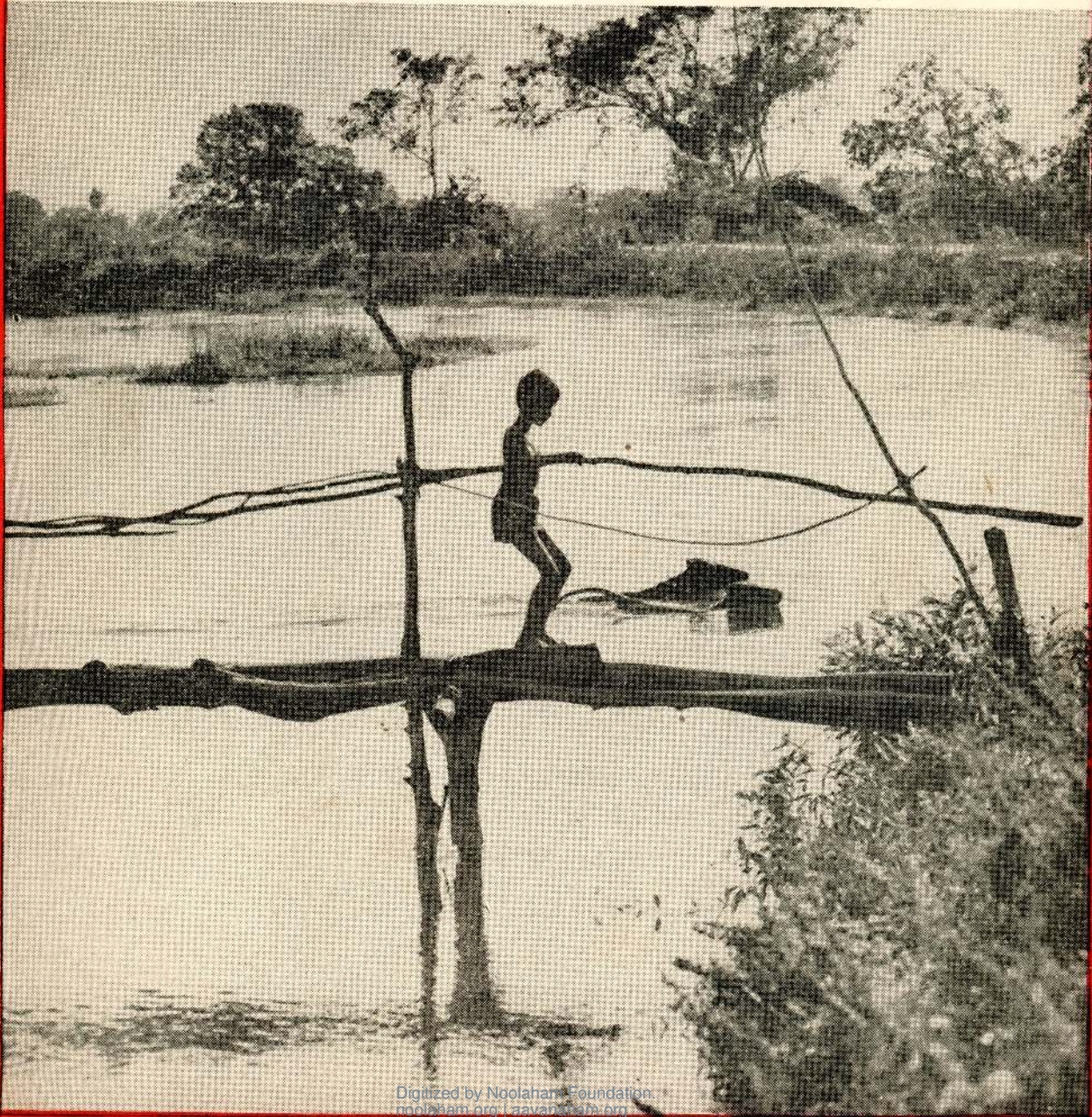


TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER we have a picture of a village lad crossing the little stream on a pole bridge. Each time anyone makes a trip on this bridge it is a balancing feat of great merit—or so it must seem to urban folk. But, life in our rural areas is still full of hazards and difficulties and many people who do not know just how primitive life in this country really is, are amazed that life goes on at all. Is it strange that the methods and strategies adopted for the running of the affairs of this country are often not any less primitive or hazardous than the pole bridges that span most of our streams. Take the case of our financial dealings with foreign countries. We have just obtained promises and undertakings of massive financial assistance. But, the money has been promised by donors and potential investors on the footing that the Sri Lanka Rupee (SLR) was “pegged” to float around Rs. 16 to the US dollar. *Tribune* had, at that time when this rate was fixed, pointed out that the SLR had been “devalued” too much and that a rate around Rs. 12.50 to the US dollar would have been more appropriate and realistic. To our surprise, however, on May 10, a *Reuter* report from Stockholm stated: “Sri Lanka hopes to strengthen its rupee in due course as the country benefits further from economic and political stability, Finance Minister, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, told a press conference here yesterday. Although he declined to forecast when such a development might occur, he noted that it was more likely than further depreciation in the wake of the cut of over 40 percent in the rupee’s value against the dollar late last year. Since Sri Lanka last year abolished the virtual three-tier exchange structure involving the official rate, the special tourist rate and the black market rate, the rupee has traded stably at around 16 to the dollar. ‘Since my last Budget, Sri Lanka’s trade balance and payments account have improved considerably. Our international reserves of 300 million dollars are the highest for 20 years,’ Mr. de Mel said. With the rupee stable and prospects for political stability better now than for two decades, the Government can push ahead with its growth and development plans, he added. The Minister is on a tour of Western Europe.” Our local newspapers ran the story under the headline RUPEE MAY BE REVALUED, SAYS RONNIE. *Tribune* had pointed out when the new parity rates were fixed that Sri Lanka was saddled with this rate for a long time to come because it would not be possible to “revalue” the rupee until greatly increased local production strengthened our economic structure. Minister of Finance, Ronnie de Mel, however, on the basis that benefits would arise from the new “political and economic” stability, generated no doubt by the massive financial loans, felt that the rupee may be revalued earlier, in “due course”. He also referred to the favourable trade balance for the first time in twenty years and the international reserves—all because of the high prices some export commodities have fetched recently. But is this enough to hint at a revaluation? Local production has not yet got off the ground. And no Finance Minister talks about a revaluation until the decision is made and announced. Otherwise he will throw open the gates of his kingdom to currency speculators and racketeers. Moreover did the Finance Minister have Cabinet sanction before talking to the press about revaluation? This premature wishful thinking about revaluation by the Finance Minister has already made some potential investors to develop the proverbial “second thoughts” about investing in Sri Lanka. The boy on the pole bridge seems to know his way about better than our Finance Minister who talked out of turn about revaluation whilst sojourning in Europe in between rushing from one capital to another to collect more and more aid. The *Sunis* the only paper which has, so far, been critical of de Mel’s *gaffe*, and in an editorial suggested that the SLR “when the time comes it will seek revaluation on its own merits—without any political manoeuvring”.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK	
—Bread, Tigers, Prices	P. 2
QUIDNUNCS	
—Scandals	p. 6
LETTER	
—From A Reader	p. 8
THE WORLD TODAY	
—Afghanistan	P. 10
WHITE PAPER - 4	
—Concluded	P. 15
GENTLE REMINDER	
—To Keuneman	P. 18
KARAINAGAR HINDU	
—Just Grievance	P. 20
CARAVAN FAMILY-9	
—Trincomalee	P. 22
GRAMA SASTRA-8	
—Urban Pill	P. 23
SRI LANKA CHRONICLE	
—May 2 - May 9	p. 24
BETWEEN THE LINES	
—Mainly Economic	P. 30
CONFIDENTIALLY	
—Where's Nimal?	P. 32

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

● Rain ● Bread ● Tigers ● Prices ● Export

Colombo, May 16,

The very heavy rains in the Southern, Western and Central parts and less heavy rains in other parts of the island together with the hue and cry against the Tigers (especially the four wanted men who have been proclaimed—and one of whom was caught in Murray Estate in Maskeliya) have temporarily taken the edge off the mounting tempo of frustration and discontent against the daily increasing prices of fish, meat, eggs and vegetables. A less propitious time for the announcement of the ten cents increase in the price of wheat flour and bread could not have been thought of by the government. The price of rice, in spite of the bumper crop, has not come down—there is a slightly upward trend in many areas—and this has invested the increase in the price of heat flour and bread with a rather sinister touch.

Tribune had from the beginning stated that the price of wheat flour had been fixed too low and had expected an increase at any time, and the ten cents increase is from any rational point of view far too little in the context of the actual price of wheat flour on the world market. But the government probably thought that it might stir up a hornet's nest if it pushed up the price any more than ten cents a pound.

But even this was done in the most amateurish way—so much so the local bakers and traders who held fairly large stocks of wheat flour made tidy fortunes by diverting the flour from bread (which has to be sold at fixed and controlled prices) to hoppers, string

hoppers and other items where prices and profits could be (and were) pushed up without limit. And bread has been short in the city and outside ever since the price increase was announced.

There is no doubt that the timing of the increase in the price of wheat flour and bread came at the most inconspicuous moment, but the government had probably no choice in the matter. SLFP's weekly, *The Nation*, 12/5/78, had an interesting front page spread on this matter under the heading REMAINING SUBSIDIES TO END BY JUNE? The report read: "The Government which decided to increase the price of bread and flour last week in abject deference to a peremptory order by the World Bank, has it is learnt, agreed to slash all remaining subsidies and welfare measures including free education and the free medical treatment in government hospitals by the end of June, 1978. The commuter fares of the CTB as well as the price of milk, fertilizer and petroleum products, too, are likely to be increased soon. The *Nation* reliably understands that the decision to raise the price of bread and flour was taken quite suddenly, last Friday, consequent to an urgent cable message received in Colombo from the Minister of Finance and Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, who was leading the Government's delegation to the Sri Lanka Aid Group Meeting held in Paris last week. At the commencement of meeting, which was presided over by Mr. David Hopper, Vice President of the World Bank, the Group is reported to have insisted on the abolition by the Sri Lanka Government of all forms of remaining subsidies and welfare measures including free education and the free medical scheme in government hospitals by the end of June and the removal of the subsidy on bread and flour, if the

Group were to consider Sri Lanka's application for further development assistance. At this stage the Sri Lanka delegation is said to have told the Group that the Sri Lanka government had already decided in principle to abolish all subsidies and welfare measures but wanted time to phase out the operation so as to minimize embarrassment to the Government, because it had pledged to the electorate in July 1977 that if it came to power, it would in addition to maintaining the existing subsidies, increase the quantum of weekly subsidised cereals to 8 lbs. per person. The Group was not, however, agreeable to vary its original stand. The Sri Lanka delegation was thus compelled to respond to the Group's requirement in some meaningful way and hence the Finance Minister's urgent call to the Government to remove at least a part of the subsidy on flour and bread, pending the total abolition of all remaining subsidies and welfare measures at the end of June. Accordingly the government is said to have decided to remove a part of the subsidy on these commodities with immediate effect pending further action in regard to the other related matters, on the return of the delegation to Sri Lanka. When it was clear to the Aid Group that the Sri Lanka Government had taken some positive measures on the lines suggested by it, it had sat down to consider Sri Lanka's aid requirement. However, according to the Government's own news media, the Aid Group has not yet made up its mind about the extent of its aid to the so-called Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme. The UNP also promised at the hustings to reduce the cost of living within weeks of its coming to power, but in reality the cost of living of the average citizen has, as pointed out by the *Nation* some weeks

ago, risen by 58 percent since July 1977, primarily because of the devaluation of the Sri Lanka Rupee by about one hundred per cent by the UNP Government's first Budget. Besides, the cost of drugs and building materials has risen by more than 200 percent since January this year. With the increase in the price of flour and bread, the Jayewardene Government has broken all its major election promises held out to the people at the last General Elections. It will be recalled that in his very first address to the nation, in his capacity as Prime Minister, from the historic Octagon of the sacred Dalada Maligawa in Kandy, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene reiterated that all his election promises would be faithfully translated into action. The Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, in one of his first post-election public speeches said boastfully that the "UNP came to power to make the people live." But, within a few weeks of these solemn pledges the Government withdrew the rice and sugar ration from more than 7 million of the country's population. It has now been revealed that nearly half of these people lack the income to provide their families with the basic essentials of life."

Readers will recall that *Tribune* was the first and only paper to set out the terms on which the IMF was giving the okay and green signal for the rich western countries to grant Sri Lanka the Rs. 6,000 million overall financial assistance. The timing of the increase of the price of flour and bread, last week, was undoubtedly inopportune. But the compelling demands of the IMF that at least a "gesture" be made to establish Sri Lanka's bona fides regarding its undertakings to first reduce and later eliminate all subsidies, led the government to increase the price of flour and bread.

THE RECENT RAINS have been correctly described as "inter-monsoonal"—rains which traditionally come with the change-over from the north-east to the south-west monsoons. Such inter-monsoonal rains in the past have brought devastating floods. These rains usually lay the foundation for the cultivation of subsidiary food crops in the dry zone. For the last 4 or 5 years the inter-monsoonal rains have failed, except minimally in some areas, so much so that many wondered whether the climatic pattern had changed to the extent that the inter-monsoonal rains had disappeared for ever. Even though the inter-monsoonal rains have come on the dot of time, there is no guarantee that the rain during the rest of year would be following the traditional pattern.

The Government campaign against the *Tamil Tiger Terrorist Movement* assumed a new dimension from last week end. The names and photographs of four persons alleged to be among those wanted, for the Murunkan and other killings were released to the newspapers. Posters were also displayed in all prominent places all over the island. The report in the *Ceylon Daily News* of Monday, May 15 summed up the actions and motivations of the Government. "The Police were yesterday reported following up several leads given them by members of the public following the publication of the photographs of four young men wanted in connection with the murder of four CID officers at Murunkan in early April and the attempted murder of the 2nd MP for Pottuvil, Mr. M. Canagaratnam, at Kollupitiya. The four most wanted men in the island are (1) *Vamadevan* alias *Thanam* alias *Thanabalasingham* (25) a former CTB driver who also worked as a driver for the late Federal Party leader, Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam; (2)

Chelliah Padmanathan alias *Kanadi* alias *Chunkan*, a 34 year old radio mechanic; (3) *Chellappah Nagarasa* alias *Nagarajah* who once worked as a clerk at the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation and (4) *Uma Mageswaran*, a 33-year-old surveyor. Thousands of people were also reported to have gathered from early yesterday morning at market squares, bus-stands, railway stations, junctions and other places where people gather to take a close look at the four suspects whose photographs and descriptions were carried on wall posters. Police said they were checking on every scrap of information, however frivolous it seemed, in their efforts to track down the wanted men. These men who Police allege, were hard-core members of the Liberation Tiger terrorist group responsible for the seven Police slayings, the murder of former Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiyappa and the attempted murder of the 2nd MP for Pottuvil Mr. Canagaratnam, were reported to have gone underground. Meanwhile, a massive Police, Army, Navy and Air Force security operation was launched in the early hours of yesterday morning in the Eastern Province where a large number of Liberation Tiger terrorists were reported to have gone into hiding after combing-out operations commenced in Jaffna last week. The operation embarked on the orders of the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, will continue until further notice. The Armed Forces were on "alert" in all areas and were ready to deal with any contingency, security sources told the *Daily News* yesterday. They also said that CID and Police investigations of the killings and the Liberation Tiger Movement revealed that about 20 terrorists now operating in the island had trained abroad with international terrorist groups such as the IRA and the Baader-Meinhoff group of West

Germany. The investigations revealed that at the time of killing of the four CID detectives the Liberation Tigers were planning to purchase arms abroad and smuggle them into the island in large quantities. The money was to be provided by a group of sympathisers in Malaysia. A number of members and sympathisers of the Liberation Tiger Movement, which detectives claim is an off-shoot of a political party in the North, and which still has its roots there, have found employment in the Middle East with the primary purpose of helping finance the movement. In the UK, Paris and other countries too large sums of money were being collected by branches of the movement which were established in many countries."

