

TRIBUNE

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TOURISM

— mirage or bubble? —

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THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIVE (1975) will undoubtedly prove a year of destiny for Sri Lanka. It will not be an year of a General Election because the Government does not want an election this year and it is within its constitutional rights to insist that the next General Elections will take place only in 1977.

This matter is well within the power of the Government to enforce. But there are a whole list of other matters where the Government will soon find itself unable either to fulfil its promises or is confronted with boomerangs that might deal severe blows not only to its prestige but also its well-being. The list of such matters will

soon become apparent to everybody, but discerning people had been able to anticipate these developments a long time ago, but it is very likely that 1975 will bring all these failures to the surface in a dramatic manner.

The weaknesses of the food production war, which *Tribune* has been spotlighting for years now, will burst upon the nation this year—and people will see that the really bad drought, which has ruined the current Maha crop, cannot provide an adequate smokescreen for the man-made ineptitude which is at the bottom of our food crisis. *Tribune* cannot but help reverting to this topic in future issues because the failure of food production undermines the country's economy more than anything else. In this issue we will devote attention to another matter on which we have said much, but not enough, to show that the Government was stampeding the country into a fools' paradise of wishful thinking, namely tourism.

We have been sceptical about the governmental hopes of tourism being a panacea for a major part of our foreign exchange problems. We have not hesitated to express the view that the money and effort spent on tourism could have been more profitably channelled to other fields of productive activity. The year 1975 is likely to show how correct have been about the tourist "boom" on which our Government has been persuaded to invest so much capital, time and effort.

Ministers and bureaucrats have promised us the moon about tourism, but now hard

KANKESANTURAI

Tribune's lead story last week about the political perspectives inherent in forthcoming Kankasanturai by-election has sparked off heated discussions and violent arguments in many quarters, and *Tribune* itself has been inundated with opinions, comments, criticisms and even congratulations for the analysis we had ventured to make. One reason why we had published this analysis is that our newspapers—nearly the entirety of the Fourth Estate—are now committed one way or the other, and independent and objective analysis cannot be expected from any of them. *Tribune* is the only paper which is still in a position to publish such independent analysis in its columns. The Party journals naturally support the Party candidates, or oppose the rivals, with vehemence, even if it meant violence to truth and reality. Of the so-called "national" daily papers, *Lake House* is suspect and is treated as nothing more than being an adjunct of the Government (with a running fight within it for different trends of UF opinion to surface in the columns of its publications), whilst the *Times* papers are regarded as no more than a weak echo of certain governmental groups at the core of the Establishment, (but in Tamil matters it is said to reflect the wishful sentiments and views of the lone-ranger Member for Jaffna). It is difficult to say how the *Sun-Dawasa* group would have developed if they had been allowed to publish their papers, and it is even more difficult to say what they will be like when they resume publication sometime this year (when the planets become more favourable). The *Virakesari* and the *Eelanadu* endeavour to maintain a semblance of independence and objectivity, but these papers have only significance among Tamil readers. It is significant that the Communist Party has no Tamil paper and is at the mercy of the *Lake House* *Thinakaran* (with its circulation, slowly but surely vanishing into thin air), the *Times* group *Eelamani* (whose circulation is yet to be built), the *Virakesari* (undoubtedly the most widely circulated and read in the Tamil areas) and the *Eelanadu* (the provincial Jaffna daily which everybody in the peninsula reads). The only regular Tamil paper published by UF circles is the *Janavegam*, the sister paper of the *Janavegaya*. The absence of any Tamil CP paper has been commented upon in Jaffna—as being part of the CP surrender to Sinhala nationalism.

realities (which many observers throughout the world had anticipated) are coming home to roost. It is also well to remember that people do not lay much store by the boastful utterances of the Minister of Tourism and Shipping. It was he who had proclaimed sometime ago in a fit of enthusiasm that Sri Lanka would soon be the richest nation in Asia—all because of tourism, its oil and even more because of its United Front policies. This is no doubt a long-term boast, but it was the same Minister who had said while naming one of the vessels of the Shipping Corporation (Lanka Rani, or Lanka Devi, or one of such boats) that by March 1975, these ships which were now being used to import rice would take away the first export load of rice from the shores of Sri Lanka. Mark you, the Minister had stated that by March 1975, the Lanka Rani or one of her sister vessels would take an export-load of rice. We are now very close to the D-day of March 1975 and what we are confronted with is not the spectacle of rice being exported from Sri Lanka but the prospects of importing more rice than we have had to do in the last three decades.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS boastful statements about tourism on record which Ministers and Bureaucrats must swallow in the course of 1975. It is easy enough to talk about "world inflation" as the cause of the decline and downfall of the tourist industry in Sri Lanka, but this was something which had been foreseen as early as 1972 when the UF government was pushing its tourist development plans and investment programme with vigour and blind faith in its own wisdom.

In recent weeks we have seen an avalanche of banner headlines and special supplements about the South Asia Tourist Year and the millions Sri Lanka would mint from this boom—which it was hinted would go on in Sri Lanka in spite of the inflation, recession and depression in the rest of the capitalist world.

The first admission that Sri Lanka was being adversely affected by the "recession" in the tourist trade came in a tiny frontpage report in the Daily News of January 23,

1975 under the heading: SUDDEN DROP IN TOURIST ARRIVALS:

"There has been a marked drop in the arrival of tourists to Sri Lanka during the past few weeks. A spokesman for the tourist industry told the Daily News that this was the direct result of the global problem of inflation. Many potential tourists from European countries have abandoned their excursion plans due to this problem the spokesman said.

Many hotels have informed travel agents of the availability of rooms for which previous bookings for this season were cancelled. Tourist arrivals which were almost normal up to Christmas started reducing only during the latter part of last month. This trend, according to many in the tourist circles, is likely to continue for a few months more."

This is a cautious way of indicating that all was not well with the tourist business. Tribune had from middle of last year been citing prestigious magazine like The Economist to show that we should stop hoping for a "boom" in the tourist industry.

The Times of Ceylon, also of January 23, had two front page stories which would no doubt have thrown a damper on the local "tourist industrialists" and governmental top-notchers who had gone all crazy about tourism. One item was a lamentation by the President of the local Tourist Hotels Association that the government's taxation and fiscal policies were "unfair" to the tourist industry and that the latest tax regulations were contrary to the promises that had been held out earlier to the private investors who had gone into the business. One need not waste much time with such mournful stories because if an entrepreneur could not see the realities of an industry and also evaluate the promises of a government subject to leftwing pressures, he should have the grace to swallow his medicine without a murmur.

THE SECOND FRONTPAGE splash in the Times was an interesting piece under the headline: FRENCH TOUR OPERATOR'S VIEW—POLICIES OF MAJORITY OF HOTELS "CRAZY". We reproduce the report in extenso because it shows the development of the

hotel business in Sri Lanka has been haphazard and foolish—intended not to attract and keep tourists but to enable a small class of rich men either to turn black money into white or have investments which had many tax holidays and the like.

The policies followed by the majority of the hotels in Sri Lanka are 'absolutely crazy'. Hotels have been built here even in remote areas without any insistence on quality or a view to long term policies. This has posed a serious problem for tourism in Sri Lanka. These observations were made by Mr. L. Laffaille, Director of Asie Tours, one of the largest tour operators of France specialising in Far Eastern traffic, when he addressed pressmen at the Hotel Ceylon Inter-Continental yesterday. Mr. Laffaille is in Sri Lanka to make a survey of hotel conditions and tourist resorts for the purpose of booking tours for the next tourist season.

Mr. Laffaille said his tour company had during the last tourist season diverted a very large number of French tourists to Sri Lanka and this year they intended to increase this number by more than fifty per cent. However, Frenchmen who already visited Sri Lanka have protested vehemently against the system of occupancy charges followed here by the hotels. Most hotels demand a non-refundable deposit for all block bookings. 'This system is not followed in any other country in the world.' Tour operators could not know in advance whether their customers would make last-minute

Overtaxed

Deeply indignant at the way he thought he was being overtaxed, Victor Lester of Stockton (California, U.S.A.) resorted to a method very much in vogue in his state—and not only there—to rectify the alleged injustice. He broke into the city's finance department and, waving a stick of dynamite, took the tax inspector as a hostage. After three hours of negotiations as a result of which the finance department promised to look into the matter, Lester gave himself up. The police established that there was no fuse in the stick of dynamite.

cancellations and in the case of such cancellations operators would be unfairly penalised under this 'crazy' system of deposits demanded by the hotels here. If this deposit was only a guarantee for payment by the tour operator it was fair enough 'but such deposits must be refunded after payment.'

French tourists had also complained about the 'unfair charges' made by the hotels in respect of package bookings. While single occupancy rates were very low, block bookings cost nearly one hundred per cent more.

This again is highly ridiculous and unfair because in any business, wholesale prices are always less than retail prices. As a result most of the hotels on the coastal region were almost empty. Mr. Laffaille also highlighted what he described as very poor hotel facilities in some of the leading tourist hotels. There was no cleanliness, and food was of poor quality. 'The French tourists come here in search of tropical foods such as fruits and fresh fish. But some-times it is difficult to get even a pineapple or papaw which are cheap foods at a hotel here.' Some hotels also failed to supply copies of leading national newspapers to every hotel room.

The French tourist 'is a good customer' because though he may be fussy he spends a lot of money in buying gems and other goods. But no effort was made to break into the French market in a big-way.

There should be more cultural shows, exhibitions of local art, films and other publicity material made available to tour operators in France. 'In comparison with other embassies in Paris the Sri Lanka Embassy is very courteous and obliging but that is not enough.' Tour operators spend large sums on publishing brochures and other publicity media while there was no help from the Sri Lanka authorities. If things do not improve in Sri Lanka, the tourist industry will be ruined." Mr. Laffaille warned and urged the Ceylon Hotels Corporation to play a bigger role in helping tour operators and improving conditions in all hotels.

The story speaks for itself, and no comment need be added.

IN THIS CONNECTION, it would be interesting to refer to a Pelican book which has been on the market for some time entitled: TOURISM, BLESSING OR BLIGHT? The author,

George Young, is well qualified to speak about the international tourist industry, and in this issue we will be content to refer to a few passages in the Introduction to the book to show that tourism is not the panacea for many countries, especially for developing countries which do not have a manufacturing industry to provide the needs of the tourist industry.

... "In spite of this growing awareness of the importance of tourism, many questions concerning it are not so much unanswered as unasked: and implicit assumptions which may have been valid twenty years ago are neither challenged nor substantiated. Does tourist expenditure really filter through to and benefit the local economy or has the emergence of international airlines, international hotel companies, international travel agents and international banks meant that the benefits of tourist expenditure are now being siphoned away and reverting to the tourist's country of origin rather than this destination? Is it the case that the taxpayer or ratepayer of the tourist destination is in fact subsidizing the tourist who is probably better off—by paying through taxes and rates for expensive tourist infrastructure and capital grants for hotels, without receiving adequate benefit? Is the traditional machinery of local government, geared to the priorities and requirements of local residents, able to control or plan for an ever increasing influx of visitors from abroad? To what extent is the sustained and costly effort made by tourist authorities on behalf of many historic cities to attract and accommodate more tourists undermining their very appeal as tourist destinations? If there are saturation levels beyond which further growth in tourist arrivals brings more problems than rewards, what is being done to calculate those levels and see that they are not exceeded?"


The author also raises a question which we have often asked ourselves:

"...On a national level, is it really in the best interests of developing countries to graduate from an agricultural economy to a service economy based on tourism without the intermediate stage of a manufacturing economy? Might the effort of diverting a country's

labour force into the tourist industry—where productivity gains are difficult to achieve—impede growth rather than accelerate it?..."

