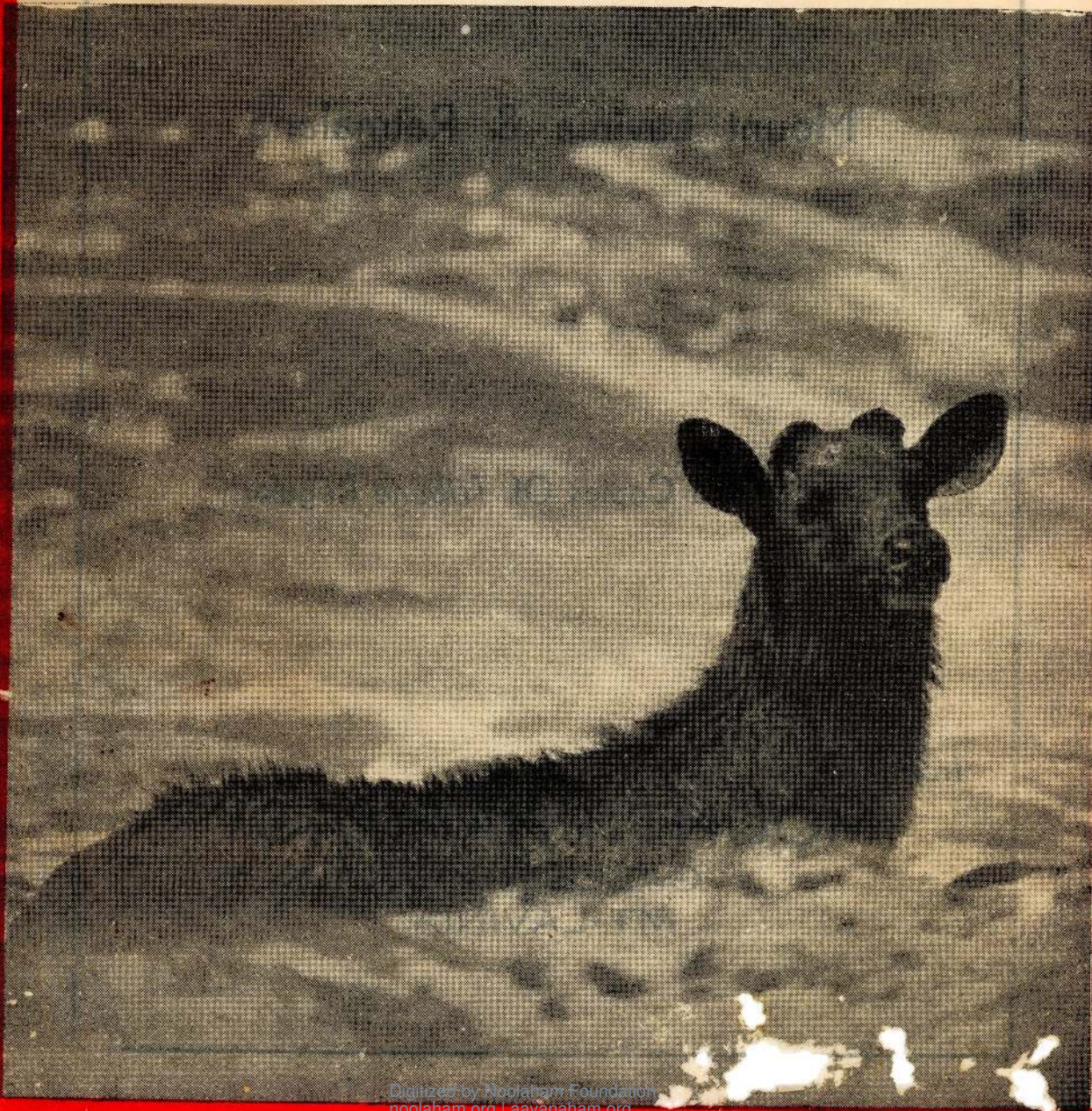


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Letter From The Editor

THE ELK, a picture of which appears on the cover this week, is not the only thing which is fast disappearing from the Ceylon scene. At the rate KURUMBAS are being plucked and sold, the coconut too will soon be a thing of the past. There is today legislation as well some kind of administrative machinery (the Wild Life Protection Department) to protect the elk, but so far there is not even the slightest indication that the authorities have woken up to the problem of the massive plucking of the young nuts to be used for consumption as a beverage. If this goes on unchecked—and there does not seem to be anyway of doing it immediately—Sri Lanka will soon be faced with a tremendous shortage of coconuts, to be processed into copra, desiccated coconut and coconut oil. Coir and fibre will no longer be available because the *kurumba* shells are thrown away into the dustheap. The entire coconut export industry was based on the ripened nut which is turned into copra, desiccated and oil together with the coir and fibre from the husk. One has only to travel today through the rich coconut lands in the Kurunegala district and elsewhere along the coastal belt (including the South) to realise that *kurumbas* are being plucked in their millions to be sold as a beverage for the low-budget consumer (and who is not low-budget these days?)—and often the *kurumba* is a meal in itself with the tender kernel. With the price of aerated waters and cordials at Himalayan heights, the ordinary man has been driven to quench his thirst (and even his hunger) with a *kurumba*—*thambili* production not being enough to satisfy the demand. The *thambili* costs fifty cents each in the remotest parts of Sri Lanka but in Colombo, it fetches anything from Rs. 1 to Rs. 1.50 each, whereas *kurumbas* fetch about 30/40 cents in rural areas and about 50/60 cents in Colombo. The price of the *kurumbas* comes very close to the price of the ripe nut which is used for domestic cooking and also in agro-industries for our export coconut products. Those who have now come into possession and control of coconut lands after Land Reform do not seem to have any qualms about plucking the nuts as *kurumbas* (their argument is that the price they will ultimately get would not be any higher). There is a great anxiety and haste on the part of the new owners of coconut lands to have ready cash as quickly as possible and this has led to the massive plucking of young coconuts to be sold as tender *kurumbas*. Anyone taking a trip round the coconut-growing areas of Sri Lanka today will realise that the plucking of *kurumbas* has reached such massive proportions that it will not be long before there will be a total shortage of ripe nuts for domestic cooking as well as nuts for our coconut-based export agro-industries. This statement is not an exaggeration or an alarmist statement. It is not intended to denigrate the Land Reform and the parcelling out of coconut lands to landless owners who are slaughter-exploiting the coconut palm. Even those in charge of *janawasas* and other "collective" and "co-operative" undertakings, looking after LRC lands, do not seem to be aware of the disaster the national economy will face with the massive plucking of *kurumbas*—they seem to be satisfied if they can show an income from their coconut palms not much lower than selling the ripe nuts as in the old days. Furthermore, neither the LRC nor the new "collective" state-sponsored undertakings have developed any sense of responsibility regarding profitability or accountability, and the way they are slaughter-exploiting the coconut palms is nothing short of vandalism. The elk is now a rare animal in this island where it had freely roamed in thousands only a few years ago. It has now become a rare sight even in the remotest jungles of Ceylon. Even the few surviving ones are being hunted with the sophisticated weapons to provide meat for the rich tourist who wants to taste exotic food on the FEECs-subsidised tourism he is able to indulge in the Sri Lanka of today. For over five years the Wild Life Protection Department had confined its activities (protective and otherwise) to the game reserves and sanctuaries in a limited number of places—while poaching and the killing of "protected" animals had gone on unchecked in the rest of the island. Today, there seems to be a slight reversal of policy, and Game Wardens have made their welcome appearance in areas where the elk, sambhur, and the deer have been killed indiscriminately over the years without let or hindrance. Readers will recall that *Tribune* had been the first newspaper to spotlight the sale of venison in tourist hotels in and out of Colombo; other papers, notably the *Observer*, had followed suit. The matter was also raised in Parliament. As a result of this public outcry there seems to have been a change of heart in top governmental circles about protection of wild life in areas outside the game sanctuaries, and game wardens have been re-assigned to some of the old posts. It is still possible to save the deer, sambhur and elk. But, at the moment we see little chance of saving the coconut. Sri Lanka has entered into the era of the KURUMBA, and this means the end of the COCONUT, COPRA and COCONUT OIL.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Floating Currencies Again!

OUR DAILY NEWSPAPERS have become so lopsided in the presentation of current news that readers who rely entirely on them for an understanding of the contemporary world will be left only with a badly cock-eyed view of some aspects of domestic Sri Lanka politics. Parochialism is bad at all times, but the squint-eyed parochialism presently engendered by the kind of journalism practised by the main daily newspapers has already brought an age of semi-darkness to the people of Sri Lanka. On foreign affairs, it is very nearly a world of total darkness to those who depend only on the local daily newspapers for news, or even the SLBC. Only a few are in a position in Ceylon today to buy even a minima of the magazines and periodicals which provide background information about international developments. (It is significant that money has not been provided for some of the libraries in our different campuses to purchase even a few of the prestigious magazines like the *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, etc. etc.) The Cabinet Sectoral Committee on Mass Media was very concerned about the image of Sri Lanka abroad, as depicted by foreign correspondents and the news agencies, but the time has now come for the Sectoral Committee to take an interest about the image which the ordinary people of Sri Lanka are able to acquire about the rest of the world by reaching the daily papers in this country presently published under aegis or the blessings of the Government.

At the moment, there is new upheaval in the international monetary scheme which was ordained at Kingston in Jamaica early this year to replace the Bretton Woods monetary structure which had all but collapsed sometime ago, or was not able to fulfil the needs of the capitalist world order. About these developments which will affect the well-being of Sri Lanka for many years to come very little or nothing is known.

It will also be interesting to recall that: The Bretton Woods Agree-

ment of 1944 gave birth to twins: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Having grown to stature, the twins have now pronounced the Bretton Woods system dead. They did this in Kingston (Jamaica) when the Interim Committee (IC) of the IMF and the Development Committee of the twins met early January. The IMF (like the World Bank) is a supranational institution of the world capitalist system set up to promote orderly economic development to begin with, of the capitalist countries, by eliminating trade competition and currency wars among the monopoly capitals of these countries. Later on, it extended its sway to the developing countries also. The IMF was to achieve its aim in three ways.

First: Sometimes some countries face balance of payments deficits. This means that they owe money to other countries not only for their excessive imports over exports but on several other accounts also. A country facing this difficulty may restrict its imports and introduce strict foreign exchange and currency regulations and subsidies to boost exports. Other countries retaliate. Such action disorganises trade, production and monetary stability. To prevent these things, the IMF would lend money to the country faced with balance of payments deficit from out of its funds contributed by member countries according to their quota. The voting power of a member country is proportionate to its quota. Naturally, by virtue of its large quota, the US has had a dominant control over the IMF with veto power. This control is further strengthened by the fact that the IMF has largely invested its funds in US government bonds.

Second: Because of US control over the IMF, the dollar became a major means of international payment. The dollar-gold parity was fixed (arbitrarily though) at 35 dollar per troy ounce of gold and the dollar was convertible into gold. Thus the dollar and gold had stable value and could serve as measure of value, standard of prices and means of payment.

However, gold has 'intrinsic value' while the dollar has only a token value, a fundamental difference between the two.

Third: The IMF was to supervise the currency exchange rates of other member countries so that they did not exceed a margin of 1 per cent.

These three measures were to ensure trade and monetary stability in the 'Free World'. They worked, more or less, smoothly until the sixties when Japan and the European capitalist countries completely recovered from the ravages of World War II.

But trouble began when the US lost its position as a creditor country. On account of its war in Vietnam and the huge arms expenditure, its excessive imports over exports, the flight of the dollar to other countries in search of bigger profits giving rise to the phenomenon of Euro-dollar, amounting to tens of billions and the ever mounting inflation in the country, on account of all these, the US began to have an increasing balance of payments deficit, which by the late sixties rose to more than \$50 billion.

By this time, US gold reserves came down to \$ 10 billion. The dollar lost its value over the years. There was a rush for gold and other strong currencies like the West German Mark. The price of gold shot up to around 200 dollar per ounce. The 'defence of the dollar' became an ever serious problem for US Presidents, Kennedy onwards.

From the early sixties France representing other capitalist countries, especially, the ECM six began to demand restoration of gold as means of international payment replacing the dollar so as to ensure monetary stability.

"The developing countries which were much more severely hurt by the instability put forth demands for the reform of the monetary system and for linking the IMF (World Bank) loans to their development rather than to the quotas."