As we go to press, the news is to hand that Vamadevan has been arrested in Murray Estate, Maskeliya. It is well to remember that the cry for Tamil Eelam did not go down well with the 'Indian' Tamils of the plantations and for this reason, if not for many others, the Tamil Tiger Terrorists cannot hope to find a safe haven among the Tamil population of the plantations.

The *Daily News* of May 16, brought the story up to date: "Hatton and Maskeliya Police yesterday arrested Vamadevan alias Thanabalingham, one of the four men wanted in connection with the killing of four CID officers at Murunkan and the attempted murder of Mr M. Canagaratnam, 2nd MP for Pottuvil. Vamadevan (25) was arrested by a Police party led by ASP Noordeen of the Hatton Police and, Headquarters Inspector Upali Gunawardene last evening at Murray Estate, Maskeliya. It was only last week that the police publicised the picture of the four wanted men with full descriptions about them and also offered a reward of Rs. 100,000 for information leading to their arrest. Posters were also

displayed in all parts of the country of the wanted men. Vamadevan alias Thanam alias Thanabalingam was a driver of the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, leader of the Federal Party. He was thereafter employed as a mechanic at the Ceylon Transport Board. The other three men wanted by Police in this connection are Uma Maheswaran, a Surveyor, Chelliah Padmanathan alias Kannadi alias Chunkan, a radio mechanic, and Chellappah Nagarasa alias Nagarajah, a clerk. The four CID officers who were killed were Inspector T. I. Bastianpilli, Sub-Inspector A. E. Perampalam Sgt. Balasingam and Police driver Siriwardena. A man carrying a number of passports, with visas for certain countries in the Middle East, was one of many persons taken into custody by the Security Forces during 'Operation Anti-Terrorism' which began on Saturday night. The man was arrested at Pettah on Sunday and handed over to the CID for further interrogation, security sources said yesterday. They said public response to the appeal for information after the photographs of the four most wanted terrorists were published, was very good and every tip-off was being minutely checked. The security sources said the massive combined armed forces and police operation was now being largely carried out in the Northern and North-Eastern areas and in Colombo where a number of persons suspected of being members of the Liberation Tiger Movement, were taken into custody. In Colombo and the suburbs police backed by armed forces personnel searched a number of residences suspected of harbouring terrorists. These included several chummeries as terrorists were known to have run a number of such establishments. A number of persons have also been placed under surveillance, while those whom the authorities believe may be the next

targets of the terrorists have had the security guards protecting them strengthened. CID sleuths investigating the activities of the Liberation Tiger Movement have now drawn up a list of its known 'sympathisers' and supporters and of those who subscribe to funds and provide refuge for the terrorists. Meanwhile, security sources said that senior police officers in India who were personally briefed on the Liberation Tiger Movement by the DIG (CID) Mr. Herbert Weerasinghe and the Director, CID Mr. A. Navaratnam, were reported to have placed a number of persons in South India, particularly in the Tamilnadu, under a 24-hour surveillance. The sources said the key link man the Liberation Tiger Movement had in Madras was a doctor, a well known racialist and literateur who has visited Sri Lanka on several occasions. The two senior CID officers were still in India, working in close co-ordination with the South Indian police and also carrying out their own investigations. They were expected to return to the island this week."

A small box item in the *Daily News* of May 16 under the heading POLICE DOUBLE AGENTS MOVED OUT stated: "Certain police officers who were alleged to have been serving as 'double agents' by a person described as a key informant and a number of the Liberation Tiger Movement have now been transferred out of the posts they were serving in, security sources told the *Daily News* yesterday. The *Daily News* reported recently that the informant, now in protective custody, had given senior detectives the names of four Police Officers who were leaking highly classified information, particularly of the CID investigations and movements of officers probing the Liberation Tigers. Security sources said yesterday that the Police top brass were also trying to trace the source

of a leak regarding high level police discussions."

Readers will recall that *Tribune* had declared, more than once, that the counter-intelligence of the Tiger Terrorist Movement was superior to the Intelligence of the Police. It is a happy augury that the Police have at last begun to catch up with lost time.

BUT, NOT ALL THE NOISE AND THUNDER of the hunt for the Tigers can make people overlook the fact that fish continues to be unavailable to the mass of the population. The small quantities sent to the Corporation stalls in Colombo are snipped up within a few minutes—a small part by genuine consumers but the large part by agents of mudalalis and the big time operators. Seer this week varied from Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 a pound, paraw from Rs. 8.50 to Rs. 10.50 a pound and the cheapest salaya from Rs. 4.50 to Rs. 5.50. The fixed official prices of the Corporation are about a third to half the open market prices, but only a tiny infinitesimal fraction of the population have opportunities of getting a little of this fish at official prices.

In the meantime, the Minister of Trade has announced that his Ministry will import 3 million tins of canned fish—but with a population of 13 million of whom 75% hunger for fish this imported canned fish will not go very far. One consolation the people of this country can have is that they can soon (if not already), buy canned fish or fish caught in our waters by foreign trawlers licensed by the Ministry of Fisheries. This seems to be a new form of colonial-imperialism in which the ruling country took the natural resources of the subject country to be processed and "manufactured" in the home country and then brought back to be sold at an enhanced price to the people in the dependant country. Sri Lanka seems to be

slipping into the same position once again, this time under the aegis of multi-national operators. Neo-colonialism is the dirty word, coined by the Left, to describe this process. It is dirty business all right. We sell our fish at royalty rates which are scandalously low per ton—\$ 5 for fish, \$15 for prawns and \$ 25 for lobsters—all for the doubtful privilege of selling us 40% of the catch which they have, by far and large, failed to do. The time has come for people to forget fresh fish—for a long long time.

The situation is no better with meat. Mixed beef is at Rs. 6 a pound but choice cuts now sell at Rs. 10 or more a pound. Mixed mutton is at Rs. 9 to Rs. 10 a pound whilst choice mutton is around Rs. 14 a pound. Pork is a little cheaper but not much more. Broiler chicken is at Rs. 10/75 a pound and is daily going up. The cheapest dry fish is around Rs. 8/50 a pound. It would be unfair to comment on the prices of vegetables with the present rains and floods.

In this situation, the Minister of Trade's desire to re-sell Chinese rice at a higher price has come as a rude shock. The export of the Chinese rice will decrease rice stocks in the country and this will push up prices of local rice in the domestic market. The craze for "export" has reached such proportions that everybody in government seems to have become obsessed with it. Otherwise one cannot understand why the Minister of Trade should have thought it necessary to talk about the export of Chinese rice—it will probably be the last time we get Chinese rice and there is no guarantee that we will be blessed with bumper crops everytime.

To illustrate the mental aberration that seems to have overtaken the ruling hierarchy in this country, there is one story going the

rounds in polite circles which is worth repeating. A group travelling first class (or what is left of it) in the CGR found the compartment overrun with cockroaches. One had quipped "...if only the cockroaches were edible we will not go hungry..." Another went one better with "...if they were edible, they would be exported..."

The Government will do well to take note of a deep sense of frustration that has begun to overtake people who had voted UNP. The prices of foodstuffs have reached such dizzy heights that people have begun to show resentment and anger. And what is worse is that Ministers want to export everything—to satisfy IMF's diktat, according to the Opposition — including the very food the people eat.

The Opposition and those who voted against the UNP tell the people "we told you so...the shops are full of goods for the rich...the rich will become richer and the poor poorer..." And there is no doubt that this is happening.

The Government must arrest this process. Unless this is done, the UNP and Government will be shocked by the results of the forthcoming local government elections. The beneficiaries will not be the traditional parties of the Left or the Opposition. New forces, mainly youth, will emerge.

ATTACHMENT

...Thinking about sense-objects
Will attach you to sense-objects;
Grow attached and you become addicted;
Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger;
Be angry, and you confuse your mind;
Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience;
Forget experience, you lose discrimination;
Lose discrimination and you lose life's only purpose.....

QUIDNUNC

● Lockheed Scandals

● Air Ceylon

A QUIDNUNC, according to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, is "one who is constantly asking 'what now?', 'what news?' hence an inquisitive person, a gossip. The word comes from the Latin, *quid* (what) *nunc* (now)—*what now?*—and is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "one who seeks to know all the latest gossip." Our own era, especially in Sri Lanka, is admittedly the Quidnuncs' Golden Age. Gossip is now a marketable commodity. The stories our Quidnuncs bring are based on a substratum of truth and *Tribune* publishes them only if the fire from which the smoke has arisen has some kind of reality. Apart from a few kite-flying stories to provoke investigation, most stories in this column have bite enough for a daily paper to go to town with a banner headline.

*TENDERS. *Tribune* Quidnuncs had raised many questions about tenders that some departments and corporations had called for and the contracts they had sought to enter into, after this government had assumed power. Our Quidnuncs' queries had covered a vast range—tractors, locomotives, railway carriages and waggons, buses, spare parts, fertilisers and a large number of other items. But, our Quidnuncs got tired and wearied because nothing had happened—and the contracts and tenders seemed to be going through. There were whispers that some of the tenders had been short-circuited through Presidential action, but, nothing concrete was known. Then

the Ceylon Observer recently had a front-page sensation PRESIDENT STOPS FOUR BIDS: SHARP EYE ON TENDER: "The Government has decided to impose stricter controls over the award of state tenders involving large sums of money. These controls are likely to include Cabinet supervision of such tenders. The Observer reliably understands that the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has already ordered the stopping of four tenders where certain irregularities are suspected to have occurred. Official sources were tight-lipped about what these tenders were. In one instance, one tender's prices had been known to another before the tender was finalized."

Mr. S. D. Bandaranayake (MP for Gampaha) referred to this question in the NSA on 4/5/78 and wanted to know whether any action had been taken. The Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, answering the question stated (vide Hansard May 4): "Then regarding the other question by the hon. Member for Gampaha (Mr. S. D. Bandaranayake), he has referred to a news item in the Ceylon Observer about some tenders. He is asking whether I will inform the House what these four tenders were. I would like to inform him that one was in regard to the supply of sawn timber. There in the tender procedure there had been some deficiencies. One was that the time given was very short. For an international tender sufficient time must be given. The other was that the specifications of the sawn timber required were inadequate for a supplier to tender for what was needed."

Mr. S. D. Bandaranayake: Sawn timber to what department.

Mr. R. Premadasa: Import of timber for the State Engineering Corporation by the Building Materials Corporation. In the tender notice it was stated that tenderers or their agents will not be permit-

ted to be present at the time. That is also a deficiency. We have taken action to regularise the position. Fresh tender notices were prepared in consultation with the Secretary to the Prime Minister, who was acting Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction, under which Ministry the Building Materials Corporation comes. Associated in the discussions were the Conservator of Forests, the Chairman of the Buildings Material Corporation and the Chairman of the State Engineering Corporation for whose work this timber was being imported. Revised tenders that conformed to the normal principles of tender were thereafter prepared and fresh tenders have been called for, giving sufficient time. As you know, timber is very scarce now, and all building activity has come to a stop. But still it is better that we follow procedure. If we give short notice, they will not be able to supply. We have to conserve our forests also. There has been a rape of the forests in this country during the last seven years. And we have no timber. That is why we have to call for world-wide tenders. Another tender was in respect of a gantry crane for the Port (Cargo) Corporation. International tenders were not called for but quotations were called for from the Colombo Shipping Agents Conference. The Hon. Minister of Shipping, Aviation and Tourism has taken action to stop the tender. International tenders will be called for for the supply of the crane. Another tender was in regard to the supply of two million gunny bags for the Paddy Marketing Board. The deficiency here was that the period for tender was less than three weeks. You know that we have had a bumper crop and we have to collect it. Gunny bags were in short supply. As the notice given was considered short, we wanted

it extended by another 14 days. This was an urgent tender that arose as a result of the failure of a contractor to supply gunny bags contracted for and the urgent need for gunny bags by the Paddy Marketing Board for stocking paddy that was being purchased from the Maha harvest. There was another tender by the Building Materials Corporation for the supply of 1000 tons of barbed wire. There too we wanted the tenderers to be present at the time of opening of the tenders. This situation was historic because the tender had been cancelled on account of the very high quotations made for the supply. But the Building Materials Corporation was directed to conform to the general rule for public tenders that representatives of the tenderers should be permitted to be present at the opening of the tenders. It will be noted that in all these cases the mistake was made in the procedure adopted. The Hon. Member for Gampaha also alleged that in one instance one tenderer's tender price had been known to another before the tender was finalised.

Mr. S. D. Bandarayake: The newspapers reported that.

Mr. R. Premadasa: That does not arise. The president has laid down a new procedure with the concurrence of the Cabinet in regard to tenders. All tenders to the value of Rs. 1 million and more should be reported to the Cabinet in the first instance. The Cabinet will thereafter appoint a Board of three Secretaries who will be responsible for all matters concerning the tender including the preparation of specifications, calling of tenders, ensuring that the general rules of tender procedures are followed, evaluating the tenders, selecting the successful tenderer and reporting the matter to the Cabinet through the Minister concerned. In this manner it

is expected that all tenders the value of which is over Rs. 1 million will be adequately processed in accordance with the general rules relating to tenders."

All this is extremely good, but Quidnuncs say that the atmosphere in the city is full of rumours and gossip about the tenders and orders for (a) locomotives; (b) railway coaches or carriages from Rumania; (c) two-wheeled tractors from Japan; and (d) fertiliser tenders; etc. etc.

It is known in political circles that the four tenders referred to in the Observer story and some others referred to in the NSA are not the only ones that have come under the axe. The INDEPENDENT, 11/5/78, had a front page lead under the heading PRESIDENT—"NO LOCKHEED SCANDALS HERE..... NO MORE CUTS". The report read; "The alleged offer of Rs. 1,000,000 commission or cut by an East European National to influence the large scale sale of an essential commodity to Sri Lanka has provoked President J. R. Jayewardene to issue a blanket warning against any under-the-table deals in the future. Alerting his Ministers to his knowledge of such an offer as well as other offers, the President urged that a scandal like the Lockheed deal should not stain this Government. The UNP was committed, he said, to complete integrity and in order to ensure that all purchasing deals like tenders would be above board, he suggested that a Three Man Board, drawn from the Treasury, the Central Bank and a Permanent Secretary be appointed to process all tenders. Meanwhile the President has already stopped the granting of a few tenders on the basis that the procedures adopted were incorrect. He has announced that the strictest vigilance will in future be exercised on all purchases, irrespective of the status of the purchaser."

One of the "East European" tenders pending was the new

"order" for Rumanian railway coaches, but as it is unlikely that a socialist country would become involved in any Lockheed-type "cut"-giving, Quidnuncs are looking elsewhere in East Europe for the offending party. It is not known, however, whether this country is to be inflicted with a further batch of Rumanian coaches as it was under the LSSP Minister (1970-77). After the experience of the last order, the CGR should be more careful. There are queries about locomotives from a source in East Asia which is now the talk of the town. Has the Presidential guillotine already fallen on it? Tenders are sordid business and the sooner they are placed in charge of an independent board, the better for everyone concerned.

