our next issue of November 13, 1976 that we hope to deal with the Budget.

On October 26, the Minister of Finance tabled the Estimates for the 1977 Budget in the National State Assembly. The *Daily News* of October 27, summarised the Estimates with the heading *Budget Deficit For 1977 Is Rs. 3,503.8 M.*

"The gap between the government's revenue and its expenditure for 1977 according to draft estimates tabled yesterday is Rs. 3,503,791,183. Estimated revenue amounted to Rs. 5,951,670,000 and expenditure Rs. 9,455,461,183. But the deficit is a paper figure at this stage because the estimates of revenue do not show the expected domestic and foreign borrowing that the Minister of Finance will reveal only on November 3, Budget Day.

"Yesterday's draft estimates were tabled by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa. The Appropriation Bill was tabled by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. A feature of the estimates of revenue and expenditure tabled yesterday is that the Government, despite its financial stringency, continues to allocate capital funds for agricultural, irrigation and industrial development, which are the employment creation and wealth creating avenues. The capital vote for the Department of Agriculture has been increased by Rs. 60,573,150 that of the Ministry of Industries by Rs. 212,458,152 and the Irrigation Department by Rs. 77,845,030.

"The capital vote under the Prime Minister's portfolio of Planning and Economic Affairs for the food production drive, under which the decentralised budget operates, has been allocated Rs. 300 million. This is Rs. 50 million less than this year. There is an increase on the capital vote for District Development Councils (also under the Prime Minister) which has been

increased by Rs. 45,274, 800 to Rs. 75,299,800.

"The total provision for capital expenditure is Rs. 3,509,047,939. The government's transfer payments continue to take a huge slice of government expenditure. The most important payment is the food subsidy where the 1977 estimate is Rs. 1,000,011,017 compared to Rs. 892,874,208 in the current year. The subsidy comprises one, on rice amounting to Rs. 707 million, a subsidy on flour costing Rs. 236.5 million, a subsidy on infant milk foods costing Rs. 24 million and one on sugar estimated at Rs. 32.5 million.

"The other major transfer payments are the interest payments on the public debt. The interest payments on rupee loans have gone up by Rs. 114,662,712 to Rs. 785,699,955. The interest on foreign loans has increased by Rs. 66,429,051. The payment on medium and long-term foreign loans is Rs. 431,588,718 compared to Rs. 341,379,513 in 1976. Another transfer payment that goes up is the Pension bill. The vote has increased by Rs. 64,535,300. There is provision next year of Rs. 27,300,000 for the Department of Parliamentary and Local Bodies elections. In the 1970-71 estimates the provision amounted to only Rs. 3,156,655."

The *Daily News* also published an absolutely "official" comment with the heading **A BUDGET WITH A DIFFERENCE.**

"This year's draft estimates are different from the previous years'. One of the main features in them is that there are no details, as in previous years, of all staff grades with their emoluments. This will be presented in a separate document titled "Estimates of Manpower requirements classified by salary and occupation", which will be tabled by the Minister of Finance during the course of the budget debate. The estimates tabled yesterday give a more detailed classification of budget expenditure in terms of programs, a better performance measurement and indicate the manpower resources available under each project. The estimates are printed in two volumes. They show signs of having been printed in a hurry owing to the troubles at the Government Press. In some pages the figures can be

hardly deciphered. Government circles pointed out yesterday that it was a credit to have printed the estimates despite the labour troubles at the press."

The *Daily News* drew special attention to the fact that Rs. 59m had been allotted for industries.

"The capital vote of the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs has been increased by Rs. 212,458,152 to Rs. 591,183,432. Foreign aid is estimated to provide Rs. 329,370,000 of this expenditure. The principal disbursements of this vote are as follows:

(i) Rs. 275 million to the state Fertilizer Manufacturing Corporation; (ii) Additional capital to National Textile Corporation (Medium Count Spinning Mill, Minneriya)—Rs. 54 million; (iii) Additional contribution to Ceylon Ceramics Corporation Rs. 50,492,080. This includes a Rs. 15 million vote for the Refractories Project and Rs. 10 million for the Sheet Glass Project; (iv) Rs. 62,100,000 has been provided for Stage II of the steel factory and Rs. 5,300,000 for the calcium carbide project; (v) The National Paper Corporation gets a provision of Rs. 65 million for the second paper factory at Embilipitiya; (vi) Rs. 42 million has been allocated for the Mineral Sands Corporation for the establishment of an integrated plant at Pulmudai; (vii) Rs. 24,920,000 to the Ceylon Cement Corporation for Stages I and II of the Cement works; (viii) Rs. 9,142,800 to the Ceylon Plywoods Corporation of which Rs. 8,645,000 is for the Woodwork Complex, Avissawella, and Rs. 497,800 for the mechanised timber extraction at Kanneliyai; (ix) Rs. 786,000 to the State Graphite Corporation; (x) Rs. 5,790,020 to the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation."

The *Daily Mirror* of October 27 summed up the estimates drawing attention to some of its more salient features.

"When the Minister of Finance, Mr. Felix R. D. Bandaranaike presents his Budget on November 3rd, he will have to bridge a gap of Rs. 3,503 million. According to the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year ending December 1977 presented in the National State Assembly yesterday, the estimated

Estimates

total expenditure is Rs. 9,45,461,183 whereas the total revenue is Rs. 5,951,670,000. The anticipated revenue of Rs. 9,455,461,183 does not of course take into account receipts envisaged by way of direct borrowing from the Domestic Sector and the Foreign Sector. Last year there was a Budget gap of Rs. 2,495 million according to the original estimates.

"The estimate of expenditure for the Department of Elections have been increased from Rs. 6,963,800 for 1976 to Rs. 27,300,000. The Food Subsidy too, has been increased from Rs. 892,874,208 for the current year to Rs. 1,000,011,017 for 1977. The General Sales and Turnover Taxes will drop from Rs. 740 million to Rs. 685 million. Excise duty on liquor has increased by Rs. 36 million while the duty on tobacco is expected to rise from Rs. 440 million to Rs. 520 million. The revenue expected from Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificates (FEECs) is estimated at Rs. 1,300,000,000 as compared with Rs. 1,050,000,000 for 1976.

"The expenditure for the Ministry of Education has been increased by Rs. 125 million while that for general education an additional sum of Rs. 125,967,640 has been provided. The Department of Agriculture has been allocated Rs. 155,009,800 as against Rs. 91,122,010 for the current year. The vote for the Ministry of Health has also been increased from Rs. 409,269,657 to Rs. 458,798,450."

The *Ceylon Observer* of October 27 was specially interested in the Rs. 27 m allotted for election expenditure.

"Allocations for the administration of election laws and the conduct of elections have been increased by nearly five times in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 1977 tabled by the Finance Minister, Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike in the National State Assembly yesterday. The amount set apart for this purpose for next year is Rs. 27,300,000, which the figure for 1976 was Rs. 5,966,100 with another allocation of Rs. 997,700 under capital expenditure. For the last election year (1970) the actual expenditure was only Rs. 10.7 million.

"Next year's Estimates indicate a Budget deficit of Rs. 3,503,791,183. The estimated revenue for the

financial year 1977 will be Rs. 5,951,570,000 and the estimated expenditure Rs. 9,455,461,183. Out of the next year's Budget the highest amount Rs. 2,089,508,658 has been allocated for the Finance Ministry and the next highest amount of Rs. 1,052,670,230 is under the Ministry of Food, Co-operatives and Small Industries. The Irrigation Department which received only Rs. 57,889,850 this year will receive an enhanced allocation of Rs. 137,985,380 which will mean accelerated activity in this field.

Up to the time of writing these notes, the only daily paper that has commented on the estimates is the *Daily Mirror*. In its issue of October 29, it editorialised under the heading *HOPES AND FEARS*.

"Statistics can be sobering or staggering. They can alarm but they can also allay and even anaesthetize. When the statistics are of national budgetary dimensions then the average man can derive comfort from a Victorian Chancellor of the Exchequer who found "those damned dots" beyond his comprehension. At first sight the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure tabled in the National State Assembly this week seem bewildering, to say the least. A deficit of Rs. 3,503 million between revenue and expenditure is no cause for hosannas but in budgets like the Olympics, records are being broken all the time. Deficits have been the norm since Independence. It was only in 1953 when there was a surplus of Rs. 11 million, and in 1954 when the surplus was Rs. 84 million that Sri Lanka did not have deficit budgets. Those two years were exceptional because of the Korean boom. In 1969-70 the deficit topped the Rs. 1,000 million mark for the first time. Last year it was Rs. 2,495. The Budget speech will reveal how the increase of slightly more than Rs. 1,000 million in the deficit is to be bridged this year, for as already stated in our news columns the anticipated revenue does not take into account revenue from domestic borrowing or the foreign sector. The Estimates do however reveal some very interesting sidelights. Not much political acumen is needed to understand the increase in the vote of the Department of Elections from Rs. 6 million to Rs. 27 million.

"The food subsidy bill goes up from the current figure of Rs. 892 millions to Rs. 1,000 millions. This means that the food subsidy alone will cost the country next year more than three times the total of all expenditure and revenue in Sri Lanka's first year of independence. The food subsidy is like many other problems a war-time legacy. That Sri Lanka is saddled and straddled with such a gigantic problem year in and year out reflects no credit on the parties that have governed Sri Lanka since Independence. There can be no dispute over the need to increase the education votes or those of agriculture, and health because they reflect by and large the increase in the country's population and the Governments desire to maintain social services and improve output. The implications of the anticipated drop in sales and turnover taxes will only become apparent in the Finance Minister's revenue proposals. It would be premature to conclude that these taxes on which the Government depends so heavily will be eased. The solution of the deficit will of course lie in the amounts to be obtained from what is known as the public debt. By the end of 1975 the total public debt stood at Rs. 14,564 millions, which was 18 per cent over the previous year and above the average of 12 per cent for the previous five fiscal years. The public debt is by no means a new phenomenon. Colonial Secretaries of the Victorian era raised finance from domestic and foreign borrowing but this was resorted to only for public works and utilities such as construction and expansion of harbours, railways, waterworks, etc. The public debt was not for consumption purposes still less for consumption through subsidised food. As we have observed before it is the expenditure on food which can be grown locally that strangles the economy and hampers development."

As the *Daily Mirror* has pointed out it is difficult to cope with mere statistics without the budgetary proposals to explain how the deficit of Rs. 3,500 million is to be bridged. But there is no doubt that the Estimates presented is the framework for a sunshine budget for the next General Elections. The sum of Rs. 27 million

has been set aside for the Elections Department and the obvious inference has been drawn that the Elections will be held next year.

There do not seem to be any new increases in taxes—except perhaps on liquor and tobacco, but even these are likely to be minimal. The increase in the food subsidies indicate that the prices of some essential foodstuffs are likely to be reduced. Ministries which are in a position to give employment have been given increased funds—and 1977 will witness an enormous increase in pub-

lic expenditure in providing employment whether such was economically viable or beneficial to the country.