All persons, genuinely interested in the welfare of the country, are entitled to ask whether the tourist industry in Sri Lanka will soon turn out to be only a mirage or whether it will be a bubble that will burst (either with a bang or just a whimper?).

The year 1975 is likely to provide the answers.



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More About KKS

OUR ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS about the forthcoming by-election at Kankasanturai has provoked indignant responses from certain circles whilst it has made many others to enter into a dialogue and discussion which they otherwise might not have done.

FP and TUF supporters are aghast that we had thought that the Communist V. Ponnambalam, the UF candidate, would poll very heavily and that he even had a freakish chance of winning the by-election. Some of them contend that VP was only fighting to save his deposit and that it would be a walk over for the FP. If this prediction of the FP enthusiasts is proved to be correct on February 6, then it is obvious that emotional grievances of the Tamil people supercede everything else and that the political and economic programme of the CP, (even after 5 years of the CP being in the Government), have only influenced a small number of the Tamil people, and that more than anything else the patronage politics of the United Front does not cut any ice, i.e. that the Tamil people refused to be diverted either by CP logic or governmental bribes from the goal of achieving a Constitution and a form of Government in which the Tamil Minority in Sri Lanka can regard itself as much first class citizenry as the Sinhalese themselves.

Many Tamils have written and many more have spoken to us about the "incorrect assumptions" on which our lead article in the last issue was based. They argue that the "personal" vote which VP will get will not amount to much. To reduce it as much as possible, the *Sutantiran*, the FP weekly, has persisted in a vile campaign of mudslinging at VP, harking on a dowry he is once alleged to have obtained, as a taint and slur upon his character. (The *Sutantiran* recourse to character assassination is in sharp contrast to the platform speeches FP leaders, who have, as we mentioned last week, desisted from mudslinging and character assassination—except of the subt-

est and perhaps permissible kind. And if a dowry or a desire to accumulate money is made the criterion of suitability or of good character for a politician, then the majority of the FP leaders must fall by the wayside—some sought and obtained big dowries, others thrived on exploiting Tamil plantation labour and the profits whereof were further invested and re-invested in Sinhala areas whereas the so-called Tamil areas were crying aloud for investment and development. The *Sutantiran* test of a good Tamil can easily boomerang on many FP stalwarts—especially when the inevitable change in the political climate of the North becomes a reality sooner, or later).

It is yet to be seen how far the character assassination indulged in by the *Sutantiran* will affect VP at the by-election, but there is no doubt that the day is not far off when the *Sutantiran* style of political campaigning will backfire on the FP. FP activists are abundantly confident that they will score a minimum 8000 to 10,000 majority at the by-election on February 6: and that if VP forfeits his deposit (i.e. by failing to obtain one-eighth the votes polled), the FP majority they say, will be even greater.

NON-COMMITTED OBSERVERS in the North say that the CP candidate will not poll as much as we have suggested he would (in our last issue) because VP is "standing as a United Front candidate". They say that if VP had come either as a CP candidate (without the CP being part of the UF,) or as an Independent with CP support, he would have polled much more than as a UF candidate. They assert that his chances have been ruined by the Tamil UF leaders who appear on his platform. While it is admitted that VP himself is incorruptible, it is general knowledge that a number of Tamil UF stalwarts who canvass for him from public platforms are corrupt in every sense of the word. A Keuneman, or a Wickremasinghe, or a Muttetugama, are a breed of *rara avis* in the Northern skies and whilst they make their appearance from time to time, the Tamil stalwarts of the UF are a daily phenomenon among the Tamils.

Furthermore, the different Tamil UF speakers do not have a single line or policy on any question.

Whilst the CP seeks to maintain a realistic and flexible line, consistent with UF policies, which can yet offer the Party a rapport and dialogue with the Tamils, SLFP "leaders" like Kumarasuriel, ex-TC (now UF) men like Thiagarajah and Arulampalam, and LSSP speakers have different attitudes to matters of vital significance to the Tamils. Kumarasuriel knows no politics except to sling mud at the FP, and Arulampalam and Thiagarajah cannot even do that effectively. Kumarasuriel's "bull-in-a-chain, shop" aggressiveness makes him pull skeletons from the UF cupboard which he should have left well alone. Murugiah, the SLFP organiser in the KKS electorates would not be unhappy, they say, to see VP suffer a disastrous defeat so that he could push his claims for to be UF nominee for KKS at the next elections.

With this Babel of UF voices enveloping VP and with all the UF under-currents against him, neutral observers feel that VP will be lucky to get the 8000 odd votes he got in 1970. At that time, the UF was a dark horse which still might have "played fair" by the Tamils. Now, nearly five years of UF rule, it is said, has made the UF stink to the high heavens among the Tamils. Under various excuses, a virtual army of occupation has been imposed on all the Tamil areas especially in the Jaffna peninsula. Until very recently, the armed services treated all the Tamils indigenous to the area not merely as second class citizens but as potential saboteurs, or smugglers, or separatists. The UF government has introduced and implemented racial discrimination in admissions to the University and in job opportunities through various colourable devices like standardisation of marks and districtwise selection in every possible matter. The UF has also brought in a new Constitution without any fundamental guarantees for the rights of the minorities—it will soon be apparent that the Tamils are not the only minority to suffer but, that the new minorities like the elitist Sinhala goigama buddhists will suffer much more from the absence of appropriate civil rights' guarantees in the Constitution and also the constitutional subordination of the Judiciary to the Executive.

THE GRIEVANCES OF THE TAMILS, and increasingly of other sections of the population, *vis a vis* the United Front, are many. And, instead of decreasing, with the passage of time since 1970, they had increased, say many non-committed observers. And today, UF prestige stands at a very low ebb in every part in the country, but more so among the Tamils. It is wrong, therefore, they said, to expect the CP Tamil leader, V. Ponnampalam, to make much headway as UF candidate.

In addition to all this, the KKS by-election, they point out, has come at a time when the economic ills are at their worst. The year 1975 is the year of the famine—so far as rice concerned—in Jaffna. And everything bad in the climate, in the food situation, the employment sector—everything in fact—is attributed to the "ill luck" brought by the unlucky UF government?

In this situation, they assert that the *Tribune* analysis with the expectation that VP would poll well over 12,000 votes—with a chance of getting very very close to SJV—was unrealistic.

We still think, however, that as matters stood during the weekend of January 18-19, what we had said was not far out. There is also no doubt that many publicly proclaim support to the UF in the hope of

getting benefits, jobs (for their sons and daughters), admissions to the University and the like, but that if these expectations are not fulfilled before polling day (or reasonable guarantees are not forthcoming), then the votes will go to the other candidate. Many say that even those who have received many plums from the UF (or even crumbs), and who have been loudest in their support for VP, will ultimately cast their secret votes for the FP leader.

These are imponderables in any election, but the KKS by-election will be an eye-opener to many, probably even to *Tribune*.

If VP does not poll as much as we thought he would (in our last issue), it would be a clear indication that the Tamils are not willing to accept the the UF and its patronage politics or its left-wing slogans at their face value. The LSSP explanations as to why they changed from parity to Sinhala Only, and why they had even opposed the compromise UNP-FP solutions to the language question (lest English should still be enthroned, said Bernard Soysa), has not gone down very well with the Tamils (especially when there is a new craze among the Sinhalese for English and also because many UF leaders send their children abroad for a good English education so also many

FP leaders). The CP has been silent about why it changed from the original CP policy about "regional autonomy for the Tamils in their traditional homelands"—this regional autonomy stand of the CP had been before days parliamentarianism had begun to envelop its political ambitions.

If, however, VP polls anything more than he did on the last occasion it will be an indication that the CP has made headway—in spite of the acts of commission and omission of the other partners of the UF and the government itself. If the CP makes any significant advance at the polls it will be because of the incorruptibility of its local Jaffna leaders and also many of its all-Ceylon leaders. But this local faith in the personal integrity of the CP candidate is not enough to take the Party to victory.

The negative policies of the FP (especially in regard to an economic programme) will continue to delude the Tamil masses because the policy of discrimination followed by the Government, coupled with the determination not to provide constitutional guarantees, has created an emotional barrier which no CP candidate can yet penetrate—it will be futile to expect an SLFP nominee to do better.

CHRONICLE—SRI LANKA

DEC. 30—JAN 9

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA COMPILED FROM ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, at the closing of the 23rd annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party held at Matara told that the school and hospital building program will be suspended for the next two and a half years in order to give priority to agricultural development under a special crash program: the Premier said that some monies allocated for the building of new schools and hospitals would be diverted to agricultural purposes in order to speed the country's progress towards self-sufficiency: in the near future, she said, indications were that there would be a worsening global food shortage unprecedented in history and the only solution for Sri Lanka in such a situation was to launch on a crash program to attain self-sufficiency in food to avoid mass starvation: the Premier made a special appeal to everyone in the country to participate in this crash program and forget their political differences at a time when the country was on the brink of calamity:

hunger was no respecter of politics, the Premier said. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Tamil United Front will not go ahead with its original plan for launching the civil disobedience movement which was scheduled for January 1975: this follows the unanimous adoption of two important resolutions at a special meeting of the TUF Working Committee held at the party's headquarters in Jaffna. According to the *Daily News*, the Soviet Union has agreed to supply the National Textiles Corporation with 1500 tons of raw cotton at a price far below the world market price for raw cotton: an agreement in this regard was signed recently between the Corporation and the USSR Economic Counsellor in Colombo. According to the *Daily News*, the University of Sri Lanka yesterday announced a 50 per cent reduction in the registration fee for external candidates sitting University degree examinations.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31: According to the *Daily News*, a proposal to transfer ownership of nearly 1.5 million acres of state-owned land to cultivators who are the present tenants is likely to be accepted soon: this move will benefit nearly 600,000 farmers throughout the country: the proposal was made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and its Land Commissioner's Department. According to the *Daily News*, the General Council of the one-and-a-half million strong Joint Council of Trade Union Organisation decided yesterday on a