*AIR CEYLON. Quidnuncs have come up with a curious tale which is hard to believe, but in the Alice in Wonderful state of Sri Lanka anything is possible. A quidnunc reports that "the mother of a Director of Air Ceylon recently went to Singapore on a gratis ticket." The Quidnunc went on to say that "ever since the Commission was appointed to investigate into the affairs of Air Ceylon, gratis tickets to employees of Air Ceylon and the immediate members of their family had been suspended but the all-powerful Director was influential enough to overcome all obstacles and give his mother a gratis Dharmista ticket.." The Quidnunc further went on to say that the Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya branch of Air Ceylon has protested in writing to the Minister of Aviation (Shipping and Tourism) and Chairman in Air Ceylon. It would appear that some enthusiasts had even posted a copy of the letter on the notice board of Air Ceylon re the issue of a gratis ticket to the mother of a Director.

Tribune efforts to investigate this matter more thoroughly did not take the paper far. The clerk

in Air Ceylon who is said to have handled travel documents of this lady is no longer there. He seems to have been sent on "transfer"—union enthusiasts allege that the transfer was a punishment transfer apparently for letting the cat out of the bag. Union enthusiasts are willing to talk, but in the absence of the clerk who handled the documents some probing on a different level has become necessary. Employees of Air Ceylon naturally do not want to stick their necks out.

If the Chairman and Directors of Air Ceylon think that our *Quidnunc* has misled us with a false story or a slanted story on a half-truth, they are welcome to set out the full and true facts. *Tribune* will publish them to set the record straight.

In the meantime, *Aviation* has been taken over by the President from the Minister who is now left with Shipping and Tourism. This is just as well with 8 (or 6) multinationals trying hard to land the contract for "collaboration" with Air Ceylon—and its many routes to nearly all countries of the world is a big attraction. Some of these big names in international aviation have rich local agents who are powerful politically. Only Presidential power can probably withstand the lobbying tactics of the local agents of the foreign giants.

But whilst this matter engages the main attention of the President, he should also look into the small matter of the *gratis* ticket to a mother of a Director of Air Ceylon. If the story is incorrect—as it well might be—it should be "exposed" in the interests of Dharmista. But, if the story is correct—our *Quidnuncs* says it is—then the President should do something about preventing major Lockheed scandals—remember little drops of water make a mighty ocean.

○ ○ ○

LETTER

Estate Housing

Sir,

The *Ceylon Daily News* of 18.2.78 carried an Editorial on the "Estate Housing", as its sister-paper, the *Daily Mirror* had done on 4.11.77, under the title ONE-ROOM-MISERY.

The topic is one of meditation: *Jesus' Passion goes on there, and Jesus is still crucified today in our midst in the squalor of the line-room.* No tears shed in the presence of a church crucifix or of one of the 'stations' of our ways of the cross in any of our local Calvaries, will be truthful unless the same compassion is shown first and foremost to the living Christ, *crucified today in the flesh and bones of his people.*

To help such meditation on Jesus' passion today in the LINE-ROOMS, please allow me to quote a few passages from the *CDN* editorial:

"The squalid..degenerate..living conditions are one test of social justice. Estate labour has rarely had a square deal. Underpaid for decade upon decade, they have generally been herded in Line-rooms that are sometimes little better than tumble-down cattle sheds. They have blotted our landscape with rural slum-lands. Fetid, damp, cramped, dim and insect-infected as they are, most of our living quarters for workers on estates have been symbolic of the INHUMANITY they have suffered from down the ages..Our Plantation history (has) been like certain wild berries: WHITE BITTER AND POISONOUS."

Meantime the General of the Jesuits in a sermon at Padova (St. Anthony's town) last August 77, said, "Around us today if one tries to read the 'signs of the times', one could discern 'signs of DES-

PAIR rather than HOPE. I have just returned from a tour of Asia. In Sri Lanka, I had occasion to visit a "LINE" in a tea plantation. What is a LINE? A long, low line of small, dark rooms, one after the other, one per family, who live there in conditions dishuman for their poverty, sickness and famine. It is difficult to describe its horrors. It is more difficult to forget them. It was just one out of hundreds of them, the typical Estate housing for the immigrant Tamil Workers, almost a million, DEPRIVED OF EVERY RIGHT AND ASSISTANCE".

The Passion of Jesus is going on..there in the "LINES". Will a few new Cyreneuses and Verenicases come to HELP HIM..NOW?"

Rev. Fr. Pia Ciampa, SJ.

* * *

SNIPPETS

A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

* * *

Humility is a strange thing. The minute you think you've got it you've lost it.

* * *

Leisure is a beautiful garment but it will not do for constant wear.

* * *

People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges.

* * *

A poor man is not he who is without a cent but he who is without a dream.

* * *

Every man's work, whether it be literature or music or pictures or architecture or anything else, is always a portrait of himself, and the more he tries to conceal himself, the more clearly will his character appear inspite of himself.



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THE WORLD TODAY

More About Afghanistan

by The Recorder

Afghanistan continues to be in the news this week also. Very soon, it will slip back into the backwaters of the news horizon—until a new coup or something sensational takes place. But, for Sri Lanka, Afghanistan is important as the northernmost member of our regional grouping known as South Asia. Very little is known of Afghanistan—but the recent coup has brought to the forefront important background information.

The New Delhi weekly, *Mainstream*, summed up some of the salient background facts as follows:

"AFGHANISTAN has been a monarchy for a long time. Its population, estimated around 20 million including about three million tribals, is predominantly, Muslim. The religious leaders hold considerable sway over the population. In 1929, the Muslim religious leaders organised a revolt against King Amanullah to prevent his ideas about modernisation of Afghanistan, like introduction of monogamy, abolition of burquah, European clothing and English education, taking roots. Amanullah was expelled and power was taken over by an Afghan chief. This Afghan chief was very soon defeated by General Nadir Shah, who received full British backing and became the king. In 1933, Nadir Shah was assassinated. His son, Mohammed Zahir, then became the king.

"On July 17, 1973, a number of progressive young officers of the armed forces who wanted to take the country forward and break the shackles of the monarchy, revolted against Mohammed Zahir and overthrew his rule. They adop-

ted Mohammed Daoud as their leader and made him the President of the new republic. Afghanistan's socio-economic situation went on rapidly deteriorating. Afghanistan has 14 million hectares of arable land but only 4.5 million hectares are under cultivation. And that too, mostly under the control of feudal lords. The promised land reform by the Daoud government started only haltingly in 1976, three years after the monarchy was overthrown. But in this land reform, only part of the Government held land was touched; the land held by feudals remained as before. While distributing the government land, the land taxes were inordinately raised, making it virtually impossible for the small landholders or new allottees to maintain their holdings.

"Irrigation facility in Afghanistan is very poor and on top of that, the country was hit by two successive droughts. So much so that in November 1977 the annual food deficit had gone up to about 3.5 lakh tonnes. Daoud negotiated with India and as an emergency help, India agreed to give him 50,000 tonnes of foodgrains. The drought also hit the northern part of Afghanistan very badly and its pastures practically withered away. This resulted in large-scale slaughter of Afghanistan's famous karakul and other sheep since fodder could not be supplied. They contribute greatly to Afghanistan's national income and the killing of sheep was a big loss. The economy deteriorated fast and the country depended on foreign aid props for its survival. The seven-year plan which began in 1976 had a foreign aid component of 2.5 billion dollars—66 per cent of the entire plan allocation. Of this amount Iran promised to give 1.2 billion dollars. No wonder, Iran had a big say in Afghan affairs."

The recent changes in Kabul would not have roused as much interest as they did in official quarters in Colombo but for the fact the Co-ordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement was scheduled to meet in Kabul on May 6. At one time, it was suggested, when it was known that Kabul would not host the meeting, that it may be held in Colombo or at the UN Hqs. in New York. G. K. Reddy, in a New Delhi despatch to the *Hindu*, on May 5, analysed the reasons for the choice of Havana.

"The venue of the Co-ordination Bureau meeting, which was changed from Kabul to New York following the coup in Afghanistan, is being shifted now to Havana, since many of the non-aligned countries felt that it should be held in the capital of a member-State rather than at the headquarters of the United Nations. The Cuban offer to host the meeting was readily accepted by the Ambassadors of several countries representing the permanent working group of the non-aligned nations at the UN on the ground that the environment of New York would not be ideal for a meeting of this nature. The other non-aligned countries like India and Yugoslavia went along with the consensus based largely on African opinion. Though some of the non-aligned countries continue to be quite critical of the increasing Cuban involvement in Africa at the behest of the Soviet Union, the fact remains that Cuba has come to be looked upon by some sections of the African people as an eloquent symbol of the Third World's resurgence and its capacity to withstand big power pressures with singular determination.

"But the more conventional Afro-Asian societies are getting increasingly apprehensive of the militancy of some of the non-aligned nations that do not distinguish between intervention and in-

urgency, radicalism and revolution. The tragic happenings in Afghanistan, for example, have led to widespread concern in the non-aligned community largely because of the difficulty to differentiating between genuine popular upsurge against the dictatorial behaviour of the Daoud regime and the contrived class angle given to an avowedly military coup by the close identification of the marxist elements with it. A superficial assessment of this highly complex situation has induced many non-aligned countries to jump to the conclusion that it was not a wholly indigenous upheaval and see the hidden Soviet hand behind it. An equally disconcerting aspect of the coup in Afghanistan has been the tendency to take the dramatically opposite view that the US is bound to step in sooner or later to counter the Soviet influence. There are some non-aligned countries which are imagining that the US would encourage Iran and Pakistan to adopt a tough attitude towards Afghanistan in the name of stemming communist expansionism in this vital region.

"This very attempt to contain the new Soviet influence in Afghanistan could involve these two neighbouring countries in a forum of interventionist politics for exerting pressures that are bound to prove counter-productive and even provocative to the point of stepping up animosities and generating further tensions. The founder members of the non-aligned movement like India and Yugoslavia, which are anxious to insulate it from such external pressures, are very particular that the Co-ordination Bureau should steer clear of any direct involvement in controversies of this nature. They do not subscribe to the theory that Afghanistan has been brought under complete Soviet dominance, nor do they want to be a party to the infusion of ideological overtones

into nationalist upheavals in countries with deeply unsettling social problems.

"The Co-ordination Bureau meeting in Havana has, thus come to acquire special importance because of these new developments. But it remains to be seen how many Foreign Ministers of the member countries are going to attend it, because of the attempts to advance the date. If the Bureau meeting is to be held by the middle of this month, a week earlier than the date agreed upon when the idea of changing the venue from Kabul to New York was mooted first, some of the Foreign Ministers might find it inconvenient to go all the way to Havana and then hang around in New York for the commencement of the special UN session on Disarmament. The interval is too short to return home and too long to wait for the start of the Disarmament conference."

To keep the record about current developments in Kabul up to date (before Afghanistan fades out of the news horizon) we will publish in this issue and in the next analytical articles and interpretative comment from Lahore and New Delhi and also reports by western news agencies.

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Change in Kabul

Lahore,

During his five years of uncontrolled power, following the ouster of King Zahir Shah, Sardar Daoud made no serious effort to consolidate his regime by giving it a popular base or an institutional infrastructure. When he assumed office in 1973 July, he had proclaimed the end of a "corrupt and effete Government, with its pseudo democracy based on personal and class interests which had taken Afghanistan to the edge of the

abyss." He and his friends, President Daoud proclaimed, would set up a republican State, introduce social reforms, and establish real democracy that would safeguard the rights of the people. However little was done to fulfil the pledges that had won him support and which had provided justification for the end of kingship. At long last, in February 1977, the Loi Jirga was summoned, but this held out no promise of a democratic transformation. It comprised notables nominated by the provincial governors, and happily elected Daoud as President for six years, adopted a constitution which vested most powers in the President, with little left for the two houses of parliament to be elected in 1979.

Therefore, not surprisingly, the one-man rule imposed on the country by President Daoud began to be regarded as a continuation of the Yusufzai dynasty under an altered label. Then, over the last year or two, Sardar Daoud seemed to be veering away from Kabul's traditional policies, seeking new alliances and friendships. Further, he had gradually started ridding himself of the friends and allies who had helped him to gain power; they felt they had been betrayed and misused. With democratic channels blocked, the challenge to Sardar Daoud's rule could only come through the barrel of the gun. Five attempts at a counter-coup were reportedly made over as many years, before the persistence of his opponents succeeded ten days ago in toppling the regime. The last act of the drama started and ended in bloodshed. It all began with the unexplained assassination of a popular trade-union leader. The murder provoked angry protests in defiance of the ban on processions and meetings. The biggest demonstration, on the occasion of the assassinated leader's funeral, was preceded by a round-up

of political elements now hostile to the regime. The denouncement came with a pre-emptive strike at midday by the armed forces, spearheaded by the tank corps and the air force. It was meant to—and successfully did—forestall government plans to wipe out all opposition groups.

The main leaders of the coup are not well known to the outside world, and it will be some time before their programme is made known and their policies can be appraised. However, the assumption of the office of President and Prime Minister by Mr. Nur Mohammed Tarraqui, as leader of the People's Democratic Party—formed recently by merging the country's main Leftist parties, the Parcham and the Khalq—is a clear enough indication of the direction of the wind of change in Afghanistan. The military commanders who masterminded the anti-Daoud coup have receded into the background, the revolutionary council which wields all power has been renamed, and the State will now be known as People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Seemingly, the new rulers intend to take forward the revolution that began in 1973 and bring about the essential political and social changes. Their ability to follow this path will have to be proved. Although Afghanistan has taken some hesitant, mopping steps towards the modern era, it remains, by and large, a backward tribal society. Education is confined to a small minority, and outside the major towns public opinion can still be swayed by the traditional leaders whose proclivities can be in little doubt. However, the new government seems to have obtained the full backing of the armed forces. Whether Afghanistan's first political regime will succeed in implementing its plans will depend largely on its ability to pull the country out of age-old stagnation. If the intro-

duction of a new policy is not unduly delayed, and if effective measures are taken to carry through the socio-economic reforms necessary to make life better for the workers and peasants, the ruling party should be able to create a strong base that will help to put the country on the road to stability and progress.

Lastly, the change in Kabul is bound to influence Afghanistan's relations with other countries and have a considerable impact on future political developments in the region. It will be possible to assess the likely changes only after the new government has outlined its foreign policy. Although the hasty labelling of regimes by Western publicists as pro-this or anti-that is seldom accurate, it is, for example, plain enough that Washington is worried. The United States' anxiety is betrayed by a State Department official's comment that, while formal recognition is not necessary after a change of government in any country, what is being considered is whether or not America will now maintain diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. Be that as it may, as far as Pakistan is concerned, we must continue with the policy of seeking friendly ties with our northern neighbour. It should be recalled that Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan had reached their lowest ebb during Sardar Daoud's prime ministership from 1953 to 1963. Later, when he took over as President, he had proclaimed that the only country with which Afghanistan had a major political problem was Pakistan. However, his attitude mellowed slowly, and over the last three years negotiations between our two countries had promised that past disputes and differences would be brought to an end. We earnestly hope that the new regime will evolve a more realistic policy towards Pakistan, so that we can cast aside

the legacy of hostility and confrontation and work together in friendly co-operation—for a brighter future for both States and their peoples. It is not yet clear whether the Pakistan Government considers that a formal demarche announcing its recognition of the new regime is necessary. If a formal step has to be taken, it should not be delayed in order to avoid misgivings. However, if no formal action is called for, this should be made known, so that relations between the two countries can continue to follow the existing pattern. And as soon as the new regime has settled down, Pakistan should find an appropriate occasion to reiterate its friendship for Afghanistan and its people, and take the initiative to resume negotiations and seek a settlement with the Afghan government that will guarantee peace, friendship and close co-operation.

—Editorial, *Viewpoint*, May 7, 1978.