The budgetary gap will be bridged, as usual, by under-expenditure and by borrowing from domestic and international sources. Every possible source has been tapped for loans, gifts and aid, and according to hints in some newspaper countries like Libya and Qatar were likely to come up with some much-needed cash loans for Sri Lanka (said to be in region US \$ 60 million). For the rest, the

Government can fall back on printing more notes (the IMF is now a little flexible about this matter)

It will not be unfair or an exaggeration to say that the 1977 budget will be an election budget to influence voters and win votes. How far this Budget will help the country to develop economically is problematic. The primary consideration does not seem to be economic but political with an eye on the next elections. In the kind of politics we play in this country this type of budgeting seems unavoidable.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Oct. 14 — Oct. 21

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina;
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14: The Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs yesterday ordered the closure of the Pugoda textile Mills: earlier it ordered the closure of the Thulhiriya and Veyangoda textile mills following labour unrest—CDN. It has been confirmed that Mr. A. M. Abeygoonsekera, a former Chairman of the Port Cargo Corporation, has been killed in the air crash at Santa Cruz airport in Bombay—CDN. At a meeting of party leaders presided by Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, Speaker of the National State Assembly, it was decided to continue the payment of Rs. 100/- temporary allowance to MPs to whom it was earlier paid when they were asked to quit the Srawasti: at the meeting the leaders of the parties were of the opinion that this allowance should be continued to be paid in view of the revised rates to be charged from MPs for improved facilities and services that would be afforded to members when Srawasti is opened to them—CDM. The Parliamentary Pensions Bill which seeks to provide pensions for MPs has been challenged in the Constitutional Court—CDM. Mr. Siva Pasupathy, Attorney General, addressing the five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, hearing the applications for a revision of the High-Court-at-Bar order in the case against the former MP for Vadducodai, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, said when one had to strike a balance between the security of the state and the liberty of the subject there was no question that the the security of the state must take precedence—CDN. From tomorrow the Ayurvedic College at Borella will be given the status of the University—VK. The road from the BIA, Katunayake to Colombo has been gaily decorated and arrangements have been made to give a big welcome to Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who will arrive

in the island today after her historic appearance in the UN—VK. According to the Lankadipa Police at the premises of the now closed Pugoda textiles Mill fired several rounds to the sky to disperse a large gathering of employees: it is also reported the Police baton-charged the crowd—LD. According to the Aththa the closure of the Pugoda mills was sequel to an argument between the Manager of the Mills canteen and a section of the employees: the paper further said Police was brought in to the premises of the Mills: following this canteen incident several shots were fired to the sky and the mills closed.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15: The Norwegian government has pledged an outright grant of Rs. 175 million to Sri Lanka to help get over the present economic difficulties: the first instalment of this aid which will be spread over a period of four years will be received at the beginning of next year: Norway also pledged to build fishing trawlers for Sri Lanka valued at Rs. 67.5 million—CDN. Following urgent requests for food aid the Food and Agricultural Organisation allocated \$ 4.5 million in emergency rations to Sri Lanka: the allocation includes 10,400 tons of wheat, flour 1,040 tons of butter oil and 700 tons of pulses: the food stocks will be shipped to the country immediately—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, who returned to the island yesterday told the Daily News that her speech at the United Nations defined to those outside the Non-aligned movement what Non-aligned meant: she further said that a number of countries which were outside the movement appreciated the stand of the non-aligned and were really relieved after the speech: Mrs. Bandaranaike said that her speech cleared the air for better co-operation between the Non-aligned and aligned—CDN. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, told the NSA yesterday that he was hopeful of a settlement in regard to the closure of the Veyangoda, Thulhiriya and Pugoda textile mills—CDN. Answering a question raised by Dr. N. M. Perera, leader of the LSSP, regarding a report in the London Times about a Sri Lankan by the name Amirthalingam who had sought political asylum in Britain but was refused Mr. S. D. R. Jayaratne, Minister of Fisheries, replied that the Government is not aware of this and would soon make inquiries: according to the London Times report Mr. Amirthalingam had entered Britain illegally with a forged passport: he has told the British authorities that he was involved in the Tamil Liberation

Movement activities in Sri Lanka and feared torture and arrest if returned to Sri Lanka—CDN. Referring to her visit to London Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, said that Mr. James Callaghan, Prime Minister of Britain, sought the help of the Non-aligned countries to solve the Rhodesian problem: she further said Mr. Callaghan assured continued aid to Sri Lanka in spite of the severe economic difficulties that country is facing today—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* a section of the MPs will move an amendment in the NSA when the Parliamentary Pensions Bill comes up, to the effect that MPs whose monthly private income exceeds Rs. 500/- should not be made entitled for pensions—CDM. Customs authorities who raided a jewellery shop in Bambalapitiya seized over Rs. 5 million in currency notes, gold bars, diamonds, cultured pearls, American gold coins, citrines and other synthetic stones to the value of over Rs. 4 million—CDM. According to an agreement signed yesterday between Sri Lanka and Japan the latter will provide US \$ 10.5 million for development for a 30 year period with three and half per cent interest—VK. The Government Medical Officers' Association has given time till next Tuesday to settle their demands: Association sources told the *Dinamina* that they hoped to take direct trade union action if the Health Ministry fails to give them an assurance on their demands. Trade Minister, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, has planned to start an insurance scheme to all members of the Janata Committees—LD.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16: Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera, Minister of Health, addressing a meeting of all superintendents of Health at her Ministry yesterday assured that Sri Lanka would no longer have "suitcase doctors" whom she classified as doctors whom the Ministry of Health had to shuttle around from post to post to fill vacancies created as a result of doctors quitting service for employment abroad, going on scholarships and on leave and overstaying their entitlements—CDN. As a protest to the manner in which the Ministry of Health is handling the demands put forward by the GMOA doctors and specialists of the Ragama and the Kandy hospital staged a one-day token strike yesterday: nearly 100 doctors and specialists were involved in this strike—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, will visit Japan from November 12 to 18: she will be received in audience by Emperor Hirohito at the Imperial Palace and confer with Prime Minister, Takeo Miki and other government leaders—CDN. A top-level World Bank team is currently in the island to assess the general economic performance by Sri Lanka: the mission headed by Mr. D. Parsons is expected to collect data on GNP, employment, fiscal policy, prices and wages, balance of payments etc—CDM. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam Q.C., senior Counsel for Mr. Amirthalingam in the applications now being heard before a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court said that they have come to the courts not to create confusion but to maintain friendship and good relationship among the various communities in the country: he further said it was totally wrong to accuse that the challenge to the Constitution is aimed at disruption in the country: Mr. Siva Pasupathy, Attorney General, arguing in support of the two applications he has filed said the present Emergency Regulation is not contrary to the Constitution—VK. The last car under the six Sri series was registered yesterday and from today the

Department of Motor Registration will register cars under the seven Sri series: the registration for the six Sri series commenced in 1971—ATH. Mr. Neil de Alwis, Deputy Minister of Finance, told the National State Assembly that between the period May 27, 1970 to May 31, 1976 the United Front Government has obtained loans to the value of Rs. 1,250 million—ATH. 138,000 acres of land will be cultivated with paddy for the next Maha Season under the Mahaveli development Scheme—DM. Election of directors to co-operative societies will not be held until the next general election are over—LD.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17: Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade and Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, has approved a reward scheme for successful price control raids: under this scheme members of the public who live definite information about hoarded goods too will receive rewards: officers who conduct the raids are also entitled for rewards: fifty per cent of the value of the confiscated goods will be credited to the revenue and the balance will be distributed as rewards—CO. From January to September this year the country earned Rs 213 million from the exports of gems: the export for the first nine months of this year has exceeded the total exports for the year 1975 which was Rs 186 million—CO. According to the *Sunday Times* talks between the UNP and Dudley Peramuna, the breakdown group of the party are in progress in an effort to patch up differences: Mr. Rukman Senanayake, leader of the Dudley Peramuna, has confirmed to the *Sunday Times* that Mr Cyril Mathew, a leading member of the UNP, has met Dr. C. D. L. Fernando, a leading member of the Dudley Peramuna, and had talks about patching up differences: Mr. Senanayake has also told the paper that his group has visited nearly 55 electorates to contact UNP supporters who were loyal to the party but critical of the present leadership. Mr. Mohamed Adnan Sadek Abdul Adel, representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Sri Lanka, commenting on a recent report in the *London Guardian* which said that PLO is training Tamil youths for guerilla fighting in Sri Lanka stated that this report is a "foul Zionist canard"—ST. The Sri Lanka Independent Broadcasting Corporation Employees Union at their annual general meeting recently held at the party headquarters unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the government to appoint Professor Kamal Karunanyake as Chairman of the SLBC and to appoint a politically oriented Board to the Corporation—ST. Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera, Minister of Health, decided to give appointments to the 140 new doctors with immediate effect to ease the shortage of doctors in government hospitals: she further said that additional Rs. 40 million has been allocated to the Health Ministry in the next budget—ATH. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the UNP, told the *Virakesari* that he firmly believed that the general elections will be held next year: he also said that his party is now engaged in preparing for the general elections. The Prime Minister will be given a national welcome at the BMICH today for the role she played at the Non-aligned Summit conference and bringing international fame to the country: the Cabinet has organised this reception and representatives from all walks of life and trade unions have been invited for this function—VK. A similar reception will be accorded to the Prime Minister at Attanagalle on Saturday 23rd—SM.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18: A meeting presided over by Mr. Maitripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, was held yesterday at the BMICH to felicitate the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in which religious leaders acclaimed the Premier as one who had brought international fame to the country as the leader of the Non-aligned Movement: a message from the President was also read at the meeting: several Ministers, trade union leaders and the Prime Minister spoke at the meeting—CDN. In her speech the Premier criticised the attitude of the Western press towards developing nations: she said her historic address to the United Nations General Assembly as Head of the Non-aligned Nations had been blacked-out by the western press: she also said journalists of the Western press were only trying to pick holes such as whether there had been internal differences between countries rather than report the important decisions taken unanimously—CDN. Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle, Minister of Shipping Aviation and Tourism, will open the 5-day 10th World Congress of the Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Association (UFTAA) this morning at the BMICH: 1,320 delegates from 73 countries will participate at this conference—CDN. The Department of Education has finalised all arrangements to provide teaching jobs for 7500 graduates from the beginning of next month: out of this number 672 will be bhikkus—CDN. Government Agents who were appointed by the Minister of Food and Co-operatives to head each co-operative authority are in a dilemma following an order by Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade, Public Administration and Home Affairs, to quit the co-operative movement: the government agents are undecided whether to quit the movement or to remain in it—CDM. According to the *Virakesari* the government will take a decision on the 23 Tamil youths now detained in prisons without trial only after the order of the five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court which is hearing the two applications filed by the Attorney General against the order of the Trial-at-Bar which ruled that the Emergency Regulations are not valid—VK. The GMOA will meet on the 24th of this month to decide on further action following the talks they held with the Minister of Health—VK. Trade unions of the Veyangoda, Thulhiriya and Pugoda textile mills attributed the recent closure of the mills to the bureaucracy and requested the Minister of Industries to remove the present board of directors and appoint a fresh one before opening the mills—ATH. The committee appointed by Dr. Badruddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, to probe the incidents at the Peradeniya Campus which resulted in a strike by over 2000 employees of the Campus has said in its report that there had been no co-ordination between the employees and the Campus President and the employees have no confidence in the President: the committee has further said that it will not be proper to continue having Professor P. W. Vithanage as President of the Campus in the interests of the Campus—LD.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19: Government sources indicated yesterday that the three major textile mills now closed on the orders of the Minister could be opened this week after further talks with the trade unions: the talks held yesterday between the trade unions and Industry Ministry officials were inconclusive—CDN. The Police were called to the Government Press yesterday to restore law and order following a

big clash there: the fight broke out between the old employees and those who were recruited after the strike at the Press: 46 people were treated at the hospital for injuries and late last night Mr. R. S. Perera, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, was conferring with his Ministry Secretary to decide on the next step: Borella Police was guarding the premises of the Press—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* butchers were openly flouting the price control order and no meat was available either in Colombo or the outstation stalls at the controlled price. Mrs. Siva Obeysekera, Minister of Health, will hold crucial talks today with the representatives of the GMOA over the demands by doctors in government service: further action by doctors will depend on the outcome of today's talks—CDM. Twenty three Tamils and three Muslim Gramasevakas were removed from their posts for failing to qualify in the official language, Sinhala—Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, and one of the leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front, requested the government to summon the TULF leaders for a discussion if the government was genuinely interested in solving the problems of the Tamil speaking community—VK. Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, decided to remove the present Board of Directors of the three textile mills and appoint a Competent Authority to manage the mills: Mr. A. B. Eikaduwa, Additional Secretary of the Ministry, has been named as the Competent Authority for these mills—ATH. *Aththa*, commenting on the recommendations of the committee appointed to probe the Peradeniya Campus issue said the President must be removed and a Board consisting of dons of the Campus and educated persons outside the University should be appointed to administer this important institution. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade and Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, will soon present a bill in the NSA to empower the government to confiscate the building and the good of any private sector shop if it is detected that these shops sold material imported for sale only by the cooperative and government sector shops—LD.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20: Veyangoda textile mills reopened yesterday and sections of workers reported for work: Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries, said yesterday that all three mills will be re-opened this week—CDN. The Government Press was closed yesterday and officials said heavy damage had been caused to the machinery and other goods of the Press: out of the injured in the clash at the Press eight have been warded as their condition had been serious: Police guarded the Press and the surroundings—CDN. According to the *Daily News* all private sector firms vested in the government under the Business Acquisition Act will be made State Corporations. Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie, Mayor of Colombo, yesterday warned that if meat stalls were kept closed for more than three days the Municipality will take over all such stalls: butchers yesterday told the Mayor that they cannot afford to sell beef at the controlled price of Rs. 3/- a pound and wanted the price to be raised to Rs. 3.75 per pound: meanwhile the price control men are rounding up all butchers who refuse to sell beef at the controlled price—CDM. Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade and Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs, told a meeting in Galagedara that there

