

TRIBUNE

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BAMBOO TUBEWELLS

Some months ago *Tribune* published a report that in India bamboo tubewells had made the grade under suitable soil conditions. This week we publish a fuller and more detailed account of these tubewells which have helped the food drive in India. There are areas in Ceylon where such tubewells are a practical and workable proposition. If done as in India, they will cost only a fraction of the money needed to sink surface wells or provide water through minor or major irrigation schemes. With the present drive to produce more food in Sri Lanka, serious thought must be given to the feasibility of sinking bamboo tubewells in all parts of the country suitable for the purpose.



Bamboo being split into pieces for making pi

FOOD
PRODUCTION
AGRICULTURAL
CREDIT
TUBEWELLS
CLIMATIC
CHANGES

FOREIGN DEBTS
NM & IMF
LAKE HOUSE
UNP'S BOYCOTT

BATTICOTTA
SEMINARY

TOURISM

Tribunania

- ❖ On Food Production
- ❖ Agricultural Credit
- ❖ Tubewells and Climatic Changes

AS FAR BACK as December, 1972, we had stated that the Maha crop will not be what optimistic bureaucrats had boasted it would be. We had not based our forecast, on astrological calculations, but on reports we had received from different parts of the country. We refused to accept the bogus statistics of interested officialdom. Furthermore, we had also forecast as early as April this year that the Yala will be a bigger failure than the Maha. This forecast was made not merely because the rains had failed at the crucial sowing season, but also because large tracts of paddy fields had not been cultivated owing to the acts of commission and omission of the Government. The Yala crop was an even greater failure than the Maha mainly because of the continuing drought in parts of the country, and the partial, if not complete, failure of the South-west monsoon.

Why government officials did not want to face the realities squarely at the appropriate time is a mystery. If they had done so, the shortfall could easily have been minimised. *Tribune* is keenly aware

that there could have been a greater Yala paddy crop, in spite of the reduced rainfall, if middle class and richer cultivators were given the facilities to sow last season. Department officials concentrated their efforts so heavily on so-called, "peasant" cultivators that they ignored sections which were in a better position to produce results. Suggestions from "middle class farmers" about what could be done in particular areas were dismissed as "bourgeois advice." Officials preferred to do nothing rather be accused of assisting "rich" persons—to produce food for the nation.

There is another aspect to which Government must pay immediate attention, that is agricultural credit. A very large number of cultivators are in default either with the co-ops or the banks on the paddy loans they had obtained from the year 1970. Although the Government may not have been made aware, the fact is that from the Maha of 1970-71, apart from the insurgency of April 1971, there was a repeated partial failure of the Monsoons and farmers could not therefore

repay their loans for reasons beyond their control. Banks and co-ops gave extended time to paddy farmers to pay these loans, but the monsoons failed for the Maha of 1971-72 and also for the Maha of 1972-73. The farmers were not able to pay their loans, but what was worse they could not obtain new loans because their old loans were still unpaid. In terms of commercial banking, the refusal to give new loans before the old ones were paid was correct, but in agricultural credit it is a well-known principle that where the weather and natural disasters have been the cause of default, credit institutions provide more credit in order to keep the farmer in business and to help him pay back all loans.

THE GOVERNMENT, the banks and the Co-op Credit organisations naturally fear that to give further credit to defaulters will be suicidally dangerous and that this would only lead to corruption of a serious kind. This may be a correct rule in commercial banking, but if this yardstick were applied to agricultural credit, particularly in a developing country in transition, a sizable portion of agricultural activity will get frozen. And production will naturally drop.

This is what has happened in Sri Lanka, and the pity is that nobody seems to recognise this harsh reality. Officials and bankers who know this reality are afraid of making recommendations

or suggestions because they do not want to be accused of wanting to help defaulters. Unless the Government and the banks offer a moratorium to defaulters, at least on selective basis, and extend fresh credit to farmers who can grow paddy on their own lands or leased lands, the coming Maha season will not turn out to be the success the Government hopes it will be. Responsible government officials and experienced bank managers should be vested with the discretion to offer a moratorium to defaulters if they will engage in paddy and food production. Offering land and credit to new farmers (who are necessarily not defaulters) will not solve the food problem because the Government must utilise the experience and knowledge of the older farmers, even those who may be called "rich farmers" in order to increase food production.

What is not realised is that the so-called "rich farmer" who has been in agriculture for years is up to his neck in debt and unless he is assisted with credit he will soon go out of business—and the country will be the loser. Until our commercially-minded banks and until our as yet commercially-inhibited co-op credit agencies approach agricultural credit on new lines, no progress in agriculture will be possible. In India, where a new spirit had been infused into agricultural credit, it has been found that defaulters assisted to get back into

business have made good in a big way and had cleared up their loans within a short time. Indian experience has also shown that credit has to be ample and adequate: otherwise the farmer will be starved of essential inputs and the whole operation will once again prove a costly failure. It must be also remembered that credit should not be in cash alone: the bulk of it should be in fertilisers, insecticides and weedicides, and in direct payments for ploughing done by private tractor owners or by government (pool) tractors.

THE GOVERNMENT has now stopped blaming the UNP for all the ills of the country. This had earlier fostered a myopia which was deceptive. Now the emphasis has shifted to the drought and international price factors. This will also tend to create a new kind of myopia. No doubt these excuses with exaggerated emphasis are trotted out to gloss over the acts of commission and omission of the United Front government, but it is time to move over from apologetics to active constructive work. The whole attitude to agricultural credit must be changed. Now that the Land Reform Act is already a reality, the obsession about "rich" farmers must be cast aside and the *non-peasants*, who are still below the ceiling must be harnessed into production without being branded as bourgeois lepers in the social milieu of the United Front.

There were many who were good farmers who owned land over the ceiling. Now

they are a disgusted lot, and it will be a long time before they are brought back into the mainstream of productive activity. If their productive efforts can be harnessed, it will help the country. We are now developing a fetish about depending solely on "peasants" for agricultural rejuvenation, but unless all other sections who are interested in farming, for whatever reason, are mobilised for produc-



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tive effort, Sri Lanka will not be able to produce all the food she needs. It will be a long time before agricultural co-operative societies can become viable units which can save the country. Our collective farms are still in an embryonic stage and it is problematic what they will do. **In the circumstances, Government must utilise all farmers, rich and poor, and also all those interested in farming, be they upper class, middle class or any other class, to increase food production, in the country.**

We, in this country, tend to be grandiose in all matters. This is perhaps to compensate for the tiny size of the island. We like to think big. We want huge irrigation schemes although these schemes cost a great deal of money. We want

Environmental Cause of Cancer

Environmental factors may play a much more important role in cancer incidence than ever suspected. According to some scientists, if the lowest incidence of particular types of cancer as it appears in particular geographic areas, can be reached throughout the world, the overall incidence of cancer would drop very considerably, says a United Nations release. There are an estimated five million new cases of cancer in the world every year: Assuming an average three-year survival rate, the total number of cases throughout the world would be 15 million, it says.

super-duper hotels on which we spend fantastic sums of money. But to provide water for an acre of land under a major irrigation scheme has been estimated to cost from Rs.11,000 to Rs.17,000. The cost under a minor irrigation is less, whilst water from wells will cost even less, particularly if they are tube-wells. Sri Lanka had not gone in for tube wells in a big way because the equipment to bore these wells were fantastically expensive when imported from the West. Because of this, the cost of each well was also very high. But what our experts in this island failed to realise is that neighbouring India had fabricated drilling equipment which cost only small amounts and that they were sinking tubewells at low cost. Even here, iron pipes cost a great deal, and as a temporary measure bamboo tubewells have been used to get a crash scheme for food production under way. This is something we in Sri Lanka can do. We have bamboo which we want to export, but the bamboo can be more profitably utilised in tubewells. We have areas where bamboo tubewells can be sunk quite easily. With the fuller utilisation of ground water resources, the damage done by drought will be minimised.

There is no use crying about the drought in the past. There is no guarantee that the rains will be plentiful for the coming Maha. If climatologists are to be believed, we must expect the worst and we must pay more attention to our ground water resources. In the

magazine *Nature*, a meteorological report by Dr. Derek Winstanley states that a large scale climatic change was sweeping through Africa, West Asia and India. The report stressed that the failure of the monsoon in India for two consecutive years was only a small part of this major world-wide climatic change. The most serious repercussions of this climatic change, according to Dr. Winstanley, was in the monsoon regions. He said that the whole pattern of atmospheric circulation in the northern hemisphere has shifted southwards.

The circulation systems which brought the monsoon had broken down because the all-important westerly winds and their low pressure troughs had extended further to the south he said.

He pointed out that from Mauritania to North-west India the summer monsoon rainfall has decreased steadily by a total of more than half since 1957. It is considered unprecedented for the rains to fail for several consecutive years not only in western India but in other monsoon regions — Niger, Upper Volta, Chad, Dahomey, Mali, Senegal and Mauritania.

