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TRIBUNE

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Budgetary Perspectives

THE NEXT BUDGET is virtually upon us. But, it is impossible to speculate on what the Budget will be like and what it will be not. Belts have been tightened in Sri Lanka for many years and it is difficult to envisage austerity measures any more stringent than what we have at the moment. Credit has been tightened so much that money inflow and outflow in industry as well as in agriculture have reached dismal limits beyond which it would be unsafe to push the squeeze.

But with the inflationary spiral being what it is, it will not be possible to relax the credit squeeze as long as Sri Lanka is inclined to follow the neo-Keynesian economics which underlie the logic of the IMF and the World Bank. There is not much more that can be cut down in the way of imports, and as matters stand one cannot hope for miracles in the way of earning mountains of foreign exchange

through the new craze of exporting non-traditional commodities.

All the major economic plans of the united Front for a mixed economy have been implemented: the import and export trade (except the export of non-traditional goods) has been nationalised; the local wholesale and retail distribution of essential goods has been nationalised; some of the major industrial undertakings in the private sector (eg Bogala Graphite, BCC, etc.) have been nationalised; land reform has been implemented and large estates (except those owned by public companies) have been taken over; a ceiling has been imposed on income: there has been a wealth tax levy, and taxation has been streamlined in a way that the traditionally-rich in the island will cease to be rich: there has been an effective Rent Control! Act and an even more effective Ceiling on the number of houses a person could own;

in fact, a great many things have been done to make the socio-economic cum political revolution which began in 1956 complete.

We have however, stated from time to time that contradictory policies had been followed by the government which detracted from the general pattern and which betrayed a sad lopsidedness in the matter of priorities. We had stressed on many occasions that the tax incentives and other benefits showered on tourist cum hotel industries was misplaced in the context of the squeeze applied on the big, medium and even some of the small traditional growers of agricultural produce. We had cast serious doubts on the efficacy and usefulness of the CRA as a economic lever for development.

WE WERE SURPRISED, pleasantly no doubt, that very recently we received support from the most unexpected quarter in regard to what we had often stated in regard to some of the policies followed by this Government. At the conference of the National Tax Payers Society of Sri Lanka held at the Hotel Taprobane on Friday, October 18, Mr. Bernard Soysa, MP, Deputy Minister of Finance and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, had declared (as reported by the *Times of Ceylon* of 18/10/74) that "the Convertible Rupee Account was a tremendous breach in the ceiling on income, exchange control procedures and the whole structure of taxation itself. While it was devised as an incentive for the promotion of non-traditional exports it was not quite certain whether it was bringing the expected results. It was not even known whe-

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ther a proper study of the scheme was being made."

We reproduce the rest of the report from the *Times* which was published under the heading **BERNARD CASTS DOUBTS ON CRA**, below:—

"Mr. Soysa said there was a very big problem of tax evasion. He therefore urged the Society to create a 'tax consciousness' among the public as a means to eradicate the evil of tax evasion. A build-up of public opinion on the various aspects of taxation was also essential for the prevention of 'loopholes in the tax structure.'

"There were people in his electorate, said Mr. Soysa, who openly bragged about their success at having evaded the payment of taxes as though it was an achievement equal to the 'winning of the Davis Cup.' Speaking on the granting of tax relief as an inducement for economic development and capital investment he said that industrial development had occurred only after the policy of import substitution and import control had been implemented.

"Tax inducements had not been thought out logically or practically by any government'. Statisticians, economists and tax experts had failed to study the real impact on the economy of the granting of such reliefs. At present there was over-capitalisation in the hotel business mainly because of the tax incentives granted to that industry. Very often inducements only led to anti-social activities.

"I know of a number of persons using the CRA who earlier also benefited from tax amnesties. This leads to the suspicion that they have sums of money which have not come under the amnesty or even the CRA.

"Stressing the need for changes both in the tax and public revenue structures of the country, in the context of worldwide inflation and high prices, Mr. Soysa said that with the social changes that were taking place it was clear that traditional tax-payers would soon cease to be tax-payers. It was therefore necessary to rope in a new category of taxpayers from among the classes that benefited from those changes. 'New thinking is essential if we are to progress. Either we developed or we perish...'

IT IS NOT YET CLEAR whether there is serious re-thinking in the Government about the efficacy of

some of the policies they have followed. But, even if such re-thinking has not arisen, the views expressed by Mr. Bernard Soysa is a clear indication that some of the top theorists of the leftwing of the United Front have begun to re-appraise the value of the CRA and the tax incentives granted to tourist hotel builders. But, *Tribune* has for a long time now not minced its words about CRA capitalists, the gem brahmins and the tourist tycoons—who seem to be accepted as an approved elite in governmental circles. It has been our position that if any private capitalists had to induce to produce more it should have been only those who were traditionally the producers of food crops—and those willing to invest in agriculture to produce more food. In Sri Lanka, as long a mixed economy prevails, all priorities must be placed on the private as well as the public sector in agriculture—especially on individuals and organisations producing food crops.

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, with characteristic down-to-earth realism, has pointed out in a recent speech to SLFP Trade Union leaders that it was imprudent to keep constantly asking for the nationalisation of every private undertaking in the country: she rightly stated that it was necessary to make many of the undertakings, already nationalised or established in the public sector, be run efficiently and profitably before demands are raised for further nationalisation. She had also mentioned that though nationalisation of key industries was on the programme of the SLFP and that the SLFP had been responsible for the nationalisation of some of the most important industries in the island, it was unwise and unrealistic to keep harping about nationalisation the whole time. This kind sloganising for nationalisation, she also pointed out, had already scared investors in West Germany, Japan, the oil rich nations and other countries from coming to Sri Lanka.

It is therefore reasonable to infer from all that the Prime Minister and some of her Ministers like Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike who has gone to some of the oil sheikdoms and Iran as her special envoy, are keen to maintain a balance

between the private and public sectors in Sri Lanka—a balance essential in a mixed economy. Towards this end, a concerted attempt is now being made to attract investment capital (and also short term credit to help in the balance of payments) from rich capitalist countries like West Germany, Japan and France (which are inclined to make such investments much more than older countries like the USA and the UK) and more especially from the Arab oil rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya and Algeria. Her latest journey abroad to Iran is also an indication that she would like Sri Lanka to be on the list of countries where the Shah would export Iranian petrodollars.

How far the Prime Minister will be able to succeed in attracting foreign investments to Sri Lanka—on Sri Lanka's basic terms safeguarding her sovereignty and integrity—is yet to be seen. There are forces, especially within the United Front, which are opposed to any foreign capital being brought to this country at this stage. They feel that this would retard the progress towards a socialist state: that foreign capital would denigrate the march to socialism: that hardships and misery should be heroically borne by the people whose salvation lay in economic liberation from domestic capitalism and international neo-colonialism. These forces are willing to risk a total breakdown in production and productivity in the attempt to liquidate domestic capitalists and rich agriculturists, and they are also willing to risk bankruptcy in the international arena by refusing to adopt policies which might help this country to attract foreign capital—to tide over the dangers that threaten to engulf the world.

AS WE HAVE SAID SO OFTEN in recent weeks the world seems to be heading for a disastrous depression. In a magazine interview published in London on October 19, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister), Mr. Dennis Healey, had stated that the world will face a gigantic slump dwarfing even that of the 1930s unless some way was found for financing the oil purchases of the major industrialised countries. To

Budgetary Perspectives

avert a slump, the Chancellor had stressed that oil producers should put a substantial part of their surplus earnings into a recycling facility to be operated by the IMF. "The IMF should accept the responsibility", said Mr. Healey, "for lending these deposits to the countries which cannot in the short term pay directly for their oil. This should meet the needs of the producing and consuming countries alike."

In the United States, a Gallup Poll published on October 20, had shown that more than half of the American people believed that the United States was heading towards a major depression similar to that of the 1930's. A poll in the *Washington Post*, however, said that 51 percent of those surveyed believed that the United States was heading for a depression while 41 percent disagreed and eight percent held no opinion. Another Gallup poll published in the same newspaper on October 20 showed that 81 percent of those questioned saw the high cost of living as the country's number one problem.

Official quarters in the United States are now seeking to convince people that there was no depression around the corner which could be compared to the tragic events of 1929-31. In a speech on October 22 at the annual sessions of The Electronic Industries Association, US Treasury Secretary William Simon had stated that oil producing nations had begun to realise that their oil policies were "exerting enormous pressures on consumer nations to become more self-sufficient." He said that present trends would not continue indefinitely since significant discoveries of oil have been made in 26 areas of the world in the past two years.

In his speech, Mr. Simon had pointed out: (1) The Arabi understand that some day their oil market will go down, and even lower prices will not bring it back. In the interim, rich and poor consuming nations must cooperate; (2) The U.S. economy has massive strengths, with plant and equipment spending increasing 12 percent this year and U.S. exports growing rapidly; (2) The U.S. economic and financial structure now is far different from that of the 1930's. "We are not headed for a depression," because there

are massive strengths in the American economy; and, (4) All though the United States is "in the grips of the worst peacetime inflation that we have ever known," the nation can weather the storm by cutting government spending, keeping a close rein on money and credit, and shifting more resources into capital investment.

In regard to the huge surpluses with the oil-rich Arabs, he went on to say: "Let me also add that in my personal experiences, I have found most of the financial authorities of the Arab nations to be highly-responsible and conservative investment managers. We have every reason to believe that their future investments will be influenced by financial considerations that we have traditionally associated with western-style capitalism. Another factor contributing to the concern about the international banking system has been the highly publicised difficulties of several European banks and the failure of Franklin National, one of the largest American banks. But these problems were not associated with disruptive investment shifts of OPEC monies or with any failure of recycling mechanisms..."

In regard to the fear of a great depression, he said that: "A third notion that we hear from the doomsayers is that fear that we are heading pell-mell toward another great depression. Let's look at the facts:

"First, our economy today still has massive strengths. Plant and equipment spending is up 12 percent this year, and the record levels of unfiled orders are convincing evidence that this strong trend is continuing. Total employment hit another all-time high in September, and despite all the talk of world-wide economic collapse, American exports continue to grow rapidly.

"Second, the dimensions of the present slowdown simply do not approach the depression years. In the 1930's unemployment soared to 25 percent; today, unemployment is less than 6 percent.

"Third, the economic and financial structure is far different today. In the 1930's we allowed the economy to suffer a massive monetary dehydration, so that by 1933 the money supply had fallen by about one-third below what would

have been consistent with full employment. The Government was unwilling or unable to cope with bank failures and other difficulties; today, the Federal Reserve System has become a lender of last resort, while the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and its sister agencies stand solidly behind our financial institutions, giving depositors the confidence they need.

"Finally, the structure of our economy has changed so that the



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men and women who hold jobs that are vulnerable to cyclical changes in the economy make up a much smaller part of our labour force than they did 40 years ago.

"In my opinion, the facts make it clear that we should have no fear of plunging over the precipice. Granted that the economy has its weak spots, let me reemphasize, however, that we are not headed for a depression. This point is extremely important, not simply to allay fears but to steer us away from the dangerous opinion that our first job is to stimulate the economy. Nothing could be more destructive, for a major campaign against an imaginary depression would drive prices through the roof and make the eventual cure to inflation much more painful".