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was no use living in a country in which the right to vote had been denied to the people—*CDM*. Mr. V. Dharmalingam, MP for Udivil, told the *Virakesari* that the TULF will not have any discussions with the government over the problems facing the Tamil speaking community until the government takes steps to release all those Tamil youths who were kept in custody without trial—*VK*. On instructions from Trade Minister, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, the National Prices Commission will review the controlled prices of nearly 750 items: the instruction from the Minister is a sequel to complaints that the prices of certain items were not realistic—*DM*. A people's rally to pay tribute to the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, for bringing international fame to the country will be held at Attanagalla on Saturday, October 23—*CDN*. The Duraipah murder trial will be taken up before the Trial-at-Bar presided by Mr. J. R. M. Perera on November 1—*CDN*. Local producers of western drugs have been ordered by the Industries Ministry to have the generic names of all drugs they produce along with the trade name—*CDN*. The Budget will be presented in the NSA by the Minister of Finance on 3rd November—*CDN*.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21: In a press release issued yesterday the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting explained the incidents that occurred at the Government Press which resulted in the closure of the Press: the press release states that when a section of the new recruits entered the composing branch they were set upon by other employees: heavy damage has been caused to the Superintendent's office of the composing branch and some machinery: extensive damage has also been caused to type composed matter of the 1977 budget estimates: several people jumped through the windows to escape and received serious injuries: alternative arrangements were being made regarding the printing of urgent publications—*CDN*. According to provisional estimates prepared by the Ministry of Health a sum of Rs. 445.4 million will be expended on the country's health services in 1977—*CDN*. According to the *Daily News* the government will purchase a substantial quantity of rice next year in view of the sharp decline in production following continuous drought: 200,000 tons will be purchased from China inclusive of the Rubber-rice pact and another 50,000 from Pakistan or Thailand—*CDM*. A close lieutenant of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Cyril Mathew, told the *Daily Mirror* that he was sure that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, will not take back to the party those who were sacked from it—*CDM*. Many butchers in the city were seen yesterday either selling beef above the controlled price or did not have any meat to sell—*CDM*. Following a request by Philippines and Libyan missions in the country the Police began a search for two most wanted insurgents from Philippines who were suspected to have entered the country—*VK*. The Inter-University Students Union has asked the Education authorities as to why the President of the Peradeniya campus of the University has not been removed even after the committee appointed to probe the Campus affairs has recommended that the President should not continue holding the post he is holding now: this has been stated in a statement issued by the Union—*ATH*.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14: China yesterday provided the first possible indication of arrests of Mao-Tse-tung's wife, Chiang Ching and three other leftist leaders: so far Chinese officials did not deny that the four politburo members Chiang Ching, Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chung-Chiao and Yao Wen-yuan—have been detained and accused of plotting a coup: foreign correspondents who tried to buy official photographs of the four at the New China News Agency were told none was available. Mr. Joshua Nkomo and Mr. Robert Mugabe, black nationalist leaders of Rhodesia have formed a powerful alliance called the Patriotic Front: according to sources in Lusaka the new front had yet to unify rival armies loyal to Mr. Mugabe and Mr. Nkomo, or create an overall political body to control any such military pact. President Ford yesterday openly admitted he made a mistake when he declared in a televised debate with Jimmy Carter last week that the Soviet Union does not dominate Eastern Europe: the President addressing 17 leaders of American groups with ties to Eastern Europe said the mistake was his because he did not express himself clearly: many leaders later said they were willing to forgive the President for his lapse. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her address to the Dar Es Salaam University during her current visit to Tanzania said her country had become the butt end of foreign criticism because of its independence of thought and action. Syria launched a major offensive in the mountains east of Beirut on strategic positions held by Palestinian forces: the tank-supported offensive by Syria is said to be the second largest attack within the last two weeks. United Nations General Secretary, Kurt Waldheim, said yesterday that he will seek re-appointment when his term expires at the end of the year: a spokesman declined to comment when asked whether he had the support of all five permanent members of the UN: the five permanent members Britain, France, China, USSR and America can veto his re-election by the General Assembly. Soviet Communist Party leader, Leonid Brezhnev, in an interview in the Moscow television said that the build of Soviet and other socialist countries armed forces has become vital because of constant military pressure from the NATO countries.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15: Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, told the press on her return to the country after addressing the 31st General Assembly of the United Nations that in London Prime Minister, James Callaghan, sought her help as chairman of the Non-aligned Movement to solve the problem in Rhodesia. Angolan President, Dr. Agostinho Neto, left Moscow after his six-day visits: he signed a friendship and co-operation treaty according to TASS. At the Santa Cruz airport in Bolivia a US Boeing 707 crashed soon after take off into a mass of children in a playground killing at least 100 people: seconds after the take off the plane plummeted on to the main avenue, spewing blast and debris, that engulfed by standers including many school children the plane had only the crew on board. The *Rhodesia Herald* newspaper described the

proposal by England and America for majority rule in Rhodesia as a confidence trick: commenting on the Anglo-American move the paper said US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, had tried to drive Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith into a corner. South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, told a meeting of the ruling National Party that external economic pressure was being applied to South Africa to try to force it to abandon its policy of separate racial development. Reports from Salisbury said three black nationalists including the Organisation Secretary of Bishop Abel Muzorewa's faction have been killed in Northeast Rhodesia. Syria yesterday announced that it would continue on its tough policy in Lebanon and stressed that it would not allow the issue to be internationalised. Former President of Philippines, Diosadado Macapagal, charged the United States for supplying arms to continue the dictatorship government of President Marcos: at a news conference he charged the US administration for continuing military and economic aid to the Philippines which helped repression. The 1976 Nobel Prize for medicine and physiology was awarded to Baruch S Blumberg and Dr. Carleton Gajdusek of the United States.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16: In China official media warned that anyone who tried to split the Communist Party would be struck down: a front-page headline in the *People's Daily* called for a struggle against those who "Tamper with Chairman Mao's directives": in Tsinghua University student poster writers attacking Mao-Tse tung's widow and other leftist leaders have called for Communist Party take over of their University because they do not trust the present administration. President Ford's troubled election campaign cleared a hurdle yesterday when the Watergate special prosecutor cleared him of allegations of misusing election funds while being a Congressman. Saudi Arabia has decided to pull back all its troops stationed in Jordan since 1967: last week it pulled off all its troops from Syria: the official reason given for the pull-out is that the troops need to be re-equipped and retained. Following the decision by Syrian President Al-Assad to stay away from the next week's Arab Summit conference in Cairo Arab diplomatic sources said they feared that even if convened the summit was doomed to failure, or at most, its decisions would be rendered ineffective: The Syrian delegation to the summit would be led by its Foreign Minister, Abdel Halim Khaddam. Syria launched a twin attack on Leftist and Palestinian forces in the mountains surrounding Beirut and efforts by Arab nations to halt the fight appeared to be faltering. African Nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo named Mr. Garfield Todd, former Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, as a member of his delegation for the Geneva conference on Rhodesia; Mr. Todd, a staunch critic of white rule in Rhodesia, will be the political adviser in Mr. Nkomo's 30-member delegation. The continuous decline of the sterling pound was reversed yesterday when it gained one cent against the US dollar on foreign exchange markets in London.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17: British Trade Secretary, Mr. Edmund Dell, said in Liverpool yesterday that restrictions on imports will not offer any easy solution to Britain's economic problems: he further said Britain's annual inflation rate is steadily edging upwards again after a year of decline adding to the hard-

pressed Labour Government's host of economic problems: prices have gone up, by 14.3 per cent over the 12 months to mid-September. Police and military rounded hundreds of communists throughout Thailand: several teachers, journalists and students who were rounded up were accused of being either communists or communist sympathisers. Denmark instructed the North Korean government to recall its Ambassador and the diplomatic staff of three, accusing them of selling illicit drugs and duty-free liquor: Police said the embassy's diplomatic staff have used their diplomatic bags to smuggle drugs into the country. US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, said that any change of government in China will not affect US-China relationship. According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) a large reservoir containing water underlies the world's largest desert, the Sahara-Arabian desert. Following the crossover of a number of leftist students from Thailand into Laos Thailand's military rulers reported a clash between Thai and Laotian forces on the border Northeast of Thailand. It was reported in Belgrade that Chairman Mao-Tse-tung's wife Chiang Ching and three other arrested left leaders tried to enlist Peking's Garrison Commander for a planned coup but instead he gave them away: Yugoslav's Tanjung News Agency said Chairman Mao's wife tried in vain to get help from the Navy leaders: the report further said she planned the coup even while Mao was living. Cuban Prime Minister, Dr. Fidel Castro accused the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States for sabotaging a Cuban airliner which crashed last week killing all its passengers: he said the CIA was directly involved in the affair and cancelled his 1973 anti-hijacking agreement with the United States.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18: The British office of Population Census and Surveys said that though fewer people were emigrating from Britain they were still outnumbering the immigrants coming to live in Britain. Syrian President Hafez Al Assad who arrived in Riyadh for a meeting with key Arab leaders said that he had made an order to his troops fighting in Lebanon to stop the war: Mr. Assad arrived for the Arab mini-summit convened in Riyadh aimed at halting the 18 month conflict in Lebanon: the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation will participate in this Arab mini-summit. Uganda leader Mr. Idi Amin told the British *Sunday Telegraph* that Israeli forces had plans to capture him during the raid at Entebbe airport: Mr. Amin said that six Israelis stormed his personal suite at the airport during the raid but he had left the suite three hours previously seeing the hostages held by the Palestinians. The presidents of Tanzania, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique and Zambia will meet today in Lusaka for consultations to co-ordinate tactics before next week's British sponsored Rhodesia conference in Geneva: meanwhile, Rhodesia's rival black nationalists are expected to have various inter-party talks to iron out their differences during the coming week: Zambian President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, said that if majority rule cannot come through negotiations then it will come out of the barrel of the gun. A security force communique in Salisbury said Mr. Philip Cohen, brother of Mr. J. B. Cohen, a coloured mixed delegate due to accompany Bishop Abel Muzorewa's faction of the African National Council (ANC) at the Geneva conference, has been killed by guerillas. At a

