

TRIBUNE

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A LITTLE RAIN

but the Maha crop.....?

STARTING FROM AROUND DECEMBER 10, what apparently seemed to be rain from the Northeast Monsoon had begun to fall in the Northern and Eastern parts, but the fact that rain had also fallen in other places on the island is an indication that some of the rain was at least of cyclonic origin. What rain has fallen in the North and East so far was only for three days and was not yet enough to fill up the tanks.

Traditionally, the Northeast Monsoon rains that fall in October and November fill up the tanks

and this water is used for tank-irrigated cultivation from mid-October at the latest to reap a harvest by mid-January. And the rains that fall in December and January are left in the tanks for the Yala crop. This traditional pattern has been upset for some years, and the latest drought following some years of partial monsoons has left the tanks so parched dry that more rain water than usual will be necessary to fill the tanks because a large percentage will be absorbed by the dried-up tank beds.

(Last year unusually heavy cyclonic cum monsoon rains in December filled up the tanks and a good Maha crop was made possible with a partial yala, but whether this will be repeated this year is yet to be seen. But, unlike this year, during last year there was a minimum of rain in October and November in the Wannai dry zone areas, and this had made possible a reasonably good rain-fed crop as well as a substantial tank-irrigated crop).

This year it is a different story.

After a few flattering showers, (cyclonic), at the beginning of October (when rain-fed fields were sown) there was no rain during October and November—except in a few places where there were slight showers and drizzles. During the weekend of November 22-24 there was another bout of cyclonic rain, until the beginning of what may well be the northeast—around December 10, but which has turned out to be another cyclonic spell.

EVEN IF THIS NORTHEAST does bring much-needed rain after this, how much of the Maha in the rice-producing areas of the Wannai can be saved?

For rain-fed cultivation—except in a few exceptional areas—the rains have come too late. Only a miracle can save about thirty percent (one-third) of the paddy plants on the ground, but the all-Wannai average (including the fringe areas like Jaffna and Mannar) can be as low as ten percent. This is not an unduly pessimistic view, but there cannot be the slightest doubt that panchydermous bureaucrats in various government departments will pretend that a bumper harvest was around the corner.

PAST REGRETS, FUTURE HOPES

Tribune takes this opportunity to wish all its readers a happy Christmas and the best of everything (possible under the circumstances) for the coming year. This will be the last issue of *Tribune* for 1974 because there will be no issue of *Tribune* on Saturday, December 28, 1974. Our next issue will be on January 4, 1975. We are old fashioned enough to recognise that world over the New Year begins on January 1, although in Sri Lanka we refuse to recognise January 1. Chauvinistic reactions to western customs, and the unhealthy competition between the two Sinhala parties (the UNP and the SLFP) to outdo each other in promoting what they believed to be the glories of an ancient civilisation has led to the refusal to recognise January 1 as the New Year (on the international calendar which we use for all purposes—except in religious and astrological matters when we fall back upon April new-year-calendar). A few years ago everything was done was to banish the English language. But now, there is a mao craving to bring English back on as wide a scale as possible because Sri Lanka is being pushed into the backwaters without an international language to link us to the rest of the world. Some day soon, January 1 will regain its significance even in Sri Lanka as the international new year day. However, though this season has been starved of holidays in Sri Lanka (with an unnecessary plentitude at other times), this is a fortnight when everybody who is not able to take casual or medical leave takes french leave. Sri Lanka has two new year holiday stretches when all work stops, with or without official sanction: one at the end of December and the other in April, and it is during these two periods of no-work that *Tribune* skips an issue. As we look back upon 1974 and look forward to 1975 this country can only contemplate with philosophic calm on the time-worn cliché that we must not dwell too long on past regrets but ensure that our future hopes bear fruit.

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What are the prospects of tank-irrigated cultivation?

At the moment, they are none too bright. At the time of writing the tanks have not filled up and the chances of their getting filled are remote unless a deluge which can produce a flood fills them during the next fortnight or so. As it is, a few took the risk of sowing in October or November and if they can re-sow now can harvest a reasonably good crop if the tanks fill up. Those who have not sowed—and the majority have not—will have to await the filling up of the tanks when they will be given their quota of water by the Cultivation Committee.

All this speculation is very good for the arm-chair bureaucratic agriculturists who adorn our ministries and departments, but those who know the practical and concrete realities in the field know that it would be prudent to prepare for a rice famine in 1975—in the months after April or May. (Massive imports can save the situation temporarily, but two questions relevant to the matter are: where can we import from in a year of universal global shortages and where is the foreign exchange to come from?)

An advertisement in a newspaper recently indicated that the State Cashew Plantation Corporation had called for quotations from competent firms to sink a number of tube wells in their plantation in the Mannar area under what purports to be a Sri Lanka/India Aid Scheme. This is a welcome step and this tube-well sinking is something which must more urgently be extended to paddy producing areas—cashew should under all circumstances have a far lower priority than paddy and other food crops.

(But far too many of our top VIPs have been mesmerised by the mania of promoting non-traditional exports that they forget that the first priority must be food).

Not much is known either about the Sri Lanka/India Aid Scheme under which cashew falls—and it is extremely difficult to get information about these matters. But if there is such an aid scheme, the Government must take steps to extend such aid schemes to cover the sinking of tube and deep wells (after a proper hydrological survey) to paddy and food producing areas.

(An Israeli team has done a preliminary hydrological survey of the Mannar district and with this the Cashew Corporation will be able to sink the necessary wells).

WHAT IS MOST DISTRESSING is the apathy which prevails in official quarters. Field officials have been asked to report what the situation in the paddy producing areas really is, but our bureaucrats from the topmost to the lowest have a congenital reluctance to report the stark realities and the truth. They, no doubt, feel that if the truth were unpalatable it might be construed as being due to the inefficiency and incompetence of the official in question. Some of them believe in breaking the news in stages, but this only helps to perpetuate a false picture thereby preventing timely remedial measures being taken.

Whilst our politicians continue to make rhetorical speeches about the glories of our food production drive in the Assembly and elsewhere, paddy production for the current Maha is already in shambles—without water at the proper time. *Tribune* has stressed for many years now, and more recently in our issues during the last two

months, including last week's, that unless we tapped our ground-water resources (which are known to exist) in a big way, agriculture and food production cannot be stabilised and good crops ensured.

In Jaffna, which is a paddy-deficit area, rice is already selling at around Rs. 8 a measure, and people are expecting it to go up to Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a measure in first half of 1975. In the surplus rice-producing areas like Mannar, Anuradhapura, Minneriya and Batticaloa, the price is already near Rs. 6 a measure and nobody will be surprised if it goes up to Rs. 10 a measure. At the prices rice will touch in 1975, many thousands (even hundred of thousands) will not be able to buy off-ration rice at the prevailing market rates. And rationed rice is notoriously insufficient. In the absence of subsidaries and other alternative cereals, people will have no alternative but to go hungry.

This is grim picture, but it does not seem to have any impact on concerned official circles which seem to think that the rains will ultimately come to the rescue of this blessed island and that everything will be fruitful and happy thereafter.

PRESS CONFERENCE

MR. LAKSHMAN JAYAKODDY —on topics of current interest—

A press conference was held at the Ministry of Defence & Foreign Affairs at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 1974, presided over by the Deputy Minister of Defence & Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Jayakoddy. At a meeting with about three dozens press officers and foreign representatives lasting over two hours, subjects coming within the purview of the following Department, under the Ministry were discussed:

(1) Sri Lanka Army; (2) Sri Lanka Navy; (3) Sri Lanka Air Force; (4) Sri Lanka Police; (5) Immigration & Emigration; (6) Registration of Persons; (7) Department of External Affairs abroad.

IT WAS MADE CLEAR that the Government will not allow the creation of private armies, independent of and apart from the regular armed services. In this matter, we follow the pattern of the British & Commonwealth Armed Services. No drastic changes either in the structures or the personnel of the Sri Lanka Armed Forces were to be contemplated. In keeping with this principle the insurgency carried out by the Jatika Vimukthi Peramuna in 1971 and the Coup d'Etats of 1962 (major) and 1966

(minor) had been successfully suppressed and the cases of some of the insurgents involved in the 1971 abortive putsch were still being heard by the Criminal Justice Commission. Several other insurgents had been released, some of whom had already been rehabilitated back into society as well as re-employed.

Tragically however, a few had been shot by the Police without a trial in the early days of the insurgency around April-May 1971, while others had been tortured or assault-

Press Conference

red mercilessly. This was an unfortunately sordid on the good name of the Ceylonese nation, which had always earned for itself a reputation for justice, fairplay and the humane treatment of political offenders, apart from occasional deviations from the system of Roman-Dutch Law, as occasioned during the period of Martial Law following in the wake of Kandyan Rebellions 1818 and 1848, and the Sinhala-Muslim riots of 1915. A special tribunal had been set up to judge the coup offenders of 1962 and 1966, but this had come within the provisions of the national judiciary.

Sympathy was expressed with the barbarian treatment meted out to ex-Army and political offenders in Ethiopia, which according to reports received, resulted in 62 summary executions, among whom were two ex-Prime Ministers, and members of their administration, leaders of armed forces, and the Emperor's grandson. These atrocities far exceeded the cruel despotic rule which followed the overrunning of the country by the Fascist Italian Army under Mussolini in 1941 at the height of World War II, bad enough though that was.

Even production brigades were not to be encouraged, although food production was a dire necessity in Sri Lanka if the nation and its peoples were to survive, following the experience with the UNP-organised Land Army, which had to be disbanded by the UF Government not because it carried the stigma of the UNP, as many thought, but owing to severe corruption, maladministration and misappropriation of accounts within its ranks.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE proposal was discussed, and agreed upon. Ships of all nations were to be given freedom of movement and trading rights within Sri Lanka's territorial waters, which extend 12 miles out to sea, or roughly along the continental shelf which surrounds the island, linking to with India on the North-West. It was objected to give any foreign country of whatever power bloc the freedom to establish any base on Sri Lanka territory, or on any of the islands of the Indian Ocean, but that all nations of every political ideology would be treated with equal favour and consideration, and given equal priv-

ileges. There was a move to take over the four lighthouses in Sri Lanka which were still being run by the Imperial Lighthouse Service of Great Britain, i.e. the Great and Little Basses, Dondra Head and Cape de Berberyn (Beruwala). These were the very last vestiges of British Imperialism still remaining in and around Sri Lanka.

We would remain steadfast in our policy of non-alignment and make all our decisions based on careful thought as to how those decisions would affect our relationship with all peace-loving nations of East or West, Communism or Capitalism or Socialism. Our P.M. is now a senior stateswoman in S.E. Asian affairs, and occupied a respected position in world affairs, and certainly very senior in the non-aligned group, being next in seniority only to Marshall Tito, President of Yugoslavia.

INCIDENTALLY, the Yugoslavs have offered us a 40,000 ton tanker, which bring the number of oil tankers to two, after the recently Singapore-bought 20,000 ton Russian oil tanker, the "Tammanna". These would be used not only to import oil from overseas, mainly from the Arab countries around the Persian Gulf, but depending on the success of the drilling operations currently being conducted with Russian aid around Pesalai, even perhaps to export oil sometime in the future. Eventually, it was decided to purchase three more oil tankers, and a fleet of coastal tankers for distribution of oil internally. Also the establishment of a second refinery.