Consequently in 1969, the IMF set up the Interim Committee (IC) of 20, ten of whom were developing countries. The IC was to make recommendations for the reform of the IMF. On its recommendation, the IMF began to issue its own token money called the Special Drawing Right (SDR) equal in value to the dollar. The SDR

International Monetary Instability

was to become eventually international reserve money and means of payment replacing the dollar and gold. The issue of SDRs only increased the international money in circulation causing more inflation. However, the dollar was protected, although temporarily.

But the monetary crisis worsened. In August 1971 the US suspended the convertibility into gold. Later, the dollar was devalued twice. Other capitalist countries were forced to buy up dollars to prevent further fall. They were forced to appreciate (i.e. increase the value) of their currencies in relation to the dollar.

Finally, they were forced to float their currencies. By agreement they decided to keep the margin of fluctuation at 2.25 per cent in place of the old one per cent. In July 1974, even the SDR had to give up its link with the dollar. It was now linked to "a basket" of 16 currencies, its value depending on the daily fluctuations of the "basket".

All these developments further worsened the economies of the developing countries with the result that their total balance of payments deficit for 1975 was estimated around 31-35 billion dollars. France and the other capitalist countries were in favour of restoring trade and monetary stability by making gold, the international reserve (store of value), and means of payment. Besides stability, the developing countries would like to have monetary resources to meet their payments deficits and the needs of development. But, the US is opposed to all these demands because instability together with the double devalued dollar helps her export trade. These three divergent interests, thus, centre on quotas, liquidity or monetary reserve, and rates of exchange.

"Blood, they say, is thicker than water. But class interests are thicker than blood. The contradiction between America and the other capitalist countries is an intra-class contradiction. Their class interest is to exploit the developing countries.

"So, in Rambouillet (France) where heads of six leading capitalist countries (US, Britain, West Germany, France, Italy and Japan) had a summit meeting last November, the US and France resolved their differences, no matter how temporarily, whereby France withdrew its demand for fixed rates of exchange based on

parity with gold. The US and the other capitalist countries thus, formed a joint front against the developing countries and had their way at Kingston.

"The Interim Committee of 20, which met at Kingston, merely endorsed the Rambouillet agreement. It ratified the existing instability of exchange rates and decided on the elimination of gold by the SDR."

As a first step, the IMF was to sell 1/6 (800 ounces) of its gold holding at market price during the next four years. With the profit made out of the sale, a trust fund is to be created for the benefit of the developing countries. The profit is estimated to be around 400-500 million dollars a year. But, after the IMF decision the price of gold had shown a declining trend and the profit may be far less than the estimates. What is worse, the head of the Bank of International Settlements, which is to auction the IMF gold, predicts "that there would be no buyers" (*Economic Times*, January 8, 1976).

Further, the IMF was to return another 1/6 of its gold holding to member countries. This "restitution" would benefit the capitalist countries because their contributions are large. A US Congress (RENS) subcommittee estimated that if the restituted gold were sold at 100 dollars as ounce, the US could make 570 million dollars; Britain 230 million dollars and so on. A uniform 45 per cent increase in the borrowing facility had also been approved. This would enable big quota holders to draw larger amounts. The DCs could not get the loans linked to their development.

There was also a proposal to increase quotas of members by a total of 32½ per cent subject to ratification by member governments. The developing countries could not take immediate advantage of the increased quota because the US, West Germany and the Netherlands are opposed to any liberation of the IMF rules.

Although Third World countries were persuaded (or compelled) to accept the Kingston Agreement, responsible opinion in these countries felt that new monetary system fashioned in Jamaica was only intended to benefit the capitalist countries and that the new scheme would only serve to promote economic instability on a

global scale. Although the Kingston Conference had sought to pronounce the Bretton Woods System dead, the IMF continued to exist with power to interfere in the economies of the developing countries on account of the large balance of payments deficits. "It can still perpetuate the bonded slavery of the developing countries to the world capitalist system."

THESE PROGNOSTICATIONS have proved to be absolutely correct, much sooner than many had expected. The pound sterling had started falling in value and by March 11 had hit a new rockbottom "piercing the dollar floor, the \$2 rate." This was thought unbelievable even a few weeks ago. But this "collapse" of the pound sterling has not created any nervousness on the part of the British Government. On the other hand, a paper like *The Economist* has editorially stated that the present deflation of the pound provided a golden opportunity for Britain to stage an economic comeback. "But the pound's fall," said *The Economist* of March 13, 1976, "gives Denis Healey and Harold Wilson and even better chance of creating the only conditions in which an investment-led export-led boom will not turn sour..." The *Madras Hindu* editorially commenting on the decline of the pound stated: "One strong element of this sombre business is the role of the City of London as international banker. That role has brought on to the pound huge short-term commitments to other countries. Stemming from these commitments are the severe selling pressures which the City cannot resist if it wished to live up to the role. Other countries which proved unequal to the pressures generated by hot money flows have ceased to involve themselves as deeply

LETTERS

The Tribune welcomes letters from readers. Short letters have a better chance of being published. All letters are subject to condensation for space reasons. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. Writers may request that their letters be signed only with initials or a pseudonym but preference will be given to those fully signed and bearing the writer's complete address.

as they used to in this international monetary traffic. Britain is still reluctant to follow suit even when its exchange reserves have worn dangerously thin.

"This is proving more costly than it would be normally because of other special factors. The downward slide of the Italian lira and the pressure on the French franc have created what is rightly described as international monetary turbulence. British monetary critics view the event as a veritable warfare of currencies. They are worried that, in this warfare, British commitments as international bankers have seriously eroded British defences. There is no compensatory advantage either, flowing from the depreciation in the value of the pound. The exchange depreciation which in the British case represents an effective devaluation of the pound by a third of its 1971 value has not improved the competitive edge of British exports. This benefit is just not available because the competitive weakness of British exports hinges not so much on high prices as on deficiencies like inconsistent quality, uncertain delivery schedules and unsatisfactory after-sales services.

"The basic malaise is thus an erosion of economic competence which has been aggravated by the unwillingness of workers, unions to relent sufficiently on wage claims which the economy cannot just afford under the prevalent conditions of decline in productivity. The unions tend more and more to cash in upon the lack of courage on the part of the Government to resist higher wage demands or breaches of its incomes policy. All this has come about in a political climate in which all the three political parties have their hands full with feuds inside and are bent on saving more their political than their economic faces. The recovery of the pound will have, in these circumstances, to await the dawn of better economic wisdom. Much depends also on how the British recapture their instinct for hard work which they have lost. So far as countries like India which have close economic links with Britain are concerned, they try to keep their currency links (of whatever kind), with the pound through *ad hoc* upward adjustments. This can be only a temporary solution. Yet a more stable solution requires their economies to be strong, which is not the case. It is time these economies took firmer steps to become immune to the highly infectious pound."

Such is the Hindu view of the implications of the decline of the pound sterling. This has come at a time when the Indian rupee was valued upwards just before the new Budget because there has been an upward swing in the productive capacity of the Indian economy. In fact, the Indian rupee has really been revalued against the pound. A despatch from New Delhi stated:

"The Reserve Bank has further revised its rates for purchase and sale of pound sterling for spot delivery with effect from to-day. The new rates are: Buying £ 5.8140 per Rs. 100 (corresponding to Rs. 17.20 per £.) Selling £ 5.7803 per Rs. 100 (corresponding to Rs. 17.30 per £). The buying and selling rates have been so fixed as to yield a middle rate of Rs. 17.25 per £, as compared to the existing middle rate of Rs. 17.75. The second upward revision of the rupee-sterling exchange rate to Rs. 17.25 per pound by the Reserve Bank of India within four days, is interpreted here as an unmistakable evidence of the strengthening of the rupee abroad as a result of the anti-inflationary steps initiated by the Government. It is also considered as reflecting the wisdom of the Government's decision taken in September last to delink the rupee from sterling.

"This is the fourth upward revision of the rupee exchange rate with the sterling since July last when the Reserve Bank's spot buying and selling rates had been fixed so as to yield a middle rate of Rs. 18.60 for a pound. With effect from September 25, the rate was raised to Rs. 18.3084 for a pound and it went up again to Rs. 18.1284 with effect from December 5. Four days ago, the rate was revised upward to Rs. 17.75 and to-day it has been further raised to Rs. 18.25. The decision to delink the rupee from sterling was taken to impart greater stability to the effective exchange rate at a time when the major currencies are floating. In the wake of the continuing depreciation in the exchange value of the sterling, a new arrangement had to be instituted under which the exchange value of the rupee would be changed periodically with reference to a suitable weighted average of a 'basket of currencies' of countries which are India's major trading partners..

"There is, however, another factor hinging upon the international monetary situation that has made possible the successive upward revision of the exchange rate of the rupee with the sterling, besides the strengthening of the rupee brought about by the Government's anti-inflationary measures. The depreciation of the pound in relation to the dollar and the other major currencies is now partly attributed to deliberate policy measures recently initiated by the British Government to reflate the U.K. economy an essential component of which is the effort to stimulate British exports. Though the counter-inflationary policy initiated by the UK Government since August last by the imposition of new limits on pay rises did bring about an abatement of prices to some extent, Britain has found it necessary to stimulate domestic demand and investment.

"On the external front Britain had been running a deficit in its balance of payments of £ 1,800 millions during the first eleven months of 1975 (though this was less than the deficit of £3,700 millions in 1974). Britain had to avail itself of a purchase of 1,000 million SDRs from the Oil Facility of the International Monetary Fund to counter the pressures on its balance of payments. On the domestic front, the British Government has had to embark upon a package programme costing £215 millions to alleviate unemployment among an estimated 1.15 million people in mid-1975 and boost industrial investment."

However, great instability had arisen in the money markets. The AFP report on March 15: "The London money market was in a chaotic state to-day, dealers said, as the French and British currencies fluctuated, following the withdrawal of France from the European 'Snake' (joint float scheme). The Bank of England reportedly stepped in when the pound worsened to \$1.9185 from previous \$1.9265. The French franc worsened to 4.775 to the dollar but then picked up to 4.735."

Bathuk Gahani, writing from London on March 15, summed up the situation: "The French Government's decision last night to pull the franc out of the EEC monetary 'snake' system plunged

the financial capitals of the western world into a fresh currency crisis this morning. The French decision was taken 'after much reluctance' by President Giscard d'Estaing because, in the ultimate analysis, it makes a mockery of all talk of progress towards devising an evolutionary plan for world monetary reform. The future of the EEC 'snake' system, looks bleak. The system dates from April, 1972, and limits the difference in rates between participating currencies at any given moment to 2.25 per cent of mutual EEC parties. The British and Irish pounds and the Italian lira have dropped out of the 'snake' and now, with the exit of the French franc, the system could even collapse.

"Only in November last year, at the Rambouillet conference in France, heads of major western industrialised nations and Japan, had agreed to curb erratic exchange movements as much as possible by official intervention. The Finance Ministers of countries whose currencies belong to the EEC 'snake' met last night in Brussels in an atmosphere of grave concern and this morning unconfirmed reports from Italian sources said the Finance Ministers have agreed that the franc should be devalued by three per cent and the German mark revalued by the same margin.

"In the wake of last week's run on pound sterling, the British currency has been effectively devalued by five per cent against the German mark and the US dollar. President Giscard's sudden decision to pull out of the snake system has political overtones. It is influenced by concern about his political popularity in France. His right-wing coalition Government is losing ground to leftwing Communist and socialist parties, if today's results of local government elections in France are any indication.

"Last week, when the French franc was under pressure along with the pound in the exchange markets, the French Government made valiant efforts to save the franc. On Thursday and Friday alone, the Bank of France is estimated to have spent \$1,200 millions in foreign exchange to cushion the franc. President Giscard's decision comes as a surprise especially because late last month, at the Franco-German summit. In Nice, both President Giscard and Chan-

cellor Schmidt had reaffirmed their confidence in the existing structure of the snake system. Both leaders felt it necessary to make a joint statement on the issue after fresh monetary tremors rocked the exchange markets.

"It is now obvious that there can be no meaningful progress towards evolving a stable monetary system for the non-communist world. In the wake of the present crises, plans for future reforms could be shelved, because of the incapacity of West European Governments to 'control' the system.

