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Letter From The Editor

LIKE EVERY ITEM of food, in the Sri Lanka of today, fish has become very expensive in terms of the income earned by ordinary people. Fish is daily becoming more and more costly in the retail market in spite of the efforts of the government's Fisheries Corporation to provide cheaper fish. In recent weeks, there has been a spate of propoganda about what the Fisheries Corporation was doing and was planning to do to make fish available at reasonable prices to consumers all over the island. There is no doubt that something is being done, but so far as the common man is concerned it seems to be only a case of too little too late. The Corporation's fish market at Saunders Place in Colombo sells fish at near-wholesale prices even to the ordinary consuming public. At Saunders Place fish is generally 20 to 30 percent cheaper than in any other market in Colombo including the St. John's Fish Market. But there is one snag at the government's market at Saunders Place: fish has to be bought whole and not cut by weight. And there are not many consumers who can buy on this basis—because one would need storage at home in a refrigerator or deep-freeze to keep a big quantity. Smaller fish, each whole, by weight, which the ordinary householder could buy at one time, come in very small quantities (comparatively) to this government market, and they are snapped up in a few minutes—and that by the smaller fish mudalalis who hawk fish on bicycles in different parts of the city. The point to be noted is that the Corporation's market at Saunders Place has not helped to bring down the price of fish generally in city: it has not helped to check the market trends of supply and demand which are exploited mercilessly by fish merchants and retailers. It must be also mentioned that the Fisheries Corporation's Stalls in the different markets in the city have not generally helped to push down prices. In the last few weeks, with beef supplies coming on to the stalls only two or three times a week, fish prices have tended to skyrocket. The position, from the consumers' angle in the city of Colombo (and from all reports available the situation is no different elsewhere in the island), is that fish is an item of food which fewer and fewer people are now able to afford. And the question that is being daily asked by ordinary folk (not the CRA capitalists who flaunt their new riches made possible by ill-considered governmental policies) is why the Government is not able to bring down the price of fish even a little in spite of millions of rupees invested in the industry in recent years. Governmental propoganda, which is just a one-way street of self-congratulation on what has been done, and about the millenium in fish production around the corner (like in everything else) is no longer believed by anyone. The results of the Ja-elaby-election should be an eye-opener to those in charge of official propoganda: that the credibility gap was daily growing bigger and as the gap escalated the anti-government majorities at by-elections tend to increase. THERE IS NO DOUBT that comparisons are odious and very often not very fair. But it would be pertinent to mention that in the neighbouring country of India, the Government has been able (through a variety of measures ranging from a new 20-point programme and stern measures under Emergency laws against profiteers, racketers, smugglers and the like) to bring down the price of food items. Many will rightly assert that India has moved away from the high principles of democratic government in some of the measures recently adopted, but reports from independent sources indicate that because the prices of all consumer goods (including grains, fish, meat and vegetables) have dropped so significantly ordinary people do not seem to mind a diminution of democratic rights for a few people so that the majority can live a slightly easier life. And it is a moot point as to how much democracy there is still in Sri Lanka in some matters. Prices have tumbled down in India—and there is no reason why this cannot be done in Sri Lanka. Production has been increased in India partly helped by the new disciplines which have been enforced with emergency laws—and it is surprising why this has not been done in Sri Lanka in spite of the Emergency which has been in force from 1971. It is not to detract from the good work which our Fisheries Corporation's chieftains are doing that we want to point out that fisheries experts in India can proudly assert that India is today on the threshold of a "fish revolution". New technologies developed in inland fish farms in recent years "had made it possible to raise 9000 kg of fish per hectare per year against mere 600 kg a year estimated earlier". Apart from sea fish, Sri Lanka started inland fish farms (with foreign assistance) several years ago. But with all this, the price of fish keeps mounting higher and higher.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Ja-ela and After p. 2

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

—Apr. 12 - Apr. 18 p. 5

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

—April 1-12 p. 7

INDIA AND NEPAL

—New Understanding p. 9

VILLAGE HOUSE—77

—Cobra In The Roof p. 11

CEYLON TAMILS

—What Do They Want? p. 13

ALLEN ABRAHAM—2

—A Great Teacher p. 16

SHREE ANANDAMAYEE MA

—Living Saint p. 17

SAFARI—March 1-6

—Men And Matters p. 18

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Mixed Grill p. 20

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Ja-ela And After

INTERESTING AND INTRIGUING DEVELOPMENTS have arisen around the Ja-ela by-election. Some of these matters did not stem directly from the by-election, but even if they appeared only coincidental in their occurrence at this time, they are intimately connected with the under-currents in the political scene which have begun to surface.

The UNP won the Ja-ela by-election with a very big majority—much bigger than many had expected (certainly a larger majority than we had envisaged). Rukman Senanayake was sacked from UNP the day after the election results were announced without any come back. Just before polling day there was an exciting day in the National State Assembly in which certain LSSP allegations (made by former Finance Minister Dr. N. M. Perera) were denied by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, did not wait for the polling after the shabby way he had been treated by the local organisers in Ja-ela (and even the SLFP candidate himself). Mr. Premadasa has filed a libel action against Mr. Anura Bandaranaike claiming damages in Rs. 150,000. The President, Mr. Gopallawa, is not well and the Chief Justice, Mr. Victor Tennekoon, is acting as President. Rumours have begun to float around that the President would like to be relieved of his duties on grounds of health, and this has naturally generated other rumours about a successor.

THE RESULTS of the Ja-ela by-election indicate that the political fortunes of the UNP are on the upswing. The UNP candidate had polled 28,850 whilst the SLFP candidate had obtained 20,314: and the UNP's majority was 8,636. In 1970, the UNP candidate, Mr. Paris Perera, had secured 21,657 as against the SLFP candidate's (Mr. Shelton Amarasekera) 19,762, giving the UNP a majority of only 1,895. Thus it will be seen that the UNP has increased its vote from 21,657 to 28,850, increasing its total poll by 7,193 votes. UNP's majority has thus increased by 6,741. The total number of registered voters

in the electorate now is 61,023 of whom 51,837 had voted on April 23—making an 84.69 poll.

The LSSP candidate was a very poor third, polling only 2,039 votes. Even if the votes of the LSSP are added to the SLFP, it makes a total of only 22,173: but, even then, UNP was ahead by a clear 6,677 votes. The other three (Independent) candidates had polled only 253, 81 and 79 respectively. The LSSP candidate also lost his deposit. Of the votes polled the UNP had well over 50%, but was just under the 50% mark so far as the total number of registered voters. The LSSP poll was most disappointing.

Looked at from any angle, the Ja-ela by election results constitute a clear and undoubted victory for the UNP. To minimise its significance will only be an infantile attempt to ignore the writing on the wall. Even the in-fighting inside the UNP on the Rukman Senanayake issue does not seem to affected the UNP unduly.

But the much less publicised in-fighting inside the SLFP seems to have had much more serious repercussions on the fortunes of the SLFP. It is said that the LSSP candidate secured part of the votes that would have gone to the SLFP—because of the SLFP in-fighting. In the first place, the SLFP had abandoned its 1970 candidate—Mr. Shelton Amarasekera, a longstanding SLFP veteran. He was first chosen as the SLFP nominee even this time, but with the in-fighting in the SLFP, a younger SLFP man (who had fought the 1970 election as Independent) was chosen. It is said (there is no way of evaluating these assessments) that a section of the registered voters had not gone to the polls because they were unhappy that Mr. Amarasekera had been treated in this unfair manner.

These pundits say that Ja-ela could have easily achieved a 90 to 92 percent poll if the SLFP had stuck to its old candidate and if the anti-UNP thuggery had not been so great as it was. (In the old days, it was the UNP which had indulged in election thuggery—blocking voters reaching polling stations, etc. etc. including impersonation. Today, the UNP seems to be at the receiving end—and to this extent the sympathy of mar-

ginal voters seems to go out to the UNP).

It would be frustrating to have a detailed post-mortem beyond a particular point. But there is not the slightest doubt that Ja-ela is a pointer which the Government cannot ignore. The pro-government *Daily News*, in an editorial comment on Monday, April 26, entitled *The Lesson of Ja-ela*, admitted that:

"However, ingeniously the political pundits may dissect the final voting figures at Ja-ela it has to be conceded that the poll was a defeat for the Government."

But the *Daily News* had perforce to repeat its daily chorus (this time editorially) about the wonderful achievements of the government.

"This is not, of course, a startling surprise considering that parties in power have always an uphill task convincing the people who have voted them in of the enormous amount of work they have done. This is particularly true of the present Government. History has entrusted it with carrying out some of the most far-reaching reforms that any political party would be proud to claim for itself the privilege. Outstanding amongst-

Ja-ela By-election Results

Mr. Joseph Michael Perera (UNP)	28,850
Mr. Peter Mendis (SLFP)	20,314
Mr. Noel Kurera (LSSP)	2,039
Mr. M. W. Mohotti (Independent)	253
Mr. W. S. M. Abeysekera (Independent)	81
Mr. D. H. Liyanage (Independent)	79
Spoilt	121
Majority	8,636
Total polled	51,837
Total No. voters	61,023
84.69 per cent. cast their votes.	

1970

Voting at the 1970 General Elections was as follows:—

Mr. Paris Perera (UNP)	21,657
Mr. Shelton Amarasekera (SLFP)	19,762
Mr. Peter Mendis (Independent)	2,166
Majority	1,893
Total No. voters	52,065

these is the law enacted to re-allocate the land among the people, restoring to them a right that had been taken away by an imperial power. Other actions taken by the Government have been equally impressive. The district development councils idea is an attempt to meet the problems posed by rural unemployment and village apathy. They have already won the praise of the World Bank. The Mahaveli diversion scheme, one of our great engineering feats attempts to reopen the granary of Lanka in a way that would enable us to be finally self-sufficient in rice. And the crowning achievement of the land policy was the taking back of the foreign-owned estates and the break-up of the agency house system which had dictated to us the pattern of our living. Though some of these achievements are politically and psychologically satisfying, the people have not been able to see the economic benefits from them just yet."

