

TRIBUNE



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Tribune

43, DAWSON STREET, COLOMBO-2.

Tel: 33172

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Founded In 1954

A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs

Editor. S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

October 25, 1975

Vol. 20, No. 23

TRIBUNE,

43, DAWSON STREET,
COLOMBO-2.

Telephone: 33172

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Paddy Ban: Flashback p. 2

CHRONICLE

—Oct. 8—Oct. 16 p. 6

PALMYRAH REPORT—I

—Introductory p. 10

POINT OF VIEW

—Ghost Of Dulles p. 12

VILLAGE HOUSE—54

—Trap Gun p. 13

KAZI—26

—Mihintale Village p. 15

FUTURE OF EDUCATION

—Dr. Udagama's Concept p. 16

TESTAMENT OF CONCERN

—Bryan de Kretzer p. 18

LETTERS

—Just Grievances p. 19

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Railways Again p. 20

Letter From The Editor

ONE OF THE MOST PUBLICISED aspects of the propaganda war unleashed by the LSSP-wing of the United Front government after it came to power in May 1970 was that the economic difficulties of the Tamils of the North must be remedied in double quick time. This, it was said, would undermine the baneful influence which the Federal Party continued to exercise in the North. In pursuance of this objective, the Minister of Plantation Industries, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, on October 25, 1970, appointed a Special Committee to investigate and report on: (a) the commercial possibility of the palmyrah palm and its products; (b) the problem of palmyrah cultivation both as a plantation and as a small-holders crop; and (c) the economics of the setting up of a Palmyrah Research Institute. Why the Ministry of Plantation Industries took over the Tamil Man's Palmyrah Burden is not clear when only a joint effort by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Industries and the Ministry of Trade was necessary to get the palmyrah industry on its feet. The Ministry of Plantation Industries was the furthest removed from the palmyrah palm (see cover picture this week)—it was never cultivated as a plantation crop and was not likely to be one for at least for three decades even if cultivation was begun on a plantation scale immediately—but Minister Dr. Colvin R. de Silva appointed a high-powered Committee to report to him on the terms of reference set out above. Initially, the Committee had consisted of Mr. V. Sivasubramaniam, Prof. K. Kularatnam, Prof. M. P. Perera, Mr. V. Sachithanandam and Mr. K. Vaelupillay. Mr. A. S. Jayawardene had been appointed to act as Secretary. On January 23, 1971, Mr. S. Cheliah was appointed to the Committee. The Committee made a thorough job of the task entrusted to it and submitted a Report to the Minister of Plantation Industries early in March 1972. Apart from a minor outburst of newspaper publicity no sooner the Report was handed over, on the basis of unofficial leakages, nothing more was heard of the Report. It was never officially released and efforts of *Tribune* to secure an official copy from 1972 to date had proved unsuccessful. And, as far as we know, the Ministry of Plantation Industries has done nothing about the Palmyrah Industry except for assurances that "something will be done soon." The only thing the LSSP did for Jaffna was that the Minister of Finance had turned the palmyrah toddy industry in Jaffna upside down by abolishing the tree tax system and establishing a co-operative system with a view to creating a new class of toddy mudalalis as an adjunct to the LSSP in Jaffna, operating what were called co-operative societies. It is true that by this the LSSP knocked the bottom out of the CP base among the tree-tax based toddy tappers and this the LSSP accomplished with great thoroughness because of the vast loans given to the toddy co-op unions by the People's Bank—how much of this will ever be recovered is yet to be seen. It is only recently that the *Tribune* has been able to secure an authentic copy of the Report of the Palmyrah Industry Committee and we propose in the coming weeks to publish extracts, if not the whole, of the relevant parts of the Report which are of immediate public interest. In the Preface to the Report, it was set out that on November 22, 1970, the Committee had invited representations from the general public and that in response to this appeal about 44 memoranda had been received. On November 25, 1970, the Committee had addressed the Government Agents in nine districts where palmyrah was known to grow, inquiring about the current acreage cultivated, the location and the use of the palmyrah in their districts. After examining the representations and hearing some of the senders of memoranda, the Committee had visited the Jaffna, Mannar, Hambantota, Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts to meet those concerned with the industry as well as government officials, and to hold public sittings. The Committee also visited South India to make an on-the-spot study of the Palmyrah industry which was well developed there. Owing to foreign exchange difficulties only the Chairman and two members were granted permission to undertake the South Indian tour. At the request of the Minister of Plantation Industries, the Committee had made *ad hoc* and interim recommendations on May 25, 1971 suggesting that it was economical to set up immediately palmyrah jaggery production centres in Jaffna before the tapping season ended in September 1971. The Minister of Industries had been persuaded to convene a conference as a follow-up of this and it was decided to set up at least four centres. We do not know what was done but there are today a few DDC jaggery projects in Jaffna under the auspices of a different Ministry. In this issue we publish the first instalment from the Report of the Palmyrah Committee. But what will intrigue many people is why the Ministry of Plantation Industries had accorded such step-motherly treatment to a Committee it had appointed. Was any constructive action held back until the Tamil people of the Palmyrah region abandoned the FP and the TUF and kowtowed to the LSSP? What price patronage politics?

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Paddy Sale And
Transport—Flashback

SUNSHINE STORIES have begun to appear in the columns of the daily papers that the removal of the ban on the sale and the transport of paddy and rice had begun to bring the price of rice down. It is true that in Colombo the price of a measure of off-ration rice has moved down from about Rs. 4.50 to Rs. 5.00 a measure (depending on the quality) to about Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 2.50. There has been also a drop in Jaffna with the price coming down from Rs. 6.50 to Rs. 7.50 to about Rs. 5.00 to Rs. 6.00. These are deficit areas which had suffered badly as a result of this ban. In the rice and paddy growing areas, however, where rains had enabled the last Maha and the recent Yala to be grown (in spite of total failure elsewhere because of drought)—viz. Batticaloa, Tissamaharama, Kurunegala, etc.—the price of rice had been around Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 2.50 a measure. The removal of the ban has begun to equalise the price of rice on an all-island basis. The producer in the areas where rice had been successful in the last two seasons will now be able to get better prices—and this will be a major inducement for them to grow more and even extend the scope of their operations (despite the increased costs of production).

The price of paddy and rice, once the all-island equalisation of price levels takes place, (with differences stemming from transport charges and temporary shortages in particular areas), will tend to move up so far as the producing areas are concerned and go down in the deficit areas (where off-ration prices had reached dizzy heights). An overall trend for prices to drop on an all-island basis will begin only when total production has increased. The removal of the ban will be an inducement to many farmers to extend their areas of cultivation, but in many areas they may not be able to do so immediately—because the ploughing, and other preliminary work had to be done in August and early September

for the Maha sowing to be done now. Furthermore, most tractor owners have not kept their tractors in useworthy condition because of the high cost of spares and diesel—and because farmers were in no mood or condition to pay higher charges for ploughing. The government tractor units are not able—especially because of the fact that the majority of the machines in the pool have been immobilised owing to lack of spares and repair—to cope with even a small fraction of the demand.

In these circumstances, the real impact of the current removal of the ban on the transport and sale of paddy and rice will be seen only in the cultivation seasons next year—provided the Government offers further inducements to farmers and does not impose other restrictions which would tend to nullify the removal of the ban on transport and sale.

There is, unfortunately, still a powerful bureaucratic caucus within the Government with the capacity to influence policymaking which believes that control and regimentation of the farming community through flats, decrees and Emergency Regulations—even in a mixed economy like that of Sri Lanka at present—was the only way of making this country self-sufficient. This logic grows from the belief that laws can change human nature and that if the profit motive and selfish habits of the farmers (petit bourgeois) were transformed into socialised thinking and action by flats and diktats, the Revolution would be a reality and a Green Revolution in agriculture a realised fact. As long as this clique and this line of thinking continue to dominate the seats of power, the danger exists that controls and regulations in different disguises will be constantly thrust upon the public.

It is only when the bureaucrats realise that in a mixed economy, certain sectors of the economy, have to be under the private free enterprise system for a long time to come (the length of time being dependent on other factors), and they accept this reality and they confine their logic of public-sector-to-socialism ideologies to certain well-defined sectors, no progress can be ever made.

In the period during 1970-75, there was no recognition of this fact (by powerful political groups in the Government and influential bureaucratic top brass) that it was more important to ensure development to achieve an economically viable society, and that to do otherwise would be suicidal. One group, which believed that economic development (to achieve viability) was secondary to expanding the scope of the public sector to liquidate the private sector completely, stampeded the Government into actions which have put the clock back so far as economic development, productivity and viability concerned.

The sector which has suffered the most in this kind of cold and hot war was agriculture. The proponents of this theory and practice operated under the delusion that the newly improvised public sector would be able to deliver the goods, without realising that at even at the best of times and under the most favourable of conditions, "teething troubles" would dominate especially when adequate measures had not been taken in advance to secure efficiency and profitability.

What the future holds is difficult to say. Having witnessed so many zig-zags in the matter of governmental policies and bureaucratic experiments, it would be unwise to predict any definite course of action the Government will follow even in the next two years.

IN THE MEANTIME, it would worthwhile to look back and refresh our minds with what *Tribune* had said when the ban on the sale and transport of paddy and rice had been imposed. This is not merely to say we-told-you-so sermon but we wish to point out that bureaucrats rush politicians into action which do a great deal of harm to the country and that when these stupid policies are reversed the damage done is far too great for immediate repair. It would be interesting to set out, in the first instance, the banner headline spread on the front page of *Daily News* of October 10, 1975 with the heading ALL CURBS ON PADDY, RICE REMOVED:

EMERGENCY REGULATIONS REPEALED: BETTER PRICE FOR FARMER IN OPEN MARKET: INCENTIVE TO PRODUCTION.

Below is the full text of the report which was inspired by new thinking, but there was a laboured attempt to make excuses for the action taken in February 1974 when the ban had been imposed.

The government has decided to remove with immediate effect all restrictions imposed by regulations governing the transport, possession and sale of paddy and rice. The Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs yesterday announced that: "The Emergency (Paddy Marketing) Regulations published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 181/27 of September 17 were repealed by the President on October 8." The emergency regulations have been in force since February, 1974.

Government sources indicated yesterday that the government move is a new policy step because it is a recognition of the fact that the restrictions on transport did not help to bring down the open market price of paddy. The open market price has always remained continuously above the guaranteed price of Rs. 33 per bushel. It is also a recognition, according to the sources, that controls will not increase production or bring prices down. The main purpose of the removal of all restrictions on the transport and sale of paddy and rice is that it will enable the farmer to get a much better price for his produce according to these sources. The Maha season is about to begin and the announcement of the removal of restriction just before cultivation begins on October 20 will be a good incentive for farmers. The new step said these sources will also (i) increase production considerably (ii) flush out all hoarded stocks (iii) equalise the price differences between rice and paddy in the various deficit and non deficit areas. The price of open market rice to the consumer will also come down gradually.

The Paddy Marketing Board (PMB) is the sole monopoly buyer of paddy and the government equipped the PMB with more powers by the Emergency Paddy Marketing Regulations that have now been repealed. An important aspect of the PMB being the sole buyer of paddy was that the government's scheme of agricultural credit for farmers which operates through banks and co-operative societies was tied to

what each farmer sold to the PMB. If the farmer gave proof that he has sold his paddy to the PMB, his credit entitlement would even be enhanced at the Agricultural Service Centre. The Government in coming to its decision has also taken note of the fact that the PMB's procurement despite all the monopoly powers has been showing a downward trend. In 1974 the PMB was only able to purchase 20.8 million bushels or about 27 per cent of the 73-74 crop. In the previous year (72-73) nearly 36 per cent was procured despite the fact that there were no emergency regulations in force. In the current Yala according to authoritative sources the procurement has been down to 20 per cent.

There was a bumper harvest of 76.3 million bushels in 1973-74—the highest since 1970—and the fact that only 27 per cent of crop was purchased "needs to be re-examined very carefully", commented the Central Bank as against the previous year's purchases of 36 per cent of 62.9 million bushels. The Bank's annual review added: "Purchases by the Board have declined progressively since it was given the monopoly purchasing rights over paddy. The fall in the level of procurement is, therefore, not confined to the year 1974 when exceptional circumstances have prevailed due to the reduction of the amount of rice given on the ration. At the same time the very sharp increase in the guaranteed price of paddy in July 1974 to Rs. 33 per bushel from Rs. 25 per bushel should have given the Board more leeway to procure a greater part of the production despite higher consumption requirements of the producer.