Chinese gunboats were being used to check illicit immigration and smuggling activities in the Palk Strait. The question of the sovereignty of the island of Kachchativu has at last been solved on an equitable basis to both India and Sri Lanka, while there have been no serious problems arising from the terms implementation of the Sirima-Shastri pact. India has agreed to take back all or most Indian Tamils settled in Ceylon, and many of these approximately 400,000 citizens of "no-man's-land" have now been repatriated to the country of their origin. According to a news-report (CDN 13.12.74) 138,959 persons had been registered as Indian citizens up to October this year, while under the same agree-

ment, 79,405 had been registered as Sri Lanka citizens. It was agreed that all foreign troops, whether Greek or Turk or of any other flag, should be withdrawn from Cyprus, the sovereignty of the island respected, and Archbishop Makarios' rule recognised. The Greek Republic would also be recognised by her fellow-republic of Sri Lanka but sympathy for the fate of ex-King Constantine of the Hellenes, now living in exile, a direct descendant of the Danish



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Dynasty founded by George I (1845-1912; reign 1862-1912) the second son of Christian IX of Denmark (1818-1906), the founder of several European Royal Houses; was expressed.

SOLIDARITY with the suffering masses of our immediate neighbours, India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh, particularly the latter, was expressed and relief work was expected to be carried out in cash and in kind with all haste among the starving and the dying, just as relief work was being expedited among the Tea Estate Workers of Sri Lanka, who were experiencing untold suffering, food shortages and other hardships.

Hon. P. B. G. Kalugalle, Minister of Shipping & Tourism, recently expressed an opinion that the Sri Lanka, being an insular race, should be encouraged to become a sea-faring nation. Several new ships were either already bought or negotiated to be bought by the Ceylon Shipping Corporation, and Ceylonese youth, who were being trained for a life at sea in many on-shore institutions, need no longer apply to foreign shipping vessels to pursue a sea-faring career.

THE SRI LANKA NAVY, 25 years old this year, which commenced operations in 1938 under the late E. F. N. Gratian, Q.C. and the

late Sir Susantha de Fonseka, and on a consolidated footing shortly after Independence with just one vessel the "Kotiya", followed soon afterwards by the "Vijaya" and the "Gajabahu", now had 8 ships; which was a clear indication of its progress during the past quarter of a century. Being a nation completely surrounded by the sea, we ought to have our own self-sufficient navy, and even our air force, which now consists almost entirely of a fleet of helicopters and light planes, ought to be strengthened and improved.

Sri Lanka's notoriously corrupt **Police Force** ought to be thoroughly overhauled. It needs to be 'shaken up' both from within and from without, peacefully rather than violently. As was the case during the 1971 insurrection, a better 'rapport' could be established between the guardians of the law and the public, following the example of the 'London bobby', who is looked upon as a friend rather than a foe, by the people, and who treats all and sundry with tact, common courtesy and good sense: receiving the same treatment in return. A propaganda campaign to promote good relations between the police and the public should be inaugurated, so that the people may cultivate a healthy regard, rather than a

contemptuous despise, as they do at present, for the forces of law and order in the lands. A good relations campaign would not only help check vice and crime but also help to promote the idea that the police force exists to help, rather than hinder, the common man to live peaceably with his neighbour, and adjust himself to an unjust and unequal society; and will also encourage mass belief in the idea that this essential service acts in accordance with, and not country to, the common interest and the common man's welfare.

Any law-abiding citizen with a semblance of a conscience would agree with the suggestion that once the CJC hearings on the insurgency are completed, a separate Commission ought to be appointed to investigate the corruption which exists in the Police Force.

One urges this in the memory of the unfortunate victims of police cruelty who may never be recalled to life, in the interests of the peace-loving inhabitants of our fair isle, and in the name of universal justice, law and order generally.

JEPHARIS

CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER 14 — NOVEMBER 23

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14: According to the *Daily News*, half a million candidates, the highest number so far in a public examination in Sri Lanka, will sit for the GCE Ordinary Level examination on December 10; according to the *Daily Mirror*, there are 793,000 people unemployed in the country and most of these unemployed are GCE qualified youths. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Soviet Union has agreed to gift a ship to Sri Lanka worth Rs. 80 million; this ship will be an outright gift which will be used to train the country's naval personnel: the Prime Ministers of USSR and Sri Lanka concluded discussions on this gift and a joint communique is expected to be issued on November 17: the Samanalawewa Project which figured prominently in the discussions between the two Premiers is now being studied by the Soviet experts: there is also a likelihood of Soviet economic aid to Sri Lanka being increased considerably. Nominations for the Katana by-election will be received on December 9, at the

Colombo Kachcheri. According to the *Daily News* Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, has told a meeting at the New Town Hall organised by the All Ceylon Federation of LSSP Youth Leagues that the people had to bear the present difficulties because of inflation and rising prices throughout the world and if the masses of the country bear them with patience it will be possible to relieve people of these burdens in some measures in the future. According to the *Daily News*, a number of land alienations which are deemed contrary to the purpose of the land reform laws are to be declared null and void. The Director of the Criminal Investigations Department said yesterday that he would welcome any further information on the alleged gem transactions of Nalim Hadjar and Jalaldeen Mohamed Raaji now under investigation. According to the *Daily News*, the leader of the Tamil United Front, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, has appealed to the Minister of Justice to either bring the Tamil youth now under detention to trial or release them without further delay. The White House has officially confirmed that there is a recession in the United States. In the United Nations there were reports of an assassination attempt on Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15: According to the *Daily News*, talks have been completed in Moscow between the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Mr.

Alexei Kosygin, USSR Foreign Minister, Mr. Andrei Gromyko and Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike. According to the *Daily News*, one of the resolutions adopted at the delegates conference of the Ceylon Federation of Labour to be held tomorrow states that the government's attitude to the 28 demands presented in February by the Joint Council of Trade Unions Organisations has been characterised by the absence of a sense of urgency: the delegates conference begins the 39th anniversary celebrations of the Lanka Samasamaja Party. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, former MP for Vaddukodal and Secretary-General of the TUF, has told that the Tamil United Front has decided to violate certain Emergency Regulations if the Government fails to release or bring to trial those Tamil youth who are now under detention. According to a Press Release, the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade by notification in a Government Gazette Extraordinary has brought the import and export of radioactive material under licence with effect from 10/10/74. According to the *Daily News* a resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Lanka Samasamaja Party states that the new constitution with its accepted aim of socialism provides a framework of advancement to socialism by constitutional means and this is a great advantage for the forces of socialism. According to the *Daily News*, the yellowish brown sands—monazite—around the coasts of Beruwala have long been known to be source of nuclear fuel. Mr. Russel Kelner, who described himself as the operations officer of the Jewish Defence League (FDL) told a Press conference that they have trained men who will make sure that Arafat and his lieutenants do not leave New York alive: Mr. Klener was later arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigations and will be formally charged in courts: meanwhile Arab guerilla leader Yasser Arafat arrived by air on Wednesday for an unprecedented address to the United Nations General Assembly. Algeria and United Nations have decided to resume diplomatic relations.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16: According to the *Daily Mirror*, Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, addressing the delegates conference of the Ceylon Federation of Labour at the Ramakrishna Hall Wellawatte yesterday has told that those half-baked socialist leaders in the United Front Government, who think that the country has reached the limits of socialism must now leave the United Front and the doors are open for them to get out: he has thanked the half-baked socialist leaders for being in the United Front for so long: Dr. Perera regretted that there were still some more people in the United Front who thought that the time had come to cry halt to further nationalisation and socialism could not be limited in that fashion. According to the *Daily News*, the hotels and tourist industry want exemption for the industry from the taxation proposals of the Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, announced in last week's budget: the Ceylon Tourist Hotels Association claims that the proposals will have an adverse impact on the industry. According to the *Daily News*, a committee has been appointed by the Secretary to the Ministry of Health to look into all aspects of purchasing, stocking and distribution of drugs, dressings and surgical instruments etc done by the Civil Medical Stores and the various divisional drug stores. According to the *Daily Mirror*, West Germany has gifted 8,000 tons of

fertiliser for the Government of Sri Lanka: these fertilisers are to be used to increase the yield of paddy. The Katubedde Campus of the University of Sri Lanka reopened for lectures on Thursday, Mr. B. Y. Chavan, the Indian Minister of External Affairs will arrive here on November 18 for talks with the Sri Lanka Government he is expected to be in the island till November 20. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Federal Party celebrates its Silver Jubilee on December 18. Dr. Kissinger, US Secretary of State has proposed a 5-point plan to deal with the energy crisis and oil prices: Dr. Fidel Castro, the Cuban Premier, has welcomed the Palestinian Liberation Organisation chief Yasser Arafat, who left for Havana after addressing the United Nations General Assembly.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17: A curfew was enforced throughout the Colombo district between 1 p.m. yesterday and 6 a.m. today: the Government announcement which was broadcast over the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation shortly before noon yesterday caught most people by surprise yesterday, according to the *Sunday Observer*: the Government attributed the imposition of the curfew to information received yesterday morning that "certain elements were planning to create mischief, to cause damage to property and a breakdown of law and order: and the Government has information to believe that this information is correct, according to the announcement by the SLBC: the SLBC broadcast the announcement of the imposition of the curfew over all its services at regular intervals: according to the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*, political observers in Colombo attributed the imposition of curfew to the decision of the LSSP-oriented Ceylon Federation of Labour (CFL) to go ahead with a planned demonstration which was to precede a Hyde Park meeting last afternoon though the permission for the demonstration had been denied: CFL members were mustering at Campbell Park for the demonstration when the curfew decision was communicated to them: Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantation Industries and Constitutional Affairs, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, MP for Kiriella and Mr. Batty Weerakoon, Secretary to the CFL addressed the gathering which dispersed without incident. According to the *Observer*, a cheerful but tired Prime Minister arrived in Sri Lanka yesterday night: Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation and Power, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and Justice, The President, Mr. William Gopallawa, were among those VIPs who were at the airport to receive the Prime Minister on her arrival from Moscow. According to the *Sunday Times*, the severe drought in Rajarata has devastated crops and threatens to upset the entire paddy production programme: sources close to the Government urge that to prevent any possibility of the fate of Bangladesh overtaking Sri Lanka a campaign is necessary to ensure that every person does at least an hours work on food production daily. A joint Sri Lanka-Soviet Communique was issued yesterday after the Premier return from the USSR.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18: Mr. Chavan, Indian External Affairs, Minister arrives in Sri Lanka this afternoon on a three day official visit: during this stay here Mr. Chavan will have discussions with the Prime Minister, the President and a number of other Cabinet Ministers,