general token strike of 24 hours duration: the exact time and date will be announced today at a mass rally to be held at Hyde Park in the afternoon. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Government will shortly introduce a Bill to compulsorily effect speedy settlement of certain categories of debts incurred by persons in the rural areas through the Conciliation Boards: the Bill termed the Settlement of Debts Law has been approved by the Government on a proposal made by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, with a view to relieve rural indebtedness. "Workers should be involved in the management of public sector enterprises in a big way to ensure those enterprises became as profitable and viable units:" this view was expressed by three Ministers—the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, and the Minister of Housing and Construction, Mr. Pieter Keuneman—yesterday at a press conference held at the National Institute of Management at Colombo. According to the *Daily News*, the Prime Minister will inaugurate a two-day national conference of Employees Councils at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall on January 2. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka's two giant reservoirs—the 3900 million gallon capacity Ka'atuwewa and the 1900 million gallon Labugama—are likely to be vested with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board which begins functioning tomorrow, January 1, 1975.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike, in her New Year Message to the nation had stated that this was an year in which the Government and the people ought to work with great determination and unity: the Premier also issued a message on the occasion of the International Women's Year which falls in 1975. The Mahanayake Theros of the Malwatta and Asgiriya Chapters in their New Year messages have said that the current food shortage is global and Sri Lanka is one of the countries affected by this shortage and to overcome this it was necessary that the people should cultivate more and more to make the country self sufficient. At a mass rally held yesterday, the Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations, ratified the earlier decision to launch an island wide token general strike on January 31. The Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) yesterday sentenced a Pettah businessman A. A. M. Mowjood and a former Traffic Assistant at U.T.A., J. N. Wickremasinghe, to four year's rigorous imprisonment each in the gem smuggling case: Mowjood was also fined Rs. 400,000 and Wickremasinghe Rs. 1,000. According to the *Daily News*, the terms of office of the Galle, Negombo and the Dehiwela-Galkissa Municipal Councils which expire today will not be extended and the Minister, of Local Government, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, has decided to appoint Special Commissioners to these three Councils. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, Leader of the Opposition, has appealed to the Prime Minister to settle the strike at the Milk Board: meanwhile two more unions—the Ceylon Mercantile Union and the Sri Lanka Jathika Kiri Mandalaye Vrutthiya Samithiya—joined the strike on Monday. According to the *Daily News*, a series of post-graduate medical examinations will be conducted this month at the Colombo Medical Faculty: a foreign examiner who is already in the island for the purpose will conduct these examinations assisted by local examiners.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2: According to the *Daily News*, elections to the local bodies will coincide with the general election and there was a likelihood of the appointment of a Delimitation Commission to demarcate electoral districts of local bodies: these are some of the reforms planned by the Minister of Local Government and Home Affairs, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike: the Minister has told the *Daily News* that a new set of laws was being drafted to restructure the present system of local government. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the committee appointed by the Minister of Education, Dr. Badudin Mahmud, to report on the proposed Higher National Certificate Examination has told that English should be a compulsory subject for all students taking up this examination. According to the *Daily News*, several villages in the up country were damaged by a freak flood during the last few days. According to the *Daily News*, more than 10 million yards of textiles are stocked in the stores of Salu Sala for want of buyers. According to the *Daily News*, the Tamil United Front has urged the Delimitation Commission to provide elected representatives for persons classified as Indian Tamils in the national legislature: it says that the Commission must consider this question not only from the stand-point of a political formula but also as an economic imperative. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike, at a meeting in Attanagalla has said that although the Government had earlier decided to ban the import of rice from 1976 adverse weather conditions had forced the postponement of this decision. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the cost of living index for December 1974 shot up to 194.04, a 1.01 increase over the figure for November. Mr. T. B. Jlangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, left for Iran yesterday to conclude negotiation for aid.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3: According to the *Daily Mirror*, a trade delegation led by the Food Commissioner, Mr. T. Pathmanathan, is now in Thailand in a bid to purchase rice for 1975: quoting informed sources, the *Daily Mirror* says that the delegation has been able to obtain only 50,000 tons though it sought to purchase a much larger quantity. According to the *Daily News*, the scheme of standardisation of marks for University admission is to be re-examined: the Government has asked the National Planning Council's sectoral committee on Social Overheads, Mass Media, Housing and Transport under the Chairmanship of Minister Pieter Keuneman to examine the working of the scheme and report on any improvement it considered necessary: the Government has also asked the sectoral committee to review the progress of the University's Jaffna Campus and to recommend such developments and improvements it considered essential. The Prime Minister addressing the two-day National Conference of Employment Councils at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall said that there cannot be any question of bonus if there is no profit. The Government yesterday asked the striking trade unions at the Milk Board to call off the strike, get back to work and begin negotiations on the bonus issue. According to the *Daily Mirror*, over 7,000 people living in the coastal areas between Colombo and Puttalam will find employment when work on the reconstruction of the Colombo-Puttalam Canal begins this month. According to the *Daily News*, the Government has formally approved the decision

of the three constituent parties of the United Front to raise the population unit for the purpose of Delimitation from 75,000 to 90,000: a gazette notification regarding this constitutional amendment—the first amendment to the Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka—will be issued anytime now: it is likely to be given top priority in the agenda of the National State Assembly.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4: Mr. A. Denis N' Fernando, a leading researcher in Sri Lanka for the exploitation and exploration of ground water has told the *Daily News*, that the Prime Minister's 'Policy statement' at the Sri Lanka Freedom Party's annual conference at Matara, urging the farmers to tap ground water for cultivation in view of the growing anxiety over the food crisis, was a welcome step. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the ranks of unemployed and underemployed in Sri Lanka had swollen to a new high in 1973, topping the 2.4 million mark: the number of unemployed stands at 793,000 while the tally of underemployed persons is 1,670,000. Addressing a press conference, the General Manager of Railways, Mr. V. T. Navaratne, yesterday assured commuters that a better train service will operate throughout the island from Monday, January 6, on a revised time table: the General Manager also said that CGR will ask the Government to deploy the Armed forces to prevent sabotage of rail tracks which has been on the increase during the past few months. A Seminar on South Asian Epigraphy organised by the Jaffna Archaeological Society will begin at the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka today. Mr. K. P. S. Menon, the veteran Indian diplomat and scholar, will give the inaugural lecture at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies on January 15: Mr. Menon's subject is entitled 'The Passing of an Era'. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka has donated 5,000 pounds of tea worth about Rs. 25,000 to be given to the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan. Dr. K. Rajasuriya, Professor of Medicine, Colombo Campus of the University of Sri Lanka, died yesterday. According to the *Daily News*, the formal inquiry into the crash of the DC-8 airliner at Maskeliya which caused 191 fatalities is expected to begin in mid-February.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5: According to the *Observer*, fines totalling a sum of Rs. 7,050, 315 have been imposed by the Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) against persons who have been convicted of Exchange Control violations in seven cases which have been concluded since the Commission held its first sittings in February 1973: the total amount of foreign exchange involved in the cases already completed amount to over Rs. 18.5 million, the Secretary to the Commission, Mr. S. G. de Alwis, has yesterday told the *Observer*: these were from the buying and selling of foreign currency and the smuggling of gems: twenty three suspects have been charged in the cases already concluded: this number includes four suspects among whom was J. W. K. Jackson a retired Engine Driver, now in Ealing, London: he was convicted and sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment by the Commission as summons had been served on him. According to the *Times*, four ships carrying flour and rice are expected during the next fortnight: ten thousand five hundred tons of flour will arrive by a Pakistan ship tomorrow; a Chinese ship carrying 13,500 tons of rice will arrive on Friday: two Sri Lanka ships, 'Lanka Sagarika' and 'Lanka Shanthi'

will bring 3,000 tons of rice and 5,000 tons of flour later in the month. The election propaganda at Katana comes to an end at midnight tomorrow and the by-election will be held on Wednesday. The *Sunday Observer Magazine* has announced a price increase of 10 cents from next week making the new price of a copy 70 cents: the reason for the increase is attributed to the soaring cost of newsprint. The Prime Minister, according to the *Observer*, has told a meeting in Nittambuwa yesterday that since her government took office it had through various development schemes given the people of this country greater powers and has reduced the gap between the people and the state.

MONDAY, JANUARY 6: According to the *Daily Mirror*, and the *Daily News*, three Middle Eastern countries visited by the goodwill mission from Sri Lanka led by the Minister of Education, Dr. Badiudin Mahmud, have made a firm economic commitment of Rs. 670 million to Sri Lanka: the commitment include outright grants and long-term loans on very concessionary terms to meet the balance of payments crisis faced by the government, a consequence of oil price increases: according to Dr. Mahmud, this was an acknowledgement of the spontaneous stand taken by the Government of Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and the United Front parties to help the Arab countries in their just cause: the countries visited by the mission were Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait: in a statement issued by Dr. Mahmud on this mission it is stated that all the countries he had visited were willing to engage the services of skilled and trained personnel from Sri Lanka. According to the *Daily News*, nearly two and a half lakhs of persons mainly women have applied for 3000 government teaching jobs: these appointments are to be made before the end of February. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, speaking at a election meeting at Katana yesterday has said that the Government is not afraid to face the people particularly looking back on the achievements of the United Front Government during the past four and a half years. According to the *Daily News*, Sri Lanka has signed a contract to buy 60,000 tons of rice from Thailand: yesterday the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade, Dr. J. B. Kelegama, said that the mission was very successful and the price negotiated was 'fairly favourable' for the country. According to the *Daily Mirror* the Minister of Plantation Industries Dr. Colvin R. de Silva would soon bring legislation to force every tea estate in the island prohibiting the construction of line rooms for labourers in future: instead they will be housed in separate houses.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7: The nomination for the Kankasanturai seat in the National State Assembly will be accepted today at the Jaffna Kachcheri: Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam (Tamil United Front) and Mr. V. Ponnambalam (Communist Party) have already paid in their deposits to contest this election. According to the *Daily News*, major amendments to the Stamps Ordinance have been approved by the Government: the most important of the amendments is that big paying units like the Education Department, Railway, Health Department, C.T.B. and even private sector establishments will be given the authority to remit to the Treasury Consolidated Fund the value of the fifteen cents stamps that are normally

fixed to the pay sheets. According to the *Daily Mirror*, ninety million bushels is the target the Government has set in its crash programme for agriculture this year to avert the possibility of a grain shortage. According to the *Daily News*, a relative living abroad will now be able to send his family in Sri Lanka a gift of a car following a decision taken recently by the Government: according to Government sources the CIF value of such a gift should not exceed the value of a 'Peugeot 404' car. According to the *Daily News*, the Ministry of Health will lay greater emphasis in future on the prevention of diseases rather than on curing illness: in re-orientation of policy, there will be no more expansion of sophisticated specialities such as cardiology, neuro-surgery and similar intensive care units. According to the *Daily Mirror*, yesterday—the first day of the implementation of new railway time tables—most commuter trains ran on time. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the State Gem Corporation earned Rs. 130 million in foreign exchange in 1974—Rs. 5 million more than its target of Rs. 125 million. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Statistics Division of the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs is now conducting a survey of industrial production in order to collect comprehensive data on the manufacturing industry for the year 1974 from all industrial establishments approved and registered under the Ministry.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8: According to the *Daily News*, the Government is now drafting a law on foreign investment that will give investors specific guarantees concerning the repatriation of capital, security of investment and transfer of technology: this law is being drafted by the Justice Ministry following a report made to the National Planning Council by a special committee which studied the question of setting up export processing industrial estates in the country. According to the *Daily Mirror*, foreign aid to Sri Lanka reached a new high during 1974: the records maintained at the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs show that Sri Lanka received over Rs. 1,000 million in foreign aid during 1974. The Kankasanturai by-election will be held on February 6 and three candidates Mr. S. J. V. Chevanayakam (Tamil United Front), Mr. V. Ponnampalam (Communist Party-Moscow Wing) and Mr. T. Ambalavanar (Indo-Ceylon Merger Movement) handed in their nominations yesterday at the Jaffna Kachcheri: the results of the Katana by-election is expected to be announced by 3 a.m. tomorrow and election takes place today. According to the *Daily News*, the Joint Council of Trade Union Organisations will hold a series of conference at district level to mobilise workers' support for the proposed token general strike on January 31. According to the *Daily Mirror*, January 10 will be a day of mourning in the North, to mark the first anniversary of the death of several Tamils in the stampede after the baton charge by the Police last year during the Fourth Conference of the International Association for Tamil Research.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9: Mr. T. Wijayapala Mendis of the United National Party won the Katana by-election by a majority of 1050 votes: Mr. Mendis polled 20,747 votes and the SLFP candidate, Mr. D. J. Fernandopulle polled 19,697 votes: the three independents and the M.E.P. candidate lost their deposits all polling less than 500 votes each: according to the *Daily Mirror* a

few incidents were reported from Katana and a prominent UNP figure Mr. Jinadasa Niythapala is warded in the hospital with cut injuries. According to the *Daily News*, the revised target of 21 million bushels of paddy for 1974 was collected by the Paddy Marketing Board: the board had earlier anticipated a collection of 30 million bushels, but following last year's drought these figures were revised. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Central Bank will launch a large-scale survey on the use of land and labour in the country shortly: the survey which will begin on January 15, will be under the direct supervision of the Director of Economic Research division of the Central Bank. According to the *Daily News*, the Labour Department yesterday issued final notices on over 1000 private sector employees to pay up arrears of provident fund contributions amounting to Rs. 5 million. According to the *Daily News*, a ferry barge capsized on Tuesday afternoon at Chenkaladi close to Kalmunai and it is feared that about 30 people were drowned: so far six bodies have been recovered. Eight people are reported to have died in the Walasmulla Police area after eating a certain variety of fish: six of the dead are members of one family and about 35 people in the village are hospitalised after eating this variety of fish. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the President of the Republic, Mr. William Gopallawa, is expected to grant clemency this week to some of those convicted on December 20 for their role in the April 1971 insurrection in respect of whom the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency) recommended that they be considered for Executive clemency.