"There is evidence that the restrictions on the movement of rice and paddy in bulk from district to district have caused prices to move up very sharply in deficit areas and resulted in shortages. Given the level of rice availability indicated in the production statistics, there is little doubt that had the free transportation of rice been permitted the sharp differences in the price levels between areas would have been less.

"The forces of supply and demand operating freely would have tended to lower the price of paddy and rice and to ensure a better islandwide distribution. The restrictions on transport did not, in fact, help to bring down the open market price

of paddy which has throughout remained above the guaranteed price. As long as the free market price was higher than the GP of Rs. 33 per bushel the regulations were not effective in stopping the sale and disposal of paddy and rice in the open market."

This is a laboured apologia for the very wrong policies followed by the Government. Understandly, the report repeats the hoary myths about the total production figures for 1973-74. However, it is now accepted in all knowledgeable circles that the claims made by certain departments of the Government are not exactly true. Tribune has exposed the intricacies of the incorrect paddy production statistics, and there is no need now to flog dead horses. The ban on the sale and transport of paddy and rice was imposed because bureaucrats believed that farmers and middlemen were hiding stocks the stocks not sold to the PMB (enormous on the basis of the bogus production figures).

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE that Tribune in its issue dated February 23, 1974, had three pieces on the PMB and the proposed Regulations to ban the transport and sale of paddy. The Sun-Dawasa group papers had early in February indicated that such Regulations would be promulgated soon, but until the notes for that issue were written, the Regulations were not gazetted. But, the Regulations were gazetted before the issue of Tribune (of 23/2/74) was out on the newstands. The frontpage news comment under the heading ON PURCHASING PADDY read as follows:

"The Paddy Marketing Board has failed to deliver the goods. It has failed during the last three years, to purchase the whole, or even a substantial portion of the disposable paddy produced in the country. It has enjoyed a legal monopoly, backed with harsh emergency regulations, to enable it to fulfil its stated objectives. During the last three years of its existence sterner and sterner measures have been imposed, allegedly to curb the profit-greedy activities of the private trader and the middlemen who operate in the villages, but in reality

these measures have sat heavily on the already much exploited rural community now wallowing in total frustration and this will lead to a further disintegration of our precariously balanced system of agricultural production. With the granaries of the PMB now virtually empty, even a few weeks after the beginning of the Maha harvests, there are good reasons for thinking that even more draconian, measures than what obtains now have been suggested by certain sections of officialdom which seem to think that heavy-handed arbitrary and inquisitorial rules enforced with brutal, savage and pitiless severity, will help the PMB to become the successful cock-of-the-walk in the mixed market economy of Sri Lanka. All further attempts to impose yet more coercive Regulations on the paddy producing community will vest the PMB with the absolute powers of a despotic tyranny, and this will undoubtedly boomerang on the Government. For a very long time now, *Tribune* has given the lead in drawing attention to the acts of commission and omission of the PMB with a view to constructively persuading the Government to reform the PMB and change its methods of purchase to that producers will voluntarily go with their paddy crop to the PMB. In this attempt we have failed so far. The PMB has been allowed to go from blunder to blunder granting it more and more dictatorial powers to disrupt the normal and traditional market economy in the paddy producing areas—until the point has now been reached where the PMB must accept total and humiliating defeat. If corrective measures had been taken at the appropriate time, the present debacle could easily have been avoided. Instead the PMB has grown into a Goliath of ineptitude, inefficiency and corruption, behind the smokescreen that the only reason for the PMB's failure was the smart alec activities of private traders and middlemen, whereas the real culprit are the field officers of the PMB who do the actual purchasing of paddy utilising the iniquitous rules which have been framed to empower them

to keep the producer away from the private trader. The Government cannot hope to change the 'human nature' of the officials of the PMB overnight, but the Government can change the rules which makes these officials the powerful petty despots they are not only in the purchasing depots where they reign supreme but also over the lives of the entire farming community. It is a happy augury that *Tribune* is no longer alone in wanting a complete overhaul in the system of Governmental purchase of locally grown paddy. The prestigious *Ceylon Daily News*, after two thought-provoking articles in its columns by G.V.S. de Silva on the economic strategy for paddy purchasing, editorially suggested on 14-2-74 that it was necessary for Government to re-think and reconsider the question of the system of paddy purchase afresh. There are welcome indications that the Government will indeed study the whole question anew. It is well to remember that if the PMB functions efficiently and incorruptibly, under normal and democratic regulations governing purchase, distribution and transport, with the proper incentives offered to farmers, this country will become self-sufficient in paddy and other grains within a short time.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the *Tribunania* column had commented on the proposed Regulations. Relevant extracts from what the *Sun-Dawasa* groups of papers were published about the possibility of these Regulations being imposed and *Tribune* had thereupon commented on the baneful consequences which would flow from the enforcement of such Regulations. We publish relevant extracts from the *Tribune* below:

There is not the slightest doubt that the governmental system of purchasing paddy through the PMB must be overhauled completely. With the PMB reaching the point of no return. It was reported that the Government was on the verge of adopting rules that can be only described as draconian. It was said that all transport was to be banned, even the meagre one bushel of paddy or sixteen measures of rice: that the farmers themselves could retain only 10 bushels of rice or 20 bushels

of paddy for their own consumption: and that the transport or sale of paddy by unauthorised persons would be totally banned.

The "*Sun*" of Thursday, February 14, in a report on the front page set out the gist of the emergency regulations which had been contemplated. This is what the report stated:.....

(Extracts from the reports from the *Sun* were cited and the *Tribune* had continued.)

The *Sun* of Saturday, February 16, re-iterated the same story with a little emphasis on the fact that all preparations had been made ready to enforce the Regulations. In a frontpage story under the headline 'Barriers up for ban on transport of rice—though New Regulations to be Gazetted tonight', the *Sun* reported as follows: "Government yesterday began setting up barriers and checkpoints at district boundaries and other areas to prevent the illicit transport of paddy and rice. Police also began checking vehicles particularly those in and around paddy producing areas, to ensure no organised attempts are made by unscrupulous elements to move out large stocks of paddy or rice. Checks were conducted at many points in the Southern, Central, North Central and Western Provinces yesterday. These measures were a prelude to the enforcement of new Emergency (Paddy Marketing) Regulations due to be gazetted at midnight today.

But, for some reason, the Regulations were not gazetted on Saturday night, but an announcement was made that people in Colombo and its immediate suburbs would get an extra half measure from Monday, February 18.

BUT THE REGULATIONS were gazetted at midnight on February 18, and although the *Tribune's* comments were actually written before the Regulations were gazetted, what we said about the proposed Regulations showed how correctly we had anticipated the effects of these Regulations on the farming community. In the same *Tribunania* column, the suggestion made by Mr. G. V. S. de Silva in an article in the *Daily News* regarding incentive payments to farmers (similar to FEECs payments to exporters of non-traditional goods) was examined in detail. What we said about Mr. G. V. S.

Proposed Regulations

de Silva's suggestion will be reproduced in a subsequent issue.

These Regulations will naturally tend to upset the rural community. It seems clear that the Government, or the most influential sections which can get things done, in their anxiety to keep the urban and trade-unionised section of the population happy is unmindful of the sentiments and aspirations of what is best described as the rural community. Under this government, the urban community has had the best of both worlds, so far, and now when some farmers, or most farmers, are in a position to make a little more money than they have ever done before, the Government comes down heavily on them under the smokescreen of curbing middlemen and black marketeers.

The real culprits whom the Government should deal with are the bureaucrats who have bungled right down the line. In this connection the two articles which had appeared in the "Ceylon Daily News" of February 11 and 12 entitled "A suggestion on Rice and Currency" and "New Incentives To The Paddy Farmer" merit the most serious consideration. At least, Mr. G. V. S. de Silva is deeply conscious of the fact that the farmer is now at the wrong end of the stick and that unless some basic re-thinking is done in regard to governmental relations with him, the country will find it difficult to solve its food problem. This is what he says: "According to official statistics we produce enough paddy to give every person in the country at least a measure of rice a week. The snag, however, seems to be that every effort made by the Government to purchase an adequate quantity of paddy for equitable distribution has been frustrated by the operation of the open market for paddy and rice. Any solution to this problem, therefore, must necessarily be in terms of some form of Government action which the private middle man would find rather difficult to counter. A mere increase in the Government's purchase price of paddy from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 or even Rs. 40 per bushel does not meet this requirement. On the other hand, compelling the farmer, either directly or indirectly to deliver his paddy to the Government is too harsh a measure even to be contemplated particularly as it will be directed against an already exploited rural community."

In the same issue of *Tribune*, Sherlock Holmes had dealt with the same problem in the IS IT TRUE column? Very important and pertinent questions were raised in that column.

IS IT NOT A FACT that many people have become reconciled to the new Emergency Regulations on the sale and transport of paddy because it had been expected for some time? That whilst other papers had been silent, the "Sun-Dawasa" group had been very insistent that the new Regulations with a draconian touch would be promulgated through a Gazette Extraordinary? That as a matter of record this measure was first anticipated in the Sunday "Observer" of February 10? That the "Sun" had given more details about what the Regulations contained and had believed that the Regulations would be gazetted at midnight of February 13? That this was indicated in its news story in the "Sun" of February 14? Then on February 16 the "Sun" had proclaimed that the Emergency Regulations would be gazetted at midnight on that day?

That the "Sun" had also reported that barriers and other coercive measures had already been made ready in all parts of the country to enforce the new Regulations? That in spite of the "Sun" reports the new Regulations had not been gazetted even by the morning of Monday the 18th February? That on that evening, the "Observer" had a further report about the terrible punishment awaiting those who moved or sold rice without a permit and there was a hint that the Regulations were on the brink of promulgation? That finally the Regulations were in fact gazetted at midnight of February 18 and that the news became widely known on February 19? That an actual copy of the Gazette has not yet come to hand and that it would not be possible to discuss the new Regulations in detail? That there is no doubt that there had been much hesitation and even greater thinking and re-thinking about these new Regulations in high circles than is generally known? That there is no doubt that these new Regulations will make this Government be re-

ESTATES TAKE - OVER

THE AMENDMENT to the Land Reform Bill to nationalise foreign and locally owned company estates was unanimously passed in the NSA on October 14. Minister Hector Kobbekaduwa had announced that compensation would be paid in rupees and not in foreign exchange. He had also said that the estates would be managed by Agency Houses only for a short period. There were several significant speeches on the second and final day of the debate. One was made by Mr. Ronnie de Mel who supported the Amending Bill with great vigour and vehemence. Then, there was Mr. Prince Gunasekera who, whilst supporting the Bill, could not resist the temptation to have a swipe at the Bandaranaike-Ratwatte Establishment (and referred to an episode which UNP spokesmen had been shouting about in the past but were silent now regarding a transaction about which the less said the better—showing how careful persons in power and authority should be about "catchers" and hangers-on). But with Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa showering praises on the Prime Minister for her role in securing a smooth passage for nationalisation, even with the foreign owners, and the UNP not saying a word about it, the Member for Habaraduwa did not make much of an impact. Mr. X. M. Sellathambu set the record right for the Federal Party (after Mr. Dharmalingam's circumlocution on Friday). Mr. Sellathambu had declared that his Party, the Federal Party, was supporting the Bill without any reservations: that they were supporting these Bill (although the Northern and Eastern Provinces were not affected by it (and had been affected only on a very small measure by the first Bill)). He also stressed that more important than ownership was utilisation and management—and that if the nationalised estates were well managed great benefits would accrue to the people. At the Committee stage a few amendments were moved and two by the former Minister of Plantation Industries, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, were accepted by the Government. Mr. Prince Gunasekera had moved an amendment that no compensation should be paid and he had pressed for a division. He was supported by Mr. Richard Udugama, Mr. W. Dahanayake and surprisingly two members of the LSSP—Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara and Mr. Athauda Seneviratne.

garded as a totally pro-urban-population government, very unmindful of the needs and aspirations of the rural population? That people in the rural areas have already developed an inhibitory fear that the Government regards all those who seek to cultivate food crops like paddy as bad anti-social people who believe only in the unofficial open market which the Government describes as the blackmarket? That there is no doubt that the Government does not seem alive to the sentiments in the rural areas? That unless the Government took corrective measures the growing rumble in the rural areas will soon develop into a mighty volcanic explosion? That what is feared is that in all this it is the bureaucratic law enforcer who will reap the richest harvests? IT IS NOT SIGNIFICANT that the "Ceylon Daily News" has not been

building up the psychological background to present the new Regulations? That until the Regulations were gazetted there was hardly any mention of these draconian laws in the offing? That on the contrary, the "Daily News" did yeoman service in trying to impress upon the High Bureaucracy of Sri Lanka that governmental methods of paddy purchase should be radically changed if the PMB was to function effectively? That the "Daily News" even editorially pleaded for a new approach in paddy purchases? That this plea was based on a worthwhile suggestion which had been put forward in two articles by G. V. S. de Silva in the "Daily News" of February 11 and 12? That the Sunday "Observer" too had carried a series of articles on the bureaucratic red tape which had tied up the rural community in knots which could probably be

untied only by a few who know the deft art of lubricating the correct cogs in the machinery which has been imposed from the top making life extremely difficult for the farmer? That the "Observer" on February 13 had published a plaintive plea from a reader begging the Government to make public the manner in which the PMB will make its purchases? That the details of the refraction test and the weight test should be made public over the SLBC? That if this were done the PMB would be able to function a little more acceptably (to the producers) than at present?