Kabul Upsets Some

Islamabad,

The developments in Afghanistan since the overthrow of Nadir Shah dynasty on July 27 naturally occupied the mind of the people in Pakistan. It was primarily to discuss the successful coup in Kabul and its likely repercussions on politics at home that the Chief Martial Law Administrator, Gen. Ziaul Haq, contacted Mufti Mahmud on phone last Tuesday to bring his team to meet him in Lahore the next day late at night at the end of a busy schedule earlier arranged for him in the city. The PNA chief then reached Nawabzada Hasrullah Khan, PNA vice-president, in Multan. The meeting was attended on the PNA side by Mufti Mahmud, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Jammat-i-Islami leader Mian Tufail Mohammed and Muslim League leader Ch. Zahur

Elahi, and on the Government side by the chief of the Election Cell, Lt. Gen. Faiz Ali Chshiti, and the MLA Punjab, Lt. Gen. Sawar Khan. Presumably it was in the context of developments in Afghanistan that the issue of the national government was discussed in the meeting. The PNA president later told Pressmen that his group had appraised the Government of its stand on the issue, and asked the journalists to contact the CMLA to ascertain whether the establishment of a national government was now a certainty.

But Mufti Mahmud reserved much of his comment for the situation in Afghanistan. He said that the happenings in the neighbouring country had saddened the entire nation and 'they' (the PNA) had reason to be concerned about it. He volunteered the remark that "the ruthlessness and cussedness with which the revolution was pursued brought back the memories of atrocities of the Middle ages. He said the developments in Afghanistan could have an impact on the neighbouring countries. The PNA leader stressed that strict watch should be kept on "secular and anti-Pakistan elements". Nawabzada Nasrulla Khan, otherwise a discreet statesman, too, seemed worried about the developments across the border. "Communism has come up to the threshold of our country", he said, "We should be vigilant". Later, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan told a journalist that the PNA had advised the CMLA against recognising the new government in Afghanistan for the time being. He said that with the backing of international communism a tiny minority had imposed its rule on the great majority of the Afghan people. That was unbearable to the people of India and Pakistan, he said.

The PNA vice-president said that the PNA had made it clear to the CMLA that in view of the grave

danger to Pakistan following the Kabul revolution, the ban on political activities should be lifted as soon as possible. He disclosed that the interim government was prepared to allow what he called "practicable" political activities. The CMLA-PNA briefing session was followed by a get together of PNA leaders on Thursday to discuss the outcome of their talks with the CMLA and his team. It is learnt that the Tehrik-i-Istiqal was now willing to join the proposed national government. The CMLA had met Asghar Khan in Abbotabad before coming to Lahore to have a session with the PNA. The PNA's reaction completely ignored the new Kabul Government's repeated statements which categorically denied the Western propaganda about large-scale killings or that the recent developments were foreign-inspired or that the change of government was brought about by 'irreligious' elements. Apparently the PNA's over-reaction was motivated by a desire to create a scare situation in which they could instal themselves into the proposed national Government on their own terms.

—Viewpoint, May, 1978.

Kabul Refutes Foreign Stories

Peshawar,

Following the overthrow of Daoud's regime last week, the situation in Kabul has finally quietened down. The new regime, headed by former journalist Noor Mohammad Tarraki, is apparently in full control. While reports from across the border do indicate that a tussle is still going on in a few "pockets" by and large it seems Afghanistan has gone through a complete resolution which has

put an end to what it described "all signs of the Nadir Khan period." Besides the death of Sardars Daoud and Naeem and some members of the royal family and the disappearance of some, all movable and immovable properties of the Nadir dynasty have been confiscated. This was perhaps the first major decision taken at the opening meeting of the new Afghan Cabinet. According to Radio Kabul, these properties had been accumulated in violation of Islamic and human values and at the cost of the blood and sweat of workers and other people of Afghanistan who had been looted by the Nadir Khan family. The confiscated properties belonged to Sardar Mohammed Daoud, Sardar Mohammad Naeem, Sardar Shah Wali, Sardar Shah Mahmud and Sardar Mohammad Hashim. "These properties stand restored to the people of Afghanistan", the Radio said.

Eyewitness accounts of the upheaval in Kabul, by visitors reaching here, reveal that the Daoud regime tried its best to "crush" the revolution but got crushed itself. In the process, however, a large number of human lives were lost on both sides. Obviously it was a struggle for existence in which the revolutionary forces were operating in the name of the people of Afghanistan while the regime in power derived all its strength from the same old clique which had once formed a "strong wall" around King Shah. For the people in Kabul and in other parts of Afghanistan, as well as in the world outside what happened in the Afghan capital on April 27 was a sudden development. It was, however, perfect in so far as the "Inqilabi shoorā" was concerned. There was no indication of the thrust anywhere and life was normal when fighting around the palace was over. Dagarwal Abdul Qadir, number two man in the

Afghan Air Force, who has since been included in Tarraqi's Cabinet as Defence Minister, and who had been demoted by Sardar Daoud, emerged as the first major force behind the coup but, gradually, civilians like Noor Mohammed Tarraqi and Babrak Karmal came into the forefront. Those who know something about Tarraqi and Babrak say that they have all along advocated left of centre policies. In a statement broadcast by Radio Kabul, Mr. Tarraqi has repudiated the suggestion that April 27 events were foreign-inspired. He said a malicious campaign had been launched by some foreign agencies to mislead the common people. Afghanistan had entered a new phase of its history due to the revolution and that power now rested with democratic, patriotic and progressive forces.

—Viewpoint, May 7, 1978

Upheaval In Afghanistan

New Delhi,

Events in Afghanistan have caused considerable anxiety in several capitals. Mark the hesitancy in Washington and London to accord recognition to the new Government in that rugged land of rugged men. While Moscow has been the first country to recognise the Government of the Revolutionary Council of Afghanistan, USA is considering whether it should at all continue future diplomatic relations with Kabul and the British have kept the request for recognition pending for the time being. In anything, such postures do give an impression of unpreparedness on the part of the masterminds of reactionary coups and rebellions in different parts of the world.

India, situated so close to the events, could not just brush aside the swift developments in Afgha-

nistan. There was a meaningful silence in the Foreign Office to begin with. No comments came from the spokesman in the South Block, till the reports from the Indian Embassy in Kabul made it clear that the changes there did not affect India-Afghanistan relations. In an interview in New Delhi, Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said: "There is no anxiety whatsoever in our minds about the change that has taken place in Afghanistan. There is nothing in it which can be considered detrimental to India. It would be a different matter if the toppling of the regime had been engineered or had been brought about by forces inimical to our interests."

As more reports pour in, certain things are becoming clear despite the efforts of some to seek answers to "many unanswered questions." It is not a question of who master-minded the operation or who timed it, but why did the people so readily and in such huge numbers join in the struggle to overthrow the Daoud regime? It should be evident—hind-sight, if you like—that the atmosphere in Afghanistan and particularly in Kabul, was surcharged with anti-Daoud feelings. It required only a spark to kindle the flames. The anger of the people had been roused by the murder of their respected trade union leader, Mir Akbar Khyber, popularly known as "Ustad", on April 16. Nearly a hundred thousand people demonstrated in protest and denounced the CIA as also SAVAK of Iran. The isolation of the Daoud regime was so great that it paid no heed to this protest, but instead arrested some of the people's leaders. That was the spark needed for the conflagration that destroyed the five-year old regime.

In 1973, when Daoud ousted his brother-in-law Zahir Shah the people of Afghanistan hailed the

end of the centuries-old monarchy and hoped for an end to feudal exploitation. Known to be among the poorest countries of the world, with little of industry and weak agricultural production, its sturdy Afghan population had expected a better turn in their lives. But nothing tangible happened and their hopes gradually turned into frustration and disillusionment. Daoud did speak of transforming this backward, tribal society by a new economic order. In fact, certain steps were being taken in the beginning to bring it about. But by 1976, the slideback started even before any perceptible change in the life of the people could be discerned. The Daoud regime did take a formal stand in support of non-alignment, joined other Third World countries in opposing imperialism and neocolonialism and generally took its position along with the developing world for positive economic betterment of the people.

However, as has been proved in many countries, including ours, mere foreign policy postures do not help solve domestic crises. So did Daoud fail to meet the rising expectations of the people through inaction on the domestic economic front and resorted increasingly to punitive methods to suppress people's discontent. Undoubtedly, the people received the guidance of an organised political group now known as the People's Democratic Party. In the absence of any open political activity under the monarchy and then under the Daoud regime, it will perhaps take some more time to know how such a well-knit political organisation has developed. But one thing is clear. The PDP not only has a social base, as shown by the huge support it mobilised in Kabul and elsewhere, but also recognisable influence among the armed forces and other services, however small may be its actual membership.

In a somewhat different context, F. Engels analysing the situation in Russia in 1885, wrote: "In these circumstances, the country is like a charged mine which only needs a match applied to it. This is one of the exceptional cases where it is possible for a handful of people to make a revolution, that is, by giving a small impetus to cause a whole system which (to use a metaphor of Plekhanov's) is in more than liable equilibrium, to come crashing down and by an action, in itself insignificant, to release explosive forces that afterwards become uncontrollable." When a New Delhi spokesman of the PDP recounted the events in Afghanistan—it is not a coup, but a revolution—probably this is what he was explaining.

It is too early to say if the new Afghanistan Government will not encounter any difficulties with its neighbours in the south-west, Iran, and south east, Pakistan. If one were to keep in mind that angry demonstrations were staged in Kabul against the Iranian secret police—SAVAK—for its meddling in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, one cannot expect an open-arm welcome from Teheran for the PDP Government. Pakistan's official reaction to the new Government in Kabul is not known till the time of writing. However, with the possibility of the revival of the Paktoonistan demand (which Daoud had skilfully suppressed), it might not find favour with the Martial Law regime either.

Thus, in all, the PDP Government will have its hands full, externally as well as internally, for quite some time to come. But the stability and strengthening of the new regime will mainly depend upon how fast the Government is able to move to take tangible measures to relieve the people of misery and privation. It is quite on the cards that the new Government will press upon all friendly

countries to come forward and help in the rehabilitation of the near-collapsing economy. India, for instance, has signed a number of agreements to co-operate in the developmental activities in Afghanistan. The PDP Government, in all probability, will ask India to expedite processing and implementation of these agreements.

—Sara I Patra

—Mainstream, May 6, 1978

WHITE PAPER ON EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS—4

Amendments Essential

—In The National Interest—
by A Special Correspondent

A Special Correspondent, in a series of four articles, examines some of the objectionable features of the Government's *White Paper on Employment Relations*. We invite comments from our readers not only on the *White Paper*, but also on the views put forward in this series of articles.

In the light of the observations I have made I wish to submit some suggestions for consideration, and perhaps discussion on a wider forum through the columns of the *Tribune*:

(a) Whenever a service is declared to be an essential service, such declaration shall be reported to the NSA by the Minister of Labour who shall give reasons why such a step was deemed necessary. The House will want a debate, and this will provide the forum for members to place their views before the House depending on the facts disclosed by the Minister of Labour. Thus,

both Management and Union will be able to have their voices heard through the members of the House. There has been ample testimony to the sensitivity of the House to public opinion after 21.07.77.

(b) Simultaneously with that declaration, a "cooling off period" should also be prescribed, permitting employees every opportunity to mould opinion.

(c) Management should be compelled by Law to commence negotiations immediately during this "cooling off period."

(d) Provision should be made in the Law for binding arbitration.

(e) In the event of no solution being in sight during the "cooling off period", recourse to the provisions of the Business Acquisition Act should be available.

(f) Provision should be made in Law requiring Unions to obtain a mandate from the General Membership, by Secret Ballot, in the need or otherwise of a Strike prior to undertaking it. The Employees Council should be empowered to conduct this referendum. A 2/3 rd majority of the total membership should be necessary for a strike to be authorised. It is surprising that this provision is not included in the draft Law.

If this nation is to survive and live in dignity and equality in the comity of nations, it is time that we stop running round the world seeking aid to bridge one budget gap or another—this is the spectacle that is unfolding before our eyes almost daily. Thus, in terms of national priorities, enhancement of production and productivity takes precedence over all else. Do we want to be a nation of beggars?

What do the Unions, and Management, say to this?

Does the management want to drive the employee into a corner from where he will hit back, and hit hard, because he will by then have nothing more to lose. Is the worker demanding benefits only for himself without due regard to the main motive of every business undertaking that profit is its motive and that its success would enhance his own prospects.

"Man is the best of animals when perfect. But when he is separated from Law and Order is the worst of all" according to Aristotle. Even the Minister of Finance referred to Aristotle in his budget speech. Government has got to be firm, because firmness in the right is indispensable for industrial peace.

If Government does not propose to make any amendments to section 31, it will not be possible to consider amendments to sections 32 to 35. If therefore as suggested in the preceding paragraph a "cooling off period" can be provided for in section 30, and consequential concession permitted in section 31, then the harshness of sections 32 to 35 will be relieved.

The possibility envisaged in the last paragraph at page 8 of the memorandum by the Centre for Society and Religion which reads as follows is disturbing. I am confident that the strong Government we have today will be big enough to listen to the workers and not brush aside the danger inherent in driving discontent underground:

"The government's policy may be self-defeating if the prohibition of strikes has the impact of making trade unions more militant and better organised and when they decided to embark on illegal strikes. This policy may also help send dissent underground and thus cause more tension and disruption in Sri Lanka society than we have known in the past 30 years."

There is a point up to which even a worker can perhaps be bullied. Government can be powerful, but how magnanimous and honest Lloyd George was in 1919. Our own Government is not incapable of such courage. John L. Lewis, the late labour leader in the USA remarked once "You cannot mine coal with bayonets." And more recently, a White House staffer of the Carter administration groaned "Trying to be tough with the Union is like trying to be tough with a bowl of jelly."

The chords of moderation struck by Prime Minister Premadasa and the note of conciliation evident in the communique issued by the Ministry of Labour are clear overtures to the Trade Unions and to others who mould public opinion, that Government is prepared to listen and to negotiate on aspects of the draft Law that needs amendment.

It will be very foolish for the Unions to mistake this for weakness, because the Government is now led by very strong and capable men, who would much rather go home than ruin the country—they have said so in public.

EMPLOYEES COUNCIL, ELECTORAL BOARD AND CONCILIATION COMMITTEE

Section 59(2) casts upon the Chairman of the Council an unconscionable burden. It is bad enough to give him a vote, but to require him to exercise a casting vote as well, renders his position invidious. In case of a tie, the decision should be taken by the toss of a coin. Would it also not be in the interests of equity to require by law to make the voting by secret ballot?

I have recommended earlier in this article that no strike should be commenced without obtaining a mandate from the General Membership of the Trade Union, and that the onus of obtaining this mandate should be placed on the Employees

Councils. If this suggestion finds acceptance, an additional sub-section (e) will be needed to section 71 of the Law.

What is the need for section 75 (2)? Would it not be possible for the management sector elected on the basis of proportional representation to this Council to speak on behalf of the Management? In the interests of the proceedings of the Council, this section should be deleted. It may however be made a mandatory requirement for any employee of the undertaking to appear before the Council and give evidence, if the Council so requires. A further sub-section (f) to section 74 can secure this.

The fly in the ointment is found in sections 76 and 77. Though I have no claims to legal training, I am afraid sections 76 and 77 have all the hallmarks of *ad hoc* drafting. These two sections could very well be combined and made less confusing. The decisions of the Conciliation Committee under both sections "shall be binding on the employer, the Council and the employees in the undertaking". This responsibility is overwhelming and formidable. Therefore the composition of the Committee should be such as to inspire confidence.

But what do we see? Section 76 (2) gives the right to the employer to nominate an "equal number" to those nominated by the Employees Council. The net result would be that the employer will have stronger representation on the Committee than the employee, because, on the Council itself, management will already have found representation. This will result in this Committee losing its credibility—the basic tenet that institutions dispensing justice should not only do so but also appear to do so will be conspicuous by its absence.

Therefore section 76(2) would seem to need amendment so that the Conciliation Committee will consist of persons only nominated by the Employees Council.