Dr. Winstanley's theory of major climatic change is the result of his study of the rainfall trends in North Africa, West Asia and North-west India in the past 50 years. The study has shown that although the total rainfalls are different in these places the trend is similar throughout the subtropical region indicating a recent switch in the summer mon-

soon of regions, further to the south and southwest.

The first sign of trouble was an excess of rainfall in Equatorial Africa where Lake Victoria started reaching to dangerous heights while the arid and semi-arid zones north and south of the equator were comparatively drier.

SUPPORT to the theory of major climatic change has also come from Professor Lamb, director of the only climatology centre in Western Europe at the University of East Anglia. *Tribune* had referred to his findings in an earlier issue. He believed the world was experiencing what may be the greatest and most sustained shift in its climate since 1700. The World Meteorological Organization was reportedly considering Professor Lamb's report which linked the prolonged droughts in India with last year's poor harvests in Russia and China as symptoms of a major world wide climatic change.

Large amounts of ice in the sub-arctic regions in recent years and the decline in the frequency of westerly winds in Britain are also linked to these climatic changes.

According to Dr. Winstanley there is no way to prevent southward shift of the monsoon regions. He says that one may have to live with the change rather than wait for the rain to return to their old pattern.

There is no universal agreement on how the shift in the pattern of atmospheric circulation was brought ab-

out. Some people think it is the new ice age since the expansion of the polar ice is one of the symptoms of the recent change.

Others think that the climatic shift was probably set off by fluctuations in the sun's heat. Dr. Herman Schmitt the American astronaut who was recently in Delhi said that this year's unusual rainfall in New Mexico has got something to do with the unusual fluctuation in the heat of the sun last year.

There is no doubt we are confronted with a climatic change and we may have to discard some of the traditional modes of agriculture

and adopt new methods to suit the changing climatic patterns. Climatically, we are in a period of transition, and one of the things that must be done in this transition is to ensure the maximum exploitation of ground-water resources. Surface wells and tubewells become even more important in this period than big and small tanks which will tend to have less and less water owing to the uncertain vagaries of the monsoons —where the monsoons are either fading away or shifting southwards.

There is no need to say Amen, and go to sleep to die. It is better to stand up and dig more wells.

LEYLAND BUS HONoured FOR "RADICAL NEW APPROACH"

LONDON, 16 July.

British Leyland's advanced new National bus, now being introduced into service throughout the UK, has won a major award, the Dewar Trophy, for its "radical new approach" to bus building. The Dewar Trophy is described by the awarding Royal Automobile Club as Britain's premier honour in the automotive field. The RAC said that on the recommendation of its technical and engineering committee it was being awarded this year to Leyland's Truck and Bus Division. The citation says the honour is "for the design, development and construction of the Leyland National bus which represents a radical new approach to the development of a public service vehicle, incorporating maximum payload and security at minimal cost and maintenance". This is the second year running that British Leyland has collected the Dewar Trophy. Last year the award was made for the advanced design of the Corporation's Range Rover all-purpose vehicle. A feature of the National, which has already earned home orders worth £57 million, is its chassisless construction. It is claimed to be one of the easiest vehicles of its type to drive while passengers are able to board through low wide doors which have "curtains" of air to retain warmth when they are opened.

RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

- ✱ Foreign Debts
- ✱ NM & IMF
- ✱ Lake House
- ✱ UNP's Boycott

LAST WEEK, in this column reference was made to a suggestion indirectly made in the *Nation* of 13/7/73 that Sri Lanka should seriously consider the repudiation of, at least, some of her foreign debts. We had reproduced the relevant passages in that article. In the *Nation* of July 20, 1973, there was another piece, entitled THE ALTERNATIVE on the same topic.

The *Nation* had stated: "Last week *The Nation* carried as its lead story the news item setting out the IMF's terms for further loans, i.e. devaluation. In that article we spelled out one method of overcoming the economic crisis caused by such IMF policy, that is asking the IMF to 'go to hell' and facing up to the consequences.

"The alternative is to take the IMF's medicine. That is devaluation, cutting the rice subsidy, and imposing tremendous burdens on the poor. At least, if this is likely to improve the economy, it is some consolation. But even that assurance is not there. The 1967 devaluation, and the subsequent bogus devaluations by the manipulation of the FEEC Scheme, have clearly shown that devaluation is no remedy to

our country's ills. Moreover, international currency realignments are likely to go on for another two or three years. What if the dollar and the pound change frequently? We too will have to change accordingly. That means that Sri Lanka will have to be ready for several devaluations (revaluations being unthinkable) in the next few years. Imagine the adverse effects of such frequent changes on the economy?

"More than anything else, devaluation is a remedy prescribed in archaic economic theory—which is quite irrelevant in a dynamic world of growing income disparities between nations. As Gunnar Myrdal recently argued, the solutions to the growing Balance of Payments problems of developing countries have to be found outside the realms of international trade theory and economic theory.

"The writing is on the wall. Those who do not read it or refuse to read it—will have to face the people sooner or later!"

It was clear what the *Nation* wanted: that Sri Lanka should tell the IMF and IBRD to go to hell; quit the IMF-IBRD capitalist-imperialist financial framework and start on a clean slate without being burdened by foreign debts, trading with anti-imperialist non-aligned countries, on the one hand, and also socialist countries, on the other. According to the *Nation* Sri Lanka will be able to make good if its leaders and planner showed a little courage.

However, in spite of this advice from the *Nation*, the Government had decided to send the Minister Dr. N. M. Perera, to plead Sri Lanka's case before the IMF. Dr. Perera was in any case going to Washington to attend a meeting of the Group of Twenty (Dr. Perera was one of the Vice-Presidents), and it would seem that the Government has authorised him to talk about the question of a standby credit with the IMF.

The *Ceylon Daily News* now reflects governmental thinking at a high level. In its issue of July 24, 1973, the *Daily News* had a front page lead by "Our Financial Correspondent" entitled NM HAS TOUGH ASSIGNMENT IN US. The second heading ended with a question mark: *Can We Satisfy IMF Criteria And Resist Devaluation?*

The article is a dexterously written piece which not only sets out Ceylon's case but also hints to the IMF what was in store for the "rapacious West" if Sri Lanka's reasonable request for a standby credit was not granted—this is not stated directly but is implied in the writing. But it is also clear that responsible sections of the Government are not with those who want immediate repudiation of debts and an immediate walk-out from the IMF.

In a sense the *Daily News* article reflects a very different point of view from that of the *Nation*, but there is every likelihood that the *Nation* may win in the end. Dr. N. M. Perera goes to the IMF with the dice loaded

against him if he wants the IMF to grant his request on the ground rules of the IMF. For Dr. N. M. Perera to succeed, the IMF must change its ground rules, but will it for the sake of Sri Lanka?

It will be an interesting exercise to analyse this article by the Financial Correspondent of the government-managed *Ceylon Daily News*. He opens with a brief and concise statement of the question at issue: will Sri Lanka get what it wants from the IMF now that the Finance Minister was going himself? A delegation of officials had recently failed to make any headway. The writer succinctly summed up what the IMF had wanted of Sri Lanka: "Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, who was scheduled to leave for the US last night will have to do some tough bargaining in Washington if we are to get the 24.5 million Special Drawing Rights from the International Monetary Fund. An official Sri Lanka delegation earlier failed to negotiate a standby agreement, with the Fund. The IMF's criteria is based traditionally on two factors: (a) a balanced budget and (b) an exchange rate which the IMF considers realistic."

The Financial Correspondent then proceeded to state categorically that on the first hurdle of a "balanced budget," the IMF was satisfied with Sri Lanka's performance. No document has become available to the public to show that this is how the IMF feels, but the Financial Correspondent may have had access to documents or information on which he based his conclu-

sions that the IMF was satisfied with Sri Lanka's budgetary performance. This is how he put it: "The IMF, I understand, is quite satisfied with our budgetary performance of 1972-73. The budget anticipated a 43 million rupee surplus. However, this estimate may have been upset by factors which were not anticipated when the budget was introduced.

"The anticipated surplus was turning out to be a large deficit when new post-budgetary measures were introduced yielding an extra revenue of 300 million rupees. As a result, our current account surplus will probably exceed 60 million rupees. Therefore Sri Lanka's performance, as far as the budget is concerned has the approval of the IMF.

"However, a new question has arisen. The standby agreement will cover a period beyond 1973. This means that the IMF would like to have a good hard look at the next budget and study government thinking. Since the IMF (and also the World Bank) always urged developing countries to increase their public savings, the budgetary surplus which would completely satisfy the IMF may be around 100 million rupees.

"The Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, I learn, is quite confident that he can introduce such a budget though the actual revenue measures have not been worked out. Dr. Perera is expected to tell the IMF that the government will introduce a well balanced budget."

New wedding law for non-citizens in Singapore

Singapore, July 3,

The Government has introduced a new regulation under which non-citizen work permit holders will have to obtain prior official approval before marrying Singapore nationals. This new ruling, which became effective from 1 July, created a frantic rush as hundreds of non-citizens engaged to Singaporeans rushed to the registrar of marriages to beat the "marriage by Government consent" deadline.