But, the Daily News had also to offer an explanation why the SLFP had done so badly and the UNP so well. In cautious and guarded, but realistic terms, the Daily News editorial explained:

"At election time particularly, the benefits of governmental action must be tangible. It is true that the land has been taken over and distributed among the people but the fruits from the land have been chary in coming. In a democracy a government cannot afford to ignore the grumbles of the people, however unreasonable these may be at times, and when the grumbles happen to be about the prices they have to pay for food, then the situation calls for some serious re-thinking. It is not that the Government has been ignoring the complaints of the people. The last budget, for instance, showed a considerable solicitude for the burdens that have been placed on the people by global inflation. Obviously the relief measures given in the last budget have still not been felt—relief from income tax, more employment opportunities, these have yet to reach the people. But when to these delays the prices of vegetables, fish and meat begin to mount whatever good the Government may have done gets naturally obscured. We have often reminded the Government in these columns that the marketing of

local produce could be improved if only some serious thinking was done to deploy available vehicles. As anybody who has travelled to the interior knows, the prices of vegetables are scandalously low. Yet when they reach consumers the prices are impertinently high."

All that the Daily News says in this editorial has been said in Tribune many times over but more often than not it was said (when, we said what the Daily News not says) that we were being "anti-government" because we had pointed out what many governmental leaders tended to ignore. The Daily News now finds that it has to fall back on these realities to account for the SLFP debacle at Ja-ela.

The Daily News went on to drive the point home.

"It is a pity that with so many governmental lorries in use a scheme has still not been devised to use the considerable empty running they do to provide transport for the farmer unable to reach his market in time. The Fisheries Corporation has been making very encouraging noises recently but to judge from what happened at Ja-ela obviously the housewives there have not been impressed at all. Yet another irritating issue is the price of beef. Readers have often drawn our attention to the high-handed manner in which the butchers run their stalls. We have focussed attention on this problem from time to time but the butcher has always managed to proceed regardless. The lesson of Ja-ela is that elections are still decided in the kitchen. But yet this is one department that seems to get neglected despite the many things governments have done to help housewives. Even if we now know the answer the solution to this problem is not easy. As every housewife knows pleasing each and every member of her family is perhaps the hardest thing to achieve."

It is not only in the kitchen the government has failed. It has alienated large sections of the population among all communities by blatant discrimination—political, racial, religious and such discrimination has been perpetuated by vesting power in MPs and Political Authorities to act on their whims and fancies and not according to well-considered rules.

There is no use repeating the point that the bulk of the new voters have voted UNP, and this trend has been noticeable in all by-elections in recent years. It is said that SLFP had abandoned its old candidate, Mr. Shelton Amarasekera, because they wanted a younger candidate with a new image—because the UNP had chosen such a candidate. But even this did not stop the tide against the SLFP.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT REPERCUSSIONS of the Ja-ela by-election was reflected in the National State Assembly on Thursday, April 22. The report in the Daily Mirror of April 23, had stated.

The Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike vehemently denied a statement made by Dr. N. M. Perera that she planned to get American troops to quell the 1971 insurgency. Speaking at the adjournment in the National State Assembly yesterday, Mrs. Bandaranaike said it was "a clumsy attempt to mislead the public and tarnish my image." She further said: "No person with any modicum of intelligence or reason could be expected to believe it."

Here is the full statement made by the Prime Minister:

"Today's Janadina contains a news item under the banner headline 'American Army to kill our youth.' According to this news item, the Leader of the LSSP Dr. N. M. Perera, has made a statement at Ragama that I had proposed that American troops be brought down to Sri Lanka in order to bring under control the insurgency that broke out in April 1971. He has also stated that he had not participated at the discussions at Temple Trees on this occasion, as a Member of the LSSP, the proposal I made would have been accepted, and the children of our cultivators would have been killed at the hands of American soldiers. I am astonished that a person of Dr. N. M. Perera's standing can fabricate such a story. During the early days of the insurgency we met in Cabinet almost every day to review the situation after obtaining reports from the Service Commanders and the IGP. At no stage did I make a proposal, nor did the thought enter my mind, of obtaining foreign troops to deal with the situation. We were certainly short of vital equipment such as helicopters, vehicles, firearms and ammunition, and this we proceeded to obtain from among friendly countries.

"The statement attributed in the 'Janadina' to the ex-Minister of Finance is such a blatant untruth that no person with any modicum of intelligence or reasons could be expected to believe it. The only explanation I can think of is that it is a clumsy attempt to mislead the public and tarnish my image. Such a deliberate fabrication cannot be excused on the grounds of exigencies of a by-election.

"The short period within which I was able to bring the insurgency under control and the manner in which I dealt with insurgents by calling for their surrender within one month, as an act of mercy by itself proves the absurdity of the statement of Dr. N. M. Perera. It is unbecoming of any person, leave alone a person of Dr. N. M. Perera's standing, to make such a wild statement."

Dr. N. M. Perera said that the statement attributed to him regarding the Prime Minister wanting to get down American troops during the 1971 insurgency was correct and not fabricated.

Mrs. Bandaranaike: Why did you remain silent all this time?

Dr. Perera said he was compelled to come out with this now because the Prime Minister had made a serious charge at Ragama that the LSSP was against the rehabilitation of insurgents.

What was more, he said, during the critical days of the insurgency Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike had come to him with tears in his eyes and informed him of the Prime Minister's plan. When he contacted the Prime Minister she requested him not to raise the question.

Mrs. Bandaranaike: What nonsense!

Dr. Perera said that what the Prime Minister had said at Ragama had not been denied in the news paper which reported her speech.

When Mr. T. B. Illangaratne tried to intervene, Dr. Perera snapped at him: "You were also suspected by Madam at that time." Dr. Perera said that the situation during the insurgency was critical as 80 police stations had been attacked and all members were "shivering".

Mrs. Bandaranaike: So were you!

When Mr. Illangaratne tried to intervene again, Dr. Perera snapped back at him: "We made a politician of you and you can't get away from

that fact. The people of Kolonnawa will teach you a lesson."

Mr. Illangaratne said that the Prime Minister had not entertained any suspicion against him. Whether the people of Kolonnawa would teach him a lesson was a matter for the future. After all, he said, we would say that after 35 years he made Dr. Perera a Minister and that was a matter of opinion. "And I don't claim any credit for that either!" he added. If Dr. Perera thought of coming back as a Minister in this Government even that was a matter that could be considered as the UF was forgiving?

Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike said that the hot and excited tone generated by Dr. Perera in reply to the Prime Minister's statement was expected. However, he liked to add on a note of personal explanation regarding his going with tears in his eyes to Dr. Perera: that it may have been cataracts rather than tears that Dr. Perera saw. But considering his (Mr. Bandaranaike's) relationship with the LSSP, Dr. Perera would hardly be his choice to leak information of what the Prime Minister was planning as alleged by Dr. Perera.

Even if the Prime Minister was planning to get American troops, he said he would rather have alerted his Cabinet colleagues "with tears in my eyes." Mr. Bandaranaike said that it was surprising that when the LSSP parted company with the Government last August they did not think of saying the things they now say. At that time they could have very well have revealed that the Prime Minister was a traitor to the land. Apparently what Dr. Perera now said was a defense for the rehabilitation story revealed by the Prime Minister at Ragama. Of course, he said it was encouraging to find that Satan — the Devil incarnate — had to appear before Dr. Perera in tears to disclose a plot such as alleged by him. Mr. Bandaranaike explained that it was not known who was behind the insurrection till he initiated investigations and they found the JVP in it. He said that if any person should hold any suspicion against Mr. Illangaratne, it was completely untrue.

Mr. Prins Gunasekera said that last things kept setret were coming out.

Mr. Bandaranaike on a point of order said that it was only fair that those who had been mentioned

should have the right of a personal explanation as this was not a debate.

At the end of the discussion, the Speaker Mr. Stanley Tilleykatne requested a fair reporting of this matter in the Press and over the Radio.

We have published the Daily Mirror report in full—it will be sometime before the Hansard becomes available.

Political observers who had their nose to the ground during the Emergency of 1971 were surprised to read Dr. N. M. Perera's charge that there had been attempt to bring in US troops to quell the insurgency. At that time rumours and whisper talk had abounded—and although there had been baseless talk of British troops and Indian troops, there had been no talk about US troops. Ammunition had been flown in a hurry from Singapore and India, and the helicopters were obtained from the US. Dr. N. M. Perera's charge was something no one heard of before—and many wondered whether it was not an election gimmick for Ja-ela to answer the charge being made by the SLFP that the LSSP had wanted a "tough line" towards the insurgents.

In these circumstances, Dr. Perera's charge has not found acceptance in neutral political circles who accept the Prime Minister's denial: they also point out that the LSSP Ministers had ample opportunities after quitting the Cabinet to make this "secret" public. A great deal has been already written about the 1971 insurgency. Much more has to be written—and will be written. What future researchers will discover is a matter for speculation. The Americans, no doubt, have an unfortunate record of being drawn into fights against the Left insurgents, but in 1971 British and Indian troops were nearer at hand if the Ceylon had wanted such assistance. But Sri Lanka did not want manpower help at that time—the security forces were only short of ammunition and small arms, apart from helicopters to spot insurgents in the jungles.

Even this sensational "American troops" charge does not seem to have helped the LSSP candidate to get grab more votes from the SLFP at Ja-ela. Whilst this fight went on between the former partners of the United Front, the UNP was

seeking to create an image of itself as a pro-socialist people's party. On the same day at the NSA, the UNP leader made it a special point to insist that his party will not go back on any socialist laws. The Daily Mirror report on his speech read:

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene said in the National State Assembly yesterday that a future UNP Government under his leadership would not change any single socialist law already adopted. Mr. Jayewardene who was speaking on a regulation under the Business Acquisition Act took the opportunity to outline the new policy of the UNP. He said all parties had changed their policies at some time or other. The SLFP and LSSP too had done so. The United National Party, too, had changed its policy and the party would now adopt a socialist path. Different countries implemented socialism in different ways. It was true that the UNP did not start as a socialist party as when the party was formed in 1948 the economic conditions were different. The late Mr. D. S. Senanayake, however, accomplished one of the greatest socialist acts when he made nearly 6 million acres of lands available to the people which were earlier in the hands of foreigners. It was absurd to suggest that they could have taken over all estates of local capitalists and foreigners soon after independence. For the last 10 to 15 years the UNP had adopted a line of democratic socialism. Mr. Jayewardene said that there were various measures already implemented which

they could not go back. For example they could not hand back to the owners the lands already taken over. However, they would change the procedure adopted in managing the lands. The UNP believed that the means of production exchange and distribution should belong to the people and not the State and that exploitation of man by man should be done away with. They will adopt the common methods in the road to the socialist goal. If the UNP was able to form a government there was no objection to anybody, be it individuals or a party, joining the Government.