In regard to the question of the fear of inflation, Treasury secretary Simion said: "I come then to our fourth and final fear about the economy: the fear of a devastating period of inflation. It is on this one front that I am often tempted to join my colleagues in conjuring up visions of an Armageddon. We are now in the grips of the worst peacetime inflation that we have ever known. But, once again, I would urge that this is no time to hang black crepe all over the economy. Let's keep in mind that about half of our recent inflation can be attributed to special factors that were unpredictable and uncontrollable, and—more importantly—are unlikely to occur again. It is extremely improbable that oil prices will quadruple again, and by all rights they should retreat. Agricultural crops are more unpredictable, but despite some recent deterioration, we are unlikely to have another price explosion of the 1973 scale. There should also be no fear of another devaluation of the dollar. We have had two devaluations of the dollar which achieved their main goal of making our exports more competitive, but as expected, also contributed temporarily to our inflation at home. In short, the influence of special factors in driving up the price level should be steadily weakening. That is good news for all of us.

"What concerns me today is not the one-shot nature of these special factors but whether we have the will and the wisdom to cope with the other forces in our economy

that bear equal responsibility for today's inflation and have been building up steam for so many years that they have a momentum of their own.

"One of these is the burgeoning Federal Budget. If the present inflationary problem is to be solved and interest rates brought down to reasonable levels, the Federal Budget must be brought into better balance. This is the most important single step that could be taken to restore the confidence to people in their own and our nation's economic future.

"In my own view, monetary policy has also been overly stimulative in the past decade and must be regarded as another culprit of our current troubles."

"What then, is to be done? First, we must sharply rein in Federal spending. Second, we must enact new spending programs only if we are willing to pay for them. Third, the Federal reserve must complement this fiscal discipline by keeping a reasonably close rein on the growth of money and credit it. Fourth, we must begin shifting far more of our resources into capital investments. Productivity is the key to expanding our industrial base, and unless we reawaken to that fact, we are in for years of trouble. Finally, I want to call for your support for President Ford's WIN PROGRAM. (Citizens' Action Program to fight Inflation) The sceptics may wince at the old fashioned patriotism of the WIN program, but I would suggest to you that these are the same sceptics who believed that Americans would never co-operate with the voluntary energy measures last year. They were wrong then, and they're wrong now."

Secretary William Simon's speech gives a clear indication of the manner in which he proposes to overcome the stagflation in the USA. He does not think that a depression will overtake the capitalist world. He is also reasonably certain the oil rich monarchs of the Arab countries and Iran will follow conservative western-style capitalist policies in handling their vast surplus money. According to him, inflation was the evil that had to be overcome—and he prescribed a series of remedies which a capitalist country like the USA

must follow in order to save the country and the capitalist system itself.

It would be interesting to see the remedies that the Finance Minister of a developing country, like Sri Lanka, committed to a mixed economy (and suspended perilously between an unwieldy and not-yet-profitable public sector and a presently moribund private sector) would prescribe in the next Budget to pull the country out of the economic stagnation in which it is now buried. Within the ruling United Front there are contending forces: one wanting the government to break decisively with capitalism, discard the hotch-potch experiment of a mixed economy and adopt whole-hog socialist measures to ensure from each according to his ability and to each according to his work; and the other, wanting a dynamic private sector to act as a fillip as well as a curb on a burgeoning public sector so that Sri Lanka could progress to a socialist democracy by easy stages through parliamentary procedures.

Every Budget since 1970 has reflected this dialectical conflict within the United Front.

What will the new Budget bring?



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- Origin Of The Monsoon
- Thailand's Tourism

UP TILL NOW, it was universally accepted that the monsoon, especially the southwest in the South Asian region had been caused by moist currents over the southern part of the Indian Ocean which after crossing the Equator approached peninsular India as the southwest monsoon between May/June and September. This theory was first disputed by an Indian meteorologist, Dr. P. Koteswaram, now Director-General of Observatories in India, in the year 1958 at a symposium on *The Monsoons of the World*. He had stated that the monsoon had its origin in Tibet, and had explained that the heating of the Tibetan plateau was an important factor in initiating and maintaining the monsoon circulation.

Very recently scientists in the USSR have also advanced the same theory. In a report from Leninograd on October 12 this year it was stated that Soviet scientists had come to the conclusion that the monsoon originated over the Tibetan mountains and not over the ocean. The scientists reached this conclusion after a study of data collected during the Monsoon Expedition (Monex) organised by Indian and Soviet scientists last year. "Until the Monex, the general belief had been that the monsoon was caused by moist currents over the southern part of the Indian Ocean which after crossing the Equator, approached the Indian peninsula as the southwest monsoon between June and September. The impelling force triggering the monsoon circulation was believed to be the high pressure belt in the southern hemisphere which intensified and pushed air across the Equator in spurts known as monsoon pulses."

Dr. Koteswaram's 1958 hypothesis was that the Tibetan plateau which extends upto five km in height was heated directly by the

sun's rays and contributed to the heating of the upper half of the atmosphere where weather is formed. The heating then led to a gigantic clockwise circulation of winds above the Tibetan plateau with strong winds blowing from east to west for some nine km over the southern peninsula.

Dr. Koteswaram had said that "the air rising over the plateau is displaced southward and descends near the Equator returning to northern India as a westerly current constituting the south-westerly monsoon." The data from Monex confirms the earlier theory of Dr. Koteswaram.

This is a major breakthrough in the study of climate and rainfall in this region. *Tribune* in recent months, has drawn attention to reports about climatological changes in various parts of the world and the latest reports about the southwest monsoon in this region will create a great deal of interest in Sri Lanka.

In this connection, an Ottawa report dated October 19 had stated that: "A Canadian meteorologist had predicted that world temperatures will drop for a period which will last for years, severely decreasing agricultural production,

"Mr. McTaggart-Cowan, Executive Director of the Science Council of Canada, speaking at a two-day conference here on Friday, said that the demands upon agriculture by an increasing population fail to account for climate change, which more than any other factor will affect the world food supply. Speaking on papers presented by international experts on the future of agriculture, he said the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was unsuited to its task because the problems it faced were different from when it was set up after World War II. 'I don't think the world is getting the truth from FAO any more because it is controlled by its masters and divulging the truth is not in the interest of certain governments he said."

WHILST OUR BUREAUCRATS AND POLITICIANS still seem to think that tourism will bring Sri Lanka untold wealth in the form of foreign exchange, many countries which have enjoyed a tourist boom some years ago are now in the dold-

rums. Apart from the fact that the popularity rating of tourist centres change periodically, the current economic situation in the world is not conducive to the growth of a new tourist boom—even in a paradise like this island. But the chieftains of the tourist industry in this country do not seem willing to admit that tourism today is a speculative risk, especially on a long term basis.

Tribune has referred in recent issues to the difficulties which have overtaken leading tourist countries in Europe. But now, news has come to hand that Thailand, which was for many years one of the tourist showpieces in Asia, was in deep trouble about its tourist industry. Official admissions from Bangkok indicate that the country's major hotels, night clubs and other tourist infrastructure were facing serious financial difficulties. *Depthnews* from Manila, analysing the current situation in Thailand state that.

"Mr. Suchin Bencharonkgul, president of the Thai Tourist Association, is the latest in a long line of those involved in the tourist industry to openly ask the government for help. Mr. Suchin has blamed labour unrest, a soaring crime rate, and economic woes to the present lethargic state of the industry in Thailand. He reveals that hotels which had an occupancy rate of between 70 to 80 per cent at the start of this year, are now scraping with an average 30 per cent occupancy rate. He claims that tourism has taken a 27 per cent drop from last year.

"The general Thai labour unrest is beginning to affect the hotel industry. Last August, all the employees of the prestigious 411 room Siam Intercontinental walked out demanding better employment conditions and the sacking of two foreign and one Thai executives for maltreatment of workers. Losing at the rate of approximately Rs. 2 lakhs a day, the hotel management quickly complied with the workers' demands. Workers in other hotels are now beginning to demand better wages."

It is not the labour unrest alone which has caused a decline in the tourist traffic, but the crime rate; and the law and order situation in Thailand has deteriorated so much that tourists have begun to

kok for pastures new. And in a world where less and less of the affluent are now able to travel, this decline in the tourist popularity rating for Thailand is no doubt a matter of grave concern to the Thai authorities. "The soaring crime wave is also beginning to affect tourists. The English daily Bangkok Post on August 20 front paged a news story of five tourists who were robbed with the headline. 'A Welcome Five Tourists Won't Forget'. Robberies on tourists have been so frequent in the last few months that Colonel Somchai Hiranyakit, the deputy director of the government. Tourist Organisation of Thailand, has proposed a special court be set up to try criminals who rob and assault tourists. He has also asked the government to increase police forces in tourist haunts in Bangkok, and in places like Pattaya and Chinagmal.

"The biggest drop has been in Japanese tourists. It is estimated that the number of Japanese tourists have dropped by about 10 per cent. The Thais are desperately worried that the scare stories may compel tourists to flock to neighbouring nations. The industry earned Thailand Rs. 140 crores from a little more than one million tourists last year."

And even the tourist traffic which still comes into the region seem to prefer the fleshpots and other

attractions of Malaysia, Singapore and even the Philippines. It is not merely the law and order situation which takes people away from time to time.

"Tourist organisations are keeping their eyes glued to Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. President Marcos has openly endorsed tourism and Manila received nearly 100,000 visitors in the first three months of the year. This was a 159 per cent increase over the same period last year. In Malaysia, the tourist industry is booming and hotel construction is going ahead rapidly. By the end of this year Kuala Lumpur alone is expected to have 4,300 hotel rooms. And Malaysians confidently predict that they too will hit the one million mark this year. To Singapore, where there were more than a million tourists last year, the rate of growth in the industry is much higher than Thailand's. All three countries have the advantage of having English fairly widely spoken and a good law and order situation."

There is no doubt that Thailand's economy will be badly hit by any decline in the tourist business. Its planners for many years had gone on the assumption that tourism was more important than the rice growing industry of Thailand. In fact, rice-growing and other agricultural pursuits had been neglected because of the boom the country

had enjoyed owing to the tourist business (and also from the presence of US troops in the country). Most of the US troops have now left Thailand, and this has brought a major economic backlash. And with the decline in the tourist business, Thailand faces a grim prospect.

"Thailand can ill afford to lose out on its tourist industry. Already, the smaller hotels and tour operators are beginning to think in terms of laying off workers. The beaches of Pattaya are deserted and Chiangmai, famous for its beautiful girls and northern hospitality has only foot weary Australian and German hippies in town. The Thais are learning that being the land of smiles is not enough."

The only lesson that one can draw from all this is that tourism is not an industry on which a country can depend upon for any length of time. It is far better to invest capital in agriculture rather than in tourism — from a long-range national point of view. Sri Lanka has now over-capitalised its tourist hotel industry but the boom and the high popularity which she now enjoys on the basis of FEECs subsidy we give tourists will be more ephemeral than many seem willing to admit.