A Reuter comment stated: "Inflation, high unemployment rates, fall in industrial production and the ensuing social and political crises, now topped by uncertainty about the future of currencies and the monetary system, portend hard times ahead for the West European countries. During the last decade, roughly upto the end of 1974, the western world was thrust headlong into the most accelerated period of business and financial activity of all time. For example, in Britain, Japan, the United States and West Germany, the pace of economic transactions as measured by bank debits, soared from \$7 trillions a year to over \$30 trillions. These were the years of superboom. The fourfold increase in oil prices, followed by energy crisis resulting into a world trade recession, changed all that.

"Can the present western monetary system survive future shocks of this magnitude? This is the question bankers and business men in the western capitals are asking as they switch to US dollars and German Marks by offloading the weaker West European currencies. Countries like India, would have to take a fresh look at their economic and monetary relationship with the western nations. Just now, developing countries are 'importing' western inflation by paying higher, and perhaps artificial, prices for import of capital goods by depending on the vagrant exchange rates of the weaker West European currencies. Belgium and Holland suspended their special relationship within the European joint float under which the currencies fluctuated at a reduced margin of 1.5 per cent, the National Bank said. The ending of the so-called 'mini-snake' means that the Dutch guilder and Belgian franc

will now operate the full 2.25 per cent margins of the float system dealers said."

It will thus be seen that a new period of great instability has begun to undermine the monetary system which rich industrialised nations had sought to impose upon the capitalist world after the Kingston Meeting of the Committee of Twenty.

Very little of these developments have been reflected in the columns of our daily papers. The Ceylon rupee is today buffeted about in a world of floating currencies. Our declining productive potential, in spite of the boasting on the front pages of our pro-government newspapers and over the SLBC that great things were being done in Sri Lanka, has reduced the value of the rupee. Our rupee buys less and less each day in the internal market. Inflation is running high and nobody seems to know just how fast it is rising. An egg now costs between 75 to 80 cents each, the cheapest pound of fish is between Rs. 3/50 and Rs. 4/00, and there are very few people left in the island who can afford to buy meat even once a week. It is a depressing and dismal picture, but our newspapers and the SLBC seem to think that all they have to do is to keep up the spirits of the people by retailing stories of great achievements and speaking about the glorious millenium around next corner.

Last year, Sri Lankans lived in the belief that Pesalai oil will bring untold prosperity to the island (one Minister had proclaimed that Ceylon would become the richest nation in Asia). This year Sri Lankans are building castles in Raja Rata on the basis of Mahaweli waters. Unlike Pesalai oil, which did not gush forth as expected, Mahaweli waters have begun to flow into the Wannu. But this will not mean an immediate productive breakthrough into self-sufficiency. It will be years before the waters of Mahaweli will have a substantial impact on production. It may well be 1978 or 1979 before the diverted waters of Mahaweli are utilised purposefully to increase production: what is possible now is to have the production brought back to pre-drought levels.



CHANGE IN CHINA—4

The Campaign Against Teng

BY THE THIRD WEEK of February, just ten days or so after the nomination of Hua Kuo-feng, it was clear to the world that Peking and China were in the throes of another Cultural Revolution—whether it was called a “class struggle” or a “power struggle”. In fact, taking all objective factors into consideration it was a “power struggle” in every sense of the word as ordinary human beings understand it, and even ideologues found it very difficult to throw a smokescreen that it was a “class struggle” in order to mask the “power struggle.”

There was no doubt that the two opposing groups are wedded to contradictory and conflicting policies—from education to economic policies. It did not seem that both sides had equal rights or opportunities to present their case. The reality was that the group obviously sponsored by Mao Tse-tung had the propaganda machine in its hands (and also the security and administrative machine also in its hand owing to the magic of Mao's name) and that it was able to carry on a vicious and vituperative campaign against its opponents. The only concession afforded to the opponents by the Maoist radical group was to set out the policy attitudes of the “capitalist roaders” in summarised form in order to mount a campaign against them.

In the midst of this polemical war, ex-president Nixon was invited to China by Chairman Mao (a special plane was sent by Peking to fetch Nixon from California). Nixon's visit was to mark the anniversary of Nixon's first visit, and it aroused a great deal of resentment in the United States—and we will deal with aspect of current Chinese politics in the next instalment in this series about the latest *Change in China*.

The *Time* of February 23, 1976 had an interesting comment about the changes in China—changes which had caught the CIA and the

State Department in Washington unawares: “Once again, China seems to be embroiled in a power struggle between its ideological factions. One week after the unexpected appointment of the relatively unknown Hua Kuo-feng as the country's acting Premier, leftists in Peking's leadership launched a violent attack on their ‘rightist’ enemies. The radicals’ rhetorical onslaught, if it continues to grow, could upset the plans for a smooth leadership succession carefully worked out by Chou En-lai before his death last month. The principal target of the radicals’ campaign was First Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, the man most Sinologists had believed would succeed Chou as Premier. Last week a series of wall posters appeared at Peking University, as well as universities in Shanghai and Wuhan. The posters, mentioning no names, virulently attacked ‘an old capitalist roader,’ as well as ‘people who say ideology is not important and the only thing that matters is economic progress.’ The references were clear. Teng had been denounced as a ‘capitalist roader’ during the Cultural Revolution, and he is known to be a man committed to a pragmatism in economic development. Foreigners were allowed to inspect the posters in Peking—proof that this was not an isolated and unapproved campaign. Some students even said explicitly that Teng was the target.”

“Shortly after Hua's appointment, *People's Daily* published its most violent polemic in years—an attack on the large group of bureaucrats, Teng chief among them, who had been restored to power since their disgrace during the Cultural Revolution. ‘Before it is too late,’ urged the editorial, ‘go and tear down their masks, arrest the black hands that have attacked the proletariat, and seize hold of the tails of these foxes who push for the restoration of capitalism.’

“Despite the blunt language of these polemics, it was too early to say whether China was on the verge of another drastic revolutionary upheaval. One snippet of evidence: Richard Nixon's visit to Peking later this month—commemorating the fourth anniversary of the Peking summit that inaugurated an era of Sino-American detente—had not been cancelled.

In welcoming the former President, Peking seemed to be rebuking the present Administration in Washington for failing to take a harder line against China's revisionist enemies in Moscow. Nonetheless, the visit affirmed the importance that Peking attaches to its relations with the U.S.—as well as to the moderate foreign policy forged by Chou En-lai. The renewed radical campaign also does not necessarily mean that the wily, tough Teng Hsiao-ping, is finished. Obviously his chances of becoming Premier are dim at best; but he still holds more top posts than any other official in China—First Vice Premier of the Government, Vice Chairman of the Communist Party and Chief of Staff of the Army. It is possible that Teng and the rehabilitated bureaucrats now under attack have the strength to withstand any radical effort to oust them from their positions. A majority of China's powerful regional military commanders are believed to have good relations with Teng. Sinologists were betting that the army would back him and the moderates if it came to a showdown. Moreover, previous leftist campaigns during the past three years—none of them so serious as the current one—fizzled out when the moderates proved able to hold their ground. Late last week, hints of the counterattack by Teng's group could be found in radio broadcasts from China emphasizing ‘party leadership’ and ‘unity,’ code words for anti-radical policies. Still, last week's offensive was ominous, coming as it did so soon after the death of the moderate pragmatist Chou En-lai. At the very least, the new radical attack raised serious questions about China's ability to transfer power smoothly to new leaders. Certainly, the biggest immediate test facing inexperienced acting Premier Hua will be keeping Peking's quarrelsome factions at peace. Moreover, the biggest test of all—managing the world's most populous country after the death of its feeble 82-year-old Chairman—is yet to come.”

The *Newsweek* of February 23, commented as follows:

“I do not care whether a cat is black or white, the important thing is whether she catches mice.”

"In China, political news often comes in oblique ways, as it did last week when a crop of radical wall posters blossomed at Peking University. Although they did not mention his name, the posters denounced the author of the cat-and-mouse remark—and went on to protest the presence of a 'capitalist roader' in Peking's hierarchy. Their target was clearly Teng Hsiao-ping, China's senior Vice Premier who had just been passed over for the job of Acting Premier. The wall posters helped explain why China's leaders had chosen to ignore the wishes of the late Chou En-lai, who made Teng his political heir, and to name Hua Kuo-feng, the party's eleventh-ranking politician, to head the government. The appointment demonstrated again that China is a uniquely closed society, for it came as a complete surprise to even the most expert China watchers in the West. Last week these analysts theorized that ultra-leftists had raised a hue and cry against the 72-year-old Teng. 'There's a parallel with a U.S. political convention', one American analyst in Hong Kong explained. 'You have a guy—Teng—who is the odds-on nominee, but at the last moment a stop-Teng movement begins. The result: Hua Kuo-feng, a compromise candidate.'

"Following their success in blocking Teng, the radicals evidently decided that it was time to go public. In addition to the display at Peking University, anti-Teng posters soon appeared across town at the Tsinghua University campus and later in Shanghai, Wuhan and Hangchow as well. Without naming Teng specifically, one poster charged: 'He used his power against the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao.' Others declared: 'There are people who say ideology is not important and the only thing that matters is economic progress.' Before long, leftists began to bus Peking factory workers to the university grounds to read the posters. According to Westerners in Peking, many workers copied the denunciations into their notebooks. In all likelihood, the radicals enjoyed at least the tacit approval of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Recently, China had been straying far from the radical course laid down by the 82-year-old Mao at the opening of the Cultural Revolution a decade ago. Under the aegis

of Chou En-lai, party moderates returned from disgrace to positions of power. Teng, of course, was the most prominent example of political rehabilitation. At the peak of the Cultural Revolution eight years ago, Teng who was then general secretary of the Communist Party and one of the top half-dozen leaders in the country, was denounced by Red Guards as a 'bourgeois revisionist'. For six years, he dropped out of sight—only to suddenly re-emerge as Vice Premier in 1973. In his wake, Teng quickly restored other victims of the Cultural Revolution to power but carefully kept the most important positions for himself. To most outsiders, it appeared that Teng had assured his own future as China's next Premier. But in retrospect it is now clear that Teng's political program stirred too many old fears among China's radicals. He decreed that orderly economic growth was China's No. 1 concern—and to leftists, such pragmatism was anathema. In one especially sharp protest last week in the People's Daily, radical spokesmen charged that the moderate were making 'a sham effort to go after modernization while their true intention is to restore capitalism.' This is the hour, it added, for 'great hand-to-hand combat between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.'

"Teng's defeat, if that is what it was, would not necessarily change Chinese domestic policies. Like Teng, the 54-year-old Hua Kuo-feng, was himself a target of left-wing attacks during the Cultural Revolution. Since his transfer from the government of Hunan Province to the Peking hierarchy five years ago, Hua had been a firm supporter of rational economic planning. Nor was there anything in his record to indicate that Hua would alter China's foreign priorities. As if to confirm that hostility toward the Soviet Union would continue to dominate Peking's diplomacy, the official news agency Hsinhua reported last week that Chinese militiamen had again been skirmishing along the western border with what it described as 'armed Soviet intruders.'

"The wall posters did not unravel all of the mystery surrounding Hua and Teng. The wording of the posters had a distinct Cultural Revolution flavor, and it was possible that Mao had personally

ordered up a major nationwide campaign against moderates. Moreover, Peking made no formal announcements as to how long Hua would serve as Acting Premier, and there was no news about the current status—or even the whereabouts—of Teng Hsiao-ping. He had not been seen in public since last month, when he delivered the formal eulogy at a memorial service for Chou En-lai. In view of his proven resilience, no one was prepared to count Teng permanently out of China's political equation. He still appeared to occupy the posts of Vice Premier, Vice chairman of the party and chief of the armed forces general staff. Given the power of those jobs, one China watcher in Hong Kong remarked, 'I can't believe that Teng is just going to fold his arms and say 'O.K., you win.'

The **Far Eastern Economic Review** of February 27 set out the charges against Teng Hsiao-ping as follows:

"The following are allegations made about Teng Hsiao-ping by his factionalist opponents according to reports from Peking and Shanghai. Some are absurd; others are designed to provoke quarrels with his colleagues. All help to explain why the sudden upsurge of criticism of unidentified officials has been interpreted as pointing directly at Teng.

"His self criticism and rectification in Inner Mongolia (1967-73) was not sincere and he continues to encourage his old followers in the Administration to stick to his pre-1966, anti-Mao line.

