

TRIBUNE

ROTTEN BUSINESS

A Doctor Speaks Up

THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION at its last General Meeting, ceased to be an Association dominated by the Colombo Specialists which it long has been. It has been "captured" by the younger officers of the Department, some of whom are probably burning with a sense of urgent reform. Reform in undoubtedly an excellent thing, but but it is necessary to point out that it is not necessary to introduce special legislation or offer bribes in the form of higher salaries in order to persuade medical practitioners to conform to the ethics of the profession.

For the general run of government medical officers (practically all are new entrants) private practice

is taboo. Only this rule has not been enforced. And, as for Specialists, whilst they are permitted to practice privately as consultants, they make their money as General Practitioners under guise of being Specialists. These twin evils can be eliminated without the sugar coated pill of higher salaries (no doubt higher salaries would be appreciated but it is necessary to view the question of private practice by government doctors in the correct perspective).

Environment

It is unfortunate that the younger officers in the Department today were compelled, during their career at the medical College, to live in an environment where the main topic of extra curricular conversation was the amount of money certain Specialists (attached to the Colombo General Hospital) were able to squeeze out of their private patients. These students grew up in a world where they saw these Specialists ostentatiously enshrined in palatial mansions in Ward Place and drive round in high-powered American cars. The result of this environmental background was that whilst a section of the students yearned to emulate the worldly-wise Specialists others grew up with a sense of frustration, nursing irrational obsessions against a system which was

not as hopelessly bad as it was made out by the Specialists and their misguided adherents. Students who admired the "successful" Specialists, no sooner they qualified, resorted to the same ruses and devices.

What is first needed is a through exposure of the methods of these Specialists, who have set up and continue to maintain the worst possible professional standards. I am personally aware that in Colombo and the outstation hospitals Members of the Royal College of Physicians and Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, cast aside all ethical standards laid down by these two great institutions of London, to collect unconscionable fees, sell beds in Government hospitals, and see patients in their homes not as Consultants but as General Practitioners. It must be remembered that on these officers the Government of Ceylon has spent on an average at least Rs. 20,000 to enable them to obtain their post graduate and specialist qualifications. The least the tax-payers of the country are entitled to expect is that these officers would devote their time to serve the public which has so generously paid for their education.

Visiting

Serving the public is the last idea which enters the minds of these
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TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW
COLOMBO, Sept. 8, 1956

Vol. 3. No. 17

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Our comment last week on the suggestions of the GMOA to end private practice among Government medical officers has brought in a veritable avalanche of letters. We publish one above from a very senior officer in the Medical Department with a distinguished and outstanding record. Though the letter came fully authenticated we took the extra precaution of checking up its authenticity. For obvious reasons, the name and identity of the writer cannot be disclosed, but we commend his frank letter to the readers of the "Tribune".

FILM ILLEGAL

Edward G. Robinson
English at The Liberty

I wonder how a local judge would react to a defending counsel who uppercuts a witness and lays him out in open court, in order to prove his point. Or swallows a liquid alleged to be poison-the chief exhibit in the prosecution - and continues as if he had just refreshed himself with an orangeade... In the first instance, I have not the slightest doubt that my learned friend would be charged with battery, assault and contempt of court. And in the second, he would presumably be had up for the gastronomic destruction of material evidence in the case, and by that means hampering the course of Justice. To the overcritical and those unfortunates like myself who have, at one time or another, had the felicity of being roared at by the lions of the law and summarily squashed by judges for not giving monosyllabic answers, this kind of melodrama may lack verisimilitude. But they do make a good story. And when you have Ed. G. Robinson doing his stuff, they begin to be almost convincing.

In this film Robinson plays the part of Victor Scott the District Attorney who always wins his cases. He knows all the legal booby traps like the back of his hand. He knows how to get at the heart strings of

Grand Juries. He has a perfervid interest in convictions only. He is cocksure, egotistic, case-hardened. Men are condemned not so much by their own actions but by the clever quibbles and unctuous intonations of Victor Scott. But one fine day he sends by the perfection of his art, a palpably innocent man to his death. He tries to stop the execution, but is too late. His conscience - indeed he has one - cannot take it. He abdicates and fortified by the consolations of alcohol, begins to re-orientate. He sets up in practice, in a small way, as a civil lawyer. But things don't turn out to be as civil as he imagined. He gets a retainer from a racketeer, whose stooges, it is his duty, to save from jail or the chair, by hook and if necessary, by crook. But he has to draw the line when the woman whom he loves in his secret heart gets herself involved in a charge for murder. Scott is obliged to bite the hand that feeds him: a bite that very nearly costs him his life. But he dares it and does it. And the proof of the innocence of the accused is a bullet in his stomach. The case is dismissed. And Scott, perhaps for the first time, achieves a victory lying on his back. And everything ends happily.

It would hardly be a compliment to call Edward G. Robinson a film star. He is a singular personality, a compelling presence, a cultivated actor. The matinee idols of the day



the Pecks, the Flynns, the Bogarts, are very small beer compared to his particular vintage, and can't help looking a little callow and wishy washy. He has been in films longer than I can remember, but I doubt that he has made a film which might be called a potboiler.

This film starts with a bang, a series of bangs in fact, and the tempo is maintained right to the end. Nevertheless it would be nothing to write home about without Edward G. Robinson.

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SUNDAY CHROWICHE

LI SHIH-CHEN

Li Shih-Chen (1518-1593), one of China's greatest pharmacologists, was born in the latter part of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). His *Pen Tsao Kang Mu* or *Compendium of Materia Medica*, published about 1596, was not only the greatest work of ancient Chinese pharmacology, but has continued to contribute to modern medical science.