And now, these Regulations have been repealed.

But a great deal of damage had been done in the meantime to paddy production.

CHRONICLE

Oct. 8 — Oct. 16

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—Silmuna; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8: The National State Assembly will meet today and the Assembly is likely to debate the Prime Minister's statement on September 18 if the Assembly agreed to give way to a motion by the LSSP Parliamentary Group calling for such a discussion—CDN. The All Ceylon Buddhist Congress in a wire to the Prime Minister urged the admission to the University on population and media based quota system—CDM. Dr. N. M. Perera, MP for Yatiyantota, speaking at a meeting at Baddegama last weekend said though the new Minister of Finance has promised to bring down the prices of food it will not be an easy task; he further said that whatever the promises made, the truth was that the Government had increased the price of oil which is bound to increase further—CDM. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP, replying to a question at yesterday's UNP Executive Committee meeting denied that he went to Temple Trees, the official residence of the Prime Minister, by night for hush-hush talks: Mr. Jayewardene explained that he had been to Temple Trees on invitation and that it was wrong to accuse him of having gone there surreptitiously—CDM. In the identification parade held before the Mallakam Magistrate two suspects of the Jaffna Mayor murder incident were identified by witnesses: the two suspects are Balasubramaniam Kanapathy alias Kalapathy (20 years) of Valvettiturai and S. Kiru-

pakaran alias Kirupainathan (21 years) of Ariyalai—VK. In future, non-residents of Ceylon will not be given free medical treatment in hospitals: they will be permitted to enter hospital only after paying an initial deposit of Rs. 800—VK. According to the Lankadipa in future any changes in the price of essential items will be only through the annual Budget of the Government and not through overnight gazette notifications. The State Corporation Employees Union has protested to the Prime Minister against the Security Board Bill which is expected to be submitted in the NSA today: the Union said that this Bill create another Police force in the country: the Union has requested the Prime Minister to eliminate the provision for the use of certain powers for those employees covered by this Bill—ATH. Certain important leaders in the UNP and the SLFP are joining together to completely destroy the progressive movement in the country before the next general elections—JD. The TUF has decided to file action against the government in a court of law against the detention of several Tamil youths arrested over two to three years ago and remanded without producing them in courts—JD. On the decision of the Minister of Finance the Government will recruit youths to Government jobs from those who were arrested and later released regarding the April insurrection: the selection will be made from those youths who were not directly involved in the insurrection—DM. Five-nation preparatory talks ended in New York yesterday after two days of discussions to agree on an agenda and a date for the economic summit proposed recently by French President. American and Soviet grain negotiators in Moscow are snagged over the difficulty in devising a mutually acceptable "escape clauses" in a proposed long term grain sales contract between the two countries.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9: The Government yesterday decided to go ahead with the Keuneman Committee's recommendations on admissions to the University where 70 per cent of the intake will be on merit and the balance 30 per cent on a district quota basis—CDN. According to the Lankadipa the admissions

to the University will be 70 per cent on District quota basis and 30 per cent on merit and the paper commented that this decision of the Government was a great victory to Sinhala Tharuna Sangvidhanaya. The *Aththa* in its lead story commented that the *Lankadipa* story a few days back where it was said that there was no discovery of oil in Pesalai was a "dead rope" by the Editor of *Lankadipa*: the paper further said that the Editor, Mr. Gunadasa Liyanage, was earlier the Editor of a Sinhala paper called *Sinhakadiya* which paper published the same story when it was in publication and on a complaint made by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation to the Press Council the Editor had to apologise for the wrong story: the *Aththa* said that a certain new capitalist of the *Lankadipa* paper wanted to throw out Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, out of the Government and on the strength of this the Editor was in a position to publish this utter lie in the *Lankadipa*. Mr. E. R. S. R. Kumaraswamy, Chairman of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, in a statement to the *Daily Mirror* denied the story of *Daily Mirror* on 7th October where it said that there was no oil in Pesalai. The Working Committee of the UNP yesterday decided to postpone any further action against Mr. Rukman Senanayake, M.P. for Dedigama, till the election petition against Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, is disposed of—CDM. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, in a reply to Dr. N. M. Perera, former Minister of Finance, said that he did not sign the Letter of Intent with the International Monetary Fund—CDM. The Government yesterday decided not to cancel the holidays allowed for Deepavali, Mahasivaratri, Ramazan, Hadji and Good Friday for 1976: earlier the Government decided not to declare these festival days as public holidays—VK. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, MP for Agalawatte, speaking in the NSA yesterday said that since the 1974 Budget the capitalists of this country were very angry and to satisfy them the Prime Minister not only gave them the head of Dr. N. M. Perera but she presented with them two more heads on a tray—JD. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva in his speech in the NSA further said that this Government cut the throat of the working class which had safeguarded this Government—VK. Dr. Silva paid a tribute to the good work done by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa—CDM. Mr. Ronnie de Mel speaking in the NSA said that this Government was treating the minority community as second class citizens and under such treatment there cannot be communal harmony in the country—VK. Moves by the committee headed by Mr. C. Kumarasuriar, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, to bring about a settlement between the two warring factions of the SLFP-oriented Trade Unions ended up in a deadlock—CDM. Spain is to step up its campaign against guerillas—government sources ruled out a formal state of emergency. Yugoslavia Prime Minister, Dzemal Bijedic, had a 90-minute meeting with Chairman Mao Tse-tung in Peking. The U.S. hopes to start peace moves on Israeli-Syrian front before the United Nations mandate on the Golan Heights expired on November 30.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10: The Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs yesterday announced that: "the Emergency (Paddy Marketing) Regulations published in Gazette Extraordinary No. 181/27 of September 17 were repealed by the President on October 8": with this announcement all restrictions imposed by regulations governing the transport, possession and sale of

paddy and rice have been removed with immediate effect—CDN. Mr. T. B. Llangaratne, Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs and Trade told the NSA yesterday that the Government has no objection to the appointing of a select committee of the House to probe the PL 480 funds withdrawal by the American Embassy in Colombo—CDN. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, M.P. for Dedigama, in a letter to the leader of the UNP, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has protested against the decision of the UNP's Working Committee which announced that it had indefinitely postponed the inquiry against Mr. Senanayake: in his letter Mr. Senanayake said that he had publicly stated he had remained neutral during the by-election campaign for Colombo South and it was unnecessary for any witnesses to testify that he did not work for Mr. Jayewardene—CDM. Dr. N. M. Perera, MP for Yatiyantota, speaking on the Prime Minister's statement in the House on the 18th of last month said that it was on his information that the First Accused in the Bandaranaike Assassination trial was arrested: he further said several people who now claim as ardent followers of Bandaranaike policies kept mum when he was assassinated—VK. In his speech in the House Dr. N. M. Perera said that people including Messrs Upali Wijewardena, Dasa Mudalali, J. P. I. Piya-dasa, C. S. Ratwatte, P. A. Fernando and E. A. T. Ellawela have registered their names as gem exporters and if necessary he was prepared to reveal all names of those who have registered as gem exporters—JD. The *Aththa* editorially referred to the broadcast of the SLBC and the news story in the *Daily News* following a statement by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation regarding stories published in the *Daily Mirror* and *Lankadipa* about discovery of oil in Pesalai and said that the tone of the broadcast and the *Daily News* story was in a manner to protect the interests of the Times Group of newspapers. The sale of any liquor in restaurant cars of trains has been banned—CDN. The Noble Committee announced that this year's Noble Peace Prize has been awarded to Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet dissident scientist. Libyan leader, Col. Muammar Gaddafi, has confirmed recent reports of an unsuccessful attempt to topple his government. Following attempts on the life of US President the visiting Emperor of Japan, Hirohito, has been provided with tight security measures by American authorities.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11: The Ministry of Health temporarily withdrew the circular it had sent to all District Medical Officers in the island that no free treatment should be given to non nationals: following protests by several leaders that this circular will affect the stateless persons living in the country the Minister of Health, Mr. George Rajapakse, decided to withdraw this circular—VK. Following the removal of the curb on transport, sale and possession of rice and paddy the price of rice dropped in the open market and several eating houses too reduced the price of rice meal—VK. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands moved the second reading of the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill in the National State Assembly yesterday: Mr. Kobbekaduwa said that the amending bill was in effect the nationalisation of estates of public companies: with the passage of the bill lands owned by public companies both local and foreign will be vested in the Land Reform Commission: the lands affected will cover 415,000 acres of tea, rubber and coconut—CDN. The Sri Lanka Independent Petroleum

Employees' Union yesterday repudiated the statement made by Mr. E. R. S. R. Coomaraswamy, Chairman of the Petroleum Corporation, in reply to the union's allegation that there was no oil in Pesalai and the "oil find" was a fraud: in this regard the union has written to the Prime Minister—CDM: the union in its letter to the Prime Minister has asked as to why barrels of imported crude oil was sent to Pesalai from the Sapugaskande refinery—LD. According to the *Daily Mirror* the Department of Food is faced again with the problem of an excess flour: the Department has 150,000 tons of flour in its go-downs. The Chairman of the Bank of Ceylon in a note to the Minister of Finance said that the management of the bank should be reconstructed to perform new tasks serving the masses—CDN. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has told that the Indian Ocean must be allowed to be free zone. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt will pay an official visit to America starting October 26 at the invitation of President Ford.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12: According to the *Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated*, there are too many students in the Medical faculty of the Colombo Campus and senior dons fear that this overcrowding may result in deterioration of standards. The Land Reform Amendment Bill has yet to be passed in the National State Assembly: on Friday the debate on the Bill went on till 10 p.m. and since 40 members wanted to speak the debate was postponed for Wednesday—ST. The Delimitation Commission on electorates will commence public sittings from 20th October: the commission is expected to hold public sittings in Colombo for one week—SM. The Deputy Secretary General of the Tamil United Front and the MP for Uduvil told the *Virakesari* that on the 8th of this month notice had been given in the House for the proposed separate state for Tamils and this is expected to be debated in February next year. According to Government sources gold worth Rs. 5 million has been smuggled out of the country during the last two years—VK. An SLFP trade union's false propaganda on the oil exploration in Pesalai by Soviet experts is being done to mislead the masses and on the instructions of reactionary forces within the SLFP: international reactionary forces are behind this move and the latter's sole interest is to cripple the economy of the country and establish their strength in Sri Lanka—JS. The *Janasathiya* editorially commenting on the reply by Dr. N. M. Perera, M.P. for Yatiyantota, in the NSA to the Prime Minister's statement of September 18, said that Dr. Perera's reply has silenced those who now speak high of Bandaranaike policies: the editorial further said the speech by Dr. N. M. Perera has revealed that those who now cry for Mr. Bandaranaike policies are doing so to justify their own positions and interests. According to the *Janasathiya* most of the District Development Councils in the country which are being run by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs are on the verge of closure: the paper attributed the reason for this situation to the difficulty in seelling the products of these D.D.Cs. All employees in the Ministry of Plantation Industry are instructed by the Minister of Plantation Industry through the Secretary to the Ministry that all official business in the Ministry must be carried out in Sinhala.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13: Employees who were recruited to the CGR after the 12th of August—Dr. N. M. Perera's Hartal Speech Day—and who were