It is hardly surprising that so much opposition has been generated against the Law proposed because section 76 has introduced "a basic fundamental change in the industrial relations system...and that the net result of the new system will be to reduce the bargaining power of the employee and subject his future to the goodwill of the employer."

I cannot but agree with the comments of the Centre for Society and Religion at page 11 of its memorandum that "we also feel that this proposal goes counter to the legal and social developments in the country over the last fifty years, developments the intent of which was to strengthen the hand of the weak against the powerful."

In its over enthusiasm to create conditions favourable for the promotion of production and productivity, the framers of the Law appear to have sacrificed the fundamental principles of employer-employee relations which have been developed over the years and enshrined in the labour legislation in this country and received the approbation of the ILO. Section 77 (4) should provide for reference to a Labour Tribunal by either party to any dispute, if the order of the Committee is found to be unacceptable. It would be an enormous injustice to the worker to permit this section to remain in its present form.

Section 77(5) seems to be an afterthought. As a result it has all the ingredients of hasty legislation. A grievance of a Trade Union or an employee is no joke. It could possibly be one to the management, but certainly it cannot be so to the worker. It is a matter

for speculation why the Employees Council is given absolute and final authority to determine whether the grievance of the employee or the Trade Union is well founded or not and worse still to make such decision "binding on the Council, the employee and the employer."

It is amusing also to note that this sub-section makes the decision taken by the Council binding on itself! Quite apart from this frivolity, this decision of the Council under this sub-section should not under any circumstances be made final and binding on anybody. If either the Trade Union or employee is not prepared to accept the Council decision under this section—77(5) —it is my view that section 77(4) should be activated with the further provision that an appeal shall lie to a Labour Tribunal as suggested earlier.

EMPLOYEES TRUST FUND.

This is an extremely welcome proposal. The Ministry of Labour deserves the thanks of the workers for introducing this proposal. But what is not clear, in the absence of any provision, is the purpose for which the Fund may be utilised. This is a lacuna that should be remedied.

Section 90 of the draft Law suffers from the lack of clarity. This is shown below indicating also in what respects this infirmity does injury to the Law itself:

sub-section (1) who are the 'members' referred to?

sub-section (2) What happens if the Minister is not prepared to accept the Chairman elected by the Board administering this Fund? If the Board is not prepared to change its decision, in fact, how can it, there will be a confrontation between the Minister and the Board. The more prudent course would be for the Minister to have nothing to do with this particular matter.

sub-section (3) The words "without assigning any reason" makes the Minister autocratic. If the Minister removes any member from the Board, it should be made mandatory for him to report the reasons thereof to the NSA.

sub-section (4) The Council too should not have the power to remove its own nominee "without assigning any reason". In the event of the Council wishing to remove such a nominee, it should report to the Minister who should have the power to remove such member and thereafter report to the NSA.

sub-section (7) Why should not the provisions of sub-sections (1) and (2) not become operative?

GENERAL. The observations I have made in this article on some aspects of the proposed Employment Relations Law are made in the hope that it would provoke further thinking. This major legislation will lose much meaning if in the heat of debate and controversy, the perspectives are blurred.

There is nothing to indicate that there has been discussion with Trade Unions and Management prior to the preparation of the White Paper. If my presumption is correct, it has been an unfortunate miscalculation. For instance, the Ministry of Justice declared recently that the Administration of Justice Law and other statutes would be amended only in consultation with the legal profession. In point of fact a highly publicised Seminar was held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, and without doubt, the task of the Legal Draftsman and the decision makers would have been much simplified by that Seminar, quite apart from ensuring the creation of a climate conducive to the exercise.

Would the Ministry of Labour take a lesson from this precedent and have the foresight and wisdom to start an immediate dialogue with the institutions that are going to be affected by the proposed Law? If this is done the task of the NSA will be rendered much simpler and the honourable members of the House will be able to examine the Law without emotion.

In concluding I think it is worth quoting in full what the Memorandum of the Centre for Society and Religion has said at page 12:

"One of the objectives behind the White Paper proposals appears to be the creation of a suitable environment of economic growth and for motivating workers in the interests of production and productivity. As far as motivating the workers is concerned, there are two methods of achieving this, one, the method of compulsion, either by rigid regimentation or by injecting an element of uncertainty regarding job-tenure, the other the method of involvement. The first concentrates on the negative aspects of the human psyche and assumes that he has to be forced to work; the second concentrates on the positive aspects and assumes that given a certain social environment he will find fulfilment in his work and joy in being a contributing member of his society. It may appear attractive to mix these two approaches—the traditional carrot and the stick—but ultimately the value systems of the society must determine which of these two is more appropriate"

The Employment Relations Law should be so framed so as to enable the Government to fulfil its determination to "lay the foundation for the creation of a New Society tomorrow for the young men and women of today" as set out in the UNP Election Manifesto.

Concluded.

"COMMUNAL" COMMUNISTS

A Gentle Reminder

—To The Communist Party—

by Roy Muthaya

In the April 22nd issue of *Tribune* in the *Editor's Notebook*, Mr. Pieter Keuneman's speech to the CPSL (Communist Party of Sri Lanka) in his capacity as re-elected General Secretary, has been reproduced in full.

Mr. Keuneman makes a comprehensive reference to the national minorities. In particular I was struck by the following passage from his speech. Says Mr. Keuneman.

"In this regard, our Party should take steps to restore the confidence which the national minorities had in us by frankly accepting and correcting certain rightist and opportunist errors, which disfigured our correct policy in the recent past and led to suspicions about what we really stood for. Examples of such mistakes are the incorrect position we adopted over the events of 8th January 1966 and our failure energetically and publicly to oppose not only the many discriminations that Tamil speaking minorities experience in their daily lives, but also the excesses of some of the security services in the North during the Emergency."

Thus does Mr. Keuneman try to explain away the role of the Communist Party whilst it was one of the limbs of a Coalition in which the SLFP and LSSP were the other two limbs. To refer to the stand which the CP adopted in those 'rightist' and 'opportunist' years merely as errors and mistakes would merit being termed the finest understatements of the year.

Let Mr. Keuneman think back to the period 1965-70 the years

of the National Government of Mr. Dudley Senanayake, which he formed with the Federal support. It is in this period that the Communist Party played its most inglorious role with reference to National Minorities in general and Tamils in particular. (These remarks also full apply to the LSSP).

To refresh Mr. Keuneman's memory, in the 1965 General Election the UNP won sixty six seats and the SLFP won forty one. The LSSP and CP won just a handful of seats. Both the UNP and the Coalition (this term is used to refer to the alliance of the SLFP, LSSP, and the CP) began wooing the FP as soon as the election was over. It is an undeniable fact that the Coalition made vigorous overtures to the FP in order to get its support and form the Government.

Unfortunately for the coalition the late Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam and the Federal Party threw in their lot with Mr. Dudley Senanayake.

This was the signal for the coalition to unleash one of the most spiteful, hate-filled and vicious campaigns against the Tamils till the United Front formed its Government in 1970.

This communal campaign was conducted against the Tamils principally by the Communists and the Sama Samajists. The leaders of these parties were (and still are) suave, urbane, London and Cambridge educated gentlemen who wouldn't descend to crude, communal levels. Therefore the parties used two instruments—instruments designed to reach the Sinhala rural masses. I am referring to the Sinhala dailies of these parties *Aththa* and *Janadina*.

Day after day these two papers kept on the pressure of a Tamil bogey taking over this land. Even a cursory glance at the front page banner headlines of these papers during the years 1965-70 will amply

demonstrate my charge. That they succeeded brilliantly is borne out by the results of the general elections of 1970.

Right at the beginning of the term of the National Government (1965) was raised the spectre of a **secret pact** dubbed the **Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pact**. The official agreement between Mr. Senanayake and Mr. Chelvanayakam was not accepted by the coalition. Despite the vigorous denial by the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake of the existence of such a secret pact, the *Aththa* kept in plugging this line—may be on the Goebbelian theory that a lie on constant repetition comes to be accepted as the truth. Up-to-date this Pact has not seen the light of day.

Every incident and every act of the National Government was twisted and distorted to make out that the Tamils had become dominant in the land. Let Mr. Keuneman go through the past issues of *Aththa* and see for himself whether the role of this paper was to rouse the Sinhala people against the Tamils and the National Government or not: (in fairness it must be stated that it is no longer so today).

I am sure Mr. Keuneman has not forgotten the 'thosai, masala vadai' slogans. The *Masala Vadai* line was initiated, propagated and throughout the period of the National Government sustained by the *Aththa* paper. This was gutter journalism at its worst.

When talk of District Councils was in the air, it was construed as division of the country. The *Aththa* and *Janadina* made out that Mr. Dudley Senanayake had capitulated to Federal demands. They built up formidable resentment in the Sinhala areas. August '77 could have recurred much earlier. Fortunately the Federalists had the good sense to drop the District Councils issue, thereby saving Mr. Dudley Senanayake considerable embarrassment.

There were a large number of by-elections during the period '65-70. But before a by-election some how or other the *Aththa* and *Janadina* succeeded in bringing to public focus some issue or other pertaining to the Tamils. This was done in such a diabolical manner as to give the impression that the Federalists had blackmailed the Government. The 'District Councils' issue was one such issue, already alluded to. Another was the 'Sinhala teachers to the North' issue. The *Aththa* started the controversy that Federalists will never permit Sinhala teachers to the North. Using great powers of persuasion Mr. Senanayake persuaded the Federalists not to oppose Sinhala teachers to the North, as it was embarrassing the Government. Mr. Senanayake thought that he had won a great victory. But the next day *Aththa* carried banner headlines—*Sinhala teachers to the North, only with Federalists' permission.* This was the kind of diabolical chicanery the *Aththa* indulged in, day after day, much to the discomfort of the late Mr. Senanayake.

One can go on at great length on the manner in which the Communist Party used its Sinhala paper to damage the Tamil speaking people. Of course the Party's English and Tamil papers sang quite a different song.

Even Mr. Thondaman was not spared. It was alleged that the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact was changed to suit Thondaman. A massive meeting was held on Bogambara, Kandy, in which it was asserted that Dudley had betrayed the Kandyan Provinces to the Indian Tamils in the manner in which the Sirima-Shastri pact was being implemented. But so far no visible proof of such a betrayal has been forthcoming.

It was sickening to witness the spectacle of the intrepid, one time champions of the minorities des-

cending to these levels. As for January 8th 1966, the day the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act was passed, the Coalition leaders went to the Vihara Maha Devi Park to take an oath to protect the language, culture and religion—from whom?

Mr. Edmond Samarakkody was the only leftist who had the courage to say that what was offered to the Tamil speaking people on January 8th 1966 was an insult to them; they deserved much more. And it was in this innocuous bit of legislation that Mr. Keuneman and his party saw a threat to the language, culture and religion of the majority.

Mr. Keuneman also eloquently refers to the discrimination against Up-country Tamils of Indian Origin. One is constrained to ask Mr. K. 'What did you do about this when you were a Cabinet Minister?'

To put it in a nutshell, the Tamils supported the UNP to form the Government in 1965. Therefore the easiest way to discredit the UNP was to fan the flames of anti-Tamil feelings in the country. This the Communist Party did with a vengeance, using its Sinhala daily *Aththa* very effectively.

After more than a decade, when he is no longer in the Cabinet, after a crushing parliamentary defeat, Mr. Keuneman sees the light.

If ever 1965 repeats itself how will Mr. Keuneman and his party react? Will he once again sacrifice principle on the altar of expediency or will he still concede that the national minorities suffer from disabilities and the up-country Tamils of Indian origin have to face almost inhuman discrimination?

Or as Marxists are alleged to: will he merely shrug and say 'After all the end justifies the means!'

+ + +

KARAINAGAR HINDU COLLEGE

A Just Grievance

—that must be set right—

We publish below copies of five letters which tell a story. They deal with the problem of the transfer and "demotion" of the Principal of the Karainagar Hindu College, Mr. K. K. Nadarajah. From all information available to us it was motivated by petty personal "political" reasons. The Principal was punished, we learn, for not inviting a VIP presently in a position of vantage to a school function—and not even UNP VIPs in the North seem to be able to secure redress for what is obviously (and undoubtedly) a grave injustice.

As far as we can see the question at issue is not strictly a party or even a political issue—it seems to have emanated from personal pique! The hierarchy of the TULF will do well to see that injustice is not perpetrated on any individual, or a group, or a particular area, and that the human rights they are demanding for the community, or the Tamil "nation", are not denied to persons in their midst who do not slavishly follow every whim and fancy of TULF tyros! If the TULF wants to unite the Tamil people, it must rise above petty personal sectarian considerations.

The government must also not fall victim to the opportunism of bi-communal political expediency by throwing on the dust-heap of discrimination schoolmasters and principals after slaughtering them on the sacrificial altar of transfers and demotions—in the belief that it is possible to catch the whale with a bait of small shrimps!

We are aware that we will be told that there are many sides to a question. There may be—but there cannot be any defence for the punishment, transfer and demotion meted out to the person who was

Principal of the Karainagar Hindu College, one of the premier educational institutions of the North.

The Minister of Education, we hope will soon redress this grievance which has begun to snowball through the peninsula to reach even the *Tribune*. All the letters we publish below and more have, we understand, been made available to the Minister. It is also significant that the Regional Director of Education has "transferred" many qualified persons to take over as Principal of the Karainagar Hindu College, but so far every one of them has declined to accept the post, in view of the injustice done to Mr. K. K. Nadarajah. The school is now without a Principal, and the least the Minister can do is to re-instate Mr. Nadarajah. No question of governmental prestige is involved. On the other hand, prestige will accrue to government because the principles of Dharmista will be practised to set right a wrong.

—Editor.

* * *

Dear

A great injustice seems to have been done to Mr. Nadarajah Principal of Karainagar Hindu College. He has been transferred as Asst. Teacher to Vaddukkoddai Hindu College. The P.T.A. is very disturbed over it. We shall be grateful if you will kindly cancel his transfer.

Thanking you,

R. R. Nalliah,
District Organiser,
U.N.P. Northern Province

* * *

UNITED NATIONAL PARTY
Vaddukkoddai Electorate,
(Regd. No. 75)
Sangarathai,
Vaddukkoddai.

Hon. Nissanka Wijeyaratne,
Minister of Education,
Colombo.

Dear Minister,

Mr. K. K. Nadarajah B.Sc., Dip-in Education has been the Principal of J/Karainagar Hindu College for the last three years. His College produced the best results in the Jaffna peninsula in the G.C.E. Advanced Level in 1977. His sudden transfer to J/Vaddukkoddai Hindu College as Asst. Teacher has been a big blow to the steady progress of J/Karainagar Hindu College and I understand that the P.T.A.; Teacher Guild and the O.B.A. (College branch) have sent petitions to you protesting against this sudden transfer. Our party branches in the Electorate feel that a great injustice has been done and therefore make a humble request that he be transferred back to his old school.

Thanking you,

N. Ratnasingham,
Ex UNP Candidate,
Chief Organiser.

* * *

Old Boy's Association,
Karainagar Hindu College,
Colombo Branch,
19.01.78.

The Hon. Minister of Education,
Malay Street,
Colombo.

Dear Sir,

We have to inform you that Mr. K. K. Nadarajah who is special Grade I holder, Science Graduate & Diploma in Education, is Principal of J/Karainagar Hindu College. He

has produced best results in the G.C.E. Adv. Level Last Exam. He is transferred by the Regional Director of Jaffna as Asst. Teacher to J/Vaddukkodai Hindu College. We humbly request you to cancel this Regional Director's transfer & allow him to continue as Principal of the College for some time at least in the interest of the College.