Any Singaporean who marries now a non-citizen without permission would be deprived of certain rights such as the eligibility for Government flats, free education for children and subsidised medical treatment.

The new ruling, according to a Labour Ministry statement, is aimed at discouraging young permit holders from early marriages with Singapore citizens until they show ability to settle here successfully and support a small family.

Under the existing rules marriage to a Singapore citizen does not automatically confer upon a non-citizen rights of entry to or residence in Singapore except with the permission of the immigration authorities.

It will thus be seen that Financial Correspondent has conveyed to his readers and the public that at least on one of the points stipulated by the IMF, Sri Lanka had obtained pass marks. At least, this is what the Government, or the Minister of Finance, would want the public to know and believe.

There is no doubt that it is good for one's mental well-being to accept what is stated in the new *Daily News* without entertaining any doubts. But doubts are inevitable when one considers a great deal of what has happened in recent years. It is yet to be seen whether the realities which transpire in the course of the coming months will be borne out by what the Financial Correspondent has stated in this article.

Next, he went on to the real problem which was at issue. He stated: "The real problem, however, comes from the second criterion customarily viewed by the IMF as a yardstick of economic performance—the exchange system. Judging by its policies in other countries, the IMF would like to see a devaluation whereby the official rate of exchange is changed, probably brought in line with the Indian rate."

"The other device of course is to operate a new FEECs' system by broadening its area of operation to cover many more import and export items.

Sri Lanka's difficulty is that this is bound to produce a further inflationary trend.

"Dr. Perera anyway is determined to resist IMF pressure on devaluation."

What the IMF wanted was straightforward devaluation and a further adjustment of the FEECs (even by doing away with it)—so that Sri Lanka's currency was placed on a "realistic basis" in terms of other currencies. The Financial Correspondent then set out the case which the Finance Minister was likely to place before the IMF to persuade the bigwigs at the IMF to make an exception in the case of this little island which was battling against tremendous odds. What the Government had done *in lieu* of devaluation makes impressive reading: "Measures the Government has adopted as alternatives to devaluation include investment, development, export promotion and a heavy cut-back on consumption imports.

"Restraints have also been placed on certain welfare measures. Public transport fares were revised. A token levy on OPD treatment at hospitals was introduced and, except for rice and sugar on the ration, no other food commodity is subsidised.

"Public Corporations have been instructed to become economically viable units and government grants to keep their heads above water have been refused in most instances.

"To add further strength to the government's bonafides is the recent declaration by the Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike that from 1974 it is proposed to ban the import of rice. The import of onions, chillies

dried fish and many other subsidiary food commodities have already been banned, resulting naturally in an increase in local production of these commodities to meet the demand of consumers."

Concluding, the Financial Correspondent hinted that "officials" — unnamed and anonymous, had expressed great optimism that Dr. N. M. Perera would be able to do the trick. But the Correspondent was at pains to state that these "officials" were certain that Dr. Perera would not let the side down and succumb to what the *Nation* has always characterised as *IMF Blackmail*.

We do not know what the Financial Correspondent thinks or how he evaluates the information imparted to him about Sri Lanka's current problems with the IMF. In the past, it was contended that writers in the Lake House papers echoed their Master's Voice, namely the voice of the Wijewardena's and those who were aligned to them in a reactionary bloc.

The question now is whether under the new management, truth will prevail—as a writer and a journalist honestly sees it by a normally accepted yardstick—or, whether it will be another case of *His Master's Voice*. In this first article of any significance in the new *Daily News*, the views of the writer are submerged in the views of unnamed "officials."

"Officials are optimistic that in view of Sri Lanka's case as it will be presented by the Finance Minister, together with the fact that incentives have been offered for industrial production and the doors

have been opened for foreign investment, the IMF will finally grant the standby loan 'with no strings attached.'

"In any case they are certain that Dr. Perera will not unnecessarily commit Sri Lanka merely for the sake of obtaining the loan.

"Earlier the IMF agreed to release 18.5 million SDR's to Sri Lanka after satisfying itself that Sri Lanka's earnings from exports in 1972 were depressed for reasons beyond her control. An IMF delegation that visited Sri Lanka in March recommended this release under the Compensatory Financing Facility."

Now that the Lake House has become a "public company", under the aegis of the United Front government, which wishes to present the truth to the nation, it will be a good thing if the writers use their names and are permitted to evaluate the information made available to them. The kind of suave and slick writing, of the newly created *Financial Correspondent*, though in competent journalese replete with all tricks and gimmicks of the trade, and put across a difficult story on behalf of some VIP, will impress few people.

The new ANCL Ltd. has to be on its toes if it is to win the support and sympathy of the general public in the face of the Boycott which will be launched by the UNP as from August 1. If the reading public are persuaded to believe that ANCL Ltd. was only another version of the Government Gazette, then all that the publications of ANCL Ltd. will do is to denigrate

the existing circulation of United Front publications like the *Janadina*, *Janawegaya*, *Aththa* and *Nation*. (If the *Aththa* takes a more hardline approach to problems, then its circulation is bound to jump skywards). The danger that confronts the new Directors of Lake House is the danger of their publications becoming governmental bulletins which pretend to present unalloyed truth.

But truth, like murder will always out, although it may take a few years before the truth is known.

In the meantime, the UNP leader launched the boycott campaign in what the Sun, 24/7/73, described as a mammoth rally at Galle on Sunday July 22. It was unfortunate that the *Daily News* of either July 23 or July 24 did not report this meeting. Whether

WATER USE AND CONTROL FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

LONDON, - Britain's Overseas Development Administration is to set up a special research station to provide advice and assistance on water use and control to developing countries. The new Overseas Division of the Hydraulic Research Station at Wallingford, Berkshire, southern England, will cost £ 80,000 this year, rising to £ 170,000 in three years' time. Reason for the move is that Britain has frequently been asked by the developing countries for such information and help, especially in the use of water in agriculture. It is in order to help apply the latest techniques and developments to irrigation and drainage that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has approved the setting up of the division.

The topics which it will consider will include the organisational control of water resources, flood control, ground-water extraction, hydraulic structure design, and land drainage. It is hoped that joint research projects will also be undertaken in conjunction with the research organisations of the developing countries. Training programmes and seminars will be organised where appropriate and specialist advice on specific problems will be available. The staff of the Division, which will initially be some 11 in number, rising in the future to about 24, will form a multi-disciplinary team in the fields of irrigation engineering, water resources planning, and hydraulic engineering. This unit will provide to water resources engineers a parallel service to that already available to architects and structural engineers through the Overseas Unit of the Building Research Establishment. Current studies in irrigation and water resources financed by the ODA on behalf of overseas governments total more than £ 2 million. The value of irrigation projects carried out by British engineers in the developing countries in 1971 amounted to £ 236 million and it is hoped to increase this scale of operations as a result of the work of the new Division.

this meeting will be reported in any subsequent day is immaterial, because if a meeting was not promptly reported it is tantamount to a news blackout. The fact that Lake House under Wijewardena's had periodically indulged in such blackouts is no reason for falling into the same pitfall. The state-directed ANCL Ltd. would not have lost anything if it had promptly reported the same meeting. In fact, it would have gained a great deal in the matter of public respect.

The Sun reported the meeting with enthusiasm in its issue of Tuesday July 24. With a heading **BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN BEGINS WITH A BANG: DON'T READ, BUY OR SELL LAKE HOUSE PAPERS—JR** it reported with a Galle by-line datelined "Monday" as follows:

"Opposition Leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene yesterday called upon the people to give their verdict on the undemocratic take over of Lake House by refusing to sell, distribute, buy or read Government controlled Lake House publications in future.

"Addressing a mammoth United National Party rally at the Galle Town Hall premises Mr. Jayewardene said this was the only non-violent, democratic course left for people to demonstrate their opposition to undemocratic and unconstitutional acts like the Lake House take over. Warning the people not to be misled by what appeared in government owned Lake House newspapers hereafter, Mr. Jayewardene said: 'Lake House newspapers in the future cannot be expected to

publish correct news, which the people have a right to know.'

"This meeting was held primarily to launch the UNP campaign to urge people to boycott Lake House newspapers, and was organised by the Galle Branch of the UNP.

"Mr. Jayewardene, who presided at the meeting, drew attention to the fact that the privately owned shares of Lake House had not been distributed to the people by the Government. The major part of these shares had been taken over by the Public Trustee. And in addition, the law had not specified the date by which these shares would be sold to the public.

"Furthermore, he said, the Government had retained the power to select the people to whom shares would be sold. This meant that the Government could retain any portion of the shares and disburse a small portion to whomsoever it likes.

"Mr. Jayewardene told the gathering the Constitutional Court had said that certain provisions of the Bill to take over Lake House contravened the right of free publication and association. But the Court had gone on to say that in view of the provision of another section of the Constitution, the Bill was not contrary to the Constitution. This meant that the full right of publication and the right of association had not been given to the people.

