

# TRIBUNE

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TODAY

## Hope And Promise - And Youth

FOR HOW LONG can the people of Sri Lanka be expected to live on *hopes and promises*? They have lived in the *hope* for better things for a long time—ever since the days when every adult was given a vote under the system of adult franchise. Better standards of living in terms, of the ideology of the consumer society of western capitalism, has given a sense of affluence to larger and larger sections of the wage earning population in our towns and even our villages. The plantation workers who have produced, and still produce, the bulk of the wealth of this country in exportable surplus, have not derived as much benefit as other sections of the community which have done much less for the GNP. But all this has not brought real wealth and prosperity. The real value of money has dropped in terms of food and essentials. Growing mass unemployment has made a mockery of the increased wages earned by certain sections of the community. The increase of the Rupee in circulation has not been supported by adequate commodity backing. For a long time runaway inflation was checked by food subsidies, free education and other social welfare benefits which the productive resources of this country could not sustain. And now, we have come to the end of the long road of dead-end checking of inflation through subsidies and free handouts, and the prospects before the country are grim.

AND, YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT, whatever Government has been in power during the last 40 odd years, right from the days of adult franchise in 1931, has *promised* to step up our productive levels to outstrip the increase of population. From the era of Independence, after the second world war, we have produced over a dozen national plans—all produced by experts—to develop the island's entire economy as well as step up development and production in particular fields like agriculture, fisheries, industry, (big and small),—in fact, in every field imaginable. And on top of this, we have launched a massive campaign to check population growth—and in the Sri Lanka setting family planning has, many assert, only led to promiscuity and a lowering of moral and ethical values. Not one of the Plans for development and otherwise during the last thirty years has been implemented in a way as to produce the envisaged results. In fact, one Plan superseded another resulting in conflicts which inhibited development. Nothing has moved forward in the anticipated way. And, our economy is still in the grip of the economic stagnation in which the country has been buried for the last two or three decades. And now, we have a surfeit of *promises* that everything would be all right in a short time, that the radical measures (no doubt *radical*) recently adopted would produce a miracle, that the *Promised Land* was around the corner. But the people, especially the youth, are sceptical about these promises. They are tired of promises.

WHAT WE SET OUT ABOVE is, in brief and succinct form, what a young undergraduate from one of our campuses told *Tribune* very recently. He said a great deal more, but the current emotional frustration of our youth is not yet headline news and comment must therefore be withheld.



# Tribunania

## \* Climate, Production and Agriculture

IN SPITE OF THE MANNA which has come to the residents of Colombo and its suburbs in the form of an additional half measure of rice on the ration, and in spite of the promise of a possibility of one and half measures for the Sinhalese New Year for every ration book holder in the island, there is a growing sense of gloom which no amount of uplifting propaganda can dispel. If one takes an impartially objective survey of the state of the nation today it will be found that except for sadistically impregnated satisfaction in the new Regulations among a vociferous minority of the privileged section of the urbanised Colombo trade unionised wage-earners (more petite bourgeoisie than proletarian), the present ban on the transport of paddy (and rice) and the ban on the sale of open market rice evokes no sympathetic support among the wide "masses of the people". Colombo trade union pundits, without the faintest clue to what lies at the bottom of the PMB's failure to purchase paddy and without realising the terrible hardships the producers of food have undergone and still undergo—and unmindful of the vast increases in wages and fringe benefits urban workers (and not the only real proletariat in Sri Lanka, the plantation workers) have received since 1956—identify the rural producer of food with the blackmarketeer. They applaud the action of the Government in imposing stern measures on the producer of paddy and foodstuffs without realising that such measures will only help to kill the goose that lays golden eggs. The original inhabitants of Australia had used a boomerang to kill small game, but in the era of adult franchise the boomerang has become a

metaphorical lever presage self denigration.

In the rarefied atmosphere in which the privileged continue to live in Colombo, they do not seem to sense the gloom which has begun to encircle the city. Off-ration rice, which had dropped to about Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 4.00 a measure, just before the new ban, has now shot up to Rs. 5.50 to Rs. 6 a measure with prospects of it going up to Rs. 10 a measure. Chillies are already over Rs. 16 a lb. The water cut continues and there is a hint that electric supply was in danger if the Castlereagh Dam does not fill up soon. Cholera keeps rearing its ugly head from time to time. There is, at the moment, no prospect that pleases.

But more than all this is the drought that continues to persist. The occasional spells of rain in different parts of the country have only raised hopes which brought no fulfilment. The trouble is that we are looking for rain to come to our rescue without doing anything constructive and drastic to tap our groundwater resources on a massive scale—as has been done in other countries which were placed in a position similar to Sri Lanka only a few years ago. On many occasions in the past, *Tribune* has drawn attention to the fact that planners have not taken adequate cognisance of the fact that the world's climate has begun to change and that it was high time that we fashioned our development programmes to have some relevance to the trends which have become all too apparent.

In this connection, a report sent from Washington on January 26 by Easwar Sagar to the Madras *Hindu* sums up in a most illuminating way what we have stressed so often: "Drastic climate changes in the world, which in past centuries have brought about population movements and the rise and fall of civilisations, have begun to occur again during the last few years, and this is causing the monsoon rains to shift southward, creating droughts in lands as far apart as Saharan Africa, Latin America and India. Meteorological and food experts, meeting in New York recently under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation, believe that this gloomy development taken together with the

worldwide shortage of fertilizers caused by the oil crisis, could result in as many as 20 million starvation deaths in affected lands this year.

"The southerly migration of the monsoon in Africa alone, according to the experts has caused, not only a five-year drought but has also swept the sands of the Sahara southward at the rate of 30 miles a year, driving the people of these areas to seek food and pasture in the more overcrowded lands to the south.

"While the experts are not quite certain as to what has caused this latest migration of the monsoons (they have occurred in the past too), their surmise is that it has been due to chillier weather in northern lands bordering the Arctic. Both the northern reaches of Canada and Russia have reported regular annual falls in temperature for the last few decades—and in 1972 they recorded one of the lowest temperatures ever known in the last few hundred years. This onset of the freeze in northern lands is said to have intensified the westerly flow of air in the mid-latitudes and pushed the monsoons southwards. A sharp rise in pollution, caused by today's industrialised societies is also thought to have altered the world's weather.

"In the present uncertain state of the science, weather experts are wary about suggesting methods by which man can alter what nature has done. One solution would be to lower temperatures in the Arctic by melting the 180 cm. ice pack there (the theory being that once melted the ice pack would not form again) by spraying coal dust over the Arctic ice. But this solution could run two risks. Lower temperatures in the northern hemisphere could affect other lands in drastic and unpredictable ways. Also it would be within the power of a northern country to effect a favourable change in its own climate, unmindful of the havoc it would wreak on nations in the southern hemisphere."

WHILE THERE is very little tiny Sri Lanka can do about shaping the trend in climatic changes, there is no doubt that she must do a great deal more about ensur-



ing a proper and more detailed study of weather and climate in the island. Climatology and meteorology have advanced greatly that in many places they are able to forecast weather for almost a year ahead. The New Scientist has this to say on the subject which has many lessons for Sri Lanka.

"Weather forecasting is increasingly a matter for computers. The Natural Environment Research Council has recently awarded a grant to the Department of Meteorology at Imperial College to support an investigation into a new technique for forecasting climate. The aim is to forecast the monthly means of factors relating to weather for about one year ahead.

"Conventional weather forecast are made by predicting, from an initial state, the situation a short time ahead. The predicted state then serves as the basis for another time-step forward, and the process is repeated many times. The length of the time-step is limited, because one must include the important effects of those processes too small to be resolved. Small-scale convection, and turbulence near the ground fall into this category because they act as energy sources and momentum sinks for the large-scale motion, but to resolve these scales would require computers of capacity and speed far exceeding anything remotely possible. Conventionally weather-men represent these processes by a set of assumptions about their effects.

"The new technique will go one stage further, and treat the weather-systems themselves in this empirical fashion. These systems are responsible for most of the horizontal transfer of energy from the equator towards the poles; hence they determine the global-scale temperature contrasts. They also transfer momentum horizontally, injecting it into the middle latitude jet streams responsible for steering the weather patterns. These two properties may be thought of as defining climate to a first approximation. To obtain a useful prediction both effects must be included and the new technique depends on the use of a theory of the transfer processes of such large-scale motion, developed by Dr. J. S. A. Green of Imperial College in 1970 (Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society, vol. 96, p. 157)

This reproduces the observed transfers and their annual variation quite well, but the feedback between atmospheric process is so complex that it does not guarantee a useful forecast.

"The first experiments at Imperial College will test whether the atmosphere can be represented adequately, and the ocean circulation will be put in as observed. Later developments will predict the ocean circulation as well. Dr. Green expects it will be five years before his team can evaluate how well the scheme might be expected to forecast."

If Sri Lanka cannot by itself, and its own resources develop the study of and research into climatical changes in the island, which is only part of what takes place in this region, this country will do well to examine the possibilities of co-operating with other countries in this area, viz India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, etc., and launch a regional programme for this purpose on a co-operative basis. Unless this is done, all our agricultural programmes for the next few years will go haywire, and if we do not take the appropriate measures immediately to deal with the developing situation, the plight this country's agriculture will find itself in the 1980s will not be difficult to imagine.

It is not necessary to remind ourselves that this country already faces a crisis in agricultural production. The coconut industry has been badly hit by the partial drought which has continued for over four years. And now, the situation has been made worse by the inability or unwillingness of coconut land owners to apply fertilisers which are already a scarce commodity. Paddy and rice production have, for a variety of reasons including adverse weather conditions, reached a new low this Maha. Tribune has been drawing constant attention to this in several recent issues. We have pointed out that the Maha crop was low—and that it was not the greedy farmer or the unscrupulous black market trader who were solely responsible for failure which has attended the efforts of the PMB to procure more paddy.

The latest Regulations on the transport and sale of paddy and rice

has increased the gulf between the urban wage earners and the peasants and farmers, and what is worse is that these Regulations will tend to isolate the Government, slowly but surely, from the entire rural community. Exhuberant speeches by those who find satisfaction in such Regulations in a country which is still operated to a large extent on private enterprise and a market economy will be of little avail when the economy and the administration are confronted with socio-economic strains and tensions that will be devastating in their impact.

We must either completely do away with private enterprise and a market economy and adopt total nationalisation, or we must only resort to realistic measures that can produce fruitful results, even on an interim basis.