interdicted have been reinstated on the orders of the new Minister of Transport, Mr. K. B. Ratnayake: according to the Ministry of Transport nearly 290 employees who were interdicted have now been written to report back to work—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* the continued suspension of the M.P. for Dedigama, Mr. Rukman Senanayake, from membership of UNP is likely to cause a major rift in the UNP Working Committee: when the Working Committee met last Wednesday it did not take up Mr. Senanayake's case for discussion despite an appeal by the latter to Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP, to move that his suspension be revoked. The *Daily Mirror* editorially posed the question whether there was oil in Pesalai? The price of rice in the open market has dropped by 25 per cent and Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, said that he anticipated the price to drop and he was now happy that the people could buy rice at cheaper prices—DM. Tamil leaders have told the *Virakesari* that admission to the University on population, and media basis have put the Tamil students in a worse position: they further said that standardization of marks for selection on media basis tantamounts to nullify the Keuneman Committee recommendations on University admissions. The Ceylon Technical College have started a number of courses for the benefit of students who fail to get admission to University despite the qualifications at the G. C. E. Advanced Level Examination—CDM. The Minister of Home Affairs, Trade and Public Administration, has decided to convert all DRO offices in the country to offices of Assistant Government Agents—CDN. An Embassy of Cuba will be opened in Sri Lanka soon and Mrs. Anna Maria will be appointed Ambassador of Cuba in Sri Lanka—DM. The *Janadina* editorially said though the reactionary leadership of the present Government wanted to implement the Land Reform according to the wishes of the imperialist forces the Minister of Agriculture and Lands had proved that he cannot be bulldozed by their influence: the paper requested the Minister to work according to the wishes of the masses. The United States and the Soviet Union are close to signing a grain deal provided that snags holding up a parallel Soviet-American oil Agreement can be overcome, according to informed official sources. Soviet dissident scientist Andrei Sakarov said in an interview that he hoped the Soviet authorities would adopt a more reasonable and logical attitude towards dissidents now that he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has sent instructions to the Ministry of Food, Co-operatives and Small Industries that political interference of any sort should not be tolerated in efforts to rid the co-operatives of bribery, corruption and mismanagement—CDN. The Mahanayakes of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters have written to the Prime Minister that admissions to the University should be on the basis "of proportion of the Sinhalese population wise"—CDN. Two trade union leaders of the Sri Lanka Independent Petroleum Employees Union Messrs W. D. Alfred Perera (President) and T. G. Somasiri (General Secretary) who signed the letter to the Prime Minister alleging that the discovery of oil in Pesalai was a fraud have been interdicted by the Chairman of the Petroleum Corporation—CDM. Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, told the *Virakesari* that

the Communist Party is still making attempts to join the LSSP and SLFP: Mr. Keuneman further told there is not much of a difference among the two parties policy-wise. 1,500 officers will visit estates to be nationalised on Friday and will take stock of movable and immovable properties—ATH. According to the *Janadina* different views expressed by Certain SLFP Ministers and Youth Leaguers have put the reactionary forces of the SLFP in a dilemma and this difference has resulted in keeping the Parliamentary Secretary posts of certain ministries still vacant. The *Janadina* referred to a speech of Mr. Anura Bandaranaike in which he has said that the number of Parliamentary seats of the LSSP will be reduced to three in the next-General Elections and editorially commented that under the present circumstances the SLFP will not be able to secure even half the number of seats it has now at the next general elections and predicted that several Ministers too will lose their seats. Mr. Nimal Horana, Central Committee member and the Editor of the LSSP official weekly *Janasathiya* resigned from the party—LD. The Government has decided to appoint a new Chairman and completely change the Board of Directors of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation—LD. The Indo-American Joint Commission which ended a two-day meeting in Washington had discussions on the establishment of a joint business council to bring together business leaders of India and the United States and decided to conduct talks on bilateral tax treaty to avoid double taxation. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi described Israel's support for the establishment of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East as a manoeuvre.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in a broadcast to the nation last night on the occasion of the passing of the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill in the National State Assembly said that "today we can stand up as a free nation among the other nations of the world: we have reached the culmination of the endeavour to achieve economic independence": soon after the Bill was passed in the NSA Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, thanked all parties in the House and every single member of the House for supporting the Bill: the Bill was passed unanimously and the Minister said that compensation to foreign owned estates will not be paid in foreign exchange—CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice, moved before the NSA a Government resolution to appoint a Select Committee of the House to probe and report on the disbursement of a sum of Rs. 15,168, 169 out of the PL 480 funds—CDN. Following a recommendation by Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, a committee headed by the Prime Minister will be appointed to look into all oil explorations in the country: the committee will also look into oil exploration works in Pesalai—CDM. The Sri Lanka Independent Petroleum Employees Union yesterday decided to stage a hunger strike in protest against the interdiction of its President and General Secretary—CDM. The *Daily Mirror* editorially welcomed the decision to appoint a committee chaired by the Prime Minister to look into the oil explorations in the country. The President of the Sri Lanka Jathika Guru Sangamaya, and World Teacher's Federation, Mr. L. Ariyawansa, told the *Virakesari* that politics should not be mixed with education and as such he welcomed the recommendation of the Keuneman Committee

to admit students to the University on a basis of 70 per cent on merit and 30 percent on a basis of district quota. Counsel for Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, one of the suspects before the C.J.C. (Exchange Frauds), told the Commission yesterday that the former Governor General will not be able to come to Sri Lanka owing to old age and illness—VK. By December this year the CTB expects to deploy the services of 500 more new buses—DM. The 1975 Nobel prize for Economic was awarded to Professor Leonid Khantorovich of the Soviet Union and Professor Tjalsing C Koopmans of the United States. India's External Affairs Minister Yashwantrao Chavan said that difficulties still persisted between India and the United States over the American policy of supplying arms to Pakistan and the question of the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16: According to the *Daily Mirror* drugs to the value of several lakhs of rupees that had been imported by the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation have become outdated. The Land Reform (Amendment) Bill which was passed in the NSA on October 14 will become law in the statute book at midnight today—CDN. According to the *Daily News* the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs said yesterday that it was inevitable that the country's expanded program for oil exploration on lands and at sea would be subject to delays if normal procedures were followed and the committee expected to be appointed will eliminate such delays. According to the *Virakesari* Minister Subasinghe has told that there was no need to probe into the oil exploration work in Pesalai and the reason for appointing a committee is solely to expedite the future program of oil exploration. The Parliamentary Group of the TUF will meet on October 23 to decide what action should be launched in protest against the admission of students to university on a basis of media wise selection—VK. The Independent Petroleum Employees Union in a letter to the Chairman of the Corporation demanded the reasons for the interdiction of the President and the General Secretary—LD. According to the *Janadina* the Government has imported a large quantity of wheat flour and this will compel a reduction in price to dispose this quantity. In a press release by Mr. L. W. Panditha, General Secretary of the CFTU, while thanking the Government for the nationalisation of estates it has been urged to nationalise all foreign owned banks in keeping with the promise to the nation. Pakistan is likely to open a diplomatic mission in Bangladesh by the end of this month. Saudi Arabian Oil Minister, Sheik Ahmed Zaki Yamani, predicted another fight between the oil producing countries over the price of oil when the current price freeze ends next June. After three days of calm fresh shootings were reported from Beirut's troubled Eastern suburbs.

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PALMYRAH REPORT—I

INTRODUCTORY

—Tapping The Sap—

BORASSUS is a genus of the family Palmae (Palms). There are 4 species of *Borassus*, one of which, *Borassus Flabellifer*, is the Palmyrah Palm. The Palmyrah is sometimes believed to be a native of tropical Africa. (*Wealth of India—Vol. I. Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, New Delhi, 1948. p. 203*), where a species grows in abundance, but it is some times held to be a *Borassus* species peculiar to southern Asia. (*A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula* by I. H. Burkill Kuala Lumpur, 1966). Today, it grows extensively in the drier regions of India, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia, and in some islands of Indonesia.

It is a dioecious palm which could thrive on most inclement soils. Generally it attains a height of 40-60 feet and sometimes even exceeds 100 feet. Its terminal crown bears 30-40 large fan-like leaves about 3-5 ft. in width. The leafstalk is about 2-4 ft. long, strong and fibrous. The stem consists of a hard outer portion composed of stiff longitudinal fibres and a central portion—the pith—which is soft and starchy. The inflorescence or the spathe begins to appear generally in November to December. The spathe of the male palm is tapped in Ceylon from February to July, sometimes upto September. When tapped, the inflorescence yields a sugary sap which is either consumed as toddy or converted to jaggery and other sugary products. The fruit is large and fibrous and contains usually three nut-like portions with the seed enclosed. The palm is propagated by self-sown seed. In the earlier stages, only the underground portion of the stem in creases in thickness. It usually takes 15 to 20 years for the aerial portion of the trunk to elongate and develop into a mature palm.

The palmyrah is susceptible to attacks by insects which also attack the coconut palm, such as the rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), the red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), the black headed caterpillar (*Nephantia serinopa*) etc. It is also liable

to a fungus disease called "bud rot" (*Pythium palmivorum*) which attacks the bud and gradually kills the tree.

PALMYRAH was one of the palms whose leaves were used in ancient India as a writing material, the other palms being *Corypha* and perhaps *Phoenix sylvestris*. It was called "Tala", and the leaves were used as such long before one of the original records of its use by the famous Chinese traveller Hsuien Tsiang (629-646 A.D.) Writing on palm leaves is said to have been introduced to Java and the Malaysian region by migrating Indians.

THE USES OF THE PALMYRAH PALM are so many that it is poetically referred to as "the all-providing tree"—an epithet commonly used on most palms. The major uses of the Palmyrah, however could be classified into 5 broad categories, namely, *food preparations, leaf products, fibre products, medicinal preparations and timber products.*

FOOD PREPARATIONS. The main product of the palmyrah hitherto has been the sap extracted from the inflorescence which is either consumed directly in an unfermented stage called sweet toddy or "meera", or in a slightly fermented stage "toddy", or in some processed form such as jaggery, or "gur."

The tapping of the palm for its sap is done mostly in India, Thailand and Ceylon where there are heavy concentrations of palmyrah. In South India and Ceylon, tapping is done mostly by professional tappers who are also itinerant farmers or labourers. According to the time-hallowed caste system that prevails in these regions, the tapping function is generally limited to a certain community whose main source of income is derived from tapping palmyrah, coconut and other palms during the tapping seasons. As the tapping season extends to a mere six months of the year mostly, members of this caste-community live during the non-tapping season either by producing other palmyrah products such as fibre and leaf products or as hired farm labourers or casual workers. In the hierarchical caste system, they are assigned a very "low" position and generally speaking, their standards of living are

relatively low when compared to the rest of the population.

Generally, the tappers do not own the palms; they hire the palms from the land owners either on the payment of a fee for the whole season or on the basis of supplying one-half of its product to the land owner (that is by tapping for himself and the land owner on alternate days), or both. The rental fee is not uniform but varies from region to region and also within regions according to the productivity of the individual palms. In Jaffna, for instance, the rental may range from Rs. 5 for a male palm to Rs. 10 for a female palm. In South India, the rentals are generally much lower.

THE TAPPING IS SEASONAL because the flowering of the palm is seasonal. In South India and Jaffna, the flowers commence appearing towards the end of the year, say in November-December, and the tapping is done continuously from February to May-June. As a rule, the female palm is tappable for a longer period than the male palm, and in South India and Jaffna, it is not uncommon for the female palm to be tapped until late July-August. This pattern however is not uniform because the flowering season is determined by the environmental factors. For instance in the Mannar region of Ceylon it is possible to tap the palm for longer period while in the Bombay region of India it is reported that the tapping season is in November-December. Also, the different methods of tapping can determine the period of yield of a palm. (E. E. Jeyeraj, K. Ratnasingham, and K. Balakrishnan: *Yield of sap from Palmyrah Palms, C.I.S.I.R., 1970*). It is generally agreed, however, that the yields are highest in the cooler months. Mature trees of about 25-30 years of age are selected for tapping and the tree is, on an average, tapped for about 30 years or more. Tapping usually commences in the 19th or 20th year of the palm, but when the soil is sandy and porous, tapping could commence even earlier—say in 15 years or so.

In the female palm the inflorescences are tapped when the nuts are in a formative stage. Usually the tips of the inflorescences are squeezed and beaten with wooden sticks; after a couple of days these are scraped with a tapping knife and the tips are pared off daily.