"He rehabilitated former Chief-of-Staff Lo Jui-ching in July 1975 although Lo proved his stubborn anti-Maoism by attempted suicide and is thus one of those who 'have never given in' according to a May 1966 Party directive. Teng wants to rehabilitate Peng Chen, his ally before the Cultural Revolution, who plotted against Mao Tse-tung. Teng also wants to see the return of Tao Chu, former Party boss in southern China, although Mao condemned Teng for having recommended Tao Chu to the Politburo.

"He organized the convention of the National People's Congress while acting on behalf of Premier Chou En-lai, who was mortally sick, although he knew Chairman Mao could not attend. Teng took

this step to ensure his own promotion and the appointment to high positions of his followers.

"He prevented Central Committee members and representatives of the masses from consulting Mao, on the excuse that Hangchow was in a state of chaos and had to be isolated from the rest of the country. Teng thus abused his post of Chief-of-Staff to cut off the Chairman from the people through an absurd fabrication.

"While Premier Chou was gravely ill, Teng arranged for Wang Hung-wen to spend many months in Shanghai because when Mao was not in Peking and Chou was unable to attend Politburo meetings, Wang was entitled as second Vice-Chairman to preside. Teng wished to strengthen his control over the Party in this way.

"He sought to increase his hold over the armed forces by suppressing the announcement that Wang Hung-wen was Vice-Chairman of the Party Military Commission during the August 1 celebrations of Army Day.

"He disobeyed Premier Chou's instructions by producing a translation of alleged discord between the Chairman and his wife, Chiang Ching, obtaining this 'black material' from the writings of an American, Roxane Witke, who had interviewed Chiang Ching. Teng sent this translation to the Chairman.

"He deliberately sabotaged the campaign initiated in August 1975 by Mao Tse-tung to learn from the classical novel *Water Margin* since Teng wanted to prepare the way for reconciliation with the Kremlin."

In the meantime, the poster and press campaign against Teng Hsiao-ping increased in scope and vehemence.

A Reuter report from Peking datelined February 28, stated: "Thousands of wall posters attacking senior Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping by name were pasted up at Peking University yesterday in a major escalation of China's fiery anti-rightist campaign. It coincided with a front-page article in the Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily* disclosing that Chairman Mao Tse-tung 'personally started and led' the nationwide movement. Since early this month Mr. Teng has been the clear target of a press and poster campaign

against so-called 'capitalist roaders' but the attacks had refrained from mentioning him.

"The posters written in large letters accuse the Vice-Premier by name, saying, 'Teng Hsiao-ping is evil minded' and 'Teng Hsiao-ping is as crafty as a fox.' The *People's Daily* yesterday revealed a new aspect of the crisis which indicated its seriousness and extent. The newspaper said in a front page article that those 'responsible for taking the capitalist line' and who did not repent, were 'sabotaging stability and unity everywhere under the very pre-text of promoting stability and unity.' The article went on to underline that this was particularly true among executives and was to be found everywhere thus suggesting that the crisis involved not only the top authorities but also other levels of the hierarchy, if not the basic structure itself.

"In an apparent reference to leaders and executives who owe their careers to the events of the sixties, the newspaper added, 'in attacking the recently appeared forces, those who are travelling the capitalist road want to settle their Cultural Revolution accounts with the proletariat.' The *People's Daily* also referred again to the 'split in the party and in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party which it had already noted on February 8. They (rightist leaders) are working to promote this split at the heart of the party, and at the heart of the Central Committee which has chairman Mao at its head', the newspaper said. 'In sowing discord and spreading absurd rumours,' the article went on, 'those responsible at the heart of the party who are travelling the capitalist road are the source of the split.'

"Meanwhile, Dr. Werner Marx, a leading West German politician and parliamentary Opposition spokesman on foreign policy, said in Hong Kong, China's leaders were in the grip of a violent and profound internal struggle. Dr. Marx, told his Christian Democratic Party headquarters in Bonn that the struggle would not weaken China's anti-Moscow policy.

"In a statement issued by his party in Bonn he said the heavy attacks against Mr. Teng Hsiao-ping had been gathering force in the last few days. He described

Mr. Teng as a convinced advocate of placing China's future in the hands of technocrats rather than ideologists. 'The Chinese leadership is being shaken by a violent and profound internal struggle,' Dr. Marx said. These 'convulsions', however, did not seem to have any impact on the country's foreign policy. Peking would stick to its hard course against the Soviet Union, and there were many signs that this would become even tougher, Dr. Marx said.

"Dr. Marx and his party colleague, Dr. Alfred Dregger, were guests of the Chinese Government and were among the first foreign politicians to talk to Mr. Hua Kuo-feng, China's acting Prime Minister. They also saw the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Chiao Kuan-hua and the chief of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee, Mr. Chang Chun-chiao. Dr. Marx said the Chinese leaders describe the communist parties in Western Europe contemptuously as 'useful idiots' for Moscow."

It was inevitable that speculation and guess work should begin to dominate political thinking throughout the world about developments in China.

An AFP despatch from Hongkong datelined February 29 stated: "The late Chinese Premier Chou En-lai is being criticised by name in wall posters appearing in the streets of Canton, according to reports by travellers returning from the South China provincial capital. The posters blamed Mr. Chou who died of cancer in Peking on January 8, for the rehabilitation of senior Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping who is being branded as the 'capitalist roader in the party' on wall posters almost all over the country. The big-character posters said that Mr. Teng only agreed to return to the Peking political scene in 1973 after holding a four-hour talk with Premier Chou. The posters said: 'Without Chou En-lai, Teng could never have been back with the party leadership.' Informed sources in Peking quoted a senior Chinese official as saying that Mr. Teng now had no chance to re-mould himself. The official, questioned by a visiting foreign delegation, told them: 'Once Mr. Teng had a chance, but he does not have a chance any more.'

"The Chinese Communist Party Newspaper, *The People's Daily*, to-

day identified Mr. Teng beyond any doubt at all as the target of the wave of accusations that is sweeping the country. At the same time, the newspaper stated that the group in the party leadership being attacked as 'capitalist roaders' still held 'much power.' This denunciation, almost by name, by the official press of one of the most powerful men in the Chinese Communist regime—Vice-Premier, Vice-Chairman of the party and Army Chief of Staff—foreshadows a real trial of strength whose outcome is unforeseeable.

"Mr. Teng was identified by *The People's Daily* in a front-page article. The article said that 'he' (Mr. Teng) 'continues to oppose the revolutionary line of Mao Tse-tung.' A gradual process seems to be under way of sketching out the silhouettes of the people under attack, and it will apparently

wind up with their being publicly named.

"Since January 15, the day of Mr. Chou's funeral ceremony, not a single one of the 'veterans' in the leadership—the group to which Mr. Chou himself belonged, and also Mr. Teng—has been mentioned in the official press, with the obvious exception of Chairman Mao. The only leaders who have been mentioned during the last six weeks are those who owed their high positions to the cultural revolution. They are generally known as 'radicals.' Among the most important people in this group of 'radicals' are Mr. Wang Hung-wen, aged about 40, the Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Number Two in the party hierarchy after Mr. Mao, Mr. Chang Chun-chiao and Mr. Yao Wen-yuan, members of the Political Bureau and Madam Chiang Ching, wife

of Chairman Mao, who is another member of the Political Bureau.

"Mr. Yao, a brilliant theoretician often called 'Mao's gunner' is believed to be playing a major role in the current campaign and in the writing of the press articles that are marking it out. Other important figures are Mr. Hua Kuo-feng, who was appointed Acting Premier at the beginning of the month and General Chen Hsi-lien, a Vice-Premier and member of the Political Bureau. Of the remaining 11 Vice-Premiers only three have been mentioned since January 15—Mr. Ku Mu, Mr. Sun Chien (a former worker from Tientsin) and Mrs. Wu Kuwi-hsien (a former textile worker) All three owe their political career to the cultural revolution."

(To be Continued)

CHRONICLE

Mar. 17 — Mar. 22

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; TOCSL—Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17: The Government decided yesterday to stay the regulations governing the Credit Councils and for the purpose of festival advances state institutions have been instructed to pay from advance accounts—CDN. A Committee chaired by Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Food and Agriculture, decided on several measures to prevent hoarding during the time of the Non-aligned conference to be held in August: one of the measures is to keep two Jatika Polas open daily from August 1, till the end of the conference—CDN. All doctors of the Galle hospital were summoned to the Ministry of Health yesterday by the Director of Health Services for a discussion: at the end of the discussion it was agreed doctors of the Galle hospital could report for duty at neighbouring hospitals and others who do not wish to do so could go on leave: meanwhile the Galle Police arrested 10 of the suspects wanted in connexion with the assault on a specialist and the Medical Superintendent of the Galle hospital—CDN. Aththa in its lead news said that out of the 11 applications received for a post of Assistant General Manager (Agriculture) in the Bank of Ceylon several applicants had BSc, MSc and PhD qualification in agriculture with several years of practical experience in the field but the applicant selec-

ted had no qualification nor experience in the field: according to the paper the only qualification the applicant has had was that he had been an executive in a private establishment. Employees of the Government Press refrained from doing any work since yesterday afternoon protesting against the presence of workers who were hired during the strike at the Government Press—JD. A public meeting will be held at the Nawarangahala today to celebrate the 40th year in Parliament of Dr. N. M. Perera, Leader of the LSSP—VK. Nederland will give aid to tune of Rs. 6 lakhs for 25 District Development Projects under the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs—DM. According to the *Lankadipa* there have been more incidents of sabotage in the Ceylon Transport Board after the token strike of February 20. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, has been elected a member of the 25th CPSU Congress held recently in Moscow: Mr. Keuneman, returned to the island on Monday after leading a delegation of the Sri Lanka Communist Party to the Congress—CDN. The British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson announced yesterday that he would resign to make way for a successor: Mr. Wilson who was Prime Minister for eight years said that he will step down as soon as the Parliamentary Labour Party elects a new leader: Mr. Wilson will continue to be a member of the Labour Party. Egypt cancelled a five year old arms and aid treaty with the Soviet Union and accused Kremlin of interfering with the internal affairs of Egypt: it is expected that Egypt will withdraw port facilities to the Soviet Navy in Egypt. Russia in a broadcast commenting on the cancellation said that those who were responsible will have to bear grave responsibilities.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18: According to the *Janadina* workers of the Government Press have refrained from doing any work since the afternoon of 16th protesting against the presence of 44 new recruits in the Press: these 44 were from the workers who were hired during the strike: soon after the strike was settled the

new recruits were housed in a building in the premises without any work being assigned to them but on the 16th of this month on the orders of the Minister of Information and Broadcasting 44 of the workers had been deployed in the Press to do various jobs: according to the *Daily News* Government yesterday reviewed the situation at the Government Press and the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, asked the Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne, to report to him on the situation at the Government Press—CDN. According to the *Aththa* T. N. de S. Wikremasinghe, convicted and sentenced to jail by the CJC (Exchange Frauds) had been released on a pardon by the President: he was sentenced to 4 years rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs. 25,000 by the CJC: yesterday being the final day of the time given to the accused to pay the fine: his case was called up before the CJC but his lawyer informed the Commission that his client had been pardoned by the President and as such he need not pay the fine: *Aththa* further reported that neither the Commission nor the Attorney General were informed of the pardon given by the President: the Commission postponed the case for April 30th. Mr. George Rajapakse, Minister of Health, assured the doctors of the Galle hospital and the GMOA that the Government will not give room for thuggery and intimidation in Government hospitals and hoped that the condition at the Galle hospital will return to normal within a week's time—CDN. The UNP Working Committee yesterday picked Mr. Joseph Michael to contest the Ja-Ela by-election—CDN. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, will declare open the Bowatenne Complex, second stage of the Mahaweli diversion scheme, today at the auspicious time of 10.21 a.m.—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* Ministry of Finance has decided on a new feature in budget-making known as the "Multi-year Budget forecasting" by which the estimates for the year 1977 will be drawn up with a forecast of the expenditure for three more years from 1978-1980. A Tamil Research Conference by the Sri Lanka branch of the International Tamil Research Conference will commence in Batticaloa today—VK. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, currently in Yugoslavia yesterday visited a medical institution for an ailment in the knee—VK. The sterling pound registered its lowest in several cities throughout the world following the announcement by Mr. Harold Wilson that he would soon resign from the Premiership of Britain. Queen Elizabeth has given her consent for the separation of her sister, Princess Margaret, and her husband Lord Snowdon.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19: Nurses of the Galle Hospital walked out yesterday refusing to work with the Army Volunteer Corps medical personnel; meanwhile the GMOA's executive committee decided yesterday that a decision to 'return to work' or 'prolong the absence' by doctors of the Galle Hospital would be taken only on the 21st of this month at the general council meeting—CDN. Government press employees returned to work yesterday morning when the Government Printer removed the new recruits deployed in the Press but later in the evening refrained from work protesting against alleged intimidation by a new recruit on a Press worker outside the premises: meanwhile the new recruits are once again housed in a separate building in the premises—JD. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Acting