According to a joint Sri Lanka-Soviet communique issued following the Prime Minister's return from Moscow, Sri Lanka and Soviet Union consider that joint actions by all countries aimed at the establishment of relations based on the principles of co-existence and good neighbourly co-operation primarily the renunciation of use of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in internal affairs, broad and equal development of economic and other co-operation, would contribute to the ensuring of stable peace and stability throughout the whole world. The Ceylon Federation of Labour (LSSP-oriented) in a statement to the press on the curfew states that the working class cannot be forced to production through denial of right of demonstration which the workers have always enjoyed: it further states that the action of the CFL should make clear to the Government that the working class will not acquiesce in any action of the Government that affects its rights unless such action is taken in consultation with the organisation of the working class and if this action is not taken to heart the CFL will have no doubt that there can be more and more curfews in like situations: the CFL has posed the question to the Government that to what production the curfew will lead to. According to the *Daily News*, two students of Colombo schools were last week arrested selling Ganja. According to the *Daily Mirror*, a campaign headed by the lay Catholic Associations in Sri Lanka will be launched soon to accelerate national development and to ensure economic independence in 1975—the Holy Year. 10,000 tons of sugar from Mauritius will arrive in Colombo harbour on Friday. President Ford has left for Japan, South Korea and Soviet Russia: some Japanese trade unions have launched demonstrations against his visit.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19: According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka's narcotics and Customs authorities anticipate a major upsurge of drug smuggling activity via Colombo with the re-opening of the Suez Canal to regular shipping next year: focus of an intensive investigation now being carried out has been concentrated on the operations of a particular group of smugglers which has over the years concerned the opium market of the underworld in this island. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will open the Commonwealth Medical Conference this morning at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. According to the *Daily Mirror*, legislation is under way to bring a wide range of both imported and locally produced commodities under price control: the legislation will soon be presented in the National State Assembly by the Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. T. B. Illangaratne and will be implemented immediately thereafter. The Government Cereals Service Union and the Socialist Trade Union Congress have issued statements to the press on the recent curfew which are critical of the Government's action regarding this matter: Arts and Science students at the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Ceylon staged a token strike yesterday to protest against the declaration of curfew in the Colombo district last Saturday preventing CFL-led workers demonstration scheduled to be held in Colombo. According to the *Daily News*, there has been a marked drop in rubber prices and in the trade the downward trend is an indication that the boom signs in October 1972 have ended:

the main reason for the drop in price is attributed to the recessions in the United States. According to the *Daily Mirror*, there is an increasing demand for the study of modern European languages as against the old classical languages like Latin and Greek which were popular some years ago: according to a spokesman more students are offering modern European languages due to the emphasis placed on the study of technological subjects. Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Karamanlis, is well on top in the Greek general election, the first in seven years. Leftwing trade unions have announced a massive protest rally against the visit of the United States President Ford but Prime Minister Tanaka of Japan and his ruling liberal Democratic will accord him a warm welcome. A top team of Indian officials have begun talks with their Pakistani counterparts on the restoration of air links and overflights suspended before the India-Pakistan war of 1971.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20: According to the *Daily News*, Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike last night met LSSP leaders Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, Dr. Colvin R. De Silva, Minister of Plantations Industry and Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, Minister of Transport: the SLFP Ministers associated with the Prime Minister were Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, Minister of Trade, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice, Home Affairs, Local Government and Public Administration, Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle, Minister of Shipping and Tourism, (Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation and Power and Highways was away in Kalaawewa): the main aim of the discussion was to reach a clear-cut and common position on all key issues facing the United Front in the perspective of issues arising from Saturday's events: the LSSP party Secretary, Mr. Bernard Soysa, was also present at this meeting: the discussions centred on events leading up to the declaration of a curfew on Saturday and questions concerning the United Front in the light of Saturday's events: according to a top SLFP source the discussions were frank and helped clarify SLFP's future program of action. According to the *Daily News*, the Premier who met a delegation of SLFP trade unions has told that one of the reasons why the Government was forced to curtail public demonstrations was the heavy expenditure it incurred in the deployment of armed forces and the police to ensure public security: she said rallies whether pro or anti government required the services of additional fleets of buses, which again was an extra burden on state coffers. According to the *Daily Mirror*, a summit conference of the three parties comprising the United Front will be held shortly to iron out the differences that have arisen following the imposing of the curfew. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, LSSP MP for Kiriella speaking in the National State Assembly yesterday lashed out at the *Adha* newspaper for criticising Dr. N. M. Perera: Mr. Nanayakkara said that *Adha* is voicing the opinion of the new rich people backed by the reactionaries to undermine the progressive march of the Government. Japan's big trade unions have timed a general strike on economic demands for President Ford's current visit: the US President met Emperor Hirohito yesterday. The entire opposition in both Houses of Parliament in India (except the Communist Party) walked out protesting at the suspension of fundamental rights for those arrested for bigtime smuggling.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21: According to the *Daily News*, a ministerial delegation led by the Minister of Commerce of Mauritius is due in Sri Lanka next week to discuss sale of sugar to Sri Lanka; the delegation's visit is sequel to the visit of Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance to Mauritius in September; the main purpose of Dr. Perera's visit was to negotiate the purchase of sugar from Mauritius by Sri Lanka; meanwhile the London sugar price rose another £10 sterling to a record £650 yesterday. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the University of Sri Lanka has failed to attract qualified academic men to fill many of its long standing vacancies; following this the Finance Committee of the University has recommended that its Board of Governors should find out reasons for the University's inability to attract the personnel it requires. India's Minister of External Affairs Mr. Y. B. Chavan, left the island yesterday after a three-day official visit. According to the *Daily News*, a 400 million dollar package deal of assistance to developing countries next year, which is 12.5 per cent increase in the global resources of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) over 1974 was announced by the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Sri Lanka; at the recently concluded UNDP conference held in New York Sri Lanka pledged 180,000 dollars towards the UNDP resources for next year. Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Kewal Singh, has told the United Nations General Assembly that India supports, the right of Palestinian people to return to their homeland and determine their independence. Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev is to visit Syria next year; he will also have a summit meeting with President Sadat in Cairo. The CENTO exercise in Indian Ocean begun on November 20. President Ford had talks with Premier Tanaka on the oil crisis. A Fatah leader in Beirut has threatened new attempts to assassinate King Hussein of Jordan. President Nixon had promised a pardon for the original Watergate burglars a White House tape record played at the cover-up trial disclosed.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22: The Speaker, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, announced in the National State Assembly yesterday that Lands Minister, Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa would head a Select Committee to examine the documents the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, had presented in March this year about an alleged conspiracy to destroy the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily News*, private medical practitioners are faced with the problem of an acute drug shortage; many of them are perturbed that two items—tetracycline capsules and chloramphenicol syrup which are considered "life savers"—are in very short supply; over 500 doctors in the country have decided to pool their resources and form a drug bank. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Minister of Plantation Industry, told the National State Assembly yesterday that there is no power on earth that could break the United Front Government and during the next two and a half years of the United Front's rule, the capitalist structure in this country would be completely wiped out. According to the *Daily Mirror*, following the arrest of big time smugglers in India many smugglers in India and Sri Lanka use dual passports; police and Customs sources revealed that this was the latest attempts by smugglers to resume the smuggling traffic between the two countries which runs into hundreds of millions of rupees annually. The

Government Medical Officers' Association wants the Government to exempt in the case of Government doctors at least one car from the computation of Wealth tax while the computation in respect of any other cars be made on a sliding scale. Professor T. Lambo, Deputy Director General WHO, at the Fourth Commonwealth Medical Conference at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall yesterday said that scarce resources, particularly in the developing countries, would be better used in disease prevention than in making large investments in the curative approach. Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev had left for Vladivostok for his summit meeting with President Ford. There were as many as 80 survivors in the first ever crash of a Jumbo jet in Nairobi on Wednesday; about 90 deaths are feared. The Hungarian Premier, Jeno Fock, has left Budapest on a visit to India.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23: According to the *Daily Mirror*, Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, has told the National State Assembly yesterday that he did not want nationalisation overnight; he has further told that he did not expect to wipe out the private sector completely right now but the future of the private sector is unpredictable. According to the *Daily News*, political interest now moves to Kaiawewa where the eighth by-election since May 1970 polls will be held on Wednesday; both the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, and leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, will address rallies across the constituency tomorrow and on Monday. In a letter to the Prime Minister by the Ceylon Federation of Labour's Secretary, Mr. B. Weerakoon, the CFL has lodged a protest against the prohibition of the procession which was to be held last Saturday and other matters; the letter released to the press says that the CFL intends to seek an early opportunity to discuss these matters with the Prime Minister. The Department of Inland Revenue in a press release pointed out that the new proposals in the current budget takes effect only next year. The Second Reading of the United Front government's fifth budget was passed in the National State Assembly by a majority of 83 votes: 19 members voted against and 102 for. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike yesterday participated in the naming ceremony of the country's first tanker, 30,000 ton "Tammanna" at the Colombo port. A Colombo Municipal Councillor was yesterday sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment and was ordered to pay a fine of Rs. 10,000 on charges of bribery. Hotel owners in the city of Colombo have been warned by the Municipality that throwing rubbish in front of their boutique is an offence and owners of hotels who neglect this warning will be prosecuted; this is the new step taken in the campaign to keep the city clean. The Soviet Union has declared its support for a strategic arms agreement with the United States limiting both the quality and the quantity of their vast nuclear arsenals; the officials Tass News Agency said this on the eve of President Ford's Vladivostok meeting with Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev.

INTERNATIONAL-AFFAIRS

BY ARIEL

INDIAN OCEAN
U.S., India, Sri Lanka

THE INDIAN OCEAN continues to be the focus of attention in this region. In the last ten days of November, CENTO held its annual naval and air exercises in the Northern Indian Ocean region in the Arabian Sea which borders not only India but also the oil rich states in Arabia as well as in the Persian Gulf. According to an official statement, the exercise was held to practice modern techniques of "keeping open free-world seelanes". The operation included, for the first time, nuclear submarines in a CENTO practice session. The exercise included units from Pakistan, Britain, Turkey, Iran and the USA (which has an observer status in CENTO), and participants were given further training in anti-submarine, air defence and mine warfare, with emphasis on protection of convoys. Pakistan's Navy acted as the host for the eleven days during which the exercise had continued.

This CENTO exercise had naturally raised widespread critical comment in India. A commentator analysed the situation from the Indian point of view thus: "The annual CENTO naval exercises in the Indian Ocean known as Midlink, have a new twist this year. For the first time major units of the U.S. Navy including an aircraft carrier, are taking part in it, thus raising the CENTO'S profile in the Indian Ocean by several notches. Besides a British squadron, which has been knocking around the area, and units from the Iranian and Pakistani navies, those participating are the U.S. carrier Constellation and three escort destroyers, which are on their quarterly sortie into the Indian Ocean, following a practice established in October last year.

"Because Britain, the U.S. and Turkey are members of both CENTO as well NATO, the exercise acquires a NATO colouration,

but officials in Washington argue that it is still a strictly CENTO affair—they point out that France which is a NATO member and which has naval forces in the region is not participating. As for the escalation of the U.S. participation in this year's exercise, they say this is only because this exercise happens to coincide with the quarterly 'show the flag visit' of the U.S. naval task force—in fact this may become a regular feature from now on because November, when the CENTO exercises are held, will coincide with the quarterly visit of major detachments from the U.S. Navy based elsewhere. (The carrier and its escorts are scheduled to leave the area after the exercises, in time for their crew to spend Christmas at home in the U.S.).

"Washington is aware that participation by its major units in the CENTO naval exercise will attract fresh criticism from the littoral States (voiced by the Defence Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, at the world peace council conference in New Delhi) to the effect that not only are NATO powers moving into the Indian Ocean in a big way but also creating new tensions by associating a non NATO country like Pakistan with it."

IT WAS SIGNIFICANT that the CENTO exercise took place shortly after the Kissinger visit to India. Admittedly, Kissinger has succeeded in opening a new era of friendship of understanding with India, but the role of the US Navy in the Indian Ocean was not settled. Diego Garcia was one of the topics on which no agreement could be found.