Referring to the Ward Place incident, Mr. Jayewardene said that according to police reports seven or eight buses had left Warakapola on the day in question. This was increased to 20 in Colombo. He regretted the incident as violence in whatever form should be deplored. Mr. Jayewardene said he would like to remind those who tried to cash in on the Ward Place incident about the "Atanagalla Doctrine."

Socialism did not mean the takeover of undertakings of opponents only. They would support the takeover of the textile mills if it included the undertakings of the friends of the Government.

Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike replying to Mr. Jayewardene stated:

"If you find so many virtues in the SLFP, why are you trying to change the government?" This question was posed to the Leader of the Opposition by Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice when

replying to Mr. Jayewardene. He said that the Ward Place Revolution was apparently doing some good as all the socialistic reforms passed by the government was now finding a place in the heart of the Leader of the UNP. He said Mr. Jayewardene had mentioned that Russia, China and Yugoslavia had still not evolved a common system of administering state enterprises. Perhaps, he said the Ward Place Revolution would have to evolve some system combining the systems prevailing in the socialist countries. He was always happy whenever there was a genuine change of heart as long as the people were not fooled. After all, he said, it was Mr. Dudley Senanayake who shrewdly said that "one could not unscramble an egg" when asked why he did not de-nationalise the bus services. However, he said, it was difficult to visualise the present leader of the UNP leading a party without the good-will of his supporters.

The UNP is now obviously willing to accept the welfareism and state capitalism of the SLFP (and of the United Front) as "socialism" as its plank for the 1977 elections. The United Front of the SLFP and CP will have to do a great deal of hard thinking to formulate policies which will outbid the UNP—with the LSSP sniping at them from the flanks. The LSSP, which had hoped that the voters of Ja-ela would show an awareness for a need for new left coalition, must do even harder thinking to stage a political comeback.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

April 12 — April 18

A 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; TOCSL—Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

MONDAY, APRIL 12: After a three-week stay Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, left for Paris from Belgrade. Mr. Kilos Minic, Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, will join the talks scheduled to take place between the Indian Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike in New Delhi. Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Mr. W. T. Jayasinghe, left for New Delhi yesterday to join the talks in New Delhi—CDN. One aspect of

the investigation of the Commission of Inquiry to probe the State Gem Corporation would be to ascertain whether the valuation or export of precious stones gave rise to any undue or improper advantage to any person—CDN. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, yesterday chaired a meeting of 102 UNP Youth League and Womens' Organisations of Dedigama: representatives who spoke at the meeting condemned the incidents that took place recently near the Ward Place residence of the UNP leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene—CDM. Aththa in an editorial requested the Government to nationalise foreign companies in view of the increasing incidence of exchange violations by many of these companies in the recent past. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Public Administration, Trade and Home Affairs, addressing a meeting in Colombo said that the Government realised the problems of the minority community and had taken steps to solve the latter's problems: he further said that at this juncture it was improper to voice separatist slogans—VK. A special conference of the Tamil United Front originally scheduled to be held in Trincomalee has been transferred to Vaddukottai, Jaffna: this conference will take place from 14 to 16th May—VK. According to the

Lankadipa at least 200 cars would be deployed for the use of foreign correspondents who attend the Non-Aligned Summit Conference in August. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, requested Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the UNP and the Opposition, to make available the services of any senior Police officer of the latter's choice as body-guard: this request follows the incidents that took place near the Ward Place residence of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene—LD.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13: A draft law pertaining to the country's sea rights will be gazetted soon after the Prime Minister's return to the island: the law is expected to include certain concepts which have been accepted at the Law of the Sea Conference now being held in New York—CDN. Professor Senaka Bibile, Chairman of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation, said that the Corporation does not believe any commission has been paid for its purchases of drugs—CDN. Special commemorative meetings and religious ceremonies have been organised in all parts of the country today being the third death anniversary of the former Prime Minister, late Mr. Dudley Senanayake—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* voters of Dedigama requested Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, not to resign on his own from the UNP. A joint committee formed by SLFP and CP trade union leaders are making elaborate arrangements to celebrate May Day: the main theme of the May Day celebrations of the two main constituent partners of the Government the SLFP and the CP will be to fight fascism and reaction—CDM. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the UNP, addressing a public meeting at Baddegama over the weekend said the cause of the trouble near his Ward Place residence was because certain members who were expelled from the party have misled the voters of Dedigama: earlier in the day Police arrested the chief organiser of the Baddegama branch of the UNP as it was alleged certain pamphlets condemning Mr. Jayewardene's actions were distributed: Mr. Jayewardene in his speech further said that the motive behind certain happenings in the recent past was to endanger his life—VK. Communist Party of Sri Lanka will enroll 1500 new members to the party today to coincide with the birthday of the party's President, Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, which falls today—ATH. Hindus and Buddhists throughout the island will celebrate the New Year today—DM. Talks between the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike will take place today in New Delhi—LD.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14: (No papers were published today owing to New Year holidays)

THURSDAY, APRIL 15: (*Daily Mirror*, Lankadipa, Janadina and Aththa were not published today too owing to New Year holidays). According to the *Daily News* Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will return to the island today: Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice, too will arrive in the island today: he was away in UK for an eye operation. The first consignment of tea by the Janawasama for the London auctions will be shipped today from the Colombo Harbour—DM. According to the *Virakesari* Police inquiry into the Ward Place incident will be over by the 19th of this month and Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, is expected to make a statement in the NSA on the 22nd of this month.

Lanka Samasamaja Party will commence work on the proposed formation of the Socialist United Front from the beginning of next month—VK. SLFP trade unions will continue to function in the JCTUO and it is expected in political circles that the Working Committee of the SLFP will change its earlier decision that the SLFP trade unions should disassociate from any organisations in which the LSSP is a member—VK. A crowd of nearly 10,000 people were present at the Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday to see Concorde Supersonic jet when it touched down for a technical stop-over for the first time in Sri Lanka—CDN.

FRIDAY, APRIL 16: Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, Prime Minister, arrived in the island yesterday and there was a large crowd of people including members of the Cabinet and diplomatic corps to receive her: according to a *Reuter* report Mrs. Bandaranaike had a one-hour talk with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, at New Delhi on the way to Colombo—CDN & CDM. Seven passengers were seriously injured when a train on the Kelani Valley line plunged into a CTB bus at a level crossing at Narahenpita yesterday: the bus was badly damaged—VK. Thirty five people have been killed all over the island on New Year day: Police said most of the killings were owing to drunken brawls—CDM. According to the *Janadina* Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, leader of the House and Acting Prime Minister in the absence of Mrs. Bandaranaike will soon lodge a complaint to the Prime Minister against the conduct of Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, son of the Premier and Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues: this complaint, according to the *Janadina*, is regarding a boycott campaign alleged to have been organised by Mr. Bandaranaike during an election meeting held recently at Dalture, Ja-ela: according to the paper several senior Cabinet Ministers attended this meeting including Mr. Maithripala Senanayake but on the instructions of Mr. Anura Bandaranaike the SLFP candidate for Ja-ela by elections, Mr. Peter Mendis, did not attend the meeting. *Aththa* in its editorial criticised the long stretch of holidays on the eve of the Sinhala and Hindu New Year and said such holidays should be reduced as this would hinder the development of the country: the paper further said the method of declaring holidays according to astrological findings should be done away: From the 10th to 18th both days inclusive were non-working days except the 15th which was a working day: but many employees did not turn up for work on this day too. Celebrations and special prayers will be held today in Christian and Catholic churches throughout the island being Good Friday.

SATURDAY, APRIL 17: According to official figures Sri Lanka has earned an additional Rs. 528 million by the export of tea from the period January to November 1975 compared to the corresponding period in the previous year: this is said to be a 42 percent increase—CDM. Organiser of the UNP in Dedigama, Mr. Abhaya Samarakoon refused to call over at the party headquarters when he was asked to do so on last Thursday: instead, he replied, he would meet party officials at Warakapola: Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, too refused to be present at the party headquarters—CDM. *Janadina* posed whether the budget policy of Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, regarding the closure of liquor shops and taverns near places of worship and schools was intended

April 1 - April 12

to take revenge: the paper said it has been found several liquor shops which were asked to close down have been owned by personalities who did not toe the line of the Minister of Finance. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways, will soon hold talks with Government officials and Political Authorities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Matale and Trincomalee to draw up a program by which these four districts will get equal distribution of Mahaweli waters for Yala season—*ATH*. *Aththa* in an editorial said the Government should inquire as to how the country came by the present stock of wheat flour distributed to the public throughout the island: the paper said the flour was unfit for human consumption and it will make things worse for the Government at the present juncture when it faces a by-election at Ja-ela. Following recent incidents in which several threats and attacks have been launched on politicians Government ordered the Police to provide security and if necessary a body-guard to party leaders and senior politicians: meanwhile the report of the Police inquiries into the Ward Place incident has been forwarded to the Attorney General for further action: Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, refused to give a statement to the Police over the Ward Place incident—*VK*. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, said that preference will be given to village youths living around estates taken over in training and providing employment when vacancies occur in these estates—*DM*. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will celebrate her 60th birthday today—*LD*.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18: A complete reorganisation of the country's health services by fusing the preventive and curative aspects of medicine has been planned and for this purpose Mr. George Rajapakse, Minister of Health, appointed a special committee to make the draft plans—*CO*. A gang of robbers involved in several robberies in the recent past was rounded by the Police last week: Police inquiries revealed that the robbers have used a political party office in Colombo as "operational cover" for their nefarious activities—*CO*. The April issue of *Vama Samasamajaya*, a paper of a breakaway group of the LSSP, in an article said that the striking feature of the Marxism of the LSSP was the total absence of interest in Marxist philosophy—*TOCSI*. UTA, the French airline, has told the Air Ceylon that it would consider continuing the UTA-Air Ceylon tie-up until September, if the national carrier is prepared to share the losses now being suffered by both—*TOCSI*. Water Resources Board advised the Government on the establishment of a Water Court to solve problems arising out of diversion of waters from tanks and rivers to agricultural fields—*LD*. A program by which school children could participate with farmers in the agricultural fields will be introduced by the Ministry of Education from next month—*SM*. A Japanese Buddhist delegation comprising 34 delegates will arrive in the island on the 27th of this month—*ATH*. The main slogan of the LSSP for the May Day will be the formation of a "socialist United Front": the celebrations of the LSSP will be held at the Colombo Town Hall—*JS*. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, addressing a meeting at Kuliyaipitiya said that the credit of acquiring foreign owned estates should go to the Left movement of this country—*JS*.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1: The United States refused political asylum to the former President of Philippines, Diosdado Macapagal. Formation of a Soviet Air Force Squadron within the range of Tokyo has been confirmed by the Japanese Defence Agency. US Ambassador to Thailand said that his country would continue military and economic assistance to Thailand despite the withdrawal of US military personnel from Thailand. Left wing leader of Lebanon, Kamal Jumblatt, said that Syria cut down arms supplies to leftists fighting in the civil war in Lebanon. Libya and Angola agreed to set diplomatic ties at embassy level. At the official talks between King Hussain of Jordan and US President Ford the former appealed to America to assist solve the Middle East crisis: King Hussain said Middle East was at cross roads between war and peace.