Prime Minister and Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, speaking at the ceremony held in connexion with the commissioning of the Bowatenne complex of the Mahaweli diversion scheme said that soon Sri Lanka would attain self sufficiency in food—CDN. The Customs officials at Kachchativu nabbed eight soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army attempting to barter arrack, coconut oil etc to Indian pilgrims during the function—CDM. Nominations to the Ja-Ela by election will be received today at the Colombo Kachcheri: already seven candidates have paid in their deposits to contest the seat—LD. Celebrations in connexion with the Tamil Research Conference by the Sri Lanka branch of the International Tamil Research Conference was held yesterday at Valaichchenai in the Eastern province: the conference will continue in Batticaloa today—VK. Dr. N. M. Perera, leader of the LSSP addressing a meeting at the Navarangahala in connexion with his completion of 40 years in Parliament extended an invitation to the Sri Lanka Communist Party to join the progressive left movements in the country to achieve the goal of socialism—JD. *Aththa* in a front page lead gave details of a function held on the eve of departure of a Director, Mr. Abrew, of the Lake House: the Board of Directors of the Lake House spent a sum of Rs. 2046.46 for drinks and food for 14 people at the Hotel Oberoi: the paper said that this money had been spent from the Welfare Fund of the employees of Lake House. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, UNP MP for Dedigama, has still not replied the explanation asked from him by the party's executive committee as to how the Minister of Finance came to know the contents of a letter Mr. Senanayake addressed to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the UNP—DM. Mr. Denis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer, may not contest the post of British Premiership and according to political observers this will improve Mr. James Callaghan's chances of becoming Prime Minister of Britain. Egyptian War Minister, Abdel Ghani Gamassi, will leave for France to discuss a new arms deal. UN Security Council yesterday voted unanimously to extend economic aid to Mozambique to help it withstand the financial consequences of its decision to apply sanctions against Rhodesia. Indian Prime Minister told an interview that she would not step down just now.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20: Mr. Ridgeway Tillekeratne secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said though no finality had been reached on the question of the new recruits to the Government Press discussions have been held with trade union leaders and it is expected that by Monday the Press will return to normal—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, yesterday discussed bilateral issues and the Non-Aligned Summit to be held in Colombo in August with her Yugoslav counterpart Mr. Dzemal Bijedic in Belgrade—CDN. Six persons handed in their nominations yesterday for the Ja-Ela by-election to be held on April 23: Mr. Peter Mendis—SLFP, Mr. Joseph Michael Perera—UNP, Mr. Noel Kurera—LSSP and three other independent candidates handed in their nominations at the Colombo Kachcheri—CDM. LSSP sponsored trade unions in the JCTUO will hold a mass rally on March 8 at the Town Hall to decide what action should be taken to win the eight demands the JCTUO has already submitted to the Government—CDM. According to the *Janadina* the acquisition notice by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to take-over the building of

Shaw Wallace and Hedges, a leading Agency House, had been withdrawn on the orders of the Government—**JD**. Over 2000 delegates of the SLFP trade unions will meet at the Nawarangahala today to decide on the Prime Minister's order that the SLFP trade unions must sever their connections with LSSP unions in the JCTUO—**ATH**. Health authorities warned the public not to use water from the Kelani river in view of the spread of cholera—**VK**. A committee headed by Mr. G. P. A. Silva, retired Chief Justice, has been appointed by Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, to decide on the payment to be paid for owners of rupee company estates and private estates that were taken over by the Land Reform Commission in October last year: other members of the committee are Messrs D. S. de Silva, M. D. W. Bodinayake, E. M. G. Tillekeratne and H. Molagoda—**DM**. According to the *Daily News* even after the take-over of agency houses the system of shipping teas to London auctions will continue and for this purpose the Government has made new arrangements: according to the new arrangement there will be two committees, one in London and one in Colombo, to co-ordinate the shipments of Ceylon teas to the London auctions. A Royal announcement from Buckingham Palace said that Princess Margaret and her husband Lord Snowdon have agreed to live apart. According to an opinion poll published in London 2 out of 3 in Britain do not trust Soviet Union and thought the Soviet Union posed a military threat to Western Europe. Lebanese Premier, Rashid Karami, fled from a plane in Beirut when gunmen opened fire on the aircraft before it was due to take off with him and other Muslim leaders for Damascus: no one was injured.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21: According to the *Sunday Times Illustrated*, UNP candidate for Ja-Ela by-election Mr. Joseph Michael Perera, was the selection of Mr. R. Premadasa, First MP for Colombo Central: Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the UNP, wanted Mr. Bunty de Soysa, famous criminal lawyer, to contest the seat on behalf of the UNP. According to the *Sunday Observer* at a SLFP trade union federation delegates meeting held at the Nawarangahala yesterday it was unanimously decided to ask the Prime Minister and the SLFP leadership for an opportunity to discuss the party directive calling for a review of its role in the JCTUO: according to the *Sunday Times* the delegates decided to request the party hierarchy to suspend its directive ordering them to have no truck with LSSP trade unions. During the last five years nearly 2000 professionally qualified persons have left the island: among those who left were doctors, engineers, economists and other skilled persons—**CO**. All six people suspected to be involved in the Wijerama People's Bank robbery of Rs. 600,000 have been rounded up by the Police—**CO**. The *Janasathiya* in an editorial wanted the Government to reveal all dealings involved in the purchase and hiring of aircraft in the country's air service in view of the Lockheed scandal. A special Police unit headed by an Inspector of Police has been established at the Galle hospital following recent incidents of thuggery at the hospital—**VK**. According to the *Sri Lankadipa* doctors of the Galle hospital are expected to return to work tomorrow. A 19-foot statue of late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, made by a Soviet artiste will be installed at the Galle Face Green just before the start of the Non-Aligned Conference in August—

SLD. Cabinet has approved a proposal by Mr. George Rajapakse, Minister of Health, to raise the standard of the Ayurvedic Medical College to that of a University Campus and to bring its functions under the Medical Faculty—**DM**. President Tito of Yugoslavia and Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez discussed the Non-Aligned Conference to be held in Colombo in August. Lebanese Prime Minister, Karami, will resume his trip to Syria despite a narrow escape he had the day before yesterday when his Syrian bound plane came under gunmen's fire at the Beirut airport.

MONDAY, MARCH 22: At the General Membership Meeting of the GMOA doctors decided that they would return to work to the Galle hospital only if the Minister of Health, Mr. George Rajapakse, guaranteed their safety—**CDM**. Several state attorneys who were also members of the Bar Association resigned from the latter because they felt that certain decisions taken by the Association in the recent past were more of a political nature—**CDM**. According to the *Aththa* and the *Janadina* over two thousand delegates who participated at the SLFP trade union meeting held at the Nawarangahala to discuss the Prime Minister's directive that they should sever all connexions with the LSSP trade unions unanimously decided that the strength of the working classes should remain together: *Aththa* editorially praised the decision of the trade unionists and said it was a very wise decision: the *Janadina* editorially commenting on the decision taken at the Nawarangahala meeting said though the Prime Minister could get mixed up with the capitalists in her attempts to safeguard the capitalists she cannot expect the working class to get mixed up with the capitalists: the editorial further said that the working class should see that there is no damage done to the JCTUO. Railway Guards' Union decided not to work in defective brake wagons and had given three day's time for the Railway authorities to take remedial action failing which the Union has decided to call out its members on strike from midnight of Wednesday—**CDM**. An interim report by the Salary Anomalies Commission on equal pay for trained teachers will be submitted to the Government very soon—**DM**. Working Committee of the TUF decided yesterday that the plight of the Sri Lanka Tamils should be explained to the delegates of the Non-Aligned Conference who would be in the country in August—**VK**. Patricia Hearst, daughter of newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, was found guilty by a San Francisco Court for willingly helping her guerilla kidnappers in a bank robbery in April 1974: sentenced was postponed. President Ford of US described North Vietnam's leaders as "a bunch of international pirates" who still had not accounted for Americans missing in action during the Vietnam war.



NEXT WEEK

- WORLD IN TURMOIL
—Egypt, Argentine, Britain
- LETTERS
—priests' garb
- MORE NEWS FROM KANTALAI
—Via Ehetuwewa

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—73

News From Kantalai

By Herbert Kouneman

15 February Kantalai
Well-being and Prosperity!

My dearest Parents and beloved
Brothers & Sisters.....

We have had the letter PB-malli wrote. Thank you for news. Yet, when we saw that fond message the three of us were sad and all three had a good cry. Our friends teased us for our tears, so we bore up afterwards with great difficulty. I, too, had written; before PB's letter arrived.

Yesterday we reached our lodgings in Kantalai. They are excellent. They have every convenience, beyond our expectations. We have beds to sleep on, double-beds. (I have since determined, on anxious enquiry! that these 'double' beds are nothing more suggestive than double-decker bunks!) There are twelve occupants to each room. Here too we three are in one room.

On the day before we left Gannoruwa, the 13th, the Minister (of Food, Co-operatives & Small Industries: Mr. S. K. Sooriyatchchi visited us again. 45 of us rehearsed for two days a lovely reception procession to welcome him: we three were also picked for this. We also staged a Variety Entertainment to display individual accomplishments, to which Biso-nangi contributed a dance and a song. I sang a song to accompany a dance some other girls presented. Biso-nangi won a prize for her song: a dress-length and a flute. The Minister conversed with us very affably.

On our way here yesterday we first worshipped at the Dalada Maligawa. Next we visited the Polgolla, Ukuwela and Bowatenna sites. We got here about 6.30. Here we met Aruna Munasinha of Kantalai, who you remember wrote to us. He works as an overseer in the same place as we do so we can count on any assistance we need in obtaining supplies and so on.

Today, the 15th at the nakat, (auspicious) time we boiled milk (i.e. cooked the ceremonial kiri-bat on the site) and began the reaping of a rice field of about 50 acres.

Charles-mahatmaya (Mr. C. A. Abeysekera, Director, National Institute of Management) is also here at this moment.

All of us are in good health. Remember us with love to our tiny daughter (Nilima: Banders' and Dinga's new baby) Sumana, the mahatmaya (me) our relatives, and everybody. Biso is writing to the mahatmaya at this same time. On all of you the blessings of the Triple Gem.

At my hand,
Your daughter
Ukku Amma

15 February Kantalai
May you be happy!

Dear Father, and all the family
included—

I am sure you will have received the last letter I wrote? Loku Aiya sent me a letter the day before yesterday. Punci Aiya telephoned again on the 12th, but I couldn't speak to him, I was out practising the shot-put at the time, Biso spoke to him.

I came first in the shot-putting contest. As a prize I won a bottle of Lacto-Calamine and a cake of Khomba soap and a cake of Sunlight soap and three handkies. Podi-nangi (Biso) won a dress-material and a flute, for singing. Our House (Gemunu) won the prize awarded for the best play: a set of tumblers, to be divided amongst six of us; we haven't divided the set up yet. Podi-nangi and I were in that play. We were told that accounts of us would be published in the newspapers Taruni, Janata, Dinamina, and Silumina.

We got to Kantalai about 6.30 last evening. For our parts, we took a great liking to this area. To see all the water is such a joy! To me this area is a thousand times better than Gannoruwa. As regards comfort and conveniences we are very well off indeed. We ran into those friends we had met that day of our interview.

Today we began some reaping at a nakat time. We made kiri-bat and partook of it. If Herat (a neighbour, working in a Survey gang at Kantalai) is still at his home, please send by him my long-sleeved jacket, the one I use for working in, and also two old pairs of Punhci

Aiya's trousers. (Our uniforms are still being stitched. We shall receive two: one to work in, and one for occasions.)

On the 13th Mr. Sooriyatchchi came to Gannoruwa. He asked us how we were doing. Today Mr. Subasinghe (Minister of Industries & Scientific Affairs) is also here and we had a second showing of our play. Mr. Abeysekera was here too and went out of his way to speak kindly to us before he left.

The next few days we shall be busy with our reaping: we have taken it on as a contract, to earn some extra money. I shall write later and give more news; now I shall close, wishing everyone of you happiness and success.