Palmyrah Toddy

Within a week or so, the sap commences oozing, and it is collected into an earthenware pot. If it is desired to arrest fermentation of the sap, the inner-side of the pot is coated with lime. In the male tree, the flowering shoots which project from the main stalk are tied together and given the same treatment. The yield of the female palm is generally higher and ordinarily the male palm yields only about 2/3 of the yield of the former.

Tapping of the palm is a highly skilled operation. These skills are generally handed down within tapping groups and very little technical investigation has been made into the techniques. Of some interest are the scarce skills of "Kaiveddu" or tapping of the maturing fruit and "Varichchu" or the manipulation of male palms to induce off-season flowering. Iyeraj, Ratnasingham and Balakrishnan have shown that tapping methods do have a significant impact on yields, apart from the known impact of weather conditions.

A TAPPER CLIMBS the palm twice a day; early in the morning he climbs the tree with a spare pot, collects the previous evening's sap, pares and dresses the inflorescence and brings the produce down. In the evening too he climbs the tree, and where the yield is high collects the morning's yield; if it is not sufficient he pares and dresses the inflorescence, gives a good shake to the pot and climbs down. It is said that a good tapper can deal with 20-25 trees per day on this basis in Ceylon, while in India, higher rate of 30-50 palms a day has been reported. (This figure is close to the rate of the coconut tappers in Ceylon about 60 palms per day. But this is aided by the systems of ropeways). This involves working about 4 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening.

The fresh sap brought down from the palm, which is called "neera" or "sweet toddy", is a sweet and refreshing beverage with a characteristic aroma and a pungent taste. After prohibition, some Indian States have actually promoted the sale and consumption of neera, bottled and chilled in alkathene bottles. They were sold in special "Neera Parlours" and evidently, were a popular beverage. Neera contains small amounts of sugar and yeast—the latter being a good source of vitamin

"B Complex". A survey in India has revealed that the incidence of diseases connected with Vitamin B deficiency were quite rare in areas where neera was freely available. Apart from this, it is considered to be a stimulant and an anti-plegmatic and useful in the treatment of inflammation and dropsy.

SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION converts the sap into "toddy". It is estimated that during the first 6-8 hours after extraction, the fermented sap contains 3% alcohol and 0.1 of acids; thereafter, the alcohol content increases to almost 5%, after which it begins to decrease while the acid content increases rendering the liquid unsuitable for human consumption. This "toddy" is a popular and somewhat alcoholic beverage widely used in India and Ceylon. It is generally consumed direct and occasionally used in the manufacture of bread on account of its high yeast content; the latter use however is not very popular because of an unpleasant odour attributed to the presence of butyric acid. (Busrur & Quarachi: *Journal of Omania University*, 1939).

Palmyrah toddy has been successfully bottled (E. E. Jeyeraj. Preservation and Bottling of Fermented Palmyrah Toddy—Chapter 7 of Bulletin No. 21 1967, C.I.S.I.R. Colombo p. 33). and sold as in the case of coconut toddy, but the industry that was started in Ceylon a few years ago is no more.

Jaggery (called 'gur' in India) is also produced from the sap. Immediately after extraction, the palmyrah sap is 'poured into open vessels, leaving out the light sediment. The sap is then boiled. In some parts of India the sap is first evaporated to one-third of the bulk before boiling down. According to the former process, after 15 or 20 minutes of boiling, a white scum rises to the surface. This is skimmed off and a few castor beans are crushed and put in (or some coconut oil) to prevent further frothing. After about 2 hours, the fire is lowered and the contents are stirred. To test the solidifying properties, a small quantity is put into cold water and if it hardens quickly it is ready, and is transferred to wooden moulds which are slightly moistened on the surface. This is the 'gur' of India, which is a darkish solid

jaggery with its own characteristic flavour. The Ceylon product is generally poured into palmyrah baskets of varying sizes called 'kuttans'. On account of deliquescent salts that are found in the jaggery, it readily absorbs moisture and therefore becomes soft and sticky in humid climates. This is less so in dry climates like in Jaffna and certain parts of South India. More recently, an improved product has been experimentally produced by the Industrial Development Board and the C.I.S.I.R. (For details of the process, vide K. Ratnasingham: *Jaggery*, Chapter 5 of Bulletin No. 2/1967. C.I.S.I.R. Colombo pp. 12-25).

SOMETIMES THE SAP is converted to a brown sugary candy called "Tal-Misri" in India and "Kallakaram" or "Thalsukiri" in Ceylon. This is the raw sap boiled down to a lesser degree of concentration than jaggery. The resulting syrup is poured into covered pots and buried underground for some months when the crystals of sugar candy are deposited in the pots. More sophisticated methods of

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manufacture are adopted in South India. This preparation is considered a delicacy and is widely used as a medicine for coughs and other pulmonary disorders. It is also used as a mild laxative.

"Gur" of India was once refined into crystallised sugar. The raw gur is heaped on platforms for about two months to drain away most of the molasses. Thereafter, it is dissolved in water and refined into sugar. India has also worked a few small-scale (one-ton and one-third tons a day capacity) sugar manufacturing units under State initiative; but the relative cheapness of cane sugar has retarded the development of a palmyrah-based sugar industry. Cambodia is another country where palmyrah palm sugar is made. (Vide B. Tkatchenko: *Palm Sugar of Cambodia Agron. Trop. (Nogent-Sur-Maine) 1948*, pp 563-93 and J. Bartosek: *Manufacture of sugar from palms. Czechoslovak Heavy Industry 1965*, pp. 40-6. At the beginning of this century, an attempt was made to manufacture palmyrah sugar in Ceylon (at Polykandy, Point Pedro) by a German firm, whose enterprise was stifled by the first World War. Another attempt to make sugar was made in 1950 by the Department of Rural Development and small Industries with the assistance of the C.I.S.I.R., again at Polykandy; but this too was abandoned after a few years.

According to Ratnasingham (K. Ratnasingham: *Palm Sugar—Chapter 6 of Buletin No. 2/1967, CISIR, Colombo*, pp. 26-32) the experience at Polykandy has shown that production of palm sugar on a cottage industry scale, (say, a ten-gallon unit) was quite feasible. He felt, however, that collection, transport and bulking for large-scale manufacture was not so practicable because of problems of ensuring continuous and large-scale supply of sweet toddy of uniform quality. The economics of sugar production, of course, will depend on the cost and price of other sugars in the domestic market.

The by-product, *molasses*, is known to be an excellent animal feed. (3. P. G. Kamat and Kamala Sohoni: *Studies in palm molasses—Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1960-pp 257-8.*) It is an item that is imported to Ceylon.

Other possibilities in sugar-making are the manufacture of *syrops* (e.g. "Golden Syrup") and *candy*. A *treacle* is also made from palmyrah, and this is widely used in the treatment of chewing tobacco.

When the sap is left to the extreme limit of fermentation the resulting acid is *vinegar*. In India, for instance, cheap vinegar is manufactured by burying vessels containing toddy underground and allowing it to ferment to the limit. (4. U. P. Varma: *Vinegar from Palm-juice, Bihar Agricultural College Magazine, 1959*, pp. 35-42) In Ceylon, no vinegar is known to be produced from palmyrah.

The deliquescent property of palmyrah jaggery, sugar or candy has been a problem that has perplexed its users from time immemorial. Hence, its use has been, often restricted to less humid regions (dry areas) and even here, the product has to be consumed soon after manufacture. In certain parts of India and Indonesian islands (especially Madura islands), the thick sugary treacle is mixed with flour to make cakes and other sweets.

To Be Continued

* * *

POINT OF VIEW

Ghost Of Dulles

by Jayantha Somasundaram

THE FALL OF CAMBODIA followed even more dramatically by the fall of South Vietnam clearly showed the dismal failure of three decades of US foreign policy in South East Asia. The inability of the US to implement a coherent foreign policy built on military force seems to have been exposed. However, while a considerable amount of attention is being paid to the setbacks of the US in South East Asia, the changing role of the US in South Asia seems to be forgotten.

To much of the West, particularly the United States, the Indian subcontinent has always seemed an enigma. Unable to appreciate the stand of these countries, the United States quite often embarked on a policy that was met with hostility by the countries of the region. John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State

refused to view in isolation the Indian subcontinent, and reduced its importance to merely another link in the chain of countries bordering on and ringing the Soviet Union and China. The three different treaty organisations that he forged in the early fifties with the European and Asian countries sprang from this limited concept of dealing with foreign countries.

The South East Asia Treaty Organisation which he forged in 1954, aimed at bringing the countries of the Indian subcontinent within this rigid framework. He therefore could not appreciate Pundit Nehru's commitment to non alignment, nor sympathise with India's opposition to SEATO. Not all the pleadings of Anthony Eden, then British Foreign Minister, could shake Nehru's stand. In a very short time Sri Lanka's S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was to follow suit, in committing Sri Lanka to an identical policy, one which Dulles had regarded as pious hypocrisy.

IN PAKISTAN however Dulles met with success, in that Pakistan became the linch-pin linking together SEATO with the countries of the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). It is self evident that SEATO has failed. The experience of Vietnam and Cambodia proves this. Britain's White Paper, deactivating herself militarily east of the Suez confirms this. Thus the foundations on which United States foreign policy was built in this region in the fifties and sixties has ceased to exist. And historically our position has been vindicated.

However, the United States had already in existence an alternative diplomatic lever to the military pacts. This was a programme initiated in the early fifties, pledging "food for peace" to the countries of the Third World, many of whom had joined the ranks of the non-aligned. Since 1954 the United States has transferred \$ 30 billion in food aid to these countries. Of late however, food scarcities and the inflationary effect of large scale aid on the United States economy tended to restrict the quantity of food available for the Third World. This was of particular significance to those of us on the subcontinent, who have been faced with recurring food crises.

The war in Bangla Desh and the role played by the United States did not endear the United States to the vast majority of people on the subcontinent. Nor could India take kindly to Nixon's visit so Peking behind her back. The iteps that Sri Lanka took in the immediate aftermath of May 1970, namely, the recognition of People's Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Provisional Revolutionary Government in the Republic of South Vietnam, and the German Democratic Republic, while suspending relations with Israel, and expelling the United States Peace Corp and Asia Foundation further imperilled the United States position on the Indian subcontinent.

DR. HENRY KISSINGER has, however, initiated better relationships with the countries of the Indian subcontinent, by falling back not on the military pacts, but on "food for peace."

Neither the Soviet Union nor China can give adequate food assistance to the countries of the subcontinent. The United States on the other hand, has pledged around 500,000 tons of food for India, 400,000 tons to Pakistan, 250,000 tons to Bangla Desh and 100,000 tons to Sri Lanka. Kissinger was able during the last few months to convince President Ford of the necessity of using food as a foreign policy tool in the Indian subcontinent.

The contribution that Pat Moynihan, until recently US Ambassador in New Delhi, made towards healing the Indo-American rift must not be forgotten. "I believe", said Indira Gandhi, "that Ambassador Moynihan worked very hard to improve relations and remove misunderstandings, and to a great extent he succeeded."

India has unbent in the face of United States acceptance of her dominant role in the region and her right thereby to act as an independent power. However Pakistan has not been sacrificed. During his recent visit to Washington Bhutto was promised arms shipments which were suspended in 1965. Moreover, the United States position in the Persian Gulf is being considerably strengthened by the rearming of Pakistan and the possibility of air and naval base facilities in Pakistan.

While assessing the role of economic penetration in the sub conti-

nent, one would do well to review the latest political developments and determine their significance for the United States.

Indira Gandhi has repeatedly warned that the US was seeking to destabilise the region towards its own advantage. Her startling political moves were justified in terms of forestalling such US endeavours. The recent coup in Bangla Desh and the earlier events in the Maldiv Islands to some extent help to vindicate Indira Gandhi.

Finally let us examine Sri Lanka's traumatic events. There is little doubt that the beneficiary of the abrogation of the United Front's Common Programme is the US. The expulsion of the LSSP from the United Front will lead obviously to the expulsion of the CP. It is not inconceivable that China would give her tacit consent to the destabilisation of the Indian subcontinent. Especially if she sees it as a means towards the thwarting of the Soviet Union and their Communist Parties.

It is well to remember that "Peking liners" within the United Front have endorsed the expulsion of the LSSP. International power politics, it seems, makes strange political bedfellows.

* * *

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE-54

Village Scrapbook-2

By Herbert Keuneman

The other day I received — and, maugre all my quite genuine Wildlife Protectionist convictions, greatly appreciated—a generous gift of 4 lbs. of fine wild-boar meat besides a handsome piece of the liver.