"So, as much as he had lost his rights, the people, too had lost their rights. But the fact remained that it was the people who gave the Government the right to

govern the country in a democratic way. The people, in effect, were the kings. That was why the UNP had decided to place this question before the people, Mr. Jayewardene said.

"He said if anyone took over dictatorial powers and acted undemocratically, people should protest peacefully. That was why the UNP had stepped into this problem. It was not the UNP's intention to topple the Government. But the UNP could not close its eyes to undemocratic steps taken by the Government. 'We must have the right to live without being subjected to repressive, undemocratic measures,' Mr. Jayewardene told the gathering.

"Continuing further, he said when the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike signed a pact with Mr. Chelvanayakam, the UNP had protested and marched peacefully to Kandy. That triggered a public protest which resulted in Mr. Bandaranaike himself tearing up the agreement. He said the late Mr. Bandaranaike was a democrat and had always respected public opinion. An earlier Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike had brought a rule to insist that the Opposition Parties should address meetings without amplifiers. So they had held meetings and broke that law. They were prosecuted but the cases were dismissed.

"Now, the Government had taken over the Lake House newspapers because the people were reading it. Because of that the people should now stop reading these papers. Ad-

vertisers should also not go to these newspapers.

"Mr. Jayewardene said that he asked the people to take these steps because if this trend continued the fundamental rights of an individual to free publication and free assembly would be lost. He said that on the first three days of August they were going before the people and would assemble in every public place. Their plea on these occasions would be to shun the Lake House newspapers for it was as bad to human rights as alcohol was bad to the constitution.

"It was now possible for the Government to distort their statements through the columns of these newspapers. The Prime Minister had recently threatened other newspapers as well. Mr. Jayewardene said that this statement of the Prime Minister showed that freedom of expression in this country was doomed. Recently the Government was defeated at the vote on a Bill in the National State Assembly. But not one word about it was relayed over the Radio. The new Government-owned newspapers of the Lake House group would also be like that.

"He said: 'Government MPs and Ministers have threatened to come before the people to counter our boycott campaign. That is very good. It is indeed good if the Ministers and MPs of the Government could come before the people. But one thing is certain, we are winning in this struggle,' he asserted."

If Lake House publications did not report this meeting, which by all accounts was quite a big one, the *Sun* reported it. But even if the *Sun* did not report it, talk and gossip spread fast in this country and such whispers snowball into exaggerated avalanches. It is well for some people to realise that S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike won the 1956 elections and Mrs. Bandaranaike won the July 1960 elections with the mass media against her. The big daily papers blacked out a great deal, if not everything, of what the opponents of the UNP did or said. If the UF now resorts to such tactics, it will have only itself to blame if public sympathy turns against it.

Lake House publications, on the other hand, now echo what comes over the state radio, the SLBC. It gives prominence to news of the support which trade unions and others have extended to the Government for diffusing the ownership of Lake House. The official formula for the take-over of Lake House is "diffusing the ownership of Lake House."

In the meantime Minister T. B. Illangaratne has directed all co-operative societies to buy the shares in the ANCL Ltd when they came up for sale. This is how the *Daily News* of July 24th reported it under the heading TUs, Co-ops to Help Broadbase ANCL.

"The Minister of foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, has issued instructions to all co-operative

societies throughout the country that they should invest their "spare monies" to purchase shares that are available at Lake House. According to the Minister's instructions all monies in hand after investment in normal business—distribution, agriculture or industry—should be used to purchase shares at Lake House with the approval of the Commissioner of Co-operative Development.

"Mr. Illangaratne told the *Daily News* that he had issued these instructions with the express view of achieving the objective of broadbasing its ownership. He believed that this could be best achieved through co-operatives purchasing shares. He also holds the view that this would enable Lake House publications to mirror a wider range of public opinion and create the opportunity for all sections of the public to express their views."

The same report went on to say: "Meanwhile, the LSSP-controlled Ceylon Federation of Labour yesterday asked the Prime Minister to give preference to trade unions and co-operative organisations when shares are allocated of the Associated

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Newspapers of Ceylon under the new management. The federation said that if this was not done, the former owners holding 25 per cent of the shares (as allowed in the Bill itself) would have in every way a predominant position among the hundreds of atomised share-holders owning the balance 75 per cent.

"The CFL's general secretary, Mr. Batty weerakoon, in a memo to the Premier said: 'Speaking for trade unions in the Federation we can assure you that we look upon our purchase of shares not as an investment—something we could ill-afford—but as a necessary step for our own participation in a venture that is of tremendous national significance.' Congratulating the Prime Minister on the passage of the ANCL Bill Mr. Weerakoon said: 'Action to break the press monopoly has been a matter the working class movement of the country has been urging for a considerable length of time'...."

In the meantime, the *Aththa* has not shown much enthusiasm for the manner in which Lake House was being run and had warned its readers not to get too closely involved in the Lake House-UNP squabble centred over the Boycott and had hinted that common people should be on their guard lest they be left holding the baby when the chief opponents got together, sooner or later, on a political deal.

The *Janawegaya* was also critical of the way things were being done in the new ANCL Ltd. Its complaint

TOURISM OR POLITICS?

A Victory That Might Have Been

By CANAX

LET ME begin with a word of warning. If you know what's good for you, you'll disregard rumours retailed by all and sundry. And if you know better, you'll simply swallow the ones I dole out each week—and stay satisfied. My rumour for the week is that there's no truth whatever in the rumour that the Government has lost all faith in Tourism as the miracle-cure for the country's ills.

As far as I can guess, that wild rumour got going thanks to an ardent—and hence disappointed—supporter of the Party. Dharmasiri may not have got Dedigama, but Sri Lanka still clings hopefully, not hopelessly, to Tourism as the answer to a maiden's prayer.

I've suspected all along that whatever benefits we may reasonably expect from our massive investment in Tourism are all long-term, if at all. Dedigama has only provided conclusive proof of that.

Not that the Government needed any such proof, of course. It is viewing the

was that "reactionaries" who were employed by the Wijewardenas were still in key places in the administration of Lake House, on the editorial side and elsewhere, and that unless these "reactionaries" were thrown out lock, stock and barrel, the purpose of taking over Lake House would be lost.

whole episode objectively by closing its all-seeing eye to the unpleasant reality. But the despondency that seems to have descended on the entire fledgling tourism industry is unimaginable, except perhaps by yours truly. (As always, huh?)

It's difficult to know precisely what it was that Mr. Senanayake fought last month at Dedigama, at least from what he says. Along with a lot of others, I thought it was an election; Mr. Senanayake seemed to suggest it was a war and, well, he should know best.

WHATEVER it was he fought, we were informed by the Press and Radio by the morning of July 10 that he had lost. But, almost a week later, in a post-mortem disguised as a Press Release, Mr. S seemed to suggest otherwise. And, again, he should know best. I suppose.

Judging from all the rumours I've had access to, both reliable and otherwise, I feel Mr. Senanayake was unfair both to himself and to his Party. He should never have given the impression, from the very start, that he was in fact fighting a war and not just an election in Dedigama.

By that he lost plenty of support. Said a leading operator in the tourist business here, "If only he'd put us in the picture properly. We

kept clear of the battle because tourism and war simply don't mix, as we've learnt to our cost. Hell, we even cancelled a lot of scheduled charters till we were sure the fighting was over."

"I could have cried out loud," he went on, almost on the verge of tears, "when I discovered it was only an election our ex-chief had fought. We would have given it the works."

"You mean you could have swung the election in his favour?" I asked.

"Not *could* have," he corrected me, "but *would* have."

"But 4,500 votes would have been a lot to swing," I reminded him.

"It's not for nothing they say Tourism can work wonders," he shot back. "Apart from swinging 4,500, we would have given him a 5,000 majority!"

"Was there such a huge floating vote?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said irritably, "but I'm talking about the Tourist vote. Just ten Jumbo charters the day before the election would have seen him through. Four-five majority, you say? That's chicken if we had got down to it."

HE SEEMED to be assuming a lot. "How come you're so sure all your tourists would have been rooting for Dharmasiri? A good many may have favoured Rukman, for all I know," I protested.

"Simple," he said, with a knowing air. "Okay, what's

Rukman done—for them, I mean? As for Dharmay, any man who can give them a 65 per cent premium on the mighty Mark, the shaky Sterling or the drooping Dollar can't be all that bad..

"..Personally speaking, he was the ideal choice for candidate. Just look at his credentials. Having conned hundreds of thousands of tourists to not only come here but also part company with their money, which is as tricky as drawing blood out of a stone, Dedigama should have been a cake-walk. But, of course, the operational approach was all wrong...

"That part of the job should have been entrusted to professionals—like us. Victory, then, would have been a foregone conclusion."

"But Dharmasiri is claiming victory, isn't he?"

"There are victories and victories," he said. "We would have ensured victory with a 5,000 majority. As it is, it's only a victory with a 4,500 deficit."