CHRONICLE

SEPTEMBER 29 — OCTOBER 2

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
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SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29: According to the *Sunday Observer*, a new Civil Procedure Code embodying several far-reaching proposals designed to speed up the process of justice and make it less expensive to the ordinary man is being written into the Statute as an amendment to the Criminal Justice Law; a Bill to make this amendment possible has been gazetted by Justice Minister, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike. According to the *Sunday Times*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, intends to hold direct dialogues with the Tamils when she makes her first ever official visit to the Jaffna peninsula on October 5 and 6. According to the *Sunday Observer*, the number of Parliamentary electorates in the country is expected to be increased by 44 to 50 according to the population figures following the last general Census: the Delimitation Commission

now pursuing the representations made by the public regarding the demarcation and naming of new electorates will consider submissions till the end of October, after which public sittings will be held throughout the country. A Sri Lanka 'connection' in the international illicit opium trade is being reported to be worrying narcotics officials according to a Colombo datelined *Christian Science Monitor* despatch published in Boston, reports the *Observer*. According to the *Sunday Times*, a project to manufacture white sugar out of palmyrah sweet toddy is to be launched by the People's Economic Foundation. The Canadian High Commissioner Miss Marion Macpherson, yesterday presented a cheque for Rs. 10,000 to the Family Planning Centre Maradana. According to the *Observer*, Town Councils will be abolished when the country's Local Government system undergoes further radical changes at the beginning of next year. America's first lady, Mrs. Betty Ford was operated yesterday for breast cancer. Communist Black Militant Angela Davis yesterday publicly opposed the confirmation of millionaire Nelson Rockefeller as the Vice President of America at a Senate Rules Committee hearing.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 30: According to the *Daily Mirror*, house builders will be given the choice

of getting part of their housing loans in the form of hard-to-get building materials; the Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman, will implement this scheme to help house-builders obtain building materials difficult to purchase in the market. The lost mileage recorded by the Ceylon Transport Board during the first six months of 1974 was 38.6 million miles. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, the Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth League and son of the Prime Minister, addressing a large meeting of teachers at Moratuwa yesterday told not to get school children to wave flags when politicians attended functions: Mr. Bandaranaike dispersed a large number of school children who lined up to greet him when he arrived at Prince of Wales College Moratuwa, to attend the Bandaranaike Commemoration meeting. According to the *Daily News*, a team of French railway engineers has recommended the phased electrification of the railway in the country; the team's report which had been handed over to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, states that with the completion of the Mahaweli Project Sri Lanka have an excess of electrical power available. Three thousand invitees including Ministers, MPs and the Diplomatic Corps are expected to be present when the Prime Minister declares open the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka next Sunday: investigations of the incident when a bomb failed to explode in the premises of the Jaffna Campus are being continued; following this incident, the Campus has been brought under top security arrangements. According to the *Daily News*, a Labour Department—ILO sponsored seminar on population and family planning for the plantation areas will be held in Ratnapura in the first week of October. Britain is to make a three-fold increase in its contribution to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical (CFTC) over the next three years. Federal Energy Administrator John Sawhill bluntly warned oil producers that their policies have now reached the point where they threaten United States national survival.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1: According to the *Daily News*, the Industries Ministry has expressed concern about the large number of approved industries that have not gone into production: a survey carried out by the Ministry in association with the Industrial Development Board found that over 45 per cent of the industries approved between 1971-73 are not in production: the survey showed that out of some 1150 industries approved during this period only about 700 are in production and that some are not even in existence. Justice Minister, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike will table the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Bill in the National State Assembly today. According to the *Daily Mirror*, tight security measures are being taken by the Police to prevent any attempts at intimidation and violence during the Prime Minister's visit to Jaffna on next Sunday. According to the *Daily News* the SLFP-controlled Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation is planning to set up volunteer worker corps in every electorate to alert the working class against reactionary moves aimed at disrupting the policies of the United Front Government: union squads, which will have three hundred members per unit will be appointed on the recommendations of the MP of each constituency. According to the *Daily News*, the Labour Department is to set up a skill development centre to upgrade the skills of workers in the industrial sector. According to the *Daily Mirror*, smugglers in

the country are now being "hoist with their own own petard:" customs officers are using fast mechanised vallams seized from smugglers in anti-smuggling operations to combat the massive and rapidly increasing illicit traffic between India and Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily News* five members of the UNP in the Colombo Municipal Council, who flouted the party Whip when they voted in support of a recommendation of the Council's Finance Committee to pay an allowance of Rs. 450/- a month to certain councillors selected by the Mayor to perform official duties, have been reported to United National Party High Command. World Bank President Robert McNamara warned that millions of the world's poor face the risk of death unless they receive a massive aid increase from rich countries. General Carlos Prats former Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army was killed with his wife when a bomb blasted his car: General Prats was a supporter of the former Chilean President Salvador Allende. President Antonio De Spínola resigned yesterday, declaring in a televised broadcast that he found it impossible to continue in the present troubled climate of Portugal. President Tito of Yugoslavia entered hospital for a minor ailment.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2: One of the provisions of the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Bill tabled by Justice Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike in the National State Assembly yesterday was that any person could, by a communication in writing signed by him, bring to the notice of the appropriate authority any recent acquisitions of wealth or property or any recent financial or business dealings or expenditure by persons to whom the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Law would apply: the Bill seeks to compel all Members of the National State Assembly, Judges and other state officers appointed by the President or by the Cabinet Ministers, and staff officers in Ministries and Government Departments, Chairman, Directors, members of Boards and staff officers of public corporations, elected members and staff officers of local authorities and any other categories of officers as may be specified by regulations, to declare their assets and liabilities in and outside Sri Lanka to their respective appropriate authorities. According to the *Daily Mirror*, though every one of the 15,506 students who have obtained the minimum qualifications for admission to the University will be issued with admission papers, only about 3,500 students will actually be admitted. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka will soon import for the first time 1000 tons of milling copra for local consumption from the Seychelles: this action is being taken by the Coconut Marketing Boards in order to save Sri Lanka one of her traditional export markets in Pakistan which has been seriously threatened by the ban on exports imposed following last year's drop in coconut production. According to the *Daily News*, 150,000 bushels of processed seed paddy will be made available to farmers after the new seed paddy processing plant goes into operation this week: the plant has been installed at a cost of 200,000 US dollars at Hingurakgoda, from funds provided by the Methodist Church of Australia through the National Freedom from Hunger Campaign Board and this is the first phase of a joint UNDP-Sri Lanka Project. India made it clear in the U.N. General Assembly that the Pakistani proposal for a nuclear free zone in South Asia was not acceptable to it.

LETTER FROM INDIA

• Cabinet Reshuffle • Internal Problems

• The Kissinger Visit

New Delhi,

The two major matters of continuing current interest in New Delhi today revolve around the action taken against topflight smugglers and blackmarket currency operators on the one hand and the Cabinet reshuffle on the other. About the manner in which the action against the smugglers has been taken under MISA rules there has been a great deal of controversial discussion, but it is generally admitted that the action has been effective in dealing a serious blow to all kinds of blackmarket operations on an all-India basis.

The Cabinet re-shuffle has evoked comment in political circles, and the situation has been most aptly summed up by the editor of the weekly *Mainstream* in the issue of the magazine dated October 12: Newton's First Law of Motion says: "Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless, it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it." The condition of Smt Indira Gandhi's team of Ministers amp; vindicates Newton's First Law. As a rule, the Ministers choose to be in a state of rest—though it may be questionable they are "in a right line"—and they are compelled to change only when some forces are impressed upon them. Dynamism in Ministers is mostly seen in extra-administrative affairs. This week the nation mourns Krishna Menon's passing away; his dynamism in Defence production earned him enemies although it was this exercise in self-reliance which made an abiding contribution towards the country's security.

But a Krishna Menon or a T.T. Krishnamachari or a Mohan Kumaramangalam were exceptions rather than the rule. The state of rest is the motto for an average Minister, and the only force that can make him move seems to be the Prime Minister's displeasure or his devaluation in her eyes.

This week's Cabinet reshuffle has been the seventh that Smt Gandhi has effected in three-and-half years, thereby working out at a half-yearly average. In between these operations—preceded every time, by weeks of feverish nervousness for the Ministers—there has been very little evidence of solid, constructive work, of mastery over details and urge or competence for in-depth study of problems, and the grit and the cou-

rage to grapple with them. One may not be wrong in generalising that with every reshuffle, the barometer of the nation's state of health has registered a marked decline: whether the two have any organic links one may not care to establish but there is no gainsaying the fact that none of the Ministerial reshuffles so far made has helped to tone up either the administration or politics at the Centre. The Cabinet reshuffle, in other words, has become a seasonal exercise in irrelevance; and the latest one promises to be no better.

The *Mainstream* editorial then proceeds to examine the implications of the Cabinet re-shuffle and with somewhat brutal frankness evaluates the meaning and significance of the changes as they affect some of India's top political personalities.

For weeks before the actual re-constitution of the Cabinet, there were talks of a major shake-up, or "surgical operation" about to be performed. In terms of reshuffling her pack of cards, Smt Gandhi has no doubt gone through the ritual. But, one is now left wondering: Reshuffle for what? What has been the underlying principle on which it has been undertaken and, how much of the original plan could actually be forced through by Smt Gandhi?

It was said for months that the Prime Minister herself was anxious to keep the portfolio of Defence under her own charge, and hence Sri Jagjivan Ram should be moved out of it. She did cross the first hurdle and got Sri Ram out of Defence, but she could not get it for herself.

Sardar Swaran Singh, fired with the illusion of having become a world statesman by going on flying jaunts

to places as far apart as Moscow and Washington, Seoul and San Francisco, could not be compelled to take charge of an economic portfolio and stuck on to the demand for Defence with the same persistence as a child hankers for lollypop. Thereby, the Prime Minister allowed to go by default the very principle by which she was supposed to be reconstituting her ministerial team, namely, that in the face of the grave economic crisis before the country, her senior colleagues claiming to have political weightage could be made to take up the responsibilities of the key economic portfolios.

If this was the argument used to move Sri Jagjivan Ram from Defence to Agriculture (made a little more attractive with the addition of Irrigation), it was abandoned when tackling Sardar Swaran Singh: his journey to Defence looks like a return ticket from an excursion in External Affairs.

If Sri Brahmananda Reddy with his reputation for toughness is supposed to gear up Home, left in a state of inertia by Sri Uma Shanker Dikshit, it was perhaps meant also to placate the South which never had a Home Minister at the Centre since Rajaji held the office for a brief spell after Sardar Patel, nearly twenty-five years ago.

But was it at all necessary to retain the discredited Sri Dikshit as a sort of mythical Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster? After all, the Ministers without Portfolio in the past—Krishna Menon, TTK and Lal Bahadur—were men who were not pensioners or hangers-on but those who had multifarious assignments to undertake. There is an equal lack of rationale in retaining two whose competence and capacities are perhaps less than marginal—Dr. Karan Singh and Sri Kamalapati Tripathi.

By standards of administrative competence, Sri T. A. Pai has already made a mark, but one has to probe for the criterion by which he has been saddled with Civil Supplies. The long talked-about Ministry of Essential Supplies has not been set up: is it because of lack of competent personnel, or because some of those who were campaigning for it, fought shy of themselves taking it up? This is a very serious gap in the new team of Ministers, a gap which will be duly noticed by the growingly critical public, hard-hit by scarcity

Letter From India

and blackmarketing in essential commodities.

Sri K. D. Malaviya's new portfolio should have come to him ten months ago when he rejoined the Cabinet: he could have done a lot more by now, at least for Petroleum for which Sri D. K. Barooah displayed little interest or energy.