CHRONICLE—THE WORLD

DEC. 30—JAN. 9

A DIARY OF WORLD EVENTS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30: A state of emergency has been declared in Bangladesh, political activities have been suspended, strikes banned and fundamental rights curtailed: a government proclamation said that these extreme measures have been taken to contain internal subversion and secret killings. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi and newly appointed war Minister Gamassi have arrived in Moscow on a sudden visit and according to Reuters this visit is apparently to prepare for Mr. Brezhnev's visit to Cairo next month. Dr. Soares, Portuguese Foreign Minister, who is on a five-day visit to India, had a meeting with the Indian Premier, Mrs. Indira Gandhi: Dr. Soares is supposed to be in India to set the seal of reconciliation between India and Portuguese which have been at odds with each other for the past 20 years.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31: The shadow activities of the United States Central Intelligence Agency were threatened with unprecedented exposure following reports that it had operated illegally in the U.S. The Chilean Government yesterday announced that it had decided to sell 12-state owned banks to private interests. Thousands were feared dead in an earthquake in a remote mountain region of Northern Pakistan. According to reports from Cairo, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation will meet tomorrow

to formulate a co-ordinated Arab policy. Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev's visit to the Middle East has been postponed according to Arab sources: the sources said the official confirmation will come only after the return of Egypt's Foreign Minister and War Minister who are at present in Moscow. Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam said yesterday that he intends resuming his European tour which was interrupted owing to the Darwin cyclone disaster.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1: Russia has agreed to supply India with a million tons of kerosene this year. The latest report on the earthquake in Pakistan says it has claimed 4000 lives and rendered several thousands homeless. Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, Chief of the Soviet Communist Party, has postponed indefinitely his visit to the Middle East. The Soviet Union and Egypt has called for the resumption of the Geneva talks. Australian Premier, Gough Whitlam, has resumed his visit to Europe which was interrupted by the Darwin cyclone.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2: A high-level Canadian delegation led by the Foreign Affairs Adviser, Ivan Head, was sent to New Delhi and will hold talks on the possible resumption of nuclear material shipments to India. Portugal and India have resumed diplomatic relations which were broken off after the dispute over the Portuguese enclaves in India. Ethiopia's military government nationalised all Banks and Insurance companies. The Watergate jury is still considering its verdict which is expected any moment. The two Egyptian Ministers who went to Moscow, Fahmi and Gamassi, have returned and there is wide speculation in Cairo on the reason for the urgent visit.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3: Three big names in the Watergate cover up trial were convicted yesterday: they are John Mitchell, former Attorney General, H.R. (Bob) Haldeman and John E. Ehrlichman: no sentences were announced. Demonstrators shouting for the removal of Premier Abdul Aziz Hegazi started rioting in the streets of Cairo. The Ambassadors in Turkey, Cyprus and Greece have been summoned to Washington for a discussion on the future of Cyprus: the suggestion is to set up a cantonal system on the island similar to that existing in Switzerland. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia has given 10 million dollars (4.3 million sterling) for Pakistan earthquake victims as relief efforts ran into the spot difficulties.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4: Pakistan Prime Minister Ali Bhutto has invited the President of Afghanistan for discussion "to normalise relations." The Indian Railways Minister, Mr. Lalit Narayan Mishra, who was injured in a bomb explosive in Bihar died last night. Canada will make a 9.4 millions Canadian dollars (4 million sterling) interest-free loan to Pakistan under an agreement signed in Islamabad: the loan will be used to purchase 20,000 tons of fertilizer from Canada.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5: As the former top Nixon aides convicted in the Watergate cover up went ahead with plans to appeal, there was speculation in Washington whether they eventually would get a Presidential pardon. The heads of the three main Angolan Liberation Movements will hold a summit meeting in Mombasa, Kenya. Helicopter reconnaissance missions found two more devastated areas in the Karakoram mountains and raised fears the death toll in the Pakistan earthquake could eventually reach 6,000: relief operations

were once again restricted owing to high winds. President Luis Echeverría of Mexico is named as a collaborator of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in a book published in London.

MONDAY, JANUARY 6: It has been found that a clandestine agency behind all the troubles in Cairo and almost all the members of this agency were arrested and are being investigated. President Ford has set up a citizens' commission to investigate whether the CIA spied on thousands of American citizens in the United States. Russia claims to have outstripped the United States as an oil producer: figures also showed the Soviet Union have moved ahead of the United States in the production of coal, pig iron and mineral reserves. Soviet Communist Party, Chief Leonid Brezhnev had bronchitis during his visit to Paris last month and had to cancel his Cairo visit.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7: Independent talks between the Portuguese Government and leaders and the three main Angola liberation movements will commence in Southern Portugal next Friday: these three movements have announced that they have forged a common front in preparation for the negotiations. American Vice President Nelson Rockefeller has been named by President Ford to head the citizen's commission to probe the activities of the C.I.A. Palestinian commandos have claimed responsibility for the recent wave of bomb explosions in Jerusalem. The Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is to visit Iraq later this month: her three-day visit to Iraq for talks on oil and political and economic co-operation is expected to begin on January 18. Five officers of the Indian Railways are among those arrested in connection with a bomb blast that killed the Railway Minister, Mr. Mishra.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8: The biggest gold auction in history has commenced in Washington with the U.S. Treasury putting up for sale 200 million ounces of gold worth around 350 million dollars at 170 dollars an ounce. British Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, wound up his consultations with African leaders directly involved in the search for a settlement on Rhodesia by meeting Tanzania's leader Julius Nyerere. The Communist Party newspaper of Russia *Pravda*, yesterday accused "protectors of monopoly interests"—an apparent reference to United States Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger—of trying to blackmail Arab oil states with the threat of war: the charge came in a commentary on recent discussions in the West of the possibility of military intervention to ensure oil supplies and the controversy sparked by Dr. Kissinger in a remark on this theme to a U.S. Journal.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9: Little progress has been made in the Indo-Bangladesh Joint River's Commission which concluded in New Delhi yesterday, according to a communique issued at the end of the talks. Japanese Foreign Minister, Miyazawa, leaves for Moscow on January 15 to resume the off-and-on talks with the Soviet Government for the conclusion of a peace treaty. The European Economic Common Market has come out strongly in favour of a plan to recycle, dollars 6,000 million to dollars 12,000 million, of surplus oil exporter's revenue back into the world economy this year through the International Monetary Fund. General Motors, the world's biggest car maker, yesterday announced that its new car sales slumped by nearly one-third in 1974.

LETTERS

● Ministry's Control ● Without English?

Sir,

Most of your readers would agree that the control of admissions to the University should be vested not in a politically-oriented institute nor in any such extraneous body but in the University itself, to which applicants should be admitted under regulations drawn up by the University itself. Lamentable it is that University autonomy should now be an anachronism thanks as much to political academicians as to predominantly non-academic politicians. In the circumstances your unedited publication of Mr. Manicavasagar's (Mr. M's) scathing commentary on the Ministry's mode of selection has rendered high national service by baring the extent to which political departmentalism has debased University education in Sri Lanka. It has also revealed the extent to which a one-time sturdily independent national journal has now become a most faithful organ of His Master's Voice.

In a UNESCO release serialized in the *Observer Magazine* Editions of 22/9, 29/9 and 6/10, the Ministry's Secretary had given the widest possible currency to a novel and disquieting concept of Educational Administration. Education, he averred *inter alia sui generis, is politics*: if such indeed is the case, as apparently it must be under his overall direction, and perhaps even demonstrably so, not debased only but altogether sordid is this prime concern of the State. There must therefore have been more than a touch of dramatic irony in the Deputy Minister's jeremiad that only a quarter of the eligibles had been admitted to the existing vacancies in Sri Lanka's prestigious, many-camped unitary University. It would undoubtedly add weight and sting and poignancy if we could ourselves join wholeheartedly in the noise of the mourning of a Ministry bereft at once of the elemental responsibility of ministering to the higher needs of three-fourths of her progeny.

If merit, as proclaimed by departmental ukase, is equally distribu-

ted in all geographical areas and in all social classes, a sober admission it would appear to be not of classless socialism, nor of egalitarianism achieved but of naturalism with a difference, unchanged by soap-boxism or all the convulsions which have rocked and befouled humanity through the ages. Being both horizontal and vertical it should be found, we are assuringly warned, as much in the stinging wastes of the Sahara as in the fastnesses still enveloping the banks of the Kumbukan Oya. In equal measure too, we are emboldened to assert, it would be found on the banks of the Seine, in the sky-scraping sophistication of New York City and shall I add, in Ultima Thule. Unmoved however by departmental assurances we would venture to suggest that not all the Ministry's horses nor all the Ministry's men can with all their alchemy and belabourings mend or remake any dull ass endowing him in the process with all the grace and strength and agility of a thoroughbred.

Talent verily is no monopoly: it is the exclusive possession of no particular tribe or race or nation. It is confined to no particular region or climate or age. It is found wherever *homo sapiens* is foregathered. It is nevertheless more pronounced both in quality and quantity in certain quarters rather than in others. To scotch it under whatever pretext, whether political or economic, is not only a crime against humanity but a policy as well of obscurantism to which few nations developed or developing have fallen prey in modern times.

It will be appreciated that while Mr. M's justiciary acumen has made a through expose of the procedure now in operation, he has drawn no categorical inferences from the irregularities brought to light or from the glaring departures from universally accepted canons of selection. Having delved for facts within the documentation available and finding them inconsistent with departmental assertions, he does not proceed, laymanlike, to impute motives which have remained locked in the breast of ministerial executives, leaving inference and interpretation to the reader's discretion. And the reader unused to the benefit of doubt pro-

cedure and judging solely by preponderance of evidence in the context of the politics of education, is thus enabled to delve beneath the flattering unction of standardizing jargon and to infer what underlies the skin and film of ulcerous places uncovered by judicial analysis.

Mr. M's magisterial reference to merit reminds one of Rom... Virgil's *Etiam hic sunt sua praemia laudi* (Even here does merit find due recognition) to be followed by the most quoted lines in all Virgilian literature: *Sunt lacrimae rerum set mentem mortalia tangunt* (Distress there certainly is in life and human woes find touching response in the heart.) Long had the poet pondered over the vicissitudes of fortune, long had he been witness to sorrows unspeakable afflicting human kind but never I believe had he known or faced a situation so sombre and so seemingly irremediable, fraught with so much anguish and charged with such sinister potentialities. Holding as he did with all the wealth of imagery drawn from the storied past that merit must have its meed even here on earth, had he lived in our day and seen black despair writ large on the wrinkled brows on so many of our youthful intellectuals, he would have rued the day they were born outpouring all his grief and resentment in mournful rhythm over Lanka's Marcellian doom.