What was I to do: refuse it, even now that the beast had already been killed? I might have refused to buy. But this was a gift; and, with beef at Galgamuwa Rs. 2.75 a pound plus return bus-fare, as I say a generous gift. (This is off the record; but it is Galgamuwa now that supplies Colombo beef, points north having been exhausted —off the record it travels daily, as personal luggage, on the Yal

Devi — and it is this has boosted the local price.)

Also, the wild boar had been shot with a **TRAP-GUN** the *tuvakku pattalaya* which ever since the development of the percussion lock in the 1830s (and perhaps, I suppose, even since the flintlock) has supplied the village with welcome bonuses of meat. It is the method of the village shooter. The village hunter may miss his aim; but the trap-gun if it is set off at all almost invariably brings home the bacon. If somebody's stars are crossed it may, of course, bring down a fellow-villager; but that is one of those things. Anyway, here was my benefactor willing to show me how the trap was laid—at a private view, in my own back-garden—and I, who had always wanted to see the device but never had, was not about to discourage him by an ill-timed lecture.

The 'gun' itself, I found, is an almost laughable thing, the product of not more than an hour or two of a village blacksmith's effort. But the whole contrivance was a miracle of primitive but vastly ingenious and highly efficient make-do.

The gun barrel—the *tuvakku kanda*—was in this case a simple length, about 30", of heavy-gauge 3/4" (that is, about 12-bore) galvanized-iron piping fused and drawn to a rough knob at one end. At this blocked end was bored a touch-hole with a small nipple—called by obvious etymology the *nipula*—soldered round it. Of course the barrel didn't have to be of this inferior un-Ordinance-Proofed metal, the steel barrel of any real gun would be even better and the barrel of an old muzzle-loader with its nipple welded in place would be best of all; but the point is plain bathroom plumbery would do. So much for the barrel.

Then there was a flat piece of steel, the *pathula*, which did duty as a percussion lock, being both hammer and hammer-spring in one. Not even regular spring steel, this *patula* was an old kitchen-knife blade vaguely spear-head shaped at one end and at the other slightly dishd and pronged so as to clasp the barrel when the *yakada valalla*, a loose iron ring, was slid over the *patula* and *kanda* together until it jammed where the *patula*

began to widen. That was all there was to the gun as such. The *patula* had to be so adjusted that, when a small wooden peg placed upright between its free end forced upward and the rigid barrel was down slipped, its point would snap down and fire the cap (Sinhalese: *kap*, what else did you think?) inverted over the nipple. That was all there was to the gun as such.

The ingenuity, the sheer make-shift brilliance of the thing, came in the laying of the *pattalaya*, the whole jungle rig that formed the trap.

The *pattalaya* began with a single small straight stake (the *manum kanuva*) planted upright in the ground. A few feet away were planted, also upright, two crocheted branches (the *pattal kanu*) in whose forks the gun barrel could rest at the critical height—depending on what game you were after—precisely aligned on the *manum kanuva* and precisely parallel with the ground. This adjustment was of the essence. But now came the crux.

Behind the barrel at a yard or so, at the distal end from the *manum kanuva*, another stick cut on the spot was firmly planted: a longish whippy wand of green wood—a *gatiya* stem, I was told, is best; for it can be bent almost double without fracturing yet springs strongly back—which is called the *dunu*, or spring, *gaha*. Also from the jungle came two lengths of thin strong creeper which were bent in the form of tightly knotted though loose-fitting loops round the gun barrel between the forward *pattal kanuva* and the anchored end of the *patula*. (The preferred species for this purpose is *kiri-vala*). Again from a jungle bush, the trap-gun layer now cut two small sections of woody stem some half-inch thick: the first about 1½" long, the second about 6" long and whittled to a taper at either end like the 'cat' for a tip-cat game. As far as I can discover, the two—together—are named the *ipitta*.

(I do not know why the two parts of the *ipitta*, alone of all the many of the *pattalaya*, have no separate names nor how to translate the name they have. Actually, they have quite separate functions and to identify them is easy: the 'cat' is a trigger, and the little dowel or peg is the sere. But *ipitta*? All this is beside the point,

but such words are the genius of a language—even of a culture—and I cannot resist the temptation to expatiate. The masculine form of this word suggests (as in Latin the feminine form does) a certain familiarly-regarded near-personality; and its slightly comic sound suggests a near-personality mischievous but fondly entertained. 'Thingumajig' wouldn't do, that is neuter and without life; 'thingumajig-er' might.)

The larger component of the *ipitta* was laid along the top of the barrel and the *val mundu*, the loops of creeper, were adjusted to hold it ticklishly in places by the tapered ends; the smaller was jammed upright between forcibly retracted *patula* and the gun barrel, back of the nipple. The *dunu gaha* was now bent hard over and a strand of tough bast such as from *belipatta* bark stretched from its tip to the hinder half of the 'cat', straining it upward so that it only needed a slight slip of even one of the loops that precariously held it to let it come free and allow the *dunu gaha* to fly back. But halfway up the *dunu gaha* was tied another string of bast attached to the peg that held the *patula* in tension; so that as the sapling sprang straight it would jerk the peg away and the end of the *patula* would come down hard on the cap below and the gun would fire.

All the mechanical arrangement that now remained was to run the trip-wire, the sinisterly named *maru vala*, the Death-dealing Snare, back from the *manum kanuva* to the forward *val munda* restraining the 'cat', which on a slight pull on the snare would slip and let the 'cat' go and the whole infernal machine be set off. The only special skill required (though that is considerable) lay in adjudging the exact amount of slack to allow the trip-wire—I have called it 'wire' but it was in fact a single filament of fibre from the basal sheath of a *kitul* palm frond: strong and inelastic and so dark as to be invisible, a final triumph of improvisation from nature—so that the fearsome gunload of assorted pellets would strike where they are most lethal, just behind the foreleg. Nothing counted here like sheer experience.

In loading the gun, on the other hand, nothing seemed to count but optimism! Or maybe a sort

of obverted pessimism. I have said that the gun—this particular one—was noting but a piece of roughly 12-bore G.I. piping. But my man stuffed it as full of powder and shot as though it had been a large punt gun.

Having de-activated the trap by releasing the *ipitta*, and dismounting the barrel, he poured in before my incredulous gaze 'three fingers'—two inches, it came to: 2 inches 12-bore! I weighed it and there was ¾ oz. instead of the old 'normal' 2-drachm (1¼-oz.) 12-bore black-powder charge—of *gal-vedi behet*. (Sir Samuel Baker used 6 drachms, though of 'the best fine-grain' black powder, as a heavy charge for his 10-bore rifles, for elephant shooting! for lesser game he was satisfied with 4. In Ceylon, that is. Twenty years later he was advocating as much as 10 drachms; but in barrels made for it.) This he rammed in lightly with a plain piece of thin stick, a liberty I should not have dreamed of taking without a clean conventional ramrod, and followed with a *busa*, or wadding, of dry fibre from a coconut husk. Then came the no less prodigal charge of shot—6 regular SG pellets plus a home-cast torpedo-shaped slug 1½" long which alone weighed 1½ oz, a total of 2½ oz.! which would be more than an overload for an 8-bore—divided into three parts each held by a wad of tangled fibre. Finally he made the percussion cap. Choosing a bit of dry twig of diameter equal with the nipple he moulded round the tip of it a tiny tin cup of metal cut from a jam-jar lid and stuffed it with a 1:1 mixture of powders scraped respectively from half-a-dozen match heads and the striking-plate on each side of the match-box. This mixture too was firmed in its little tin case with his usual hideous insouciance, and the *kap* was then inveited over the nipple, the touch-hole having already been filled with a 'train' of home-made black powder. The whole load was thus weatherproof, even damp-proof if a humid atmosphere did not persist too long.

Only one thing amidst all this display of do-it-yourself virtuosity disappointed me: the gunpowder he used was commercial 'blasting powder', like, coarse grains of plumbago, at Rs. 30 a pound in the black market, whereas it seemed to me that he could well have

made his own as the Sinhalese did for centuries after they learned to use a musket; and the slugs likewise were 'shop'-made, saving the huge 1½ oz. one which he showed me with such pride. Black-market SG were Rs. 12 a pound. It seemed to me like a betrayal of principle. He explained, however, that home-made powder tended to burst the barrel: an explanation I could very well believe, seeing what the barrel was, and if the three-finger rule was to apply to finely-pulverized black powder as fecklessly as to the granulated variety he used! He said it was also to prevent a burst barrel that he bought his SG rather than cast them himself—else he could have used any small iron scrap — and it was for the same reason, for precaution, that he separated his charge of slug into three portions.

For the same reason, for precaution! I nothing trusted that barrel and removed myself to a safe distance while the great demonstration was made! But Heen Banda—that was *not* his name—knelt not more than a few inches behind the muzzle and tripped the *maru vala* with his hand.

There came a crack like that from a 12-pounder; the *manum kanuwa* had its head shot off, and a hole as large as my head appeared in the large anthill Heen Banda had chosen as a butt and from which he carefully dug out the spent slugs distorted though they were.

Could he use them again? wouldn't they jam? I asked.

He could file them into good shape, he said.

The great bang had apparently been recognized for what it was by many of my neighbours, and, hearing it from an unfamiliar direction, a number of them came to see.

'Any luck? Did you get anything?' Not even a fellow-villager! Oh well. And they went away again.

K A Z I — 26

In The Mihintale Area

By Anatory Bukoba

June 29,

A walk of two miles along a tarred road, and then three or four miles along a track, those three miles on the return, and then another three miles along a similar track, not counting a deviation that must have compassed a mile; that was the area covered by this Kazi. On the bus I had met a lad who had not seen me for three years; he dropped out at his house on the walk. A mechanic at a C.T.B. depot miles away, was he, and he looked hale and hearty. A boutique, I passed, that never fails to ask me in. A man was at the counter, who with his brother looked the type, that Dr. Gamini Corea was once said to have remarked that Ceylonese aspired to, when asked if he represented the starving millions of Ceylon at an FAO conference. A quick call at the house of a man with whom I would rather face wild elephants than with any other man I know, of, especially in the dark. He was out, but his wife was there surrounded by six children, all neighbours. I was called in at another house which stood well of the road, a house the scene of a snake-bite drama, two months before.

It went on like this until I turned off the main road, but not before I had had a haircut. I had come all the way from Colombo to get this haircut. One of our main trunk routes in Ceylon, this section of the main road is not served by buses. Although I had regaled myself with plantain and hard bread, I was as hungry as a lion, and feeling as weak as a kitten, when I came to my first boutique on the track in two miles. With fifteen minutes to dusk, the landlord, a total stranger from miles away, and a married man invited me to stay the night, but I had to press on. There are elephants along this part of the road in the wet season.

Arrived I at a house in the village that was my destination, unseen, though people may have seen my torchlight. I went along the top

of a tank bund, and when I was approximately opposite the house, I called the names of various occupants to ask them to indicate the path down to the house. One of the sons met me at the top of the tank bund, and as the bund had been built up recently, he helped me down the steep side as all the tracks had been obliterated. His brother met me at the foot of the bund, and we all went to the house. The time was half-past seven, and they had all eaten, yet, the daughter, a child, and her mother set to, presently, to cook me rice, and a curry of *murunga* or drumsticks. They put in very little chilly, but much salt to please me. There were seven children of whom only two, I think, were girls. They had an uncle who had married recently, one who had sworn to be a bachelor all his life. I went to the tank to have a bath and wash some clothers. From the top of the bank or tank bund, to the water's edge, was another steep slope, and here, too, I had to be helped, but the help was given generously, without my having to ask. I bathed first so that my body could dry off while I washed my clothes. A stone used for washing clothes, and in the water, was the only dry flat surface around, and on it I put all the clothes those to be washed, and those not, with the two cakes of soap, one for my bath, and the other for the clothes. The lad who accompanied me, held my torch and used it when it was necessary. I slept in the only room on quite an adequate bed and the lad was on the floor beside me. I have rarely slept more soundly.

In the morning I had a round of visits to make, which I kept to the least number possible. One man was making a new house. The walls of brick, I think it was, were up, the door-frames, and the window frames, were in, but the roof had still to go on. He had called in people from elsewhere to do the work. He was a farmer's son, but he had a job. On a holding, near by, there was a well being dug. These were just a few of the events that I care to mention. To mention them all would be tedious.