This article was written three eminent Chinese: *Lung Po-chien*, the Director of the Chinese Medical Research Institute of the Central Health Research Academy; *Li Tao*, a Professor of the Department of Medical History, Peking Medical College; and *Chang Hui-chien*, a research worker in classical Chinese literature who is engaged in the study of the life and work of Li Shih-chen. We reprint this article with acknowledgments to the magazine *People's China* in which it appeared in January 1955. The concluding part of this article will appear next week.

This article is a pointer to what might be done in Ceylon. Western practitioners in Ceylon now turn their noses up at Ayurveda whilst our Ayurvedic pundits want no contact with modern scientific medicine. This unfriendly and irresponsible attitude on the part of both sections must be eradicated and a synthesis evolved as in China where age-old Ayurvedic remedies are being scientifically tested and developed.

China ranks among the world's earliest pioneers in medical studies. Pharmacology, called *Pen Tsao* ("materia medica," or more literally, "herbal") in Chinese, had already been elevated to the status of an independent branch of learning early in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Enriched by the introduction of Hindu therapeutics from the third century A.D. on-

wards it was codified as the *Hsin Hsiu Pen Tsao* or New Materia Medica in the early years of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) under imperial sponsorship. This was the first materia medica that had ever been written in China or anywhere else.

Chinese pharmacology soon spread to other Asian countries, notably Japan, Korea and Arabia. According to Marco Polo, Chinese medicine was known in Europe as early as the thirteenth century. By the fifteenth century, when China had developed a flourishing maritime trade, large quantities of Chinese medicines were shipped to the West. Ever since then rhubarb, China-root and cassia have remained important items of export from China.

The empire of the Ming Dynasty, founded in 1368 as the outcome of a peasant revolution, waxed strong in the sixteenth century. During this period, medicine, especially clinical medicine, advanced by leaps and bounds. A huge mass of pharmacological data, accumulated over a period of some 1,700 years,

was awaiting scholarly research, and the need to compile a new materia medica for use by practitioners was pressing.

Compendium of Materia Medica

Li Shih-chen's magnum opus, *Pen Tsao Kang Mu* was really the crystallization of the clinical and pharmacological experience of the ancient Chinese people up to the sixteenth century. It lists no less than 1,892 kinds of medical substances, 1,094 of them of vegetable origin, thus making it an invaluable aid to Chinese botanical classification. For over three hundred years it has been the constant companion of every Chinese practitioner.

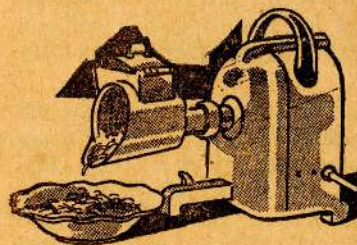
As an important book on materia medica the *Pen Tsao Kang Mu* has long acquired international fame. It reached Japan in 1605—ten years after its publication—and was twice translated into Japanese, once in 1783 and again in 1929. Among those who either partially translated or consulted the *Pen Tsao Kang Mu*

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Li Shih-Chen

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when writing books on China were: Michael Boym, a Pole, who wrote *Flora of China* (in Latin, published in 1659); du Halde, a Frenchman, who wrote *A Description of the Empire of China* (published in 1735, and containing two chapters on Chinese pharmacology); A. Tatarinov, Russian physician and Sinologist, who compiled the *Manual of Chinese Materia Medica* in 1857. An abridged German translation of the *Pen Tsao Kang Mu*, called *Dalitsch Plantzenbuch*, was published in 1928. There have been ten or more English translations. One of them was done by B. E. Read; its first seven volumes appeared between 1928 and 1941.

An Able Physician

Li Shih-chen was born in Kichun, Hupeh Province, in 1518, of a family which had followed the medical profession for two generations. In the feudal society of ancient China science was looked at askance, and a medical career meant low social status. His father led a life of worry on a meagre income. He would rather have seen young Li take up an academic career and work for official advancement.

Since childhood Li had been a lover of nature and of reading books about it. His own health was poor; and this, plus his medical environment, gave him a strong propensity to study medicine. However, not wishing to hurt his father's feelings he began to go in for official examinations when he was fourteen.

The official examination system of feudal China was simply a device employed by the ruling class to enlist the service of the nation's intellectuals in propping up the reactionary regime. The examinations were run on extremely stereotyped and irrational principles. Li passed the county examination but three times failed in the provincial examination. After his third failure, he relinquished all hopes of official advancement and decided to go in for medicine. Li soon afterwards started practice.

He found the old *Pen Tsao* or herbals full of errors. They were arranged in a hopelessly arbitrary way. Being court publications they took no cognizance of popular prescriptions, however tried and tested by long experience they might be.

In Li's time the *Pen Tsao* was the book most frequently consulted by medical practitioners. Realizing the vital effect this had on the health of thousands of people, Li resolved to write a new *Pen Tsao*. His plan received encouragement and support from his father,

He began his work by making an exhaustive collection of ancient books and writings on materia medica. He studied them carefully and took copious notes. He made researches into the history, properties and efficacy of the medicines, and also read widely in other fields.

Having steeped himself in book learning, Li took up field work to verify his conclusions. He was a keen observer: he knew what to look for, and how to assess his findings. He examined and compared all kinds of plants—their habitats, sprouts, flowers, petals, fruits, leaves, roots, odour, taste, and so on. He studied not only the medicinal plants grown in his own garden but also those growing wild. He studied animal anatomy, and once opened up a pangolin to find out whether it really ate ants.

As has been said above, Li was born into a family of low social status and straitened circumstances. In his father's clinic he came into daily contact with the poor and sick. He saw how his sympathetic father gave them free treatment. From early childhood he had a

fellow feeling towards the poor. After he started his own medical practice he continued his father's humanitarian spirit. Poor patients were charged reduced rates and the exceedingly poor were treated entirely free of charge. During an epidemic which came in the wake of a great flood, he worked hard as a volunteer to help the sick and dying.