Such then is the deplorable situation in which we find ourselves, a situation which has also largely contributed to the emergence of roving troops of youthful desperadoes seeking redress from the established order in wanton manifestations of subversive intent—a looming catastrophe which cannot long be contained or repressed unless the axe is laid here and now to the gnawing cancer of corruption now consuming the vitals of national advancement. Such is the tragedy enacted in Sri Lanka, enacted on so many hopeful aspirants to higher education thirsting indeed for legitimate fulfilment but frustrated tantaluslike through medial and parochial indirection.

E. Seemanpillai

Chenkaladi,
21. 1. 1975.

Sir,

Professor Dayantha Wijesekara's article on Brain Drain in the *Sunday Observer* of 19.1.75, poses the question—"Has the switch to 'Sinhala Only' boomeranged on the Government?" Like new wine going to the head, our new found freedom appears to have clouded the thinking of our leaders and destroyed the true path to progress.

While the switch to Swabasha was essential for our national pride and administrative convenience, doing away with English as the medium of Higher Education has been both destructive and suicidal.

Destructive because it has closed the door on us to recent advances in science and medicine. Suicidal because it has diverted our youth from Agriculture and Industry and added to the problem of unemployment. The growing frustration among our youth may be directly or indirectly traced to the denial of English for Higher Education. Our Universities are yearly churning out graduates who are neither useful to themselves nor the country.

I hope the government will at least at this stage realise the immens harm done to progress and restore English as the medium of Higher Education.

Politics may not require specialists but the fields of science and medicine demand the very best. Without Scientists, Engineers and Doctors there can be very little progress. The fact that other developing countries have been turning to us for professional assistance is clear proof that our system of education in the past has been good. Can we continue this role or will the position be reversed? The answer lies in the hands of our leaders.

We must plan our developments in the context of world advancements and not in the manner of the proverbial frog in the well.

D. J. Thamotheram

9, Vivekananda Avenue,
Colombo 6.
22.1.75

**FOR NEWS
BEHIND THE NEWS**

read
TRIBUNE
regularly

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—18

**GETTING NOWHERE
—with Village
Ways and Works—**

By Herbert Keuneman

ONE WAY to elevate yourself is not so much to elevate your self but obstruct—and if you cannot actually obstruct, you simply sit back and sulk and resent—the elevation of others. This is the village way.

Ambition (insofar as it involves working towards its realization) is not a common village phenomenon. Envy, hatred and malice and a good deal of other uncharitableness, on the other hand, is. There is a certain logic about this attitude. If the ideal is merely to stay ahead of others—as in fact it is—then it is obviously as effective, and less trouble, to place obstacles in a competitor's way as to hustle around overcoming obstacles for oneself. It must be remembered—and I think this is true, for all the rancour with which I say it—that the traditional concern of the villager is, primarily, to preserve (rather than increase) the distance between himself and his rival. The distance used to be something nicely ordained by karma and involved no real individual laboriousness. But the distance is, generally speaking, all. Reckless innovators have gone and messed around with the established order of things by putting ideas of egalitarianism and self-improvement by dint of personal effort in silly heads, and the order is endangered. But, to protect it, the method of choice is that which requires the least exertion.

Of all the villagers in Ehetuwewa—and in the name I include several 'satellite' villages—I can think of only two men who have shown themselves ambitious by Western, deterministic standards: the rest have been satisfied to watch the activity of these two with some consternation, never above raising some obstruction against their progress if that could be done without too great trouble but never equal to buckling down and emulating it themselves.

One of the two is my friend and benefactor, the village Postmaster: like the other—and like me—a 'foreigner', coming as he does from another and for more ancient village eight or ten miles away! When he first appeared in Ehetuwewa, bicycling in from his own place to open and run a speculative little shop in this once unimportant spot which the accidents of government and commerce had, begun to turn into a 'rural centre' I doubt if anybody regarded him as a coming power in stature or status. Indeed, when my wife and I first came here (fourteen years ago) although his shop was by then quite established and he had already obtained charge of the Sub-Post Office. I remember we were quite amused to see that the postman, a local man and a considerable land-owner, was a personage of much greater consequence. But things have greatly changed. By adroit commerce; by opportunely exploiting the infinite possibilities of his Post-mastership; by foreclosing on mortgages, making outright purchases, and acquiring government leaseholds (as a now 'permanent resident') so as to become one of the village's foremost landlords; by sagacious politics that have brought him to be head of the local Conciliation Board and Justice of the Peace while his son is—or was, until he left to train as a teacher—Secretary to a local Youth Organization and his daughter President of another..by all such skills and means and efforts..he has become one of the community's leading lights.

YET EVEN, he is not above a little obstacle-raising when that, it seems, is likely to be the efficacious thing to do. It was he, for instance, who most openly warned me against my advancement of the boy Nesan: 'it is ill-advised to raise a man beyond his station: this boy comes of a stock that deals in turds, and turds is his Karma'. And now he let it be known to me—tactfully almost indirectly—that in presenting Pinhamy and his family with what would be the biggest house in the village, and an upstairs house at that, I should be, should I not? flouting the proper disposition of such affairs, whereby the Pinhamy household had hitherto been held in their ordained station in a small one-storeyed cottage.

One could not be angry at such officiousness; seeing, especially, that it was not officiousness, not all of it. The officiousness—he plainly thought—was mine to be boasting a family out of its normal orbit to gratify nothing but my own wanton whim! I was soon to see from remarks and actions and reactions throughout the village—few directed at me, but even more at Pinhamy's people and particularly his son 'Banders', my direct beneficiary,—that his was the general attitude. Even our girl Rum, whom we had already provided for in at least equal measure, and who had grown up with Banders for twelve years and was his and his wife's great friend, began to hold the house against him. And against me.

As though it were not enough that I should have to contend against unreliable bases, venal officials and incompetent self-important bureaucrats, I now found that the four years of life I had lived in Ehetuwewa previously had not been village life at all: I had lived a town life in romantic village surroundings. I had now to face up to the practical problems of the real thing.

These problems were not only a matter of adjusting to village ways of thought: one had to adjust, also, to the manner of village events. Village events—perhaps less factors combine to restrain them—commonly end up far more catastrophic than the comparatively even tenor of town events prepare one for. Things seem more easily to fall apart. Take the matter of my sawyer.

CONSTITUTIONALLY disposed though I am to adjust myself toward obedience, my experience with the Timber Corporation and the stark fact that I could save a considerable deal of money and the persuasive argument that I could buy *halmilla* timber privately while government regulations categorically denied it me regardless of the degree or extent of my need seduced me into the admission that in this matter the villager is right—or at least sensible—and I resolved to collect privately, not to say privily, what timber I could! For this I needed a sawyer and Pinhamy found me one, another nephew of his, who he assured me was the best sawyer in the district.

He was the brother of Leela Banda (who had engineered the Carters' Strike) but altogether unlike him: burly, bumbling, bubbling with good nature—though I was warned he had a violent and unpredictable temper—and we took to each other at sight. To cement our alliance, on Pinhamy's advice I made him an advance of Rs. 50; and Mutu Banda promised to begin work on certain trees he knew of already felled as soon as he had finished preparing his rice fields in his own village of Palugaswewa. It was at this agreeable point that Catastrophe stepped in. I give the details as I remember them.

Mutu Banda and his *goiya*, his partner in agriculture, were putting the finishing touches to their labour at the edge of their last field. At the farthest edge of the next field Menik Rala, a relative, was ploughing. At the near edge of the field beyond that were working Menik Rala's young son and his *goiya*. A pleasantly promising pastoral scene!

But now a quarrel breaks out between the two young farmers in the third field and Menik Rala's son gives his partner, it is said, a slap. Menik Rala, who is the most gentle and peaceable of men, reprimands his son; and the thing ought—surely—to end there. But no, not in the village where anything can get out of hand. The slapped young man, a creature apparently of no spirit at all but with sufficient *amour propre* to feel it has been wounded! goes blubbing to his mother and complains of the slap. Menik Rala's name crops up.

The slapped one's mother is a notorious termagant. In addition, she has spent a bad night tormented by her asthma. She leaps bad-temperedly to her duty in her young one's vindication: she leaps, also, to the conclusion that it is poor Menik Rala he must be vindicated upon! Hiding a *katta*, a billhook in the folds, of her cloth she sets forth to do battle.

She takes her stance upon the *nijara*-ridge dividing Menik Rala's field from the one where the quarrel took place and where Menik Rala's son is still unconcernedly working, and begins to scold. Menik Rala protests gently: 'kelle—girl—these are men's quarrels and we'll settle them; don't work yourself up.

But the soft answer turns away no wrath; maybe the quiet assumption of *machismo* indeed inflames it! As Menik Rala in his ploughing guides his buffaloes past where she stands she suddenly frees and swings her billhook and fells him with a terrible gash in his leg.

STRANGELY ENOUGH, it is at this point that *machismo* awakens in her craven son! Loudly shouting that in her interference she has attacked the wrong man, and who was she to interfere anyway, snatches her weapon from her and knocks his own mother down with a blow that dislocates her all-too-active jaw!

Far away in the other field Mutu Banda and *goiya* heard the bruit of all this and ran to the scene. Mutu Banda, seeing his relative Menik Rala (of whom he was very fond) bleeding and fallen and the bloodstained *katta* in the slapped-one's hand, did not stop to enquire; wresting the *katta* into his own possession he aimed a blow with it that should have killed the young man save that in the struggle the blade had turned and it was the flat that landed, though with force enough to drop the latest victim like a tree. Mutu Banda believed, at that moment, he was a murderer; but it is to his credit that even when a crowd gathered from the nearby village, attracted by the hubub, he stayed by Menik Rala to aid him.

When partisans had carried off the termagant and her son to hospital, however, his instinct of self-preservation awoke although he still would not quite abdicate his responsibility. Believing—as his *goiya* did too—that he had killed his man, he did not take Menik Rala to Maho Hospital, which was nearest, because there it seemed the Police (to whom all the *dramatis personae* were familiar) would surely find and arrest him, but to the hospital at Galgamuwa considerably farther away and, though he probably did not realize this, not as well equipped.

At Galgamuwa (from all I hear) they refused to touch the case—assault cases always spell trouble—and claiming the wound was too severe for Galgamuwa's resources consigned Menik Rala to the Provincial Hospital at Kurunegala. Thither, therefore, his faithful companions

Living or Drifting?

accompanied him, running the gauntlet of Maho and its Police on the way.

At Kurunegala Mutu Banda had the foresight, after he had discharged his duty toward Menik Rala and seen him safely hospitalized, to secure a lawyer to appear for him. (What a very lucky thing, said Pinhamy, recounting all these happenings to me—for he had had the news, and only a little garbled, almost as soon as the events transpired: a village "miracle" that unfailingly fills me with awe—what a very lucky thing that Mutu Banda had in his hand the fifty-rupee advance that I had given him which enabled him to do so! I could not but agree.)

Joy was almost unconfined when the fugitives heard that actually no one had died in the fracas and the most Mutu Banda would have to face was a triple charge of assault (for the termagant's broken jaw—as well as the *Kattia* wound on Menik Rala himself—had by now been blamed upon him also) and I, for purely selfish reasons, shared in it. Now, it seemed, my timber was going to be sawn after all.

But this relief lasted only a couple of days. In two days Menik Rala was dead; and from a mere assault charge Mutu Banda was facing one of murder!

Evidently, the lawyer, Mutu Banda had picked was a good one. For nothing eventually came of all this. It was somehow established

—doubtless at a price—that Menik Rala had died as a result of a medical error of judgement and not directly of his wound, though (so far as I know) not even a doctor came off the worse for this. The other charges seem to have fizzled out. Or maybe, in the end truth prevailed? Or something.