While there is favourable reaction to some of the tested Ministers of State retaining their portfolios—particularly Sri Nurul Hassan, Sri I. K. Gujral, Sri D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Sri Raghunatha Reddy and Sri R. K. Khadilkar—the important assignments given to Sri Chandrajit Yadav and Sri K. C. Pant are really challenging and they will have to disprove by their performance the validity of Peter's Principle.

Similarly, the new responsibilities to be shouldered by Sri Pranab Mukherjee, Sri Om Mehta and Sri A.C. George will provide scope for their emerging as administrators of competence with a sense of direction. Particularly, Sri Mehta and Sri Mukherjee will have to guard against their Ministries becoming strong-holds of Reaction since the Cabinet incumbents in charge of Home and Finance are suspect in the eyes of the forward-looking elements both inside the Congress and outside. While Sri Amiya Kisku's removal is welcome, there is no earthly reason why Smt Gandhi should have chosen a corrupt operator like Sri A. P. Sharma, unless it was to placate some of his known Right-wing patrons.

What has added to the mess is the knowledge widely shared in the Capital that there would be further changes in the set-up at the Centre. This extends from Policy Planning in the External Affairs Ministry to the Planning Commission leadership, from the need to have some new governors, to a firm decision on Bihar—issues with each of which is linked the future assignments of some of the present members of the Council of Ministers.

The total picture that has emerged from what is known as Cabinet Reshuffle is that Smt Indira Gandhi with all the unchallenged authority at her command in the Congress, could not unflinchingly adhere to a firm criterion of competence and performance record in choosing her Ministers. For too many extraneous considerations—group policies, cumulative attachments and pressures—have come in the way.

With all the talk of modernity, feudal values die hard in this land of grotesque anomalies.

This is perhaps a cynical appraisal of the Cabinet reshuffle by an independent leftwing weekly, but it is difficult to quarrel with what the editor says, though many would have preferred to have left these things unsaid—especially in print.

APART FROM THE CABINET RESHUFFLE, political circles in New Delhi are also concerned with a number of other matters which are of a disturbing nature. Chief among them is the J. P. Narayan agitation in Bihar which he has threatened to carry over to Delhi. The support which Narayan has received in Bihar is not only a reflection of the colossal incompetence of the Congress government in that State but also of the general *malaise* in the country. The new Congress President, Mr. Barooah, is now busy dealing with this problem and there is a great deal of speculations as to what course of action he is likely to recommend. A new start is also being made to bring matters in the state of Gujarat into some harmony so that a new government could begin to function.

The aftermath of the Sikkim episode has resulted in strained relations between New Delhi and Kathmandu. In Nepal, the powerful Chinese Lobby had not only pushed the Palace Establishment into dubious positions which have irritated India, but had organised rowdy demonstrations against the Indian Embassy and Indian residents with the assistance of Maoist youth. It was only when pro-Indian elements had started counter-attacking that the Nepal Government had taken action to prevent Maoist demonstrators from doing any further damage.

New Delhi, for the first time in its relations with Nepal, has taken a tough line, and this has shaken the Nepal Palace Establishment and the Government it sustains. The overwhelming bulk of the economic assistance Nepal gets it from India (what China gives though spectacular is fragmentary), and New Delhi, has made it clear that India would not continue such aid if the Nepalese government could not resist the temptation to tilt politically towards China at every possible juncture.

The Palace Establishment knows that Nepal cannot break away from India nor discard it, but it has displayed a pro-China tilt in order to blackmail and intimidate India into giving more and more. But after Sikkim, and after Nepal's anti-Indian demonstrations, India is in no mood to be pushed around by Nepal (or Bhutan) anymore.

Nagaland is yet another sensitive spot. In recent week, the Indian government has taken steps together with the Burmese government to stop the traffic between Nagaland and China. It is now openly admitted that a large number of Naga underground rebels go to China for training and arms and several groups have been caught on the border while going to or coming from China.

The Naga rebel movement, besides getting support for its revolutionary elements from China, has always got strong support from christian missionaries. There is also a belief in responsible circles in the Capital that the CIA uses missionary societies and other religious institutions for its own work of collecting intelligence information. The CIA has come in for a great deal of fresh attention in India after the revelations about its activities in Chile to "destabilise" the Allende government. The US Ambassador in India, Moynihan, had sent a telegram to Washington (which had leaked out) that India was deeply disturbed about CIA activities. The Indian Ambassador in the USA had tried to pour oil over the troubled waters by saying that New Delhi was not over-perturbed.

But the fact is that there is great anxiety in the Capital about what the CIA is suspected to be doing in this country. It was only last year that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had publicly uttered warnings about the danger of CIA activities in this country. After the Chile disclosures it was felt that it had even cast a dark shadow over the long-impending visit of Dr. Henry Kissinger to India. The visit of the American Secretary of State is now imminent and it would be interesting to recall what he had said at the time the Moynihan cable had raised a furore.

A PTI despatch from Washington dated September 20, had stated.

The United States Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, told Congress yesterday that he had informed the Government of India that if it found any Americans engaging in political activity "they should let us have their names and they will be removed from India within 24 hours."

Dr. Kissinger was responding to questions, in an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was asked about a recent cablegram from the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. Patrick Moynihan, in New Delhi that recent disclosures of CIA activity in India had confirmed the worst fears and suspicions of Mrs. Indira Gandhi that the U.S. would like to upset her Government.

Dr. Kissinger said that Mr. Moynihan "is given to flights of eloquence. I think his dispatches which are frequent and extensive are always a joy to read."

"Where?" asked Senator Charles Percy, "In the New York Times or the Los Angeles Times?"

"Most of the time I get them first", Dr. Kissinger replied in a reference to the leaks of the Moynihan cablegram to American newsmen.

Dr. Kissinger denied that there was any tilt in U.S. relations with India at this time. He said that the term had been used at the time of the India-Pakistan war when Indian troops were in Bangladesh and the U.S. feared they might also enter Pakistan.

"Our relations with India have improved dramatically since the Pakistan war", he said. "I have reason to believe they will improve still further in the coming months."

Dr. Kissinger said the improvement in relations with India did not in any way derogate U.S. relations with Pakistan. The U.S. would like the Indian sub-continent to be an area of peace, he said, and to the extent the U.S. could do so it would like to see it free of outside influences. He said the U.S. did not look at the Indian sub-continent as an area where some countries were aligned with China and others with the Soviet Union.

The Time and Newsweek, both of September 30, 1974, had special cover page features about the CIA and the disclosures in these magazine have made many in the Indian capital sit up with a jerk. What has astounded many people is that the CIA has tried to make use of mass public, youth, religious and other

organisations for its subversive and intelligence activities. But what has been even more surprising is that the CIA continues its activities on a bigger scale in spite of the disclosures, not only before Committees in the US Congress but also through a series of new books which have been published by ex-CIA men.

In India, the fact that the CIA is tied up with many religious organisations has caused deep concern. The Newsweek of September 30 had stated: "...The CIA has also made a major effort in recent years to improve the covers used by agents abroad. So, in 1968, a special CIA unit was set up to deep cover 'assets' in place. Some agents now pose as missionaries..." The New York Times of an earlier date had stated that the CIA made use of religious organisations of different denominations, and that money had been pumped into many such organisations.

In New Delhi attention has been focused on an organisation called the India Catholic Relief Service as being one of the organisations used by the CIA in this country and that a top man in its hierarchy, deputy director, John G. Mathews, is alleged to recruit Indian Catholics to collect information as well as support opposition parties. India had restricted the entry of foreign missionaries for many years owing to troubles in Nagaland and other places, but it has been stressed that over 200 American missionaries had gone to Indonesia to work among the population presumably to bring enlightenment.

Henry Kissinger had offered to recall any American "found" indulging in subversive political activities, and there is every possibility that the authorities here will take him on his word when he is here for talks.

But more important than the activities of the CIA in India is the need for India to get grain from the USA. The problem of the PL 480 pyramid has been solved by Moynihan, and new way has to be found to enable India to import grain (there is a shortfall of 10 million tons) this year. This is coupled with the serious differences which had arisen between Washington and New Delhi during recent years, especially in the Nixon Era from 1968.

Will Kissinger be able to provide a healing touch? That is the question that commentator G. K. Reddy tried to answer and he concluded his comments thus:

"...So the coming Kissinger visit poses for Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Swaran Singh the psychological challenge of how to handle a person of his intellectual eminence and unfailing perception for establishing a personal rapport with him. The detailed discussions on the U.S. acceptance of India's enhanced role in Asia, the resumption of economic assistance and restoration of cultural exchanges would automatically fall into a positive pattern and a proper equation has been established with him. If the United States remain still caught up in the agonising coils of Watergate, it is a good psychologic moment for India to initiate some meaningful moves for opening a new chapter in Indo-American relations. The great advantage in dealing with Dr. Kissinger is that he is a man with clear-cut policies on most issues and even if one cannot go the whole hog with him, one can at least see the direction in which he is moving in pursuit of his objectives.

"It is much easier to negotiate with a highly skilled Secretary of State like Dr. Kissinger who knows the limitations of his own policies than with the goodygoody ones like his predecessor, Mr. Rogers, who had all the warmth and grace, and the elegances and natural restraints of a very fine man, but was totally ineffective in his key role and was unable to inspire the necessary confidence in his own President. If India wants American grain at concessional rates or long-term loans, it should be frank enough to say so during the forthcoming talks in Delhi. It is no use beating about the bush by continuing to keep up a fictitious distinction between making the country's requirements known and actually asking for assistance. The whole dialogue has to be conducted on a higher plane with the correct historical perspective and the political awareness of the present-day realities of the world situation.

"Whatever the recent failings of the United States in not living up to its great traditions, it can still claim that as a country it has much more to its credit than discredit on balance. Its interferences in the internal affairs of other countries have been a standing disgrace and its involve.

ment in wars like Vietnam a matter for lasting shame, but the internal shake-up of its democratic system which culminated in Nixon's downfall is certainly a shining example of its political resilience and the power of its public opinion. In another two years, the U.S. will be having its bicentennial celebrations and the United States can pay no greater homage to its own political institutions on that historic occasion than the establishment of a cordial and mutually beneficial relationship with India in its capacity as the world's largest democracy sharing the same values and traditions. And it is well within the realm of achievement for India to look forward to equally beneficial relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union."

N. M.

LETTERS

- Sinhala Only?
- Oil In Sri Lanka

Sir,

I did not intend to turn my original comment on Language into a continuing discussion; however, your reply compels me to write again, if only to clear my name.

Whenever I try to get a calm discussion on the need for Sinhala to occupy pride of place for sociological reasons, I find that folks endeavour to confuse the issue by raising the Tamil problem. You have also raised the burgher problem, which I feel the Australians are dealing with in a satisfactory fashion anyways! There are questions which are raised sometimes not to bring light but to produce heat or because the questioner knows there is no easy answer to the question. But either way the Tamil or the Burgher question has nothing whatever to do with the issue I raised. But to clear my name of the hideous suggestion that I advocate genocide of any variety, I would mention that in a recent issue of *The Nation* there was published my article pleading for justice for Tamil estate folks.

In an article *A World Gone Mad* Rene Dumont writes "The backward and dominated countries, first of all, must rid themselves of our

economic and cultural influence, which saddles them with a civilization model hindering their authentic development. They will extricate themselves only if they build a more egalitarian society based on the priority satisfaction of their entire population needs: food, clothing, housing and welfare services. Above all, permanent education must be promoted for all, beginning with functional literacy in the local vernacular to instruct them on their economic, social and political problems. This would lead to true development and a consolidation of a strong oppositional peasant power."