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## CHRONICLE

Feb. 14 - 20

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

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14:** The coconut industry faces a new threat—a shortage of fertilisers like urea and ammonium sulphate. The Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade last week accepted tenders for the supply of 40,000 tons of wheat flour to Sri Lanka: the average price accepted from four tenders was £ 125 per ton but with the present freight charges the cost will work out to £ 150 a ton. The transport or sale of paddy and rice by unauthorised persons has been totally banned: farmers can retain only 10 bushels of rice or 20 bushels of paddy. The 2,400 university 'shut outs' have been advised by the University Advisory Board of Governors to join vocational training centres: they have been told that it would not be possible to admit them to the University. The UNP will launch another campaign calling for the boycott of *Lake House* newspapers at Matara tomorrow. Pro-United Front trade unions in the public and private sectors will hold a joint rally at Hyde Park on February 28 to urge the Government for an immediate grant of a 20 per cent wage increase. Certain parts of the country experienced a brief shower last evening for the first time after an almost one-and-a-half month's dry weather. Sentences on six suspects found guilty by the CJC (Exchange Frauds) will be passed today. Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn has been deported to West Germany. The Arab Oil Ministers' Conference due to start in Tripoli has been postponed indefinitely. Iraq called for a Security Council meeting of the United Nations to take up the recent fighting on its border with Iran.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15:** Jail terms and heavy fines were imposed yesterday by the Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) on six accused who were found guilty earlier; Mr. Bhagawandas Hirdarama, i, Mr. Stephen Galetovic and Dr. Gligo Mladen, the first three accused were each sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment: fines of Rs. 1,340,660, Rs. 819,243 and Rs. 1,262,077 respectively were also imposed on these three accused: the fourth accused Mr. Yashdev Murjiani was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs. 531,401; Mr. K. K. Jaktiani, the fifth accused, and Mr. D. S. Sabnani, the eighth accused will receive suspended sentences in addition to fines: these sentences and fines will be imposed on them on February 25. The JCTUO has decided to hold a public meeting of members of all affiliated unions to ratify the demand for a twenty per cent wage increase: Government yesterday began setting up barriers and checkpoints at district boundaries and other areas to prevent the illicit transport of paddy and rice: police

also began checking vehicles, particularly those in and around paddy producing areas, to ensure no organised attempts are made by unscrupulous elements to move large stocks of paddy or rice. The Food Commissioner Mr. T. Pathmanathan will hold talks with officials of the Pakistan Trading Corporation (PTC) as well as the private sector there, regarding rice purchases by Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka wants to buy 50,000 tons more to bolster its stock position. Nine suspected insurgents are reported to have tunneled their way out of the rehabilitation camp at Anuradhapura. Sri Lanka has been granted 5.9 million US dollars from the International Monetary Fund. French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert charged that the meeting of the 13 major oil consuming countries now being held in Washington had turned into a political conference and hence France was dissociating itself from some aspects of the final communique.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16:** About 500 of the 2,400 students who qualified for admission to the University should be given the opportunity to read for a science degree externally through affiliated schools: the Minister of Education had made this proposal to the Vice Chancellor of the University. Regulations governing the ban on the transport of rice or paddy from one district to another is now expected to come into force in the course of next week. Fresh licences to function as shipping agents will not be granted to any company after today, unless it is a public company in which the Government holds more than 51 per cent shares. The Kandy-Senkadagala Bhikku Front has decided to hold propaganda meetings in the 14 electorates of this district to explain to the people the socio-economic and religious problems in the country. An extra half measure of rice will be issued on the ration in the rice deficit areas again. A new municipal court is to be established in the Colombo Town Hall premises to deal with offenders against Municipal laws and by-laws in the city of Colombo. The "limited" Algiers Arab Summit has decided to lift the Arab oil embargo on the United States and restore full diplomatic relations with Washington. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the Soviet Union has been described as "an outrageous violation of human rights" by the official Vatican Radio. President Nixon has flatly refused to hand over any more tapes and documents relating to the Watergate scandal. U.N. members gave Secretary General Kurt Waldheim authority to convene a special session of the General Assembly, sought by non-aligned countries to discuss world economic problems.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17:** The Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike has issued a deportation order on the two Yugoslav nationals who were found guilty by the Criminal Justice Commission inquiring into exchange frauds, of having violated the exchange laws of this country: after consultation with the Yugoslav authorities in Sri Lanka, the Premier made the order for the deportation. A separate unit to handle the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal will soon be set up at the Foreign Office. A tough new rice procurement plan designed to channel all the available rice to the Paddy Marketing Board will get under way this week. The Government has ordered the issue of an additional



half measure of rice to consumers in Colombo and suburbs from tomorrow for the convenience of people living in non-rice producing areas in view of the ban on unauthorised transport of rice and paddy. A Chief Accountant and a Stores Manager have been sentenced to death in Soviet Russia for defrauding the State of some 540,000 Roubles (310,000 Sterling). They were involved in massive sales of fertilisers and other farming materials and apparatus belonging to the State. An underground movement is officially suspected to exist in Indonesia aimed at overthrowing Suharto Government. The price of gold soared to a new record of 150 Dollars an ounce in London and Zurich from yesterday. The Soviet Union sought to bury the name and reputation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, claiming that he had suffered a Civic Death as a traitor to his country.

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18:** The Minister of Health, Mr. W. P. G. Ariyadasa, is seeking Treasury approval for an increase in the cadre of Government doctors. The present cadre is based on the needs of the country around two decades ago and was meant to cater to a population of 8 million. The President of the Kattubedda Campus, Mr. L. D. Sumanadasa, has been appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka: his appointment takes effect from March 1. The Opposition's motion for the appointment of a Select Committee of MPs to investigate and report on the alleged plot "to destroy the sovereignty of the people", will be taken up on March 6, in the National State Assembly. A total of Rs. 1.6 million has been recovered by the Inland Revenue Department during 1973, as penalties. Customs have blown the lid off a racket in which precious stones and cheques were being sent overseas, concealed in curios. A situation similar to that which prompted the establishment of a section of the university at the Race Course in 1965 and thereby creating another 12,000 unemployed arts graduates by 1971, exists now in the case of science students, states a report prepared by four Deans of the University. The Minister of Education, Al Haj Badiuddin Mahmud, said that many of the chief Education Officers are ignorant of the Five Year Education Development Plan. The Minister made this remark at a ceremony held to award certificates to these officers. Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, left for Pakistan yesterday to attend the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore. The North Korean Navy sank one South Korean trawler and seized another on the high Seas off the West coast of Korea. A stolen\* helicopter was shot down when it was found circling over White House in Washington.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19:** New amended emergency Regulations regarding the transport, possession and sale of paddy and rice were introduced last night: the purpose of these regulations is to assist the Paddy Marketing Board to buy as much locally produced rice as possible. The National Housing Department now offers loans to the public to purchase land to build houses up to a maximum of Rs. 20,000: this is in excess to the facilities of loans for building houses. The Jaffna Magistrate has returned a verdict of death by accidental electrocution at the conclusion of the inquest held into the deaths of seven persons on January 10 at the final session of the IATR seminar held in Jaffna. Dr. N. M. Jerera, Minister of Finance, and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva,

Minister of Plantation Industry, have raised objections to any Free Trade Zone being set up in the country: the two Ministers have taken up the stand that foreign investors had been given enough of encouragement and as such Free Trade Zone is not necessary. Persons holding Convertible Rupee Accounts can now buy luxury goods sold in the Ceylon Hotels Corporations' tourist shop; this shop has up to now catered only for foreigners tendering foreign currency. The 100-year-old Mercantile Bank and the four-year-old Hatton National Bank will merge shortly. Marxist Parliamentarians attempted to storm the presidential dais at the opening of the Indian Parliament in a wide-spread outburst of anger over inflation and food shortages.

## NUCLEAR & SOLAR ENERGY

— the only answer —

Hyderabad Jan. 16,

Speaking on "Our dwindling earth resources and the problem of survival of our industrialised society", Prof. B. Sundara Rama Rao, a UNESCO expert in geophysics, said here to-day that the answer to the energy crisis in the world lay in man's ability to harness nuclear and solar energy. With these new sources at our command it would be possible to sustain an industrial civilisation of the present magnitude for another millennium (1,000 years), he said.

Prof. Sundara Rama Rao, who was delivering the Prince Muka-ramjah lecture under the auspices of the Indian Geophysical Union at the National Geophysical Research Institute, said that the present generation should realise that the fossil-fuel epoch was transitory, and the complete cycle of the exploitation of the world's fossil fuel would cover barely 300 years. Hence the answer was development of nuclear and solar energy. However, the limits to the growth of industries activity were no longer set by a scarcity of energy but rather by the space and material limitations of a finite earth together with the well-known principles of ecology.

Prof. Sundara Rama Rao said that three years ago a team of international experts sponsored by the Club of Rome studied the ecological problem. The team examined five basic factories that determined and therefore ultimately limited the economic and industrial growth on this planet, namely, population, agricultural production, natural resources, industrial production and pollution.

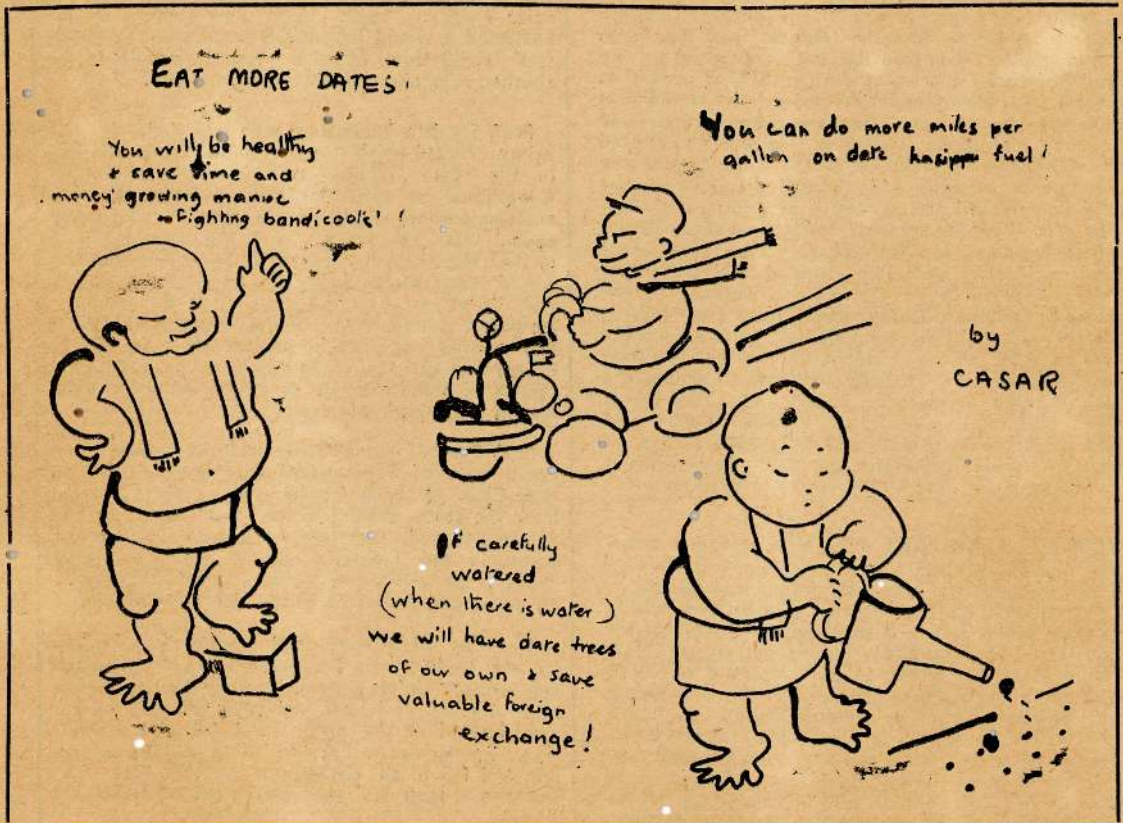
A series of analysis and projections made by the study team all pointed to this simple conclusion: "Unless growth is controlled, the earth's resources and its human habitants will be destroyed. Instead of the decline and fall of a civilisation, Roman or otherwise, there will be a decline and fall of all civilisations in the long run, and the longest run may be less than 150 years."