All the same, I had to go back—temporarily—to the Timber Corporation.

SHAMBA

Life On The Acre

—men, money and monkeys—

by ANATORY BUKOBA

December 9,

Five days away was I, and the new house was remade and completed two days ago. It is as I described it before, it has a simple gable roof. On one side is a high *massa* bed, and the roof, which is only six and a half feet in the middle, sloped down to the height of the bed on that side. On the side opposite to the bed, it is slopes very much lower. Near the foot of the bed is the door, or doorway, for two *cadjans* serve as the door just now. On either side of the doorway are walls. The walls on all four sides of the house reach to the roof. There is a wall at the head of the bed. On the other side, the room, but not the roof is longer, for this side of the house, takes in the kitchen or rather the fireplace. There is a wall at the end, and a doorway connecting that wall to the wall at the head of the bed. As these two walls are paralel and not in line, this doorway at the back of the house is at right-angles to the doorway at the front of the house. The little bit of the house shut out by this arrangement serves as a kind of pantry cum woodshed, and it has the protection of the roof. A pantry in the Ceylon idiom or context, is a place where you lay out your unused chatty pots, or you will clutter up the house. This back doorway is securely fastened

with two *cadjans* as I write, for it is night. The fireplace or kitchen, and the kitchen wall and doorway was finished today after I arrived. I came just as it was beginning to get light. We set to work at once, and then washed and had breakfast. The *massa* bed in the new house is the one that was put up in the old house nearly two weeks ago; that had to come down to supply the materials for this. The walls and the doorways are complete. Major was not long moving in. The two people who helped him with the roof were the two people who removed the *cadjans* of this house when it was first put up, and so had us making it nearly all over again.

Major built up the fireplace with earth, the two sides taken in by the corner, and so the look of the fireplace, for we cook on wood fires, is not unlike an oven, with the cooking pot that is being used serving as the top of the oven. The earth for this came from ant-hill at the back of the house, and we also used this earth to raise a little that part of the floor of the house which is not covered by the *massa* bed. Our tools are under the bed, and the groceries. We have various stones in, old bits of concrete slabs, serving as seats, and it is on one of these that I sit writing, while the oil lamp, and old bulb, is fastened to one of the short posts that make up the side of the house. It is right by the fireplace. Major is over at the other house. Both my colleague and the housewife are in, but by the sound of the voices, Major's time, with the aid of the other two, is being taken up mostly with the two, or rather, three-year old. He is very good with her. When I finish this, we shall start an English session. I bought him, second-hand, one of Sir Walter Scott's epic poems: I think it is called the *Lady of the Lake*, and it will serve as our text book. If there is any time left after that, I shall do a little French and Swahili, and Major may join in if he wishes to and still has the energy. He did a little clearing while I was away, but I think most of his time must have been taken up with preparations for doing this house again. One hundred long *cadjans* went into this house this time, the first time it was seventy-five short *cadjans*, short,

Tahitian Beer

Tahitian statisticians affirm that their island holds the world record in per capita consumption of beer. The average per day is twelve bottles. Beer brewing and sales are the most profitable item of income after tourism, and this despite the fact that hops have to be imported from the Federal Republic of Germany, Czechoslovakia and France, and yeast is bought from Switzerland. The only thing the Tahitians have more than enough to make beer with is the water of their mountain streams. Foreign specialists say that, thanks, to this water, Tahitian beer is one of the best in the world.

because we were had. We have had visitors today, friends from around here. The business of entertaining visitors, if only with conversation, is, I think, important, and it is what makes university life and education. Major is waiting for me, so I must not be long with this.

We have two houses really functioning on the *Shamba* for the first time now. On the other occasion when there was another house, it was almost cheek by jowl with the first house, and it hardly counted. We may have someone joining Major and me; we can only wait and see. We can hear traffic on the main road but otherwise it is quiet round here. A few crickets are making a noise, and a frog. We have had some rain here.

December 10,

The *massa* bed is at the height of the lowest part of the roof in the other half of the house, and the roof on the side where the bed is ends up a foot and a half above the bed; and so the slope of the roof is less on that side. As I described it last night, I would have shoved the bed up against the roof, to the slight discomfiture of anyone sleeping on it. I saw my mistakes by daylight.

As I started to write this, a big rat ran from under my stone seat which is almost at ground level, and across the floor; then it ran back at me and veered off under the bed. Not a minute later, it seemed, there, was something crawling along the roof opposite me. It was an *una-hapuluwa*. I still do not know what an *unu-hapuluwa* is, but I heard the noise, and Major went out to investigate. He asked me to come quickly, and he said it was a baby *wanderoo*. That seemed impossible, and my colleague and the housewife in the other house were consulted. It was they who hit on the name of the creature. Would it be a *Loris*?

Major said that a *garandiya* sprang three feet at him today. That it sprang at all seemed unlikely. All I know is that he was in full flight across the front of the house, a short sprint. I heard the noise and called out to find out who it was and why. Was it a *polonga*? He had hit it with a stone, and then it was it sprang. We have

been cleaning the area around the house. It would have been difficult to walk on it barefooted before. Even Major said it looks good after being worked over with the mamoty, removing all except the little grass there was, or what of it could be saved, and a few other rare-looking if frail, plants. We used a thorny stick to sweep up what was unearthed.

A great debate has been going on as to whether Major should go home tomorrow for the day. I have been trying to make him postpone a decision until the morning, for he is inclined to go, and at the time when he was inclined to stay, I wanted to be sure he was happy about his decision. Now the odds are that he will be going. Even if something does go wrong, I do not suppose the great outlay of money, consequent to his coming here, will have been in vain, because much has been accomplished which would not have been done on this *Shamba*, I should think, if he had not come and stayed. On the other hand, his staying here has cramped other activities of mine; I have been less able to move around. All things considered, I think the most important thing has been to make a success of this *Shamba*, although I am blessed if I can see how we are going to make any money out of it. In spite of the inconvenience, I am inclined to let Major go tomorrow, without fussing, because it will give him a chance to clarify his own mind about what he wants to do, if he has not already made up his mind about it. This morning he constructed a platform or *massa* under the bed to hold all the foodstuffs except what is in a big chatty; this has to stay on the ground. I have handed out Rs. 50/- to Major in the last two days for shopping, and most of that money is supposed to be under the bed, lying around as foodstuffs.

On the whole, I do not think as much work has been done as might or could have been done. Major moves very fast; he is not slow like me. Whenever he has occasion to leave the *Shamba*, he is back in double quick time. Cooking takes time. I had one lad here who spent the whole day, nearly, cooking. He was a fine sprinter, and he did one every morning, going like a rocket.

There is not much one can say
the mind being dull,
Of aches and pains and shocks,
decisions made,
Which cannot be undone,
nor made again.
You are faced with a sheet and much
to write,
And thoughts wont come which you
would like,
To read, nor one idea to shade,
sketch or shape.
When the hour 's night,
and all a-bed
Except yourself, and there's
still to do that
Which you set yourself,
it's not time to sleep,
Yet sleep will blissfully come to
slumber thoughts,
To set your mind at rest,
and give repose,
When all will look quite fresh in
the morning's sun.

December 11,

Rained, it has, most of the day; frequent stops, and no wind. Major said the house would leak a little, and he said this yesterday after looking at the roof. That part of the roof may have to be redone, as it is in the centre and the *cadjans* cannot be moved. The rain was very good. It stopped at all the right times. Idle day I had, but my colleague made up for it. He moved earth into the old house. The housewife and he carried it in on a gunny sack, several loads. The earth was used to raise the floor. The effect is good. The only part not touched was under their *massa* bed.

There are vegetables growing on the *Shamba* at last. My colleague made a circular bed, built it right up he did, where two paths meet right by his house, in the centre of the wide fork. Then, where I had something growing soon after I first came last year, he has a tiny bed of lady's finger's and more growing which is self-sown. The seeds have been lying there, it seems, since *wanderoo* ate the plants one day when the housewife went out to work. Chilly plants have been put into the circular bed. A little feverish did I feel today, and this was almost reason alone for having an idle day.

Major went home this morning and said he would be back tonight. The rain might have delayed him, as he has some distance to walk at the other end. I had another companion for a part of this evening, and he has gone home. He may or may not come back. The family are in my house at the moment; the housewife has just made tea. The conversation has been about Major. All say that Minor was the man for work. We have run through some money in two days. I do not think there are the goods to show for what has been spent. Money is easily spent wherever one is these days. It is not easy to expect others to account for money spent when one can hardly account for what one spends oneself.

The thought has come to me that I shall have to rely on my old colleague. For he has a certain basic goodness about him that comes out when one has one's back against the wall. He was speaking today of converting his house into a mud-and-wattle one. Not long ago he was all ready to leave. I have undergone a change too. Leaving aside my concept of this *Shamba*, which has not changed, I am sure I do not think or act the way I did when I first came here. The end, I think, is the same. It is my approach to it which is different.

It is important, too, to see oneself as one really is. It is also important is it to see one's true place in the scheme of things. Reading Augustine helps. One has also to find the time to read. There are people who can and will not. There are other who cannot. I do not think the important factor is in being able to read. There are many people, who cannot read, who are as wise as Augustines. As in other matters, the important factor is not having the opportunity to do this or that, or learn this or that, but to make the best use of your time if you have the opportunity. I could go on in this vein a long time, but it has little to do with this *Shamba*.

Augustine brings out the point that life is a sacrifice, both the individual and the group, to the first cause and the last end, which is God. Nothing else will do. The realization of this will make life something really very noble. A sacrifice to secondary beings, leaving the first cause out of the reckon-

ing, will be worse than useless: if they except it, they are evil. If they are inanimate, of what use are they? They may be useful, but the sacrifice would be worthless. Eleven o'clock though it is, I can hear the sound of voices in the other house. Adversity brings out noble thoughts in the right man, in proportion as he is humble. If there is too much attachment to any creature, these thoughts will never come.

December 12,

Major came back at 11.50 p.m. last night in pitch black and without a light. There was a rupee cinema ticket on the bed, and he said he went to the pictures on his way back. There was that sort of a drizzle this morning that looked as if it would go on for days. In the afternoon it cleared up but stayed dull all day. Major planted some chilly plants and we have a small field of them now to the front of our house. My sandals were clogged up with mud like shoes or boots in an English winter, so I put down a stone with a sharp edge as a shoescraper by the door. I laid down a path of small or smallish flat stones to the front door over the part of the path that was wettest and slippiest, where one's shoes became most clogged up with mud. It looks good as the stones are mostly white, pieces of an old concrete floor. Major's mother and father turned up and he had to cook for them again. He seems as pleased as punch over the visit, and I am glad about it. I found that there was no cooked food to be had in the village. The family have been almost without food all day. We are waiting to see if my colleague brings any back, but it seems unlikely that he will. Then we shall have to dip into our own precious store. My colleague planted more chillies by his house, where I had planted my first vegetables more than a year ago. I would rather he had left it as a lawn. It is 7 p.m. and he is not back. Food is certainly a very big problem with us. It is not that we are short of it, but I never see how we are going to manage. A year and a half ago three of us lived without worry on Rs 5/- all told for the day. Now it is a worry how two of us are going to manage on Rs. 7.50 between us for the day, for we seem

to exceed even that and and we are always threatening to run out of money. If we do, we shall have to leave the *Shamba*. The family have been, and are, in a far worse plight. I suppose it is faith that keeps me going. Certainly, God is a great provider. We are very quiet. We are both writing. I just heard the sound of mice.