national seminar held in New Delhi several lawyers joined the Opposition members of Parliament in attacking the proposed constitutional changes by the Indian government: some said that the proposed change will institutionalise dictatorship. Presidential contender Jimmy Carter and Ford exchanged personal attacks in their election campaign accusing each other of misrepresentations, slander and of being untrustworthy.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19: In the Philippines, in a national referendum over the martial law administration President Ferdinand Marcos looked set to receive a massive vote of faith: the elections commission said that an initial 350,000 votes counted since polling ended at noon yesterday showed 95 percent support for martial law. China announced that it had successfully conducted another underground nuclear test and linked it with a call to rally round the newly appointed Chairman Hua Kuo-feng: according to observers this test is a morale boosting move to assure the Chinese people that despite the current upheaval in the country the nation's defences were intact: meanwhile the Peking Garrison commanded by Vice Premier Chen Hsi-lien yesterday publicly pledged its support and vowed to battle against revisionists, splitters and plotters: according to Western observers the plight of the four now under detention would be decided by the Central Committee. At the Arab mini-summit, in Riyadh, Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, who were at loggerheads embraced each other: the reconciliation followed reports that Syria has agreed to Egyptian proposals to end the civil war in Lebanon where Syrian troops were battling leftist and Palestinian forces. The Pakistan government dismissed more than 500 top government servants on charges of corruption according to Pakistani papers. Rhodesian nationalist leader, Rev. Hdebaningi Sichele, said that Britain did not include him in the Geneva conference but observers in Dar-Es-Salaam said that on the recommendation of Tanzania's president, Julius Nyerere, Britain might invite Rev. Sichele for the Geneva conference. Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin made his public appearance yesterday after three months of sickness in which he was suffering from a heart ailment. The Nobel prize for Physics and Chemistry were won by Americans. Mr. Ford in his strongest attack yet on Carter said the latter would "say anything anywhere to be President of the United States": he characterised his Democratic opponents as "untrustworthy, divisive, opportunistic and shallow": Mr. Carter in his telegram to President Ford requesting him to stop personal attacks said these were "misleading and erroneous" statements: later Mr. Carter too used some strong language on the President in a rally in Yugoslavtown.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20: Wall posters in Peking accused Chairman Mao Tse Tung's widow, Chang Ching, of trying to murder her husband: several other posters were also seen in the Peking University walls and the information on the posters were said to be based on texts and documents made available by the University Branch of the Communist Party: an editorial in the *People's Daily* attacked the four radicals and instructed readers to thoroughly expose and repudiate those who tampered with Chairman Mao Tse-tung's directives or conspired to usurp power. According to British sources Britain will not accept suggestions by

black Rhodesian leaders that Britain should assume colonial responsibilities for the administration of Rhodesia during a transitional period: Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere has proposed that Britain should accept this type of responsibility and is expected to announce this at the forthcoming Geneva conference. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's effigy was burned outside Australia's Parliament in Canberra as he arrived for detailed discussions with Australia's Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser: the participants in the demonstration outside the Parliament were mainly Singapore and Malaysian students living in Australia. Arab leaders meeting in Riyadh announced that a ceasefire will be proclaimed throughout Lebanon at 6 am on Thursday: the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation agreed at the Arab mini-summit that there should be a 30,000 strong Arab deterrent force to implement the ceasefire, collect heavy weapons and supervise the return of armed men to where they were before the Lebanese war broke out. United States President Ford edged closer to his Democratic rival Jimmy Carter in the latest election campaign poll published on Monday: Mr. Carter's lead has been narrowed to 44 to 40 percent.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21: A full Arab summit on Lebanon will be held on Monday and Arab Foreign Ministers and officials met in Cairo to prepare for the Summit: the full summit was scheduled for this week but was delayed owing to the mini-summit which agreed on a peace proposal in Lebanon when it met in Riyadh. Mr. Robert Mugabe one of the leaders of the black nationalist groups in Rhodesia said that he would take over all private lands in Rhodesia when the black rule is realised in his country: he said this in a brief interview to Reuter when asked about his plans if he is returned to power in Rhodesia. Britain told the United Nations Security Council yesterday that it would veto a draft resolution to impose a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa: Mr. James Murray, Britain's representative of the UN, said the resolution signed by seven Third World nations was "inappropriate both in timing and substance." A Swedish Foreign Ministry spokesman said that Police were investigating Swedish link in the Scandinavian tobacco and liquor smuggling operation involving North Korean diplomats: Sweden is the third Scandinavian country to become embroiled in the affair while Norway and Denmark have served expulsion notices on the entire North Korean diplomatic staff in their capitals, accusing them of selling duty free goods. Clear signs of dissension inside the powerful Italian Communist Party emerged over its policy of endorsing the government's moves to solve the country's acute economic crisis: at a Central Committee meeting of the Party President Luigi Longo criticised Secretary-General Enrico Berlinguer over certain policies within the Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party stepped up its campaign against the four radicals according to the party daily *People's Daily*: the attack was mainly on the widow of the late Chairman, Chiang Ching. Observers in the Middle East said the success of the Arab mini-summit held in Riyadh recently was a diplomatic victory for Saudi Arabia. Trang Khan Thanh, a little known Vietnamese even in Ho Chi Minh City, has made an application to the United Nations Security Council that his name be considered for the Secretary General Post.

POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN
PEKING—1

The News Is Broken

By Kautiliya

WHEN MAO TSE-TUNG'S HEART stopped beating a little after midnight of September 9 nobody had imagined that it would lead to a political earthquake more stunning than the geographical (physical) earthquake that had shaken the the Tangshan-Peking region on July 28. Soothsayers and others who see occult and mystic significance in cataclysmic natural occurrences were categorical that this earthquake and other natural disasters, which had overtaken different parts of China from the beginning of the year, portended a major "change of dynasty". Rationalists and materialists scoffed at these prognostications and declared that age and disease had claimed the lives of Chou En-lai and Chu Teh and that Mao Tse-tung was already on the verge of death for a long time.

But these hard-headed materialists could not foresee what was to come: they spoke pompously about a collective leadership that would continue to run the regime without any of the "power struggle" bourgeois political commentators foolishly and unknowingly spoke about.

When Mao died, many foreign observers who knew China indicated that there would be some kind of "power struggle", but most of them believed that the radical group led by Chiang Ching and Wang Hung-wen would carry everything before them in the same way they had (only recently) sent Teng Tsi-ping into the wilderness. Or that a compromise balance would be maintained between the radicals and the moderates. Of all the newspapers, only the Hongkong weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review* had hinted in a vague way that the Shanghai radicals would be pushed aside slowly by the pressure of the pragmatists and moderates from the provinces. But even the *FEER* was not able to anticipate what actually took place within a month of Mao's death—namely the arrest of Chiang Ching and the three other Shanghai radicals who constituted the hard-core of the radical faction.

At the time of the ceremonial funeral for Mao Tse-tung, the Shanghai radicals were still right on top of the world. Wang Hung-wen was number two in the order of precedence, next only to Hua Kuo-feng, and the three others were very high up on the list. No foreign observer even dared to suggest that the Chiang Ching group would be eliminated from the seats of power within such a short time. The Shanghai radicals, together with the Peking radicals, controlled the media and even after the death of Mao they kept blasting away not only against the "soviet social-imperialists," revisionists and the superpower hegemonists, but also against the capitalist-roaders etc with all the vigour they had shown in the post-Cultural Revolution days.

The end of the radicals came suddenly. In the backdrop of the "power struggle" referred to by foreign observers (regularly referred to in the columns of the *Tribune*), there was a slow mounting of political tremors from the beginning of October which developed into a mighty political earthquake in a matter of days. In typical Chinese (Confucian and Mandarin) style, the moderates and pragmatists struck at the radicals under cover of the same smokescreen the radicals had used for a long time: Mao Tse-tung. But with one difference: that until the death of Mao, Chiang Ching was accepted as the living link between the fading Mao and the outside world. In the name of Mao, the radical group had wielded more power than their numbers or their ideology justified.

The opening bars came with imperceptible quietness. A *Reuter* report, from Hongkong, under the heading MAO'S LAST WORDS WITH POLITBURO MEMBERS, on October 4 stated:

Chairman Mao Tse-tung left his last words with at least seven Politburo members, including Premier Hua Kuo-feng, at a meeting last June, the daily, *Ming Pao*, reported yesterday. The newspaper said Mao's "last words" at a meeting on June 3 with Mr. Hua, Defence Minister Yeh Chen-ying, party Vice-Chairman Wang Hun-wen, Vice-Premiers Wang Chun-chiao, Li Hsien-nien and Chen Yung-kuei, and ideologue Yao Wen-yuan, were being cir-

culated in some Government offices in the form of a mimeographed notice.

According to what the paper described as the full text of the notice part of Mao's talks with Mr. Hua was given. "...No one in the world is immortal. Few can live up to 70 and as I am over 80, I should have died. Are there not some people among you who hope that I should go to see Marx sooner".

Mao was quoted as saying.

"No", Mr. Hua replied.

"Really no one? I don't believe it." Mao said.

He added that he had been called a totalitarian long before, naming as his "betrayers" and "opponents" former Defence Minister Pen Teh-huai, disgraced head of State Liu Shao-chi, another former Defence Minister Lin Piao and the twice disgraced Ten Tsiang-ping who was stripped of all powers last April for being an alleged unrepentant capitalist roader.

"Some people even attacked me in the name of Premier Chou En-lai and at once I became everybody's target and a lonely man," Mao was quoted as saying.

"I have said this is nothing. Truth is always with the minority. Even if the Politburo and the whole Central Committee were against me, the earth would still rotate, and if the worst comes to the worst I will go up to the Chingks Engshan again..." he added. (Chingks Engshan was the mountainous area in Kiangsi province where Mao started his guerilla war against the Nationalist Government in the late 1920's before the Long March). According to the notice reported by the paper, Mao agreed with those who called him stubborn and inflexible, but he added the marxist principles and the basic line of the party must be upheld. He said the best thing was to have a three-one leading group set up by the Politburo. Whether Chiang Ching (Mao's widow) should be included should also be decided by the Politburo. No one should "try to seek settlement of old scores." Even if the past decision was wrong, reversal of the verdict was not allowed. Mao asked those present to help Chiang Ching to "carry on the Red Flag" and remind her of her previous errors to avoid them. He said the struggle against the two Super Powers should continue.

Mao was also quoted as saying that if he died his body should be sent back to his home province, Hunan. He said he was not afraid that some one would "whip his body". Zpienszu or whipping the body is a Chinese expression used metaphorically to mean condemnation of a ruler.

THIS STORY was obviously an inspired leak from Peking (and not Taiwan). As to be expected, some Peking officials formally denied the story and said that no official authenticity could be attached to the report. But those who are familiar with China and things Chinese (even in the communist era) would have recognised in the report the first thrust by the moderates against the radicals. The names of a few radicals were included in the group which had this "last interview" with Mao, but what was important was that this interview was intended to demonstrate that Mao did not extend his confidence and support solely to Chiang Ching and her radical cronies. Very unobtrusively, Chiang Ching was downgraded: that Mao did not intend her to be a sole successor to and interpreter of Mao's Thought: that the references to her "previous errors" showed that she was mortal and not the infallible "marxist" the radicals had made her out to be, and also that Mao had chosen Hua for the role he was playing (giving covering sanction to the virtuosity of the political wisdom of the moderate and pragmatic group). The interview also quoted Mao as saying that even if past decisions were "wrong", they should not be reversed. This was no doubt intended to remove the halo of infallibility which the radicals always sought to attach to anything done "in the days of Mao", or "on Mao's directives". This will open the way to exposing a whole host of "wrong decisions" in the past, and though Mao did not want them "reversed" (no doubt for unity), the Hua group would be able to show that Mao had been tricked into such decisions by the vicious machinations of the Shanghai Gang of Four.