French President George Pompidou will visit the Soviet Union next month for a meeting with Communist party leader Leonid Brezhnev. Several senior members of Peking Radio have been suspended, in one of the first reported moves against ranking officials in the political campaign conducted under the slogan "Criticise Lin Piao, Criticise Confucius."

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 20:** The Ceylon Electricity Board has strongly appealed to consumers to cut down on the use of electricity in view of the drought which is threatening the supply of hydro-power generated from the Castlereagh and Maousakelle reservoirs; the oil price hike has forced the Board to close down the Kelanitissa Thermal Power Station which produced one-third of its power; the Board has given a warning that higher tariffs will be imposed if the situation does not improve. Affiliated colleges are likely to be the solution to the problem of 2000 odd students shut out of the science based faculties, owing to the lack of facilities at the University campuses.

The Prime Minister yesterday appealed to all the 22 District Political Authorities to get the co-operation of people and farmers in diverting to Paddy Marketing Board as much as possible of the paddy now being harvested. Army has been deployed to man the barriers set up by the Paddy Marketing Board to check the illicit transportation of rice and Paddy. Sri Lanka will make the same arrangements this year for the Kachchativu religious festival as it did last year. The oil price hike has resulted in mobile police patrols being cut down by about one-third. Dr. Frank Barnaby, Consultant to the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Peace Zone proposal, will arrive in the island today on a five-day visit: he will meet the Premier to discuss this issue. Sri Lanka is likely to raise the issue of the Anglo-American decision to expand facilities in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. In the United Nations. The two-day meeting of the foreign Ministers of Islamic countries opened yesterday in Lahore to draw up the agenda for the Islamic Summit which starts on Friday.





# Inania of this, that and the other

## Don't Leave The World, Father

by Inna

STILL ANOTHER scene I was privileged to witness quite recently. It is no secret that there is a polarization taking place in church quarters on many topics and this seems common to all christian groups.

One read a text from the gospel book which said something like this: "Seek first the kingdom. Don't worry about what you are to eat, what you are to wear..." and so on. In spirited conversation the other pounced on him: "That is what I say. Why worry about wearing the long robe? Whether you wear it or not you must remain good in the world of today. Did you not read Fr. Mervyn's article in the magazine. That's it. We have not fled from the world."

The gist of it was this: one party says that they should wear the long white robe as a sign that they have left the world: the other party maintains that they have not left the world but that (with J. B. Metz, I hope the spelling is right) they are "fleeing with the world to God." This made me look up the real purpose of the Buddhist robe about which that Father's article speaks. Some hard words were thrown about in a friendly manner. One recalled the "Show and pomp of tassels and silk and shot-silk of a bygone era." I slowly went to the library nearest, and read on:

"In wisdom I put on the robes, as a protection against gadflies and mosquitoes, as protection against cold and against heat, wind and sun, the touch of serpents, and to cover nakedness, i.e. I wear them in all humility, for use only, and not for ornament or show..." (Buddhist Ordination Service, J. F. Dickson, in Buddhism by Richard Grad, page 10c)

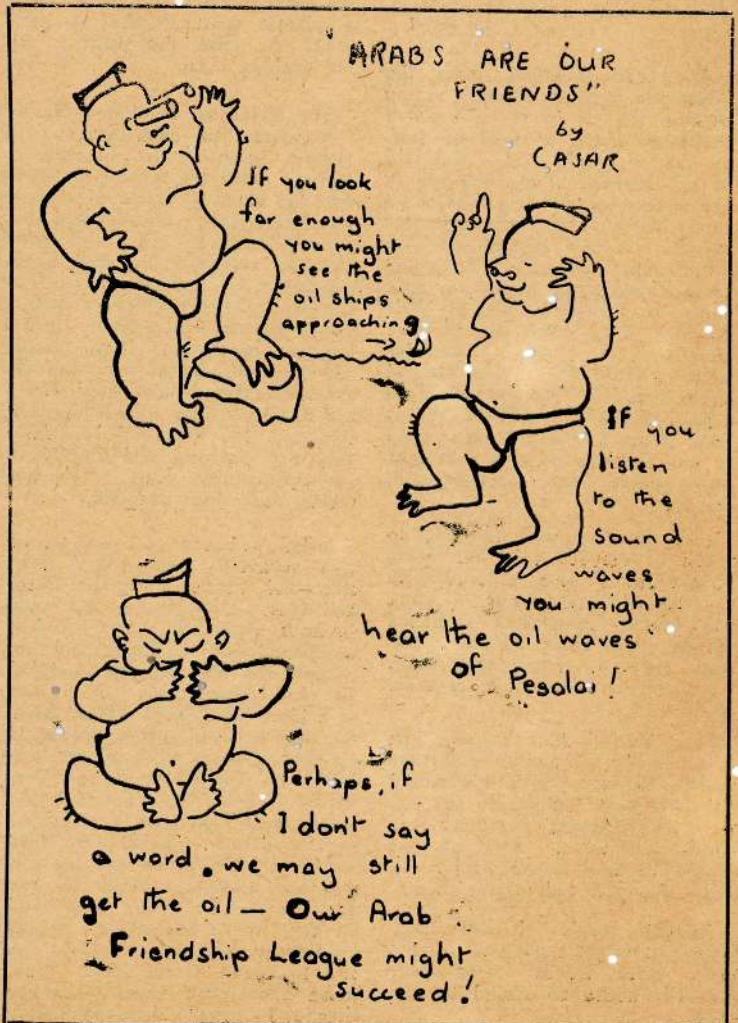
ALTHOUGH I underline the words "show and pomp" as if they were

in opposition, there is an added reason, or reasons: priests and prelates are pressed for time, I am told and so, they want to get easy seats in bus and train and queues (I am not inclined to believe this, because I've seen many such 'clerics' taking their turn in the queues, except in bread queues).

The era of the common man demands that these prerogatives and privileges be forgone. I like the freedom with which so many catholic priests here in Sri Lanka use the garment which they need, for their work. If they travel in a society car, it's a long robe, sometimes coloured according to rank: if working in a field or hanging

on the maypole of a bus, it is a pair of trousers; if pushing a handcart (as I know it happens, so that the pusher might meet more people and help them to goodness) it is a sarong-type of decent cloth which makes him dignified in the spirit of service. That is the only thing which christianity upholds: not privilege but service. Pluriformity is the operative word.

Rome can be superb. Listen: "Today, people do not accept any more that a cleric be someone who enjoys privileges. Neither the faithful, nor priests, nor seminarians accept such a situation" (Notitiae, January 1946, 15th August 1945, page 19).





Talking of robes while people are suffering is another red-herring tactic by the unwise and the petty-minded who insist: "Don your robe, Peter"! but Paul should keep on saying "Put more spirit. Put more content!" And they all say Amen, to the truth.

*"Bramble and briar will soon discover*

*Who is the liar and who the lover."*

## SHORT STORY

# RETRIBUTION

by Saya

As Malati emerged from the house she caught a glimpse of the back of the car as it went down the lane raising a cloud of dust, on the untarred road. She said to her husband who stood nearby "How is it that all of a sudden we have become good enough for them? I suppose because we have made money, we automatically become respectable! But I am sure there is a motive behind their coming. It is surely not affection after all these years. I wonder what it could be?" Rassa smiled and said quietly "Do not bear them a grudge forever. After all she is your sister and when they come to our house it is only right that they should be treated with respect."

"It's all very well for you to speak of respect, but you know how much I have suffered with the lack of it, and how my heart has become completely hardened against all of them. I don't consider them my family any longer. I couldn't care less if all of them died!"

"Now Malati don't I know just how bad you still feel after all these years. Whatever it is you should not have sent Ramesh to say you were not at home. She must have known you were. After all, we should be big-hearted enough to forget the past and forgive them."

"Forget! Forgive! I shall never forgive or forget as long as I live!" With these words Malati went into the house to attend to her work.

Rasa sat down slowly on the easy chair on the verandah and looked out into the dusk and sighed. The farmers were returning home after a hard day's work in the fields. A bullock cart rumbled slowly by, the weary bulls plodding slowly home after carrying their load for the day. A group of local youths, the "dandies" of the village went laughing and talking on their way to the tavern. Rasa was a tall, well-built man in his late forties. Despite his comparative lack of education, he was a philosopher in his own right. He was a good, hard-working man devoted to his family. He was deep in thought over the events of the evening. The reason for his sister-in-law's visit after nearly a quarter century! After a little while he rose and went in for his evening meal.

The bitterness of almost twenty five years had been aroused in Malati's heart. Her bottled up feelings were all pouring out like the fizz when a bottle of aerated water is opened. She realised that it still hurt and the humiliation and the rejection she had experienced only seemed to enhance the bitterness through every passing year. Respectability, family, pride, honour, reputation, these words had been thrown at her head till she felt ashamed, humiliated, cheap and tawdry. The only compensation was the love and consideration her husband had shown to her through the years. This was what made life bearable.

Malati had been a very attractive seventeen year old. Fair, slim and petite with a peach and cream complexion and long, lustrous black hair. She had just completed her schooling and her parents did not wish to send her to the University or in pursuit of a job. They were conservative, for they believed that a girl should be kept at home till a proper husband was found for her. They hardly allowed her out. If she went out it was with her mother to the temple. She felt the need for companions of her age but this was not possible because, for the better part of the year they lived on her father's tea estate. It was only occasionally they came to the city to spend a few days. True, when they were small, she, her sister and brother had played, fought

and studied together, but now her sister was married and her brother was across these as furthering his career as a lawyer.