At my hand,
Your loving daughter
Ukku Menike

16 February Kantalai
Good Fortune! To my dear Akka—

I think you folks must have had the letter I addressed to Father. I sent a previous one to your name, too. You surely have had that, haven't you?

Remember we had that Sports Meet and I was first in the Putting-the-Shot event? There is a picture of me receiving my prize from Mr. Sooriyatchchi on the front page of today's Dinamina. Have you seen it? We had done a play, wearing clothes and jackets, and it is in that costume I appear in the photograph.

It is such a wonderful delight to see water as we do here. We are at the moment reaping a rice-field. It has been planted with H-4. You can't lift a sheaf of paddy for the weight of it! The paddy grows as tall as ourselves. Our surround ings look just like they do at home the forests are huge, though.

Shall send further news again. Tell Amma, Appachchi, Jaya-mali Ran Banda-malli, Sena-malli and all at Bappa's (Pinhamy's) house that I remembered them. Say also that I remembered Sitta, Bandi-akka, (Bandara Menika, a particular friend) and Sitta's mother.

This is your loving sister
Ukku Menike

(4) 19. February Kantalai
Peace Abiding!

Dearest Mother & Father and All
the Family—

Ezpatriate News

We left Gannoruwa on the 14th morning and about 6 in the evening reached Kantalai. Since then we sent off a letter written by Akka; we should be glad to know whether it reached you or not. At Gannoruwa we received the letter written by Punchi Malli. We have also had the letter written by Mr. Keuneman to Kantalai, to which we have sent a reply.

Well, during the 14 days we spent at Gannoruwa we learnt a great deal that will help us in life. We had lectures by several various people on several various subjects. They were most worth-while. The life we lead at Gannoruwa was thoroughly enjoyable. At the end, on the 13th, we had an inter-House competition including a Variety Entertainment. At the latter I sang a song for which I won a prize: a dress-length and a bamboo flute (which I shall bring whenever I come, for Herat-malli). In addition, a play put on by our House won first place. We called it *Mahaveli*. Ukku Menike-akka and I had parts in it. Our (own) akka was in Parakum House, the two of us in Gemunu House. Ukku Menike-akka came first in the Putting the Shot contest and she too received a prize.

I must add that Minister Sooriyaratchchi came there. He spoke most graciously with us. He asked me where I had learnt to sing. He also asked me whether I had not an akka here, too? I wonder how he knew. Do you think Mr. Abeysekera may have told him he knows us? (He may well have done, being a close personal friend since long before I dreamt of Ehetuwewa, and has been a frequent visitor at the Village House as well as at the house long before it. But Biso is something of a village personage in her own right, too, since her appearance in the opening scene of *Desa Nisa!*) Mr. Abeysekera always speaks kindly with us. They are equally kind to everybody; but when they speak to you they seem to be especially nice to you. We are very happy about this. We have a Warden and two doctors to look after us. There are also four or five lecturers, at present; but they will be leaving us in a weak or two. The Matron here is very kind.

However, we have no one really ours here. There is not even a vill-

age near us. Kantalai town is about 15 miles off. But Aruna Munasingha (whom we met at the Railway Station that day of the interview) works for the Tobacco Corporation as an overseer, and we often see him. We have 2 vans, tractors & c., and he is very helpful, bringing the girls whatever we need to buy.

On one side of us is forest as far as eye can see. Peacocks and elephants and other wild creatures simply abound. Peacocks are a common sight, we saw any number as we drove here. Just recently an elephant came right close up; we girls shouted at him and drove him off. On the other side of us, as far as eye can see lie stretches of paddy. The grain is ripe and we too are helping reap it. We shall receive payments of Rs. 150 per acre. There are 200 acres to reap. These fields belong to the Tobacco Corporation.

So, we harvest paddy from 5 in the morning to 10. Then at 3 p.m. we begin work again and return quite late in the evening, about 6. We do our own cooking. Eight of us cook for a week at a time. Rice twice a day. In the mornings we have bread or something else. They give us excellent food: meat, eggs and such like. For a few months all expenses will be met by the Corporation. Our stipend will be paid us, but we have not drawn it yet. They will pay us by the end of the month.

It is when we sit to eat that we remember home hardest. But what to do! We work with all our might. So it doesn't matter. Wherever we are to work and tire ourselves to win food is a satisfaction: we are in debt to none. To me, however hard I work it doesn't seem enough. Why? Because my reward for it is assured. And because we have water. Wasn't this the sort of work we had longed and prayed for? to work where there was water and the other essentials! Now it has come to pass, the greatest thing we have had in our lives.

Yet, sometimes it feels as though nothing could matter but to remain together with our Father & Mother and brothers & sisters even if we starve to death. Why? Well how very far away are we. And transport is difficult. We

live in the midst of a forest and even Kantalai is 15 miles away. One must reach our place by the Seruwavila road, on which not even a bus runs. There is a rumour that a bus will be put on the road in March, but we can't tell for certain. Should anyone come, therefore, he must *rastidu-venna* until one of our vehicles comes along; but when one will come no one exactly knows. What I advise is don't come just now. That is because it is so inconvenient. If anyone comes he can get a lift here in one of the blue vans bearing the letters. There are other vans as well, but it is difficult to identify them. I am longing to see someone from home.

We managed to read the letter (in English) which the *mahatmaya* sent. We didn't have time to see *Desa Nisa* and are very disappointed. We feel so sorry for the *mahatmaya* and are so happy *Kusum-nangi* and the rest help out, 'Sir' (i.e. I) has said he hopes sometime to come this way. Then *Nilhan-mahatmaya* (Mr. I. N. de Silva, of M/s C.F.T.: one of my—and Pinhamy's family's—dearest friends, who maintains for me a sort of 'emergency transport' system!) will come also, won't he? If so, someone from home come too. I can't tell you how I ache to see home again.

Write us news of you all every week. Our one joy is to read your letters. We read *Punchi-malli's* letter and cried for several hours. *Punchi-malli*, don't write like that again: it is too sad. Like the house sparrows, we too must leave our parents and go abroad. I sometime wonder whether this is what life is meant to be. *ane*, I don't know what nonsense I am writing out of the sadness in my heart. I have seen *Chuti Duwa* (*Nilima*) *Sumi*, *Herat*; *Podi-nangi*? you, *Mother*; and *Father*, all in dreams. We have only to shut our eyes and home is all we see.....

We are keeping well.

Wishing all of you every divine blessing, I shall close.

This is
Biso Menika



THREE RIVER BASINS

Problem Of Flooding

—Kaluganga, Ginganga,
Nilwalaganga—

By R. Kahawita

CURRENTLY, there is a team of Chinese Engineers studying the flood problems of these three river basins in the South Western sector of Sri Lanka.

Earlier there were Indian, American, Russian and local Engineers attempting to find a solution to the same problem. Anyway the present vogue is to choose foreign engineers according to their political colour and convictions, so Chinese Engineers have been invited to have a go at the problem.

It may also be that the Minister wants to do one better than his predecessor.

While this kind of vacillation has been going on for years the people living in the flood plane have endured the hardships and have carried on till the next flood occurred. When it occurs, everybody gets active and concerned with the suffering of the people till the floods recede and things are back to normal again. This has been the pattern of flood relief in these areas over the years except for this kind of periodical interest shown by the powers that are depending on the political importance and timing of the floods.

Nothing concrete has been achieved so far. The solution to these problems are not so elusive, difficult or costly. Several practical solutions have been found by our Engineers. Even work on some has been started as far back as nineteen forties. Unfortunately, they never had the continued support of the politicians. As the colour of our politics change so also the magnitude of the problem, due to rivalry between individuals or political parties.

In the alternative our Engineers do not have the correct political colour to impress the Political Authority of the area when a Minister goes

a visiting the sufferers. So they, our Engineers, "are no good, what experience have they got, after all what are they? Ceylonese." products of our Institutions of learning, and we know of what standard these Institutions are. This is what the politician says to win the votes.

FOREIGNERS, at least they come from countries that dominate other countries and politically, who knows, may result in an alignment in our non-alignment movement. It will certainly boost up the prestige of the politicians. They can visit the flood areas with the foreign Engineers attending on them, meet the "victims of floods" and explain to them what the Government is going to do to alleviate their life long sufferings. While our Engineers who have been involved in the problems for years trail along in the background, probably laughing inwardly their guts out at the comedy enacted.

The problem is simple, When there is widespread rains in the entire watershed and the runoff thereof is much more than the river channels can contain within its banks, the surplus water overflows into its flood plane. If a river's natural flood plane were left without being cultivated there would be no problem. As it has happened all over the world, man's first settlement has been in the river valleys, because periodical flooding has rendered the river valley soils rich and fertile and are capable of yielding good harvests with little effort. So in between floods he takes the risk of cultivating the river flood plane. For similar reasons river valleys have been extensively cultivated in Sri Lanka too and thus problems are created. The Chinese engineers are here to solve this problem of flooding in the three river basins.

The obvious solution to the problem of floods in a "flat bottom river valley" is to construct detention reservoirs in the upper reaches; on the same principle as cup and saucer, what spills over the cup is held up in the saucer. This is what the foreign experts have recommended. Not that this idea has eluded our Engineers.

Unfortunately, they know the local conditions and the way of life of our people better than the foreign Engineers. Reservoirs mean

creating other and greater problems of resettling of inhabitants from the reservoir bed areas, and sacrificing their more productive lands and homesteads to save the comparatively less productive lands to the inhabitants lower down. Naturally our engineers have not accepted a solution that gave rise to greater problems and socially unjust if implemented.

Their solution is based on the relative productivity and value of land to be protected and the land to be put out of production to save the former. Their contention is that to save a relatively low productive acre of land three acres of high productive land have to be put out of cultivation and compensated. When the cost of compensation is added to the cost of constructing reservoirs, the proposition is not financially feasible. For these very good reasons they have discarded this obvious solution and have adopted the cheaper solution of River Bank protection to keep the surplus water within the river banks during the critical period of a cultivation season.

OUR ENGINEERS have said all this with facts, figures and examples, but they get no hearing, and with one voter in the area dissenting, our politicians get the cold feet and rush about to stop the work and then get foreign experts to study the complaint and not the technical and economic problems all over again. They submit their reports practical or otherwise with an attitude of "What do I care, it's your country and if you want it that way you can have it

MAHAWELI

I am enclosing herewith an article entitled—"The Three River Basins" for publication. The next issue should carry the 3rd (or 4th) article on Mahaweli. I will be sending the final article on Mahaweli in another two weeks time. The one published in last weeks issue (Tribune, Vol. 20, No. 42, 13/3/76) was not meant to be a part of Mahaweli that the Tribune said so.

R. Kahawita

Colombo.
15.3.76

More faith and trust in our Engineers will deliver the goods, they have no political axe to grind. Their interest is national and not political. Their desire is to save this land of ours. Forget the Chinese Engineers and go back to our men to find the solution to the flooding of the three river basins.

Will the Politicians who go round the world in search of aid do it? They talk of freedom, while hankering slavishly to the West, while our best export commodity to the West is our brains—so-called "brain-drain", why because the politicians with empty heads want to be the experts. This is Sri Lanka's tragedy today.



VIETNAM

Reunification

— Elections In April —

The Political Consultative Conference between South and North Viet Nam to discuss the reunification of the Fatherland issued the following communique:

From November 15 to November 21, 1975 in Ho Chi Minh city, the delegation of the North and the delegation of the South held a political consultative conference to discuss the reunification of Viet Nam on the State plane.

The North Viet Nam delegation has 25 members with Truong Chinh, member of the Political Bureau of the Viet Nam Workers Party Central Committee and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam as head.

The South Viet Nam delegation has 25 members headed by Pham Hung, member of the Political Bureau of the Viet Nam Workers Party Central Committee, Secretary of the South Viet Nam Committee of the Viet Nam Workers Party, representative of the Party in the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation.

The conference proceeded in an atmosphere of high enthusiasm and in the spirit of blood-sealed fraternity between the North and the South.

The conference reached complete unanimity of all problems concern-

ing the policy, steps and measures to be taken to achieve national reunification on the State plane, thus demonstrating our people's iron will and earnest aspiration. The conference affirmed that Viet Nam as well as the Vietnamese nation was originally one. From the time of Hung Kings, founders of the country, to the glorious Ho Chi Minh era, the Vietnamese nation has gone through glorious periods of struggle to safeguard the independence, freedom and unity of the homeland.