Thanking you,

V. Keetheeswarathasan,
Hony. Secretary.

* * *

Teachers Guild,
J/Karainagar Hindu College
Karainagar.
13.01.1978.

Minister of Education,
Malay Street,
Colombo 2.

"Thro"
The Director of Education,
Jaffna.

Sir,

Transfer of Mr. K. K. Nadarajah

We the following members of the Teacher's Guild of J/Karainagar Hindu College wish to express our deep concern over the transfer of our former principal Mr. K. K. Nadarajah. In this connection, permit us to submit the following facts for your perusal. Mr. K. K. Nadarajah was an efficient amiable and hard-working principal who won the esteem and co-operation of both the teachers and the students. Thereby he was able to run the administration of the school smoothly. It was during his period that a new block of 7 classrooms, and a new laboratory were constructed to find accomodation for the increasing number of students. Even now a new adminstration block is being constructed. These bear amply testimony to his untiring service.

Before he took over as principal, not a single student entered the Medical Faculty or Engineering Faculty. But it is to the credit of Mr. K. K. Nadarajah that about 100 students qualified for admission to the university of which 7 entered during his short stay as principal here. Mr. Nadarajah was a dedicated principal whose primary concern was the uplift of the school. Although his term of office was short, the school saw far-reaching improvements. We feel, Sir, that this transfer, has been effected at a very short notice purely for political reasons. Hence, we earnestly request you Sir, to appoint Mr. Nadarajah again as our principal.

President

K. Nadarajah,
Secretary

- N. Amurthalingam
- I. N. Sathiamoorthy, 2. S. Sivagnanam; 3. S. J. Sathasivalu; 4. K. M. Selvaratnam; 5. K. Ponniah; 6. K. Rajaratnam; 9. E. Devedranatha; 8. T. Balasingam; 10. Y. Arumugam; 11. P. Ramupillai; 12. R. Nablalshy; 13. Y. Somasundaram; 14. N. Murugeru; 15. S. Shanmuganatha; 16. V. Tharmarielan; 17. B. M. Thangarajah; 18. B. Rasanayagam; 19. K. Nadarajah; 20. S. Arumainayakam; 21. P. Selvaratnam;

* * *

Parents Teachers' Association,
J/Karainagar Hindu College,
Karainagar,
30.01.1978.

Hon'ble Minister of Education,
Ministry of Education,
Malay Street,
Colombo.

Respected Sir,

**Transfer of Mr. K. K. Nadarajah
Performing Principal**

With reference to the unanimous decision taken at the General meeting of the Parent Teachers'

Association of J/Karainagar Hindu College held on 25.01.1978 at the school, I wish to submit the following facts for your kind consideration and early action.

Mr. K. K. Nadarajah B.Sc., Dip. Ed., Grade I Special Post Holder, the Performing Principal of the school has been transferred as assistant Teacher to J/Vaddukkodai Hindu College, w.e.f. 1.1.1978. The P.T.A. of the school is deeply grieved over the transfer.

Mr. K. K. Nadarajah, during his term of three years and two months as a principal at this school, has done a wonderful service for the upliftment of the school. Under him the school has produced best results in G.C.E. A/L Examinations and a good number of students have entered the University. N.C.G.E. results of the school had been the best in the Circuit. Our school won the First Place in the Circuit Athletic meet and during his time we have put up seven new classrooms, a modernised Chemistry Lab, a double unit H.N.C.E. Lab., and a new double storeyed Administration Block is nearing completion. He spent much of his time practically from 6.00 A.M. to 8.00 P.M. for the school. It is a pity that such an efficient Principal is transferred as an assistant Teacher.

We therefore request you, humbly, to cancel this transfer to keep him as Principal of our college for a further period.

Thanking you,

Sgd. Secretary,

c.c. to D.E., N.R., Jaffna,
Mr. T. Thirunavukkarasu M.P.,
Vaddukkodai.



CARAVAN FAMILY—9

More About
Trinco

by Ina Trimmer

Daddy returned in high spirits. "Where are the children?" he asked.

"In the sea, still bathing", answered mummie.

Varuni, Ranjit and Nila came running up.

"It's lovely. The water is so warm", said Varuni "but the stones hurt our feet. I wish there was sand."

"Tomorrow morning I'll take you to a marvellous place. There are scores of perfect bathing beaches in Trinco, Sandy Cove, Dutch Bay, Back Bay and many others you'll be able to do some underwater swimming too".

Varuni forget she was as wet as a mermaid and flung her arms round daddy.

"Oh, thank you daddy."

"O-o-o get along with you and change. You are wet."

They climbed to Jason's top deck from where they had a wider view of the harbour, and sipped iced drinks while they talked.

"Tomorrow morning an old pal of mine will send his car to take us around. He was delighted to see me and begged me to use his car while we are here" said Daddy.

"We'll make an early start. There's lots to do and more to see. Trinco is very ancient, more so perhaps than any other part of Ceylon. It's not every country that has had a temple, so old, that it's almost impossible even to guess its real age.

"Tomorrow I'll show you where one of the most ancient temples of the world stood. It's still spoken of as the temple of a thousand col-

umns, but now there only a few carved stones left, because the Portuguese broke it down to use the materials for their fortifications."

It was pleasant under the sheltering trees, with the vast inner harbour before them, and a million lights twinkling far across the water.

Next morning a large car came to take them out sight-seeing. As they followed the curving drive, with Orr's Hill on the left, and the sea close on the right, they saw for the first time the beauty and the wonder of the inner harbour.

"It's like a lake", said Ranjit. "There are no waves, only tiny up and downs."

"That's because there's land all round, except for the narrow opening you can see far away" and that too has an island in the middle."

"That round one with a light-house?"

"Yes", answered daddy.

"It's known as Round Island. It guards the entrance to the harbour. The depth there is close on two miles, but in some places, they say, you cannot touch the bottom because the inner harbour is supposed to be the crater of a volcano. It's so enormous that the whole British Navy can be accommodated within. Owing to its great depth even the largest ships can be berthed quite close to the shore and only a jetty is necessary for passengers to come ashore."

"Oh daddy look! Another island" shouted Nila.

"That's Sober Island."

"Why Sober Island?", asked mummie.

I don't really know. Perhaps drunken sailors were sent there to become sober."

"Worthwhile getting drunk", said mummie.

"To go and stay on that beautiful island—could we go there?"

"Yes, this afternoon."

They turned right and followed the coast line, past the Customs House. More and more of the harbour came into view, all kinds of bays and inlets, as blue as blue could be, and little islands, some only clusters of rocks, others green with vegetation.

"That's Plantain Point", said daddy

"What funny names!" said Ranjit.

They continued, turning right along the harbour.

"There's Admiralty House and Pepper Pot Cottage where the Admiral of the East Indian fleet and his Flag Captain used to live" said daddy pointing to two houses on the right, on a grassy knoll above the water.

There were houses on every side, some perched high up on the hill that rose sharply on the left.

"These were all built and occupied by the Admiralty personnel when the British were here", said daddy as they drove to the very end of the road.

"The hill on our left is Osterberg Ridge. Trincomalee is a strange place. It's a double town, with the inner harbour and the outer harbour, the inner town and the outer town, each with its own maidan or esplanade and the two forts. Osterberg one side, and Fort Fredrick on the north end of the town. 'We're going there now.'"

"The sea is everywhere" remarked mummie as they drove along and left the inner town to face Dutch Bay and Back Bay, with Fort Fredrick a huge headland between. "How deeply blue the water is."

They entered Fort Fredrick through a gateway that reminded

Ranjit of the Galle Fort main gate and drove a short distance past houses and offices. Then daddy stopped the car and they walked up a steep slope till they stood on a headland high above the sea.

"Here's the famous Swami Rock. Now children be careful!" said daddy. It's a sheer drop of four hundred feet to the sea and it's been the scene of many tragedies. This is where the temple of a thousand pillars used to stand. They say there are fragments down in the bottom of the sea.

Every Friday the Hindus hold a service in the evening and break coconuts which they offer with flowers and throw down to the depths below. Tomorrow morning we'll come by boat to this point and Varuni can try out her under water swimming."

The children peered down and were afraid. They were so high above, and the sea so far below.

In the afternoon mummie, made a picnic of their visit to Sober Island. When they were hot and tired after walking they sat by a little cave where the water lapped so gently and ate sandwiches, and cakes, and drank tea brought in Thermos flasks.

Close by was a tiny cemetery, at the edge of the water, with only six or eight graves of sailors who had died of fever or by falling from a mast, many many years ago.

"Poor dears" said Varuni. "So far from their homes, How sad!"

Next morning they went again to Fort Fredrick where a boat was waiting. The sea was calm and clear as they approached Swami Rock which towered above them, black and forbidding.

They were all in bathing costumes but Varuni had on flippers as well, ready to enter the water. Daddy said he would swim with her, but the others could not be

trusted to look after themselves in such a deep sea."

Varuni drowned her mask and in a minute she was in the blue water that sparkled in the morning sunshine. Daddy followed slowly.

"Varuni" screamed mummie, "don't go so far from daddy."

But Varuni was so interested in the fish that abounded in those unfathomable depths that she just swam and swam her head buried in the water. Suddenly she dived and in a moment she had disappeared.

Mummie screamed. "Daddy! go after her."

But where was she?

Then to their horror they saw an apraised fin in the distance, cutting like a knife through the water.

"My God! shouted daddy. "Shark!"

There was pandemonium in the boat. Mummie screamed, Nila cried, Ranjit gripped the sides of the boat. Even the boatmen were scared.

"Aande Vanne", they gasped. Far out rose Varuni's little head in the orange coloured bathing cap.

"Shark!" shouted daddy, "Varuni shark!"

She heard, looked back, and realized there was no hope to win that race with death. To everyone's amazement she spun around and faced the horror that was gaining every second on her. The racing fin stopped dead. Everyone was dumb with fear and at the suddenness of all that was happening. They could clearly see the great body of the shark just below the water.

Fearlessly Varuni gazed into these cruel eyes greedily watching her, waiting for her next move, as if it was unable to understand this strange performance.

That second's respite was enough. Daddy and the boatmen flew to Varuni's rescue. Using their oars like flails, the boatmen beat the water while everyone shouted as loud as they could.

They picked up a trembling Varuni and rowed quickly back to shore.

Gramma Sastra-8

Scribblings on Uva Villages

by Gamiya

Violence Against The Peasant

Mark Twain writing on the French Revolution spoke of two Reigns of Terror:

"There were two 'Reigns of Terror', if we could but remember and consider it: the one wrought murder in hot passions, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon a thousand persons, the other upon a hundred million, but our shudders are all for the "horrors" of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak, whereas what is the horror of swift death by the axe compared with lifelong death hunger, cold, insult, cruelty and heart-break? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which all have been so diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves" (in a Connecticut Yankee in King Aruthu's Court, WCC, in Jesus, pre-Nairobi papers).

The Paraguay Bishops' Conference was involved in the second kind of the Reign of Terror in June

1976. It denounced the persecution in Paraguay and stressed in its Statement, the church's determination to carry out its mission in spite of violence, oppression and hardship. Peasant communities of the Ligas Agrarias (Agrarian Leagues, a co-operative movement) were terrorized, arrested and some of them killed by military troops. Jesuit priests were detained and later expelled from the country. This was aimed also at the lay groups working for the development of 80,000 indigenous people and the deprived mestizo (mixed blood) peasant population. *Amnesty International* made a big campaign and pressed for the observance of Human Rights in regard to them.

Circulars, Episcopal Letters, Campaigns sound excellent when there is a reign of terror from the side of the Capitalist class against the working class. The fanfare is good and welcome and the crisis

met. Once the occasion is over, some prisoners die, some come home and no one bothers about the permanent boot that is permanently on the head of the peasantry all over the world, precisely because the peasantry are non-descript, illiterate, boorish, uncivilized and only half-men!

This violence no one wants to see even in this country—the die-hard violence produced by some of the riff-raff from Great Britain (D.M. Forrest in His Hundred Years of Tea allows that some planters who came were 'not of the best': we may truthfully add: were some of the worst men, selfish, cruel, self-seeking people who ever walked the earth.) This violence has gone on in spite of religion, or because religion turned a blind eye on it, controlled from city Hq's. This

violence stalks the peasantry in Sri Lanka, hunts him and kills him and this is called Order.

Law and Order and Discipline must be kept at all costs—is a pious platitude which keeps so many busy looking at the code, being moral, while the rest of men die a slow death caught in the Genocide machine of Ford and Rockefeller—as any sane man would know who reads the inside story of the suppression of peasant population with pills.

The monks in Uva are rightfully indignant at the ethnic and religious imbalances brought into the rural areas by urban pills and urban organization of their families, by wanton hysterectomy and tubectomy. Is it too late?

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

May 2 - May 10

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; CM—Chintamani; WK—Weekend; RR—Riviresa; EN—Eelanadu; IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release; DK—Dinakara; DW—Dawasa.

TUESDAY, MAY 2: The President yesterday held out a May Day pledge that by next year the UNP government would provide jobs for 70,000 youths in fulfilment of the election promise the party

THE LURE OF UVA

Dear Gamiya,

My nose may have been to the grind in Colombo but my imagination soared over Haputale and Namunukula and rolled down over the plains to the East and South. And so itching to see Uva, I suddenly packed my bag, to the surprise of my mother who thinks I am a determined man, and left for Bandarawela, on the 29th morning in the Badulla bus. Now having seen a little bit of Uva though only from the seat of a C.T.B. bus, I will not be content till I have explored the length and breadth of it. The next morning, the 30th I boarded a bus to Wellawaya. If I could choose any spot to settle down it would be Ella with its deep gorges and thickly wooded slopes. On reaching Wellawaya I inquired from the passenger seated next to me the whereabouts of the rest-house. Having directed me he in turn inquired what I was doing in Wellawaya. On receiving the reply "mey paththa balande ava", he invited me for lunch at the Army Detachment Camp. And so I found myself lunching with my new found friend in the Army mess.

At Bandarawela, I stepped into Sevaka Sevana on a couple of occasions to meet Fr. Michael Rodrigo. Unfortunately for me, he was in Buttala. I hope to go back to Bandarawela for the Vesak holidays and shall try to meet him. Maybe I could meet you too, Gamiya, and learn more about Uva.

Nimal Perera.