The lads of this village were helping build a *pansala* or temple in a deserted village, one evacuated nearly ten years ago. There were

two carts from the village there and a number of lads. I think their work for the day was done, and they were going home for lunch. They would have to pass through another village to do so, not one of those men were at the *pansala* when I dropped in. The priest looked as old as I have seen any, but he was active.

* * *

DR. UDAGAMA'S CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Children Made The Guinea-Pigs Of Educational Experimentation

by E. Seemanpillai

A totally new concept of Education is, it would seem, the first offspring of every new political administration. This new concept is ex professo superior to the ideology espoused and proclaimed by any earlier alien administration.

There has been within living memory a three-fold approach to Education: the colonial, the so-called neo-colonial and now the republican approach to Education. The colonial had a long run of nearly 150 years, the neo-colonial and the republican approaches very much shorter spells.

And now with the hustings in the near offing we shall live to see the superimposition of a further fresh ideology on the burgeoning "totally new concept" fathered by Dr. Udagama in the 11nd Sirimavo Administration.

In an earlier handout—I believe it was to a UNESCO bulletin, vide the *Ceylon Observer Magazine* Edition of 22 September 1974—Dr. Udagama had characterised the entirely new approach with the pregnant words: "Education is Politics".

If the learned doctor's asseveration is to be accepted by lesser-placed mortals, we shall have as many concepts of Education as there are systems of political philosophy. There would thus appear to be no common permanent values in education, no rock-bottom prin-

ciples: everything would be in flux, universal mobilism would ride triumphant destroying without preserving, changing without conserving. Every new ministry would ply the hatchet and the sledgehammer ploughing up even substructures to rebuild on fresh foundations. These would in turn be churned up again in the not too distant future by yet other architects, artisans, iconoclasts, revolutionaries.

OUR CHILDREN the progeny of aligned and non-aligned citizens, are the guinea-pigs of educational experimentation. The experimenters are the bureaucrats ensconced in Malay Street, short-lived and short-living careerists, for the most part dancing attendance on ministers and other politicians. Bureaucrats come and go but our children go on for ever.

We ourselves join in the obloquy heaped on the earlier administration with swinish phrase soiling their addition. We silently acquiesce in the vandalism that follows offering nothing constructive to those silent movers yearning to build Jerusalem in Lanka's green and pleasant land. Education, I would venture to add, is not wholly vituperative of the past: conserving whatever is deemed of enduring value, it should at the same time be constructive of the future striving to elicit and develop the best in each for the well-being of one and all. Humbling conceding that there was much good in earlier insights, it should not presume or protest too much over its own native excellence.

DR. UDAGAMA is not overhappy with pedagogic efforts to cover the prescribed syllabus. Covering the syllabus is the teacher's most pressing concern if he is to ensure that his tender charges are adequately primed to meet the challenge of every question flung at them by the examiner who, it should not be forgotten, is billed to set the paper not on a portion of the syllabus but on the syllabus in its entirety. If the syllabus need not be followed and covered as well, there would appear to be hardly any reason why it should have been drawn up at all and prescribed.

Unwittingly Dr. Udagama has disclosed why there should have been such a massacre at

the O.L: the syllabus in most cases was not covered.

Education is politics and candidates more often than not, especially in the bigger cities, were politically engaged in the fervid belief that such involvement would doubtless cover a multitude of their sins of omission and commission.

The smallest child has, we agree an incentive, a very strong inducement, to attend school, the smaller the child the more pronounced this incentive in: to collect the bun or the biscuits. The syllabus is perhaps interesting, the bun far more attractive and compelling. Hence the nil dropout rate in grades 1 and 2. For the higher grades no figures are disclosed! The lure of juvenile employment and the consequential freedom from parental control in an increasingly permissive environment together with the new enforced rates for unskilled labour, far outweigh the comparatively meagre rewards to be reaped by further schooling and the laborious attainment of some modest literary competency or an equally modest mechanical dexterity.

During the colonial and neo-colonial eras, it would be pertinent to recall, the role and rule of the attendance officer was a factor to be contended with, especially in the remoter villages, by the peasant-parent indifferent to the need of drilling his offspring in the three R's. Conspicuous

Tribune

Sir,

I notice a few letters in *Tribune* regarding its small print. But may I ask why there are so many mistakes in spelling, missing words and bad composition in your otherwise excellent journal? Don't you have any proof-readers?

D. V. Wijegoonewardena
295, Baseline Road,
Colombo 9.
13.10.75

After thirty years of our new and ever changing system of education, proof readers in the English language have become a dying species of *rara avis*. Bad composition stems from the same cause though more meticulous sub-editorial work will minimise it—Ed.

Purpose of Education

is that officer now by his absence, perhaps he has vanished altogether from the scene of his earlier labours.

In the Observer Magazine of 14 September 1975 Dr. Udagama has proclaimed the purpose of Education in relation to his new reforms to be to provide a very knowledgeable, free-thinking, and useful citizen of Sri Lanka.

Cerebration is an internal process ever free and unfettered, its external manifestations alone being subject to the inhibitions of organized society. We omit for the nonce further consideration of the semantics of free thinking independent of both logic and psychology as also of sociology, assessing only its repercussions on the knowledgeable and utilitarian aspects of the system now in operation.

If as a result of free thinking in the upper grades at school, the drop-out rate is appreciably high, alarmingly so especially in the rapidly industrialized sectors, not very knowledgeable would the citizen be nor of very high utility value to the democratic state. Strictly proletarian would the eventual outcome be, an asset neither to democracy nor to larger humanity.

REVERTING to syllabus-consideration, the curriculum development official has planned for full coverage of the syllabus in 150 days. Dr. Udagama does not demur: to him as to ourselves full coverage is not the sole purpose of Education. But what is the conscientious, working-to-rule teacher to do on covering the syllabus in full within the planned 150 days? What would the students do during the balance 60 days, two-fifths of the coverage period? Perhaps the Dalton plan of 50 years ago for revision and the updating of information?

As to question papers and answer scripts, we are informed that the questions have been devised by practising teachers drawn from the 25 educational districts in the Island. We are also informed that all (sic) practising teachers would mark the scripts. Quite apart from the mathematics and statistics of marking over which there has recently been such a commotion outside Malay Street, the system adumbrated would not fail to ensure that the questions to be set are an open secret well in advance of the examination

together with the answer thereto, and that individual performances would require no official intimidation. Inimical to free thinking and originality of approach the system would encourage reproduction on a massive scale, itself so obnoxious to genuine advancement, together with the manufacture and sale, on an equally massive scale, of model question and answers.

REPRODUCTION, it may be observed, has become so much the besetting sin of higher and now of lower education that the present reforms together with the publicized *modus operandi*, far from discouraging any such pernicious tendencies, will actually provide the amplest scope for their development and, eventually, for their infecting penetration into every sphere of human endeavour.

The havoc thus wrought on inventiveness and originality of conception without which the human genius is drowned to stagnation, is well nigh incalculable at once and irreparable: the national school and kindred other institutions of similar intent become hardly distinguishable from stereotyped fac-

tories churning out instead thousands of grim visionless humans ill-fitted to meet the challenge of new or novel situations.

Faced then with this sombre turn to educational endeavour what is the poor perplexed and bewildered parent to do? His progeny is the future of Lanka for whom the State is inescapably pledged to provide the fullest scope for the flowering of ascertained aptitudes, find adequate food, shelter, clothing and congruent employment.

"Reform it altogether," would he say with Hamlet in a mood of deepest dejection or would his proliferating progeny, frustrated and forlorn, cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war resorting to that extreme radicalism which Omar Khayyam seems to suggest in utter desperation?

Ah, Love! could thou and I with
Fate conspire
To grasp this Sorry Scheme of
Things entire
Would not we shatter it to bits—
and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's
Desire?

RAILWAYS

IS IT NOT TRUE that the Wellawatte Station premises is a standing monument to Railway neglect and inefficiency? That this station is not only in a filthy and dilapidated condition—far worse than any other station—but for months now the major part of the building has been without a roof? That many ask whether this another way of reminding the Tamils (there is a vast concentration of them in Wellawatte) that they must cast aside the FP-TUF and embrace the LSSP before they could receive any of the benefits of good government? That this was also the reason why the Northern line was the most neglected?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that technical officers of the CGR, based on Ratmalana, have now begun to whisper privately that the Tribune was absolutely correct about what it has said about the new Canadian locomotives? That the wheels were getting wasted (because of the incorrect specifications) and that they were being "re-ground" (or some other technical process) many many months before they were ever due? That some of these officers have also mentioned that these engines were fitted with gadgets which are of no use in the CGR? That there are many superfluities which had only added to the cost? That engine drivers have been instructed not to use them? That some of the braking devices were also superfluities? That officers who went to take delivery had pointed out that some of these extra gadgets were unnecessary for Sri Lanka? The they had been told to sticking to the business of taking delivery and that they should not poke their snouts into matters which had been decided upon by higher authorities? That these officers say that the fault was not with the Canadians but with the gentleman (or gentlemen) from Colombo who placed the orders (contravening specifications which has been followed by the CGR over the years in ordering locomotives)? That this question of locomotives is a matter worth serious probing?

THAT WE ARE MOVING remorselessly to such a cataclysmic catastrophe in our dealings with the generation we are shortly to send forth or have already in the recent past sent forth from our schools, there are many many indications with the gloomiest possible prognostications. Putting off D-day with little morsels of relief and sunshine here and there, will not do. The vituperation and the sundry hurling of charges of ineptitude and misdirection must cease. The hand must be set to the plough with no harking back to past follies or vindictive measures.

A bright future must be spelt out to our young hopefuls. Measures effective for the ringing-in of a thousand years of peace and progress must be laid with firm unflinching hands. If we attempt reform and a thorough reform at that, let it not issue forth in Malay Street ukases and pronouncements but in deference to and in concordance with the collective vision of a competent Board not wedded to politics nor involved in political essayings but reflecting the sterling commonsense of dedicated practitioners to whom Education is not politics but lifelong service to the youth of this now unhappy land.



A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS?

A Testament Of Concern

by Bryan de Kretzer

I LOVE THIS LAND and people, and fain would serve here. This must be my reason for this concern. As I look about me I see large numbers of our peoples sitting idle for no one has employed them.

I hear promises of food for all, but know that thousands have little to eat. And, I see dirt. Despite all the promises and bills and laws and speeches these are the three dark demons that stalk our beloved land. Year in year out we have been assured of light at the end of the tunnel; and the unemployed numbers increase, the battle for self-sufficiency in food appears lost, and the filth in our streets remains. This must be

the judgement on the performance of our leaders.

I believe that our leaders mean well. One recently exulted in the large number of Bills passed by this Government. The illusion of people whose profession is speech is to imagine that a Bill being passed and made law *ipso facto* accomplishes its objective. Nothing is, of course, further from the truth. History is replete with noble ideals entombed in vast mausoleums of nobler speech and these lie gasping for breath, for life, as fish do in dried out tanks. Politicians have to learn that the passing of Bills is only the tiny first step on the march to its implementation.

LOOK AT our three major problems, first **EMPLOYMENT**. No Government since 1948 has resolved this problem. All of course have made brave promises about it. And each in turn have made gestures towards the solution by giving a few appointments to relatives or friends. I have recently watched the large numbers of men employed under the Keuneman Plan for the restoration of the Dutch Canal between Colombo and Puttalam. They appear to be a fine band of men and it is a hard job they do. But where were they all prior to the plan? Frankly, sitting like frogs by the roadside of the homes doing nothing. And, when the Canal is restored, back I suppose they will go again to frog existence. **If I were in the men's place, I would be strongly tempted to put back at night the sand taken out by day to ensure work performance!**

Second **FOOD** has been given high priority by all our Governments. Yet despite mountains of money and oceans of plans, the gap remains. We continue to import a great proportion of our food requirements, and every Government in turn safely promises self-sufficiency next year. What is keeping us going at the moment is not our own food drive triumphs, but American aid in the form of flour. We have talked much of export drives but apart from gems which nature has given us, the most successful minor export crop is made up of the larger numbers of our children who are being sent across the seas to other lands.

Third **DIRT**, I suppose we are so accustomed to the squalor of

our towns and villages that we are not aware of its extent. I often meet Englishmen who make regular flights to Canton in China, they have told me that there is not a single city in Europe as clean as the cities of China! I'm afraid I have still to hear any favourable comment on our cities—our cities and our villages rise up as dirty and unattractive as they have ever been. People who are ready to put up with dirt must become dirty inside too, that perhaps accounts for our greed, corruption and immorality.