In the Ho Chi Minh era, our entire people, under the leadership of the former Indochinese Communist Party—now the Viet Nam Workers' Party—successfully waged the August Revolution, smashing the imperialist and feudal bondage. On September 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh read before the entire Vietnamese people and the world people as a whole the historic declaration of independence, proclaiming the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. That is the first people's democratic State in South East Asia, with one National Assembly for the whole country, one Central Government, and local administrations at various levels from the North to the South.

Following the August Revolution, the French colonialists came back to invade Viet Nam once again. The entire Vietnamese nation, in response to President Ho Chi Minh's sacred appeal, stood up to wage a war of resistance lasting almost nine years and finally recorded a great victory at Dien Bien Phu, forcing the French colonialists to sign the 1954 Geneva Agreements and recognize the Independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam.

However, the U.S. imperialists, stubbornly refusing to give up their scheme of intervention in Indochina, replaced the French colonialists, and engaged deeply in the path of aggression with an attempt to perpetrate partition of our country, turn South Viet Nam into a new-type colony and a military base of the US, use South Viet Nam as a springboard to attack the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, to prevent socialism from developing to South-East Asia, and to sabotage the national liberation movement then seething in Indochina,

Our compatriots throughout the country have fought valiantly against this vicious plot of the U.S. After liberation, the North moved forward to carry out the socialist revolution and build socialism and became the firm and strong base for the revolution in the whole country. Under the clear-sighted leadership of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and in close unity with the peoples of Laos and Cambodia, our people have over the last 20 years, waged war of resistance against U.S. aggression for national salvation. Enjoying the devoted assistance of the fraternal socialist countries and the whole-hearted support of people throughout the world including the progressive people in the United States, we have won one victory after another, compelling the U.S. imperialists to sign the Paris Agreement in 1973 and to commit themselves to respect the fundamental rights of the Vietnamese people and to withdraw the troops of the U.S and its satellites from South Viet Nam.

However, hardly had the agreement been signed, the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen started undermining the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam seriously. That is why, our people carried on the fight, driving the enemy into an ever weaker and more losing position. The general offensive and uprising of our people and combatants in Spring 1975 which ended with the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign, dealt deadly blows to the enemy and won glorious victory, thus shattering to pieces the neo-colonialist regime of the U.S. in South Viet Nam.

Since April 30, 1975, our country has become completely independent; and in reality, the North and the South have been reunified in many respects. At present, the question of completing national reunification has become urgent and extremely important for the destiny of our nation and the future of our homeland.

The political consultative conference unanimously holds that the Vietnamese revolution has switched to a new stage, the stage in which the entire country, engages in socialist revolution and socialist construction. It is ne-

cessary to complete national reunification on the basis of national independence and socialism. That is the most complete and firmest reunification.

Independence, unity and socialism are closely related. Socialism is the direction of advance and the necessary trend for the Vietnamese society and the only path to safeguard forever national independence and unity, and to build a strong and prosperous country with modern industry and agriculture, powerful defence, and advanced culture and science, ensuring a happy life for us today and for thousands of generations to come.

The conference unanimously holds that in the whole process of the completion of national reunification, the key point at present is to achieve national reunification on the State plane. This is the fundamental condition to take our country quickly, vigorously and firmly to socialism in order to constantly enhance the right of mastership of our people, undertake a planned development of our economy and culture in conformity with the realities in each zone of our country and build a new society and men of a new type in the whole country.

The conference unanimously affirms that it is necessary to organize soon general elections throughout the territory of Viet Nam to elect a common National Assembly for the whole country. As the supreme organ of power of the completely independent and socialist Viet Nam, this National Assembly will define the political system of the State, elect leading State organs and work out a new constitution of the unified Viet Nam:

General elections will be held in the first half of 1976 in strict observance of the democratic principles of universal, equal, direct and secret ballot.

(It will be held on April 25, 1976—Ed.)

The number of deputies to the National Assembly will be made proportional to the population. There will be a deputy for about 100,000 inhabitants.

In charge of the elections throughout the country will be the National Election Council

with an equal number of representatives from each zone. The National Election Council has the task of supervising the voting throughout the country, summing up the electoral work, announcing the election returns, issuing certificates to the elected and reporting the election returns to National Assembly. An organ in charge of the elections will be set up for each zone. The organ presiding over the elections in the North is the Standing Committee of the D.R.V.N National Assembly; in the South it is the Advisory Council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The convening of the common National Assembly and the chairing of the first session of the National Assembly prior to the election of the Presidium of the session, will be assumed by the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the D.R.V.N. National Assembly and the President of the Advisory Council to the R.S.V.N.P.R.G.

Apart from the major problems already decided by the political consultative conference, concrete problems concerning the directions in each zone will be decided by responsible organs of each zone.

After a week's sitting, the political consultative conference on national reunification has recorded splendid success. That is an important political success of our entire people. The conference has upheld the determination to carry out the great Ho Chi Minh's teaching: "Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese nation is one. Rivers may run dry and mountains may wear flat, but this truth will never change."

Our people who have defeated the old colonialism of the French imperialists and the neo-colonialism of the U.S. imperialists, will surely succeed in the cause of building a peaceful independent, unified and socialist Viet Nam, thus actively contributing to the struggle of the world for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

For the North Viet Nam
delegation Head Delegate
TRUONG CHINH

For the South Viet Nam
delegation Head Delegate
PHAM HUNG

Ho Chi Minh City, November 21, 1975

Inania of this, that and the other

Stop Not! Go

—Vide Letter in Tribune Of
February 21, 1976—

By INNA

One might think that these are inanities, emptinesses. That's how we started. That's how we wanted it to be.

The drunk groans: "I'm not drunk". The avid, secret readers of the slanted newspaper, often exclaim: "Oh, I've no time to read—that paper, or review," and they almost spit out the name of the paper or review.

Our Inania started in September 1973. They are meant to be a few thoughts on 'little nothings', but when a big, bombastic tirade follows from an anonymous correspondent who tells clergymen not to hide their identity and hides his own in the process, I'm wondering what has happened to sanity and authenticity.

I am reminded of an Inspector of schools of an Asian country "who had to take bribes". He just had to, because he said everybody is doing it and "I do, not want to be cut out as a unique figure. I am not unique." When he was in College, we are told his nickname was "Sieman's pills": he had cures for everything, from headaches and bellyaches to imaginary brain tumours. As a schoolboy he decried all types of graft but when he became a man and came to man's estate, if you know what I mean, he just had to give up his old principles. The plaidoyer you present reminds me of that.

That "article" which was a loud letter lengthened out into an article ran the gamut of classics, mythology, Latin unseens and what have you. "Esses" was right on many points. But, praising the high-souled, one could become low-beeled, if you would pardon me the pun!

Just as you hid from your normal name—only one in the Tribune writes the way you do, Esses, and your name is known though I don't expose it with journalistic courtesy, which you seem to have forgotten—

so I am entitled to take up any name. And, Sir, you are not going to stop me, even if the subjects hit certain people hard in the solar plexus. Hiding behind the anonymity of "Colombo", you can not understand the plight of rural areas just yet, until you see the people in them bereft of western classics, Latin, and normal day-to-day living, especially in certain areas. Read closely in future and get into the spirit of these *Inania*, not the form.

Normally, journalistic ethics would have demanded that the Editor send me that letter and ask for a reply in the same paper, if he had the time. Knowing the lack of time, and the difficulty of communications and the avalanche of holidays that hits the postal services now and again, he may think he did the right thing. But, there you go talking unadulterated nonsense about *sevanas* etc. That had nothing to do with the grammar and the Latin of the subject you tried to correct. I have only one thing to tell you, good Sir, Judge just judgement.

When the net tightens we don't know what will happen. That is the apocalyptic reality I am worried about for you and me and all of us. And besides, to mix my metaphors with east and west, you'll see, man, I'll tell you something: "One swallow does not make a summer." I'll keep on writing. More's to come. No need to assure: they are just inanities, not meriting comment or reply. And of course, no names.

SAFARI—FEB. 6-14

A Christian View

By Alkardi Mugana

Feb. 16.

Get a lot of young people together with someone important, politically-minded, and their mind is apt to turn to their lot, and the talk will revolve round what their future is to be, a future or fortune which they will feel wrapped with the fortunes of the country. Trousered young men, smartly-dressed, smart-looking, and with keen faces. What could these young men and women want? They seem to have everything

that makes them alive and alert. So why not maintain the political status quo? Why not prolong the life of the government indefinitely? I think that as an answer there is just one word, justice. There can be no peace without justice, and I think all ordinary people recognize that fact. It is not a question of election promises fulfilled. To my mind, it is more a question of important election gimmicks unfulfilled, and the one that comes readily to my mind is that one of doubling the rice ration. To my own mind, I would much rather there was no rice rationing in the country at all. That is what makes it so annoying, that a bad promise was given, one injurious to ourselves, and accepted, fulfilled for a time dubiously, on the terms on which it was given was not as much as was expected, and then, to crown it all, broken, whatever the reasons. That is what makes an election so desirable and just.

Feb. 17.

They say that unemployment is a problem. Some talk as if vocational training, properly run, will solve it. This training trains people to take up some job, and the question will still have to be faced that someone will have to give a job. Same turn to socialism to do this, whether international, of the Russian or Chinese variety, or national, such as Mussolini and Hitler tried. Then there are various other brands, Tanzanian, Indian, Ceylonese. We are wedded to a mixed economy, that is, both state and private. The private employer, especially, has to face a crippling E.P.F. contribution amounting to 9% of each employee's pay, while the employee has to contribute 6%, a total of 15% I believe. If you have a workforce above a certain number, you have substantial additional contributions to make, and the sum-total of what an employer has to pay out on each employee is enough to frighten all of them, and many would-be employers, too, from giving anybody any work, and, so a lot that might be done to increase the G.N.P. goes undone. If, to get over this problem, and to give people work, you try to have a new relationship with your employee, something towards a co-operative or corporate effort, you stand a good chance of coming before a Labour Tribunal. By law

you are not able to even pay a man his wages each day, if he is on your check roll. So he has to wait for his pay, eased though it is by a system of advances, given weekly.

Feb. 18.

In the old days, when you could sack a man, that is, terminate his employment, the length of the notice given was supposed to be co-equal with the same length as the intervals at which he was paid. A man's wages might be calculated by the days he worked, but if his pay was due monthly, then he was given a month's notice, and the worker was himself expected to give a month's notice of his intention to leave. As few people can wait a month to receive their pay, people such as coconut workers were given advances weekly in such a way that, by law, as the law required, there was at least 25% of their pay coming to them on the day they were supposed to receive their pay. To say the least, this gave some factual form to the myth that they were paid monthly, and balance wages' day, as the great pay day was called, had to be by the tenth of the following month, albeit on whatever day of the week advances and balance wages were paid. Balance wages were usually paid together with an advance for the month in which the wages were actually paid the month following that for which the wages were due. A man who received regular employment, even if it was not five, six, or seven days a week, but four or three, had to be on the check roll and paid by the system of advances. Yet wages paid by the day, on the day it was earned, would surely have both inculated thrift and at the same time, kept the workers out of debt.

Feb. 19.

Socialism is a great word today. Capitalist society is said to be breaking up. Many favour communism, or any other authoritarian forms of government, the very thing we are supposed to have fought the last war to avoid or defeat. Society is said to be changing. People look forward to a new society, a more egalitarian one. Those who want an authoritarian government or State think it will relieve them of responsibility and anxiety among the vicissitudes of

life, and that it will assure them of a living. As in the material sphere, which saw a resurgence, an economic one, in Germany and Japan, so in the realm of political philosophy, the defeated in the last war, seemed to have emerged victorious over the bones of their dead leaders. Some think this is a trend, a world-wide one, that cannot be halted. All this is in the sphere of what the world holds holy, an attitude from which those who value the realm of the spiritual and the supernatural more, are asked by the apostle, James, to keep themselves unstained for he asked us to keep ourselves unstained from the world at the end of the first chapter of his letter.