It was only natural that Malati sought out the company of the servants, (she had never been able to communicate with her parents), particularly the young and handsome driver Rasa, recently employed by her father. He had studied upto the eighth standard in addition to being attractive. Consequently Malati had spent more and more time with him. The outcome had been inevitable. When Malati's parents found out that she was pregnant, they had hurriedly got her registered to Rasa and sent them packing to fend for themselves. It was incredible how ruthless one's own parents could have been. They had valued their honour and their place in society, higher than their own child. Rasa was very good to Malati, and he had taken her back to his village. He had started farming and slowly things had improved for them. The going was rough for Malati who was accustomed to the luxuries of life, but what had helped her through the rough period was the kindness and understanding shown to her by Rasa and his people. They were simple village folk but they restored her faith in human beings. She had had no connexion with her family at all. A decade ago her father had died and her mother too a couple of years later. Rasa had started doing better and he had bought a lorry. Now he owned half a dozen lorries and they had built a nice house and were comfortably off. They had two children, a daughter who was now in the University, and a son still at school. What had hurt Malati most was that even her sister and brother had never once attempted to see her or even write a single line. Until today. Malati could not understand why.

A few months later, a wedding was taking place in Malati's house. Malati's daughter was marrying the boy of her own choice whom she had met at the University. The wedding was being celebrated on a lavish scale. The place was teeming with people. There was a flurry suddenly and everyone was excited. The drummers beat louder and the dhoby ran to lay



out the white cloth on the ground. The bridegroom was arriving. Malati stood quietly on one side, a cynical smile playing on her lips. "This is what is called Retribution and Revenge" she thought to herself.

The bridegroom was none other than her sister's son!

## SHAMBA

# Getting Into Stride Again

By  
Anatory Bukoba

February 12,

Came I here, this visit, with the intention of clearing this acre quickly, and doing it before I went away again, but it is not to be, for I have other commitments. I have also lost two days of work through lethargy caused by illness. My cold is very much better, but I have a slight headache, no fever. We were up betimes; the night had been warm, no frost, and it is so again today. It may rain, some say.

It was the weekly fair. There was nothing to take me there, but I went to what amounts to our nearest town. On my way back there was a group of youth on the road, all but one of whom I knew and some to whom I teach English. They had nothing to do, it seemed, but sit there and talk, and I joined them for a while. Fine lads they were, relations and friends they were, all good farmers I should say, though some had other occupations. Most tradesmen and craftsmen do some farming around here. They had nothing to do this morning, and so here they were.

Now this sort of activity does not go well with G.N.P., big Corporations, firms, with people who have money to invest, with a rat race, a consumer society, capitalism, socialism or communism, I should imagine, nor with unfavourable balance of trade, lack of foreign exchange, good economics, and much else that seems to be in vogue. They were self employed and they had money, or money

when they needed it. These lads had leisure, although it was the middle of a working morning, albeit a "fair" day, traditionally a day when the farmer goes to town, and they were spending it, or using their leisure, in a way that did not cost them a cent. I was very struck with these young working men, and I thought at the time what morally clean-looking fellows they looked, too.

It happened that I was not the only one who was not working at the Shamba. Thanks to our housewife, I was able to drink a lot of coriander and ginger for my cold. In the evening I cleared with the *vici katha* a small patch that I had not been able to do last time I was here, and had left unfinished. Then I moved across the footpath to where the old plantain trees were growing and, the beans, sweet potato and pumpkin. I had not done much when the shaft of the *katta* broke and the iron head flew off. So I called it a day as far as any further manual work went. It was still early.

The mosquitoes seem to be bad tonight. One or other is always going down with fever in this village, it seems. The English lessons are going well, and it is surprising how much of English some people know. Others claim a blissful and proud ignorance of it.

February 13,

Today I did more manual work than I have done for years I should think, all the area where the first plantain trees went in and the near side of the house right along to the trees on the river bank, the back of the house to where the old brick house used to stand on the hill, and the top side of where the first manioc went in, all these I cleared with the *vici katha*, cutting the grass short and what weeds there were. The grass I cut was long, lush and still green, and would have been ample feed for some cattle. But the dry months; the answer to that is to make hay, which nobody, so far as I am aware does in Ceylon, but grass is always given while it is still green; that same day, in fact. I think I have heard of silage being made in Ceylon, but there is such a pothor about making it, that I would prefer hay.

Well, I started after breakfast, and after I had collected the *katha* from the *bas*. When the *angelus* rang at twelve, I went to the river for a bath and washed a sarong and a white shirt, the clothes that I had on. After lunch I set to it again and worked steadily till about half an hour before dusk. This made me late for the English lesson. By then the *katha* was loose again, and I took it back to the *bas*. He decided to do a different kind of job on it, to give the *vici katta* a collar, an iron collar, like the ordinary *katha*, and I shall have it tomorrow.

The mosquitoes in a gully by the river were like elephants, if I may use elephants as a sort of simile. They attacked me in broad daylight when I had occasion to go there and seemed to stick on like leeches. Today our housewife went out to work while her husband minded the youngest. She was picking *mungatta* or green gram. Some years back one never heard of *mungatta* being grown in Ceylon, and yet, where I was, we ate it every morning. The family is clamouring for cowpea, says it is the most satisfying food to be had at its price, but they have not the money for it.

Sleeping off the Shamba and eating a proper dinner at a *kadday*, I really have a chance to sample village life, and very satisfying

### Vaccine could cut brain damage risk

A new vaccine which protects against a common virus that causes severe brain damage has been developed by researchers at St. George's Hospital, London. The vaccine, which has taken 10 years to research, protects against cytomegalovirus, a cause of brain damage in between 200 and 600 children annually in England and Wales. Further trials may take five years, but if they are successful the vaccine could be given to teenage girls in a single injection with German measles vaccine to prevent any likelihood of their giving birth to mentally retarded children. The work is reported in the British medical journal, *Lancet*.



I find it. The regulars dropping in at the *kadday*, just as in an English pub, the casuals one sees, the peaceful, quiet atmosphere, no radio on today, all these I like. I expounded my views on farming at the class, they were not bound to accept them but said they liked it.

February 14,

The rythm of my life seemed quite upset last night and it came about this way. Both husband and wife went out to work, the wife to put cowdung on the walls of a house, for cowdung acts as a disinfectant, and the man to reap paddy. At dusk the man was back, but not his wife. When I came here about 9.30 p.m. he was not in either. Their tiny little puppy greeted me on the road at the entrance to the *Shamba*. I was reluctant to leave the little thing here alone, and so took it away in the big bucket and I came back here later with the puppy and slept here.

So I was sleeping on the *Shamba* again, in my own house, or, rather, my old house, after more than two months. I knew the puppy would give us warning of anyone coming, yet I fixed up one or two contrivances about the doorway to give me warning of anyone trying to be an intruder. The *massa* bed was in a shocking state with large gaps between ill-fitting sticks, and I could hardly find a comfortable position in which to sleep. It was quite impossible to sleep on my side, and I had to sleep on my back.

In the evening I had visited the *Colonization Officer* of our tract and told him about the felling and burning on my land. He at once gave me a note to the offender to keep off, and to go and see him. I handed the note over when I got here, or rather, on my way here, for the man is almost on the adjoining property, and when I got here at 5 P.M., there was a group of monkeys, wanderoo, all over the place.

They were right by the doorway almost face to face with the puppy, and they had quite ruined the *bandakka*, bean and sweet potato. They had not touched the pumpkin or the solitary passion fruit; the other two passion fruit plants died some time ago. They had not touched

the jak either, it was planted by the woman and is doing very well, right by the house.

The man arrived this morning, just a few minutes ago, and I am finishing off the day's notes by the river. Most of yesterday morning I spent gathering up what I cut yesterday; it took me that long, nearly half a day and I put it all in what used to be a well behind the house, a shallow hole, of no use now, and in this way I hope to make some compost; but the cuttings were already half dry. It would have been better if it had been gathered up the day it was cut, when it was all green. That makes for quicker and better compost.

### PICKING POCKETS AGAIN

## Once More, With Feeling

by CANAX

ME AND MY BIG MOUTH, as you-know-who keeps telling me all the time. Whoever thought picking pockets was a subject likely to lead to controversy? I didn't, I promise, or else I wouldn't have touched on it at all last week. Come to think of it, I was rather proud I had managed to write something without saying anything which, you must admit, is no mean achievement.

All I said the last time, as far as I can recall, was that pick-pocketing, like charity, begins at home. That at any rate was the gist of the whole piece, and if you want to know why I don't stick to the gist of what I want to say every week, it is because that's one sure way to get to the poor house. When you get paid by the column-inch it is nothing short of suicidal to plonk for the gist of things.

It was my wife who told me when I started this column, "Don't ever say in three words what you can possibly say in thirty", and that has proved to be sound financial advice. She's invaluable, I'll say that for her.

So here I go again. The quite unwarranted impression seems to be that I am opposed to pick-pockets and to their profession. I'll swear on anything, even on

my purse, that I am nothing of the sort. Picking pockets is, to my mind, a very singularly human occupation, sometimes thoughtlessly indulged in to the point when it becomes a pre-occupation. That does not make it any less human, of course.

No, I don't suppose there is anything wrong with picking someone's pocket any more than there is in picking someone's brains. The objective, after all, is the same in both, which is to get something for nothing.

I wish to go on record, then, that picking pockets is okay by me. Now that is not a view I find myself holding only of late and all of a sudden but one I have held all along, and one I shall continue to hold as long as no smart alec picks my pocket. Fair's fair, I always say, and I can't think of anything fairer than that, can you?

MY WIFE SAYS no smart alec will waste his time picking my pocket for the same reason no wise guy will want to pick my brains. I can't see why, but she says it's obvious. Never mind, she's always seeing things.

What the professionals saw wrong in my approach last week was that by making light of it I missed the whole point of the problem. (My problem, alas, is that if I'm not missing the point, I'm invariably getting away from it).

What I see in my original approach is that it was devoted entirely to the woman's view, which I suspect is really what some—I hate to say this, and yet I will—male chauvinist pigs in the business seem to be grouching about.

By way of making amends after a fashion I'll let them have their say this time, and console myself with the thought that at least my column hasn't gone to the dogs. (Note by Ed: It has, it has, but keep going.)

Seems there is more to picking pockets than meets the eye. When done expertly, in fact, one hardly ever sees any of it, I am told. Ah, yes, and one feels none of it, either. But that is not what the pros in the game are grumbling about.

The quarrel they pick with me is that I failed to treat the subject like I would any other human



## From The Easy Chair

problem. In other words, sympathetic consideration was conspicuous by its absence in that wordy jungle of mine last week.

I have been thinking (surprise! surprise!) and must admit I feel touched—not where my purse is, but where my heart is, and that is in my mouth. I'm scared for the future. Equality and social justice is all very well so long as the worker in the process gets a bigger bite of the bathala than before. But you work with that end in view and end up having some of the citizenry desperately roaming the streets not knowing where their next buck is coming from, for traditional sources of supply are fast drying up. Many a pocket, according to reliable reports, is already empty.

**QUOTE ME ONLY** if you must, but I hear even the Planning Ministry boys have stopped doodling and started thinking about what next to do. Caught napping, they are now worried about the plight of the poor pick-pocket.