The same commentator had this to say: "The Indian Ocean issue was one of the irritants left unresolved by Dr. Kissinger's Delhi visit and as of now there is no evidence that it will be settled to every body's satisfaction. The subtly expressed hope in some quarters in Washington that in time India will learn to live with a foreign naval presence in the ocean adjacent to it and that in return the U.S. will cease making a big thing out of India's determination to proceed with the peaceful exploitation of nuclear power.

"The U.S. has also every intention of going ahead with its Diego Garcia plan, despite all criticism from the littoral States, arguing

that all it has in view is a modest presence, in the region, to protect its 'vital interests'. The U.S. House of Representatives has approved \$32.3 millions for expansion of the runways and improvement of the anchorage on that island, but the Senate has sanctioned only \$18.1 millions. The expectation is that eventually only the lower figure will be approved this year by the Congress as a whole after the conference process that is yet to take place. The Pentagon however foresees no difficulty in obtaining the rest of the money needed next year. The U.S. also expects no difficulty in concluding a lease for the island with Britain: 'if we did we would not be going to all that trouble to get Congressional sanction', said one official.

"These officials argue that the amount that is being expended on Diego Garcia is not large, and differing with the view of other agencies including the CIA they say that the U.S.'s Indian Ocean plans have not led to any significant increase in the Soviet presence in the ocean—in fact the U.S. estimate is that even after the re-opening of the Suez Canal the number of Russian combatant ships in the Indian Ocean will rise from the present eight to perhaps a maximum of twelve. 'It is not logical for the Soviet Union to move more ships into the ocean with their limited objectives in the area. In fact from a global military point of view we would be happy to see the Russians move their entire fleet into the Indian Ocean leaving the U.S. a free run everywhere else. They are not so foolish as to oblige us that way,' says a military expert.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, so far as India was concerned, Britain, while cutting down its military expenditure drastically, seems to have decided to participate in the decision to expand the facilities on Diego Garcia. On December 2, the British Defence Secretary, Mr. Roy Mason, announced these drastic cuts. An AFP despatch summed up the proposals thus: "Mr. Mason also said Britain intended to open talks with South Africa on ending the Simonstown agreement, which gives Royal Navy ships access to the Simonstown naval base near Cape Town. The Defence Secretary told the Commons that Britain

would chop the percentage of its gross national product spent on defence from 5.5 to 4.5 per cent.

"The following measures would be taken to achieve this: *Reduction of British forces in Hong Kong.* Authorities in the colony would bear more of the cost of defending it; *Withdrawal of British forces from Gan air base in the Maldivian islands in the Indian Ocean and from Mauritius; Withdrawal of the battalion of Gurkha troops in the State of Brunei, North Borneo; Pull out of the forces stationed in Malaysia and Singapore because of a five-power agreement (Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Malaysia and Singapore) for the defence of South-East Asia.*

"Mr. Mason said most of Britain's defence spending would comprise its contribution to the Atlantic Alliance. But London intended to discuss with its allies all aspects of its financial contribution to NATO.

"Mr. Mason announced that Britain had agreed to the United States proposals for a relatively modest expansion of defence-base facilities on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. He cited Soviet naval power in the area as part of the consideration in reaching this decision.

"Mr. Mason outlined his plans to cut £4,700 million from Britain's defence costs over the next 10 years."

It is not likely that India's protests will have any effect either on Britain or the USA, but there is a great deal of fresh speculation about the real implications of the recent Kissinger detente with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. India's Ambassador to the US, Mr. T. N. Kaul, who is believed to have done yeoman service to bring about better US-India relations at a press conference in Washington on December 7 had said that relations between India and the US can only grow better, but that there were still some doubts whether the new policies announced by the US Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, will be implemented.

Mr. Kaul has told newsmen that during his recent visit to New Delhi, Dr. Kissinger was able to remove many of the past misunderstandings, misconceptions, doubts and resentments among the people of India towards U.S. poli-

cies. Dr. Kissinger was able to say publicly the U.S. Administration accepted what he called the new realities of the situation in the subcontinent. What is more, he said America respects India's policy of non-alignment and does not regard India's friendship with the Soviet Union as being aimed against any third country or an impediment to the development of friendly relations between India and the U.S."

Mr. Kaul said Dr. Kissinger's statements were warmly welcomed by the press, people and the Government. But after two decades of U.S. policy which was not very friendly to India, what India still perhaps doubts is whether the U.S. policies as announced by Dr. Kissinger will actually be implemented or practiced or not," Mr. Kaul said.

Asked what policies he was waiting to see put into practice, Mr. Kaul replied: "Such as not tilting the balance against India, accepting India's role as one of peace and security in promoting progress in the subcontinent and in not adopting any policies through the Super-Power detente which are against India and other countries of the region."

IN NEW DELHI ITSELF the results of Kissinger's negotiations as a whole are regarded as a victory for India's foreign policy. There are good reasons for this evaluation. For a long time, the cornerstone of US policy in the subcontinent was to maintain equilibrium, at least in the military and political fields, between India and Pakistan. The latter was regarded as a valuable ally of the US in South Asia bound by the US-Pakistan Agreement of Mutual Assistance and Defence of May 13, 1954. It was to maintain this equilibrium in the subcontinent that during the Bangladesh episode, the US had sought to pressurise India and had ostentatiously stopped economic assistance. In addition to economic sanctions and strongly-worded declarations against India, the US resorted to gunboat diplomacy by sending into the Bay of Bengal a unit of the ships of the US Seventh Fleet headed by aircraft carrier *Enterprise*. The Indians also allege that the Americans had mined the approaches to the port of

Chittagong to limit the activities of the Indian fleet.

Less than three years after Bangladesh, the US Secretary of State Kissinger, during his recent stay in New Delhi while addressing a meeting of Indian businessmen, had repeatedly stressed that a strong and developing India was necessary for maintaining peace in the subcontinent and all over the world. The *National Herald*, a paper established by Jawaharlal Nehru and very close to Indira Gandhi wrote editorially, after the Kissinger visit, that India was at least recognised by the United States as a great power that could not anymore be put in the same position as Pakistan with a dangerous balance of forces which was maintained between them. The implied Kissinger refrain that "India is a great power" was echoed by the Indian press with undisguised satisfaction. Indian papers found consolation in stating that the USA had finally recognised the error of the earlier evaluation by the State Department of the realities of the situation in the subcontinent. The assurance that the US would not resume supplies of arms to Pakistan was well received in India.

There are doubting Thomases in every country, and observers in New Delhi have raised important queries that have fundamental sig-

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nificance. It has been pointed out that whilst the Russians have consistently, persistently and unambiguously re-iterated their support to the Indira Gandhi government and the radical policies it follows, the US and its foreign policy makers do everything possible not to mention which India they consider a great power and with which India they will develop relations in the future. This, it is pointed out, is not an academic question. There is the India of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi pushing a policy of developing the state-owned sector of the economy, of nationalising banks and key industries, including foreign oil companies, of establishing state control over private enterprise and pursuing an independent foreign policy which frequently irritates, annoys and displeases Washington.

But, these commentators point out that there is also the India of Jayaprakash Narayan who is now heading the movement to remove Indira Gandhi from power. There is also the India of the Swatantra Party and other groups of right-wing opposition standing for free enterprise and a reorientation of the foreign policy towards a closer relations with the West. It is also pointed out that it was an open secret that the programme and declarations of the rightwing opposition groups and leaders found favourable responses among the influential circles in Washington. Indira Gandhi and other leaders have repeatedly referred to the activities of the CIA in India as well as what they term the American Lobby in the country.

To test the concrete realities of the rapprochement between the US and India, observers have tried to evaluate the impact of this new detente between Delhi and Washington on the US-India-China triangle. The apexes of the triangle are closely connected with each other, and this was demonstrated by the extreme nervousness displayed by Peking when Kissinger visited India. Peking's official propaganda during this period referred to the Sikkim affair accusing India of expansionism and making itself a threat and a danger to its neighbouring countries. Peking also repeated its well-known theme about the "dismemberment of Pakistan by India's" trying to rub

this particularly into Bangladesh inhibitions on the matter.

PEKING also reminded the US of spirit of the Shanghai communique at the conclusions of the Nixon visit which was infused with a definite anti-Indian flavour. But after the Kissinger visit, the US-India line on the triangle has undergone considerable change. The US has now accepted India's leading role not only in South Asia but also in the Third World of non-aligned countries. And this is undoubtedly a serious blow to China's aspirations and ambitions to become the undisputed leader of the Third World countries. Furthermore, US-India joint communique after the Kissinger visit had stressed that the two countries have no conflicting national interests. New Delhi interprets this statement as a welcome change in Washington's earlier position on the Kashmir question: that Kashmir was an "international problem." Now, it is clear that the US accepts the Indian view that Kashmir was a domestic problem which had to be settled on a bilateral basis between India and Pakistan. Peking openly and without delay reacted to this change in the US attitude, and even before Kissinger had arrived at Dacca (from Delhi) the Chinese radio and press had started high-pitched attacks on American imperialism. Immediately after this, Peking's attacks on India were stepped up and China's diplomatic activities in countries around India increased visibly.

All this has led to speculation why the US has changed its policies in the subcontinent knowing fully well that it would have a dampening effect on US-Chinese relations. Some observers think that China's inflexibility and rigidity on foreign policy matters had become a source of disappointment to the USA, and as the USA was not getting any closer to China, Kissinger seems to have decided that it was not worthwhile for the US to continue its estrangement with India, the second largest country in Asia and the largest parliamentary democracy in the world. Other observers in India have attempted to reconcile Nixon's Guam Doctrine (Asians To Fight Asian's") in the light of Washington's new detente with New Delhi. One result of this new development is that no sooner the US had indi-

cated that it would develop friendly relations with India, China has demonstratively increased its propaganda pressure against India. Was Kissinger's diplomacy intended to bring about a greater confrontation between India and China as a result of the US-India rapprochement?

The Kissinger detente is undoubtedly part of the US policy in the Indian Ocean and in Asia. One commentator has summed up the situation thus: "The U.S. is also wary about accepting an invitation to participate in an Indian Ocean littoral States conference and thrashing the matter out there with the Russians 'because it is we rather than the Russians who would be bullied in such a forum by a majority of the littoral States'. The U.S.'s attitude to peace zones, such as the one proposed by Sri Lanka and supported by India and others, is that this idea is in basic conflict with its concept of freedom of the seas and commerce. For the same reason it is supposed to be unenthusiastic about Pakistan's call for a nuclear free zone in South Asia—the U.S. feels that this amounts to a restrictive imposition on the sovereignty of the states concerned. How this belief would be translated when the U.S. votes on the Pakistanis or Indian resolutions on the subject in the United Nations remains to be seen.

"As for the Iranian suggestion that security in the Indian Ocean should be left to the capabilities of the countries located on its shores, the U.S. view is that even with Iran's grand plans for expanding its military capability, it will be several years before it is able to extend it beyond the Persian Gulf; it is pointed out that in the meanwhile Iran has welcomed a U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean. And U.S. officials also note that while Australia, which after Gough Whitlam's first election was, openly critical of the U.S.'s Indian Ocean plans, is now much more "moderate" in its approach to the question.

"As U.S. strategists see it, though an American Indian Ocean presence is needed to protect the U.S.'s and Europe's oil supplies and act as a restraint on Soviet influence and motives in the region, what looms more important in its perception is its bases in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean."