I am persuaded that the present desire to keep English in the position it occupied during the British period is bad for this nation. Today, despite all that Anagarika Dharmapala and others tried to achieve, those who don't know English are second-class citizens in this land. And in part it is because the dominant elite group fear that if Sinhala were truly to be made the State language there would emerge "a strong oppositional peasant power" that they continue to maintain that in the business houses of Colombo and elsewhere it is necessary for folks of this country to do business with each other in English when all that is required is the the firm has one competent 'English' chap to reply to the occasional letter which comes in from London.

English is part of a strong culture and the majority of the English speaking group in this country have been culturally emasculated through their exposure to this culture over the years. Consequently, it is not for reasons of money alone that doctors etc. want to leave the country. They leave because they are more at home in an English cultural ethos than in a Sinhala one. Let them go. But we who stay have to examine ourselves and take steps to build this nation on more enduring foundations than those which any "echo" community, the English-speaking group in this case, can provide.

In his book, *The Forsaken Lover* Chris Searle writes "The English language has its roots in a savage historical racism and pride. The white man devised a language based on words and symbols which protected himself and advertised

his belief in the primacy of his colour. When he promotes that language to a non-white people it is a way of breaking apart the identity of these people, dividing them from themselves and subjecting them to the white values and political thinking which are assimilated and spoken out through that language." Again "But in the European language of the Caribbean black man there is disorder and chaos. It is the disorder of mimicry. The language tenses with the nature. The words and images mock the man who speaks and feels them. He covers himself with foreignness." "Nothing is more astonishing than to hear a black man express himself properly, for then in truth he is putting on a white world.. he is a complete replica of the white man. So there is nothing to do but give in." (p. 18)

Elsewhere Searle writes "Their old identity was one of limitation,

Aspirin Ruins The Stomach

Mexico City,

Heavy aspirin users may find themselves with some bigger headaches than the ones they're trying to cure: gastric ulcers, bleeding ulcers, ulcerative colitis and other severe intestinal problems. That is the consensus of some of the world's top gastro-enterologists attending the fifth World Congress of Gastro-enterology here.

Dr. Morton Grossman of the University of California at Los Angeles said in an interview on Monday that one-third of those suffering from gastric ulcers are chronic, heavy aspirin users. Some victims take huge quantities of aspirin to control arthritis but the majority "are just chronic aspirin users—they take it for headaches and often they can't tell you why."

Dr. Atanas Maleev, Deputy Minister of Public Health and Rector of the Academy of Medicine in Bulgaria said: "We have observed that 50 per cent of the bleeding ulcers, ulcerative colitis and serious lesions in the intestines seem to be directly related to patients who abuse the use of aspirin."

subservience and alienation, cutting them off from themselves and their own dignity. Their new identity must speak of them and of their own world, for their own ideas and standards, their languages and their art. We find our identities through our language. That language must uphold us, give us confidence, tell us we belong to our world and each other. It is our language that provides us with the particular dominant national images that sustain our particular culture and build the structure of belongingness and trust that most people need, giving to the individual self the ability to experience the necessary social sense of continuity and sameness. A man becomes absurd when his language divides him from his world, divorces him from his surroundings and his fellows, and makes him speak of foreign things. One uses the language which help to preserve one's life, which helps to make one feel at peace with the world, and which screens out the greatest amount of chaos." (p.16) One cannot help feeling that this last sentence is particularly apposite in regard to the desperate attempt of the English-speaking elite to kid the people of this country into the belief that unless they know English they will perish. What is certainly true is that if Sinhala, the language of the majority were truly to become the dominant language, the status and privileges now shared by the English speaking class would go. And I remain unrepentant in my belief that these must be removed because they prevent this people from developing into a mature and self-confident people.

And, may I repeat, this analysis does not argue against the value or need for English when we relate to other nations. And one final word, since you have mentioned the Tamils, I hold that it is far more important for the Tamil and Sinhala peoples to know each other's language than for them to know English.

BRYAN DE KRETZER

Prithipura,
Hendala, Wattala.
21.10.74

Sir,

Every patriotic citizen of Sri Lanka would have rejoiced when the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, broke the news that there are "positive indications of the existence of oil and gas deposits around Pesalalai."

I think it is appropriate on this occasion to recall that almost ten years ago in the course of an exclusive front page lead news story in the English and Sinhala dailies (*Sun* and *Dawasa*, 19/11/64) of the group of newspapers in which I was serving, I reported that that Soviet scientists were positive that there was oil in the Northern and North-Western parts of the country.

"SOVIET SCIENTISTS POSITIVE—OIL IN THE NORTH" was the banner headline of the news story that appeared on 19th November, 1964. I shall quote from that news story.

"There are oil deposits in the Northern and North-Western parts of Ceylon.

"This is the conclusion of a group of Soviet scientists, now carrying on under-sea geological investigations off the Indian coast.

"Dr. Yakov Malovitsky, head of a group of 35 Soviet scientists on board the research ship 'Akademik Arkhangelsky' of the State Geological Committee of the USSR, told in an exclusive interview that positive results had been achieved in their investigations in the past four months, and that it had been established that there was oil west of the Palk Straits and of the Gulf of Mannar, and the corresponding areas in the Indian mainland.

"Therefore, he contended, there should be oil east of the Palk Straits and of the Gulf of Mannar.

"He strongly maintained that there should be oil at least in the Northern and North-Western areas of Ceylon.

"He said that there might be oil in other parts of Ceylon, but to establish such a contention positively and scientifically, it was necessary to carry out geological investigation around the coastal belt of Ceylon and the corresponding areas in the mainland.

"As in the case of India, the Soviet Government is likely to offer its services to the Ceylon

Government to carry on such investigations.

"The Russian scientists are on a one- and - a - half - year assignment for the Government of India. In the last four months, they have been carrying on investigations off the Coromandel Coast and in the mainland. In the course of these surveys, they have arrived at the conclusion that since there are oil deposits extending to the West of the Palk Straits, similar deposits would be there to the East as well, extending through Ceylon's territorial waters to the mainland."

I am quite confident that if the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government survived the 1965 general elections, it would have followed up the news story and we could have rejoiced over the discovery of oil in Sri Lanka several years ago.

Nevertheless, even after a lapse of ten years, I am glad that the prediction made in my news story has come true.

HEMA DE SILVA

National Lotteries Board,
502/1, Galle Road, Colombo 3.
16.10.74

SUGAR MYSTERY

WHY NO SUGAR? AND NO JAGGERY!

by BITTER—SWEET

SUGAR AND OTHER SWEETENERS like jaggery, crystalline candy and the like are not alien to the people of this country. They are indigenous to the subcontinent of Hindustan, of which the island of Lanka was a geological cum geographical part for countless centuries. In fact, sugar was native of India and it was taken to Europe by Arab traders. The Sanskrit term *Sakara* for sugar and *khanda* for candy are admittedly the root origins of most European words for these sweeteners via the Arabia *quandi*. The Italian *zucchero*, the French *sucre*, the Russian *sakhar*, the Anglo-saxon *sugar*, the Portuguese *assucar* are all deriv-

Why No Sugar?

ved directly or in a mutilated form from the Sanskrit *sakara* and *khanda*.

Though India was the home of sugar, sugar candy and jaggery, these products were commercialised only by European capitalism (and imperialism) with the result that vast sugar plantations were opened in many parts of the world in the last century to give the world a sweet tooth (and with it a host of illnesses, and also vast profits for entrepreneurs and investors). Sugar was also made from other products besides cane. And today, Britain and America are among the world's greatest consumers of sugar and it is estimated that each person in the two countries consume (in various forms) a little over hundred pounds of sugar every year. China, on the other hand, is estimated to consume much less—the average is said to be about three pounds per person per year—and the Chinese are no doubt a healthier nation for it.

But even in the subcontinent of India, sugar was never a major item of food in the pre-imperialist days, but today it is regarded as a basic staple, constituting a major source of energy for every human being. We, in Sri Lanka, can do without sugar, but it cannot be done as a matter of political dictation. For over one hundred years, the people of this country have been brought up on the use of sugar and it will take a long time before this habit can be changed.

When world imperialist interests first began expanding sugar cane plantations, Ceylon was also tried out for this crop. In the middle of the last century there were about a dozen companies established to grow cane and refine sugar, but tea, rubber and coconut seemed to have submerged these sugar companies. One sugar company, however, had persisted into the early decades of this century in the North where there was major effort to use the sap of the palmyrah to produce sugar. And, right up to very recent times, when the unimaginative excise laws about tapping our palm trees made it impossible to produce jaggery, this country produced sizable quantities of jaggery, treacle and brown candy—a part of which was even exported because food faddists elsewhere believed that such treacle and candy provided people with

natural sugar (plus natural vitamins) which did not induce diseases like diabetes.

AND BECAUSE OUR DOMESTIC LIQUOR INDUSTRY had to be maintained on a monopoly basis, the jaggery and treacle industry based on our palm trees was virtually destroyed—the last being in Jaffna after 1970 when the elastic tree-tax system of tapping the palmyrah was abolished to make way for the monopoly for toddy-tapper-caste-dominated-co-operatives to make a bonanza from the toddy-trade (and the government to get higher revenues from it).

Ever since Independence and more especially after the first World Bank report in the fifties on economic development in Ceylon, there was a governmental concern to make this island self-sufficient in agricultural products like rice, sugar and the like. Vast sums of money have been spent in the attempt to establish sugar plantations under government auspices in Gal Oya and Kantalai. Two big factories, one British and one Czech, were set up at Amparai and Kantalai respectively—and if these factories worked to capacity the sugar requirements for this country could easily have been met. As it is, after twenty years in the case of Gal Oya and fifteen years in the case of Kantalai, these factories do not have enough cane for crushing for more than a few months every year—actual latest statistics are still a secret but it is known that each of them do not operate for more than three months a year. Whatever it is, these two factories today only produce a small fraction of the sugar we use, and as the cost of production was so high that the state-owned Sugar Corporation found it necessary to concentrate on producing liquor and other spirits in order to reduce the losses—or at least to show profits (on paper). New Sugar cane fields have come up in the Uda-Walawe area, but little is known about their actual productive potential.

It is admitted that the dry zone (the Wann), apart from other areas in Sri Lanka, are excellent areas for cultivation of cane, geologically, climatically and agriculturally. This country not only can grow and make all the sugar it needs but it will also be

in a position to export sugar. It is the same story as our paddy and rice.

IT IS NOT THE PURPOSE of this article to go into details about the question why the sugar-cane ventures of the Government have failed so disastrously and why the two factories have been sidetracked into major liquor producing industries—whereas liquor should have been only a minor side-line in a country where a vast amount of foreign exchange was being used to import sugar. As it is, this country can do without importing liquor (as we are now doing) without finding local replacement, but in the context of contemporary realities and the food habits of the people, it was foolish, to say the least, for Governments to have neglected the sugar industry—both the growing of cane and the manufacture of refined sugar.