FRIDAY, APRIL 2: A Junior Minister of Thailand was shot and seriously injured. Thailand-Laotian troops exchanged fire across the Mekong River. Former Prime Minister of Japan, Kakuji Tanaka, denied any involvement in the Lockheed pay-off scandal. Since it was the policy of Syria to help all liberation forces in the Arab world, Lebanese Left wing leader Kamal Jumblatt said that he hoped that Syria would help the leftists fighting in Lebanon to oust President Sulaiman Franjeigh: 17,000 Syrian troops were fighting in Lebanon assisting the leftist forces. Kremlin yesterday officially blamed Egypt for the discord between USSR and Egypt: it further said Cairo was trying to justify deals with Israel.

SATURDAY, APRIL 3: Indonesia announced that those found guilty of smuggling could be hanged according to new regulation. *Chinese People's Daily* accused the Deputy Prime Minister, Teng Hsiao-ping of an anti-party plot: the attack is said to be the most ferocious one the paper has ever written on the Deputy Premier. South Vietnam agreed to release two Americans detained since the Vietnam war. UN Security Council charged South Africa and passed a resolution condemning the latter for its aggression against Angola. The Sterling Pound plunged to its lowest in the London market. Political observers and newspapers in West Germany said that Bonn would conclude a nuclear pact with Egypt to be used for peaceful purposes.

SUNDAY, APRIL 4: Huge crowds demonstrated in Peking's Tien An Men Square in support of the moderate policies of the late premier Chou En-lai. In Thailand's general elections Seni Pramoi's democratic party took an early lead and Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoi was voted out of office. A Leftist instigator at the recent student disturbances was sentenced to death by the Burmese military court. Except the Chinese language all other Chinese studies have been banned by the Philippines schools. Tass News Agency reported that Soviet Union has asked for an explanation from the US regarding reports that American Navy ships are on their way to Lebanon. President Sadat of Egypt currently in Paris is expected to draw up a program of arms assistance to Egypt from France.

MONDAY, APRIL 5: Large crowds of Chinese went on rampage in Peking: the crowds beat up people and set fire to cars: they also ransacked an administration building. Cambodian President Prince Narodom

Sihanouk resigned as Head of State and was replaced by Deputy Premier Khieu Samphan. Thailand's Democratic Party led by Seni Pramoj gained 115 seats out of a 279-seat House of Representatives. External Affairs Ministry of India accused four countries China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the United States of misrepresenting or failing to understand developments in India. Cuba hailed the UN Security Council resolution condemning South African military intervention in Angola. Uganda's President Idi Amin said the struggle by black Rhodesian nationalists had reached the stage where an undisputed leader must be chosen to wage the guerilla war against the regime of Prime Minister Ian Smith.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6: Leader of Thailand's Democratic Party, Seni Pramoj, said leaders of Thailand's military oriented parties agreed to form a coalition Government with his party. Tension eased in Peking following disturbances in Tien An Men Square. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel said that he opposed US military aid to Egypt. Lebanon's Left-wing leader Kamal Jumblatt charged Syria has entered its troops into Lebanon disguised as Palestinian guerrillas. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat charged that Syria was responsible for the tragic events in Lebanon and called on the Lebanese President, Sulaiman Franjeigh to resign. Jordan's King Hussain said that negotiations to purchase arms from the US was stalled as his country did not have money for same.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7: Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping was dismissed from the party and all posts he held by Chairman Mao Tse-tung: Hua Kuo-feng was appointed Prime Minister and Vice Chairman of the Communist Party. Japan's Parliament met for the first time after three months since the boycott by three Opposition parties over Prime Minister Takeo Miki's handling of the Lockheed payoffs scandal. The Cambodian Cabinet resigned. James Callaghan took over as Prime Minister of Britain and immediately went over television to warn the nation that it was living on borrowed money: Mr. Callaghan further said that all must unite together to fight inflation. Egypt's President Anwar Sadat flew into Rome from Paris yesterday to meet Italian politicians and the Pope: 4000 security officers were deployed in the routes of the Egyptian President while in Italy.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8: Thousands of people celebrated the fall of Teng Hsiao-ping in the streets of Peking. Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Nepalese Prime Minister Tulsī Giri had talks in New Delhi over political and economic issues. Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki said that he hoped the visit of Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev to Japan would materialise soon and expected to enter into a treaty of peace with Russia. Italy agreed with the idea of President Anwar Sadat that the only hope for a permanent Middle East peace lay in the establishment of a separate Palestinian State. Indian Minister of Defence, Bansi Lal, told Parliament that the Indian Navy was being strengthened because developments in the Indian Ocean has made the area a danger spot. Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Andrew Peacock said that his country was firmly committed to the ban of all nuclear tests.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9: Wall posters appeared in Shanghai demanding death sentence for former Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping. Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik said that his country was not yet ready to normalise relations with China. Singapore's Foreign

Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam played host in Moscow to his Soviet counterpart Andrei Gromyko. Soviet Union declared support for forces fighting in Lebanon which are "fighting for national unity" and called for maximum effort to consolidate the present ceasefire. A Philippine Airlines plane flew off from Manila with three hijackers aboard along with nine crew: the plane was said to be heading for Libya. Earlier the plane was delayed owing to mechanical trouble. An expert on eye diseases of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness in South East Asia said that India will have 20 million sightless people at the turn of the century if necessary precautionary measures were not taken to prevent the spreading of blindness.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10: Former Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal who was refuged political asylum in the United States said he would continue "lawful and peaceful" efforts to bring democracy back to his country. Australia's aborigines who held a conference at Canberra pledged that they would seek international recognition as a separate aboriginal nation. Nine US congressmen have planned to visit China in the near future. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat warned Israel not to use nuclear weapons in the Middle East war. A French Government envoy arrived in Beirut on a peace-seeking mission amid signs that the Left-wing forces might extend their current 10-day truce in the civil war. New China News Agency said that China charged the USSR of using its huge fishing fleet to plunder the resources of other countries.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11: Indonesian officials said that the proposed visit of Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, to China in May, did not mean that there would be quick normalisation of relations between the two countries. Burma launched one of its bloodiest offensives against Communist rebels according to an official announcement from Rangoon. Lebanese Parliament passed a law enabling it to elect a new President straightaway, an essential step towards ending the country's political crisis. Prime Minister Ian Smith of Rhodesia will next week announce fresh plans to resolve the black-white political crisis in the country. Japanese and French Communists have agreed to work for socialism through democratic means in alliance with other socialist groups.

MONDAY, APRIL 12: India's socialist leader George Fernandes was quoted by a German magazine as saying his clandestine organisation was carrying out acts of sabotage against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Government. Although Pakistan ordered the hijacked Philippine Air Lines plane to leave Karachi the hijackers refused to comply. China's People's Daily quoted Chairman Mao Tse-tung as saying that the ousted Vice Premier Teng Tsiao-ping did not understand Marxism-Leninism: the paper in an editorial said Teng Tsiao-ping was the Chinese Communist Party's biggest "capitalist roader." President Ford of America at a news conference said that US was trying its best to avoid Syria sending its troops to Lebanon: he said Lebanon should be allowed to solve its own problems. A West German spokesman said that Soviet leader Brezhnev might visit Bonn before October.

NEPAL—2

(Continued from the last issue)

By A Special Correspondent

IT WAS CHAVAN'S visit to Nepal at the end of January which had laid the foundation for the understanding and agreements which have now been reached between the two countries. The *Hindu*, in an editorial of March 25, had set out the position as the dialogue between Nepal and India had got under way. The editorial read as follows: "A FRUITFUL INDO-NEPALESE dialogue was initiated by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, when he visited Kathmandu in the middle of January. Minor differences which continue to cloud relations between the two countries are expected to be ironed out during the projected 12-day visit of the Nepalese Prime Minister, Dr. Tulsī Giri, to India next month. When he was in Nepal, Mr. Chavan had outlined some of the starting points for increased co-operation, particularly on economic development projects which can provide benefits to both countries. The welcome atmosphere of friendliness which has developed in recent months is now marked by substantial progress in technical discussions, especially on harnessing the vast potential in the river valleys in the Himalayas. A delegation led by Mr. Y. T. Shah, Secretary in the Union Ministry of Energy, has just returned from Kathmandu after reaching accord on measures to speed up the implementation of the 1,800 mw Karnali project and other schemes. These augur well for the coming talks with Dr. Giri. India has agreed to nominate soon its representatives on the Karnali Executive Board formed by the Government of Nepal and has also discussed ways to finance the project which will include a massive dam across the Ghagra river. All this should allay Nepalese suspicions that New Delhi has been paying less attention to Karnali than to other schemes which are of immediate relevance to flood control and irrigation in the northern parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. A controversy over the Kosi canal is likely to be set at rest by India's readiness to provide more funds for the distri-

bution system. The rivers rising in Nepal cause havoc in both countries during the flood season and greater realisation appears to prevail now in Nepal of the common geographical destiny of the neighbouring countries. Parallel with the work on the Karnali multi-purpose project, whose power output will be sold to India, investigations are to be undertaken on the Jalkundi project across the Rapti and the Pancheswar dam on the border. Nepal has received assistance from many countries, but Indian aid of Rs. 130 crores comprises about 40 per cent of the total. Nearly two-thirds of Nepal's power production come from the Rs. 21-crore Trisuli hydel power station which was handed over to Nepal recently. The Karnali scheme, Asia's biggest hydel project, many cost Rs. 350 crores at present estimates even for its initial stages. Apart from programmes to aid generation of power and control floods, India is also participating in a 300-km road-building project in the central sector of Mahendra Rajmarg. When this is completed, India's contribution will account for nearly half the Himalayan kingdom's motorable roads. Generous and speedy help for development projects like dams will be an effective way for India to build up reservoirs of friendship with the touchy neighbour."