Said a big planner, "We realise the chaps represent a sizeable arm of skilled, self-employed workers and the only reason we took no account of them was that they, unlike other workers in the public and private sectors, are extremely backward in coming forward. They are not what I would call a militant lot." He didn't say so, but I gather pick-pockets don't have the added clout of trade union representation.

"Believe me," he added, "no one has until now put in a single word on their behalf."

"What do you make of it?"

"I really don't know," he said, "every nation has it and we may have finally discovered our own Silent Majority."

Next I had a word with a senior police official who hadn't sent a wink since the problem surfaced "I'm not sure I did the right thing," he said bleary eyed, "but I called in the Wild Life chaps for urgent consultations."

Seems the problem is one of conservation and the thinking is that if nothing is done soon enough pick-pockets will almost certainly

become an extinct breed in this island. With its vast knowledge of successful conservation measures for the elephant, the Wild Life Department realised just how serious the problem was and urged prompt action to save the pick-pocket for posterity.

**THE POLICE VIEW**, to begin with, was that if pick-pockets vanished from view, it was not the end of the world: the Government could always import fresh specimens from other countries and start all over again. But this was rejected by the Wild Life boys as being totally unrealistic.

Said one of them, "It's a question of adaptation. You can't just bring a pick-pocket from Poona, let him loose in the Pettah, and expect him to go forth and multiply to solve your problem!"

There's a lot in what the guy says. Conditions vary from country to country, even from area to area in the same country, so the police are way off the scent. The police had even suggested that imported pick-pockets be reared here under controlled conditions, but this too didn't find favour with the jungle men. Pick-pockets have never been known to take too well to confinement, it was pointed out, for they were impossibly shy creatures and, like our elephant, simply wouldn't breed in captivity.

A Social Service man also present at the conference had come up with the bright idea of putting pick-pockets on weekly welfare and got hooted for his trouble, for it was clear he hadn't understood the nature of the problem to begin with. As the Wild Life man pointed out, they were dealing with predators and pick-pockets who faced extinction not because they didn't have money but because the rest of the country didn't have any.

At that the Social Service withdrew from the meeting, saying the Department's budget simply wouldn't go round the rest of the country. But before he left he said, "Why don't we appeal to all trade unions in the country, both in the public and private sectors, to demand a 20 per cent increase in wages and salaries?"

The suggestion was unanimously accepted and, I hear, the unions have done their bit for the pick-pockets. It's up to the Government now.

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## BRITAIN AND SOUTH ASIA

## Heath Government's Policy

By B. Vivekanandan

With acknowledgements to the *INDIA QUARTERLY*, the journal of The Indian School for International Studies, which is now part of the Jawaharlal University, New Delhi, we publish the first instalment of an article on Mr. Edward Heath's Government Policy towards the countries of South-Asia — notably India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

"THIS Government is now moving into a new era of British diplomacy. . . We are leaving behind the years of retreat. We are determined to establish the reputation of Britain once again, the reputation as the firm defender of her own interests and the skilful and persistent partner of all those who are working for a lasting peace."

Thus spoke the British Prime Minister Mr. Edward Heath, outlining his foreign policy objectives, at the Conservative Party's annual conference in Blackpool, in October 1970. When he took over the reins of power in Britain in June 1970, Westminster's relationship with the nations of South Asia was limping through a phase of stresses and strains. The two major factors which had contributed to the dismal phase of Britain's relationship in the region were the partisan attitude the Wilson Government adopted during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war, and its decision in 1968 to withdraw from the East of Suez by the end of 1971.

The other minor but notable factors were Pakistan's steady movement towards the orbit of Peking in recent years and the coming into power of a leftist Government in Ceylon headed by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in May 1970. Of these, the first two proved to be factors of serious dimensions.

Over the years Britain's undue preference to Pakistan in the affairs of South Asia was a blot in the Indo-British relationship. It took a serious turn during the 1965 Indo-Pak war when Prime Minister Harold Wilson, playing into the hands of a pro-Pakistani lobby in British Foreign Office, issued a hasty statement on 6 September 1965. The statement accused India

of aggression on Pakistan when the Indian Army, for strategic reasons, marched towards Lahore to reduce the Pakistani Army's pressure in the Chhamb Sector. The statement obviously was not only anti-Indian in character and spirit, but also a violation of the well-established convention of Britain's neutrality in a conflict between two Commonwealth countries. As a result it took the relationship between the two countries to a new low that the Wilson administration could never regain India's goodwill. Neither Mr. Wilson's subsequent behind-the-scene efforts to help India, following the Chinese ultimatum in September 1965, nor his instant £ 10 million interest free loan to India, could compensate the damage done by his statement on 6 September.

THE WILSON GOVERNMENT'S declaration in January 1968 underlining its intention to terminate Britain's treaties with Gulf States of Bahrain, Qatar and the seven Trucial States and withdraw British forces East of Suez by the end of 1971, on economic grounds, had led to develop cold feet in its relationship with South Asia. The decision had far reaching multiple implications that it had deprived Britain of its will to play a meaningful role in the region, and had a weakening effect on its relationship with the nations East of Suez. In Persian Gulf and the Far East it led to a new move for alternate arrangements. In South Asia, Pakistan, realising that SEATO will be of little value in a conflict with India on the question of Kashmir had moved steadily towards Peking in late 1960s.

In Ceylon the assumption of Mrs. Bandaranaike's leftist Government in

1970, with pro-Soviet Ministers in the Cabinet, also did not augur well for Britain's close relationship with it.

As the Leader of Opposition, Mr. Edward Heath was bitterly opposed to the Government's policy to withdraw from the East of Suez. He firmly believed that such a step would not only be a great mistake, but also would jeopardize the stability and peace in the region, which were absolutely necessary to safeguard vital British interests. In fact, this deep conviction had emanated from the first hand information he gathered during a 15-day private visit, from 29 December 1965, to the entire region.

Apart from this, on the eve of the 1970 general election Britain's shadow Defence Secretary, Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Everyday something like 2,000 British ships are on the high seas, in the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Far East. For Britain a maritime strategy is an essential part of the defence of our shores and the protection of our trade routes and interests. A Conservative Government will accordingly make full use of, and built upon the Simonstown Agreement with South Africa and keep a British naval presence in the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Far East."

MR. EDWARD HEATH'S Prime Ministership in June 1970 began with a series of measures designed to win back the confidence of the nations of South Asia. As the first step he halted the withdrawal of British forces East of Suez and brought the Government's policy for the region under review. He maintained that Britain's hasty withdrawal from the region without proper future security arrangements for the states concerned would create a vacuum in the region which would be filled by the Soviet Union. For the Persian Gulf he favoured a stable political framework which could ensure the security of the tiny Sheikdoms. In the Far East, he favoured the conclusion of a five-Power defence agreement with Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia.

In the Persian Gulf Britain favoured the move for the creation of a Union of Arab Emirates com-



posed of Bahrain, Qatar and the seven Trucial States. In a major policy statement for the Gulf States, Sir Alec Douglas Home told the Commons on 1 March 1971 that Britain would "strongly support the development of a Union of Arab Emirates", and was prepared to offer the Union continuing links and assistance. He elaborated that Britain was prepared to offer a treaty of friendship containing an undertaking to consult together in time of need, and was willing to hand over the Trucial Oman Scouts to form a nucleus of the Union Army. It was also prepared to make available British officers and other personnel on loan to the Union forces and to assist in the supply of equipment. "If the Union wishes, elements of British forces, including training teams to assist with the training of Union security forces, could be stationed there on a continuing basis to act in a liaison and training role... On their side Her Majesty's Government would expect the Government of the Union to continue to permit the overflying and staging of British military aircrafts through Union territory on the lines of the present arrangements. However, in 1971 itself Britain and the Gulf States concluded treaties of friendship, which came into effect before the withdrawal of the British forces there. Even though Britain withdraw forces from the Gulf, RAF aircrafts and ships of Royal Navy continue to pay regular visits to the area. The importance Britain attaches to its continued connections with the Gulf States could be seen in what Mr. Heath said to the CENTO Ministerial Council meeting on 1 June 1972. He said: "The presence in the local forces of officers seconded from the British forces, the regular exchange we have in the field of training and the new treaties of friendship we have entered into with Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are examples not only of our continuing interest in the region but also of our will to contribute towards its stability. Our aim is to retain and strengthen our non-military links with these countries. At the same time we are determined to assist the Gulf States to the best of our ability to make peaceful progress and to maintain the stability of the area, which is so much in the interests of all of us here today."

BRITAIN continues to station forces in Singapore and Malaysia. At a meeting of the Ministerial representatives of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia and the United Kingdom in April, 1971, in London arrangements were drawn up for the security of Singapore and Malaysia. This Five Power agreement in the Far East came into effect, from 1 November 1971. The ANZUK forces now continue to stay in Singapore and Malaysia within the frame work of the five-Power agreement.

*Thus, after ensuring its continuing hold in two strategic points in the Indian Ocean region the Heath Government had taken a series of key initiatives in 1971 to improve relationship with the nations of the Indian sub-continent.*

Its governing principles for the sub-continent is that it has no interest in "taking sides"—a factor that places Britain well for playing a major role in the region. As a pacesetter to develop warm relationship with India Mr. Edward Heath availed the earliest opportunity provided by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Commemorative Dinner in London, on 17 November 1970 to speak on Indo-British relationship. He said: "I believe that the bonds between Britain and India have been strengthened in the mature post-independence relationship of equality and co-operation. And I do believe that we do well to cherish the friendship between our countries... There is a vast body of affection and admiration in this country for India. History has left its mark and has drawn our countries together. We must seek to use our common concern for humanity to break down the prejudices, the inequalities and divisions that confront mankind."

But the real breakthrough in Indo-British relationship came in the wake of the Bangladesh crisis in 1971. Notably, Britain was one of those very few Western nations which had shown great understanding of the problems the atrocities of the Pakistani military regime in Bangladesh had created for India. The influx of 10 million Bangladesh refugees into India during the crisis was viewed with great concern and understanding. When Mr. Swaran Singh, India's Foreign Minister, made a world

tour in June 1971 to appraise the Bangladesh situation, Britain was one of those very few nations which had shown great understanding of the social tensions and financial strain to India caused by the colossal influx of Bangladesh refugees.

As a result in a joint statement issued by Mr. Swaran Singh and his British counterpart Sir Alec Douglas Home at the end of the talks, they agreed that a political solution to the problem should be found "acceptable to people of East Pakistan." Britain stood firmly on this basic stand despite official protests from Islamabad. In fact, Britain was the first foreign country to declare so clearly that a political settlement in Bangladesh would be a pre-condition to the return of Bangladesh refugees from India while countries like the Soviet Union preferred to walk obliquely for a fairly long period.