To come back to the questions posed in this article WHY NO SUGAR? WHY NO JAGGERY? the answers are very simple. In the seventies, more than at any time before—it was the UF government that had sought to make the Sugar Corporation a profitable venture through liquor even more than predecessor governments and it was the UF government that had dealt a blow to the jaggery industry in the North and elsewhere by an over-anxiety to increase the revenue from local liquor—this country had become more and more dependent on imports for its basic requirements of sugar. And this was at a time when the foreign exchange crisis had become acute with the reckless import policies of the previous UNP government. Instead of promoting the local sugar industry even through private industry (by offering the same inducements of tax holidays and the like as in tourism), the government did not pay adequate attention to the domestic production of sugar. And the jaggery industry was virtually liquidated by a short-sighted excise policy where palm-tree tapping became the jealous monopoly of toddy renters and arrack distillers—all under government control. This neglect of the sugar and jaggery industries—large-scale, small-scale, and even at cottage-level—is the basic and fundamental

reason why we do not have enough sugar in Sri Lanka today to meet minimum requirements.

The ration of three-quarter pound per person per month, even though at a subsidised price, is not enough to make twenty cups of tea for a normal working man or a middle class person; that is a person cannot get even one cup a day. One cannot buy off-ration sugar today even at Rs. 10 a lb—off ration sugar is being issued only to tourist and other big hotels at Rs. 7.50 a lb. Jaggery costs as much or even more than Rs. 10 a lb, but most of it is adulterated with the result that its sweetening qualities are greatly reduced.

Until people get used to a less-sugar or no-sugar regimen, there is bound to be a great deal of grumbling particularly in the case of people who have many children. Energy from sugar was one of the cheapest ways of imbibing calories in a country where meat, fish, eggs and other high protein energy-giving foods have become scarce and expensive. But, today, sugar has become more expensive than all of them. Milk too has become a luxury with the bungling and mess the Milk Board and the Department of Agriculture have made of the milk cattle and milk products.

THE SECOND REASON why sugar is so scarce in Sri Lanka today is that the Government bureaucrats have more than bungled the import of sugar. Imports have no doubt to be cut down, but it was not difficult to estimate our requirements for five years knowing the potentialities of local production. Believing in fairy tales about local production of sugar, pompous boasts were made that increased local production made it unnecessary to maintain the old level of sugar imports—and imports were cut down, haphazardly at random.

But what was worse was that there was no planned programme of imports. Even today, sugar on forward contracts cost anything from £ 130 to £ 180 per ton, whereas the spot price for immediate delivery in London has touched the all-time high of £ 370 per ton (not £ 400 per ton as indicated by our bureaucrats). Britain still gets its sugar from its Commonwealth sources at much less than £ 100, in fact much of it as £ 58 a ton. For the new five year forward

contract, Australia had wanted £ 180 per ton whereas the EEC was prepared to supply the same at £ 130 a ton (vide *London Times*, 20/9/74). In fact, the EEC Council has told Britain that it was duty bound to buy from the EEC and the prospect of cheaper sugar (and plentiful sugar) from the Common Market will have important repercussions on voters in the UK.

When the beet crop in Russia and Europe failed last season, it was known that spot prices for sugar would shoot up temporarily, at least. But the bureaucratic pundits in Sri Lanka, who did not believe in forward buying (because they were certain we would be near-self-sufficient soon), and they also did not seem to know the current trends in the sugar market. Not very long ago, the local bureaucrats refused to accept offers for spot sugar at £ 270 a ton because they thought the price was too high, but within a short time the price had shot up to £ 340 a ton, then £ 350 and finally to £ 370.

When this happened they threw up their hands in holy horror and advised the Government to stop all imports and make do with what little they had in the storehouses. And even here the greatest concessions were extended to the tourists who were able to pay for the sugar with the subsidy inherent in the FEECs.

(Millions of rupees of private capital has been invested in tourism with special inducements—tax holidays for 15 years, CRA, etc. etc.—but what little foreign exchange this investment has brought has been more than swallowed up by the higher prices we pay for sugar and other agricultural products—rice etc. On the other hand, if the same money had been invested in agriculture on the same basis, this country would not only have saved more foreign exchange than tourism has brought, but the people would have had food in plenty—and this private enterprise in agriculture could have been done without disturbing the fundamentals of land ceilings and land reform through the medium of short, medium and long term leases. But, as has been pointed out time without number, all Governments in Sri Lanka from Independence, including the

present UF government, have mixed up priorities).

To sum up: we do not have enough sugar and jaggery in Sri Lanka today because: (1) we have bungled the sugar cane growing and refining industry and stifled the jaggery industry—in both cases we have given greater preference to the alcohol industry over sugar and jaggery; (2) we have messed up the import of sugar in not entering into forward contracts (even on a bilateral basis with socialist countries) at reasonable prices to cover all our requirements, but we have resorted to speculative buying at spot prices in a highly unstable market.

The Government has to take correct measures to meet the present sugar crisis, and it will be interesting to see what measures the Government will adopt immediately. *Grow more sugar cane* is the cry today, but how will they implement this new slogan? Will they give an opportunity to private capital to enter the sugar cane industry on a 15 to 25 years guaranteed basis? If the Government is serious about producing sugar for consumption (and even for export), it must seriously consider inviting the private sector (as in the tourist trade) to come into agriculture—without solely depending on state farms, youth council farms, collective farms co-operative farms and peasants cultivators because these are organisations that can only develop slowly after overcoming many handicaps. In a mixed economy such as ours, competition between the private sector and the public sector, under the benevolent eye of a pro-public sector government, will go a long way towards increased productivity and production.

Next, the jaggery making industry must be freed from the shackles of excise laws which are intended to help the toddy and arrack renters. Unless this is done immediately, there is bound to be a hue and cry in the country about the shortage and the high prices of sugar and jaggery. It will take over 14 months before cane sugar can be produced, even if the correct steps are taken, but jaggery from palm trees can be in the market within a matter of months.

In regard to imports, forward contracts, even on a barter basis,

Why No Sugar?

may be become essential to meet the present crisis. But import policy must be based on a realistic assessment of local production potential and a better understanding of the international movement of price trends in the sugar world.

BUT APART FROM ALL THIS, there is very strong resentment among ordinary people about the manner in which the Sugar Corporation fixes prices for its products—even after the sugar crisis has come upon this country. Very recently, a big "fuss" was made that the Corporation was willing to sell cane sugar jaggery at Rs. 7.50 a lb. The *Aththa*, basing its revelations on sources from the trade union workers in the Corporation, stated that this Rs. 7.50 jaggery had cost the Corporation only Rs. 1.30 a lb. The workers, it was pointed out, had stated that even if the Corporation was inclined to make a 100% profit could have fixed the price at Rs. 2.60 a lb.

It would appear that the workers in the Corporation get a preferential price, but even this is black-marketing with a vengeance. The following are some of the prices worked out by the Corporation:

"A packet of jaggery cubes known as "ranketi" weighing one pound, is sold to the workers of the Corporation at Rs. 5.65. The wholesale price of this product is Rs. 6.20. The retailer gets it at Rs. 6.80 and the consumer pays Rs. 7.50. A bundle of jaggery weighing one pound is sold to the workers at Rs. 5.50; to the wholesaler at 6.00; retailer at Rs. 6.50; to the consumer at Rs. 7.25. Another variety known as "sakkara" costs the workers Rs. 4.90; the wholesaler Rs. 5.40, the retailer Rs. 5.90, and the consumer Rs. 6.50. A bottle of syrup known as "ranwan" is sold to the workers at Rs. 5.65; to the wholesaler at Rs. 6.20; to the retailer at Rs. 6.80 and the consumer Rs. 7.50. The above prices give an indication of the super profits the Corporation is making."

It is also significant that the large consignments of sugar imported by Sri Lanka was at £ 760 a ton (earlier shipments were at even lower prices). This will mean Rs. 3900 a ton, that is Rs. 1.78 a lb. This sugar was being sold to ration book holders at 1 lb a person per

month at .72 cts. a lb, and the subsidy on the 6000 tons that was so distributed every month was Rs. 7,992,000 or Rs. 7.9 million. But from the off-ration sugar (3000 tons a month since March) at Rs. 5 a lb, the profit was Rs. 21,240,000, i.e. Rs. 21.2 million. The Government made a net profit on sugar since March this year was Rs. 13.2 million. This was without FEECs which was charged on the consumers price, and this would bring an additional Rs. 22.8 million. The profits on stocks bought earlier will be greater.

There could be mistakes in the arithmetic, but there is no doubt that the Government has made a good profit on the sugar—as it has always done to offset the part of the losses on the rationed rice which was subsidised. There may be some excuse for this, but there cannot be any excuse for the prices charged by the Sugar Corporation which already makes handsome profits in the alcohol it produces. It will be a good thing if the Sugar Corporation stops its liquor and alcohol manufacture and switches over to sugar—at least to ensure that all children under 16 and infants get an adequate quota of sugar which is one of the very energy giving food we have in this country at the moment.

One cannot but end this article with the concluding paragraph of the editorial in the premier government daily, the *Ceylon Daily News*, on September 14 which said: "What now, Sri Lanka Sugar Corporation? Here is your challenge to take the public into your confidence, to map out swift and sure strategy to produce sugar, and in due course to produce all the sweeteners possible. People will live with the shortage of sweeteners if there is a definite prospect of more, soon. Or are we going to be faced with the absurdity of Sri Lanka producing its own oil—and continuing to import its sugar?"

AS A POSTSCRIPT the Editor, of *Tribune* has drawn attention to a paragraph on Sugar in *The Economist*, 7/9/74, entitled **SOMEONE IS MAKING MONEY**. It said: "Australian Estate 'A' shares have risen 22p to 110p in the past two weeks, and the market has started to invent bld stories to explain it away. A circular by stockbrokers Simon and Coates discloses

more fundamental attractions: the company mills 10% of the Australian sugar crop. Of the total Australian crop of 2.6 m tons last year, 1 m tons were sold at free market rates and the rest under various quota agreement, including about 350,000 tons to Britain at £ 58 a ton, under an agreement currently being renegotiated at much higher price. Across the board, the average price was £ 84 a ton, producing revenue of £ 253m, including the molasses trade. Even on the basis of the existing agreements, the average price for this year's record crop of 2.75m tons should be £ 155, what with the current free market price being £ 370 a ton, including molasses, sugar revenue should be over £ 441m, with profits of £ 257m. Since the millers get a third (and the growers two-thirds) of the profits, Australian Estates' shares should be around £ 8m. This compares with the pre-tax profits for the whole group in 1973 of £ 6.8m (40% of which was sugar) and a market capitalisation of £ 15m."

The concluding part of the note reveals how big business operates in a commodity which is at the moment "scarce": "Tate and Lyle has unrealised sugar profits which actually exceed its market capitalisation. The company uses the base-stock method of accounting, which values 200,000 tons of its British sugar stocks at £ 25 a ton and has the effect of eliminating any stock profit made on the cost of the base stock. But what is denied to the shareholders as current profit sits in the balance sheet as a hidden reserve. If Tate and Lyle reduces the size of its base stock—as it has done in recent years—that surplus is turned into hard cash. It is worth £ 65m compared with the market capitalisation of £ 52m. The share price has risen from 102p to 120p in the past few weeks. Buy both these shares—but sell when the sugar scare fades."

No comment is needed.