"What's your secret?"

"Now that it's all over I don't mind telling you," he said. "In addition to the Tourist vote, we would have organised whole planeloads of visitors to undertake a house-to-house campaign covering every home in every remote hamlet in the electorate. The visits would have been confined only to what we consider 'prime time' every day, say, between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m."

THE IDEA seemed altogether new as campaign tactics went.

"You mean awaken people from their sleep to solicit their vote?" I asked.

"Boy, are you quick on the uptake," he exclaimed admiringly. "That's just the idea."

"People will be so hopping mad," I said, "Dharmasiri would lose more votes than he'd gain that way."

"I don't know about that," he replied. "Our tourists would be coached to go round pretending they still owned this country and at the same time plugging hard for Rukman."

"Hmmm...you have a point," I conceded. "Dharmasiri couldn't lose even if he wanted to."

"We're not amateurs, you know," he said with a self-satisfied look. "If Dharmasiri had told us in time we could have organised a special charter for a group of experts to come down and take charge of the whole campaign a month ahead."

"What makes you think they'd come over to handle a small by-election?"

"That's easily organised," he said confidently. "Right now there's a terrific heat-wave on in Washington, largely around Congress, and a lot of top people in the Capitol can't wait to get away from it all. An offer of a free holiday would have proved irresistible. Why, with a little bit of luck, we might even have had Nixon himself here directing operations. Incognito, of course. Ah, well, what's done is done."

BATTICOTTA SEMINARY - 3

Why Proficiency in English?

MISSIONARIES' OBJECTIVE

This is the third instalment of the series on Batticotta Seminary. The first instalment appeared in our issue of July 21 (Vol. 18, No. 13) to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the institution on July 22, 1823.

WITH THE addition of capable and earnest men and women (thanks to Brownrigg), Meigs and Poor felt emboldened to extend and raise the educational services of the Mission. Chelliah says, "Some of the boys were so far advanced in their studies, that it was felt that fuller provision should be made for their further education. With this object in view the Missionaries resolved to establish a central institution to give higher education to deserving boys, and issued an elaborate

Prospectus, which they presented to the Prudential Committee of the American Board, the Ceylon Government, and to friends in England, America and the East."

The position on the eve of the establishment of the Seminary is given in an early Report of the Mission. "In 1822", it is stated, "there were 42 schools with 1800 pupils maintained at a cost of £ 270/- including presents, premiums and the wages of the teachers who, instead of receiving a regular salary, as at present, were paid, according to the progress of the scholars which was determined by a monthly examination."

In 1823 the Mission supported more than 105 boys and 28 girls at the free boarding schools at their five stations. "Not a few of the pupils in these schools," continues the Report, "had made such advancements in their studies and given such promise of further advancement as to warrant an attempt to place within their reach the advantages of higher education in a Central High School."

THE PROPOSAL of the missionaries was to establish a College of University rank with, it is supposed, a Charter to confer degrees in due course. The Prospectus which was dated Jaffna, Ceylon, March 4, 1823 and sig-

ned by Meigs, Poor, Winslow, Spaulding, Woodward and Scudder is a historic document. It is an extremely far-sighted and comprehensive blue-print for a truly liberal education of "Tamil and other Youth". The prospectus was reproduced in the *Missionary Register*. A slightly incomplete version is given by Chelliah in his book.

It is a thousand pities that this magnificent Plan was not fully implemented. Had it been executed in the grand manner as envisaged by its architects it would have heralded a national and cultural renaissance not only in Jaffna but throughout Ceylon and South India. It was noted in the Plan that "there was a considerably large Tamil population in the island, and some millions on the continent, that might need the aid of a literary Seminary, and that there were many native youth of good talent who would prize its privileges and employ them for the good of their country men" (italics added).

It will be observed that the builders spoke of good "talent" not of good "birth". This, we suppose, was done advisedly, and is very significant; for although it so happened that the recruitment of students by the American Mission was drawn generally, with a few exceptions, from a particular class of the Hindu community (unlike, for instance, the Catholic Missionaries who cast their net far and wide), the method of education imparted and, as we know in several instances, the manner in which the social crises and challenges of feudal pseudo-

"What of the future?"

"I'm hoping Dedigama's loss will be our gain."

"You're not expecting him to come back to the Tourist Board? What would he do that for?"

"After what he's gone through, the Board owes him a good, relaxing holiday."

"At the Bentota complex?"

"Not really," he said. "I was thinking more of Hawaii."

superiority were faced, testify to the determined effort in the part of the missionaries to instil what they held to be the cardinal Christian virtue of universal brotherhood among the brethren with whom they had cast their lot.

Their method of approach to the social problem of caste was somewhat peculiar. They preferred generally to inculcate a sense of duty and social justice among those who had hitherto wrongly held themselves superior, rather than to encourage a consciousness of denied rights to those who had been forced till then to accept a position of inferiority. Thus they endeavoured to avoid the bitterness of the class struggle. Admittedly this was not the radical way. But it did raise the social tone of the community. The least that it did was to make indifferent Hindus better Hindus, even if they had failed to make them Christians, good or bad.

VIII

THE OBJECTS of the proposed College were declared in the Prospectus.

The first object was:

"to give native youth of good promise a through knowledge of the English language. The great reason for this is, that it will open to them the treasures of European science and literature, and bring fully before the mind the evidences of Christianity. A knowledge of the English language, especially for those designed for Native Preachers, is in this point of view, im-

portant almost beyond belief. Their minds cannot be so thoroughly enlightened by any other means."

Tennent had stated some years later, "The Seminary like all others founded by the Mission is essentially a Christian institution." The Missionaries were of the opinion that a knowledge of English was necessary for a liberal education; and that a liberal education was an essential requisite for the reception of the Christian gospel.

The missionaries disagreed with the position taken up by William Carey and his colleagues in India who had earlier in 1817 established an educational institution known as Serampore College, a body somewhat similar to, though much less catholic and liberal than, the one contemplated in Jaffna. The controversy between the two was over the place of English in the educational structure.

THE QUESTION of the national language vis-a-vis English had been the subject of debate ever since the British undertook the educational development of their subjects in India. This debate still continues even after the withdrawal of the British. Scientifically it has been held that one must learn first in one's own mother tongue. This has never been refuted by the Missionaries. But they had realised that English education at that time was an urgent need in order to open the windows of the world to their promising wards who were hungering after knowledge, more

knowledge and still more knowledge. The Prospectus in a spirited advocacy of the stand of the Missionaries had declared:

"The great efforts they are making to transfer the learning of the West into the language of the East, is a matter of most sincere rejoicing; and the Seminary here contemplated is designed to assist in doing this good work. It is in this way only that the great mass of the people can be enlightened. The most important works in English must be translated, epitomes made of them, or new works written, but to accomplish all, or any of these objects, a large number of English scholars must be raised up from among the Natives. It is a work which foreigners, comparatively ignorant of the language and customs of the country, cannot be supposed qualified to do."

The Missionaries had anticipated Macaulay's Minute by a long stretch of years.

(To be continued)

* * *

RIISING FIGURES

The number of women in Britain who drink is increasing, the Associated Press reports. W. H. Kenyon, an official of a commission on alcoholism and drug addiction, says that a few years ago only one in every nine alcoholics was a woman; today the number has more than doubled.

AN INDIAN EXPERIMENT

THE BAMBOO TUBEWELL

by P. S. Appu

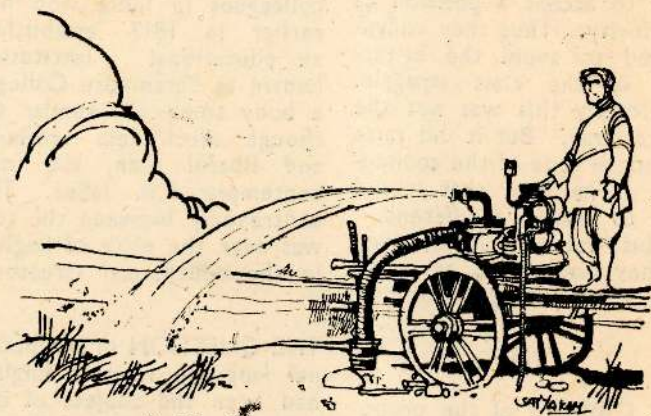
THE BAMBOO TUBEWELL is an innovation introduced in the Saharsa district of Bihar in December 1968. It bids fair to presage a spectacular breakthrough in the exploitation of ground water. The materials used are all locally available, the only skilled technician needed is the village blacksmith, the work can be completed in a few hours and the cost is only about Rs. 250 or so. The bamboo tubewell has brought the tapping of ground water well within the means of small cultivators.