**DURING THE INDO-PAK WAR** in December 1971, on the question of Bangladesh, Britain had kept itself discreetly aloof from the realm of controversies after realising that intervention would be useless since the birth of Bangladesh would be a *fait accompli*. British diplomatic efforts at the United Nations and also with India and Pakistan were aimed mainly at a ceasefire, an 'orderly' transfer of authority in East Pakistan to a Bangladesh Government, and military withdrawal to the old lines in the Western front. Its actions in the UN Security Council and also in the General Assembly—notably its repeated abstentions during the voting on the resolutions calling for immediate cease-fire—were lauded in New Delhi as gestures friendly to India.

Further, when President Nixon sent a naval task force of US Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to blackmail India, Harold Wilson, Britain's former Prime Minister, lost no time to denounce it as "stupid and ill-considered." He said that Mr. Nixon was repeating the same mistake he had committed in 1965. It may be noted that even though in the wake of the war the United States had suspended aid to India, Britain had refused to do so. On the contrary, on 13 December 1971 Sir Alec stated despite the war Britain would fulfil its military commitments to India.



Heath. Government's initiative to improve the relationship with Pakistan was noted when a cyclone ravaged East Pakistan in 1970. Britain was among the first to rush humanitarian relief for the victims of the calamity. In November 1970, besides private donations, Sri Alec Douglas Home announced £ 1 million aid for the victims of the disaster. This timely help was lauded in Pakistan. But when the military regime in Islamabad adopted measures to suppress the democratic aspirations of the people of East Pakistan, unleashed a reign of terror and committed genocide, it prompted Westminster to take a cautious attitude.

Apparently, Britain adopted a neutral posture when the civil war broke out in Bangladesh in March 1971. Its initial reaction was that events in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) were problems of Pakistan's internal affairs. But, it took great care not to involve itself into a controversy over its role in the crisis. To remain non-controversial, Britain's role was limited to humanitarian relief of the victims of the crisis. Moreover it had officially refrained from condemning genocide in Bangladesh even though the entire Britain expressed shock and dismay. But it continued its private counsel for a political solution to the problem through the transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Pakistan. Besides it pressed for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from arbitrary detention.

Despite two months' private efforts to exert friendly influence, the Pakistani President Gen. Yahya Khan proved to be obstinate. This had hardened the attitude of Whitehall. On 13 May 1971 Britain suspended the Export Credit Guarantee Department's insurance cover for trading with Pakistan. Further, it was made clear that Britain would not deploy aid to Pakistan so long as abnormal situation prevailed in Bangladesh.

Whitehall spurned a request of Mr. Mirza Ahmed, a special envoy of Pakistan, on 19 May 1971 to resume British aid to bail out Islamabad from financial crisis. Sir Alec's subsequent remarks in the House of Commons on 23 June 1971 criticising Islamabad, evoked much criticism that Pakistan had officially protested that the remarks "exceeded established dip-

lomatic norms" and were an "interference" in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Anti-British tempers rose to a pitch in West Pakistan towards the end of the Bangladesh crisis. Britain's realistic stand was misunderstood in Islamabad that Britain stood by and watched Pakistan's dismemberment. When Britain told Pakistan its intention to recognize Bangladesh, in a huff and as a protest Pakistan, left the Commonwealth. But Britain was considerate to Pakistani immigrants to Britain in maintaining their status in UK as Commonwealth immigrants.

Now Pakistan wants Britain to write off British loans which were intended for Bangladesh. Mr. Richard Wood, British Minister for Overseas Development, discussed the matter with Pakistan Government officials during his visit in November 1972. However, the British efforts have been to help start a dialogue between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Sir Alec Douglas Home's visit to Rawalpindi in March 1972 was meant primarily to clarify the British position. Explaining the British position Sir Alec said: "If we could help in any way to bring these countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) together to establish better relations which must be established, then our services are available to any of the three countries in the sub-continent."

**FROM THE VERY BEGINNING** of the crisis in East Pakistan in March 1971 the British Government and the public were sympathetic to the democratic aspirations of East Bengalis. There was a concealed sympathy for them in Whitehall all along. Unlike in Biafra, Nigeria, Britain refused to assist Islamabad to suppress the Bangladesh freedom movement. It had not only suspended aid to Pakistan but also pleaded for its suspension by the aid-Pakistan Consortium till the solution of the Bangladesh problem. The impact of these British measures to restrain Islamabad regime and respect popular will was tremendous on the minds of the East Bengalis. There was all-round appreciation of the British stand.

As a result, the free Bangladesh emerged with a strong background of growing friendship with Britain. Sheikh Mujib's first public

appearance in London after his release and his parleys with British statesmen and the early recognition that Britain had accorded to Bangladesh had helped to further cement the growing trust between Dacca and Westminster. The fact that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had felt it important to take Britain into confidence, through a special message to Mr. Heath, on the recent Indo-Bangladesh package offer for Pakistan, is a pointer to the warm relationship between them.

**THE TIMELY HELP** Britain rushed to Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government to quell the armed insurrection of "Che Guevarist" militants in Ceylon in March-April 1971 was the other key British move in South Asia that helped to improve relationship between Britain and Ceylon.

Britain helped the Ceylon Government with helicopters, scout-cars, small arms and ammunition. In the House of Commons, Mr. Anthony Royle, Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, stated on 22 April

#### Prawns may indicate Oil-beds

Cochin, Feb. 13,

Is abundance of prawns on the west coast of India, particularly Kerala, an indication of the existence of petroleum? Captain M. V. K. Menon, Deputy Conservator of the Cochin Port, who initiated oil exploration possibilities in the off-shores of Kerala, thinks "yes".

In an interview with UNI here to-day, Captain Menon quoted a December 1969 article in *Indian Farming* to show that the prawn grounds in the Gulf of Mexico, Persian Gulf, Sarawak and Borneo were strangely enough rich oil beds, the striking exception being eastern China, the well-known prawn field. Recently however, oil has been struck in eastern China. "There is therefore, the probability of some inexplicable relationship between prawn grounds and oil beds", he said.



1971: "We have assured Mrs. Bandaranaike of our willingness to help Ceylon, as a fellow member of the Commonwealth, in the present emergency." This friendly gesture was appreciated in Colombo. Mrs. Bandaranaike wrote to Mr. Edward Heath in glowing terms of her "very great personal appreciation" of his "generous" and prompt despatch of the required help.

Upholding Britain's instant support to Mrs. Bandanaike's Government, Prime Minister Heath told the House of Commons on 9 May 1971 that it was the policy of the British Government to help Ceylon with maximum possible aid. He said: "When the democratically elected Government of Ceylon asked Her Majesty's Government for support to deal with insurrection, we thought it right to support them."

According to the pro-Government *Daily Telegraph*: "The essential criteria are that Britain is a traditional supplier to Ceylon, and that the present left-wing government there, like its predecessors, was democratically elected. In addition to humanitarian reasons, the need for stability and British interest in Ceylon all call for support of the present Government despite its many shortcomings. Ceylon's strategic position is too important for adventures of this kind to be allowed to succeed."

No doubt the British arms had helped the Ceylon Government to turn the scales against the rebels. Mrs. Bandaranaike's subsequent visit to London in October, 1971 registered the beginning of the thaw in the relationship between the two countries. There she held discussions with Mr. Heath and Sir Alec Douglas Home on the prospects of demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean and other bilateral questions like aid and trade. Since these friendly gestures come from a former critic of Mr. Heath's concern for Indian Ocean security, it denotes the impending warmer relationship between Westminster and Colombo.

(To be Continued)

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IN SRI LANKA TODAY

✻ Rice ✻ Bread ✻ Theft

— A random collection of cuttings and excerpts from the local Press reflecting the State of the Nation —

**Food Commissioner Flies to Pakistan**

**Urgent Mission for Rice**

Government yesterday sent the Food Commissioner, Mr. T. Pathmanathan, on an urgent rice buying mission to Pakistan. He is expected to negotiate for rice, to be shipped to Colombo immediately. Though the exact quantity Pakistan has agreed to offer Sri Lanka is not known, the Government has already made inquiries from rice producing countries to import 50,000 tons. As exclusively revealed in the "SUN" of February 9, the countries contacted include Pakistan, Burma and Thailand. Informed sources say the need to import rice immediately has arisen due to the inability of the Paddy Marketing Board (PMB) to procure adequate quantities under the guaranteed price scheme. In recent weeks, the PMB is said to have had difficulty in providing its usual quota to the Food Commissioner's Department for distribution on the ration.

In view of the devastating floods that affected some of the main paddy producing areas in Pakistan last year, the country has not been in a position to offer substantial quantities of rice in world markets. However, she is understood to have agreed to consider Sri Lanka's request as a special case. Authoritative sources say Mr. Pathmanathan is likely to report on the outcome of his talks to Colombo, so that authorities here could decide whether he should proceed from Karachi to either Rangoon or Bangkok. Meanwhile moves to enforce a total ban on the transport of rice and paddy (in a bid to help the PMB collect as much paddy as possible) are being opposed strongly by a section of the Government. This section points out that the move would discourage paddy farmers and also push up the price of rice even in the black-market. The black market price

of rice has already shot up to about Rs. 8 a measure in some areas.

— Sun, 13/2/74

**Bakers, Hotels will get less Flour at week ends**

A further cut on the flour issued to hotels and bakeries is to be brought into effect as from next week. This will cause a fifty per cent reduction in the quotas issued for use on Saturdays and Sundays. This is in addition to the present reduced quotas issued for the two rice-less days—Tuesday and Friday. The flour quota issued to hotels and bakeries was reduced by one-seventh in view of the two riceless days. This decision was taken at a conference held recently at the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade. It was attended by officials of the Ministry and of the co-operative sector.

All co-operatives have been instructed to implement the new decision as from next week, it is learnt. Meanwhile, with the withdrawal of the half-measure of rice given earlier, the price of rice sold in the open market is increasing rapidly. In most areas where rice was earlier available in plenty in the open market, it has become scarce. The one pound of flour issued per person on the ration to consumers through the co-operatives will continue as before.

— Sun, 31/1/74

**Bread Queues Again**

Bread queues have again begun to form in various parts of Colombo city and the suburbs. Shortages in bread were experienced over the weekend. In many parts of the city and the suburbs bread is being sold out by 5 a.m. and in the afternoons by 3 p.m. At Nuwara Eliya on Sunday supplies of bread were exhausted by noon. The



heavy demand for bread is due to the suspension of the issue of the extra half measure of rice on the ration. The suspension has also resulted in an increase in the price of all varieties of rice. In the city the price of samba varies between Rs. 4.50 and Rs. 5 a measure while other varieties fetch as much as Rs. 4 a measure. According to Food Department sources over 20,000 tons of flour have arrived in Colombo harbour. These shipments have been obtained from Canada and Singapore. It is likely that the quotas of flour issued to bakeries will be increased in view of the shortage of bread that is being experienced.