RECORDS

Eleven couples began the Great National Kiss-Off contest in Schaumburg (Illinois, U.S.A.) on June 8. The aim was to break the world kissing record of 100 hours.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—7

THE PLAN (continued)

By Herbert Keuneman

I HAVE EXPLAINED that, both in the interests of economy and for suitability to its environment, I had decided half my house should consist of 'open' rooms: half-walled. This was easy enough where the roof could rest on posts or columns. But on the ground floor of a two-storeyed house, with the weight of an upper storey to be provided against, it was obviously a different matter: every opening would carry masonry above it or (if there were to be no masonry) brick piers over 16' high would have to uphold a largish roof against all the working of the Vanni winds. Concrete tie-beams were of course an answer but an unacceptable one: as I argued last week, cost and non-traditionality equally opposed the technique. A simple—and pleasing—alternative was...the arch.

The arch, even the dome, is a perfectly legitimate and familiar *baas'* device. He seldom employs it now (save in building the 'Dutch' oven of the village bakery, and here he employs it invariably) but he understands it, has an 'eye' for it. It is true that the *keystone* arch is a thoroughly foreign concept within—at least—Southeast Asia; but the *corbelled* arch, and vault, and dome have been Sinhala as long as the *gediges* of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. (In is interesting, though irrelevant, that—as Wallace, of Wallace's Line, points out—the diagonal brace is also foreign to the same region). I would not trust corbelled arches; but I settled for the 'rough segmental' type, which in any case I find more picturesque than the semi circular.

It was a pleasure to see how easily the arches grew under my *baas'* hands. It was a pleasure, too, to see how simply and cheaply yet efficiently they improvised the necessary shoring. They merely built up mortarless columns of loose bricks to a suitable height, placed across them a stout plank so that its upper surface coincided with the springing line (where the curve of the arch commenced) built up on this the profile of the curve with coconu husks bonded with mud, smoothed off the top of the pile to the precise shape of the soffit, and laid the bricks on this temporary foundation. A few days later, when the mortar had well set, they knocked a brick or two from the dry-stone columns, dismantled these, removed the plank with its form of husks, and there was your arch as sound and firm as you wished. I MADE what I think was a useful contribution so this rough-and-

ready method by producing a simple device—my *yantare*, the *baases* indulgently named it—to ensure that the bricks should be as evenly spaced as possible: it seemed to be tempting providence to carry this *insouciant* kind of arch building too far. It was a wooden frame which just fitted within the abutments of the arch in such a manner that the point where a swinging arm was pivoted on it would automatically fall at the focal point of the curve of the arch segment. The breadth of the arm being that of the thickness of a brick, one could swing it across the face of the form and mark on the mud precisely where each brick should be placed.

Also, so far as the building of the arches was concerned I personally saw to it that the mortar was a strong and uniform mix and that every brick was thoroughly soaked before it was laid. For I had earlier learned that *baases* may be careless about such things, especially the soaking of bricks, so that not only might the bonding be poor but also some bricks could turn out to be *damba gal* (insufficiently baked bricks; pure mud). I had undergone the trauma of watching a sudden sharp shower of unexpected rain dissolve a brick or two out of walls already raised, before my very eyes!

I suppose I could have arched my doorways and windows as well. But this, it seemed, might turn out too much of a good thing: the house had ten arches without them. Besides, the kind of windows I had chosen demanded level lintels. They are top-hung, not casements. The shutters open outward and upward and must be propped in the open position. The result

is an agreeably rustic-looking fenestration (though no other village house, to my knowledge, has them) and the raised shutters act as effective sunshades against the noonday glare. I chose them, however, first for cheapness. They require no expensive window frames, only a top timber from which they hang and inexpensive mouldings in the plaster against which they abut when closed; and three light hinges suffice where a casement would need four, if not six, heavier ones. There is no glass in them, though glazed panels could be quite practically introduced could I afford them.

As for doorways, not all my doorways contain doors. Some are open archways: others, where privacy rather than security is the overriding requirement, have only double curtains trapped at either side and drawing completely one over the other. Where there are doors they are of the brace-and-batten type nailed and clenched.

So much, then, for some of the chief practical problems my house-plan presented.

But I have described, so far, only the main block, the Living area.

The Service block—if it does not sound too grandiloquent to call it that—is a single-storeyed lean-to shed 8' deep and as wide as the main block. To be sure, it started out a little more ambitiously: it was going to spread on either side 8' wider than the main block and partly enfold the base of it in right-angled arms. This would not only have given me greater kitchen and storage space but the profile of the roof-slope over the arms, repeating the slope of the roof above it at a lower level and in a broader stance, would have supplied a base from which the taller structure could logically spring: a figure, now I come to re-visualise it, not unlike that of a Kandyan dancer squared off and ready. My budget, however, and Mr. N. M. Perera's—two very contradictory things—put paid to any such fancies. The Service block, its arms amputated, is (as built) the mere shed I have called it, albeit a walled shed; and the view of the house as one approaches it from this direction, where stands the front door, is frankly ugly. Someday, perhaps, my plan will

be restored: meanwhile, I try not to look too much save from the bund of the tank (the other direction from which the house was meant to be observed).

ONE ENTERS the house through a Vestibule. In the wall facing one is a door to the Hallway and Stair Well. To the right is the kitchen. To the left lies a corridor from which open: on the one hand a doorway to the Guest Bedroom, and on the other doorways to the Toilet serving this and a Shower Room still without a shower (the water system has never been within a thousand rupees of being installed!) At the end of the corridor is a door of loose planks—common in boutique fronts throughout the Island—through which is the Storeroom.

The Storeroom is especially worthy of attention. The walls of this part of the house, up even to the wall-plates surmounting them, were built during one of my absences from Ehetuwewa. My head *baas* in his eagerness to complete this section so as to bill me for it on my return entirely overlooked the window I had drawn into my plan—a window which was to be of jam jars (of which I had dozens, empty) embedded in cement so as to let light in but keep everything else out—and since beholding this I never found sufficient spirit to tear down what was already built and rebuild it. One does not, actually, spend a great deal of time in a Storeroom: so it has not been too difficult to reconcile myself to the idea that to find anything in mine I must light a hurricane lamp! A flashlight? With batteries at Re. 1/50 per cell? and preternaturally short-lived batteries, too! Anyway, I need a hurricane lamp to look for the batteries by.

Separate blocks though the Living and Service areas are, they flow one into the other at one point: the Kitchen. I felt that, somewhere, this should be so; that the Service area should not, in an 'organic' plan, remain a mere appendage of the other; and the Kitchen, it seemed to me, was the logical place where the synthesis should occur. It is all right, perhaps, to treat the kitchen purely as a service component in a house where the domestic 'staff' constitutes a sort of second-class citizenry in the household (so

long as this kind of household must exist.) Mine, however, was not going to be—and is not now—such a household. Besides, there was the matter of logical proportions. The Kitchen could well be larger than its 8' depth allowed; and a 16x17' Dining Room was too large, and too square, for my 7'x3' dining-table. So I raised a free standing partition wall which reduced the Dining Room to 16'x12' and pierced the wall of the main block behind it with arches, thus adding about 80 sq. ft. to the Kitchen's floor-space but leaving no firm boundary to demarcate where Living ended and Service began!

I HAVE NEVER yet quite determined which is the front of my house and which the rear! I have an indubitable Front Door, the main entrance to the house, which I have described; but all the chief Living rooms—Living Room proper, my own Bedroom, Dining Room—look out in the other direction: over Galkadawala Tank. This is, surely, the front of the house? In that case, however, the 'Front' Door is at the back and the opposite door, the one by which the house must be left after locking up, gives to the front.

The only trouble I have with this arrangement is not really a matter of arrangement at all. It is that the house faces westward, for the view, and the westerling sun—an unpleasant, nagging kind of glare altogether unlike the cheerful exsuscitating beams of the sun as it rises—insists into every best room, so that from 2 to 5 screens must be lowered against it and the view itself cut off. Also, by the same token, the Southwest wind, which blows with great force from May to September or October, pours through the same rooms, blowing everything about that is not weighted against it. But the unspeakable alternative was to disregard the view entirely. As it is, thanks to the wind the thermometer lies when it climbs into the high 80s and the 90s and the house is as cool as Kandy. And for all but those three shuttered hours of the afternoon my eyes are blessed with a scene of peace.

THE MYSTERY OF LEMURIA—6

Search for the "Sumerian Paradise": Mohenjo-daro

By A. Kondratov

BEFORE TELLING THE READER, about the search for that land I want to sum up what has already been said.

The study of the Dravidian languages, their comparison with the languages spoken by the earliest inhabitants of India, Mesopotamia, Elam (possibly not only Elam, but also some other regions of Iran up to Central Asia, as well as the Caucasus) and with the geographical names and languages of Arabia enable many scholars to advance a hypothesis that the bearers of Dravidian languages once inhabited a vast territory from the Caucasus and Central Asia to Arabia and India.

India however cannot be looked upon as the mother country of these languages. And yet they spread not from the northwest, but from the south, since by far a very large number of them live in south India.

Both the creators of the proto-Indian civilisation and the Ubaidians—predecessors of the Sumerians—could have spoken Dravidian, or some other languages related to them. According to Kramer and other researchers, the proto-Indian culture was brought to India by the Ubaidians, who had been forced out from the south of Mesopotamia by the newly arrived Sumerians. On the other hand, according to the legends of the earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia civilisation was brought to this area by the god Enki. He had founded Eridu, the southernmost city in Mesopotamia. "When royal power descended from heaven, a kingdom was founded in Eridu," says the ancient "list of kings" found in Mesopotamia.

Does not this mean that civilisation had been brought both to India and Mesopotamia (and probably to Elam and even Egypt) from some unknown "X centre"? The bearers of this civilisation had a dark skin and spoke Dravidian languages, while the ancient legends of

the Dravidians say that Lemuria, which now lies in the bottom of the Indian Ocean had been their ancestral homeland.

IS IT POSSIBLE to find any indications of this legendary land not only in Indian, but also in Sumerian sources? It goes without saying that it may not necessarily be called Lemuria, Navalam, Tamilaham, the Southern Continent or any other, as the name could have been changed by the Sumerians (remember how they changed the Ubaidian god Enki into Ea), while the Dravidian names of the sunken continent relate to the Middle Ages and could also have changed considerably.

The god Ea, or Enki, this "Neptune of Mesopotamia," brought culture to the people of Eridu, the southernmost city in Mesopotamia. Enki himself lived in a country called *Dilmun*, where there were neither diseases, nor death, where there was clear spring water and the people were happy and care-free.

It may seem at first glance that *Dilmun* was a mythical country that had never existed. However, this is not the case. Mention of "ships from *Dilmun*" can be found in very ancient business texts discovered in Mesopotamia. Later Assyrian sources also tell about Uperi, a *Dilmun* king, paying a tribute to Sargon the Second, King of Assyria. Another Assyrian ruler brought a rich booty from *Dilmun*—copper, bronze and valuable timber. The warriors of *Dilmun* helped Sennakherib, and Assyrian despot, to raze Babylon, to the ground "the mother of the cities." In short, in spite of the fact that mythology endowed Ea's domain with all the typical features of paradise, *Dilmun* had actually existed.

But where was it situated?

Dilmun is called "a land from where the sun rises," therefore its situation should be sought to the east of the Tigris and Euphrates valley. When archaeologists discovered an ancient civilisation, "a missing link" between the cultures of Mesopotamia and India, on the Bahrain Islands in the Persian Gulf, they decided that the mysterious *Dilmun* had been found at last.