In the light of these developments it is difficult to see where Sri Lanka's Indian Ocean Peace Zone Plan will fit in. It is strange and significant that Sri Lanka did not protest against the CENTO exercises which took place in the Bay of Bengal although many Arab countries and many African countries had registered their protests against the holding of these exercises especially with nuclear submarines. India had made it clear that such exercises only increased tensions in the region.

There has been speculation as to why Sri Lanka had made no protest about the CENTO exercises although it was a provocative violation of the spirit of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Plan this country has been seeking to promote in the UN, at the non-aligned Summit and everywhere else. Was it by an oversight, involved as the country was in the Kalawewa by-election, that no statement was issued by the Government? Even Mr. Lakshman Jayakoddy in his recent monthly press conference did not say anything about the CENTO exercises?

Some cynics are inclined to suggest that Sri Lanka had kept a diplomatic silence about the CENTO exercise lest the toes of the almighty Shah of Iran be trod upon—and thereby jeopardising the chances of the getting of the aid he had promised to grant.

But there is no evidence to support this suggestion except for the silence Sri Lanka has maintained about the CENTO exercise. Even if it is late, Sri Lanka should say what it should about the CENTO exercise—of its Indian Ocean Peace Zone Plan is to be taken seriously not only by other countries in the Third World but also all countries in the rest of the world.

If Sri Lanka Government does not register an official protest about the CENTO exercise, her Indian Ocean Peace Zone Plan will be taken as a mere propaganda ploy or gimmick which should be given a decent and ceremonial burial as soon as possible. Undoubtedly, there is no practical way in which Sri Lanka can keep the navies of big and small powers out of the Indian Ocean, but if

she is to be taken seriously she must register at least strongly-worded protests each time there is a violation of the spirit of the Peace Zone Plan favoured by Sri Lanka.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—13

THE VILLAGE "ROTARY"

By Herbert Keuneman

ON THE 6TH OF MAY (1972) taking advantage of a gln-clear morning after weeks of demoralizing rain—it was one of those mornings so transparently clear and bright that the early dayshine is not so much silvery as steely, with a hint of blue that comes not from the blueness of the sky but from the whiteness of the sunlight—I sent Nesan scuttering around and was able to invigle Jayawardana Baas and Pinhamy, before they had plausible excuses made ready! into joining me on the site in lining out for my foundations.

The ground was a morass. When I had inspected it in February, when the idea of building on it was only conjecture, it was as hard as brick; a mammoth just skin-wounded, it, took a pickaxe to make a real dent. I realized, of course, that low-lyngas it was it would be waterlogged in the real rains; but here were merely the yala rains and the ground so soft that to drive pegs for the lines one just had to lean on them and they slid in two feet! Fortunately I found a bed of quite level clay, thoroughly soft but stable, about three feet down; and I decided that a foot or so into this would give me firm enough a base. Even so, I thought it wise to widen my designed footings considerably as a safety measure; and as a further precaution I also decided on a ditch at least as deep as the foundations and surrounding them entirely, to leach seepage water away towards the tank, leaving a reasonably dry platform upon which the house should rise. I was already embarked on the first of many expenditures in excess of my budget.

PINHAMY INDIRECTLY contributed: not, need I say? to the expen-

diture, but to the excess. In answer to my preparatory enquiries concerning the local charges for various services he had quoted Rs. 3/00 per kattiya (or Cuba) for surface excavations. Now when the men whom at my request he had personally selected for the work demanded a rate of Rs. 4/50, he washed his hands of any farther participation in the transaction and left me to haggle.

I haggled. I bargained, I promised incentive bonuses, I tried various methods by which to pay, if unavoidable, the enhanced rate—which God knows was not high by town, or any, appraisal—while preserving the principle of paying the standard one. For my position was going to be—and became—very vulnerable indeed if it was once established that I was liable to a special charge for no other reason than that I was technically a stranger and was still believed to be as comfortably off as when I had first lived in the village in the early 1960s. But no method worked. The men were as pleasant as villagers can be, but adamant. There must, they insisted, be some mistake: this Rs. 3/00 thing was an anachronism, the new rate was Rs. 4/50. And so it proved to be—for me—wherever I turned. The available work-force in a rural community is small and when advantageous closeknit. Rs. 4/50 per Cube it had to be. (I was later to find that the only dependable alternative to accepting whatever special charge I might be ammerged was to seem to reject the doing of the job at all. Then, if it was really believed that I could do without it, the price of it came down.)

Meanwhile, Pinhamy stayed aloof from the whole argument. I was desperately disappointed at this, at first. When all was said and done, it was his or his son's that the house would be; I expected that he would make it his business to see that I (he) finished up with the most possible house for the least possible money. But it was my money and therefore none of his business to see I saved it, if to do so involved contradicting the accepted 'village' business ethos. If, on the other hand, he had what he considered some good and sufficient reason, any such broad loyalty could go to Kingdom Come!

(Like, for instance, the Rubble Cartage Crisis. Early on, we had the job on our hands of having 3,500 pieces of 9" rubble transported from a quarry 100 yds. away to the building site. The standard local cartage for 1,000 pieces was Rs. 15, even over much greater distances; but the price quoted us was, it seemed, Rs. 15 for the 100 yds. Pinhamy explained that the reason was: the lane to our site was so narrow and so sticky with mud that the bulls would be unable to work the cart free if the wheels bogged down. I suggested smaller loads; but it was 'explained' to me that this meant double labour! I suggested that the very small distance involved might fairly be held to offset labour, even if it were doubled; but this cut no ice.

THE SUDDENLY, Pinhamy's carter (who was also his nephew) and Pinhamy had some quite unrelated disagreement, and the cartage went up to Rs. 20. This was a smirch on Pinhamy's honour as relative and elder and off he went to Hiddewa, a neighbouring village, where he arranged for a cart at the original charge. By next morning, however, the 'strike' had spread to Hiddewa and wherever else he tried close by. But Pinhamy was not defeated. He sent Banders' wife, in charge of his younger son, 15 miles to the village she came from to summon her brother with his own cart all the way from there to shift our stones over 100 yds!)

The village's business ethos—the peasant's: ask Norman Douglas—is this: that not to make money when you can make money, or to make any less money than you can, is—far from being an admirable trait—a disgraceful abdication of ability. He is, in this, certainly no worse than the great corporate tycoon who is 'in business for profit' and might conceivably feel a genuine pang of conscience if he lost his company, from any such extravagant or ornamental motive as benevolence, or 'gentlemanliness', the hundredth possible part of a cent per share; as though tooth-and-claw redness on behalf of an impersonalized group (but, to be sure, always including oneself) were somehow more pureminded than making a more directly motivated and distributed profit for a smaller group. War has some time been given up for lost as a chivalrous practicality;

Big Business has come to a similar point of view; the peasant 'business man' has simply known the truth from the beginning.

Do I sound bitter? cynical? I probably am. I was brought up in the belief that you could push competition to an illogical conclusion (I know now that it is competition itself that is illogical) and an extirpated fallacy leaves a painful wound. But I am trying to get over it. I have got over, it to some extent. I know now, for instance, that although (at the time) I was inexpressibly shocked and hurt to learn by the slip of a tongue that Pinhamy was earning a small commission from the brick-makers he dealt with for me; perhaps also from the carters he engaged on my behalf to haul them; the fact does not make him, as I used to think, and ingrate and a small-time crook. In a few ways he has been genuinely solicitous for me, in many ways most generous: those 3,500 pieces of rubble—though I have, I hope, repaid him in kind—were an outright gift. If he doesn't make his generousities some part of his business deals...well, at least it cuts everything clearer on both sides.

BUT THEN AGAIN: do I not have to question my own lately-acquired complaisance? Is it in fact, rather, complaisance? Or even complacency? Would I have adjusted as accommodatingly to 'peasant' attitudes if, say, friends from my former world had displayed them in dealings with me? Would I have been less moralistically intransigent had I had a business training; or does the theological training I did have make me a more punctilious philosopher? Do I accept in Pinhamy lesser standards than I would in the friends I used to be used to because I take it for granted that Pinhamy himself is lesser than my kind of person?

And—without sentimentality—is or is not this true?

It is no use the pietist's answering facetiously that of course it is not true; for he then finds himself in the quandary of having to decide whether there are not in truth degrees of morality. It seems fairly well agreed by public opinion that, in war, high-explosive and napalm are permissible; atomic blast is, at worst, controversial; but chemical weapons are beyond the pale.

Business has no less nice, if less spectacular, ethical-decisions to be made. From what premises: the temporarily expedient? the persistently relative? or a perseverant sense of the absolute (which, if you like, you may call God)?

All very high-falutin. But this kind of soul-searching—or researching—is forced upon one if one is not only to build but adequately inhabit a Village House.

However I answer, I still relate far more successfully to Pinhamy than to Jayawardana Baas.

I CHOSE JAYAWARDANA to build my house because (a) he was Simon Baas' son, and Simon Baas was and remains the greatest friend my wife and I ever made in Ehetuwewa; (b) I had known him from our very first to visit to the place and both he and his wife and I and mine had always seemed to like each other; and (c) he had done several jobs for me, even coming out as far as Hammenhiel to do one of them, and done them satisfactorily. I did not realize in time that the jobs he had done were too simple to judge his actual capabilities by—in/experienced as I was, the title *baas* (the Dutch word) misled me—nor that in the twelve years since I had first known him he had grown tremendously ambitious to be a rich man and exceptionally rapacious for any quick buck, nagged into it by the necessity to purchase the respect of his wife whom we had taken for such a charmingly unassuming and docile village girl.

There is something about many villagers, one might almost say the majority of them, that makes speculation—get—rich—quick—irresistible. I was not aware that Jayawardana/Karuna were paradigms of the type; nor that they had tried and failed at many schemes, not all of them shall-we-say legitimate, to realize their ambition while I was out of touch with them; nor that friendship and trust would count for very little when it appeared that the building-contracts I offered—by word of mouth, only there was nothing in writing—would be interpreted not as in any way an obligation but as an opportunity; if not to achieve their ambition, at least to further it! nor that when Karuna wrote and begged (while the House was yet less than a dec-

CAPTURE AND DOMESTICATION

— Recommendations —

sion) that I would use what in fluence I might have towards obtaining her a contract to make bids for the Beedi Corporation and I finally succeeded in obtaining the franchise for her because I knew she was a Kegalla girl and a skilled bidi-roller and believed her contention that at least a dozen Ehetuwewa girls would benefit from the enterprise, I was in fact creating in Jayawardana her husband a rival interest to my house-building which he would prosecute without compunction.

Now the rest of the acts of Jayawardana, how he jockeyed and outmanoeuvred and held me up to ransom, behold they are written in the chronicles of my Building a Village House. In the parts that are to follow.

But now that I have got all this off my chest I can go on with my tale with neither too much rancour nor too tender a conscience, without feeling too sorry for myself or apologetic for my expose of business ethics in Ehetuwewa.

Tory Recipe

After their defeat in the recent general election, the Tories began to look ever more energetically for ways of neutralizing the influence of socialist ideas in Britain. The one to go about it most zealously was Sir Keith Joseph, who has been mentioned as one of the contenders for the post of the Conservative Party's leader. It was he who, before the other diehards, saw and declared in a speech in Birmingham that as a result of socialist influence in the past few years the nation was moving towards "degeneration." Sir Keith suggested a sure way out, a way that was both extremely simple and well-nigh brilliant. All that is required, it turns out, is more birth control for the "lower classes." That will do the trick. There will be fewer workers voting against the Tories and relatively more gentlemen from the "upper classes." And this will ensure the victory of the Tories' ideas (and of their candidates in the elections).

THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL INSTALMENT of the Wild Life Dept.'s Advisory Council Paper No. 1 ON A NEW POLICY FOR THE CEYLON ELEPHANT. In the first part (*Tribune* 30/11/74), we read that in the national interest it was foolish to attempt to save the Ceylon elephant in its wild state in the Dry Zone if we had any concern for the peasant—and as consolation we were told that Science would not lose anything if the wild elephant became extinct in Sri Lanka because the same species was found in India, Burma and Thailand. In the second part (*Tribune* 14/12/74), it was shown that everything done to save the wild elephant in the Dry Zone had proved fruitless and abortive, as the peasant in his anxiety to save his crops would naturally destroy the animal and that were little the Department could do about it—especially when the sympathies of the Department and of all (presumably sane) people should be to safeguard food crops and not the elephant. The conclusion drawn at the end of the second part was that the attempt to save the Ceylon Elephant in its wild state should be given up and that the recommended policy was that all efforts should be directed towards capturing and domesticating all the elephants outside the National Parks (and we were also told that elephants refuse to be confined to the National Parks.) The third and concluding part of the Advisory Council Paper we publish this week sets out methods of capture (and inferentially domestication). Suggestions are also thrown out how an attempt should be made to encourage and persuade the Ceylon Elephant to breed in captivity (which it is said it refuses to do unlike counterparts in India, Burma and Thailand—where it appears the tame and the wild elephants mingle from time to time in the jungle). We do not know whether the Department and the Government have adopted what has been set out in the Advisory Council Paper as the accepted official policy, but we think that this is a matter on which there should be re-thinking not only about the fate of the Ceylon Elephant but also whether it is yet possible to save the elephant as a denizen of our Dry Zone—EDITOR

I would suggest that we make a radical shift of policy and revert to the system which obtained before 1950 when capturing of elephants for domestic purposes by individuals was permitted on a permit. This suggestion I know would be regretted by conservationists but it is the only alternative policy to having a large collection of dead elephants shot by cultivators.

If this policy of capturing of elephants is agreed to we will have to decide whether the capturing should be done by the Department through our Game Rangers and thereafter sold or whether permits should be issued to private parties who would then employ their own Panikkians and trappers and capture the elephants in the jungles themselves. I would prefer the latter course. Departmental staff can concentrate on their normal functions. They should however supervise the capture by private parties to ensure that the terms of the permit are followed and no cruelty is caused to the animals.

IF CAPTURING is decided on, obviously we will also have to decide the methods by which the capturing will be permitted. There are actually 4 methods which can be adopted.

- (1) Noosing the animals by laying out nooses in the jungle;
- (2) Noosing the animals while the animal is on the move (Panikkian method);
- (3) Immobilising the elephant by the use of capture guns and thereafter tying the animal; and
- (4) By the re-introduction of Kraaling.

My own view is that the noosing and Panikkian method is the most

satisfactory. These are long tested methods which resulted in the least number of deaths. There are people conversant with both methods who are still living in the N.C.P and the eastern province who could readily resume capture operations.

I would not favour the use of the capchur gun as the dosages for the elephant is still imperfectly known and there is the risk of high mortality. Tranquillising in any case has to be followed by tying the animal, like after noosing, and will cause the same type of injury.

THE REINTRODUCTION of kraaling of elephants can also be considered. An elephant kraal

if properly advertised in the tourist season can be an exceptional draw for tourists. A kraal recently held in South India brought several times its expenditure from fees charged from visitors. The difficulties in a kraal, however is that suitable sites are not available in areas with pocketed herds. Substantial expenditure has also to be incurred on building stockades and on obtaining beaters for the elephant drive. The system of kraaling in Ceylon also appears to be inextricably bound up with feudal land tenures which do not obtain in Ceylon any longer and it may not be possible to organize a drive for an elephant kraal in the 1970s. If private parties are able to consider organizing such kraals, there is no reason why Government should not examine these proposals closely.

The issue of permits to private parties to capture elephants should not however be indiscriminately done. I would suggest that it be done on the following conditions.

- (1) The permits for capture be issued in specific areas. These can be e.g. D.R.O.'s divisions. In specifying area we should give permits in the following order to preference (a) pocketed herds; (b) In areas where elephants threaten villagers; (c) In areas in which it is proposed to clear jungle shortly for colonization purposes and (d) In other areas. Permits for capturing elephants in the immediate environs of the three parks will not be issued as the elephants who gather in these areas are likely to be migrants from the parks.
- (2) All capture operations should be done under the supervision of our departmental staff who will see that permit conditions are followed and no cruelty is caused.
- (3) The method of capture will be specified in the permit. This will be decided on depending on the locality and the competence of the noosers or panikkans whom it is proposed to employ.
- (4) Size of the animal and the sex will be specified.
- (5) In the past the permit fee for capture of an elephant was Rs. 100/- Since an elephant now fetches Rs. 10,000/-. I would suggest a fee of Rs. 4,000 per

permit to capture. A permit for a tusker to be Rs. 8,000/- and Rs. 2,000/- for an animal over five feet. The reason for this last rate is given below.

- (6) The licence will be issued for a specified period only and will be renewed only in exceptional circumstances. If no animal is caught in the specified period, the licence will lapse.

Another connected problem that is likely to arise is what is to be done with large male animals. Animals over five feet in height, who would be over 20 years of age, are not considered suitable for domestication in Ceylon, even though in other countries such animals are readily domesticated. Noosers and panikkians in Ceylon only capture animals below 5 feet. Large animals caught in kraals are invariably set free. It will be necessary for our current operation that we encourage the capture of large animals even at a reduced licence fee, as it is not advisable to capture the herd and leave such animals alone in the jungle.

THE DEPARTMENT, however, should not end its policy towards the elephants after with the issue of permits for capture of elephants for domestication. We must also formulate a definite policy regards tame elephants.

The main aspect of such a policy towards tame elephants is to find ways and means of breeding tame elephants in captivity. Elephants breed freely in captivity in Burma, Siam and India but strangely in Ceylon elephants do not breed under domestication. This appears to be related in some way to the food given to domestic elephants in Ceylon and also due to the different methods employed in Ceylon for the up-keep of domestic animals. For example in Ceylon animals not in use are always kept tied while in Burma and Siam domesticated animals are hobbled and let loose in the jungles where they freely mingle and mate sometimes with wild elephants.

This question of a breeding programme for tame elephants is of course one for a scientific survey. Some initial work in this connection has already been done by scientists from the Smithsonian Institution together with the staff of the Veterinary Science Faculty

of the University. Although this survey was commenced I believe much progress has not been made so far due lack of funds and per personnel.

It is I think very necessary that such a study be organised with assistance from both the Government and international bodies. It is also preferable that such a study be done by a full time team rather than by officer working on it part time in addition to their other duties. Perhaps the Advisory Council with the advice from the University members will be able to formulate such a scheme.

Tied to such a study for breeding tame elephants is another aspect which is likely to prove helpful to the conservation of elephants throughout the world. This is the development of a method of artificial insemination of elephants. Most Zoos throughout the world do not keep male elephants due to their aggressiveness during period of must. Zoos therefore only keep female elephants. If an effective method of artificial insemination of elephants could be decided on, it will be possible for Ceylon to assist in the breeding of captive female elephants in Zoos throughout the world. This will be a definite contribution to the conservation of the species apart from the substantial earnings in Foreign exchange which the country could obtain.

The law as it now stands permits the issue of licences for the capture of elephants outside National Reserves. The licence fee, however, is prescribed at Rs. 50/- per animal. This, however, will have to be changed by regulation which can easily be done. The law relating to the capture is contained in Section 12 of the Fauna & Flora Protection Ordinance.



SHORTLY

MORE ABOUT THE CEYLON ELEPHANTS — including highlights of the discussions in the Assembly during the recent Budget debate.

FROM HANSARD

Aziz On Plight Of Plantation Workers—2

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying yesterday, in the matter of co-operative development on estates no action whatsoever has been taken at any level. It may not be out of place for me to make mention here of one very important matter. You would recollect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when the production drive was commenced by the Government we were anxious that the plantation workers should also be brought into this great effort towards the development of the country.

I therefore met the Secretary, who was then called the Permanent Secretary, of the Ministry of Planning and discussed this matter with him. He was very co-operative and very helpful at the discussions. He expressed the opinion that this matter, if dealt with through the co-operative movement, would receive the support and help of the Government, and advised me that I should discuss it with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. I did so. I met the Private Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. The Permanent Secretary himself was not available on that day. He advised me that I should meet the Assistant Secretary which, I did. He in turn referred me to the Co-operative Department. I then went to the Co-operative Department and had a discussion with the officials there. They told me that as it was a matter concerning the plantations the best thing would be to discuss this question with the Ministry of Plantation Industry.

So, from the Co-operative Department I was shunted on to the Ministry of Plantation Industry. I discussed the matter with the Secretary to the Ministry of Plantation Industry who himself belonged to a progressive party. He was very sympathetic and wanted me to write to him with full details so that his Ministry could go into the matter and find a way out of this problem. It is now nearly 12 months and I have not received any reply in spite of my reminders. I wish the

Ministers who are present in the House today will hold with me that this is a serious matter.

The position is this. The officials are not sure as to what precisely is the Government's policy with regard to the plantation workers and the development projects as far as the plantation workers and their welfare are concerned. I sometimes get angry with the officials but upon a reconsideration of the matter I feel I cannot blame them because they do not know what they should do in the matter. They feel that if they take action they might be pulled up and therefore they are reluctant to take any steps. Some move in this connection is absolutely essential at the highest level in the Government, meaning, at the Cabinet level. So that, if the policy, in regard to plantation workers is laid down then the officials also will be in a position to act when requests are made by Members of this House. I think it is a very vital matter because, unless this is done, the plantation workers will continue to be neglected even in the future as they have been neglected in the past.

There is another very serious matter to which I have referred almost from the time this Government took office. A person of Indian origin obtains citizenship in this country, under the laws of this country, but in the birth certificate of his child, even if he is a citizen of Sri Lanka, he is described either as an Indian Tamil or as Indian Moor. Why, I cannot understand! I have written letters to the Minister of Public Administration and I have received replies which say that 'Indian Tamil' is an ethnic group which has nothing to do with citizenship or nationality. Tamil may be an ethnic group; Moor may be an ethnic group; but 'Indian Tamil' and 'Indian Moor' in respect of people who are citizens of this country are terms that are not understandable. If you continue to call them 'Indian Tamils' or 'Indian Moors', how are you going to move forward this process of integration which, in my view, is absolutely essential?

As I pointed out yesterday, thanks to the efforts of the Prime Minister,

in 1964 this question was settled between the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka, and approximately 600,000 people—375,000 in these new Agreements and 150,000 earlier, that is, more than five lakhs, and their natural increases, which might come to about 600,000—would become citizens of this country. Why not put into operation effective processes for integration? Why continue to remind them the whole time that they are Indian Tamils or Indian Moors?

Sir, it might interest you to know that one or two persons who described themselves as Ceylon Tamils were hauled before a court of law, prosecuted and convicted for having described themselves as Ceylon Tamils. And this in spite of the fact that they had Ceylon citizenship.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, First Colombo South,

What was the offence?