—Times of Ceylon, 30/1/74

### Bread Lines Lengthen

With extra rice no longer available on the ration, bread lines in Colombo City and the suburbs have begun to lengthen again. Bakers complain that the bread scarcity has been aggravated by the cut in the flour quotas, in the wake of the introduction of the five-day week. Consequently in most places the bread rationing system has been tightened up. Bread is being distributed strictly on token cards issued by the co-operatives. Meanwhile bakery owners say that the cost of material required for the baking of bread has risen by more than 50 per cent. As a result, they say they are unable to produce bread for sale at the controlled price of 76 cents a pound. The Bakery Owners Association is due to meet today at Rex Building in Borella to discuss what should be done in this situation. One of the essential ingredients in the baking of bread—yeast—has gone up in price from Rs. 7.50 to Rs. 10.30 a pound. In addition, the prices of coconut oil, firewood and even transport costs have increased, bakers claim.

—Sun, 2/2/74

### Cycle Thefts Mount

Pedal cycle thefts have increased by almost 50 per cent within the past week according to the police. The police attribute the increase to the larger number of bicycles

in use after the fuel crisis. Police sources told *The Times of Ceylon* that some cyclists were careless for not looking after their cycles. Police also observed that cycle thieves were using more sophisticated methods of "unlocking" locked cycles. In Colombo, over 25 cycles were reported lost last week. Statistics of losses in the outstations were not available, but there had been two cases of cyclists being over powered in the dark and their cycles being removed by some unidentified persons, police sources added.

—Times of Ceylon, 7/2/74

### Tourist robbed of \$ 4,000 at Galle Face

An American tourist was waylaid and robbed of 4,000 U.S. dollars in cash at Galle Face Green late on Saturday night. According to police sources the tourist was staying at the Hotel Ceylon Inter-Continental. He was walking along the Galle Face Green to meet a friend at the Galle Face Hotel. When he was in almost midway, three persons are stated to have attacked him and relieved him of his cash and belongings. According to the complainant one of the three persons was in Western dress. The tourist had contacted 'Police Emergency' the moment he reached Galle Face Hotel and a patrol car was rushed to the spot. The alleged robbers however had disappeared. The *'Daily Mirror'* understands that this matter has now been handed over to the Crime Detective Bureau, Pettah, for further investigations.

—Ceylon Daily Mirror, 27/1/74

### Avoid the Green after Dark

A warning to the public to avoid the Galle Face Green as much as possible after dark has been made by the Police. Police sources told *The Times of Ceylon* that owing to the restricted lighting on streets, the Green had become "a veritable hunting ground of shady characters" and some cases of robbery had been reported in the past few days. They said a tourist was robbed of £ 1,400 (U.S.) and Rs. 350 two days ago while walking along the Green at 2 a.m. "It is impossi-

ble to have policemen posted on duty there throughout the night", they said. "Therefore, in the interest of your own safety, please keep off the Green", they added. The Police are taking immediate steps to round up all loiterers and undesirables found in the Green.

—Times of Ceylon 29/1/74

### Three Rare Ceylon Books Missing

B. Marik de Silva

The Government Press is unable to trace three rare books on Ceylon—Ananda Coomaraswamy's 'Bronzes from Ceylon,' E. W. Perera's 'Sinhalese Banners and Standards,' and Codrington's 'Catalogue of Coins'—given to it for reprinting by the Museum's Department. The books were sent to the Government Press some time ago for reprinting. They are all rare collector's items.

The *Observer* understands that the books have disappeared from the Press and cannot be traced. This was holding up the reprinting program and the Museum has withdrawn one of the few available good copies of Codrington's 'Catalogue of Coins' from its library and made a second copy available to the press for going ahead with the schedule for bringing out a new edition. The Museum, fortunately has copies of the other two books as well and it will be possible to go ahead with the work of bringing out new editions of all three books. But they will be made available to the Government Press only one at a time.

Meanwhile the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, has suggested that the Press uses the photo off-set printing method for bringing out the new editions. This would be quicker than setting type and also obviate the proof reading errors that have fouled up some publications of the Government Press.

—Ceylon Observer, 31/1/74



BIG POWER  
DIFFERENCESFRENCH OIL  
DIPLOMACY

by  
**J. Saxena**  
*Institute of Defence  
Studies & Analyses  
New Delhi*

New Delhi, Feb. 2.

In the wake of the Arab producer's oil offensive, France, like all other major oil importers, was guided by two over-riding considerations. One is to assure for itself a steady and adequate supply of its energy requirements; and the other to remedy, as far as possible, a balance of payments deficit bound to arise from a four fold increase in its oil importation bill.

The French had two alternatives: either to join in a united front of the largest oil consumers, as proposed by the United States (the "energy action group") mooted by Kissinger in London on 12 December, and more recently, Mr. Nixon's call for a Conference of the oil consuming countries of the industrialized world), which risked alienating the Arab world, or to go it alone. The French decision to opt for the second alternative was based on the assumption that at least in the short term, the interests of the developed capitalist world were in conflict.

A concerted energy programme by the U.S.-Japan-EEC could produce alternative sources of energy at the earliest by 1980, leaving the intervening years with a big question mark. This evidently assumes that concentrated pressure against the Arab oil producers is not likely to succeed. On the other hand, in opting for bilateral contracts with the oil producers, France could cash in on the fund of goodwill created in the Arab world by Gaullist policy in the Middle East, beginning with de Gaulle's pre-Arab stand in 1967.

It was further encouraged in this policy by the change in the Arab outlook towards the U.S.

as indicated by the Saudi Commander of the National Guard before the October war. If the U.S. continues to support Israel, he said, the "momentum of history may join ourselves and the Europeans in a unique and deep friendship." He had gone on to emphasize the "high degree of reciprocity" of interests that exists between the Arab world and Europe.

THE FRENCH CHOICE, it has to be noted, was not an isolated one; the scramble for oil deals that followed the energy crisis, involves governments which overtly support the American initiative. Britain, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Japan and even Switzerland have all been vying with each other to win "favoured treatment" by hectic and not much publicized diplomatic manoeuvring. France's bilateral contracts have however, been the most spectacular upto date. They have led to the signing with Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait, of oil deals which, given the Arab priority to the reinforcement and modernisation of their defence potential, necessarily involve, apart from French technological aid, sales of military hardware.

With Saudi Arabia, the French government has confirmed an "oil-for-arms" deal, negotiated in great secrecy last month. It involves a guaranteed supply of 30 million tons of crude oil for three years with a 7% discount in price in exchange for the sale to the Saudis of 38 Mirage aircraft, an unspecified number of Crotale ground-to-air - missiles and AMX-30 tanks. The French objective in fact was to obtain 800 million tons of crude over 20 years and their Foreign Minister, M. Jobert hoped to sign a deal to this effect in Riyadh during his January visit to Saudi Arabia. The absence of any announcement on the subject so far does not necessarily signify that the deal has fallen through; according to the French Press agency (*Le Monde* of 27 January), it is likely to be signed at the end of March.

The Abu Dhabi deal has not been officially confirmed, but there were leaks on January 6 that France was negotiating an "oil assurance" deal involving 14 Mirage-III interceptors, and a total sale package of £ 85 million in industrial and military goods. According to U.S.

intelligence sources, the number would be 18 Mirage interceptors, to be delivered in two years. The same sources indicate that Abu Dhabi is buying 32 Mirage fighters in addition to an earlier purchase of 14 Mirage-V ground attack planes due to be completed this year.

THE ITINERARY of M. Jobert's Middle East visit, included also Kuwait, with whom France has been negotiating for some months the sale of Mirage F-1 and III, air to air, air-to-ground, ground-to-air missiles (Matra, SNEP Rolland and Crotale), tanks AMX-30, helicopters (Puma, Gazelle) and radar systems. The negotiations seemed difficult till now, because of the preponderant Anglo American influence; there but, on the eve of M. Jobert's visit, Kuwait's defence minister, while mentioning that Kuwait had a budget of seven billion francs for buying arms, remarked "France's attitude towards the Arab countries is just and justified, and we take it into account." Also, the Petrol Minister Mr. Altiqui told *Le Monde* on January 27 that Kuwait was going to "guarantee to France a certain quantity of crude depending on its needs". On 5 February there were leaks from Kuwait that an agreement has been reached involving the sale of 16 Mirage jet fighters.

One factor that has helped the French breakthrough in the Middle East apart from the Arab desire to diversify their arms purchase base to ensure against an arms embargo is the guarantee of Pakistan's assistance in the training of military personnel in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. The Pakistanis are considered by the French as the best of all the overseas airmen trained in France. Pakistani technicians and pilots are also held in high regard in many of the Arab countries. The Abu Dhabi army is already officered by Pakistani military men; and the sale of Mirage III interceptors to Abu Dhabi, which has no competent jet pilots of its own, contains a provision that the Mirages would be flown and maintained by Pakistani pilots.

This Pakistani cooperation with the French could be one major reason for the French desire to build Mirage jet fighter-bombers under licence in Pakistan and to make it a major centre for French arms production,



marketing and maintenance for the Middle East and South East Asia. This new variable in the subcontinent—Pakistan as a factor in France's Middle East policies—is of direct concern to India.

**THE POSSIBILITY** of Western Europe emerging as a major arms supplier to the Arab world also poses new problems and uncertainties for the U.S. and Israel because the situation in the Middle East still remains explosive despite the success of the initial disengagement talks. Would it constrain the U.S. to further buttress its commitments to Israel? Would the Israeli response be a decision to go nuclear?

The American response to the French bilateral initiative has been understandably critical. The U.S. feels that French success is liable to intensify the oil scramble which in turn will raise international oil prices even further. More fundamentally, Dr. Kissinger finds it a major set back to the energy conference proposed by Nixon and therefore, to his hopes of infusing new vigour in the Atlantic relationship. (A common approach to the energy crisis was considered by him to be "an act vision" essential for sealing the cracks in the western alliance, that suffered during the October war.)

The French like some other EEC nations (U.K., Italy) maintain that EEC interests in the energy crisis are fundamentally different from America's which is only marginally dependent on oil imports. France is also suspicious that the U.S. initiative is a direct ploy to keep Europe dependent on the U.S for its supply of enriched uranium and for new sources of energy.

And finally it considers that if there is to be consultation between consumers it should be done where it would give least offence to the Arab world. It advocates the calling, under U.N. auspices, of a conference which would assemble not just a few chosen consumers, but producers and all consumers including the developing world.

These differing views on the energy crisis have added a new irritant to France-US relations. Yet one should guard over emphasizing its significance. France, whether it finally agrees or not, to attend the conference of February 11, as a nation, will be represented

through the EEC. Furthermore, the conference is not expected to reach any far reaching decisions, since many participants share the French view.

Besides, as long as American forces and the U.S. nuclear deterrent are considered essential for West European security—France has been emphasizing just that under President Pompidou—there are certain evident limits to the deterioration of U.S.—European relations, though within these limits, there is ample room for it to go its own way on issues affecting its interests vitally.