The problems between the two countries, it must be realised, were not merely political and economic. There were also ecological problems which, as will be seen from the editorial, were of supreme importance.

IN AN EARLIER article, the *Hindu* had indicated some of the ecological problems which had to be solved in the Himalayan region for the joint benefit of the two countries. This article draws special attention to the question of erosion on the Himalayan mountains which received southwest mountain rains. Of immediate practical importance was the problems of the seasonal flooding of the rivers which originated in the Himalayas and flowed through Nepal and India. The facts set out below in the *Hindu* article on soil erosion are of significance.

"THE GREAT MOUNTAIN barrier of the Himalayas stands in the way of the south-west monsoon causing heavy precipitation of rain water

which in turn leads to serious erosion of the southern flanks of the range. To this process of natural erosion is added man-made erosion caused by terrace cultivation, the grazing of livestock and deforestation through the exploitation of timber resources. Top soil is washed away and carried to the plains. Landslides are frequent in the area. A four-man group from West Germany, the Himalayan Ecosystems Research Mission, recently visited the Himalayan area to discuss with Indian experts the need for reforestation and the setting up of a soil erosion study centre in the Himalays. The team visited the Forest Research Centre and the Soil Conservation Institute at Dehra Dun. Contacts were made with the Government of Nepal as well as with Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation. The German mission noted that already, as a result of population increase in the mountain areas, there has been large-scale migration to the plains of the Terai. The forests of this area have been depleted leading to wind erosion. The runoff of water from the hills leading to the denudation of the slopes is believed to increase the danger of floods in the rainy season as well as drought in the dry season. It is proposed that a pilot project should be set up in a selected catchment area which could be later extended. Dr. Reiger of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University, who led the mission which included a forestry expert, a hydrologist and an agronomist, has said that an intensive study of Himalayan erosion would be a tremendous project requiring the services of many experts as well as the co-operation of the Government. There is no need to stress the point that a study of this type should be undertaken without delay in view of the importance of the Himalayan region for the whole of the peninsula. While some thought has been given in the past to the problems of using the water and forest resources of the Himalayas, it is clear that we will also have to examine the problem of erosion which will affect the lives of millions if allowed to progress unchecked."

THE VISIT of the Nepalese Prime Minister to India last month had been preceded by many preparations in New Delhi. There were a

number of matters of political importance which had to be dealt with. Nepal, for instance, had developed fears that India might attempt to swallow her into the India Union. There were several consequences on account of this apprehension on the part of Nepal: Nepal had edged towards China to obtain a protective shield to keep India at bay; Nepal had encouraged China to get a big economic and political foothold in the country; Nepal had established links in western countries hostile to India to ensure that Nepali sovereignty and integrity were not violated by India; King Birendra of Nepal had wanted to make Nepal a "zone of peace" and Nepal had developed strong anti-Indian postures in order to get more help from China and some western countries.

But Chavan's visit and the other negotiations at different levels had laid the foundations for better relations. An editorial in the *Hindu* on the eve of the visit of Dr. Tulsi Giri had indicated the progress achieved in Indo-Nepalese relations.

"CONSIDERABLE GROUNDWORKS WAS done in parleys among officials and Ministers before this week's first visit of Dr. Tulsi Giri, Nepal's Prime Minister to New Delhi to open what Kathmandu hopes will be a new chapter in relations between the two countries. Some of the basic issues were discussed at length when the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, went to Nepal in January. Over the past two and a half decades, there have been several occasions when the two countries went off the road of close friendship. Pakistan and China were often responsible for egging Nepal on to stances which led to a thickening of the mist of misunderstanding, despite India's constant effort to extend a helping hand to the Himalayan neighbour. Dr. Giri's recent statements in Kathmandu as well his remarks in the last two days in New Delhi underline Nepal's desire to get closer to India. India has given repeated assurances to Nepal that it should have no reason to fear the big neighbour in the south. With reference to relations with China as compared to ties with India, Dr. Giri has now been explicit in declaring that "naturally, they tend to tilt more towards India," bilaterally. It is good that Nepal

has refrained from trying to push India on any commitment on King Birendra's proposal for a declaration of the kingdom as "a zone of peace". Nor will Nepal raise the "peace zone" proposals at any international conclave like that of the non-aligned nations. Since King Birendra himself stated that he had no apprehension of a threat from India, it should be considered superfluous for Nepal to pursue the idea at all in New Delhi. If Nepal harbours suspicions over China's intentions, it is up to Kathmandu to take up the issue with Peking. One of the fruits of the New Delhi discussions—which were frank—is the forthright approach that minor irritants should not be allowed to sully the fraternal ties which are sought to be placed on a sounder footing than ever before. Faith in mutual goodwill is essential to avoid slipping down on the Himalayan border as a result of pettifoggery over matters like Nepal's problems as a land-locked country. India has been generous in assisting its less developed neighbour, notwithstanding its own pressing economic difficulties, but has added a note of caution that its friendship 'should not be taken for granted'. The proof of the pudding is to be seen in the continued ability of officials and experts from both countries to speed developmental efforts in the Himalayan foothills. A good beginning has been made in clearing the mist, so that New Delhi and Kathmandu can see each other's problems in a healthy perspective of co-operation in their common interest."

Whilst Nepal's Prime Minister was in India, the Nepalese Foreign Minister in a speech at Kathmandu, on April 10, had declared that Nepal was no longer anxious to play the role of a "buffer" state between India and China. He had said, *Nepal believes in constantly "nourishing and nurturing" relations with the two neighbours India and China in keeping with the realities of the situation, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Krishnaraj Aryal, has said. Explaining his country's stand, Mr. Aryal told a meeting of Rotarians here yesterday, "this calls for mature and sober appreciation of each other's point of view, leaving no room for misunderstanding."* Mr. Aryal quoted King Birendra as saying that the idea that Nepal tried to play the

role of a safe buffer between India and China was "outmoded". Mr. Aryal said that despite his country's cultural ties with the two neighbours, Nepal had neither taken for granted its friendship with them nor tried to play the role of a buffer between them.

When Dr. Tulsi Giri returned to Kathmandu on April 14 he had made it clear that he was satisfied with the latest talks. An agency report had stated: *The Prime Minister of Nepal, Dr. Tulsi Giri, returned here this afternoon completely satisfied with his talks with Indian leaders during his visit to Delhi. A cheerful Dr. Giri told newsmen at the airport that he had "very nice and fair" discussions at Delhi. Answering a question he said "Sure I got the friendship I sought."* The Prime Minister, however, felt that any statement and rhetoric would not help, for, what ultimately counted was "how it works out". He remarked "the taste of the pudding is in the eating." He said he gone to India with a certain definite purpose. "My purpose in going there was to generate an atmosphere of mutual trust and to establish friendship on a sound footing."

INDIA HAD FOR SOMETIME become apprehensive of the "politics" China was playing in Nepal. As Chinese aid had increased in Nepal, it was reported that more and more Chinese had come to Nepal. It was not merely the number of Chinese personnel at the Embassy which had grown phenomenally. There was also a flood of Chinese "experts" and also "bureaucrats" from their trading and business corporations. It was reported that over 60 Chinese were working on the construction site of small textile factory 60 miles from Kathmandu. Several thousand Chinese "specialists" and "engineers" were engaged in the construction of the road from Pokhara to Surkhet. It was known that many of these "specialists" and "engineers" were servicemen in the Chinese army. China, it was known, took special care to keep possible Nepali fears at bay by expanding economic assistance at every stage. India was therefore anxious that this Nepali-Chinese connection did not reach the point where Nepal would become a hostile base against India.

It is for this reason, more than anything else, that India was anxious to increase economic aid to Nepal and India has now gone far to meet Nepal's requirements at least one field, namely power projects. The following article in the press indicates the progress made by India in this connection.

"Some progress is understood to have been made in respect of several projects hinging on Indo-Nepalese co-operation during the talks that the visiting Prime Minister, Dr. Tulsi Giri, has had with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and other Ministers of the Union Government. The more important among them is the Karnali hydro-electric project of 1,800mw consisting of six units of 300 mw each. The benefits of this project will be shared jointly by India and Nepal. The Nepal Government has already agreed to associate Indian experts with its detailed investigation. When this study is completed, it is quite likely that the proposed generation capacity of 1,800 mw may be revised. The other projects, which will be jointly investigated by Indian and Nepal engineers, are the Pancheswar hydel project of 1,250 mw to be erected on the Sharada river on the U.P.-Nepal border, and the Purnagiri hydel project of 1,000 mw. In the case of the Pancheswar project, the installation of a head station on the Nepal side is also under consideration. As regards the Purnagiri project, very little progress has been made so far. When these two projects are taken up for implementation, there will be submersion of land both in India and Nepal, and this will be among the matters for joint investigation by the experts of the two countries.

"Yet another small hydro-electric project of 13.8 mw in Devghat, inside Nepal, is to put up with Indian assistance. Considerable headway has been made in respect of these projects and several other matters during the talks between the Nepal Prime Minister and the Indian Ministers. Technical and financial assistance is being provided by India for the construction of a road connecting Kathmandu with Dhankuta. India had earlier offered to put up a cement plant in Nepal as a turnkey project, a sugar mill and an ancillary engineering plant. Another matter of vital importance to

Nepal is the issue of landlocked States which has figured in the Law of the Sea conferences. The Nepal Prime Minister has stated that while taking advantage of these conferences to put forward its views, Nepal's intention was not to embarrass India. There is now general recognition that the problems of the landlocked countries should be understood much better than has been the case so far.

"A study by Mr. W. G. East, President of the Institute of Geographers, examines the common characteristics of 14 landlocked States. Though he found that their cultural and economic geography had nothing in common, apart from their aloofness from the sea, he arrived at a category of buffer States numbering 11, including Nepal, Afghanistan and Mongolia. The remaining three were independent landlocked States. A more recent study by Mr. M. I. Blassner dealt with access to the sea for developing countries though this did not include Nepal or discuss the nature of the landlocked country's economy to provide a proper measurement of its dependence on access to the sea. It is now realised that even the geographers did not pay much attention to the economic problems of the landlocked States and this is one of the grievances of these States. Nepal has repeatedly taken up this issue at the U.N. forums."

There is a great deal of hope in India that relations with Nepal will take a new and different turn from now.

(Concluded)



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—77

A Spot Of Excitement

By Herbert Keuneman

Have you ever tried to get a good night's sleep—always provided you can get a good night's sleep—knowing that a biggish cobra is at large in the roof over your head? It can't be done.