The Indo-Gangetic plain and the deltas of the great rivers are endowed with rich ground water resources. The recent spurt in agricultural production in some patches of these tracts, picturesquely, but rather inaccurately, styled as the "Green Revolution," is largely based on the intensive exploitation of ground water through tubewells. It is no accident that the home of the so-called Green Revolution is the Punjab-Haryana region where about 80 per cent of the ground water is being currently tapped to support multiple cropping. Only a small part of the ground water potential is, however, utilised at present in large parts of the Gangetic plain, particularly in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The conditions in the districts of Purnea and Saharsa which constitute the Kosi area

are in several ways ideal for the easy exploitation of ground water. With an average annual precipitation of 60 to 65 inches, ground water resources are more plentiful than in the western part of the Gangetic plain. The aquifers get recharged by the Kosi Canal system which waters a large part of the two districts. A perennial stratum of ground water is usually

tubewell equipped with brass strainer used to cost over Rs. 6,000. In the year 1969 a scheme was drawn up with assistance from the Agricultural Refinance Corporation to sink a large number of 4" tubewells. The cost of a tubewell was estimated at Rs. 4,000. Including the price of a diesel pumpset, the total cost of installing a tubewell was Rs. 8,000. These tubewells tapped ground water at a depth of 150 feet. When it was found that it was enough to go down to a depth of only about 80 feet, the cost of the tubewell could be reduced to about Rs. 3,000.



Paddy being irrigated through a bamboo tubewell.

struck a few feet below the surface. The soil being sandy or sandy loam, it takes only a few hours to sink a tubewell anywhere in these districts. In spite of these great natural advantages the exploitation of ground water had not made much headway in this region until recent months.

THE FIRST tubewells were sunk in this area some 15 years ago. At that time a

Even so, the installation of a tubewell remained far beyond the means of small and medium farmers and, therefore, the scheme did not register much progress. So far only 1,580 such tubewells have been installed in the two districts during the last four years.

A cheaper kind of tubewell had been in vogue in the neighbouring districts of West Bengal. In these tubewells,

often known as filter points, iron pipes were substituted by cylindrical frames formed by welding 1/4" steel rods around iron rings. Coir string was wound around the cylindrical frame to serve as strainer. The cost was about Rs. 800 to Rs. 900. Though these filter points did not get any encouragement from Government departments, a few of them had been installed by some enterprising farmers of Purnea and Saharsa.

It was against this background that the bamboo tubewell was invented in December, 1968. As in many cases in history, this invention was also mothered by necessity.

RAM PRASAD Chaudhary Jaiswal of village Lalpur in the Singheswar Asthan Block of Saharsa is a medium farmer owning about 15 acres of land. Some years ago he had purchased a diesel pumpset with a government loan and had taken to modern farming. But he had no dependable source of irrigation. In the winter of 1968 he entered into an agreement with a farmer of another block to buy his old tubewell. He hoped to have it pulled out and installed in his own land. In the safe assurance that he would be able to have a tubewell in time, Ram Prasad went ahead and sowed an improved variety of wheat seed in his land. The vendor, however, backed out of the agreement subsequently and Ram Prasad found himself at a loose end. He spent several sleepless nights wondering how his wheat crop could be saved. The fact that coir

string could be used for making strainers was known to him. It occurred to him in a flash that he could try to fabricate a strainer by using strips of bamboo and coir string.

He made a long cylindrical frame by fixing strips of bamboo with nails around iron rings of 4" diameter. The upper portion of the cylinder was made water-tight by wrapping gunny bags around it and smearing coal tar over the gunny bags. The bamboo tubewell was ready. All the villagers including his own brother thought that Ram Prasad had gone off his head. In the sandy soil of his village boring a deep hole in the ground was an easy job. At the first attempt the bamboo cylinder broke into two while being lowered into the ground. But the second attempt was successful. He brought his diesel pumpset, inserted the hose pipe inside the tubewell and started the engine. All the spectators and Ram Prasad himself were greatly astonished to see water gushing. These were the circumstances in which the first bamboo tubewell was born.

The news spread quickly. The Block Development officer of Singlieshwar Asthan and the Special Deputy Director of Agriculture of Saharsa were greatly impressed and they tried to persuade other farmers to sink bamboo tubewells.

But Government's tubewell department did not take kindly to bamboo tubewells. The department had several objections. Bamboo is easily affected by air and water, is destroyed by white ants and

rodents, and may not resist the soil pressure. The tubewell department would not encourage bamboo tubewells. During the next four years about 3,000 bamboo tubewells were sunk in Saharsa and about 1,000 in Purnea without any assistance from Government sources.

THE SEVERE drought of 1972 turned out to be the proverbial blessing in disguise for the districts of Purnea and Saharsa. As part of the programme to step up rabi production, Government placed funds at the disposal of the District Collectors for sanctioning loans to small farmers for sinking bamboo tubewells. Early in October 1972 the Divisional Commissioner fixed a target of 6,500 bamboo tubewells for Saharsa and 5,000 for Purnea to be sunk before the end of March 1973. Three months later, in January, 1973, the State Government raised the target to 6,500 for Purnea too. As luck would have it, Mr. J. M. Lyngdoh, Collector, of Purnea and Mr. G. Krishnan, Collector of Saharsa, were keen, energetic, young men with initiative and drive. They gave the highest priority to the sinking of bamboo tubewells and geared up the entire administrative machinery to push up the programme. The officers at the Block level were told that their work for the year would be assessed primarily on the basis of the number of bamboo tubewells sunk in the block.

These efforts paid handsome dividends. During the four months from the middle of October 1972, 7,451 bamboo

tubewells were sunk in Purnea and 6,637 in Saharsa with loan assistance from Government. The farmers on their own without any help from government sunk during the same period 2,004 bamboo tubewells in Purnea and 2,791 in Saharsa. Thus over 18,000 bamboo tubewells were sunk in the two districts in four months.

The discharge from a bamboo tubewell is about the same as from an ordinary 4" tubewell. In the conditions obtaining in Purnea and Saharsa a bamboo tubewell irrigates five to 10 acres of land. Thus over one lakh acres of agricultural land has been brought under irrigation in the two districts in recent months with a small financial outlay. Only a sum of about Rs. 50 lakhs has been given as loan to farmers in the two districts for sinking bamboo tubewells.

Bamboo tubewells serve no purpose unless there are satisfactory arrangements for lifting water. As electricity has not reached most villages, reliance had to be placed on diesel pumpsets.

The programme of sinking bamboo tubewells was accompanied by a vigorous drive to sanction loans to farmers through the Land Mortgage Bank and commercial banks to finance the purchase of diesel pumps. The pumps are usually mounted on wheels and experience has shown that one pump can service up to five bamboo tubewells. Diesel pumps are now available on hire in the rural areas of the two districts.

Including the cost of fuel the hire charges range from

Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 per hour. Thus bamboo tubewells coupled with the availability of mobile diesel pumpsets on hire have brought the exploitation of ground water well within the means of small farmers.

The materials required for fabricating a bamboo tubewell are three or four bamboos, about 20 kilogrammes of coir string, a few iron rings of 4" diameter, a few yards of steel wire, iron nails, coal tar and old gunny bags.

THE BAMBOO tubewell has several obvious advantages. All the materials required are locally available. The only skilled technician needed is the village blacksmith. In the context of the acute shortage of steel, its substitution by bamboo is a welcome development from the point of view of the national economy. The most attractive feature of the bamboo tubewell is its extremely low cost which seldom exceeds Rs. 250. The life of a bamboo tubewell is not as short as originally apprehended. Some have already been in existence for over four years.

The bamboo tubewell has brought the exploitation of ground water within the reach of small cultivators. Even cultivators who own as little as half an acre of land have installed bamboo tubewells. Most of the holdings being fragmented, hitherto even well-to-do farmers found it difficult and uneconomic to provide irrigation for all the plots of land owned by them. Now they are in a position to instal a bamboo tubewell in each scattered

plot and bring the entire holding under irrigation.

Furthermore, the investment in bamboo tubewells being so low, their sinking will not render future consolidation of holdings more difficult. The bamboo tube well has also generated considerable employment in the rural areas. The fabrication and installation of one bamboo tubewell gives employment to about 10 labourers for one day.

AND FINALLY, the large-scale exploitation of ground water by sinking bamboo tubewells will remedy to a great extent the water-logging caused by the Kosi irrigation system and may prevent any possible rise in the water table. Thus the bamboo tubewell may turn out to be a corrective and complement to canal irrigation.

The ambitious programme of sinking bamboo tubewells is being executed without having undertaken any detailed survey of ground water resources. Knowledgeable men with whom the writer has casually discussed the matter are inclined to think that considering the rate of recharge of the aquifers in this region, there is no danger of the dropping of the water table. Even so, it is absolutely necessary to conduct a detailed survey, fix limits of safe exploitation of ground water and lay down a mandatory minimum distance between bamboo tube wells. This question should receive the immediate attention of the State Government and of the Central Ground Water Board.