He says this where he tells us what religion is, which he says is to visit orphans and widows in their distress. It is as simple as that. We tend to regard religion as the means for the acquisition of virtue, which will lead to our happiness. The Hindus of old tried to achieve this through the practice of austerities and great penances. It did not always work, Gauthama Buddha turned away from this to preach a life of self-denial and the rooting out of desire. Buddhists today, even though they have achieved a great measure of peace, know that even this is not enough. Then comes Christianity to tell us that mastery over self can only be won through the person of Christ, by grace that flows from him, and it has as its symbol a cross, that is, the cross on which Christ died for all. We are asked to help carry that cross, in the form of our own cross, the daily unfolding of our lives. To take up our cross requires a large measure of self-denial, and so you get the beautiful blending of both the Hindu and the Buddhist ideas, capped off with a person, the person of Christ. He died for his preaching which the rulers rejected and feared.

Feb. 20.

Whilst on James, let it be said be also wrote this. *Show no partiality if you have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in and you pay attention to the one who has the fine clothing and say Have a seat here, please, while you say to the poor man, Stand*

there, or sit at my feet, have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme that honourable name by which you are called?

In the army I found that the men liked a strong disciplinarian, for they associated discipline with fairness, with showing no partiality. That is one side of the coin. There is another which is best illustrated this way. When I first came on a certain estate fourteen years ago, one rarely got a smile out of anyone. One was only too conscious of the horrible gap that existed between the management and ownership on the one hand, and the workforce on the other. Now, comparing these times with those, there is a contrast. Everybody smiles, and no one is afraid to talk to one, and no one talks insolently. People work even better. There is a lot more work being done.

Feb. 21,

Either you send a certain man away or you do not get the money to pay the week's advances, and thanks to a general strike, the advances are already a day late. One solution is that you withdraw from the scene yourself together with the man against whom you are perpetrating this enormity. Another is that you take complete control. In the army this would be called assuming command. It is like a coup, and you hope everything else falls into line in a moment, like payments, or as in this case, non-payments, as it would have to be. The third is that you negotiate, in which case, a third man says he withdraws from the scene. This you are not prepared to see happen. You want both men. Words will not help any more, for the matter has been thrashed out often enough. Action has taken the place of argument. So you keep silent, and let, as far as possible, the other side do the talking. They work out a compromise. The decision is presumed accepted, and to implementation, on humani-

an grounds, it is said, is deferred a month. All of this has to be done, of course, with a certain amount of tacit acceptance on your part, a verbal acceptance without too much elaboration, for, as the great Aquinas said in his twenty-two volume treatise, necessity knows no laws. I seem to have developed a habit, lately, of going to bed after dinner, and then walking up at one or two ante meridiem in the morning, and doing some work, which is writing this. Today I went to sleep after doing some reading, about the corruption and the cruelty in the Roman State; and yet people lived in it, and the mass of people survived.

LETTERS

- * London Examinations
- * Motives And Motivation

Sir,

The question of resuming the London examinations has cropped up again. I as one who had been fighting against the banning and later for resuming these examinations would like to give my views on this subject. The stopping of the London examinations was one of the crimes perpetrated on the helpless citizens of our country. The reasons given for the banning of these examinations were many and almost all of them were puerile and some of them even false.

One of the reasons given was that the London University was not willing to hold these examinations in our country. I wrote to the London University and received a denial from its Registrar which was at that time (in 1969) published in the Press and was even taken up in the Senate by Senator Reggie Perera. Another reason was the expenditure of foreign exchange involved for the applications of the students. But what a tiny amount it was when compared with other exchanges allowed for useless and worthless things!

Some of the students, who, if the London examinations had been continued in our country, would have stayed in our country went abroad getting foreign ex-

Letters

changes selecting some courses of studies for which foreign exchanges were allowed. The foreign exchange allowed for a few students would have been sufficient to send the applications of all the students who have sat for the London examinations from our country. Some of the students went abroad to sit for these examinations sending money in black-market. They were forced to do it. They had no alternative.

Another of the reasons given was that the London examinations would de-nationalise our people. But the people who said this themselves sent their children abroad to India, Singapore and even to London to sit for these examinations. They argued for stopping these examinations on the ground of preventing de-nationalisation but the hippie cult, bell-bottoms and what not have invaded our country and have taken hold of our people. But they have not bothered about it. Perhaps they are happy about it. Only the London examinations are dangerous!

Even today students are going to India to sit for the London G.C.E. Advanced Level examinations and classes are conducted in our country preparing students for these examinations. These students go to sit for their examinations and to send in their applications months before the examinations on the pretext of visiting Buddha Gaya or to see Sai Baba! In some cases not only the students but even the entire family goes for the sake of the student. Of course, they are not given foreign exchange. But how does one exist in a foreign country? Perhaps some blood-relations may be helping them. However it may be, the banning of the London examinations has affected only the ordinary man. He cannot send money on black market. Neither does he have blood-relations abroad.

Another reason given for banning the examinations was that the standard of our students' English was low. Then how is it that our students go to India to sit for these examinations are passing their examinations?

What have we gained by having banned the London examinations? Nothing! What have we lost? A lot! Had we continued these examinations in our country even students from India, Malaysia and other

countries in the East would be coming to our country to study and sit for these examinations, bringing foreign exchange. The other day I met a student who is preparing for one of the London Accountancy examinations which are, fortunately, not banned so far. He told me that he was a Malaysian national and had come here to study as the teaching here is better. There may be many others like him.

Banning the London examinations has only led to the children of the richer class getting through these examinations and the children of the poorer classes being denied this opportunity. We talk of socialism *ad nauseam* but only help the richer classes. It is a crime and hypocrisy to have stopped the London examinations. It is not too late to realise this folly and injustice and to resume the London examinations.

Colombo 13.

ARUL

Sir,

I am grateful to Mr. Herbert Keuneman for the words of comfort he so generously offers me in the *Tribune* of February 28th, in his comments on my note, *Farewell to Village Life*. He adds my mission was doomed to failure many times over.

Success and failure depend on one's objectives. Mr. Keuneman's objectives in living in a village are different to mine. He says he loves living in a village. That is good enough reason and there need be no other. He was also hoping to write a book and, to use his own words, "mediate to the villager, if I could, by the tested kindness of friends more influentially placed than me." I have read earlier in the *Tribune* how he freely gave chits and how the mighty name of Keuneman created a stir. Alas! we are all aware of these chits: They descend on us all the year round like Jak leaves and are much less useful. Jak leaves can at least be turned into compost. There chits more often than not raise hopes only to dash them and the higher they reach into the seats of power the greater the danger.

My objectives in living in a village were quite different. I did not

particularly relish the prospect of living in a village, specially in an area I knew to be bereft of even the minimum amenities. But I heard that a radical change must start at grass-root level and it is there I must be.

Mr. Keuneman thinks to become a villager one has to share his prejudices even his ignorance. I don't see it like that. As he himself says later, I would have been a different kind of fish. Indeed, I was hoping I would prove a different kind of fish—one that would take on the hardest jobs and ask the least in return for myself. I failed. It would have been a welcome change. Today leadership in Sri Lanka means getting the best for oneself.

A fish stinks from the head. Until our leadership changes attempts "to reframe the ruinous structure of the island's majority society from within", to use Mr. Keuneman's words again, will always fail.

One is not to be old till regrets replace dreams. Most of the time I feel old. Sometimes, I dream my children—no, that generation, like mine, was not willing to pay the price and has lost its chance—my grandchildren will order their society in such a way that even the meanest among them will have work to do, will be paid a living wage, will at the end of the day have his own abode to go to his wife and children and the children will have schools where they will receive the correct education to make them conscientious citizens.

Winwood Reade, in his remarkable book, *Matrydom of Man*, says: Conscience is merely an organ of the intellect and is altered, improved or vitiating, by the education it receives and the events that impinge on it. This means that the content of education today, both in and out of school, determines the conscience of tomorrow. In the final analysis, the struggle is for the Conscience of Man.

KUMAR

Colombo.
6.3.76



Confidentially

Bank Of Ceylon

IS IT NOT A FACT that the *Aththa* had a stirring story about a recent appointment to a top post in the Bank of Ceylon in its issue of March 17, 1976? That *Tribune* is presenting this story to its readers in a summarised translated form? That we will publish any communication containing a denial, or contradiction or correction issued by the Bank of Ceylon with the same degree of prominence as we have given to the *Aththa* story? That the story carried the heading that B.Sc. and Ph.Ds had been rejected in favour of "JUST A PERSON", meaning nobody? That the story unfolded in the *Aththa* revealed that persons holding B.Sc., M.Sc and Ph.D qualifications, with over 25 years practical experience in agriculture, had been overlooked for a job as Assistant General Manager (Agriculture) in the Bank of Ceylon in favour of a person without any qualifications or experience in agriculture? That the facts set out in the *Aththa* make interesting reading? That the post was advertised on January 4th in the *Sunday Observer* and the applications closed on January 10th—just six days later? That the qualification which was stressed was that the person should have practical experience in agriculture and that experience in accounts was mentioned as an additional qualification? That before the closing date eleven (11) applications were received? That the *Aththa* thereafter listed the qualifications of the applicants? That applicant number one was a B.Sc (Agriculture) and a Ph.D with 25 years experience in various branches of the Department of Agriculture? That of these 25 years he had been a Deputy Manager at the Udawalawe Scheme for some years? That he also had had two years experience in some of the activities of the Bank of Ceylon? That the applicant number two was a B.Sc (Agriculture) and an M.Sc (Agriculture)? That he too had had 25 years experience in various branches of the Department of Agriculture? That he also had served as an Assistant General Manager in the Agricultural Sector of the Mahaweli Development Board? That applicants number three,

four and five had University degrees in Agriculture and also had had many years of experience in various branches of agriculture? That one of the three had worked in the Udawalawe in the Agricultural Extension Unit? That one other applicant has worked in the Department of Agriculture as a Veterinary Officer? That applicants six, seven, eight, nine and ten had received several years training in agriculture? That four of them had been employed in state corporations and also in private sector establishments? That one of them was still an employee of the Department of Agriculture? That applicant number eleven—the lucky one—had neither experience in agriculture nor any educational qualifications in agriculture? That he is said to have worked as an executive officer in a private establishment? That at the time of making the application he had been "engaged in business" according to what he is alleged to have stated in the application? That he was said to be 55 years of age—a magic age? That on February 16—express letters had been sent out to the applicants calling them for an interview? (That one of the applicants concerned, according to the *Aththa*, had received the said express letter only on the 12th of February?) That on the results of the first interview, three were called for the second interview? That the three final persons were applicants one, five and eleven? That on the basis of the second interview applicant eleven was selected in spite of the fact that he neither had experience nor qualifications in agriculture? That he was thereupon, with great haste appointed as the Assistant General Manager (Agriculture) in the prestigious Bank of Ceylon? THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY to emphasise that the *Aththa* story has not been denied up to the time of going to press? That a cursory investigation has revealed that the facts enumerated in the *Aththa* story are generally correct? That if the successful applicant—number eleven—had any experience or qualifications in agriculture it does not seem have been made known to the *Aththa*? That there is no reason for the *Aththa* to hide the qualifications, if any, of applicant number eleven? That there are a number of other mystifying queries regarding the manner in which the post was advertised, the applicants called for interview and the

final selection made? That the post was, according to the *Aththa*, advertised only in the *Sunday Observer*? That this was done once, that is on January 4th? That for a post of this importance more than one advertisement should have been inserted? That even more important than that was that more than six days should have been given to intending applicants to submit their applications? That the undue haste in closing the applications savoured of sharp practice? That it was customary, when interviews were fixed at short notice, telegrams to be sent in addition to express letters? That with the current record of the Postal Department it was unfair to depend on express letters alone? That sufficient time should have been given for the applicants to be informed of the date of the interview (not to mention the lapse of insufficient time for applications to be sent)? That even more staggering than all this was the fact that the least qualified was selected for the job? That in government tenders it was customary to select the lowest tenderer? That the same principle seems to have been followed in this also when the man burdened with the lowest amount of qualifications had been selected for the post? That unless the Selection Board of the Bank of Ceylon was able to justify the appointment, on account of reasons not yet known, the public will tend to believe the worst about the matter? That the qualifications called for in the advertisement were (a) "wide practical experience in agriculture" and (b) "knowledge of accounts an added qualification"? That strangely enough for a job of this responsibility no agricultural training, either academic or technical, was stipulated? That many therefore think that the advertisement was tailored to suit a pre-selected candidate? That in spite of this the selected candidate is not known to have had any experience either in agriculture or accounts? That after several years as an executive in the private sector he was at the time of the interview "a businessman at large"? That if this kind of skulduggery goes it is strange that the brain drain should continue unabated?



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