We do not seem to lack for visitors. I can see them during the day at my colleague's house. We do not do too badly ourselves. One fairly constant visitor is our new neighbour's son. They have not moved in yet, nor built a house. 7.20 p.m., and no sign of my colleague. The housewife must be very hungry. Major is for hanging on longer before we help out. The little girl must be asleep. My colleague has just arrived. Major will be going over to see what the position is, but just now he is slicing a papaw. We have had our share and he has taken the remainder over to the other house. The housewife has sowed the seeds of the papaw we ate last night; they are with the chillies in the circular bed.

Everyone who has seen this little house has admired it. Major's father has suggested that we make the house longer by extending it beyond the Kitchen. His mother thinks the house is too small. All the rest like it. This house cannot be much smaller than those used by the pioneer Candian wheat farmers on the prairie, such as described by A. G. Street in *Farmer's Glory*, I think the book is called. They must be all right for food next door because the conversation is in full swing, with laughter. That was why I sent Major over; I thought he would size up the situation best. I might have been had, had I gone.

Rilau monkeys were within a few yards of the house this morning. Wanderoo were on the edge of the *Shamba*. The monkeys are our worst enemies. Wanderoo call to us from trees. A Rilau will snarl before he takes to a tree, and he will hold his ground as long as he dare. A large tribe of wanderoo can sound very fierce up in the trees. These are the only two monkeys I ever see. Are there other breeds of monkeys in Ceylon?

THE RADICAL YOUTH MOVEMENT

SWRD COMES INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA

By T. DURAISINGAM, J.P., U.M
Attorney-at-Law

This article gives a further sketch of the progressive movement in Sri Lanka. T. Duraisingam, who was a member of the executive committee of the Students Congress later renamed the Youth Congress, sets out here how the radical youth movement developed.

THE SECOND SESSIONS of the Students Congress was held at Jaffna with P. de S. Kularatne as its president. Informing the public of these sessions, V. Thillainathan, the General Secretary, gave a statement to the press in April 1925 that the Students Congress was started to meet the needs of the youths of this country. "I wish to make it clear to our friends and well wishers," he stated "that our Congress is no party organisation. Every facility is provided for admission of members from the different communities of Ceylon. One of our bye-laws provides that no sectarian issue can be raised on the Congress platform. The forthcoming session will be held on the 27th, 28th and 29th (April 1924) at Keerimalai. Messrs. A. M. K. Cumaraswamy (Trinity College) and P. de S. Kularatne are expected to take part in it. The latter is particularly welcome as a member from the South and one of the Apostles of National Education among the Buddhists."

The Second Sessions of the Students Congress was held at Keerimalai, Jaffna. In his welcome address to the delegates S. J. Gunasekera, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, said that the awakening of the consciousness of youth, one of the salient consequences of the Great War (1914-1918), had not failed to find manifestation in Ceylon. The Students Congress, he prophesied, would mark an important epoch in the history of the National movement in this island. He then dealt with the ideals of the Students Congress, namely (a) the development of national art, music and literature; (b) working for the economic independence of the country; (c) training in National service, and (d) realisation of a United Ceylon.

P. DE S. KULARATNE was unanimously elected President for the sessions. In his presidential address he referred to the disputes that arose at that time over the allocation of seats to the Legislative Council. He stated that he had heard much of Sinhalese-Tamil unity and he thought that the so-called split only existed in the imagination of some designing people. It was due to some of their leaders that this much talked of split had been brought about. The Sinhalese had resented the idea of the Tamils getting so many seats in

the Reformed Council. He, for one, did not mind the Tamils getting so many seats as long as they worked wholeheartedly for the betterment of the country. They could not get along if they had these petty jealousies. Mr. Kularatne further stated that the political interests of both the Sinhalese and the Tamils was the same and that they should work unitedly. He expressed the hope that in the following year the Students Congress sessions would be held somewhere in the South and that he would do all in his power to help them in this respect.

Among the resolutions adopted at the second sessions were the following:

1. "That whereas this Congress is of opinion that for the realisation of abiding understanding between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities, it is essential for each community to assimilate more and more of the others culture, it urges on the Department of Education, the Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council and all connected with the education of the youth of the country that the study of Sinhalese in the case of Tamil students and of Tamil in the case of Sinhalese students should be made compulsory at least up to the Cambridge senior standard

in every school receiving grant-in-aid."

2. "That the Congress recognising the great importance of national dress from economic, hygienic and aesthetic points of view recommends very strongly its adoption by every member."

ABOUT THIS PERIOD, that is in the latter part of 1925, the radical youth in the South were grouping themselves around a new political organisation, the **Progressive Nationalist Party**. Its members described the organisation as "an advance party of the youth of Ceylon who aim to secure national emancipation." It had as its leader **S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike** who had completed his studies in England and returned to the Island in the early part of that year. He had come with the resolve to serve his country and to work for the upliftment of the common man.

At this time the mass of the people took no interest in politics and, in the main, were ignorant of political affairs. The *Hindu Organ* (Jaffna) in its editorial of 15-5-1924 drew pointed attention to this fact. "We have drawn the attention of the educated men of this country", it stated, "especially of those who are looked upon as leaders by the people, on more occasions than one, to the very unsatisfactory condition of the masses in regard to political knowledge. We think that the most important reason why the masses generally do not take an intelligent interest in the elections and in other political activities is the gross ignorance of political affairs in which they are allowed to be. It is not reasonable to expect the people to take interest in things of which they are supremely ignorant. And as long as they are left to be ignorant of the political affairs of this country, we are sure that they will not and cannot be truly and properly interested in the political activities which take place in it.

"We want it to be very clearly understood", the editorial continued, "by all who are interested in the political advancement of this country that there cannot be any hope of such advancement until the masses are made fit to take an active and intelligent interest in its politics.

"We regard the imparting of political knowledge to the masses as one of the most important steps in the rejuvenation of our people and in the all round amelioration of the condition of our country."

S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE was the first person who set about systematically to educate the public in political affairs. He published in the daily press a series of articles setting out the problems facing Sri Lanka and the solutions to resolve these problems.

"Two problems of vital importance arise," he stated in an article in May 1926, "which require careful and earnest thought. The first is the question of Ceylon's external status, that is, what is to be her position as a nation in relation to other nations. The second refers to her internal status, the adoption of a form of Government, which would meet the just requirements of the different sections of her inhabitants.

"No effort has yet been made seriously to consider these problems, nor indeed in some quarters is it realised that the problems exist at all! There is the usual vague thinking, there are the usual generalisations, to which politicians are only too liable. The catchwords are the bane of politicians all over the world. Only too frequently phrases are used as though they were the 'Open Sesame' for all ills, without either the speaker or his audience understanding their full import. In Ceylon we find in constant use such phrases as 'Co-operation' 'Self-government', 'Cabinet-government', without any clear understanding of either what they really involve or whether and to what extent they are applicable to our own particular difficulties."

HE STATED he believed that the true solution of the problems mentioned is contained in the Federal System. He thereafter published in the daily press a series of articles as a general introduction to the subject.

In their efforts to organise public discussions of political affairs, the Progressive Nationalist Party called a public meeting at the Public Hall, Colombo, in September 1926. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who presided at this meeting, said that the meeting was primarily called

to enable representatives of the various communities to express publicly their views of what they think should be the next reforms, due in 1929.

In the next reform of the Constitution they were going to ask for full Self-Government. On the question of Self-Government he stated that he expressed his opinion when he seconded the Swaraj resolution at the last session of the National Congress, that is, that they were fit for complete Self-Government.

He then referred to the condition of the Anuradhapura area. He recalled the comments of Ramsay Macdonald who had visited the ruined cities and had said that where the ancient kings had ruled there was nothing but jackals and bears.

Mr. Bandaranaike continuing his speech said that if they had a National Government they would see all their national resources applied to that locality in making it fit for the habitation of man. If they went round to that region they would find men and women emaciated with malaria, mere skeletons.

It would be the task of a National Government, he said, to remedy such a state of things. There would then be no such thing as unemployment. People would have enough things to do and everybody would be engaged in something. That was the real nationalism that he had in mind, a growing nation making itself felt throughout the civilised world. The present system would not do. It must go by the board. Then the question "How in practice are you to attain this degree of Self-Government?" His reply was Federation. Kandyans, Sinhalese Tamils and all concerned should form a federation.

P. de S. Kularatne said that it was not a new subject at all. A government by federation had a fascination for him. It gave a great deal of scope for the development and progress of the country. But there were many difficulties ahead of them. There was the difficulty of dividing the country into territorial areas. There were the Kandyans, Low-country Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was hard to divide the country into territorial areas representing the three races. It was easy to divide the

Tamil section as the North of Ceylon, but in the case of the Kandyans considerable difficulties presented themselves in the way.

He had formulated some time ago a scheme for the federation of races. This he no doubt would have little favour in the country. But he thought it a feasible scheme.

In regard to the reform of the legislature, he thought that they had to develop on the following lines. They needed two houses. In the Lower House they had to have proper representation of all the races in the country. In the Upper House the balance of power could be maintained and it would act as a check in the Lower House.

In theory he was against communal representation. In the two House she suggested, he thought that the second House should have equal representation of all races. The Muslims were only a religious body.

Among those who contributed to the discussion were G. C. S. Corea, Mrs. George E. de Silva, the Hon. T. B. Jayah, the Rev. J. Nathaniels, P. D. Givendrasinghe and A. Satyawagiswara Iyer,

The radical youths had thus set about to study and discuss the various political systems so that the system which best suited the needs and genius of the people may be adopted when independence was achieved.

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POINT OF VIEW

LAND REFORM

—why not go
the whole hog?—

BY JEPHARIS

THE UNITED FRONT of setting up the Land Reform Commission (LRC) to acquire all privately-owned land over and above 50 acres per individual, perhaps reducing the ceiling to 25 acres in the future, and eventually even less, does not and indeed cannot, eliminate the petty capitalist or landlord who will still be entitled to keep a certain extent for his own stewardship, use and development. Even the floating of co-operative societies in order to conserve the land vested in the LRC, and running them on a "Collective farm" principle, does not altogether eliminate the small landlord or mudalali type (or even the *nouvelles riches* or "new rich") who will still have the opportunity to operate under the collective disguise of a co-operative Society. After all, a Co-operative Society is a hall-mark of a *Socialist Democracy*, which is really Capitalism dressed in an attractive cloak, bearing a different label.

This policy is in keeping with certain members of the Government itself, who though *socialist democrats*, or even red-blooded "communists" in theory, are really private capitalists in practice. Some of them have even gone to so far an extent as to float public limited liability companies to preserve their own land, only giving away what they can conveniently spare, and which entails no appreciable sacrifice, while preaching land reform to the general public. Such contradictions of percept from practice ought to be avoided. Some cabinet ministers have set the example for Ceylon's nominal "communists", who are "communists" only in name, while being capitalists at heart (belonging to a country whose social structures are still only too obviously capitalist—which explains the extremes of wealth and poverty still existing side by side in Colombo particularly) like those preachers who do not practice what they preach.

This "bourgeoisie class" in Sri Lanka seems to have one code of

ethics for itself if they have any ethics at all (?) which is doubtful (!) while advocating another set of standards for the masses.

SOME YEARS AGO, during the UNP regime of the Dudley Senanayake Government, a Bill was passed in parliament preventing the unauthorised fragmentation of land, as this would have tended to undermine the economy of the nation, privately-owned land being better and more effectively administered when run as a single viable unit. This was made necessary on account of certain affluent persons either selling to outsiders or dividing their lands among other members of their own family, in order to make use of loopholes and shortcuts in tax laws, particularly with regard to wealth tax. According to the Kaldor system of taxation introduced by the late Mr. Bandaranaike in 1957, rich people were compelled to pay Wealth Tax on their movable and immovable assets, in addition to the Income Tax they already had to pay. House Assessment Tax, Gift Tax (particularly discouraging gifts of land parcels as dowries), for a time the Rice Subsidy Tax (which was later abolished), Compulsory Savings Tax and now the Capital Levy Tax, were some of the other taxes they had to pay, in that order of introduction by subsequent "socialist" governments, and which discouraged fragmentation but encouraged land sales.