Li not only loved the working people but also respected their knowledge and experience. While making observations in the fields he made the acquaintance of many peasants, hunters, woodcutters and fishermen whose advice he frequently asked. With their friendly help he was able to gather much useful knowledge. He worked hard to collect folk recipes, many of them jealously guarded. Once, at a postal station, he saw a group of cart-drivers cooking a kind of pink flower. He recognized them as convolvulus. "Why," he asked, "do you eat this kind of stuff?" "We travel all the year round," they replied. "Nearly everyone of us suffers from some trouble in muscles or joints. This flower is a cure. It is a recipe handed down from time immemorial". Li immediately wrote this down. He collected similar lore from his patients, and appreciated it more than their payments.

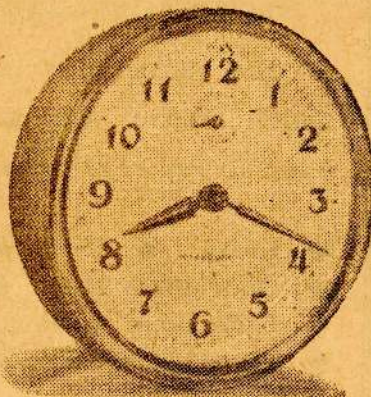
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FARM SURPLUS

The recent Agreement concluded between India and U.S. which makes available to the former the agricultural surplus of the latter on extremely advantageous terms has focussed attention on one of America's most anxious problems. This article throws revealing light on some aspects of this problem.

A spectre haunts the United States. It is the spectre of "surplus" crops. No less than 8,000 million worth of wheat, corn, rice, and cotton are stored in warehouses throughout the nation, for which 1 million daily rent is paid. In addition to these surpluses, the market is also glutted with pork, milk, sugar, peanuts, butter flaxseed oil and cottonseed oil.

All in all, American agriculture seems disastrously un sound. This plague of plenty furrows many an official brow in Washington and is cause for dire head-scratching.

Past efforts of the Government to curtail crop production have met with a strange response from farmers. Despite the constant reduction of acreage under Federal control, the advanced technology of American farming boosts crop output each year. For instance, last year on an acreage allotment estimated to yield 10 million bales of cotton, a natural disaster occurred — 15 million bales were ginned, causing startled waverings in the market.

Wheat is an even worse problem. Farmers who raised wheat beyond their quota and illegally fed it to livestock were summarily arrested. In order to reduce wheat stocks still further, the 1956 land allotment will be 20 percent below the 1955 figure.

With corn, President Eisenhower, in his farm message to Congress urged underplanting of allotments by 15 percent because the 1955 crop was 600 million bushels above expectation. This must be done, he said, to "reduce the incentive to produce excessive supplies of hogs and fed cattle". This incentive

will be in the nature of the "acreage reserve programme," or the "soil bank," or in words understandable by the uninitiated, rich, fertile land made idle or grown to grasses.

Competition

Much is mentioned in Government circles and through the press accepting the Challenge of the Soviet Union for economic competition. America's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, on 11 January issued a statement drafted by the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, warning the country to face up to the economic contest with the Soviet Union. It reckoned that "defeat in this contest could be as disastrous as defeat in an armaments race."

When the U.S.S.R. is opening to cultivation 75 million acres of virgin land, the United States, to shore up farm prices, plans to reimburse farmers up to 90 percent of parity, provided they *withdraw* up to 50 million acres of rich soil from production.

In Mr. Eisenhower's own words on this grave, prosperous situation: "Unless corrected, these economic reversals are a direct threat to the well-being of all our people," This, from the chief executive of the

wealthiest nation on earth, from a country whose national income of 326 billion dollars and national production of 400 billion dollars is the highest in history!

America's consternation seems to be "nothing exceeds like excess." From the Hungry Thirties, the ghostly words of Franklin D. Roosevelt announce that "one third of this nation is ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed." Maldistribution of the Booming Fifties still sees one-fourth of the nation directly affected by the treble evils. More than 8 million families (including 2 1/2 million farm families) receive an income of 2,000 dollars or less a year at a time when the national average is nearly double that sum.

Harper's Magazine, the influential American weekly, proposes alleviation of the farm problem thus:

"At least 1 million farm families ought to be nudged gradually off the land, and helped to find some useful occupation."

Cynicism being no private preserve of journalists, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Earl L. Butz is quoted as saying that "Too many people are trying to say in agriculture."

Surplus Disposal

The biggest problem of the Government is surplus disposal. During the same week that the Soviet Union — in the interest of

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FARM SURPLUS

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inducing multiple production — announced the creation of a Ministry of Automation, the United States created the brand new post of Agricultural Surplus Disposal Administrator. Those farmers who co-operate with this new Minister and who comply with federal control to reduce crop acreage will be paid in cash or kind, i.e. either in dollars or in those very surpluses which the Government bought from them in previous harvests!

It is estimated that maximum co-operation will assure the annual reduction of one million dollars worth of surpluses. If not another grain of wheat is added to current stocks, it will take eight years for complete disposal of "carry overs." In other words, since payments to farmers for the eight years to keep land idle will cost 2,666 million dol-

lars, and rental costs will amount to 1,642 million dollars, it will cost the Government 4,308 million dollars to get rid of 8 million dollars worth of surplus crops. U.S. citizens, many of whom are in want, are thus forced to pay for the knife with which to cut their own throats. This is Government planning and subsidisation with a dire vengeance.

It is noteworthy that the United States is planning to ask the Socialist countries to come to its rescue. If Congress adopts a Government proposal to repeal the Surplus Disposal Law, which confines exports of surpluses only to "friendly nations", Russia and her "satellites" can get in the queue for grain bargains — provided they pay through the nose in strategic materials!

Wheat Grower

This will take some doing since Russia, for instance, is a prime wheat grower and is beginning to grow corn in vast amounts, this year's crop being 176 percent more

than last year's. She also grows her own rice, besides buying great quantities of Burma's and Egypt's cotton is added to her own production. She grows all America's crop surpluses, and by 1959 her per capita food production will reach the current U.S. level.