It was well past midnight, and I was reading in bed, when the Petromax went out for lack of oil (because I feed it only a bottle a night, for lack of money). After a fruitless half-hour or thereabouts of tossing around I went to fetch

my second-string illuminant, a dim hurricane lamp, from the attached bathroom. I set it on the cupboard beside my bed and went back to my book; but I couldn't concentrate: it seemed to me there was more than usual echo of my restlessness from the cadjans above me. There is always some noise—rustlings and flutterings—caused by those beastly sparrows of whom I have more than once previously complained, who nest by the score if not the hundred in my roof; but tonight the noise was increased and I was in some way uncomfortable about it. I switched a flashlight on and searched the roof; but, saving the occasional sparrow disturbed by the beam that fluttered briefly from its perch, there was nothing to be seen to account for the pother or for my *malaise* concerning it.

Might there be, I asked myself, a *talagoya* on the prowl? The *talagoya* (*Varanus cepedianus*) a land-monitor lizard, is very much a day creature active in the hottest hours of the sun, which it devotes (as far as I am concerned) to seeking out and devouring sparrows' eggs and sparrows' fledglings and for all I know sparrows themselves in my roof. I suppose I should welcome them. But loathing all lizards, and *talagoyas* and *kabaragoyas* (water-monitor) most of all, I am far from happy knowing one is about. I know *talagoyas* are harmless to man; but since they can grow to 4½ feet and weigh upwards of 20 lbs (though mine are considerably smaller) and have very sharp claws, I cannot contemplate with any relish the thought of having one miss its footing, fall from aloft, and drape itself—disgusting—over my shoulders! And they do, occasionally, miss their footing and fall, as I have seen them do; though, thank God! only rarely. I went back to my bed and book and my dim light; but I was too uneasy; and eventually, though the noises had ceased, I had to give up trying to compose myself and went and sat in an easy-chair in the living-area and gazed out into the night.

The chair I sat on, my favourite, has its back six inches from the gable wall that separates my bedroom from the living-area. After a while the noises broke out again, and the traffic of them seemed to be along the walltop behind and

above me. I began to be increasingly uneasy. Moreover, the noises seemed to me now—but this could have been imagination—not typically *talagoya* noises (with which I am perforce familiar). Or, rather, they overlay the familiar rustling scratch with an extra-unpleasant serpentine slither. My thoughts turned to rat-snakes: I have twice had ratsnakes in the roof, on the same mission as the *talagoyas*, though both times in daylight hours. Still, if a *talagoya* could be wandering around at night, no reason why rat-snakes should not be. As between *talagoyas* and rat-snakes there is, to me, little choice. I must check again; this time from the living-room side. I went back into the bed-room and fetched my torch.

I shone the light along the top of the wall. Over my chair: nothing. Further up the gable slope: nothing. But in the angle between it and the core wall of the house which supports the roof ridge something reptilian and hideous, like a miniature gargoyle come to life, thrust out its head at me and flickered a forked tongue. It was bigger than any rat-snake's that I had seen; so it had to be a *talagoya's*. And it could well have been, although it didn't have to be as I shall show you.

Thoroughly annoyed that I must now sacrifice to a *talagoya*-hunt whatever sleepiness I had been able to accumulate—but *talagoyas* are sluggish at night, and the therefore improved chance to eliminate this one for good and all was too good to be missed—I called down to Pema and P.B. asleep downstairs to come and help me. Not to disturb the creature further, I switched the torch off and remained in the dark until the boys collected themselves and an assortment of poles and sticks and came along up. Then I switched on again, and there was nothing there.

Everybody was annoyed now—nothing like the breaking of a long-wooded sleep on a sweltering hot night to cause annoyance—and we were determined to hunt this *talagoya* to the death. We began methodically to search every foot of walltop with the aid of my flashlight and to poke the cadjans with a length of stick. Nothing. The only room as yet unsearched was the bathroom, a horribly constricted space in which to face even a *talagoya* at bay! and a great

deal of fragile furniture and fittings to complicate movement. We went in. And there on the gable wall, three feet above the door through which we had just stepped and through which I had stepped how many times that night, was Something. What it was we did not realize, at first. It was a snake—that was obvious—and it was coiled in so thick a coil that one fat lap hung over the wall's edge and it was bright and gleaming with an almost oily shine, as though it had just sloughed, but it was not at once that the significance of that white black-barred belly dawned upon us or, perhaps, that we allowed ourselves to acknowledge what we had to know. It was P.B. first put it into words, saying in an uncustomarily serious tone: 'nayek, ne-da?' 'It's a cobra, isn't it?'

It undoubtedly was. And we had still to duck under that door, under the obscene pile of poison above it, to get out of the room.

Outside, we lit two Petromaxes, and sent to the village for Pinhamy to advise our Conference of War.

I had thought at first of shooting the cobra; but I had second thoughts when I remembered that, once, I had blown the hinder third—or at least a quarter—off a cobra coming straight towards me, and he had merely left it behind him and continued to come! and Pinhamy had a no less cogent argument: the only gun available at that time of night, or in Galkadawala at all, was a muzzle loader and the glowing fragments of bast and cotton it could not fail to scatter from the home-made wadding of its load might well ignite the tinder-dry cadjans of my roof. To dislodge the creature and try to despatch it with sticks in the confined area of the bathroom was as impracticable; for if it fell it would fall more or less within striking distance of anybody there, while if it merely made off among the cadjans we should never know if it had gone away for good or was still lurking in the roof to reappear at who knew what inauspicious or inconvenient juncture.

This raised an interesting conjecture. How long had the cobra been in my roof already? About two weeks previously, what then seemed an inexplicable incident had taken place. I was seated downstairs mortifying the flesh by listening to the Sinhala Second Service on the radio when I heard

from above me a loudsish thud. Some distraction or other then occurred and, suspicious though I always am of Things That Go 'Bump!' In the Night, I somehow neglected to investigate; until when I retired to bed Pema, who was in attendance, made to enter the bathroom to check that the water-bins and pitcher were full and suddenly called out: Here's a *talagoya* dead! and sure enough there it was, not yet stone dead (its 'hands & feet', as they call them in the village, were still feebly flapping) but otherwise paralyzed, lying stomach-up and obviously hopelessly moribund, precisely under the spot—as I now, with a slight chill, recalled—where the cobra was at this moment coiled. There was no sign of wound on the *talagoya*, and it did not 'look' ill (query: how does a sick *talagoya* look?) and I remember that I conjectured with Pema that perhaps a snake had done it in; but Pema was sure that its death must be 'from natural causes', as though snakebite were unnatural (arguing that: no snake was visible, although we desultorily searched; and that where would a snake come from? It was true that we'd had three other snakes in the roof before—two rat-snakes and a bronzeback—but these are climbing species (which the cobra rarely is, and even this I did not know at the time) so that it seemed impossible a poisonous snake might actually be involved. Besides, I was so delighted to be minus one *talagoya*, however fate had chosen to subtract it, that carelessly I didn't follow the mystery up.

I can now think, because I must, of several possible though unlikely-seeming access routes: right through a considerable portion of the house from either of the outside doors and then up the roof-high pile of boxes in the store-room, whose own door is however seldom open; or up the swaying surface of an all-but-smooth bamboo tat which hangs within reach of the ground, and then along the knife-edge of boards with gaps from which the tats hang, and then up another tat—al! very dicey for even the most sure-footed of cobras; or straight up the outside walls of the house, which are of rough cement plaster but even so are so comparatively smooth that the *talagoyas* themselves can scale them only at the

corners, by tightly embracing the opposed right-angled surfaces. There are no tree branches overhanging the roof or within reach of it. I have seen to that—and nothing is ever left leaning from ground to eaves. It has to be one of the difficult routes, and it is intimidating to know that at least one of them is not difficult enough. It is horrible to think of a night traffic of commuting cobras above my head; even more horrible to think that one adventurous one may have been protractedly resident there. (*talagoyas* sometime stay for weeks). Shortly after the head-*talagoya* incident I left for Colombo and stayed twelve days, and the upstairs was deserted; had this hooded bloated squatter moved in in my place? Or even earlier?

Arguing that the cobra would probably stay out, since it had not significantly moved during all the time we had had to pass under it to observe it and while we flashed lights at it and although, sure enough, in all the confusion a *talagoya* also did in fact appear and on becoming aware of us vanished, as far as we could see, straight in the cobra's direction but without any ill consequence. I tried to get back to bed; but unsuccessfully. A mosquito net however well tucked in is simply not enough insurance psychologically (or, I should calculate, physically) against this scale of scaly menace, and I was routed into retiring to a very uncomfortable night indeed on a downstairs bed with broken springs.

Pinhamy departed, with no war plan yet worked out between us. But shortly after dawn the next morning—and a drear dilemmical dawn it was: for we dared not lose the cobra but we could not, it seemed, kill it—he returned complete with a Heath Robinson plan that turned my stomach: he was going to gaff the cobra—or, rather, he was not going to; somebody else would have to, but under his general supervision—with a large fish-hook lashed to a bamboo pole! He had brought the fish-hook; he sacrificed a frond from his precious clump of *una-bambu*, reared like a child and the only surviving clump for miles; and he commanded some wire from my store for lashing together. Shortly after, he announced that he was ready (if only the as yet unnamed wielder of the gaff was likewise). I, on the

other hand, was far from ready for any such foolhardy experimentation. To make a 'strike' with Pinhamy's gaff the blow *must* be downward; and if the strike was a bad one and the hook did not really take hold, or if a cobra could break free of a hook intended only for the soft mouth of a *lulla*, the only result could be either to pull the cobra—surely by then justifiably good and mad—to the floor and free to strike in any direction, or to tickle it into going away we should never know where or even if it had actually gone! It is true that when we crept upstairs to reconnoitre, the cobra, though still where it had apparently been all night, now presented the greater part of its coils on the bedroom rather than the bathroom side of the wall; so that if it fell there would be more room for us dragon-slayers to manoeuvre; but with me, and to Pinhamy's plain disappointment, this cut no ice. I insisted on a gun, a civilized breech-loading one to obviate what I have noted was a muzzle-loader's threat: of fire. As it happened, both plans proved their workability.

It took nearly two hours before all was ready, strategy and gaff and gun—the latter was a decrepit 16-bore from Alutwewa, and there was one doubtful cartridge loaded with SG; I should have preferred a 12 loaded with No. 2 or 4—but then it all took place very quickly.