— Hindustan Times

CHRONICLE**June 21 - 25**

A Diary of Events in Sri Lanka and the World compiled from English-language dailies published in Colombo.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21: The *Daily News* reported that "stern regulations will be announced very soon under the existing emergency to deal with State land grabbers and those abetting and inciting them": the new regulations allow the police and security forces to summarily evict those who had encroached on State land: these regulations had been formulated because of the problem in the Eastern Province where displaced plantation workers had squatted on Crown land and had started cultivating them. The Government has ordered a top level inquiry into the clash that occurred in Polonnaruwa on Monday last when seven policemen were injured in a clash between a Navy and a Police party. The *Sun* reported that the North and East had been declared as "proclaimed areas" where the police and security forces had summary powers to evict squatters on Crown land. The *Sun* reported that the Minister of Industries, T. B. Subasinghe, had suggested to the Minister of Internal and Foreign Trade, that paddy should be given to consumers on the ration instead of rice: that this would mean a considerable saving to Government if the consumer was given the task of milling and cleaning the paddy. Soviet leader Brezhnev met a group of US Senators to neutralise, if possible, their opposition to increasing trade between the USA and the USSR: the controversial issue of the treatment of Soviet Jews and their right to emigrate to Israel was one of the main topics which came up for discussion. Prohibition was likely to be re-introduced into Tamil Nadu by stages starting from September 1 this year.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22: The *Daily News* reported that the Government will take over seven more estates in the Nuwara Eliya and Kandy districts on July 1: two of the estates, taken over under the Land Reform Act, Wavendon and Thalavantenne, belonged to S. Thondaman,

President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress: three other estates in which Thondaman had interests were also taken over under the Land Acquisition Act, viz. Devon, Balapokuna and Medettenne: the other estates taken over were Rangbodde and Vedamulle. The *Sun* reported that Ministries, Departments and State Corporations had been banned from corresponding from one another in any language other than the official language, Sinhala. The *Sun* also raised the question whether the squatting on Crown land in the Eastern Province by plantation workers of Indian origin had a political motive? At the two-day Conference of Rubber Experts held at the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall starting yesterday, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, appealed to rubber scientists and technologists to pool their knowledge and expertise to explore new uses for natural rubber to overcome the threat of synthetic rubber. There was a virtual bloodbath in Buenos Aires at a mass rally to welcome ex-President Juan Peron when two factions of Peronists decided to fight it out. The talks between Nixon and Brezhnev at their summit was said to be going well and more agreements were expected to be signed shortly including one to minimise the threat of nuclear war. West Germany and Czechoslovakia initialled an agreement to open a new chapter in diplomatic relations and bury the hatchet which had been hanging over both countries ever since the notorious Munich pact of 1939.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23: The M.P. for Mahiyangana, Edwin Wickremaratne, was discharged by the Fort Joint Magistrate yesterday, because the medical evidence could not sustain a charge of culpable homicide: he was charged with having assaulted a senior official of the Education Department. The *Sun* reported that two navy men wanted in connection with the recent police-navy clash at Polonnaruwa were taken into custody yesterday. The *Daily Mirror* reported that the Police were aware that there were over 250 persons hawking opium and ganja in Colombo: that drugs had become big business in the island. It was reported that the two factions in the CP would hold separate meetings to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the CP. The three *Skylab* astronauts splashed down in the Pacific yesterday. President Nixon and

Soviet leader Brezhnev signed an agreement yesterday pledging to avoid military crises that could erupt into nuclear war. France yesterday rejected a request from the Court of International Law at the Hague to suspend its nuclear tests in the Pacific until the applications before it on this matter were finally disposed of .

SUNDAY, JUNE 24: The *Observer* reported that ganja refining factories were the latest additions to the local drug scene. Owing to paper shortages, the Government Gazette will not be available for sale to the public: copies will be posted up in public places for people to read. Family planning had proved a flop in the provinces. The UNP leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, made a policy speech outlining the programme of the party: it was a speech on a low key focussing attention on the next General Elections in 1976: that the UNP would strive to restore all freedoms. The *Times Weekender* hinted that the latest issue of *Newsweek* was likely to be banned in Ceylon because of an article in it about Sri Lanka entitled *A Hell Of A Mess*: the article in question was reproduced in full by the *Times* and the *Weekend*. France was silent on the question whether she would explode its nuclear devices after rejecting the directive of the World Court. The new US-USSR agreement about curbing the threat of war was welcomed in many capitols of the world: it was even stated that it provide a safety measure to China which feared an attack by the USSR.

MONDAY, JUNE 25: Owing to a power failure at Laxapana, yesterday's power cut from 12 noon to 1 pm was extended by more than an hour. A delegation led by Mr. H. A. de S. Gunasekera left for Washington yesterday for negotiations with the IMF for a further standby credit of 25 million dollars. The Prime Minister, in declaring open the new telephone exchange in Kandy for direct dialling, stated that the new generation must not be burdened with the foreign loans incurred so far: that they must be paid here and now by starting profitable ventures. The *Sun* raised the question whether "the rain gods were a convenient scapegoat for CEB bungling." The

Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, it was announced, would pay a visit to Canada at the end of the month to coincide with the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference. The newly appointed Press Council held its first meeting this morning and appointed Mr. Chandra Wijewardena and Deepananda de Silva, both CAS men, as Press Commissioner and Secretary to the Press Commission respectively: Press Council Chairman Premadasa declared "as long as the Press complies with the law it will have its freedom...at all public sittings we will go on the principles of natural justice and the press will always be given a hearing. In making our decisions we will always attempt to settle standards and make precedents in which the press will be interested...": the other members of the Press Council, viz, Nissanka Wijeratne, Ridgeway Tillekeratne (ex-officio) K. Shanmugalingam, S. S. Wijeratne and Indrapala Abeywira were also present. The *Daily Mirror* raised the question whether the Communists (Moscow) will re-unite before the 30th anniversary. The Constitutional Court today informed the Speaker of its decision on the ANCL Ltd (Special Provisions) Bill: the Speaker will make the decision public when the Assembly sits next on July 10. There were further protests against the proposed French nuclear tests. Soviet leader Brzhnev concluded his visit to the USA after signing a number of agreements.

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LAKE HOUSE TAKEOVER MARKS

THE END OF AN ERA

by

LANKAPUTRA

THERE MAY be differences of opinion among the politically-conscious sections of our society about the rights and wrongs of the Lake House take-over or the manner in which it was done. But there can be no doubt whatsoever that the break-up of the family concern that ran the Lake House group of newspapers mark the end of an era in Sri Lanka, an era in which this powerful newspaper company has played a dominant part for the last so many years.

Left-wingers will say that Lake House was more than a newspaper group, that it was in fact the leader and organiser of all the reactionary lost causes ever since the birth of the Left movement in the middle thirties. There is much truth in this allegation. Whatever part the late Mr. D. R. Wijewardene may have played in the fight for national freedom, from the 1930's onwards Lake House newspapers have been more concerned with propping up the fortunes of the Right against the Left (and since the 1950's against the Centre too) than in promoting national interests as an independent newspaper should have really done. Let us have a brief glance back at its recent history.

With the promulgation of the Soulbury constitution in

1947, Lake House newspapers became the mouthpieces and propaganda organs of the UNP than anything else. The campaign they waged against the Left-wing parties for the greater glory of the UNP was admitted later by no less a person than the late Mr. J. L. Fernando in his book *Three Prime Ministers of Ceylon*. Mr. Fernando was, of course, the Political Correspondent of the *Daily News* and the chief lieutenant of Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe in the pro-UNP and anti-Left campaign in those halcyon days.

Pro-UNP stooging by Lake House had to be considerably increased with the resignation of Mr. Bandaranaike from the UNP and his formation of the SLFP in 1951. Lake House began a campaign of character assassination against him in the manner of the anti-Left sallies of the 1930's. The most filthy lies were concocted against him. Even the gates of Horagolla Walauwa were said to have been erected by Mr. Bandaranaike on monies racketted from public funds when he was Minister of Local Government!

Lake Houses' role as king-maker following the sudden death of D. S. Senanayake in 1952—to make Dudley Senanayake Prime Minister for the first time has been preserved for poster-

ity in that bestseller *Premier Stakes* written by the chief victim of that conspiracy.

ITS ROLE in getting the UNP re-elected to power at the ensuing general election is familiar to all those who were in the thick of politics then. Suffice it to say for the benefit of the younger generation that it included whipping up hysteria over the death of old D. S. Senanayake, caricaturing Mr. Bandaranaike as a stooge of the Leftists, and attributing to Dr. N. M. Perera a statement he never made—that he would make latrines out of the bricks of Mahiyangana dagoba no sooner the UNP was defeated.

The only act of Dudley Senanayake's government that Lake House opposed was his conclusion of the Rice-Rubber Pact with China! But it sided with Dudley when the masses rose against his government in 1953. The famous headline the *Daily News* "Work as Usual Today" when life in this country came to a complete standstill on Hartal Day that year will live forever as Lake House's most monumental howler committed in the service of the UNP.