However, in the interests of peaceful co-existence the Socialist states are not averse to trading with America, even on the basis of relieving her of a surplus problem. Yet it was not much over two years ago that America announced she had a very big headache in the form of vast amounts of surplus butter, and that when the Soviet Union offered to buy it, she was rebuffed.

The Socialist States for their own part have declared frequently that they are willing and, indeed, eager to trade with capitalist countries but on a mutually profitable basis. It is the East, after all, which initiated the call for more East-West trade.

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WEEK by WEEK in CEYLON

METTANANDA

The storm which flared up in the world of Ayurveda subsided last week after a conference convened by the Prime Minister. Dr. Lenora, the Principal, and the Chairman of the Board have both withdrawn the resignations they tendered and a decision on the critical issues involved have been delayed for a month. Postponement of an issue is undoubtedly one of the most useful methods of solving a crisis, but it is necessary that the time should be spent in a clear and sober consideration of the points at issue. As we pointed out last week, what is at stake is a vital principle whether Ayurveda should be permitted to stagnate in the same old moribund manner under the plea that any form of contact with the scientific developments of the West would be injurious to its well-being.

Just as much monopoly of the Western system is bad, the fossilisation of the ayurvedic system under the old world pundits will be detrimental to the development of an indigenous system which undoubtedly has many secrets to reveal for the benefit of mankind.

Unions

The daily newspapers were full of news last week about threatened splits in several of the major trade unions in the country. The Government Clerical Service Union is now in two: a faction which seems to support Sinhalese Only has set itself up as a new trade union for public servants. The threatened splits in the Quasi-Government Servants and the Mercantile Union seem to have been staved off temporarily at least. Quasi-Government servants have, it would appear, taken the position that the language problem is not one which should worry them overmuch. The troubles within the Mercantile Union too seem to have been settled on the basis of compromise "elections" to fill certain vacancies which arose as a result of disputes within the Union owing to differences in regard to the award of the Industrial Court.

Egg Hoppers

The change-over from the NP to the MEP was marked, among other things, with a change from egg-hoppers to kiribath. Egg-hoppers had almost gone out of public fashion and notice until a picture in last Saturday's *Observer* drew attention to the fact that egg-hoppers were still used for ceremonial occasions. It was reported that Azeez of the Democratic Workers Congress entertained delegates from five other Unions to an egg-hopper treat when they met to put their signatures to a memorandum to the Commissioner of Labour. The memorandum was on the question of amendments to the labour laws of the country and press publicity seemed to indicate that this memorandum was conceived of a Labour Code. Whilst it is hoped that the fate of others who believed in the cult of the egg-hoppers would not overtake the sponsors of this Code, there seems to be a great deal of confusion as to what this memorandum is all about.

Shortly after the MEP came to power, a Committee of MEP stal-

warts headed by R. E. Jayatilleke was appointed to make suggestions to amend the labour laws. At no time was it thought that these gentlemen were serious about their work about amendment of the laws, but it was believed (and there were good reasons for doing so) that this Committee, whose most active members were Themis and Karunatileke, was solely set up for the purpose of establishing MEP trade unions. They sought access to factories and other working places to interview workers under the pretext of recommending amendments. The Committee had called for submission from other trade unions (whom they wished to liquidate) before July 23. Owing to other preoccupations, this Committee does not seem to have functioned as well as it should have done so.

Now when the public had almost forgotten the existence of this Committee, six Unions suddenly caught the front-page of the daily newspapers with write-up and photographs (egg-hoppers thrown in!) about a Labour Code. In political

(continued on page 266)

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According to press reports, the Minister of Education seems anxious to grant University Charters to two Buddhist Privenas. Whilst it is no doubt a welcome step to create more Universities in the island, and whilst it is also necessary to recognise and encourage Buddhist learning, it is essential to stress that great caution must be exercised before university status is granted to any private educational institution. An obvious precaution would be to see that these institutions have attained, or have reasonable guarantees of ensuring the high standards which must be emphasised in respect of such seats of higher learning. To grant a body of persons making tall claims the necessary Charter would be no more than to put the cart before the horse.

It should not be forgotten that once University status is granted to private institutions like Buddhist Privenas, the claim for Catholics to have a University of their own and for Tamils to have yet another University cannot be resisted. The Catholics already have more than a nucleus for a University in Colombo, whilst the Tamil University Movement has gathered a great deal of momentum in recent weeks. In the circumstances, the greatest care should be exercised in the matter of granting Charters. It would be suicidal to the cause of higher education in this country if mushroom Universities, whose degrees would not be worth the paper on which its certificates are issued, were permitted at random. Before Charters are granted to any existing institutions or to any body of persons, Government should lay down and insist upon certain minimum basic standards.

NATIONALISATION

The mystery about the nationalisation of buses continues to increase with each day. The report of the team of civil service "experts" to which reference has been made in this paper before, has now been published as a sessional paper. One remarkable feature about the report is that it has not been signed by any of the persons who constituted the team. It has been custo-

mary in the past for such reports to be signed by those making it. Why has no one sought to take responsibility for the report? Is it that it is thought that all members who made the trip to India as part of the team should be bestowed with some degree of responsibility, although it is known that one or more of them had nothing to do with the writing of the report or the recommendations contained therein!

Whilst this is one aspect of the matter that needs investigation, another matter needs yet more urgent clarification. The entire basis of the report and the scheme for nationalisation is based on the promise that fares should be raised in order to make nationalised transport feasible. Without this fare increase, the bottom drops out of the scheme propounded by these "experts." The Minister of Transport, however, has in several press reports insisted that there would be no fare increase in any nationalised scheme of bus transport. Why was this report then published which goes contrary to Ministerial policy? Why does the Minister not publish a report which supports his position that nationalised transport will be possible and profitable without any fare increase?