In all that time, and throughout the molestation that was to follow, the cobra scarcely moved. It shifted its attitude, but not its position though it had plenty of room to do so. I wonder why? Perhaps it had recently sloughed; but search as we might we have not yet found a slough. It did not seem to have recently fed; when we finally stretched it out there was not the least irregular bulge discernible. And it could not have been sick—not deathly sick—for when it came to battle it hoodspread and hissed quite terribly. But though it twisted and turned it did not attempt to leave its place under any provocation.

Pinhamy's gaff—wielded, in the end, by Pema, who good-natured and complaisant always has the dirty jobs foisted on him—was first brought into play. For several minutes the cobra was prodded and jabbed, with no more

evident resentment than if it were a ticklish girl! and jockeyed into position. There was some hissing, but no attempt at either flight or attack. Then Pema saw his chance, and struck. It was fortunately a fine strike, hooking the cobra firmly behind the hood. But I maintain it was still lucky the cobra and Pema pulled oppositewise, for if the snake had come with the pull the chances are it might well have fallen free. As it was, Pema was able to pull the head down until the hood hung splayed against the wall, a perfect target. Then it was that the hoodspreading and hissing came in earnest! But it was no trick at all then to blow its head off.

Allowing for its pulverized head, the cobra was precisely 5'6" long.

That afternoon we despatched the *talagoya* too. Pema, using the same technique he had used for the cobra, gaffed this as well, but it tore free with one jerk! Unfortunately for it, it jerked so hard it fell backward over the otherside of the wall and P.B. clubbed it. I was glad the cobra hadn't used the same tactic.



POINT OF VIEW

Ceylon Tamils

—what do they want?—

By R. Kahawita

THERE WAS an article in the English press about Ceylon Tamils. It seems an unhappy way of classifying about 20% of our citizens who claim to have come to Ceylon long before the Vijaya clan from Orissa landed in Ceylon. Tamils coming to Ceylon before the Sinhala is a possibility if we believe in the Epic of Ramayana—a venerated narrative of Aryan literature. It is very likely the Tamils hopped from Island to Island from Rameshwaram and came to the barren tidal waste of the Jaffna Peninsula and the mainland adjoining it. But when they found that the new territory was no better than their homeland the Tamils did not think seriously of colonising the newly discovered territory, but may have used to set up seasonal fishing villages as was the case before Ceylon shed the colonial rule. This is legendary.

By the time the Portuguese, the Dutch, French and English came to have interests in Ceylon there were a Tamil population settled down in the Northern and Eastern seaboard. These western "sea farers" took the Tamils as well as the Muslims occupying those areas, as they were, and accepted them as a part of the "Colony's" inhabitants and allowed them to follow their way of life, culture, social organisation and caste systems. However, the Portuguese multinationals, from whom one of our misguided clerics is seeking liberation, may not have had any impact on their way of life.

These events were followed by Independence from British rule in 1947. Then, like Eve eating the forbidden fruit, a new consciousness dawned in the inhabitants of Ceylon. The two major communities, the Sinhala and Tamils, wanted to share Paradise on a fifty-fifty basis—with this the communal rumpus started and with Independence a new breed of humanity called "Politicians", raised their presence in every nook and corner of the Island. This breed saw, in the carcass left by the British, several varieties of carrion to fight over.

In spite of all the wrangling that were going on, an amicable settlement was arrived at, and the differences were unified in the New Flag of Ceylon by including the Tamil colours in the National flag even though the rampant Sinhala lion is depicted in a threatening attitude towards the Tamil colours. So far so good, as long as Ceylon had leaders determined to weld the different communities into one nation. But as usual the "new breed" were not quite happy with the turn of events, they wanted trouble so that they can voice the troubles of the "Underdog"—the Sinhala, and immediately a tremendous issue was raised "Sinhala in twenty four hours".

This electrified the Sinhala and they saw at once, new jobs, new prospects in employment once the Tamil or English speaking employees were ousted, sheltered and protected avenues of employment, new trade and business lines then monopolised by the Tamils and English speaking communities. A new vista of hope and future opened up over-

night to the Sinhala speaking people. In pursuance of Sinhala in twenty-four hours, the Politicians rivalled each other to make Sinhala, "like instant tea", brew it instantly. And then the "Sri" numbered vehicle registration came which no one asked for and no one cares two hoots about it even today. It is absurdly puerile to think that by putting one Sinhala letter on a vehicle number plate the whole language and its literature, culture and religion can be revived. Anyway that is how our Politicians think.

All this finally emerged in three groups: *Sinhala, Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils*. And among the Ceylon Tamils they broke up into Jaffna Tamils, Batticaloa Tamils and Colombo Tamils. The Indian Tamils got divided into upcountry Indian Tamils and low-country. The Sinhala felt that they were left out of this shuffling so they also divided themselves into the Kandyan Sinhala and the low country Sinhala with various claims, the former think they are superior to the latter basing their claim to the "Kandyan Convention" and the latter think they are superior because they say "we did not surrender and sign a convention; for us, the Britishers were visitors and we treated them as visitors and extracted what we could from them while the going was good and this is how we became rich".

And today Sri Lanka—the new name for Ceylon, is divided into various camps, with the Muslims sitting on the fence and plucking the best of the produce on both sides of the fence. They are a shrewd community and exploit the situation as the Sinhala saying goes, "Wasi patheta hovi". They are the only community in Sri Lanka without a problem except the problem of how to amass more wealth quickly while the other communities fight over the chaff. They are the only community well organised to look after their interests. The other day, they even had a public meeting to protest against the teaching of Communism and Socialism as a compulsory subject in School instead of Religion and religious knowledge. While the other religionists like the Catholics, other Christian denominations, Buddhists and Hindus were

silent—may be muted by fear or like some of the Catholic priests, they have abandoned the crusade to liberate erring souls and taken to "Liberation Tea."

Now looking at the major problem of the "Ceylon Tamils" as referred to in the English, press what do the "Ceylon Tamils" want? Are they asking for Federation, Separation or Annexation to Tamil Nadu of India? This may be their coup-de-grace if they do not get their fundamental human rights as citizens of Sri Lanka. If so what are their minimum demands as citizens of Sri Lanka? They are:

(a) **USE OF TAMIL AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE** so that a "Tamilian Lankian" can transact business in the language he knows. They have a human right to demand this for, in spite of foreign influence over four centuries, they have maintained the purity of their culture, religion, music, dance forms, dress and even in their culinary arts. If they were able to protect all that matters to maintain their cultural and ethnic identity so far, one could not expect them to surrender what they hold foremost as their heritage for political advantage. Whatever the cultural groupings, one could not think of any people sacrificing a cultural heritage for a momentary advantage. Therefore, it seems foolish for the Sinhala politicians to expect that, which the "average Sinhala man" does not care two hoots as to what the Tamils speak etc. So to overcome this impasse over the language issue take a bold step.

Make "Sinhala" the National language so that Government proclamations, the President's speech etc. can be in Sinhala. The official languages, however, should be Sinhala, Tamil and English. Why English also be an official language may be asked? Every Sinhala boy and girl craves to learn English, because a western language opens up a new horizon to human outlook and knowledge.

Making Tamil also an official language will give "the average Tamil inhabitant the facility to transact his business in the language of his fore-father's as much as a Sinhalese can do likewise."

Today even in African States they are reviving the dead tribal dialects, not that they can learn much, but it creates self confidence and a pride in the individual. He may give it up for a language which gives him economic advantage but to build him to that level all inhibitions and complexes have to be wiped out for him to accept what he is, he is.

Politically or legally, a language and with it the culture of a people cannot be wiped out, more so when that language is one of the most ancient languages of the Human Race and in today's context a very virile language. This problem is similar to the English-French problem of Canada, with this difference Sinhala is a minority language compared to Tamil at an international level. What the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka resent is to deprive them the right to choose the language they should learn and transact business.

A Government or the Politicians should know that, when they encroach or attempt to erode the fundamental human rights, they will meet with obstruction and opposition. Here in Sri Lanka, this attempt is countered by Federation, Separation etc. To make Sinhala, Tamil and English official languages is not a loss of face but a progressive measures which will be hailed as the most far reaching step taken by any Government to achieve national unity.

(b) **ANOTHER ISSUE IS TO CONTROL OF OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**, admission to professional and training institutions, etc. by various overt and covert devices to give dominance to the major community. This is an open insult to the major community to consider that without such devious ways the major community cannot stand a chance. Also it categorises the major community as a weaker section of the population and therefore they need special considerations.

The politicians may be thick-skinned not to think that way. But it is an open admission by them that the major community is no match to the minority community. It is not so, if there were such a thing, it is because the minorities are better organised, more practical in their outlook, and more purposeful in what they do. For instance, in their educational insti-

tutions teaching of Science, Mathematics, and Technology is given the highest priority; for they have accepted that without these subjects there are no avenues of employment.

The answer to this, is not "controls" to create dissatisfaction in a section of the citizens, but to bring all the educational Institutions in the Sinhala areas to the level of those in the North and East in the teaching of Sciences, Mathematics and Technology, and man them with competent teachers. If there were no language issue there would be hundreds of Tamil community graduates in these subjects willing to give the lead to bring the so-called weaker section of the community to a stronger position.

Instead of building science laboratories etc. in the secondary and Mahavidyalayas our Sinhala Ministers build hundreds of Agricultural centres paddy and fertilizer stores etc. Purely for a political thamasha and after the thamasha to abandon them to be the home of stray cattle. If half the money spent on these useless buildings is spent on science laboratories, science equipment and science teachers, very soon there may be a demand from the minorities to consider them as the weaker section and provide them special treatment in job opportunities etc.

It is a disgrace to consider the Sinhala youth as backward and weak in competition with the Tamils, what is required are corrective measures to equalise opportunities. To cover political bungling, competition should never be abandoned. Equal opportunity and the better man for the job should be the slogan.

(c) **ANOTHER MAJOR ISSUE IS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION** in the well being of the country. The "Lankian Tamilian" never had this opportunity except during the leadership of giants like D. S. Senanayake, his desire to weld a Ceylonese nation was met with all kinds of allegations, about secret pacts etc. Even today after 24 years after his death our carbage hunters refer to these to gain political advantage.

It may be said, there is Tamil representation in the Cabinet today. Yes, there is by nomination. The politicians forget that one of the main issues with the British Raj was representation in the then

legislature was by nomination was and not by representatives elected by the people. Both the Sinhala and Tamils "fought" the British Raj side by side as two brothers on this issue. Now with the Independence so gained Sinhalese wants the Tamils to be represented by nomination. This to the Tamils is a travesty of basic human rights. It is so by any political standards. Even in a communist country there is seemingly elected representation.