After Dudley's resignation from office, Lake House, without a blush of shame, switched over its support to Sir John Kotelawela who succeeded him. Kotelawela's semi-fascist, authoritarian regime with its strike breaking, telephone tapping, private Gestapo, "Operation Ganja" etc. etc. got full support and even theoretical justification from the press lords of Lake House.

AN IMPORTANT point to remember is that it also supported the anti-Communist antics of Sir John on the international scene—his attempts to join SEATO, his clowning at the Bandung Conference (where Esmond Wickremasinghe himself was Sir John's adviser!) etc. Lake House at that time opposed the concept of peaceful co-existence between states with differing social systems saying that this was impossible as long as there were Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union!

Perhaps the worst crime that Lake House committed during the pre-1956 period was to give prominence to the activities of the Tri Sinhala Peramuna and incite racial troubles towards the end of 1955 in an attempt to break up the no-contest pact that the SLFP entered into with the LSSP and CP—a pact they knew would sound death-knell of the U.N.P., as it did.

After the election to power of Mr. Bandaranaike's government, Lake House was able to whip up communal tension with a vengeance. It played no mean part in creating the racial riots both in 1956 and 1958. How the Sinhala and Tamil papers of the Lake House group carried different versions of the same events, one to rouse the Sinhalese people against the Tamils and the other to rouse the Tamil people against the Sinhalese has been analysed at length by the K. D. de Silva Press Commission which went into the matter in 1963.

In all this playing with fire, Lake House nicely synchronised its campaigns with communal extremists both in the North and South and with the UNP who sought to utilise the situation to stage a come-back to power.

Many will also remember how Lake House at various times under the first Bandaranaike Government made heroes of various people who were to stab the SLFP in the back and even assassinate Mr. Bandaranaike. Buddharakita and Vimala Wijewardena, W. Dahanayake and C. P. de Silva, "Sinhala" Marikkar and Jim Munasinghe were among those who fall into this category. They were used not only to thwart progressive legislation like the Paddy Lands Act but to try to bring down the Bandaranaike Government itself and restore the UNP to power. Lake House, of course, was one of the brains behind the "Cabinet strike" of 1959.

EVERYONE knows the part Lake House played, after Mr. Bandaranaike's assassination, of getting the minority government of Dudley Senanayake returned to power in March 1960. Its dirty campaign against Mrs. Bandaranaike before the July 1960 elections (especially the notorious Collette cartoons) will be equally remembered as touching the lowest depths of journalism in this or for a matter of that any other country.

Its role in bringing down the Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike in December 1964 as the only way of saving

themselves from the Nemesis that awaited them is recent history. The most unscrupulous methods used to bring this about and the vast sums of money spent for the purpose are disclosed in detail in the T. S. Fernando Commission report.

Lake House resumed its old role as stooge-in-chief to the Government in power when Dudley Senanayake formed his seven-party coalition government in 1965. As in the old days prior to 1956, there was nothing that Lake House did not do to prop up the fortunes of the government and throw every bit of mud available at the Opposition parties, to break the unity they had forged and to character-assassinate their leaders. But all to no purpose.

The most severe blow of all came when the Opposition parties themselves had their own back at Lake House.

ANTIQUE HUNTER

A group of Pakistani M.Ps recently expressed grave concern about the increasing instances of antiques being stolen and smuggled out of the country. Some time ago, for instance, a statue of Buddha found during the excavations at Taxila disappeared from a state depository. Later, Afghan customs officials found it in the luggage of a Western tourist. It is said to be just one of the hundreds of relics that are being smuggled out of Pakistan.

making sensational disclosures about how the bigwigs of Lake House had diddled the government to the tune of millions of rupees in income tax and foreign exchange frauds. So the great press lords who had preached high ethics and morality to all and sundry all these years were proved to have feet of clay.

The Government then in power did everything, of course, to defend their friends who had supported them in power throughout the years. But to no avail. The Lake House deals and Governments condonation of their misdeeds itself became a live issue in the 1970 Election which routed the UNP and put the UF Government in office. Lake House's fate was sealed.

The end of Lake House as we knew it all these years marks the end of an old era and the beginning of a new.

* * *

LETTER

INDIAN OCEAN

Sir,

Apropos the article by J. P. Anand on the Soviet Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean in your issue of July 14, I came across a cutting from my files from the *Blitz*, Bombay, of September 30, 1972, with an article under the heading SUPER-POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, which will be of interest to your readers. I am sending the cutting for publication.

T. N. Veluppilai

Colombo,
17.7.73

The "*Blitz*" article reads as follows: "The 'Power vacuum' created by the British pull-out from the area east of Suez is gradually being filled by the presence of super powers.

"THE BRITISH PRESENCE after the pull-out is, nevertheless, well preserved with the replacement of the British Far East Command at

Singapore by ANZUK — Australia — New Zealand — UK — force on November 1, 1971. It has one battalion group, a squadron of whirlwind helicopters, four reconnaissance aircraft, with six destroyers east of Suez and a guard ship at Hong Kong.

"THE AMERICAN PRESENCE consists of 1400 amphibian ships and a destroyers based at Bahrein, and two submarines operating from Guam to patrol the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The US has a communication station at North Cape in West Australia and is constructing another at Diego Garcia, 1000 miles south of Ceylon. It has also a military centre in Saudi Arabia and some military advisers in Ethiopia.

"THE FRENCH dependencies in the area comprise the islands of Kerguelin, Crozet and New Amsterdam. Each island has an airfield. France has a defence treaty with Malagasy and a base at Diego Suarez. She also keeps two frigates and two minesweepers at Afars and Issas (French Somaliland).

"THE SOVIET Pacific Fleet based at Vladivostok visits the Indian Ocean periodically. The Russians have a communication station and air base at Socotra and base facilities at Hodeida, Mogadishu and Aden.

"CHINESE submarines operate in the Bay of Bengal. China is building a naval dockyard at Dar-es-Salaam, and is reportedly installing military equipment for the ICBM to be launched."

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TRIBUNE, August 4, 1973

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

* MORE ON TOURISM

* NETT OF FEECs.

IS IT NOT TRUE that the present squandermania on tourism stems from UNP's cock-eyed plans to develop tourism as a major industry? That the UF seems to have fallen hook, line and sinker for UNP methodology of wasteful investment in the tourist business? That the UNP was lavish in its expenditure on tourism without getting adequate results? That the UF is following in its footsteps with a pair of seven-leagues-boot to outstrip all UNP norms of expenditure? That the country will soon have a unique array of white elephant hotels and there will be nobody to answer for them a few years hence? That no Zoo will be available to send these elephants? That even the deep-freeze—(unlucky 13)—units which have strayed from the custody of the proper authorities will not be of much use after some years?

That the magnitude of the expenditure escalation can be seen if one considers the basic outlines of the original Hilton proposal? That for Rs. 30 million it was estimated (on generous lines) that a Hilton Hotel of 300 rooms could be put up, inclusive a yacht harbour and deep

sea angling sports facilities as a recreational draw, as in Florida and New Zealand? That UF tourist bigwigs, who have now thought nothing of spending Rs. 55 million (or is it only Rs. 52 million?) on an incomplete Hotel Intercontinental, deserve a prize for being mesmerised by entrepreneurs of a slick nature? That this column has predicted that this Hotel will lead to a mini-Watergate in Sri Lanka in the not too distant future? That it is admitted that except for one or two small five star hotels (built at reasonable expense), the bulk of Ceylon's hotel construction should have been low-cost which could have been amortised in five years? That the *Club Mediterranean* holiday villages which are spinning money right round the Mediterranean construct their buildings of thatch, rattan and palm leaves (similar to Polynesian buildings)? That the tourists love it for getting away from it all?

IS IT NOT A FACT that Ceylon's present tourism is subsidised by 65% FEECs? That several millions are spent each year on the Tourist Board and by the Tourist Board? That there has been

no proper reckoning of the money spent by the Ceylon Hotels Corporation? That the earnings from tourism for last year was estimated at Rs. 31 million, that is US 5 million dollars nett of FEECs? That this nett of FEECs theory is that the earnings are the rupee equivalent of the foreign exchange purchased from tourists? That this sum is converted at the current parity rate to give US 5 million dollars? That in all official propaganda about tourist earnings not a word is said about the 65% paid out to earn the Rs. 31 million? That this really reduces the real value of the earnings by 65%? That, thus, the real earnings of tourism last year, when adjusted for the FEECs bonus, is around US 2 million dollars? That it is amusing to note that US 2 million dollars (and more) was earned long before the expensive UNP structure of Boards and Corporations was set up at a time when the exchange rate was only Rs. 4.76 to the dollar? That at that time the dollar was firm and was truly convertible? That today the dollar is weak and sterling is for ever floating? That all the strong currencies like the yen, mark and the franc are also floating? That with conditions in the world so uncertain it is foolish to go in for high-cost Hotels like the Hotel Ceylon Intercontinental? That when *mini* and *maxi* Watergates begin to proliferate in the world and in Sri Lanka too, our tourist industry with squandermania museum pieces like the Intercontinental will come in for devastating investigations?