Another matter on which there seems to be considerable doubt is the extent of the initial nationalisation. According to the report of the civil service "experts," only a very small sector of the present bus transport services should be nationalised. With this as nucleus and with the experience gained, more and more of the existing road passenger services should be nationalised and developed. The time envisaged by these "experts" from our bureaucracy seems to extend to anything from eight to fifteen years, if one is to proceed along the path marked out by them. But the Minister seems to think that the nationalisation of the entire transport system should be completed in three years. Pressure groups within and without the MEP seek to have the nationalisation done overnight. Whether the

nationalisation is done overnight or in fifteen years is a matter of policy but is one on which Government must make up its mind. To publish a report as a sessional paper which runs contrary to Ministerial policy only adds confusion to a situation which is already confounded by grave disorganisation and dissatisfaction.

CEMENT

The decision of the Government not to start a second kiln at Kankasanturai Cement Factory seems to savour of political discrimination. Already the Factory is making a nett profit of about four million rupees after paying heavy interest charges. A second kiln, which is expected to cost around ten to twelve millions, will pay for itself long before a factory can be started in any other part of the island. Kankesan cement is of excellent quality and the 80,000 tons now produced there does not meet even a third of the island's requirements. The demand for cement is rising rapidly in the island. This is so all over the world and cement prices are likely to be on the upgrade. In the circumstances, Government must reconsider its decision about the second kiln. A second and the third factory should also be started wherever feasible.

The argument that Kankasanturai could supply the cement only for the Northern sector on an economic basis owing to heavy transport charges does not bear examination if one looks at the question primarily as the increase of national production. It would be far better to develop cheaper forms of transport between Kankasanturai and Colombo, like coastal vessels, than to deliberately restrict the profitable expansion of the existing factory under the specious plea that transport charges are a major obstacle. Would it not be better for Matara or Ambalangoda (until a factory is started there) to get its cement from Kankasanturai than to transport it all the way from Japan, England or Belgium?

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★ INCOME TAX ★ TARIFFS

★ RED LITERATURE

Some weeks ago this paper focussed attention on the fact that the North Western Blue Line was operating without a valid stage carriage permit. The permit had expired sometime towards the end of March and for some inexplicable reason the Commissioner had not issued a permit either to this Company or any other company to run buses on the routes held by the North Western Blue Line. One does not know how many other bus companies are operating illegally in this manner without valid stage carriage permits, but it is interesting to know that the Commissioner has at last gazetted a notice that an Inquiry would be held into application to operate the routes held by North Western Blue Line on September 20, 1956.

The North Western Blue Line is an applicant for renewal and three other applicants have been listed, all of them who seem to be intimately connected with this Company in some way or other. The public are not interested as to who the permit holder really is as long as a good service is ensured. It is also necessary to insist that the inquiry do take place and that attempts to delay matters to enable one or more of the parties to "acquire" vehicles to bolster up their case should be resisted. There should be a final determination of matter. The parlous state in which a bus company has been permitted to operate a service illegally must end.

Income Tax

Last Saturday's *Observer* had a startling banner headline that several bus companies owed tax arrears amounting to millions of rupees to the Income Tax Department. How did these arise? Why were they not collected before?

Inquiries reveal some of the bus companies at least have a story about harsh and unfair treatment by the Department. They say that the Income Tax authorities had sent them two or three years assessments in on "go" and called upon them to "pay up" forthwith. What

was even worse was that these assessments were on an arbitrary basis not related to the accounts submitted. When the Bus Companies concerned appealed against these assessments, the Department, it would seem, insisted on their paying the amounts assessed pending the appeals. If the companies had been overcharged, the excess would be refunded was the excuse trotted out (this the Department is entitled to do).

But these companies have a further grouse. They say that appeals against the order of the Commissioner seem to take an interminable length of time before they are brought up before the Income Tax Board of Review. The delays which surround the listing of appeals before this Board seem to put the delays before our Courts into the shade.

One does not know whether the Income Tax boys have an answer to these complaints of the bus companies now in tax arrears (they probably have), but the least that should be done is that appeals against assessments made in arbitrary fashion should be listed promptly and disposed of early.

Lever Bros

Last week, *Tribune* focussed attention on the activities of that international monopoly Lever Bros in Ceylon. This news comment has brought a large number of letters from high ranking Ceylonese businessmen who write appreciatively of the stand taken up by this paper on this question. *Tribune* has always fought the case for Ceylonese capital and business enterprise.

One of the letters received by the Editor is from a large Ceylonese firm of importers. This letter raises a very important issue: that of "the preferential duties that are still laid down by the Government of Ceylon for the goods that come from Britain and Commonwealth countries."

Should this system of Preferential treatment be continued even in

the present era? The real question that seems to arise is whether our entire tariff system should not be overhauled to conform to the pattern of trade that is now developing. It must be remembered that the basis of Import duties and tariffs was drawn up in the colonial days when the distribution and pattern of the import and export trade of Ceylon was totally different from what it is today,

In the situation which has arisen today and which is fast developing, Ceylon's imports and exports are shifting to new centres as well as concentrating on a few of the old points of contact. This, apart from anything else, provides a good reason why the tariff system should be revised.

Import duties should also be adjusted to encourage local industries and activate national economic effort in all directions. This has no doubt been done in a haphazard manner in recent years, but piecemeal reform in bits and pieces is not the answer to the anachronism of preferential duties stemming from a colonial pattern of trade.

Red Literature

Prime Minister Bandaranaike recently assured the House of Representatives and the public that all restraints on the import of literature from Communist countries would be removed. In point of fact, the restrictions seem to have increased of late if the experience of *Tribune* is any indication of the true state of affairs. This paper receives exchange copies of weekly papers from the USA, Great Britain, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, France, Malaya, China, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Initially, papers from the "Iron Curtain" countries were often never received but it must be said that occasionally they reached the *Tribune* without mishap. After a certain amount of correspondence when it was pointed out to the authorities that what we received were exchange copies, magazines

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WEEK by WEEK

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circles it is thought that this Code and publicity is no more than an effort for these Unions to have a manifesto for recruitment of members at a time when unions led by Philip Gunawardene and the CWC seem to hold sway among the workers.