24/1, Mayfield Lane,
Colombo 13.
7.5.1978

placed before the people at the general elections last year. The government would soon introduce legislation for those who managed state institutions and corporations to be elected by the votes of the workers in such places the President announced yesterday. The SLFP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike addressing the May Day rally of her party said that since the time of her late husband it was the SLFP that worked for a common front with the left parties and even today they were for Left unity. Three ULF leaders—Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Mr. Pieter Keuneman and Mr. T. B. Subasinghe at their rally yesterday called for the unity of all progressive forces in order to continue the struggles of the working class—CDN. The so called ULF was neither left, united nor a front because of the deep divisions in it said Mr. Rohana Wijeweera at the JVP May Day rally—CDM. Former Justice Minister Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike claimed yesterday that he was not the author of the now repealed CJC Act; for the first time he alleged that it was devised by the then Attorney General Mr. Victor Tennakoon—SU. The CID has cause to believe that the Tamil Liberation Tiger Movement is an international organisation with its headquarters in Colombo—VK. The ADB has given 24 million dollars for the Lunugamvehera Development Project; 30,000 acres are expected to be developed while 6000 families will be settled after the completion of the project—DM. The TULF leader in his May Day speech said that only a united work force could create Tamil Eelam; therefore he appealed to all Tamil workers to unite and work for the achievement of this aim—EN. The new regime in Afghanistan appointed a leading Communist Nur Mohamed Tarakki as both PM and head of the revolutionary Council; diplomats in Islamabad said that the

strength of Afghanistan's new government may depend on the success in gaining the support of the country's religious leaders. World Finance Ministers meeting in Mexico agreed on the general outlines of a co-ordinated economic strategy to combat global unemployment and inflation and promote growth. 500 newly trained fighters joined Lebanon's most militant right-wing organisation yesterday—3 days after Parliament called for a ban on all private armies—CDN. More than 40,000 young people marched and danced to pop groups in London yesterday in the biggest protest to date against fascism and racism in Britain. The US wants to begin research on the so-called 'clean' nuclear bomb with higher explosive power and less radiation a department of energy official said yesterday—CDM. Israeli PM Begin arrived in New York yesterday for a week-long US visit that includes his first meeting with President Carter since their blunt talks last month raised fears of a crisis in relations between the two allies. Hundreds of thousands of socialists and communists marched peacefully through Madrid today in the first legal May Day demonstration since the 31-39 Spanish Civil War—SU.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3: The members of the government have been advised by the President to fully investigate matters regarding public officials before complaints were made against them. The former government spent foreign exchange totalling Rs. 1,769,449.57 inclusive of FEEC's on foreign trips undertaken by Mrs. Bandaranaike and her Cabinet Ministers during their term of office; this was revealed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the NSA. Over a million people have paid homage to the Kapilavastu relics so far. Moves are afoot to reform the Land Army disbanded eight years ago

by the previous government. Mr. Milos Minic Vice President of the Federal Executive Council and Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia will arrive in Sri Lanka on Saturday—CDN. Nine students from the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka were suspended over the weekend for allegedly instigating other students and violating the rule that no student from one hall of residence should visit any other hall after 10 p.m. The President has issued instructions that Food Production officers be appointed on an island wide basis before the end of this month—CDM. The CWE, one of the country's largest single trading organisations is to have a network of private sector distributors; breaking away from tradition the CWE has decided to introduce this measure as part of new distribution and marketing drive to ensure that commodities reach the consumer in all parts of the island without unnecessary delay. The IGP has clamped down on the press; he has ordered that no individual police officer should provide any information to newspapers—SU. The second biggest textile mill which was established with Chinese aid in Minneriya will be opened on the 18 of this month—DP. The leader of the Opposition speaking in the NSA last night said that the TULF did not believe in any kind of violence as it was established on Gandhian principles and that they believed in peace and ahimsa and in order to make this clear to our youth they had called Mr. Diwakar the great Gandhian to speak here he said—VK. The Bangladesh government has appointed Mr. M. M. Rezaul Karimas High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka—IDPR No. 75/78. The government has spent over 1 million rupees on the UNP May Day rally and cultural shows—DK. Four front line SLFP

leaders who held ministerial posts in the last SLFP government are to be sacked from the SLFP membership and their respective posts in the party—DM. The Paddy Marketing Board was able to buy 12.5 million bushels of paddy between January and April and supply 94,000 tons of rice to the Food Department—LD. The government will impose restrictions on skilled workers going abroad because the Plan Implementation Ministry has pointed out that 72,000 skilled workers have left the country and a shortage of such workers could become a handicap for development projects and the FTZ—DW. President Anwar Sadat said that he has ordered an immediate reshuffle of the Egyptian Cabinet—CDN. The US yesterday allayed Egyptian fears that President Carter is changing American policy on the Middle East. The Rhodesian government's former Executive Council held a special session yesterday to discuss the demand by Council Member Bishop Muzorewa that Mr. Hove should be reinstated as the Minister of Justice and Law immediately—CDM. Israeli foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said in Tel Aviv that he expected the stalemated West Asian negotiations to get moving again within a few weeks. The Soviet leader Brezhnev said today that the Soviet Union was ready to agree to reduce East West forces in Central Europe by half, providing the balance of power was not disturbed—SU.

THURSDAY, MAY 4 : The country's inflation rate and the present problem of the high cost of living are directly attributed to the previous government printing Rs. 500, million in paper notes in excess which it claimed, had been warranted in the national interest; finance ministry sources said yesterday this supply and circulation of excess paper notes had wrecked the country's economy. The BMC's

sales turnover for the first three months of this year has recorded an increase of nearly Rs. 28 million as against the first three months of last year. The PMB has purchased a record 13.5 million bushels of paddy from January to April this year; the figure for the corresponding period last year was 8.9 million bushels.—CDN. The one man committee appointed by the government to probe into the post-election violence had received over 3400 complaints of alleged violence during the last general elections. The Minister of Finance has negotiated successfully for foreign aid amounting to nearly Rs. 1000 million during the current trip abroad. The Mahaweli Development Board has decided to fix a floor price for subsidiary food crops grown by farmers settled in lands developed under the Mahaweli Development Scheme—CDM. The PM yesterday called in detectives of the CID to conduct a full investigation into the mysterious disappearance of official documents of the Ministry of Justice relating to the drafting of the CJC Act. Police who dredged the well in which the body of the CID officer had been found in Murunkan have discovered his service revolver—SU. MP's speaking in the NSA yesterday asked the government to take action after drawing up plans in each electorate to improve schools; problems of estate schools, muslim schools and Tamil schools should be specially rectified they said. A top level defence committee meeting is investigating the letter sent by the 'Liberation Tiger' movement; defence ministry sources do not believe that the letter is a hoax—VK. UNP MP's in the NSA alleged that the TULF had some connection with the 'Liberation Tiger' movement; the TULF should issue a statement condemning these terrorist activities; in reply the leader of the TULF said that none of the other parties had issued statements and he saw no reason to do so

himself; he further stated that innumerable murders take place in the country and it was not the work of political parties to issue statements about every one of them; he also challenged them to name the people who had committed the murders—EN. As a result of talks with the Minister for Development Co-operation in the Netherlands, Sri Lanka will receive Rs. 317 million in regular aid and Rs. 242 million special aid being the quotas for 1977.—IDPR No 5. Much of the garlic that was imported for distribution to the public is lying in the warehouses—DW. The CTB has paid 25 million rupees a year for unnecessary overtime allowance—DM. 6217 teachers and 1234 principals have been transferred between 25th July and 25th September last year—JD. The price of paper has been raised by about 100%—ATH. Step have been taken to import eggs from India—DK. Afghanistan emerged as the first communist ruled country in South East Asia with civilians holding the main positions of power after last week's bloody coup. The Commander of the French UN Peace-keeping contingent was recovering from wounds in a Beirut hospital last night after being reported missing following fierce fighting with Palestinian guerrillas around the port city of Tyne a UN spokesman said—CDN. President Carter's plan to sell fighter planes to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia recieved a fresh setback yesterday when more than half the members of a key congressional committee said they wanted it thrown out. The General Secretary to the UN Council for Trade and Development—Gamini Corea has met secretly in Geneva with several private banks to discuss the establishment of a raw materials fund.—SU. The Commander of the Israeli military government in the occupied west bank has been dismissed following an incident in which Israeli

soldiers threw tear gas grenades in Arab high schools on March 21. The Rhodesian interim government's executive council said it has appointed an all-party committee to settle the dispute over the sacking of black Justice and Law Minister Byron Hove—CDM.

FRIDAY, MAY 5 : A Bill embodying the proposals contained in the first budget of the UNP Government presented in the NSA in November last year by the Minister of Finance will be presented in the NSA soon ; besides the tax proposals announced in the budget, certain amendments considered necessary have been embodied in the proposed bill. Mr. Ernest Corea is due to take up an appointment soon as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Canada. The government has revised the tender procedure relating to government supplies ; all tenders to the value of Rs. 1 million and above would be reported to the cabinet in the first instance said the PM in the NSA. There was a concerted plan by certain anti-government organisations to disrupt the work of universities ; but this was being rejected by students and their parents as well as by citizens committees said the deputy minister of foreign affairs in the NSA. The Minister of Food and Co-operatives said in the NSA yesterday that the government would issue paddy on the ration to consumers who preferred to have paddy. The informant who led the four police officers to the terrorist camp at Murunkan where they were shot dead around April 7th is now in police custody ; according to the police this is the first major breakthrough in the investigation—CDM. A special concession in the matter of the medium of instruction will be given to children of Sri Lankans now abroad who return home said the Minister of Education. All weaving managers and officers in charge of textile powerlooms coming under the

department of Textile Industries have been given an ultimatum by the Director of Textile Industries that unless they show a 10% increase in production this month they will be discontinued from service. After the new government came to power over Rs. 185 million and 30 lakhs have been received as aid according to Finance ministry sources—DP. The CTB introduced a weekend semi-luxury express service from Colombo to Jaffna with effect from May 6th—IDPR No9. The government will take over the Dharmayathana Temple at Bullers Road because the proposed TV station is to be situated there—DK. The Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs will soon pay compensation to those who lost their jobs between '70 and '77 due to political reasons. The government hopes to urge the private sector to build 400,000 houses in the next five years—DM. Israeli PM Begin vowed yesterday that Israel would never withdraw to the pre-1970 boundaries nor allow an independent Palestinian state on the West bank. The US has tentatively decided to accept a Soviet proposal that would limit each side to 2,250 long-range missiles and bombers until 1986 equalising for the first time the size of strategic arsenals said the New York Times.—CDN. Chinese CP Chairman and PM, Hua Kua Feng left Peking by train today for North Korea on his first trip abroad since assuming his post.—SU. About 60,000 Burmese Muslim refugees have crossed into Bangladesh in the past four weeks the official Bangladesh news agency quoting official sources said ; the refugees had said that the Burmese army had waged a campaign against their community. Italy's ruling Christian Democratic Party said yesterday that the government could consider some form of clemency if Red brigade guerillas freed former PM, Aldo Moro and indicated they would renounce violence—CDM.

SATURDAY, MAY 6 : The CTB has used illegally Provident Fund contributions of its 60,000 employees amounting to Rs. 84 million to keep the services going ; except for a few years, the CTB had run at a loss since it was created and accumulated losses amounted to 100 million said the Minister of Transport in the NSA yesterday. The Resident Representative of the UNDP in Sri Lanka addressing the Sri Lanka Aid Group meeting in Paris today made a strong case for increased assistance to Sri Lanka for its economic and social advancement. A person described as a key informant, now in protective custody, has alleged that the killers responsible for the brutal slaying of four CID officers in early April this year had access to highly classified Police information and were always aware of the movement of the officers investigating the Liberation Tiger movement. The government has arranged to import 500,000 mammoets to meet the current shortage of these implements.—CDN. The UNDP is to assist Sri Lankan technical officers and professional groups abroad to return home on specialised consultancies for short periods of service at minimal cost of the government said the Resident Representative of the UN at the Sri Lanka Aid Group meeting in Paris. With the shift in accent on higher education from purely academic to technical education the Swedish International Development Authority has granted Rs. 50 million for the development of Technology and Science said the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. The government has reduced the customs duties on a wide variety of imported paper and paper boards except certain types of paper which has been increased under the Customs Revenue Protection Ordinance. Vice President of the Federal Executive Council and Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia Mr Miles Minic will arrive in the

island on a brief visit—CDM. Graded punishment will be meted out to offenders in the university campuses; a committee comprising senior university lecturers has been appointed for this purpose said the Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. Detectives investigating the killings at Murunkan have now established that the farm where the four CID officers were gunned down had been used as a camp and shooting range by members of the 'Liberation Tiger' movement for more than six months.—SU. A special police team has been sent to Jaffna to find the ring leaders of the Liberation Tiger movement while another police team has been sent to Chilaw to arrest five youths belonging to the same movement.—VK. The price of aerated waters has been raised by ten cents due to increased production costs—ATH. The maximum age limit for government job applicants has been raised to 40 years—DM. South Africa said yesterday it had launched a limited offence against Swapo guerillas inside Angola. A founder of the Egyptian CP, Mr. Henri Curial was assassinated in his home at Paris yesterday and an extreme rightist group claimed responsibility—CDM. Chinese and Soviet negotiators held the first plenary session yesterday to discuss the long standing border issue between the two countries. Italian red brigade terrorists appear to have announced that they are about to kill Aldo Moro who they abducted 51 days ago. Sanjay Gandhi, son of former Indian PM, Indira Gandhi was jailed for a month by the Supreme Court for attempting to suborn witnesses in a case against him—SU. The US, Soviet Union and Britain re-opened talks in Geneva today on banning all nuclear tests. Amnesty International yesterday appealed to the new President of Afghanistan to end bloodshed in his country; Mr. Tarraki has denied what he called 'reactionary western press reports' that 100,000 people had

been killed in last week's coup—CDN

SUNDAY, MAY 7: The Agricultural Development Authority will revolutionise Agricultural development activity at the village level by providing necessary inputs and guidance to village farmers and encouraging them to use modern techniques to maximise agricultural production.—SO. CID investigations have revealed that several important files including the file on the now defunct CJC Law has been sent to the Valaichenai Paper mills by the previous regime for destruction according to Justice Ministry sources. The Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister yesterday shared their concern about the growing incidence of bilateral disputes among the non aligned membership in the course of the three hour talks held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The price of wheat flour has been increased by 12 cents to 72 cents a pound with effect from this week. Sri Lanka will embrace the Referendum System shortly, when the new constitution is increased. Inspector Padmanathan, OIC of the District Crime Bureau of the Jaffna Police, died of gunshot injuries last night; he was shot at his residence by unknown assailants—WK. There appears to be a new turn in uniting the left forces; moves are afoot to unite the left forces (extremists) with the SLFP in political and trade union activities—VK. Information has been received by the government that many of the raw materials for the handicrafts industry which are being imported by the government are being smuggled out of the country—DP. Specimens of the hand prints found on the car in which the murdered CID officers travelled to Murunkan have been sent to Britain and France for investigation—EN. The Minister of Trade is taking steps to formulate a code of conduct for traders—RR. Over 300 million rupees worth of food stuff gifted

by the World Food Organisation have been spoilt and become unfit for human consumption because they have not been distributed in time—SM. Venezuelan Oil Minister Valentin Fernandez said today he thought an argument for an oil price increase could be made at the next ministerial meeting of the OPEC. Authorities in South Africa and Namibia confirmed reports of massive South African Military action against the SWAPO—WK. An influx of 85,000 Muslim refugees from Burma in less than a month is posing vast humanitarian problems for impoverished Bangladesh and causing a rift in its relations with neighbouring Burma.—SO.

MONDAY, MAY 8: The 14th Sri Lanka Aid Group Meeting held in Paris on Friday has pledged a record financial aid package amounting to Rs. 6000 million for Sri Lanka's Development Programme. A top-level team of Police officers led by the IGP left by air for Jaffna yesterday to direct investigations into the death of Inspector Pathmanathan who was shot dead on Saturday night. Sri Lanka and India will be brought under the direct dialling system from next year. A team of television experts led by an official of the Japanese Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications arrived in Sri Lanka last week with a view to establishing an island wide TV network scheduled to become operational by the middle of next year. The PM has been offered technical aid from Singapore to build 520,000 houses in the next ten years. The Yugoslav Vice President and Foreign Minister Mr. Milos Minic on Saturday complimented Sri Lanka's constructive and positive role as Chairman of the non-aligned movement and expressed the hope that Sri Lanka would continue to play the same effective role in the future. The Ceylon Leather Products Corporation has earned an income of Rs. 2400,000 in March this year, creating an all time record in sales per

month—CDN. Full police security will be provided for students when the Institute of Aesthetic Studies resumes lectures today for seniors. The Deputy IGP said that over 450 cases of homicide occurred from the beginning of this year with April recording 146 cases—CDM. The Defence Ministry will this week examine tough new measures to combat the increasing terrorist activity particularly in Northern and Eastern areas. All police officers serving in the North will be given the right to be armed always for self protection—DP. There is strong suspicion that the 'Liberation Tiger Movement' is behind the killing of Inspector Pathmanathan—VK. The CTB might very shortly increase the bus fares—DK. Tenants of the government flats in Colombo, greater Colombo and Kandy will get the ownership of these flats on the first anniversary of the formation of the UNP government—DM. Local Government and Municipal Council elections will be held from September to December this year—DW. The Minister of Plantation Industries has decided to co-ordinate the work of all estates under the National Estates Development Board and the Plantations Corporation—LD. South African troops killed 600 Namibian refugees and wounded 224 during attacks inside Angola last Thursday. The Seychelles government today assumed emergency powers and the police said 21 persons detained over the suspected coup plot were being held under the new legislation which gives the President powers to detain without trial anyone he considered to be acting in a way 'prejudicial to public safety'—SU. Afghanistan's new Socialist leader Tarakki said today that relations with the US and the Soviet Union would be based on the amount of aid they gave its revolutionary government—CDM.