Whether this interview is true or fictitious, it appears to have been widely circulated among people who mattered in Peking and other provincial capitals of China. A mimeographed sheet was the only

media available to the moderates because the Shanghai group had total control over the entire official media. The Newsweek of October 18 referred to this interview under the sub-heading LAST SUPPER (a very fitting historical analogy) but the Newsweek correspondents responsible for this piece—Clifford D. May with Sidney Liu and Holger Jensen in Honkong—were not willing to see anything more than a clever piece of political gossip in the report. Though they admitted that Chiang Ching was "not one of the strongest contenders for leadership" they did not seem to have the slightest inkling that a political chasm was being prepared by the moderates to thrust the Shanghai Four into political oblivion and liquidation. Many western observers, especially American, suffer from the invisible impact of the wishful hope that the radicals would continue to be in power to ensure that the strong anti-soviet policies of the Peking government would be continued from a leftwing ideological position (a better guarantee of anti-sovietism for the west than what pragmatic moderatism could provide).

The following extract from the Newsweek of October 18 makes interesting reading:

Perhaps the most intriguing piece of gossip, however, concerns Mao's alleged last conversation with Premier Hua Kuo-feng and six other Politburo members. In a scene somewhat reminiscent of the Last Supper, Mao reportedly asked if there were "not some people among you who hoped I would go see Marx soon?" Hua replied that there were not. "Really?" said Mao. "No one? I don't believe it." According to this account—published in the Hong Kong Newspaper, Ming Pao, and indignantly denied by officials in Peking—Mao also asked the assembled party leaders to support his wife, Chiang Ching, and help her "to carry on the Red Flag," a phrase some have interpreted to mean he wanted her to become his successor. At the moment, however, Chiang Ching is not believed to be one of the strongest contenders for leadership. Last week, there were rumours—still unconfirmed—that Hua had acquired Mao's title of chairman. But reports also persist that he is locked in a power struggle with the formidable se-

nior Vice Premier, Chang Chun-chiao. And there is even talk of yet another comeback by former Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, who was purged during the Cultural Revolution, rehabilitated in 1973 and banished again last April. Despite his latest disgrace, according to a Peking party official who recently visited Hong Kong, Teng remains popular in many quarters and particularly with the workers. Other recent visitors to China testify that a 50,000-word "big character" poster defending Teng and his "modernization" programs was put up in Tientsin not long ago. And some sources declare that Teng has sneaked back from exile in Inner Mongolia to his power base in Szechuan.

Whether that is true or not, it is a fact that all travellers, foreign and Chinese, are currently barred from visiting Szechuan Province, which would seem to suggest that something untoward is going on there. Similarly, Chinese travellers are "advised" not to go to the northern part of Fukien and, if they travel through the southern part of the province, to use buses rather than trains. This has sparked rumors that rail lines in Fukien have been sabotaged and that the People's Liberation Army has sealed off a portion of the province while it tries to quell factional fighting there.

There is no way to separate the truth from the fantasy in most of these stories. And for all the many reports of strife and struggle, Chinese officials have appeared supremely confident and calm in their recent conversations with Westerners. But, that too, may be an unreliable barometer of internal Chinese pressures. The display of official assurance could be sheer dissimulation. Or, as one Hong Kong-based China watcher pointed out: "It could be the calm before the political typhoon."

The Newsweek was correct when it said that it was the calm before a political typhoon. What actually broke out was more than a mere typhoon. It was a political earthquake and a power-struggle typhoon.

THE NEXT STAGE in the unfolding of the drama was seen in a AFP & Reuter despatch from Peking in October 10 in which it was stressed that Hua was chosen as

successor by Mao himself. This assurance had come in wall posters in Peking. The Hua group had to resort to wall posters in the first instance, because the media was completely under the control of the Shanghai (and Peking) radicals. But, by October 10, it was clear that the Hua group was firmly in the saddle. This is what the AFP Reuter report said:

The appointment of Mr. Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party was decided by Mao Tse-tung himself before he died, according to posters in Peking this morning. Posters in a teaching institute in the capital asked the people to "support firmly" the recent decisions which made Mr. Hua Kuo-feng, the Chairman of the Party Central Committee and of the Military Commission of the Central Committee. The posters praised the move as "wise" and said it was the wish of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The posters and slogans in the streets of the capital acclaiming the appointment of Mr. Hua multiplied throughout the day. The several dozens of posters seen yesterday became several hundreds to-day. Wall posters announcing Mr. Hua's appointment appeared simultaneously yesterday in Peking and Shanghai, two cities over 1,000 km apart.

The Chinese Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army issued a warning to-day to all those who would "betray" Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought" and "tamper with Chairman Mao's directives". The warning was expressed in a joint front-page editorial of the People's Daily, the theoretical magazine Red Flag, and the Liberation Army daily. The authors asserted that "anyone who practises revisionism and splitism and engages in conspiracies is bound to fail." "Historical experience shows that it has never been easy to try to crush our party", the joint editorial said. It's publication marked the end of a one-month mourning period in memory of the Chairman Mao, who died on September 9. The editorial confirmed that Mr. Hua was now the top leader of the Chinese Communist Party. It referred to him using an expression which until now had been reserved exclusively for Mao. "the Party Central Committee headed by comrade Hua Kuo-feng". The edi-

torial called on the Chinese people to "rally most closely round the Party Central Committee headed by comrade Hua Kuo-feng" and reminded them that "a deep understanding and grasp of Mao Tse-tung's thought requires that it be studied and applied in the course of the struggle." The commentary stressed that among the tasks at present was the "deepening of the criticism of (former Vice-President) Teng Hsiao-ping (disgraced last April), and continuing to beat back the right deviationist attempt". The people were reminded of Mao Tse-tung's instructions to "practise Marxism and not revisionism. Unite and don't split. Don't intrigue and conspire." Meanwhile confirming the appointment of Mr. Hua, a senior Chinese official said to-day that the announcement regarding this would be made in the near future.

What is significant is that the Hua group had already begun to control the administrative and propaganda machine of the Communist Party and that it had the support of the Army—the People's liberation army.

THEN, EARLY ON THE MORNING of October 11 (Sri Lanka time), the BBC and other international media started announcing the sensational news that **CHIANG CHING AND THREE OTHER RADICALS WERE HELD FOR COUP BID** A Reuters report datelined Peking October 11 read:

Chairman Mao Tse-tung's widow Chiang Ching, and three other top Chinese leaders have been arrested and accused of plotting a coup etat, sources said to-day. An official Chinese spokesman said he had "no comments." Sources told Reuters that Chinese officials had been privately briefed on the arrest of Chiang Ching and three other members of the so-called "Shanghai Mafia"—Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan. All four are leftist radical members of the Politburo, who first came to political prominence in Shanghai, China's most populous city.

Mr. Wang Hung-wen, about 40, is a vice-chairman of the Communist Party and until last year was widely tipped to succeed Mao. Mr. Yao is the country's chief propagandist, a former jour-

nalist who helped spark the cultural revolution. Most powerful of the four is Chang Chun-chiao, a Vice-Premier and the Army's Political Commissar. He is also a member of the Party's Standing Committee and was often talked of as a likely future Premier.

Thousands of people crowded into the streets of the East China city of Hangchow yesterday banging gongs and cymbals to support the appointment of Premier Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman. A traveller described the scene for correspondents, saying crowds gathered in a mass meeting and waved banners reading "Resolutely support the appointment of Comrade Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party." Posters in the capital and three other cities have hailed his appointment. In Shanghai workers objected to-day that they were not being kept in the picture. A handwritten "big character poster" in the heart of the city complained: "The Central Committee documents have still not been transmitted—why not?" The poster, which attracted a small crowd, was signed by the "Revonage corporalulatory Masses" of a draught. It was pasted up at 11 a.m. but by three in the afternoon had been ripped down. Travellers reported that in Shanghai the seat of modern Chinese radicalism, there were thousands of posters supporting Mr. Hua's appointment, compared to dozens in the capital. It appeared likely that despite the lack of a formal declaration, word of his promotion had reached all China's major cities.

Wall posters were pasted up in Peking yesterday urging people to support the army. Other slogans appeared today in Central Peking declaring "Love the Army" and "The Army and People are united like one family." Sources told Reuters in Peking they had been informed that Chinese cadres (officials) down to a fairly low level had now been briefed about the arrests. News was spreading among the people by word of mouth, they added.

Chiang Ching, who has been the main rallying point for radicals during the past year, took no part in China's political life until the cultural revolution of a decade ago. Together with Mao, she helped spark the tumultuous revolu-

tion. Mr. Chang and Mr. Wang also rose to prominence as a result of the cultural revolution. A bespectacled, former movie actress, she married Mao in 1939 and was his fourth wife. In recent years she has been the guardian of China's "revolutionists".

Under her aegis, stage and film works were developed along ever stricter, more puritanical and political lines. The last time she and the other three leaders appeared was on September 30 at a national day rally in the ancient Forbidden City.

The first report in any English daily in Sri Lanka came in the Ceylon Observer of October 12. Under the heading **CHARGES OF ATTEMPTED COUP AGAINST RADICAL CHINESE LEADERS: MAO'S WIFE UNDER HOUSE ARREST?** it published a Reuter report dated October 12 from London which read as follows:

"Several British Newspaper said today that Madame Chiang Ching, widow of Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung and her government colleagues were under arrest in Peking following an attempted coup against the new Chinese leadership. In a report from its own correspondent in Peking the **Daily Telegraph** said Mrs. Chiang Ching and her three fellow radicals in the Chinese politburo had been charged with plotting a coup d'etat. Quoting reliable sources, the Conservative newspaper named the other three men as Wang Hung-wen, party second Vice-Chairman, Chang Chun-chiao, First Vice-Premier, and Yao Wen-Yuan, a leading ideologue and polemicist.

The **Financial Times** said that according to unconfirmed reports Mrs. Chiang and the three men were now under house arrest. The reports are supported only by circumstantial evidence which suggests that "the power struggle which surfaced within the leadership before Chairman Mao died has since intensified. The **Financial Times** said. The **Daily Telegraph's** report said: "political organisers in factory and neighbourhood units were told of the arrests at special weekend briefings" sources said. The **Telegraph** said it was not known when the alleged coup attempt had been made. They (the radicals) are believed to have had little

real military backing and the charge may refer to some other form of alleged treason, such as manipulating or forging sayings which purportedly came from Mao in the last months of his life," it said. The **Telegraph**, **Financial Times** and the **Times** all pointed out that none of the radical group had appeared at Peking Airport yesterday to welcome the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr. Michael Somare. The **Times** referred to rumours in Peking and Hong Kong that "several leading radicals in the Politburo had been purged and some arrested." The rumours could not be confirmed, it said. The **Daily Telegraph** said that by forcing the ultra-leftists out of the Politburo, Premier Hua Kuo-feng—believed now to have been appointed successor to Chairman Mao—could now put China back on the course chartered by the late Premier Chou En-lai"

The Ceylon Observer also published a Reuter report from Peking also dated October 12.

Chinese officials today declined to comment on reports that Chairman Mao Tse-tung's widow Chiang Ching and three other Chinese leaders had been arrested and charged with plotting a coup. A Chinese official simply stated he had "no comment".