For all our troubles we continue of course to look to Foreign Aid to help us out. Third world nations continually bleat about better terms of trade. One newspaper editorial, published in Sri Lanka, actually hailed the evidence of a change of heart in the developed nations regarding this matter. It had something to do with some UNO speech of Kissinger. When will we grow up? If the West is ready to talk, it is only because of some pressure hard to resist. It does not stem from any change of heart.

In economic life, men still operate on laws of grim survival and not one person in the West intends to go without anything just to help us out. Fifty years back, White men in Australia would go out of an afternoon on a "abo shoot." (Aborigines) The same instincts inform their sons, and ours too lest we grow self-righteous about all this.

The President of the World Bank continues to urge Rich nations to give 1% of their income to help poor nations. If he succeeds, heaven help the poor nations. Aid generally is the surest way to ensure the death of a people. It is not aid our people need—they need guts. They need to recognise that we face the future with our backs to the wall—that is a splendid place to be in, incidentally, if we want to make out and come up front. But aid is a cheaper way, gets some soft jobs for some folks, and helps a few chaps to go to Switzerland. And, it ensures our continuing dependence and helplessness.

The only place where work seems to be going on apace these days in Sri Lanka is on our roads.

They are being widened, they are being improved. It gives the impression that here at any rate there is no fuel crisis. Cars are in abundance. More imports are being planned. Each time the price of petrol is raised, our peoples resolve to increase the number of cars and the speed at which we travel in them.

Poor folks subjected to bus travel continue to be tortured, however. There are obvious ways of course to cure these particular economic ills, but we are a nation which shuns a hard road, and places much reliance on appearance.

I gather all this road effort has to do with the Non-aligned conference—one would have thought that the best tonic to Third world leaders, mainly from badly run, bankrupt countries, would be to walk the road from the airport to the conference hall, both to symbolise their countries plight and, to nerve us ordinary folks to high endeavour. But, instead, most of them will travel in Mercedes or Peugeot cars—bought on loans.

There is a sense in which our destinies seem to be in the hand of playboys who are unable to grasp the serious nature of our national crisis. They live in some dream world and we in a nightmare world. Who can help feeling concerned?

* * *

Varsity Admission

Sir,

District quotas and population quotas are in the news again. Talent and its manifestation through attainment are secondary matters; the under-talented will now sit cheek by jowl with the talented, a drag on the talented, a menace to the lecturer, grimly hopeful that selection alone and politics will supply what nature has failed to provide. No wonder syllabuses cannot be covered: cramming and cribbing will flourish to the utter detriment of true learning.

E. Seemanpillai

Mylambaveli,
Chenkaladi.
14.10.75

LETTERS

● Nationalisation Of Estates

● Hoodwinking The Public

Sir,

I am not a capitalist by any stretch of imagination. I am only a humble mercantile clerk working out a mere existence. I will be retiring from my post in a year's time when I attain the age of 3 score years. I have however, been able to save a small amount of money over the years due to my very thrifty living and have invested these savings in shares of Rupee Plantation Companies as I had a great faith in this type of investment. I have just obtained a loan from my provident fund to purchase a roof over my head and when I retire, I will be only receiving 25% of my provident fund money for my future existence. I have no pension and no other income except the dividends I receive from the shares. The only land I possess is the 14 perches and the small house which I have purchased and I suppose the small plot of land 6'x3' when I go to the great beyond and lie undisturbed.

I have two children, both daughters, and it was my intention to transfer the shares I have acquired in their names as their dowry when the time comes to give them in marriage. What is my plight now? Due to the government's intention to nationalise Rupee Company Estates there is absolutely no demand for my shares and I am unable to sell them at any price nor can I raise a loan against them which I did earlier to tide over emergencies. I am almost worth nothing and the future looks very gloomy indeed. Had I invested the money in land or in any other form of investment rather than in shares of plantation companies, the position would have been different and I know a large number of others who are faced on a similar plight.

At present under the Land Reform Law, a person can hold 50 acres of land. Just because I have purchased small quantities of sha-

res in various Plantation Companies, mainly in tea companies, my savings are worth nothing at the moment. I appeal to our worthy Prime Minister and to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Lands to take a sympathetic view of the plight of small investors like me and grant some redress.

A Small Investor.

Colombo.
8.10.75

*

Sir,

I bought a box of handkerchiefs, small as ever on the 25th September. It was wrapped in cellophane, so that no one could peer into the act of injustice inside the box. Marked at Rs. 8.50, it was sold blithely at Regals No. 50, Main Street, Bandarawela as a box of elegant, six, ladies' handkies. Six, suddenly became three when the wrapping was opened, and the Novelty Products label really justified itself. Rumour has it that these boxes and handkies come forth from Gampaha, but what has happened to the Bureau of Ceylon Standards? To pay Rs. 8.50 for a box of handkies is bad enough; To discover that it is not six but three, is worse. This is what happens when you try to make a fast buck at the expense of the poor man. The post-card on the cardboard cover is mounted in ink and the enormous labour that goes into the production of one of these can be imagined with some poor working girls becoming poorer as they spend themselves pasting boxes and drawing inelegant lines and the owner of Novelty products thinks that it is novel: selfishness is always the same, *tanha*, greed.

Royal Stores Bandarawela, should not sell these products. It has another novelty product: The two handkies marked and sold for Rs. 7.50. The customer is told that there are four handkies inside! In fact the astute 'arranger' has made it look like four, when it is only two. 5" by 5" of a piece of Sri Lanka cloth sold for Rs. 3.50. Is there a special Niraya for such producers? The days of Novelty products are numbered. Customers, beware!

Norbert Gunasekera

Bandarawela.
7.10.75

* * *

Confidentially

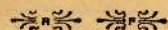
Back To The Railways

IS IT NOT A HAPPY AUGURY that Minister KBR (now in charge of the CGR) has realised that something has to be done about the Railways immediately? That he has, according to the *Daily News* of October 6, decided to appoint a Special Committee to report on what should be done to improve matters in the CGR? That the sooner this Committee completes its work and makes its recommendations the better? That the Minister need not wait for the Committee's findings to take action? That there are so many glaring defects in the CGR which calls for immediate action? That one of the best things he has done is to ban the complete sale of liquor on the trains? That the simple fact is that the Catering Service had degenerated into a racket? That only liquor had been available for a long time—except for a few short eats as a smokescreen? That what the Minister and the CGR authorities must realise is that a hardcore of powerful operators inside the Catering Service have for sometime now run the show as a private business? That the drinks and eats which were officially supplied and sold—the Catering Service was part of the official CGR show—was only a fraction of the total amount brought into and sold in the restaurant cars and canteens? That the bulk sold was the "private property" of this hardcore nucleus of catering service operators? That these gentlemen had at the early stages of LSSP rule practically dismantled the excellent Central Kitchen which had been set up and had functioned? (That the man in charge then had been transferred out as an FPer and a Rampala stooge—both of which he was not—and after sometime in some other section had been interdicted on some charge? That this official had been kept nearly three years without an inquiry? That an inquiry was only started a few weeks before the LSSP quit?) That Minister KBR has done well that to insist that disciplinary inquiries should be completed within three months and that the LSSP bureaucratic habit of penalising officials whose faces they did not like by keeping

them on indefinite interdicted must end? That to come back to the Catering Service that with the slow deterioration and practically liquidation of the Central Kitchen, the private operators seem to have taken over? That it was not difficult to introduce private stocks of liquor and foodstuffs to sell in the restaurants and canteens? That an unnecessary fire in a restaurant car, stationary at the Fort station, was made the excuse to stop all hot tea on the trains? For over a hundred years hot tea, coffee and food had been served on our trains? That in the era of the LSSP this hot tea and food service was stopped—probably as a bourgeois luxury? That this only opened the way for the liquor scales to escalate? That with Sri Lanka making of the finest ceramic ware the cups, saucers and plates in the CGR catering service are a disgrace to the country? That foreign tourists have been often seen to refuse to eat even bread and butter—with stale fish cutlets—served on such filthy crockery? That the glasses and tumblers are in a worse state and only drunks and alcoholics would be willing to use them?

IS IT THEREFORE NOT HEARTENING that Minister KBR is anxious to give a better deal to 600,000 daily commuters on the CGR? That under the LSSP the most neglected part of the Railway was the Northern line which had the greatest volume of traffic and which brought the greatest revenue (if not profit) to the CGR? That according to the *Daily News*, a Ministry spokesman had stated that the proposed Committees terms of reference would include "shortcomings in the train services, the lack of punctuality, the scheme and clean passenger carriages, a method of solving the problem of unit trains, revision of the present time tables, improvement in the catering services and the provision of increased number of sleeping berths on long distance trains"? That the Committee will "also advise the Minister on how much expenditure will be incurred to provide better and cleaner facilities to the public in 167 railway stations in the country"? (That if the Minister insisted that railway employees did an eight-hour's turn of work all stations will clean and in good shape? That these gentlemen should be persuaded to do free sharamadana work to make

up for the work they did not do in the last five years and to bring the neglect in these stations up to date? That for a start they must cut and carry away the shrubs, weeds and grass in which the vast majority of the stations are now enveloped? That it would be foolish to spend money in getting such works done on overtime—as the unions would want—because the neglect and damage was due to work not done by these union enthusiasts themselves?) That the Ministry spokesman had also indicated that "the Committee will also inquire and report on the general discipline of CGR employees including a review of their duty rosters which have a direct bearing on the conveniences of the travelling public"? That to achieve the Committee and the Minister must be able to persuade these unions to accept that there are obligations which workers and unionists must discharge for the remuneration they get? That even if they have grievances an eight-hour job of work has to be done? That the Ministry spokesman had also revealed that the Minister was anxious to get something done because "users of the train services in this country were increasing two fold each year"? That "statistics showed that while in 1969 a little over 179 million persons travelled by train annually according to statistics so far this year over 358 million persons will rely on the train as a mode of transport in 1976"? That with the increase in the price of petrol and diesel private transport will be less and less? That people will be compelled—as they have already been compelled—to use the CGR and the CTB? That various gimmicks and stunts had been resorted to by the LSSP administration to make pretence that the third class passengers were being specially catered for? That sleeping berths on the Northern line were abolished? (That this, it was felt, was to punish the FP and the TUF leaders who used them and also others who refused to bow to LSSP supremacy?) That sleeping berths were available on certain other long distance night trains? That with all the inconveniences heaped on the higher class passengers (who paid through their noses for small mercies), third class passengers did not get any benefits?



EARTH MOVERS

For Jungle Clearing

And Other Earth Work

in the


VAVUNIYA DISTRICT

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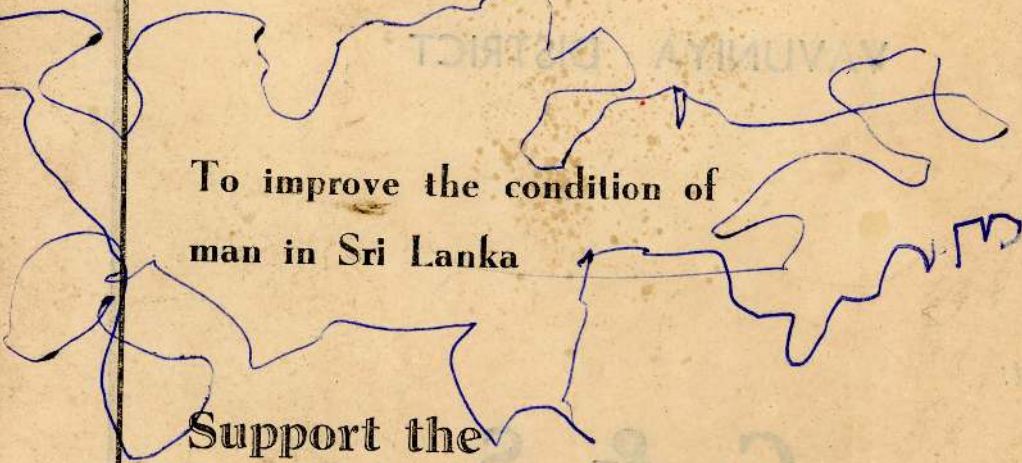
G & S

128th Mile Kandy - Jaffna Road,
PULIYANKULAM.

...They accuse me of leaning to the
Right. I shall not lean either to the Left
or the Right. I shall tread the Middle
Path — I shall continue to proceed
along that path whatever the brickbats
I receive.....



Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike



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