TUESDAY, MAY 9: The government will shortly vest with the

people the legal right to curb blackmarketing, take errant traders to court, raid hoarders and generally keep the cost of living under control; this new thinking on the part of the government will manifest itself when the Minister of Trade presents the consumer Protection Bill in the NSA this month. The IGP yesterday ordered the immediate despatch of reinforcements to Jaffna after conferring with his deputies for five hours at Police HQ's. The Central Job Bank in Colombo has geared itself to receive and process job registration forms expected from the Electoral Job Placement Committees from the end of this month. Plans to stop the brain drain from developing and poorer countries to the developed and richer parts of the world were formulated at a meeting of labour ministers from many countries held in Tunisia recently—CDM. The government has allocated Rs. 97 million to enable completion of construction and development work initiated under last year's decentralised budget. Minister of Higher Education has decided to raise the minimum qualifications for admission to the campuses of the University of Sri Lanka from the present requirements fixed in the late 1950's. There is an acute shortage of English stenographers in the country—CDM. A special Anti-Terrorist Squad of the police has been formed to declare war on the Liberation Tiger terrorist movement. A Legal Aid Commission is to be set up to grant legal assistance to deserving persons. The government is to set up an Institute of Corporation Lawyers; this will be done for the purpose of providing the services of lawyers to public corporations and local authorities—SU. Strong Navy surveillance on the Palk Straits beach area and tight security at Elephant Pass and other outlets from Jaffna are being maintained to prevent the killers of Inspector Pathmanathan to leave the peninsula—DP. The

Police High Command has decided train officers guerilla tactics to combat terrorist activity in the North. The police have found on information received by them, an illegal arms manufacturing centre near Anuradhapura; they have confiscated many half made guns and revolvers—VK. Though an intensive search is being carried on to find the killers of Inspector Pathmanathan, upto last night, no one has been arrested—EN. The government has decided to start 27 new dental surgeries in schools and hospitals. According to the Ministry of Health there is a shortage of 5000 nurses in the island—DW. The Planning Ministry and the Education Ministry will launch a joint programme to open a chain of technical training schools all over the island—LD. One of Sri Lanka's leading business tycoons and the Director General of the FTZ has bought a helicopter at a cost of Rs 5 million; he is the first Sri Lankan to own a private helicopter—DK. South African and Rhodesian intelligence sources reported that hundreds of Cuban troops backed by Soviet tanks and jet fighters have moved into Mozambique in preparation for a planned major offensive against Rhodesia. Somali guerillas said they killed 262 Cuban soldiers in Ethiopia's Orgaden region since the end of the war there last March—SU. World Oil prices are likely to remain unchanged in 1978 extending the current price freeze to 2 years Saudi Arabia's oil minister declared yesterday—CDM. Israeli PM Begin wound up a US tour yesterday by making a new peace appeal to Egypt and taking the salute at a giant parade up New York's Fifth Avenue to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Jewish state—CDN.



BETWEEN THE LINES BY SERENDIB

• Trade Surplus Foreign Assistance • Coconut

*FIRST TIME IN 21 YEARS:

The Annual Report of the Central Bank has revealed that for the first time in 21 years, there has been a trade surplus last year—export earnings totalling Rs. 6,640 million and import payments amounting to Rs. 6,150 million. The previous trade surplus was in 1956. And for the first time in 12 years the current account of the balance of payments recorded a surplus. The surplus achieved previously (1965) was also exceptional, there being a long series of deficits commencing in 1957. The Report adds that the surplus was possible owing to a substantial improvement in the terms of trade in 1977. Recalling that after the deficit of Rs. 772 million in 1975, the balance of payments recovered strongly in 1976, reducing the current account deficit to Rs. 50 million, in 1977 that deficit had turned to an unprecedented surplus of Rs. 1,259 million and that net long-term capital inflows rose by Rs. 39 million and led to an improvement in the basic balance to a surplus of Rs. 2,013 million.

The Report states that the principal factor responsible for the improvement in the current account was a surplus in the trade balance of Rs. 490 million in contrast with a deficit of Rs. 700 million in 1976. Increased export earnings came mainly from tea and minor agricultural exports. The services account reflecting transactions in respect of port, transport and insurance services, travel and profit, interest and dividends showed a surplus of Rs. 219 million, compared with a surplus of Rs. 112 million in 1976. This ac-

count has been in surplus since 1973, largely on account of a growth in earnings for tourism and bunkering, which more than offset a rise in interest payments and freight. The report goes on to say that the total merchandise and service account recorded a surplus of Rs. 709 million, in contrast with the deficit of Rs. 597 million in 1976.

Recording progress in several spheres, the Report states that the rupee value of export earnings rose from Rs. 4,707 million in 1976 to Rs. 6,640 million in 1977, reflecting an increase of 41 per cent. Export prices rose by 60 per cent. Tea alone accounted for 73 per cent of the total increase in export earnings. Here are other extracts of the Central Bank Report: (1) The rupee value of import payments increased during 1977 by 14 per cent because of a 23 per cent rise in import prices and a 29 per cent increase in import volume. Rice, flour and sugar were the major food imports which accounted for this increase. Their import cost rose by 44 per cent largely as a result of a 61 per cent increase in quantity partly offset by a 17 per cent drop in prices. Import outlays in petroleum increased by 25 per cent, on textiles by 59 per cent and on vehicles by 33 per cent. (2) The outstanding amount of total foreign debt increased more than two-fold from Rs. 6,826 million in 1976 to Rs. 13,321 million in 1977 and interest payments on foreign debt rose from Rs. 190 million to Rs. 235 million, or by 24 per cent. (3) The Wholesale Price Index showed a 31 per cent rise in prices. Discounting other factors, the Report states that it may not be unreasonable to estimate that consumer prices rose by about 12 to 15 per cent in 1977. But the increase has to be evaluated in the context of a 29 per cent increase in money supply, a 23 per cent rise in the import price

Index, a 9 per cent rise in money wages and a general increase in interest rates."

***FOREIGN AID FOR SRI LANKA:** The *Hindu* in an editorial, in its issue of May 12, stated: "Sri Lanka has been promised Rs. (Sri Lanka) 6000 million equivalent of foreign assistance by the aid consortium of Western countries and Japan. This big pledge follows a massive devaluation of its currency undertaken in November by the UNP Government which was voted to power in the election a year ago. The infusion of money by the group sponsored by the World Bank will naturally be interpreted as an expression of confidence by the donor countries in the new Government which has promised to change the path of economic development. The promised flow of foreign exchange comes in the wake of a good year for Sri Lanka on the export front. Thanks to 80 per cent increase in the rupee value realised from tea, the main exchange earner, the country's total returns on exports rose in 1977 by 38 per cent or Rs. 1,823 millions. Tea fetched more than Rs. 3,500 millions, against Rs. 2,100 millions in 1976. Imports too have shown a big increase and this was perhaps unavoidable because the new Government wanted to soothe the populace which had been starved of a variety of essential consumer goods for years. For the first time since 1965 and the second time since 1956, Sri Lanka's balance of payments has shown a current account surplus. Paddy production was an all-time record, but still nowhere near self-sufficiency. The growth of the gross national product was 4.4 per cent, compared with about 3 per cent in the preceding two years. The sharp increase in external banking assets by Rs. 1,200 millions, as a result of the export successes has not been a total bles-

sing, since domestic money supply grew by 30 per cent. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been opposed to the heavy rice subsidies in Sri Lanka, which date back to the fifties. They have stressed the need to increase rice production rapidly. One of the most ambitious projects in this field is the Mahaweli Ganga multi-purpose scheme which will eventually irrigate one million acres and meet some of the needs in the field of electricity generation in which Sri Lanka's development is at a low level. Originally, this project was envisaged to take 30 years, but now the aim is to complete it in five years, with a large measure of international co-operation. This will make a sea change in the country's fortunes."

***COPRA IMPORTED:** A long time ago, mainly after investigating the ravages wrought by the manner in which Land Reform was carried out in the coconut belt, *Tribune* had predicted that Ceylon, the land of the coconut palms, will be soon compelled to import coconuts and coconut products. This was in 1975. Since that time, Sri Lanka had attempted to import Coconut poonac, but failed because there were no supplies of satisfactory quality. The new Government has tried to undo the damage done by irrationally conceived and stupidly implemented Land Reform, but it is difficult to put the clock back. And it will be years before the coconut estates will reach the productive levels as of old under the new set-up after Land Reform however much it is streamlined by the new Government.

It was therefore interesting to read the *Observer* (12/5/78) headline 1000 TONS COPRA FROM EAST AFRICA—PRESSURE ON HIGH GRADE COCONUT OIL. The story by Manik de Silva made interesting reading: "The Coconut Marketing Board has imported 1,000

tons of low grade copra from East Africa for milling here. The milling of this copra in Sri Lanka and the diversion of the oil obtained for industrial use here will reduce the pressures of demand for high grade coconut oil produced from the domestic coconut crop which fetches premium prices in international markets. The Secretary to the Ministry of Plantation Industries, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, said yesterday that Sri Lanka coconut oil fetched high prices particularly in Pakistan. The coconut oil export trade said that there were good markets and high prices for Sri Lanka coconut oil in Bangladesh too. The Coconut Marketing Board (CMB) which imported the copra which is being unloaded in the Port of Colombo from the mv KOTA SAJAR will distribute the stock among local millers. Mr. Weerakoon said that an added advantage of importing low grade copra and milling it locally was that the poonac obtained after the oil has been expelled would also be available domestically. There has been an acute shortage of concentrates for animal food in Sri Lanka in recent times and the availability of poonac from an additional 1,000 tons of imported copra will help ease this situation. Poonac has been in short supply and very expensive in the recent past. This resulted in many dairymen stopping the feeding of their animals on concentrates leading to a reduction in domestic milk production. Some years ago too, Sri Lanka had similar imports of low grade copra when it was clear that such an operation would be profitable to the country. Mr. Weerakoon said that the local consumption of coconut oil was around 4,000 tons a month. For some time now Sri Lanka has been importing tallow for use in the soap manufacturing industry. This enables soap manufacturers to switch from high priced coconut oil to cheaper tallow

and help the country to earn a considerable amount of foreign exchange from exporting the surplus oil produced here."

There is a reference in the news reports to previous import of low grade copra. This was at a time under the last government when Land Reform had already begun to play havoc and the coconut industry had been badly handled by the authorities. Now, the import is due to the fact that production has not caught up with local demand. A coconut for domestic household use is about Rs. 1/- a nut in most parts of the island. A bottle of low grade coconut oil is around Rs. 4/- and high grade over Rs. 7/- a bottle. Coconut poonac is more often above Rs. 1500/- a ton than below it. These high prices for coconut products have deprived the common man of the vegetable oil fat and also easily assimilable protein he had earlier got at reasonable prices. There does not seem to be any prospect of any improvement either in more plentiful supplies or in lower prices in the foreseeable future. *Sri Lanka has always enough fish and coconut products for its population, but today even without any spectacular increase of population in the last five years, the fish we catch and the coconuts we grow are not enough to go round. Perhaps we export too much all to no purpose.*



SNIPPETS

Love of money is the root of half the evil in the world;
Lack of money is the root of the other half.

* * *

Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortune; but great minds rise above it.

* * *

The sparrow is sorry for the peacock at the burden of its tail.

Confidentially

FRDB And The Missing Files

IS IT NOT A FACT that a great deal of interest has been roused by the files pertaining to the CJC Act that are alleged to be missing? That on May 4, Mr. Normal Waidyaratne (MP Balapitiya) raised the following in the NSA at Adjournment (vide Hansard, 4.5.78: 1698-1699): "I have to ask three questions from the Hon. Prime Minister. On the 2nd of May, two days ago, the Hon. Prime Minister came to this House and informed us of a very serious state of affairs in the Ministry of Justice. Certain files, not merely documents, had been lost. These files were in the custody of the Minister of Justice. He also informed this House that apart from those files, a particular document was in the custody of an unauthorized person. A photostat copy had been sent to the Hon. Prime Minister along with a letter by a certain gentleman. That indicated and definitely proved that somebody was in unauthorized possession of one of those documents—at least now. Up to July last year these documents were in the custody of the Minister of Justice and the most responsible officer in that Ministry was the Secretary. To re-discover or recover these documents we need his presence in Sri Lanka. Therefore, I have to even though reluctantly, ask these questions about a particular person. Individuals do not count. But because he represented and was the most responsible officer in that Ministry we have to find out the whereabouts of the former Secretary to the Minister of Justice.... We wish to know from the

Hon. Prime Minister, first, whether he is aware that Mr. Nihal Jayawickrema, the former Secretary to the Ministry of Justice, has left the Island; second if so, for what purpose he has gone abroad and for how long he will be away from Sri Lanka? Now, the third question is the most important question, and that is this. In view of the fact that the Presidential Commission is presently functioning what action will the government take to ensure the presence of those persons who will be required to appear before this Commission?... That the Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa had replied: "The Hon. Member for Balapitiya (Mr. Norman Waidyaratne) has asked some questions about the former Secretary to the Ministry of Justice. He wants to know whether I am aware that Mr. Nihal Jayawickrema, former Secretary to the Ministry of Justice, has left the Island. The answer is Yes, I am aware. He wants to know for what purpose he has gone abroad and for how long he will be away from Sri Lanka. Mr. Nihal Jayawickrema had left Sri Lanka on 28.4.78 by Flight BA 034 to London. In the embarkation card that he has completed at the time of departure, he has indicated that he is proceeding to London for research at a university. The embarkation card does not call for information from a person who is leaving regarding the period he will be staying abroad. In regard to the question, 'In view of the fact that the Presidential Commission is presently functioning, what action will the Government take to ensure the presence of these persons who will be required to appear before the Commission', I might tell the Hon. Member that the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, No. 7 of 1978, confers on the Commission certain powers to ensure the attendance of witnesses and where the Com-

mission makes an order requiring the attendance of a person, the Government will give all assistance to ensure the attendance of such person. Then the Commission can get these powers enforced through the police... In point of fact I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all people concerned, who will be useful to this commission and whose presence and evidence will be helpful not to leave the country but to remain here and help the commission?" That when the MP for Chavakachcheri, Mr. V. M. Navaratnam had interrupted the PM with "What about the missing file?" and Mr. Premadasa had replied: "In regard to the missing file, of course the police are investigating the matter. I hope that Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike will help us in that endeavour?" That this was followed by a statement by the Minister of Justice Mr. K. W. Devanayagam: "Mr. Speaker, may I crave the indulgence of this Assembly to reply to the question asked by the Hon. Member for Balapitiya? It may be implied that the files were lost in the Ministry of Justice. But in fact these files were never given into the custody of the Ministry of Justice. During the investigations we found that a number of files had been destroyed during the last Minister's time, and that he personally superintended the destruction of those files. We believe that some of the files which we thought were lost have been destroyed. But in regard to one particular file, there is a suspicion that it may be with the former Minister of Justice because he has sent a photostat of an original document. I am sending the CID on investigation to see whether the files are available with the former Minister of Justice."

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