It is true that this was much-needed "socialist" legislation in theory, put into practice in the interest of the national economy and an equitable re-distribution of the national wealth. From the point of view of social justice, moral ethics and fair play this was perfectly justifiable. But it killed private enterprise and speculative entrepreneurship, which was one of the most cogent of cog-wheels in the machinery of the national economy—as it is a well known fact that rich people who served themselves best, served their employees and their country best, and that people would take a much greater personal interest in developing their own land, or land over which they were stewards, than would disinterested officials in a state administration who were stooges of the Government, and

the men they appointed to look after estates.

It also counteracts the policy of fragmentation, which the UNP Government was against, and which might now be considered as "reactionary." The very nature of our social and economic structures need to be re-orientated according to the trends being taken by a progressive "socialist" government, which seems to be taking the high-road to communism, an ideology, more suitable to large countries like Russia and China than to little Lanka. This one can boldly say, because a communistic system of government may not be the most suitable to the genius of the Ceylonese people, who have been brought up and grown accustomed to the feudalistic tradition of employer and employee, exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, guardian and guarded (as Rev. W. E. Senior described in his *Hymn for Lanka*) and rich and poor, which the Buddhist principle of KARMA (the law of cause and effect) would explain and excuse.

CONFISCATING LAND from the landed proprietor and re-distributing among the landless is certainly no solution, as this would be fragmentation in action (the kind of division that vitiates the economy of the nation) and would also cause squabbling, bickering, competition, jealousy and strife among the poor simple, country peasant, who not having been used to owning land, would now find it difficult to administer such land.

Besides, how does one CHOOSE to distribute land to the landless on an equitable basis? Although by certain precedents, nationalisation has been a failure (look at the CTB, that glaring example of inefficiency and mismanagement) and everything that the government has touched seems to be in ruins: why not go the whole hog and VEST ALL LAND IN THE STATE, as what eventually happened in the Soviet Union once the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had settled down (around 1920 one believes) and in the People's Republic of China after 1949.

Then get the Government to administer (or manage) ALL Tea, Rubber and Coconut estates in

Sri Lanka (which collectively earn about 85% of our total export revenue, and on whom our national economy largely depends) and let the present proprietors (or superintendents) who have the necessary experience, continue to look after such lands on behalf of the Government. They could be paid a salary by the Government in proportion to the work they put in for the Government, rather than by the owner which is the present practice. They would be paid workers of the state, serving the state, and responsible to the state, and not to any private individual. All plantation workers would become Government Servants, and members of the public rather than the private sectors as they are at present. The Government would extract the major yield from the estate (leaving a small portion for employee consumption) and handle both the domestic and the overseas export trade which the Mercantile Sector (the Agency House, the Broker and the Export Dealer) handle at present. In fact the Mercantile Sector would become redundant and might conveniently be abolished without causing any substantial gap in the community or adverse effect on the economy. Is it not true that the Mercantile Sector breeds a great deal of inequality amongst the Ceylonese people?

Those experienced in buying and selling could continue to do so on behalf of the Government, rather than privately, to fill their own pockets, as they appear to be doing at present! In this way, there would be enough in Sri Lanka for everyone's need, though not for everybody's greed, as the MRA people have a slogan, and the national economy would not suffer, but will possibly be enhanced.

One hopes this article will catch the eye of the new "middle-path" political partisans, the SLVB, if not

One to Three

The anti-alcoholism campaign which the British Education Council plans to run in the northeast of England will cost about £ 100,000, reports the weekly "Observer. And in the first six months of this year, it adds, brewers spent more than three times as much on advertising there.

the UF and the UNP, and some of the recommendations embodied herein be incorporated into their election manifesto.

Windmill For Power Generation

IT IS PUZZLING to Mr. Walter Schoenball, a West German civil servant. Despite the energy crisis, no European firm appears interested in the astonishingly efficient, power-generating windmill he and an international group of scientists have developed. Enterprises in the United States, and, of all places, the Mongolian Socialist Republic, are considering producing the apparatus. But nobody is in Europe, where the shortage of energy will likely be the worst.

Last July Mr. Schoenball's team completed the erection of their novel prototype windmill on the north German island of Sylt. Tests since then show that the double-rotor mechanism converts more than 60 per cent of the force of the wind into electrical energy. That compares with a 30 per cent conversion rate for a good, conventional windmill. To scientists, such a huge jump in the efficiency of a power source is astonishing indeed. It shows that relatively little modern research has been done on utilizing wind to create electricity.

THE SYLT WINDMILL has a generating capacity of 70 kilowatts, enough to supply five families with electrical power, including heating. However, Mr. Schoenball's group has in the blueprint stage a windmill that could turn out 230 kw. They also have plans for a 30 kw. wind-powered generator that could easily supply one house.

A question naturally arising from the use of wind as a source of power is: What happens when the wind stops?

Mr. Schoenball has a double reply. First, he notes, in many parts of the world the air rarely still. The new windmill can obtain power from winds as slow as 4.5 miles per hour. Through their research with the prototype on Sylt Island, the group expects to improve their windmill efficiency

to as high as 90 per cent. In this way the windmill could produce power with only whispers of a breeze.

Secondly, energy can be stored when the wind is blowing. For example, the power could be fed into batteries. Because batteries are expensive, Mr. Schoenball figures a better alternative might be using the power to heat water in special tanks or for heating a special stone heat-storage device. Warmth would be drawn from these during days without wind.

Three years ago Mr. Schoenball became convinced that the world faced a long-term energy shortage—not just a temporary one prompted by the Arab nations' use of oil as a weapon in their struggle with Israel. That prolonged shortage, he forecast, would arrive next year. The Arabs merely advanced it by some months. "Civilisation is in danger," he said during a telephone conversation from Geneva.

Thus he helped organize a group of experts to figure a better way for exploiting wind power. The group includes Marcel Jufer, a professor of electromechanics at the University of Lausanne; Jaques Dufournaud, a Parisian electronics expert; Hans-Dietrich Goslich, an expert in aerodynamics from Solingen, West Germany and Claude Schindler, a Geneva engineer. The group has spent about \$ 190,000 of their own funds developing and building the Sylt Island windmill. Mr. Schoenball estimates it could be reproduced for about \$ 46,000 or in mass production, for 20 to 30 per cent less than that.

For the approximately 20-year life of the apparatus the cost per kilowatt-hour would be a cheap 2.7 cents. That price would not change no matter what happened to the price of oil, he notes.

Since the windmill uses current technology, he reckons mass production could begin as soon as February, 1975. "All the systems are simple," notes Mr. Schoenball.

Obviously the group hopes to recover the costs of their "hobby" and make a profit. But Mr. Schoenball insists that their main goal has been to help rescue the world from a catastrophic energy shortage that could destroy current living standards and styles in the industrialized nations.

—Christian Science Monitor

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

BORAH IMBROGLIO

IS IT NOT TRUE that there is a major stir among a section of the Borah community in Sri Lanka? That this particular sect is known as the Dawoodi Borah community? That a polemical war has started among two major factions? That newspapers are being flooded with material about the inside goings-on this community? That press cuttings of sensational occurrences in Bombay have also been sent not only to newspapers but to many people of consequence? That the allegations make sensational reading? That the current spate of mud-slinging had been sparked off by the arrival in Sri Lanka of a priest named Abbasbhai Fakhruddin on January 14, 1975? That he had come in the Swissair flight that touched down in Colombo? That this priest was the brother of the top High Priest of the Dawoodi Borah community, Dr. M. Burhanuddin, who resides in Bombay? That since his arrival in Sri Lanka this priest, Abbasbhai Fakhruddin, is alleged to have preached highly charged sermons in the Dawoodi Borah Mosque at Glenaber Place in Bambalapitiya? That the main burden of his sermons, it is said, was to urge the Congregation to declare a "Baraat" against those members of the community in Sri Lanka who do not seem willing to follow the Bombay High Priest's actions, policies and injunctions, *in toto*, and blindly? That the word "Baraat" is a Arabic one meaning social ostracism against alleged non-conformists? That among other things, the priest had also urged that such non-conformists should be prevented from entering places belonging to the community such as the Mosque, Community Hall and the Cemetery? That as a result of this incitement to impose sanctions several unsavoury incidents are reported to have taken place? That some of these are alleged to have taken place within the Borah Mosque premises? That some

persons are alleged to have been assaulted? That a leading member of the local Borah community had been requested not to go beyond a particular door of the mosque?

IS IT NOT A FACT that these problems within the Borah community had arisen because some members of the Congregation had questioned the right of absolute control over the community's property presently exercised by the High Priest and his family? That the reformists were also unwilling to abide by the High Priest's *fiats* and *diktats* on social and temporal matters? That whilst the reformists were willing to accept the rulings of the High Priest on religious matters they were not agreeable to toe the line in other matters without democratic discussions which might lead to a consensus? That it was pointed out that Borah communities in East Africa, Madagascar and the Reunion Islands had drawn up democratic Constitutions to govern their affairs? That the Bombay-based High Priest had vetoed these Constitutions and imposed Constitutions where the appointment of members and functionaries was completely at the discretion of the High Priest? That this had led to great dissatisfaction and discontent among these communities? That like all other groups and communities, a radical and progressive wing had grown up in the Borah community in Sri Lanka as well in every country and place where such communities were found?

IS IT NOT TRUE that, in the polemical war, allegations are fluttering around the city of Colombo about the dirty linen concerning the finances of the High Priest and his priestly minions? That copies of the Bombay weekly *Current*, (once owned and edited by the well-known D. F. Karaka, and now owned by some pro-Congress pro-India elements), dated November

2, 1974, has been sent to a number of people in Sri Lanka? That this issue has a frontpage splash under the heading GOVERNMENT DUPED IN HOTEL DEAL? That the gist of the story was that the shares of Ambassador Hotel held by a Holding Company were sold for eleven lakhs when the estimated value of the building was ninety lakhs in a way that not merely control but ownership had passed to the new buyers? That it was said that the sellers was a company owned by the Dawoodi Borah Community's High Priest and his family? That the purchaser was a top smuggler and underground blackmarket operator (now under detention)? That it was alleged that the sale was effected through a transparent device which had cheated the Indian Government of the proper stamp duty dues and relevant tax payments? That it was alleged that the bulk of the payment was made in foreign exchange abroad? That it was also alleged this High Priest was involved in a deal regarding the purchase of a building known as Sandoz in Worli (Bombay) for Rs. 6 1/2 million when the declared price was Rs. 3 1/2 million—and that therefore the Government had taken over the property at the declared sale price? That in a future issue of *Tribune* more about the activities of this High Priest would be referred to? That this will be of public interest in Sri Lanka because there is a rich and influential Borah community here? That it is known that there is a total Dawoodi Borah community of one million (10 lakhs) in the world of whom 800,000 are in India and the rest in East African countries, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Hongkong, Indonesia, Kuwait, Dubai, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, UK, Canada and the U.S.A.? That some of the revelations about the wealth and business activities of the High Priest and his family read like some stories from the Arabian Night's Tales?

NEXT WEEK

- TOKEN STRIKE and after
- INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS Bangladesh
- VILLAGE HOUSE—19 The Outburst
- HISTORY (Jaffna's) Youth Congress