— Foreign News & Features

## AGRO-INDUSTRY

### Banana Powder

**RAW BANANA**, especially of the 'Kunnan' and 'Nendran' varieties, which are grown in many parts of rural India can be scientifically processed and hygienically packed for being utilised as: (i) weaning food for infants, (ii) bakery and confectionary product manufacture.

Dehydrated raw banana powder which contains less than 5% moisture can be preserved for a maximum period of one year without any oxidative or other chemical reaction in air-tight containers.

The first step in the manufacturing process is the steaming of raw banana for 10 minutes at 10 lbs. pressure. After that peeling is done and the bananas are cut into slices. Then they undergo two washings, first in 2% salt solution and the second in 1% Potassium Metabisulphite solution. The next step is to spread them on trays for drying for 61-68 hours at 50 to 80 C. Then testing is done to ascertain moisture percentage before storing for equalisation of temperature. If necessary redrying is undertaken and then powdering and sifting is done before packing the powder.

**THE TOTAL INVESTMENT** on a unit which could manufacture 100 kgs of powder per day or 30 tonnes per year (for an average of 300 working days in the year), has been calculated at Rs. 87,495—Rs. 34,000 for machinery and equipment and Rs. 53,495 as working

capital for three months which includes expenditure on items like raw materials, rent of the premises wages of staff and labour and miscellaneous items. These estimates are, however, subject to variations in accordance with the prevailing prices of various items at a particular time and area.

Manufacturing cost per annum has been worked out at Rs. 2,25,215 which includes wages and remuneration, cost of raw materials, interest on capital at 9% per annum, depreciation on machinery at 10% and all other items of expenditure. As against this, sale receipts from 30 tonnes of banana powder at Rs. 8.75 per kg are expected to be of the order of Rs. 2,62,500, giving an annual profit of Rs. 37,285. In terms of percentages it works out at 14% of total sales and 42% of total capital investment.

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS** are required under this heading; Machinery and Equipment: Work tables with aluminium sheet tops; fruit washing and cooling tanks with water connections (cement concrete constructions of 4' x 3' x 1½); aluminium balancing tank with steam pipe connections; boiler-100-200 lbs. evaporation and 100 p.s.i.g. with accessories of steam connections; retort—72, 42. can capacity with hoist arrangement; cross-floor drier electrically heated with provision for re-circulation of air and thermostatically controlled; pulverizer with cyclone arrangement, testing apparatus; weighing balances and miscellaneous equipments such as bins, tools, trollies, trays, vessels, heat sealer etc. All these equipments are indigenously manufactured.

**THE STAFF** required consists of a manager-cum-technologist, a supervisor, boilerman cum mechanic, four skilled workers, 10 casuals workers on daily wages, and one or two office hands.

Interested parties who want to set up a unit for the manufacture of banana powder can obtain further information about sources of machinery, manufacturing process and marketing, etc. from the concerned Rural Industries Project Officer or the Director of the nearest Small Industries Service Institute.

— Kurukshetra



AMERICAN VIEWPOINT

# Washington Energy Conference

by  
Sam Burks

Washington, February 12,

The need for a co-operative approach toward alleviating the world energy crisis has been a central theme stressed by most of the foreign ministers and other officials attending the Washington Energy Conference this week. Conference sources note that almost without exception each of the foreign and finance ministers from the United States, Japan, Canada, Norway and the nine member countries of the European Economic Community (EEC)—Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom—urged the development of a common energy policy that includes early involvement of the less developed countries and the establishment of a constructive relationship with oil producing nations.

THE UNITED STATES in convening the energy conference, stressed that it seeks co-operation with other consuming nations in a format designed to avoid possible confrontations with oil producing countries. That theme was re-affirmed by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger in his opening remarks to conference delegates February 11. After pointing to U.S. efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in energy production within the next decade Mr. Kissinger expressed the United States' willingness to share its advanced energy technology, develop jointly new sources of supply and establish a system of emergency sharing with other consuming nations. He called for the establishment of a co-ordinating group of senior government officials which would carry forward the work of the present conference and prepare for a future meeting at the foreign minister level that would include participation by representatives of the less developed countries.

Conference officials later added that the United States has no preferences as to what this follow-up action is called or what form it takes, as long as constructive action is taken. The U.S. approach was described by one official as "pragmatic" and based on a building—block concept that encompasses, first, a sound national policy; then a structure for co-operation among the major consuming countries; involvement of the developing countries, and, finally, the establishment of a constructive relationship with producing countries.

**DURING THE CONFERENCE** several European sources affirmed that all members of the EEC—with the possible exception of France—appeared to be responsive to U.S. suggestions for future co-operation in establishing a joint energy policy. West German Foreign Minister, Walter Scheel, speaking as the President of the Council of the European Communities, emphasized that the world-wide nature of the energy crisis requires treatment transcending a regional context. "We should not be discouraged by the fact that the conference cannot itself resolve technical questions relating to international co-operation in the energy sector, partly because it is only of short duration and partly because for some topics not all the necessary partners for the discussion are present," he noted. "Our views as to which questions should be dealt with during this discussion scarcely differ from those of the United States."

Sir Alec Douglas-Home, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs stressed the need for co-operation—as imposed to confrontation—in dealing with the international energy crisis. "But," he added, "we should be able to agree among ourselves on a code of procedure which prevents the leapfrogging of prices by auction which can only make a bad situation worse... "Whatever the framework, we must display here today, and from now on, the will to use all the ingenuity we have to deal with the problems. The essential conclusion is that we do it together."

Italian Foreign Minister Aldo Moro also cited his nation's support

for co-operative action among energy-consuming nations. "Italy is convinced of the fact that the present difficulties can only be resolved by sincere and cohesive international co-operation leading to the establishment of new relations between energy-consuming industrialized countries, producing countries and developing countries" he said.

"To encourage the development and use of new energy sources must be our primary objective and not only for us who are faced with the possibility of seeing our country's economic development retarded by a foreseeable depletion of the traditional oil resources, but for all the nations of the world... "We believe it is not only possible but desirable and necessary that there be co-operation in this area between the United States and other technologically advanced countries, with the certainty that this co-operation will serve the collective interest."

**FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER** Michel Jobert expressed the view that it is inappropriate to discuss energy co-operation through "a system of preliminary consultations" among major consuming nations, and called for future action in the OECD, the IMF and the United Nations. "We must not appear before the entire world as seeking to define alone a 'new concept' which would inevitably lead to a confrontation or a conflict with the producing countries and may be with all the developing countries," he warned. "Let us not seek to establish or to impose a new world energy order."

President Nixon, at a White House dinner for conference participants on February 11, made a strong plea for co-operation among the oil-consuming nations. He said that what he was suggesting would not be "a combine at the expense of the oil-producing nations because it is in their interest as well that we meet in order to develop a common policy that will assure a stable supply at a price that will be reasonable for them and reasonable for us."



# IS IT TRUE?

## Sherlock Holmes

### \* ON SELLING PADDY TO THE PMB

IS IT TRUE that there is a new and urgent interest in the purchasing techniques of the Paddy Marketing Board? That even the government controlled *Lake House* group of newspapers have not fully supported the methods adopted by the PMB in their commentaries and even editorial comments? That the *Daily News* started the ball rolling by first raising the question of the payment of an adequate price (and/or incentive) to paddy farmers? That the well-known writer on economic affairs G.V.S. de Silva had written two articles on February 11 and 12 suggesting that the paddy farmer should be paid in a special kind of rupee—he called it the *masurama* rupee—with an added purchasing value to it? That whilst the *Daily News* did not fully endorse this suggestion in its editorial a few days later, it called for a complete overhaul of the system of paddy purchasing by the PMB? That though the *Daily News*, over a week later, wrote another editorial in partial defence of the PMB's procedures, it nevertheless persisted in wanting some major re-thinking about the whole question? That *Tribune* in its issue of 25/2/74 fully endorsed the suggestion of payment in a special rupee with added purchasing power to the paddy farmer? That instead of merely raising the price of paddy to Rs. 35 per bushel (as suggested by the CP leader Dr. S. A. Wickremesinghe), or Rs. 40 (as suggested by others), and Rs. 50 (indicated by the UNP which said that Sri Lanka was paying Chinese farmers at that rate), it was better to adopt a deflationary method through the *masurama* rupee to induce farmers to sell their paddy to the PMB?

That the goods for the *masurama* rupee (which was negotiable and transferable) be stocked in special shops like the duty free shops for tourists? That though this suggestion of the *masurama* rupee was fully set out in the last issue of *Tribune*, it is a suggestion that should receive endorsement?

IS IT NOT A FACT that whilst the *Daily News* paid attention to the inducements which must be offered to paddy producers to sell their surplus to the PMB, the *Observer* paid detailed attention to some of the obstacles which now stand in the way of producers going voluntarily to the PMB? That the *Observer* very correctly pointed out that producers during the last two years had developed a grievance that they were cheated by the purchasing officers of the PMB who used the method of the *refraction* test, on the one hand, and the weight test, on the other, to squeeze them down to selling their paddy at an unreal and low price? That under the smoke-screen of not paying for chaff, PMB officials, it is known, had used the now obsolete *refraction* test to pay producers on the lower tariff of the sliding scale for purchasing paddy? That when the *refraction* test is used it is customary to use only the bushel measure to decide on the quantity? That instead of this, the PMB officers used the weight test? That instead of accepting 136 lbs as the standard weight for 3 bushels without the gunny bag, PMB officials had insisted on weights between 145 to 155 lbs for a bag of three bushels giving various excuses that they were covering themselves against

drriage, pilferage, damage by rats and vermin and the like? That in the absence of any public notification regarding the yardsticks the PMB would apply in the purchase of paddy the producer was in no position to put up a fight? That very often the producer who raised awkward questions, or was cantankerous about fighting for his rights, was left with his paddy rejected out of hand? That he had no alternative but to sell the paddy to a private trader for a low figure—a trader who later resold the same paddy to the PMB at the highest possible price on the tariff? That in addition to all these difficulties, the mode of payment adopted by the PMB was encolled in red tape and bureaucracy?

IS IT NOT A FACT that the highly placed apologists for the PMB talk learnedly about the need to ensure that public money is spent with due caution and care? That in the attempt to keep the corrupt activities of the officials in check the producer is driven to desperation into the arms of horder and the blackmarketeer who is able to bide his time for payment for the chaff-added paddy which he is able to unload on the PMB? That the priority, so far, has been to streamline the system against all possible corrupt practices on the part of the producer and the PMB official who is tempted to collude with a farmer? That under the stress of maintaining this priority, the big racketeer and the bigtime operator are able to drive a coach of four horses through the system so laboriously built by our bureaucrats? That it is high time that some responsible people look at this matter from the angle of the honest to goodness producer who is willing to be patriotic and public spirited as long as he is not done down at every turn? That at present the threatened deduction for the Pension Fund of Farmers is a further dis-incentive for the farmer? That serious re-thinking has to be done on all these matters if real progress is to be made to persuade paddy producers to sell their surplus voluntarily to the PMB?

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