Rumour swept Peking that Chiang Ching and three other leading leftist radicals—Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan—had been arrested. Diplomatic sources said they understood that Chinese officials had been briefed about the arrests and that the news was being passed to the people by word of mouth. The reports came in an atmosphere of political crisis as the country waited for the long-delayed announcement that Premier Hua Kuo-feng had been appointed Chairman of the Communist party in succession to Mao Tse-tung. The four leaders reportedly arrested are all Politburo members and are collectively known as the Shanghai Mafia. Mr. Wang Hung-wen is a vice-Chairman of the Communist Party and until last year was widely expected to be appointed Chairman after Mao's death. Mr. Yao Wen-yuan is a fiery leftist who helped spark the tumultuous Cultural Revolution a decade ago.

Mr. Chang Chin-chiao is a Vice-Premier and the army's senior Political Commissar he had been widely tipped as a future Premier and has a wide spread of power based on Shanghai, China's most populous city.

For the past two days rumours of a leftist purge have been circulating in Peking but until today officials had declined all comment. Last Saturday wall posters started appearing in Peking, Shanghai and Nanking proclaiming Mr. Hua as the new Chairman but there has still been no formal announcement. The unprecedentedly confused handling of the announcement was seen by analysts here as evidence of serious conflict within the leadership. For the last two days the Communist Party newspaper 'People's Daily' has been exhorting readers: 'Unite. Don't split. Don't intrigue or conspire'. The official media have issued grave warnings that any attempts by "opportunists" to split the Communist Party were bound to fail. If the arrests are confirmed it means the Chinese hierarchy has been purged of all its most famous radicals, and the country is under a firmly pragmatic leadership.

The M.P.'s Letter

The letter,
Blast it
Blast the letter? Surely we
need letters
To read and write
To make our human speech
Why blast letters?
I tell you-blast the letters
Or better still go burn them
All the MP letters
That we must get,
To get a job
A piece of land
Or a transfer, from one place
to the next.
What have these gentlemen to
do
With such like processes?
Ah, but they have us by the
throat
By this but simple means.
All men of Sri Lanka,
Save to exhale or inhale
Must be girded with an MP
letter
Or else-remain in outer
darkness.

Bryan de Kretser

Thus, the news was broken to the world.

It is not yet known when the arrests took place, but according to the BBC, Nigel Wade, the only resident British newspaper correspondent in Peking, scored a world scoop with his report in *The Daily Telegraph* on October 10/11 that China's four top radicals had been arrested.

The official Chinese propaganda machine has now been turned fully against the Shanghai Four. This propaganda blast and the statements contained in editorials in party journals, in *Hsinhua* comments and the like must be carefully examined. The Shanghai Four and the radicals will now be "voiceless"—in the same way they had silenced and shut up thousands who had differed from the "radicals" from the days of the Great Leap Forward which had marked the end of the Hundred Flowers Bloom period.

It is not easy to understand the intricacies of Chinese politics. The world will not know either, for a long time, or never at all, what the Shanghai Four and other purged radicals have to say. Are the charges of coupism forgery and attempted murder true or fabrications to effect a political transformation?

(To be Continued)



MARGINALIA

Nonaligned In Sri Lanka

By Bryan de Kretser

I find myself asking if the concept of non-alignment ought not to be applied to the existing political situation in Sri Lanka today. Anyone who believed that we can easily survive as a united people during and after another General Election does not know his Sri Lanka. There is a serious emotional schism in the body politic and it would be unwise to ignore it. The causes of the tension between our peoples need not be examined now. We need not rub the sore when what we are trying to do is to bring the plaster.

Apart from the strong feelings which exist as between UNP sup-

porters and SLFP supporters, all of us are committed as a people to socialism. Just as every age has had its religious, so Socialism appears to be one of the popular religions of the twentieth century. And as there has been a fairly obvious chasm between the behests of other religions and the habits and behaviour of their followers, so in our time there exists a fairly clear gap between the tenets of socialism and the existing situation, either in Sri Lanka or elsewhere for that matter. But to socialism all our Parties say they are committed.

Is there no way then for us to devise a method by which we can bring the major Parties together unitedly to grapple with the major problems of the country? I repeat, I can see no significant difference between the SLFP and the UNP political principles. The conflicts we are invited at the moment to join is essentially between groups of people who have personal conflicts or are caught in personal power loyalties which make it hard for them to eschew battle for fear of losing face etc. But the problems of our nation are far more grave than that facing such individuals.

I hardly need to spell them out, all of us know what they are. Employment of our youth, food for all our peoples, a gaiety of spirit so sadly absent from our lives because of existing stresses, all these require a massive and united effort if we are to resolve them, we have tried the way of Party politics and they have only snared us in empty Party slogans and cheap vendetta.

We have earned international fame by our espousal of non-alignment and we have appeared on international platforms offering this concept as one which can bring peace and justice among any peoples. There is in the concept an inherent criticism also of the way of the super-powers; we dare to explain and defend the concept as being more reasonable and more likely to bring disarmament and harmony among the nations of the world. Those who do not belong as yet to this group of nations would be even more convinced of our testimony if we were able to resolve our own national tensions between conflicting political parties by bringing the concept

to bear in healing power in Sri Lanka.

I say to leaders of the Parties think of our people. Must we continue this meaningless party conflict? Does it bring true peace to the individual? Does it not expose our poor and struggling peoples to the danger of continuing uncertainty and ill-will? You force us at Election time to make a choice. It is not for any of us a choice involving life and death issues, yet in making the choice all of us are asked to risk paying a high price, should we back the losing side. If you got together instead and pointing out to us the way ahead it would bring a great emotional release to all of us—and these energies could be utilised to help bring about a miracle of economic and social transformation in our land. The challenge facing us is a big one—are our leaders big enough in spirit to match the need of the hour? Towards the end of her speech at the Non-aligned Nations Summit, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, quoted these words of the Buddha "If we can meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and act upon our decisions in concord, so long may we be expected, not to decline but to prosper". This, the Prime Minister said "in many ways sums up the philosophy of Non-alignment itself, with the tenets of peace, justice, goodwill and co-operation."



"PEOPLE WILL SHOOT US"

A Comment On The Constitutional Rights Of The People

By R. Kahawita

EVEN THOUGH it was said in 1971, Mr. Dias Bandaranaike could not have been more precise, and more to the point today than in 1971, when in reply to the Member for Akurana he said, "The people will shoot us"—no record to say whether he said "shoot us like dogs".

Whether said in jest, or to rile the Opposition, or to bring some laughter to the House on a torrid

afternoon during a dull debate, all the same it was the logical answer a responsible Minister of a Government could give if the governing party attempts to deny or erode the rights of the people granted to themselves in their Constitution.

In his reply, the Minister, Dias Bandaranaike, was not only aware of the constitutional rights of the people but also frightened of the fate of those who might attempt to usurp the sovereignty of the people.

Under the constitution the Sovereignty is in the people and is inalienable. "The Sovereignty of the people is exercised through a National State Assembly of elected representatives of the people." Please mark elected representatives. It is quite clear that the representatives must be elected. There is no provision for an alternative way of representing the people. The people elect their representatives to a National State Assembly which is their supreme instrument of State power to exercise (a) their legislative power (b) their executive through the head of State and the Ministers and (c) their Judicial power through courts etc.

When the people of Sri Lanka adopted the Constitution, they gave a period of five years to the first National State Assembly and also deemed that all those who formed the Constituent Assembly be Members of the first National State Assembly for a period of five years. This period cannot be extended.

HOWEVER, currently there is active canvassing going on in the ruling party to extend the present life of N.S.A. by another three years by hook or crook. Some even contend that by passing a resolution with a two-thirds majority they can amend section 42 sub-section 5 of the Constitution which lays down the life of the first N.S.A. So to secure this two-thirds majority some members are going about trying to buy members to vote for the amendment like buying Pigs in the market place. Even names are circulated about who have agreed to vote for the Amendment for various considerations. These are rumours and should be treated with contempt. One could not believe there will be traitors to betray the trust the people have placed in them.

The two-third majority will certainly include the six nominated members. As they do not represent anybody, except they are the choice of the P.M., have they any right to vote to change the Constitution? The Constitution can be changed only by the elected representatives of the people. And nobody else. If the six nominated members can vote to change the supreme instrument of State Power, where do the elected representatives come in? A Prime Minister then, can collect from the lanes and byways anybody he or she likes to form a two-third majority, change the Constitution and continue to be in power for ever thereafter. This is absurd and that is why, I presume, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva is supposed to have said that the Constitution could not be changed retrospectively. The present N.S.A. is an interregnum so to say till a new N.S.A. is constituted after May 22nd 1977. In that assembly all members will be elected by the people and those whom they elect will be persons to whom the people can entrust, legislative, executive and judicial power fully conscious that the N.S.A. is the supreme instrument of State power devoid of an upper house as a safety valve to control excesses of power.

If the life of the present Assembly is extended it will be illegal and unconstitutional. And if they do what can the people of Sri Lanka do whose Sovereignty is inalienable? Mr. F. D. Bandaranaike says it is theoretically possible that it can happen etc. the N.S.A. can cut itself off from the source of its Authority". It can happen and if it happens, it will be unconstitutional—it amounts to a Coup d'etra staged by the ruling Party to do away with the will and consent of the people and establish a fascist regime by force of arms.

There is a difference between the present and the next N.S.A. In the present N.S.A. there are six members supporting the Government, these six will not be there in the next N.S.A. In seeking a two-thirds majority to change the Constitution, these six votes may be the deciding votes—and they represent nobody and are not elected members to the N.S.A. The next N.S.A. will be the representative Assembly of the people, with an elected membership. Mr.

F. D. B. says, "They will do it with guns, with sticks, with stones. There is no other way under the existing Constitution". The reverse is also true: the present ruling party also can stay in power by suppressing the people who dare to revolt, with guns as they have, 5,000 Police men and 5,000 soldiers, a navy and an Air Force fully armed.

All these possibilities are outside the Constitution and constitutional rights of the people. It is correct that the Constitution can be amended, but it does not mean that it can be amended to erode or do away with the supremacy of the people with members who have no right to be in the N.S.A. If that is the aim it can still be done by going back to the people for a referendum. The Constitution does not bestow on the elected a free hand once they are elected to the N.S.A. To enable the people to be consulted and maintain communication with the people on major issues that may affect the people's constitutional rights, the P.M. can dissolve the N.S.A. at any time he or she likes and go to the people for a fresh mandate. It is for this reason that the P.M. elected by the people has the right to dissolve the N.S.A. sooner than the legitimate life of the N.S.A. He or she can make his or her individual decision and advise the President to dissolve the N.S.A.

But the P.M. cannot extend the life of the N.S.A. without amending the Constitution. The argument that if a Constitution that cannot be amended, means making a piece of paper the King, is absurd. If the Constitution is incapable of being amended, it means going to the people for an amendment if that needs be, though cumbersome. What has to be prevented is that once the members are elected to the N.S.A. they becoming demi-gods and going on for ever by amending the Constitution.

All Constitutions are good as long as those who get into power under a Constitution respect and honour the content and spirit of the Constitution. If they do not do that the answer the people have is what Mr. Bandaranaike said "Chase the elected members with guns, with sticks and with stones". We hope the election issue of May 1977 will not be deci-

ded in that fashion. It is for such an eventuality that the political parties, irrespective of colour and symbol, should educate the voters and get them ready to establish their supremacy, as long as the present Constitution stands approved by the people.

The members of the present Constituent Assembly were elected to the Soulbury Constitution, which provided for an upper house and a lower house of elected and nominated members. In the Constitution the people adopted on 22nd May, 1972, there is *no provision for an upper house and for nominated members*. When the people elected their representatives to the defunct Parliament, they had, a sort of safety valve in the upper house to moderate excessive legislation passed by the lower house. This has some influence in the choice of the Parliamentarians.