Merger

There is also much talk about a possible merger between the NLSSP plantation Union called the Lanka Estate Workers Union and the Azeez faction Democratic Workers Congress. Knowledgeable circles are interested to know as to who is trying to swallow whom! Is Azeez trying to use the NLSSP to pull his chestnuts out of the fire, or are N.M. and Co. confident that a little "merging" will help them to liquidate the "non-revolutionary" and "communal" leadership of the DWC over the plantation workers?

Whatever be the merits of "merging" there is a great deal of disquiet among progressive circles over N. M. Perera's attack on Premier Bandaranaike's support for New Delhi's foreign policy. The NLS SP leader had critically remarked in the House of Representatives on August 10 that whereas the Ceylon Government had in the days of the UNP toed the Washington line it was now, in the days of the MEP, blindly following Nehru. Why N. M. Perera objected to the Nehru line was not mentioned, but the fact that he should have taken Bandaranaike to task for doing so has made many people wonder what the NLSSP is really up to!

Bhikkhu Peramuna

A letter from the redoubtable L. H. Mettananda published in the daily papers on Tuesday September 4 and a reply by a leading Bhikkhu on September 6 has torn a veil that has long covered the inner workings of the now officially defunct Eksath Bhikkhu Peramuna.

Mettananda in his letter claimed that the EBP was formed only for the purpose of defeating the UNP. Once this had been achieved, the EBP was dissolved particularly because some individuals had attempted to use the EBP for their own selfish ends. He claimed that the attempt to revive it by three priests was only an attempt by this caucus to create an organisa-

tion for them to dabble in politics. This long letter by Mettananda deserves closer scrutiny and analysis, but it is necessary to reveal that he makes a number of accusations and allegations which throw revealing light. For instance, he questions the 'tamasha' of the visit to the Kelaniya temple soon after the MEP Cabinet was sworn in. But his comments on some of the priests now seeking to revive the body are even more interesting.

Says he: "Of the group that is now seeking to set up the new organisation one of the leading lights is a person whose relations with a distinguished female have caused nauseating feeling among not only the Buddhists but even among the non-Buddhist elements of the country as we l. Another is a well-known Colombo landlord in yellow robes and not having much of reputation for his consideration for his tenants. Another has a reputation as being a very genial host for teenage young ladies at Chinese Restaurants and Muslim Hotels."

For these and other reasons Mettananda suggests that the attempt to re-create the EBP should be exposed as being unworthy and dangerous. Bhikkhu Hevapola Ratnasara (whom Mettananda alleges wanted a foreign scholarship to study among other things the working and administration of a Papal Seminary in Rome) replied in a letter which accuses Mettananda of the foulest motives. He claims that Mettananda attempted to use the EBP from the time the MEP victory was assured (April 9, 1956) to find a place for himself in the Cabinet as Minister of Education. It was the failure to achieve this object that had made Mettananda trigger the Jayasuriya fast, says Bhikkhu Ratnasara, and when the EBP refused to underwrite the fast Mettananda turned sour and had no more use for the EBP. Such is the gist of Hevapola Ratnasara's reply in which he meets the charge of immorality made against certain sponsors of the new EBP with the question how Mettananda could have worked with such persons earlier!

A reply from Mettananda is awaited by the public eagerly, whilst the view that Bhikkhus should leave political matters well alone (and stick to their religious affairs) is gaining ground.

Just Briefly

(continued from page 265)

from China and Russia came through fairly regularly.

But after the MEP came to power, and particularly after the Premier's assurance that the ban had been lifted, this office has almost stopped receiving the magazines from these two countries. Inquiries reveal that these magazines have been posted from the respective countries as before. To add piquancy to the situation, for the last three or four weeks, a notice is received from the Postal authorities (Customs Appraisers Section) calling upon the Editor of the *Tribune* to clear a package which has been received from Russia. This package on examination is found to be the Moscow weekly *New Times* and is released thereafter.

The point is simply this. Even in the bad old days of the UNP, *New Times* was delivered regularly at the *Tribune* office just as any other mail. Today, a person authorised by the Editor has to go every week to the Postal Department at Duke Street to clear this magazine. What does this mean? Are we going from bad to worse? What is the value of the Premier's assurance? Moreover what is happening to other magazines from Russia and China which safely reached reached this office in the bad old days of the UNP?

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SUEZ & COLONIALISM

Africa is a paradise for "Western" financial giants. It produces 98 percent of the world's diamonds, 80 percent of the cobalt, 75 percent of the sisal hemp, 75 percent of the phosphates, 30 percent of the chrome and manganese, 20 percent of the copper, 15 percent of the coffee, and all cloves.

It is rich in oil, grain, rubber, lumber, fertile land and unued water power.

But you can hardly place your finger on any part of Africa's 11 1/2 million square miles of territory without finding the name of an American, British or French firm.

Profits of the copper belt area of Northern Rhodesia are split between a British firm and the American Metal Co. In 1953 they shared 65 million dollars.

The 40,000 African miners they employ earn about 40 cents (U.S.) a day.

There are 300,000 cocoa farmers in the Gold Coast. In 1951-52 they received £34 million for their cocoa crop of 210,000 tons, giving them an average income of £104, or £2 a week.

£70 million profit

The biggest buyer of cocoa on the Gold Coast and in Nigeria is the United Africa Company. It is a "private" company, so it is not obliged to disclose its profits. But profits of its parent company, Unilever, in 1951 were nearly £70 million.

On the London market, the price of cocoa has shot up by about 50 percent in just over a year. In 1952 it was £240 a ton on the London market. Last year it was £440.