However, not long back Kramer advanced weighty arguments refuting the supposition

that the Bahrain Islands could have been *Dilmun*. He said that there were no elephants there, while ivory had been *Dilmun's* most saleable commodity that there have not been found any temples of the god of the water there etc. Kramer believes that the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, when speaking of *Dilmun*, actually had in mind India and the proto-Indian civilisation with its developed cult of water its seafaring, and tame elephants.

Is that so?

May be further investigations will make scientists once again revise their ideas about the location of *Dilmun*? And then it will be "moved" not only to the east, but also to the south of the Tigris and Euphrates delta, and further to the Indian Ocean. It is impossible to solve this problem until a careful investigation of the bottom of the Indian Ocean has been made, until the hieroglyphic texts written by the creators of the proto-Indian civilisation have been read (the word "*Dilmun*" according to Kramer, is not of Sumerian, but of Ubaidian origin, and if the proto-Indians called their land *Dilmun*, there is a chance of finding this name on charms and seals).

ARTHUR CLARKE, writer, scientist and enthusiast of underwater swimming, writes in his book *The Reefs of Taprobane* that in the warm waters around Ceylon, close to the city of Trincomalee, skin-divers have discovered sunken monuments of various civilisations, from the earliest to the present day.

It is quite possible that archaeologists will also find under water the capital of the proto-Indian civilisation. At present about 100 cities and settlements relating to the earliest Indian civilisation, are known to science. The largest of them, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, are situated on the banks of the river Indus; both cities are in no way inferior to each other. Does not that mean that the actual capital has not been found so far, and that it should be looked for not on the dry land, but under water?

Close to the Indus delta there is a wide strip of shallow water, a shelf with a big terrace at a depth

of about 100 metres. The terrace is almost as wide as the vast Indus delta itself. It is cut by an under water canyon—probably there was a time when the Indus was longer than it is now. At present this area is under water. It could have sunk to the bottom of the ocean very quickly owing to a catastrophe caused by an earthquake. Such phenomena have been observed in the area. Thus, during the earthquake of 1819 a vast territory sunk in the Indus delta below ocean level.

Ancient authors also speak about catastrophes that befell the lands situated in the Indus valley. Thus Strabo, a well-known geographer, refers in his *Geography* to the evidence of Aristobol who said: "Travelling on business I saw a land with over a thousand cities and villages left by their inhabitants because the Indus which, having departed from its former course and turned to the left into another and deeper one, flowed rapidly rushing down like a cataract." Many centuries later this evidence was confirmed by scientists, and the decisive word belonged not to archaeologists, but to a hydrological expedition headed by D. Rakes, an American researcher.

Rakes established that 140 kilometres to the south of Mohenjo-daro there had been the epicentre

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Sri Lanka.

of a tremendous earthquake which had changed the adjoining areas of the Indus valley beyond recognition. A disastrous dislocation of a mountain rock blocked the powerful Indus, and it began to flow backwards. Streams of mud turned the waters of the Indus into a shallow swampy lake which flooded the valley. Numerous villages and settlements close to Mohenjo daro were buried under a many metre layer of sand and slime. Mohenjo-daro was flooded more than five times, but every time the city rose from its ruins.

According to scientists, each "offensive" of mud lasted for some 100 years. The recently-found stone dam, which is over 10 metres high and 20 metres wide, testifies to the struggle of the proto-Indians against the elements. Natural disaster, as Pakistani archaeologists and scientists from Pennsylvania University (the USA) suppose, had caused the ruin of the proto-Indian civilisation for having exhausted all their strength in the struggle against nature, the proto-Indians could not oppose the onset of the nomads, and their culture fell into decline.

I have already mentioned that Indian archaeologists have discovered the ruins of Lothal—the most ancient port in the world—in Kathiawar. The lay-out of the city surprisingly reminds one of that of Mohenjo-daro, though Lothal is much smaller in size (it is not without reason that it has been called "Mohenjo-daro in miniature.") May be some investigation work under water will help to discover at the bottom of the Indian Ocean the "great Mohenjo-daro," the capital of the proto-Indian Ocean the "great Mohenjo-daro," the capital of the proto-Indian Ocean the "great Mohenjo-daro," the capital of the proto-Indian civilisation, once built on the shore of the sea according to the same lay-out (i.e. well planned, with wide streets, a sewage system, etc.), but only larger in size!

(To be Continued)



AGRICULTURE

Piggeries In Mixed Farming

A mere shrub jungle, just a decade ago—but a full fledged farm yielding rice, milk and meat today. That is the story of the College farm developed in the campus of the Madras Christian College Tambaram.

The venture started as a small poultry farm about ten years ago. With supply of water assured from wells there was some interest in growing foodgrains and paddy was taken up with some moderate success. Later the high-yielding rice varieties were also successfully raised. But the real stride forward in the farm venture came when it started to rear cattle with plans to grow its own fodder crops. Soon after this the farm was able to break even and gradually the return from the farm also increased making it a profitable venture.

Apart from the monetary gains that the farm earned, the indirect benefit it conferred on the people around the farm was more valuable. Easily accessible to villagers in the contiguous areas, the farm not only developed into a centre of attraction and education on modern farming methods for cultivators but also supplied them with seeds and new crop varieties. More enduring was the advantage derived by a number of students of the college who were attracted by these developments and ultimately got involved in them by participating actively in the day-to-day work of the farm and some research projects as part of the National Service Scheme.

The mixed farm would have been incomplete without a piggery for according to Dr. Mantramurthi, director of the farm project, pigs are the best converters of vegetable waste into valuable food. The main purpose in maintaining livestock is to utilise all vegetable material not conducive to direct human intake into reliable food produce like milk or meat. And the efficiency of such

conversion is the greatest in pigs. With prolific bearing, combined with a capacity to feed on unsound and damaged feed material like mouldy grains, table garbage, bakery waste, cull potatoes and fruits or vegetables of substandard quality, pigs could provide more meat easily and in larger quantities than other livestock. While the special fodder is used for dairy cattle and the special breeds of sheep raised in the College Farm, the pigs are maintained by mess waste from the college to start with. Large quantities of mess waste made available from the nearby Indian Air-Force Station has come in handy to feed the rapidly multiplying stock of purebred Yorkshire large white pigs noted for pork.

The latest development in the Farm is a project for cross breeding this Yorkshire white strain with exotic breeds that have a long body and higher quantity of meat. The farm has just received two boars of the Australian Land Race Breed as gift from the members of the Society for Those Who Have Less of Australia. These have come in time for this programme and the more productive stock that can be reared from these would not only augment the returns from the farm but also pave the way for developing scientific piggery in the village around as a side occupation for farmers who are now producing only farm field crops.

—Hindu

NEXT ISSUE

- ON ASTROLOGY
- VILLAGE HOUSE—DECOR
- WORLD FOOD SITUATION
- U. S. ECONOMY

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

• KALAWEWA • IRAN

IS IT NOT TRUE that the nominations for the Kalawewa by-election had aroused a great deal of speculation, interest and comment? That shortly after the death of the former MP, it was said that his son would be the SLFP candidate? That it was said that another contender for the SLFP (UF) nomination was young Yasapala (?) Herat, an attorney-at-law, whose home village was Nochchiyapura which is close to Anuradhapura and adjoins the Kalawewa electorate? That stories went round that attempts were being made to stop Herat from contesting as an independent if he was not given SLFP nomination? That at the last General Elections Herat had campaigned for the United Front with great vigour? That Herat is reputed to have great influence among the younger voters in the Kalawewa region? That whilst this "nomination" war was going on within the SLFP in that area, speculation had arisen as to whether Anura Bandaranaike would make his debut in parliamentary politics by contesting the Kalawewa by-election? That this story gained even greater credence when a story was circulated that the UNP leader J. R. Jayawardene, did not want to field a UNP candidate for Kalawewa if Anura was the SLFP candidate? That the story was that JR did not want the UNP to contest Anura because the latter was taking a consistent centrist line against extremists on the Right as well as on the Left? That the only daily newspaper which mentioned this "story", in print, that the UNP leader did not want the UNP to contest by-election was the *Daily Mirror*? That whilst this paper mentioned that JR's attitude had created a stir in UNP circles, it did not set out that JR (according to the story) had wanted

to avoid a contest only if Anura was the SLFP candidate? That though it was all-island talk that Anura might be a candidate at Kalawewa there was no mention of it in any newspaper? That even if this story about JR's disinclination for the UNP to contest Anura was not true (gossip mushrooms in Sri Lanka on the slightest pretext), it is a fact that from 1970 JR had wanted a new coalition between the centrist (and rightist) elements in the UNP and the SLFP? That JR had earlier failed to evoke any response from the SLFP and also had caused a major crisis within the UNP?

That whilst all this gossip about the Kalawewa by-election had mounted in volume and intensity, JR had to leave the country last week on a personal matter of a private nature? That it was expected that he would return on 27th October to be in time for the UNP Nomination Board to make a decision? That a crisis of the first magnitude has now been avoided within the UNP because Anura has not been chosen as the SLFP candidate for the Kalawewa seat? That the SLFP has now nominated the former MP's son? That the UNP would now probably nominate the person who had been the UNP's candidate in 1970, viz. Adikari? That at the time of writing, it is not known whether Herat had decided to come forward as an independent candidate? That there is also speculation as to whether the new political party, Vimukti Balavegaya (SLJVB) would field a candidate at Kalawewa? That though many regretted the fact that Anura was not the SLFP nominee for Kalawewa, it was felt that it would better for him to enter the Assembly from a constituency nearer his home political base? That time was on his side? That with his embryonic charisma

good work among the masses would make him a major political force in the country within a short time? That many in the UF were not happy that J.R. was willing to extend a UNP umbrella to help Anura along? That they feared that this UNP cover would prove to be like the mushroom umbrellas in *Alice in Wonderland*? That many others saw in JR's alleged move the attempt to form an incipient nucleus for a new and aggressive right wing coalition? That this was something that JR had been after for a long time? That reports indicate that Anura had refused to be taken in by JR's strategy of obtaining a *quid pro quo*?

IS IT NOT A FACT that Iran had invited the head of the Sri Lanka government to visit that country more than seven years ago for the first time? That this invitation had been sent personally through Sri Lanka's envoy in Pakistan (who was also accredited to Iran)? That it was known that if Sri Lanka had responded to this invitation and had in the normal course invited the Shah to this island, then far greater co-operation than now exists between Sri Lanka and Iran could have been built up? That this first invitation from Iran had come during the days of the last UNP regime? That the UNP had a cockeyed view of international relations and Iran was at that time regarded by many as a small-time satellite of the USA? That there was nothing the Shah could then have done about this discourtesy and affront? That, in spite of this, persons knowledgeable about Iranian affairs say that a second invitation was sent by the Shah to Sri Lanka about two years ago? That it has not been possible to get any confirmation whether this story about the second invitation is true or untrue? That there is no doubt that if such an invitation had come and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike had been made aware of its significance she would have responded with an immediate goodwill visit? That if this second invitation had indeed come, it may still be lying in the pigeon-hole of some bureaucrat? That it was this lack of response to the Shah's invitations which is said to be reason for Sri Lanka being left out of the initial plan announced by the Shah for economic co-operation in this region?