With the acceptance of a unicameral government, in theory the type of members the people chose to represent them should be different. Also the six nominated members who were nominated by the P.M. under the now defunct Parliament have no place in the N.S.A. for the Constitution says the members of the N.S.A. must be *elected representatives of the people*. The six nominated members who got into the N.S.A.—through the back door so to say, do not represent anybody except the P.M. in the N.S.A. They are there by virtue of the fact that they happened to be in the Constituent Assembly and they are there for five years. But for this accident of being in the Constituent Assembly at the time the Constitution was adopted, they have no constitutional right to be members of the N.S.A.



FORTY YEARS AGO
IN A TEA ESTATE—12

More About The Dorai

By Ina Trimmer

It never occurred to my husband to give in to fear or pain. Once when the V.A. was "visiting" they went out together one morning to the stables to mount their horses and start the round of ins-

pection. One of my husband's horses, Mary, was the old race horse "Struck Again" which he bought from a friend who had found it impossible to ride her. She had a vicious habit of rising up on her back legs and trying to throw her rider. My husband knew this but there was little hidden from him about horse-flesh and their tricks and how to circumvent them. Mary was certainly not the animal for Brae with its narrow paths and precipitous edges. But my husband liked her shining black coat though I, when I arrived, did not trust her toothy smile.

However this incident took place before ever I dreamt of Brae. My husband knew when Mary was about to demonstrate her little accomplishment. She had a way of tossing her head with a wicked neigh, and he was always ready with his whip to bring her down to earth. But that morning she gave no indication of her intentions. As my husband mounted her she reared herself up and began to back. There was an enormous rock close to the stables. Closer and closer she backed towards this. The whip was of no avail nor the spurs. She backed till my husband had to put out his left hand to keep himself from being crushed against the rock. The horsekeeper came running up and gave her a mighty whack on her withers. It brought her to her senses and she galloped forwards and away, up the steep path that led to the Gap. The V.A. followed "Trimmer" he shouted, "get off that horse."

But Mary galloped on, up the straight and round the bend till the steepness wore her down. At last she halted.

"Why don't you get off that vicious beast?" shouted the V.A. again, "she once threw my wife on the Nuwara Eliya Race course. Reg Wilson sold her because she was unmanageable."

My husband petted her on her neck. "Never mind, old lady, you shall learn who is master one day."

At lunch the V.A. noticed my husband trying to tackle his food with one hand only. "What's wrong", he asked. "Your hand painful?"

"A bit" answered my husband. "I think I hurt it when Mary pushed me up against the rock."

"Let's have a look. Hurt be damned. Your wrist is broken as far as I can see."

It was not till six o'clock that evening that the doctor from Madul-kelle hospital arrived. He had to go down to the factory four miles from the bungalow where my husband had insisted on taking the V.A. to continue with the day's work. They laid my husband on an improvised operating table, and as there was no anaesthetic, the V.A. was asked to grip the arm above the broken wrist as hard as he could and never let go whatever happened. So hard did he hang on that the whole arm was black and blue for over a month.

Just one more incident which again took place before I arrived on the scene, and not long after my husband had taken over Brae. The tenth of each month is usually pay day on any estate. Like clockwork all planters set out between the sixth and ninth for cooly pay. Some go to Colombo others to Kandy. It all depends on the closest large town to a branch of the estate's bank. My husband went to Kandy, usually on the eighth to return on the ninth afternoon. One night before he left for cooly pay Murugaya, his trusted and faithful Kangany who with his gang of coolies had followed him whichever estate he planted, came to him and said—"Dorai don't go for pay tomorrow. There's a 'cootum' (pack or crowd) waiting to rob the pay and kill you. They will wait for you at the Gap."

"Murugaya, this is all nonsense. They are trying to frighten you all."

"Dorai, they are not after us, but after you and the money."

"Let them try."

"Can't you get the police to accompany you dorai?"

"How many times do you think I'll have to get the police? No—this must be fought out once and for all. Anyway it's a rumour only."

"Maybe Dorai; but rumours are often the truth. I'll get a gang to walk with you. I'll send some of my relations."

"You will not. We are not going to show fear. I only want someone to carry the pay, some one with my gun, and a man for my suitcase. Now go and don't worry."

On his return with the pay, my husband dismounted as usual

at the Gap to walk downhill. Three men were with him; one with the leather box in which he always carried the pay, one with his suitcase, and the other with the gun. They were obviously frightened and kept looking round as if expecting an attack from the jungle at any moment.

Go on you men. Walk ahead. Karuppan you with the gun in front. Palani in the middle with the pay and Munian behind. I shall follow last of all. Now. There was no sign of trouble. Not a sound except the creaking of tree trunks and branches in the wind, and the shrilling of cicadas.

It was lonely. It was eerie in the overpowering presence of nature.

My husband quickened his steps to keep pace with the men who had broken into a steady trot to get away as fast as possible from the ill-omened spot. They had just taken the bend over the little water course when there was a sound of thudding footsteps behind. My husband continued to walk but more slowly now, and gripped the heavy knotted walking stick he carried, his only personal weapon of defence. The weapon men with the pay and the gun had disappeared.

Closer came the steps—closer—my husband waited till he heard the sound of heavy breathing, slightly panting close on him. He swung round with a mighty sweep his knotted stick. A crack; A thud! a cry! "Amma! several voices! But he walked on, unperturbed outwardly. He told me that his heart was thumping against his ribs as he prepared for the next man.

But there was no other.

Murugaya later informed him that the man who fell was carried by his companions to the Madukelle hospital with a broken skull

There was no doubt that my husband was held in great respect by the whole estate, but there was more in it than his fearlessness, or justice, or straight-dealing. I asked him one day whether he knew what it was. "Is it because you are the Dorai?"

"Not altogether" he said thoughtfully. They seem to imagine that a blessing from me is a benison indeed, and a curse—not the thunders of Jove can compare with one of my maledictions. Murugaya's little daughter Pothao once told

me "Dorai you are higher than us all. You are a Papen. Your father was a priest. I let her think so. It could be the greatest weapon I have in this god forsaken place."

"I've never heard you curse anyone, you scold them, and you shout at them but barking dogs never bite."

"Barking dog indeed! Get along with you! When the occasion arises all things are necessary. Somehow coincidences have proved to the coolies anyway, that they had better beware of my curses."

"Why? whom did you curse?"

"Sangeamma's husband for one. One night he set fire to Munian's goat shed, and the whole thing including two goats were burnt to death."

"How terrible!"

"Yes, and it was everything Munian had. I told the old man get the hell out of here! *Nasumpo* you bastard; He went. He took bus to Wattagama. On the way there was an accident, and he broke both legs. He wandered for five years from estate to estate and came back begged and my forgiveness."

"And did you?"

A little smile flitted across my husband's face. "Who am I to refuse? He is back in the same lines. On the same job, a respectable citizen again."

"Yes, I remember you said Sangeamma's husband was working in the factory again."

"Why, yes. The quality of mercy must not be strained. When you forgive you do not withhold. You also forced."

(To be Continued)

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—97

RAIN

By Herbert Keuneman

Well, it's come, this benison we've longed for; and, as usual with me, for me it is not an un-mixed benison! Always looking the gifts of Providence in the mouth I am, and some day no doubt Providence is going to get good and tired of my peevishness and hand me a real wallop; but until that

day also comes I reserve the right to grumble.

What is this life if, full of gratitude,

We have no time to...er...to... take another attitude? Everybody I see since returning from Colombo ten days ago is bespread with such a fatuous expression of satisfaction that a similar grin which creeps unbidden on my features when I glance at the full tank outside my hedge astringes itself and my face resumes its habitual demeanour of dole.

What these farmers have to be so all gone cheerful about I don't rightly know. Guaranteed happy days are not here again just because the tank is full—and, at that, it stopped two or three inches short of spilling; which is about three acre-feet, three blessed acre-feet, short of capacity—not by a long chalk! Yet there they go, happy as sandboys or as mudlarks more appropriately, and it burns me up to see them. Don't they understand, poor simple dupes, that this whole Northeast Monsoon business is nothing but an 'election gundu'?

But seriously: our farmers are far from out of the wood. They have, it is true, the water to begin a Mahā cultivation of sorts; but too late to raise a traditional crop of 4 1/2 month *vadimal* ('senior') paddy, they must fall back on a 'junior' strain, quick-growing but poor-yielding or high in yield but of poor rice quality; and unless Government steps in and provides it generously, not everybody will be able to procure—or to afford—the appropriate seed. Nor is that all. They must still count on the Monsoon's holding to its old pattern so that the constant water that will have to be drawn for the growing crops will not so seriously deplete the tank that a Yala harvest will be impossible without particularly heavy inter-monsoonal rains in March/April to replenish it. A not hopeful prospect, as next week I intend trying to show. And again: how many, I wonder, will actually be able to accomplish now the ploughing that should have been put behind them more than a month ago but was put off in despair because it seemed after all these years of disappointment that seasonable rain would never come. And now

that there is rain, not only time but tractors themselves are in short supply—several lie crippled for lack of spare parts or prohibitively expensive repairs and the buffaloes that might have substituted for them have been sold or stolen during the silly years when not to use a tractor marked the farmer as unprogressive and stick-in-the-mud and less than the equal of his fellows—so that tractor rates are almost arbitrarily quoted (Rs. 100-120 an acre) and of course money is in short supply as well. No, despite the now abundant water things do not look all that bright.

Nevertheless the farmers do! And I suppose, if the truth be told, an observer could surprise a smirk upon my own face, too.

Mind you, I do not forswear my grumble. My current private one is that the rain, which could be so unequivocally welcome, is coming unwelcome not only straight down through the roof (parts of which by the combined efforts of sparrows, *talagoyas*—and, let us not forget, cobras—and constantly worried by the hitherto profitless and empty wind are so thinned of thatch that to call it 'roof' borders upon extravagance) but also sideways, in cold gusts of soaking spray like spindrift, through the bamboo tats of which squirrels have long ago eaten the hessian linings. Well, perhaps not exactly eaten; they made their nests of it; but they have entirely removed it, anyway. Carpets, cushions, curtains, mattresses, everything is either wringing wet or heavy with cold damp; the very paper on which I am typing this is become hygroscopic, and each time the wind—still, by the way, south-west save during squalls—rises to more than a breath I must cease typing, cover the table with a sheet of plastic weighted down against the wind's plucking fingers, and retire to some spot temporarily free of the larger leaks.

I should have had the roof re-thatched a year or more ago. Or, better yet, tiled. Tiled for purely practical reasons, though having it on aesthetic grounds or the grounds of comfort. But with materials at least twice the price they were less than a year ago, how shall I ever be doing that on the fixed pittance of my pension? Likewise, I should have the tats

relined. But of what that is any longer available and affordable? Jute has vanished from the market: even black-market jute; and polythene—which the wind would, anyway, tear to shreds within a season—would cost me nine months' pension!

I have another worry: cracks in my walls. They are a strange sort of cracks. One reaches vertically all the way from wall-plate to plinth; the other horizontally from the upper level of a concrete lintel all the way to where the wall on which it occurs joins another wall, so that above the crack the brickmasonry mysteriously hangs together in a kind of cantilever; yet not another crack appears either in that wall or the one it joins! Both cracks have markedly enlarged since I first noticed them a year or so ago—they may have enlarged since the nearly three weeks of intense rains (now, however gradually thinning) that we have enjoyed from the end of September—but they are not caused, apparently, by sinking foundations: I have examined the foundation beneath the vertical crack and everything is as sound as a bell beneath DPC level. And yet, in this welter of wet horrid growth of doubt begin to stir. The house is founded on a fine close clay (I could not discover anything solid even three feet lower down) and one cannot avoid uncomfortable conceits of trickling underground water prying with tiny hands at the particles of my house's feet of clay and carrying them whither? to leave the structure based on nothing but a vacuum! Quite ungeological. But naggingly disconcerting.