But the African grower didn't receive the increase. In fact, last year the African grower was being paid £15 a ton less than he had been two years before.

Morocco

This country is rich in coal and iron, manganese, copper and cobalt. From this, 14 French companies increased their profits from £388,000 in 1947 to £2,500,000 in 1951.

But the Moroccan peasant lives in conditions of squalor. Two facts help tell the story: While Morocco's health service provides only 200 doctors, there are 14,000 police in the country, apart from French troops.

U.S. moves in

Since 1952, U.S. business interests with the aid of the International

The facts set out in this article provide a clue as to why Western Powers are so concerned about the Suez dispute. More than the question of ensuring the safety of traffic through the Canal, these Powers seem worried about the fate of the Suez Canal Co. They seem anxious to take such steps as will discourage other African and Asiatic countries from "nationalising" foreign investments. Just as King Canute was unable to stem the waves, so also the tide of history will roll forward in spite of the gun-point diplomacy of the West.

Court at The Hague, have secured equal rights with the French investors in Morocco. The Newmont Mining Corporation, the St Joseph Lead Co. and other American firms have gained control of much manganese and cobalt. At the same

time, five U.S. airfields have been built in Morocco.

These and other U.S. bases in Africa, Europe and the Middle East have been paid for out of the America "aid" programmes.

Elsewhere in Africa, American firms are also moving in. Oil firms—Standard Oil, Royal-Dutch Shell, Gulf, United Petroleum Southern California Petroleum Corp., and several others—now have investments in Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Liberia, Ethiopia, Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Somaliland, Tunisia and South Africa.

These U.S. corporations with investments in Africa made 31.3 percent profits on investments in 1952.

To many of them, such as Standard Oil and General Motors; a 200 to 300 percent annual rate of profit is not uncommon, according to the American economist Victor Perlo.

This increasing exploitation has led to a big increase in nationalist movements, and equally harsh repressive measures.

In Kenya, for instance, even official figures admit that 70,000 Africans were in detention camps at the start of this year, and that more than 8000 have already been killed.

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SUEZ & COLONIALISM

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There is a legislative council which pretends to be a parliament, but the 30,000 whites in Kenya have 39 representatives on this council, the 100,000 Indians have only six members, the 24,000 Arabs have two. And all six African members are nominated, not elected.

Between 2000 and 3000 Europeans have 16,700 square miles of the best farmland. Over five million Africans farms 50,000 square miles of second-best land.

There are 1,250,000 Kenyan children of school age. But in 1949 only 350,000 of these were attending school, more than half of them for only a year or two.

There is one hospital bed per 264 Europeans, and one bed per 1005 Africans.....malnutrition is widespread.



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Figures on South-East Asia tell a similar story, with Malaya a typical and important example. There, between 1948 and 1950, British trusts obtained £320 million profits—more than from all the export from Britain combined.

Last year one company alone, the Sungei Bidor Tin Dredging Co. Ltd., paid a dividend of 200 percent.

But at the same time the Malayan workers who produce this wealth receive only between 4/- and 6/- a day in wages.

QUESTION TIME

By Merlin

"Stone-age man is not very dissimilar to his modern descendant anatomically. The Ramayana mentions that several black cannibal tribes inhabited Ceylon," said Mr. P. E. P. Deraniyagala at the Royal Asiatic Society meeting.....

Morning Times, 1/9

The Ba'angoda man, as the earliest man in Ceylon has been named, killed his neighbour for his food. But why do the present-day descendants kill without such justification?

★ ★ ★

"Leaders of six powerful trade union organisations submitted a ten-page document yesterday calling for a comprehensive Labour Code....."

Observer, 1/9

Why have the two really powerful unions not been included in the Big Six? Why is Philip Gunawardene's Union, which now controls the harbour and the urban workers in the city of Colombo, not in charmed circle? And what about the Ceylon Workers Congress which is really the big noise in the plantations?

★ ★ ★

"Mr. C. A. S. Marikkar, Minister of Posts, Broadcasting and Information wants Junior Ministerships scrapped. 'They are a nuisance and serve no useful purpose.' He estimated that Government can save at least two lakhs of rupees a year if these posts are scrapped. He said that when the MEP came into power they wanted to reduce the number of portfolios. This had not been done. 'We should atone for this lapse by at least scrapping useless things like junior portfolios.'

Sunday Observer, 2/9

Has Minister Marrikkar been bitten hard by the Rajaratne bug? Is it a case of once bitten twice shy? Or does he think that a demand for the reduction of ministerial portfolios can be staved off by the scrapping of junior ministers?

★ ★ ★

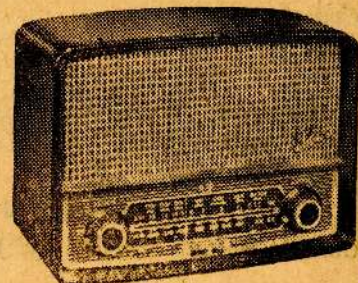
"Government departments tell Languages Director IT'S DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT SWABASHA.....The major difficulties are: (1) Lack of officers qualified in swabasha, (2) Lack of money to buy Sinhalese and Tamil type-writers, (3) Lack of technical words and printed forms (In English they have stereotyped replies on printed forms which cut short much of the work), (4) The fact that the law is not in the national languages....."

— *Observer, 1/9*

Could not all these be anticipated? Do these difficulties not arise because the switch-over has been set for 4 years? If a 15-year time lag had been decided on, as in India, would these difficulties have caused the present headaches? Is it too late to amend the Sinhala Only Bill to make it practicable?

★ ★ ★

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**HEADLINES
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BY PUCK

**STATE BUS PLAN MAY YIELD
RS. 8 MILLION PROFIT**

Daily News, 31/8

Counting chickens before eggs are hatched!