Mr. Aziz,

They described themselves wrongly; according to the law they should be called Indian Tamils and not Ceylon Tamils if they are of Indian origin. And they were prosecuted and convicted.

I am crying myself hoarse on this matter. I am anxious that integration should take place. I am anxious that people of Indian origin who have acquired citizenship of this country should be encouraged to look inward for their inspiration, that they should be encouraged to look inward for their future aspirations. Why keep on reminding them that they are Indian Moors through birth certificates and through designations or nomenclatures that are given them? If the present practice is continued we will not be able to put into operation the process of integration which in my view is absolutely essential for the future of these people as well as for the future, of this country as a united nation.

I was referring to the estate schools. I am sorry to tell you that much more is happening than the taking over of estate schools. A few have been taken over and a few more are proposed to be taken over. After I finished my speech yesterday it was brought to my notice that in some of the estates taken over by the Land Reform Commission existing schools

have been closed. If an estate comes within the Land Reform Commission does the necessity to educate the children of the estate workers become any the less? It is a pity that even the schools that existed have been closed down.

This in my view is a gross injustice. This situation must also be rectified and set right. We want the plantation workers also to march hand in hand towards our goal of socialism in this country. They are a part of the proletariat of this country. We are the most concentrated proletariat, a proletariat is preferred to pay its part in the development of this country on a socialist basis. Then why spurn them? Why not encourage them in their desire to play their part in the development of socialism in this land?

Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne,

Can you give instances of what you complain about?

Mr. Aziz,

Yes, I will give them to you.

A word about the question of land for the persons of Indian origin. Today there is unregulated emigration which is putting the Government into difficulty and putting these people also into difficulty. They are hardworking people. They want to participate in production. Some of them—sometimes led and sometimes misled by certain people—go to the dry zone and settle themselves down. After they settle themselves down there are proposals to kick them out of those places. In one place, Vavuniya, there occurred such a case which I took up with the Government Agent. A person who is a son-in-law of a retired railway worker in the Vavuniya area had been on the land for several years. You will be surprised to hear, Sir, that the hut of that poor man was burnt down, and the divisional revenue officer of the area had the audacity—if I may be permitted the use of that word—to virtually admit that he had ordered it to be done. The man's hut was burnt down and nobody did anything about it. When representations were made on the matter the authorities said, "We are holding an inquiry." And an inquiry was held five months after the hut was burnt down. What I am saying is, it is possible to use

these people for the development of food production. Instead of permitting this matter to go on in this unregulated manner, why not there be a kind of policy decision that whatever surplus workers there are be, in an organized manner, settled in those dry zones? If this is done they will be better off and the country will also be better off in the matter of production of food. These are some of the points which I think it is necessary that the Government should direct its attention to.

In this backdrop of grim poverty and gross neglect there are menacing postures of communal and reactionary organisations seeking to exploit the situation. If we permit this type of thing to go on, desperation, inability to do anything will set in motion processes to start communal organizations. I have been a firm believer that communal organizations are harmful to the plantation workers. But my saying that they are harmful is not going to solve the problem. Anybody else saying that they are harmful is not going to solve the problem. What will solve problem is that these people must be integrated through positive, definite approaches so that such reactionary forces as are trying to raise their heads in the plantations may not succeed because of processes of integration in respect of the plantation workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I may be the last appointed Member of Parliament. According to the new Constitution there will be no appointed Members to represent the plantation workers. I hope very soon the elected representatives of the plantation people will sit in this Assembly.

Mr. P. G. Ariyatileke—Maskeliya

You will come as an elected Member.

Mr. Aziz,

I thank the hon. Member for Maskeliya (Mr. P. G. Ariyatileke) for this kindness towards me. I might remind the Assembly that the constituency which he is so ably and brilliantly representing in this Assembly was represented by my humble self twenty years ago. It may be that I may be returned as an elected Member. Even if I come back I shall be coming back as an elected representative.

But the point I was making is that there will be no appointed Members in this Assembly. Let not history record that we of the earlier generation have failed by these people, because they are hardworking people who are contributing their mite for the development of the country and deserve due recognition.

I would therefore make a very serious appeal to the Government that it should realise its responsibility to this very vital section of our population. The Hon. Prime Minister has referred to the second stage of the agrarian revolution when increase of production should be the main concern. I hope at least at this stage the plantation working class would not be left out of reckoning. They must be made full and free partners in the march of the working class on the path of socialist construction. The plantation people have never failed the Government; let not the Government and the Nation fail them..

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SHAMBA

Major And
Minor

by ANATORY BUKOBA

November 12,

Arrived here did I at a time when I would have not had I had my way and buses been punctual, for then I would have been elsewhere and late here; and I had not been at the *shamba* fifteen minutes, and I was on my way out, when I saw on the road someone who had come to meet me. If I had not been here he would not have stayed. He had brought a friend whom he was reluctant to ask in. I shall call him *Minor*, and the first man *Major*. If transpired that they had both come to stay, and it was apparent that *major* at least had had second thoughts about it. It did not take him long to change his mind. What gave them away was a parcel that *minor* was carrying. My colleague quite took them to his heart.

Decided did I to stick to my original but newly-formed plan to visit the *polla*. I had wanted to see if there were day-old chicks there. These there were not, but there were *cadjans*. I bought twentyfive at Rs. 28/- a hundred, and *major*, *minor* and I took it in turns to carry this bundle of *cadjans* on our head, starting off first at the *polla* itself *Minor*, I thought, did the best of us all. We had a mile to go to the *shamba*.

We then fetched our tools and cleared a space for a *polla* on what looked the highest ground on the *shamba*, of the land that has been cleared. I am not including the place where a bungalow used to stand many years ago, for that must be the highest point of all except for the old road. The place we chose is right against the strid of jungle that separates what we have cleared from what our new neighbours have cleared. We then cleared a path, to the place, of its thorns.

Before this, and after we had fetched the tools, we bought some catfish pots; an *attilia* to cook

vegetables, a *mutti* to cock the rice, a *nabili* to sift the rice of its sand, and a *koraha* to wash the rice. These four cost us Rs. 4/50 which we thought was exorbitant. There was no *kalla-geddi* or water-pot to be had anywhere, so we went back for a big *mutti* to serve as one.

When *major* and *minor* first came, I brought up the questions of how they were going to feed themselves, should they stay. I had been wondering, before they came, how I was going to manage until the end of the month with the money I had left, the matter of feeding them has been settled because I think these lads must be given a chance. When faced with an emergency, I find it useful to have a closed mind about money, which is the opposite of having a closed fist. It means you stop calculating and virtually cease to think. You just do what has to be done, and that is that. I suppose armies go to war on the same principle.

Major can be quite an elegant man as regards his dress. So I was surprised to see him slither up a tree with a fearful drop below him of rocks and shallow water, a trunk many sizes his size in girth, and not a branch. Every bandhold and foothold of his seem to slip on the way up. I had to sit down to keep a hold of myself. It was this tree that our *Tarzan* of a year ago climbed monchalantly; he had his cutting instrument between his teeth. *Major* just dug his instrument into the tree as he climbed; dug it in ahead to have his hands free. Then he stood on the tree as if he was on *terra firma* what I liked about him was that he, who was so sure of his balance, his nerves and his head went out his way to help me over some rocks, easy ones.

November 13,

These notes are being written away from the *shamba* if was hard for me to leave my two friends, who have only been a day and a half with me. The bundles of twenty-five *cadjans*, meant for a *palla*, were not enough for the roof of the little house we put up today. Only half the roof was done and completed; the other half was done with single *cadjan* or half, as a Sinhalese would put it; quite inadequate, done this way, to keep

rain out. The half, done, was over where the *massa* bed will stand. The *massa* bed itself was about half finished. The main structure of the house was complete; a small extensions has to be made for the kitchen. The centre posts reach to a height of about seven feet. The roof slopes less steeply on the side where the *massa* bed is, that is not correct. It would be true to say, rather, that the roof has been brought up sort on that side, and that on the other side the roof is longer, and that it has been brought nearer the ground. We dug the holes for the six posts yesterday, and we got the wood for the roof ready.

So, the posts were put in today, and the three beams or *Yattalea*. Next ten rafters or *parala* wehe put on, five shorter ones for the side where the bed is, and the fly ong ones for the other side. The tying together of the rafters was done before they went on, a longer one and a shorter one each and then the whole in these pairs hoisted over the three beams. A circular ring was cut into one end of each rafter to hold the rope and prevent it slipping. This was done at the tying of the pairs. Then the *cadjans* were put on. I shall have to retire again for another short nap, so sleepy am I.

It is probably only economic unrest that causes political reform. The desire for justice, for seeing it through, should come from the mind. Instead, it rather comes from the stomach. Make a man satisfied with his economic or psychological lot, and he will be ready to call off any good work he has begun. I saw it was so in my case, I thought today. Matters like the ceasing of population control, or its cessations, I should say; and political justice, such as that men have a right to be citizens of the country they are in, in which case we would have no stateless people, surely a disgrace if ever there was one; and economic justice, on which land-ceiling and business take-over by the state are an attack; all these tend to be forgotten when a man is satisfied with his lot, just as the old *politicosocial* reformers were moved by owner-employer aggression, against their employees, by these social sts own personal ambition. If their ambition had been

satisfied, they would have promptly thrown over many a good work of theirs.

Compared to the work we did yesterday, I thought a lethargy had settled over us this afternoon. However, I was able to call my two active companions out for nearly an hour's work. A good half-hour's work, in the evening, before I went away. We did some clearing on the direct visual line between the two houses. Some small trees went and some thorn. It was all cut up and neatly stacked. I have at last woken up and I am writing easily.

Our new house will need seventy-five cadjans. There were none to had near us. I left fifteen rupees at a boutique for them to stop a lorry with cadjans and get us fifty, two bundles. My two companions have been left Rs. 10/-, five rupees a day, for the two days I shall be away. I also bought them some jaggery and tea. Lastly, I said I would stay if they did not want me to go.

Major controls minor very well. Minor is very capable, young though he is. He is also very willing, and contented, under major's control. Yet, we are all partners. Our young neighbour extolled the ways of the chena method. I feared revolt, but my companions said they saw my point.

AGRICULTURE

Inter-Crop for Tapioca Land

TAPIOCA is a long duration crop and it would be worthwhile for farmers if they can get some catch crop from the land before the harvest of the tubers which takes from eight to 10 months. The tuber crop is exacting in its off-take of nutrients from the soil. The inter-crop which is chosen must therefore be hardy enough to compete with tapioca and must come to harvest sufficiently early so that it would not interfere very much with the tuber formation. A special trial involving number of crops like bhendi, cowpea, Co. 8 lab-lab green gram,

sunflower, groundnut and Bellary onion was carried out at the horticultural section of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore to choose the best inter-crop with tapioca. It was found that other crops except onion brought down the yield of tapioca without improving the monetary return per unit area. On the other hand, the yield of tapioca was reduced by only one per cent when Bellary onion was interplanted but an additional profit of Rs. 1,036 per hectare more than compensated this loss. The onion crop was grown during the first four months of the tapioca crop.