And yet.....

And yet, as I said before, I suppose an observer when I am not casting myself in the role of a Cassandra or being deliberately 'realist' or the wind and rain are not so violent that I really cannot find in the house a sheltered spot from which to look out upon it would find me smiling fatuously, too: will-I nil-I. The fact is, after such a paralyzing period of drought and fear as we Vanni-dwellers have just been through, rain—rain as abundant and prodigal.. and visibly revitalizing to every form of material life..as now invests us—is a kind of drug, a kind of transcendent experience, a psy-

chic, irrational, supernatural condition, a metaphysic; we are taking a good trip, we are on a 'high', we are as detached from mentalization as ever any hippie was unconscious of his squalid pad or any ascetic of physical discomfort.

You who live in a city and whose most vivid, bitterest conception of drought is a water-cut and an increase in the price of pumpkins or, at worst, the fading of your garden can have no conception of such intoxication with well-being. The life-principle in us has been re-activated, we are drunk with sap.

I missed the first raptures of this experience this time—and it must have been one of the best times, in proportion to the badness of the time that had preceded it—being away in Colombo for the first week. But at least I got back in time to watch the tank fill. And that is delight in itself.

At first, despite the constant assertion of the drumming rain there is little perceptible effect (this period must have taken longer than usual this time with the tank bone dry as it was) for through its million microscopic mouths the soil everywhere is sucking the cool water in; only a sudden greening of the sere grass and the brown trees transforms the colour of the landscape overnight. But then, equally suddenly to the eye, pools begin to form; the soil is replete. The next morning, however, the pools have apparently vanished (though they are there and gently growing: it takes a lot of rain to spread an inch of water over a twelve-acre tank bed) for all at once the lotus roots—such of them as the hungry village has left undug & boiled & eaten; but there are still thousands—and the grass roots and the kek—or kak—or kokatiya roots in the old shallows and the *kumudu* and the lily roots have been awakened and put forth weak stems and the water is hidden again so that one cold almost again despair but that the brown bed is verdant now and the rain still roars from the sagging. Thus unspectacularly the water creeps higher and higher up to gentle slopes of restored sward until the last great transformation, demonstrating incidentally the whole rationale of the original

Sinhala irrigation system, takes place. Suddenly—I keep repeating this word; but I must, the fascinating essence of the tank-filling process is this series of pantomime-worthy 'transformation scenes'—the tanks on the higher contours of the country are full, the spilled water comes rippling down the ancient courses into the tanks below, and while you watch the perimeter of your own tank grows, the aquatic plants are temporarily drowned as the level rapidly rises, and where you have gone to sleep having looked upon a field of tender green you awake to find a sheet of unblemished patinated silver. The tank is full. Another three inches of rain and it should be spilling, helping spill in their turn the expectant series of tanks below it: Manakkulayagama Wewa, Ataragalla Wewa, Palukadawewa, Aesan Kulama in Galgamuaw..And thank God our sky holds promise still.

That's a strange thing: be the sky never so leaden; throughout the rains of this Northeast season a mysterious—no, a mystical—and peculiarly beautiful blue-ness seems to invest the atmosphere.. something in the light. Galgiriya-kanda is blue and casts a blue shadow; the grass is blue-green; the bark of every tree is invested with a blue sheen as though a thin lambency of alcoholic flame were flickering upon it. How did anybody ever come to associate two of the loveliest of nature's colours with low spirits and subdued emotions: 'browned off' 'feeling blue'? Under the rain, be we never so physically uncomfortable (and who that has water again at his doorstep can be wholly uncomfortable physically) our spirits are high. Perhaps, as I began by saying, foolishly, over-optimistically high. But for now we hold up our heads and let the rain wash our faces.

'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.'



HERE AND THERE

BY DOPEY

S. L. B. C. & S. W. R. D.

Other day a radio listener was complaining about the Broadcasting matter over the Sri Lanka Broadcasting channels on the 24th, 25th, 26th and the 27th in commemoration of the Bandaranaike Day. His complaint was, that the Sri Lanka Radio has such a bad reputation for broadcasting blatant and obvious lies, not one listener takes what is said over the radio seriously. So what was said about the achievements of the Late Mr. Bandaranaike by the radio during this period would have been treated by the listeners with contempt. It does more damage to this great man than any good nor increase his esteem in the hearts of the people. It is a pity that the Radio Ceylon with the kind of reputation that it has earned for itself was asked to put over the air the qualities and achievements of the late Mr. Bandaranaike. No one has denied nor any one will ever dare to deny his achievements at Oxford, at the Colombo Municipal Council, at the State Council and finally as P.M. for just two years or so up to his untimely death. The manner in which the Radio Ceylon went about eulogizing the late leader gave the listener the impression that the radio was trying to build up greatness where there was none. For four days it was a cascade of praise for his achievements, Policies and Principles but never mentioned what they were even in general. It also gave one the impression that there was nothing called Bandaranaike Policies and Principles written or unwritten so that it was necessary to din into the ears of listeners imaginary qualities and aspirations of the great leader so as to cover the misdeeds of those who followed him and did a number of things which he would never have tolerated.

The listener was really annoyed that the radio did much more damage to him than any good to him and his contributions to build

a new society to give new hope to his people. The people know without being told—much less by the "Boru Radio"—that he was an adherent of the principles of Pancha Seela as symbolized in the five columns over his grave and he strictly followed the "middle way". Our acceptance of him as a great leader of Sri Lanka was entirely due to what he preached. His followers were taken up by his approach to economic and political problems and gave him full support. Unfortunately before he defined and enunciated his policies and principles based on the middle path, an assassin's hand removed him from the leadership. What followed thereafter is far from his principles and policies. They who were ready to snatch greatness under his shadow did not lose time to drive their own ambitions into the party in the guise of his Principles and Policies, so my listener friend was annoyed and perturbed that this great man was being eulogized and flattered to such an extent solely for the purpose of covering up the mis-deeds of the people who crept into the party he formed to work out a middle way to the people of Sri Lanka. So, as the Scriptures say, "Satan is never without resources to achieve his nefarious activities". The name of this Great man is being used for that purpose by many today to achieve their nefarious activities.

NEXT WEEK

- * THE BUDGET
— And The Elections
- * SRI LANKA'S DOCTORS
— And The Government
- * POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE
IN PEKING—2
— "Radicals" Routed
- * RAIN IN WANNI
— The Future
- * LAND REFORM
— Three Acres (?) No Cow

Confidentially

Damaged Beedi Leaf

IS IT NOT A FACT that some months ago there was a song and dance in the Lake House papers about some doings in the Beedi Industry, which was a near monopoly of a state corporation, at least, so far as the import of beedi leaves were concerned? That there were front-pages headlines and the public were assured that a top level committee of bureaucrats had been appointed to investigate the allegations of corruption and the charges of mismanagement and worse that had been made by the trade unions and others concerned in the beedi industry? That, after this, nothing has been heard of the investigations of this Committee? That it is not known whether this Committee submitted a report? That, if it had, it has certainly escaped our notice? That we will be grateful if some readers will send us information about what this Committee discovered and what recommendations were put forward by it? That in the meantime, fresh questions have been raised about the beedi business? That on October 15, 1976, two LSSP MPs Dr. N. M. Perera and Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, had focussed attention in the National State Assembly on question of the damaged beedi leaf "scandal"? That the questions in the NSA had only touched a fringe of the problem? That some of the facts that have been brought to our notice reveal that this is a matter which calls for a comprehensive investigation not merely into this damaged leaf matter but also the whole setup in the industry as controlled by the State Corporation? That the facts relating to the damaged leaf matter seems to be somewhat as follows? (That we shall be pleased to publish corrections or amplifications the Corporation or any others may send us to present a fuller and truer picture of the problem?) That the Sri Lanka Tobacco Industries Corporation (by letter dated October 5, 1976) offered a large

quantity of damaged beedi wrapper leaf for tender by permit holders (actually agents, who pay BTT)? That the floor price per lb for the damaged leaf was Rs. 8/50 for grade 2 leaf and Rs. 6/00 for grade 3 leaf? That by letter dated October 8 the Corporation informed the "permit holders" that there were 300,000 lbs damaged grade 2 leaf and 150,000 lbs grade 3 leaf? That the permit holders thereupon sent in their tenders? That the story is now current that the tenders were opened as soon as they were received and that the price quoted were known to everybody in the inner circle? (That it is possible that this allegation is a baseless one circulated by disappointed tenderers? That it is for the Corporation to make known the safeguards taken to ensure that normal tender procedure was followed?) That, to continue the story, it would appear that the "last to quote" (so it is alleged) was an organisation under the name and style *Colombo North Beedi Workers' Society*? That their price was the highest being Rs. 14/35 per lb for grade 2 wrapper leaf? (That it is alleged that the prevailing blackmarket price among under-privileged non-permit-holders is Rs. 25 a lb)? That this *Workers' Society* had quoted for the entire consignment of 300,000 of grade 2 leaf? That the tenders closed on October 12, 1976? That it is not known whether the Tender Board met? That the Board or someone else decided that the entire consignment of 300,000 lbs be given to this "*Workers' Society*" which was represented by a gentleman whose name has transpired in a big way in the goings-on in the beedi industry (and other import matters) in recent years? That thereafter Corporation chieftains are said to have left for India on October 14 to purchase new beedi wrapper leaf to replace the leaf sold as damaged? That in the meantime interested parties have raised some pertinent questions mainly relating the *Colombo North Beedi Workers' Society*? That among the questions being asked are the following: (a) When was this *Society* formed?; (b) How much beedi wrapper leaf has been issued to this *Society* from its inception?; (c) How much BTT is due from the *Society* for the leaf so issued from the inception?; (d) How much BTT has this *Society* paid?; (d) (e) Who are the members and office-

bearers of the *Society*?; (f) What is the official address of this *Society*?; (g) How many workers does the *Society* employ?; (h) Are these workers paid any wages and are they on the EPF list?; (h) What are the records maintained by this *Society*?; (j) Under what brand name do they market the beedi they manufacture?; (k) What is the financial standing of this *Workers' Society*?; (l) Has this *Society* sufficient funds to invest nearly Rs. 5 million to buy the damaged beedi wrapper leaf?; (m) If the *Society* does not have the funds, who is the financier who has put up the money for this deal?; (n) Who was the person who paid for wrapper leaf on earlier transactions and who collected the leaf?; (o) If the *Society* has not paid BTT and Income Tax—as other permit holders are expected to—who has authorised the issue of wrapper leaf to this *Society*?; (p) Whose signatures is are on the tender application submitted?; (q) Was the Corporation justified in selling the 300,000 lbs of damaged wrapper leaf to this *Society*? That these questions are among the many raised by obviously interested parties? That ever since the story of the mismanagement broke in the daily press and it was reported that a Committee of Investigation had been appointed a whole series of questions and memoranda have been floating around? That it is time that some people in authority sat up and took notice of these queries? That elections can be won or lost by the whisper campaigns that stem from allegations of the kind now enveloping the beedi industry? That though *Tribune* has been bombarded for months now with information which purported to be inside information about the goings-on in the beedi industry we have not referred to them (except briefly and incidentally) because we thought it best to await the report of the Officials' Committee of Investigation? That as we have no information about the findings of this Committee we have ventured to raise some pertinent questions now in circulation? That unless these questions are answered to the satisfaction of a curious public the happenings in the beedi industry is likely to have major impact in a number of electorates where people were traditionally involved in the manufacture of beedis?



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