★

**MINISTER (KURUPPU) TURNS
DOWN MINISTER'S (DAHA-
NAYAKE'S) REQUEST**

Morning Times, 31/8

Guerilla warfare (MEP style)!

★

**BABY BORN JUST AFTER
MARRIAGE**

Daily News, 31/8

The shock did it!

★

**CLOTH AND JACKET MINIS-
TER (VIMALA) DEFT AT
JAPANESE SOWING**

Times, 29/8

Isn't it better done in kimono?

★

**FIVE M.P.'s INVITED: NONE
CAME**

Daily News, 3/9

Elections are yet five year's hence!

★

AYURVEDA STUDENTS SOB

Times, 29/8

To touch Woman Minister's heart!

★

**UNP ADOPTS SOCIALIST
PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL POLLS**

Morning Times, 1/9

Can a Leopard change its spots?

★

**ROUND THE WORLD ON
NOTHING!**

Daily News, 1/9

Ministers with wanderlust should learn how!

★

**NOW — CLOTH AND BANIAN
FOR LAWYERS**

Sunday Times, 2/9

Black and/or White?

★

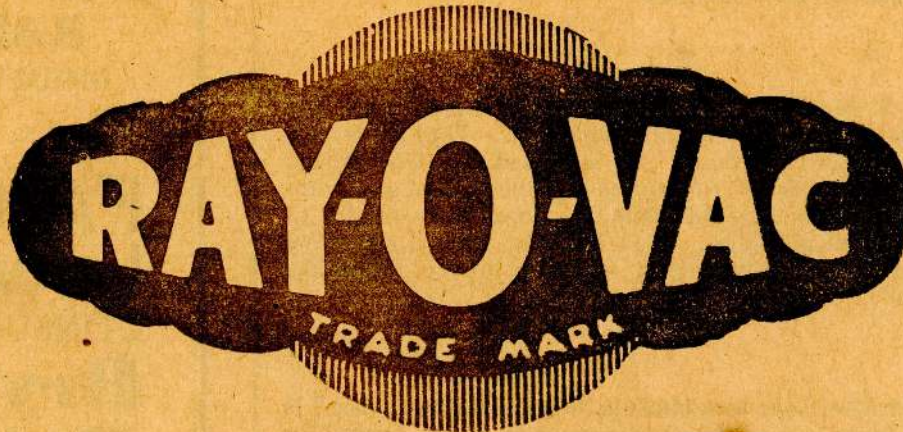
**ARMY CHIEF JOINED IN 'HAI
HOOI'**

Daily News, 1/9

Nothing else to do!

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ROTTEN BUSINESS

continued from page first

doctors. Though the Government has designated these persons as *Physicians, and Surgeons* they have by common usage added the term *VISITING Surgeons, Physicians* and so on, to give the public the idea that they are really some kind of part time officers. This is a piece of humbug which must be eliminated. It must be driven home to the general public that even these *VISITING SPECIALISTS* are full time officers who should work at least from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. (and also whenever they are called upon to attend a hospital patient) just like any other officer in the medical department.

Under the charlatan title of *VISITING doctors*, these persons in many provincial hospitals work only from 9 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and from 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. The rest of the time of these officers, on whom the State has spent so much, is utilised to extract fees from patients who are waiting in their homes. (These patients learn from experience that the Specialist pays meagre

or no attention to them if they go the hospital where he works). The malpractices of these of the Specialists and *VISITING officers* can be piled up high enough to bury the Grand Pyramid but the question now is how these can be checked.

GMOA

Even at the present time, strictly speaking, government medical officers (new entrants) are debarred from private practice. But, so far, the Department has not taken any action to penalise and punish the large number who violate this rule. The first thing the GMOA should do is to set its own house in order. It should call upon its members to set an example by refraining from private practice (such conduct would be the finest argument for increased salaries). The GMOA should go further and expose all those who offend against a code of rules which must be drawn up. The GMOA will not discharge its functions if it does not publicly hold up to ridicule all those who now bring the noble profession into such disrepute. The present system cannot be changed except by exorcising it of the devils who

make it blacker than the system really is.

The next thing that should be done is to streamline the administration at the Head Office with younger administrative officers full of drive and energy, and who will have the courage and the determination to track down all offenders among government medical officers. The present Head Office administrative staff is comprised of medical officers in the late fifties without any progressively modern outlook on medical problems. These persons have been too long victims of the system and its debased values for them to be able to break away from it or reform it.

Government should furthermore end the unnatural gulf between the curative and preventive branches of the profession in the Medical Department — a distinction devised by Specialists of old to ensure that the monopoly of money-making was exclusive as it was discriminatively selective — and select the best officers, fired with a sense of idealism and a proper regard for the ethics of the profession, to administer the Department.

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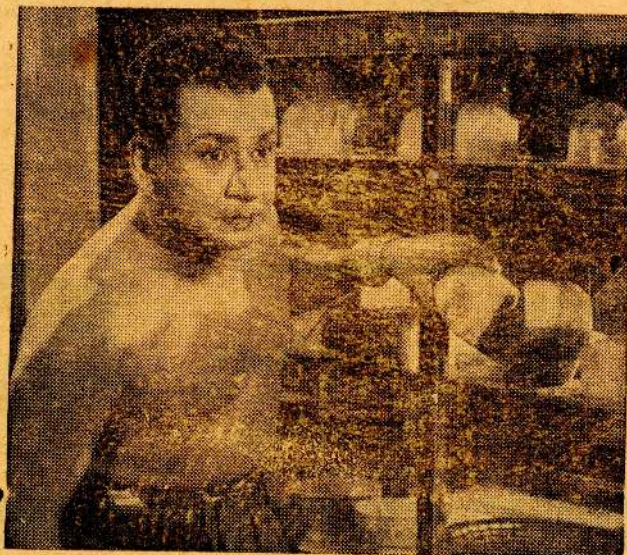
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