Intensive use of pesticide chemicals is considered to cause risks of environmental pollution and the recent trend is to go in for integrated techniques of pest control involving non-chemical methods also. Some advances have been made in the use of bacteria for destroying harmful pests, the most spectacular example being that of the bacteria, *Bacillus Thuringiensis*. A special research project has been launched by the G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttar Pradesh, to carry out research on the use of microbes as "invisible bullets" to kill pests. The project is supported by a grant of Rs. 214,800. The project will take advantage of the fact that the crop pests themselves are susceptible to many diseases and exploiting the pathogens to destroy the pests selectively, will not lead to any pollution hazards.

Manure from Paddy

Husk

PADDY CROP needs a good amount of manure and fertilizers. Unless systematic manuring is resorted to, continuous cultivation of this crop will lead to depletion of soil fertility. In some tracts of Andhra Pradesh replenishing of this loss to some extent is attempted by ploughing in some of the paddy straw which is usually stalked in the fields. Another by-product of this crop which is obtained after the paddy is hulled is paddy husk now mostly

wasted except for a minor use as fuel for par-boiling in the mills. Research has found out a method by which this by-product can be recycled as manure and used for paddy crop.

The manure which is in the form of a yellowish powder is said to contain one per cent nitrogen, 1.6 per cent phosphoric acid, one per cent potash and 2.9 per cent calcium. The husk is converted into manure by a simple method. The husk is spread in a cattle shed in a 25 cm. layer. Over this, paddy straw or other litter is spread to a thickness of 22 cm. The top layer is renewed from time to time, without disturbing the husk portion. In six weeks the husk becomes suitable for being composted it is removed and composted either in a pit or a heap as the location permits. The excellent flowing compost rich in plant foods is ready in nine months. This method described in the "Intensive Agriculture" points the way to the fruitful utilisation of the large quantities paddy husk which accumulate near mills and contribute to production of paddy grain.

Spent tapioca pulp obtained as a by-product in the manufacture of starch from tapioca is now used as cattle feed in and around Kerala in a samil measure. Experiments on using this as an ingredient in cattle feed have indicated that the large quantities of spent pulp can form the bulk of the compounded cattle concentrate feed which may be formulated by adding small quantities of oil cakes grain and bran to it. According to a report in "Gosamvardhana" animals consumed about two kg. of spent tapioca pulp. The palatability of this material can be improved by adding a small quantity of salt. The total digestible nutrients in spent tapioca pulp are 71.12 and its starch equivalent 68.09 per cent. It is possible to include spent tapioca pulp upto 10 per cent in the cattle concentrate mixture and thus lower the cost of the compounded feed.

BANKING

LONDON -retains lion's share-

By Paul Garton

London.

The City of London will certainly retain the lion's share of world banking business, according to a leading French banker.

Speaking in London at the annual seminar on world banking organised by *The Financial Times* and *The Banker*, M. Gilbert Geas, director and managing director of the Banque National de Paris, said that despite the uncertainties and apprehensions which had affected the world banking scene in the past year, the steady stream of banks coming to London had, if anything, increased, with a fresh one setting up in London every fortnight. Since last autumn, he pointed out, 22 foreign banks had opened in London, four new consortium banks had been established and another five foreign banks had taken stakes in London-based banks. M. Geas reckoned the number of foreign banks and affiliates in London at about 170—greatly in excess of those at any other financial centre.

It was true, he said, that some of the decisions to set up in London in the past year had been taken "before the events which have shaken the economy of the world quite recently"; the evidence was, however, that confidence in the future of London as a financial centre remained unshaken.

M. Geas attributed the supremacy of the City of London especially to its freedom from restrictive regulation, the advantage of using English, the world's main business language, and the large supply of skilled technical specialists and administrative staff. Another important factor at present was location in London of a large part of the Euro-currencies market.

M. Geas recalled the recent statement by Mr. Gordon Richardson, Governor of the Bank of England, that half of the increase in the oil producers' surplus this year had been placed with banks in London and a good proportion of it in sterling, and that this happened only because the City had a

flexible and sophisticated financial system whose skill was trusted the world over.

THE GUAVA

Introduced From Central America

The guava season this year has been good, though notwithstanding the heavy arrivals, the fruit was a bit costly. With the season just tapering off there is keen demand for this common man's fruit. It is true that guava is not fancied as a sophisticated dessert fruit. This, however, in no way detracts its nutritive value which is as good or even better than the more elite fruits like the apple or orange. It can be said to be the common man's dessert, though he does not need one. For, all that he wants is something wholesome in good quantities to assuage his hunger, which can be eaten on the spot. Guava lends itself to such immediate direct consumption. A bite into its soft succulent pulp needs no preparation such as peeling and paring of skin or removal of stones.

The guava, botanically *Psidium Guajava*, provides all the nutritive principles essential for human health except Vitamin A. The fruit contains in 100 grams of pulp, 0.9 gm. protein, 0.3 gm. fat, 0.7 gm. minerals, 11.2 gm. carbohydrates, 10 mg. calcium, 28 mg. phosphorus, 1.45 mg. iron, 0.03 mg. thiamine, equal quantity of riboflavin, 0.4 mg. niacin and 212 mg. of Vitamin C. The guava contains nearly three times vitamin C found in orange. And this vitamin is retained fully even when the fruit is processed into a jelly. In Hawaii and Florida in the U.S. the more sour varieties are processed into excellent jellies and a drink known as "Guava neotar."

The guava plant has also its medicinal uses. Its leaves are said to arrest vomiting and diarrhoea. The leaf offers relief in tooth-ache when chewed. Tender leaves stimulate appetite and fruits relieve constipation. The decoction from the bark and roots of guava can control diarrhoea. The leaves can also be used to remove the irritating taste from tuber vegetables like elephant yam by adding the leaf when cooked. *Though this fruit has become natura-*

lised in Uttar Pradesh it is really a native of tropical Central America. It was introduced into our country before the 17th century and has established itself almost like a native species.

SCIENCE

Force of Gravity Weakening?

New Delhi.

Scientists are perplexed about a recent discovery confirming earlier suspicions that the force of gravity is gradually weakening. It is weakening at a distinct rate of one part in 10 million per year—too small to interfere with man's daily life but sufficient to profoundly affect modern theories of the physical world including that of Einstein.

The discovery of Dr. Thomas C. V. Fliandern of the United States Naval Observatory and his colleagues was made a few weeks ago and has since been discussed in several professional journals. The scientists had been studying the motion of the moon by timing eclipses of stars as the moon passed in front of them. From such timings they were able to conclude that the force of gravity changes over a period of time. Three experiments are now in progress to confirm the latest finding by Dr. Van Fliandern. One of them aims at finding out precisely the rate at which the moon is receding from the earth. Scientists hope that if gravity is really weakening the moon will gradually get away from the earth's hold. But even tiny changes in earth-moon distance can be measured with lasers.

In another experiment scientists are trying to determine the rate at which planets are receding from the sun. In this case the distances are measured by bouncing radar signals off planets. Decrease in gravity was predicted as early as in 1937 by English physicist Dr. P. A. M. Dirac and since then by astronomers Prof. Fred Hoyle of Britain and Dr. J. V. Narlikar of India. Scientists say that if the decline of gravity is confirmed it would suggest that the solid earth is expanding at a rate of about one centimetre per century. It is believed that this expansion should have something to do with the large scale geological processes such as continental drift.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

• AIR CRASH

IS IT NOT TRUE that the tragedy which overtook the Dutch *Martinair* DC 8 plane has raised a hornet's nest of questions in knowledgeable circles in Sri Lanka? That while the corridors, lobbies and offices of governmental centres reverberate with anxious questions asked in soft whispers, street corner gossip has begun to assume noisy proportions which threaten to snowball into a mighty avalanche that will sweep many crowned heads in our Civil Aviation sector? That the Communist daily *Aththa* has, since the crash occurred on December 4, drawn attention to serious defects in the way our Control Tower at Katunayake has been operating in recent times? That it was common gossip that there had been misunderstanding in regard to the distance the plane was away from Katunayake when the Control Tower had given the instructions for it to descend from 8000 ft. to 2000 ft? That it is said that the language deficiencies of some of the men at Katunayake's Control Tower had misapprehended 40 miles to be 14? That this seems to be an over-simplified (and therefore erroneous) way of pin-pointing the human error which led to the crash? That modern commercial jet flying does not depend on human capabilities as much as it does on radar and electronic equipment? That it is obvious that the instruments to measure distances on the plane and/or the Control Tower had failed and that this was the prime cause for the air crash? That the point-of-crash was about 45 miles away from Katunayake? That for a modern jet to come down from 8000 ft. to 2000 ft. it takes a little time and it would have covered a fair distance? That according to the *Aththa* a plane like the DC 8 descends at the rate of 2000 ft. a minute? That the height of the mountain on the Seven Virgins Range on

which the plane had struck was about 5000 ft? That the plane had reached the shores of Sri Lanka on its eastern side exactly 15 minutes before it was to land? That as the jet flies (no more as the crow flies) this distance was about 120 miles and that the plane would have reduced its speed to about 500 mph at this time? That all this indicated that the popular bazaar gossip that the wrong order for the plane to descend to 2000 ft from 8000 ft on a wrong understanding by the Control Tower of what the pilot had said about distance will not hold water?

IS IT NOT A FACT, HOWEVER, that apart from the defective human element either in the pilot or the personnel posted in the Control Tower—frequent complaints have been heard during the last two years about the manner in which the work has been carried on at this important place—it was known that some of the important equipment was not functioning as they should? That aviation circles say that, even if the distance measuring equipment on the plane had gone wrong, the installations at Katunayake and on Sri Lanka soil should have helped the plane to land safely? That it is the considered view of aviation circles that if the installed equipment at Katunayake had functioned properly this accident could have been avoided? That according to the *Aththa* the *Distance Measuring Equipment* (DME) had been found by an expert of the International Civil Aviation Organisation during an inspection in 1972 to be out of order and that he had said that a "modulator" was defective? That as the original modulator had failed to function properly two new ones were brought, but which also turned defective within a short time? That since that time (in 1972) the

DME at Katunayake has not been functioning? That the four technicians trained to operate the DME have been allotted other work? That in addition to the DME at Katunayake being defective, the Radio Beacon at Koggala has also not been functioning for a long time for the lack of a "valve"? That this Radio Beacon has the function of sending signals to approaching planes from which a pilot can measure distances, but our Koggala Beacon has also been out of commission for well nigh two years? That it is also a fact that Katunayake does not have Radar equipment which every modern international airport should have?

IS IT NOT TRUE, as the *Aththa* has reported, that instead of getting essential equipment, Katunayake has been burdened with an unnecessary white elephant called the SEMI AUTOMATIC MESSAGE SWITCHING CENTRE? That this has been installed at a cost of three (3) million francs (french)? That the local Civil Aviation Department, according to the *Aththa*, was prone to boast that this equipment was the most modern and up-to-date in Asia without realising that Katunayake and Sri Lanka aviation could easily do without this Switching Centre but that equipment like the DME, the Radio Beacon and even more urgently Radar instrumentation was a prime need for the airport? That the *Aththa* hints that purchases for Katunayake were not dictated by essentiality of the needs but the possibilities of making commissions? That all this makes it clear that unless an inquiry is held into the air crash and the working of the Katunayake airport by an independent board of inquiry and the proper steps are taken to remedy matters, international aviation circles will lose confidence in the Civil Aviation authorities in Colombo? That it is common talk in airline offices and embassies that foreign airlines have been frequently disturbed by the manner the Control Tower functioned? That the *Martinair* crash has made it necessary for a full and honest investigation into the functioning of the Civil Aviation Department?