Why in Sri Lanka representation by election is not possible because of the confrontation of Federation, Separation etc. Obviously the solution is to remove the causes for this attitude. And today Sri Lanka has not got that quality of leadership with sufficient political stature and courage to stand on a public platform and say, "there is a political problem with our Tamil brothers and without solving that problem this country cannot progress to build up a sound nation, therefore, I am going to solve the problem to the entire satisfaction of the Tamils, and Sinhala. It is not political, it is national; it is not partisan it is unity; it is not a majority and a minority community, it is one national community. This, I am going to solve above political hustings, by getting representatives from both sides, unbiased by politics, to discuss in a spirit of give and take and with a genuine desire to see Sri Lanka as a United nation, marching forward together. Therefore, keep these problems outside the Political arena and leave it to me for a solution.

Alas such a leader is not there today and may never be there as long as our political leaders think in terms of their party to be steered into power by hook or crook. Nonetheless, there is no reason why representatives of the two communities should not get together and work out a solution to confront the political leaders. Without trust and unity among the community groups, "this hand of ours cannot move forward."



SOMEWHERE IN THE EAST—II

Allen Abraham

by R. C. Thavarajah
Retd. Supdt. of Police

DRIVEN UNCEREMONIOUSLY AWAY from the Metropolis, the early missionaries first settled in TELLIPALLAI, two miles South of the Port which was most frequently used those days—Kankasanturai. By way of commencing their work, they started the first printing press in the year 1836. This was the first of its kind in the entire Northern Province and was, till very recently, called the American Ceylon Mission Press.

The *Morning Star*, a newspaper which is still being published, was first printed at this Press. The *Morning Star* followed in 1841 the oldest Newspaper of our Country—The *Ceylon Observer*, which has the distinction of being the oldest publication in the field of journalism in Sri Lanka today.

Several writers of repute have contributed articles to the *Morning Star*. Mr. S. P. Amarasingam, the Editor of the *TRIBUNE*, also used to write with unflinching regularity, wit and wisdom under the popular caption "Just a Minute".

The first Industrial School in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) was started in the year 1872—the same year that the Batticotta Seminary started Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai—by Rev. Thomas Snell, a devoted American pioneer missionary. The students of this first industrial school constructed with their own hands a building which was named the Sanders Hall which still serves as the present library of the Union College, Tellipallai. Three of the students who built this Hall were Messrs. Allen Abraham, C. K. Jesudasan, and S. Thilaiampalam, father of the Late Proctor Arumanayagam.

Sir Arthur Gordon, the then Governor of Ceylon, bestowed on this Institution the courtesy of visiting the place and declaring the Sanders Hall open in the year 1884. On a conducted tour of inspection of the buildings, the handicraft exhibition, etc. His Excellency was most unreservedly appreciative of the brilliant demonstration in carpentry work organised for the occasion. He was particularly

impressed with the fret-work that was so proficiently demonstrated by Messrs. Allen Abraham, Jesudasan, and Thilaiampalam. He immediately suggested to Mr. Smith that one of these students be sent to England or America for a course of training. When Mr. Smith told him that funds of the Institution did not permit such a venture, His Excellency offered to pay for the passage. Mr. Smith, who later went on furlough, took Mr. Jesudasan who received a course of training in printing, carpentry, photography, watch making and other crafts. Messrs. Smith and Jesudasan collected more funds, brought additional machinery and equipment on their return to the Island. Mr. Jesudasan served the Institution at Tellipallai as Superintendent of the Press and Instructor of the Industrial School for over fifty years.

When Sir Monk Mason Moore, Governor of Ceylon visited Union College, Tellipallai in the forties, His Excellency too evinced great interest in the work done in the Industrial School especially in the manufacture of paper as there was an acute shortage of that commodity during World War II. Mr. Jesudasan, who had retired by that time and who happened to be present, was introduced to His Excellency and a commentary of the work done by Mr. Jesudasan was given to the Governor. His Excellency's tribute to the man who laboured for the School was that "the finest investment that the Government of Ceylon ever made was to send Mr. Jesudasan for training abroad."

It was the great Aristotle who said that the "exclusive sign of thorough knowledge is the power of teaching." This was so very true of the late Mr. Allen Abraham. I am certain that most of my teachers who received his care in moulding their pursuit of knowledge will agree with Alexander of Macedon who said "I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teachers for living well."

Mr. Abraham believed in what the great Plato enunciated when he relentlessly deprecated the unimaginative and stereo-typed methods by training boys to learning by force and harshness. Instead he directed them to it by what amused their minds "so that you may be better able to discover with accu-

racy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

His personal guidance and supervision of the work of each student under his care was something unique. Mr. Kulatungam related to me a story of some interest. One day, after setting a problem in mathematics to the Class, he walked round, as was his habit, casting a hawk's eye on the effort and approach of each student in the class. From the corner of his eye, he saw one student, who, like me was hopelessly weak in mathematics, engaged in what most of us do when there is a temporary mental void or boredom—*Doodling*. He had drawn a fairly large circle and on top he had sketched a caricature of the teacher. He had also added the lines in Tamil which I am reproducing by giving a phonetic rendition in Anglicised form:—

"Allen enpavar or Panditharam
Avar oru periya Vandiyaram.."

The Anglicised phonetic rendition serves a dual purpose. It is designed to benefit those whose mother tongue is not Tamil. It is also meant to help the Tamils—at least some of them—in a particular Postal Zonal area who, for "various" reasons, are unfamiliar with their own language, and who have denounced their "Jaffna inhabitancy", Tamil culture and—even, the "Nectar of the North" during the torrid April days—the palmyrah toddy! I am also giving my own poetic prose translation of the "effort" of the unfortunate student. In doing so, I am completely ignoring the accepted units of metre in verse and making a 'Pot-pourri' of the iambic, anapaest, Trochee and dactyl:—

"Allen is the name
Of a famous PUNDIT.
The waistline of his frame
Was one without AMBIT.

The tall, robust, rotund mentor was very angry but did not show it. With panther-like cautious approach, he tip-toed to the student's table, snatched the sheet of paper and with a stern look shoved it inside the breast pocket of his tunic coat.

The distraught student was shaking like the proverbial Aspen. Gone was his music of thought and the ecstasy of Tamil poesy. Expulsion from school was not a very inspiring thought. After

the class was over, it was a very desperately sad 'Poet' who went beseechingly to his friend, philosopher and guide for intercession. He feared what the morrow would bring.

(To be Continued)



FOR THE SPIRITUAL

Shree Anandamayee Ma

by K. Ramachandra
Talangama

Dr. Carl G. Jung, the famous psychologist, in a highly instructive article on Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharishi, whom he considered as the whitest spot in a white space of spiritual India, wrote as follows, giving a warning to both West and East:—

"The Eastern nations are threatened by a quick disintegration of their spiritual goods, and what comes into their place cannot always be considered to belong to the best of the Western mind. Therefore, one may look upon Sages like Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana as modern prophets. They not only remind us of the thousands of years' old spiritual culture of India, but also directly embody it. Their life and teachings form an impressive warning not to forget the demand of the soul in all the new things of Western civilization and their materialistic-technical and commercial concerns of the world. The breathless impulse to obtain and possess in the political, social and intellectual fields, which is rummaging the apparent, unappeasable passion in the soul of the Westerner, is also spreading continuously in the East and threatens to bear consequences not yet to be overlooked."

Certain other great thinkers and authors like the late Dr. S. Radhakrishnan of India, Dr. Paul Brunton of England, and Dr. G. H. Mees of Holland also thought in similar terms and concluded that Sri Ramana's approach to Reality was in perfect accord with the scientific spirit of the time. Dr. Mees went a step further when he said that "the Maharishi is above the spirit of the time. Long after the spirit of the time will have been succeeded by the spirit of another Age, Sri Ramana will be

remembered as an Immortal. His Immortality stands out from his every word and look."

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED and living Lady Saint, Anandamayee of Varanasi, North India, practices and preaches the Message of Ramakrishna and Ramana in a supremely combined form. She completes her 80 years of life this month, and a special celebration is to be held at Ramakrishna Mission Hall at Wellawatte from 5.30 p.m. on 9th May 1976. This is known as 'Sadhahisheka' in Sanskrit, and greater importance is attached to it than to any Silver, Golden or Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Very few Saints or Sages have, in recent times, lived upto this old age to witness such a ceremony.

Though born a mortal like all others, Shree Anandamayee had achieved identity with the Supreme Mother of the Universe. She attended a primary school and just managed to learn and write in her mother tongue—Bengalee. She evinced no interest in further studies and read no religious books. She practised no rites or rituals or Yoga of any kind, and yet found no insuperable obstacle to the emergence of human with Divine. Her parents got her married at the age of 12, but she miraculously converted her husband to a life of purity and celibacy on the wedding night itself. In simpler words, she was really born as a Saint and is worshipped as such by millions today all over the world. She observed long periods of Silence so much so that many people thought that she was actually dumb, and expressed their sympathy by saying "Alas, it is a pity, a gross injustice of God: He has made this beautiful girl dumb, though He had bestowed upon her all the best virtues of womanhood."

In the matter of food too, she had her peculiar moods. Having lost all sense of 'I' and 'mine', she used to go without food or drink for weeks and months. Her devotees, used to pass some food into her mouth through fear of losing her in death. But various kinds of miracles happened in her mere presence. All kinds of people, men of purity as well as atheists, rich and poor, young and old, flock to her with various problems and find peace and joy by sitting in front of her and looking at her face full of spiritual glow, brimming over with cheerfulness. Her sweet

and compassionate glances fell with equal tenderness upon all beings like the golden rays of the sun at dawn. Even dogs, cats goats and snakes receive sympathy and care. She is often heard to utter: "Although owing to the illusory attractions of the world, you often forget this little daughter of yours, you may rest assured that your worries and tribulations are ever before my eyes." The way she brought about harmony and mutual understanding between the Hindus and Muslims in the area in which she lived at Dacca forms one of the numerous and wonderful miracles in her most eventful life. Lack of space forbids my going into details thereof.

A FEW WORDS more regarding her reachings before I conclude this article. Since 1937, I have felt that there was a strong spiritual link between Sri Ramana and Sri Mataji though they had not met in person. I had the unique privilege of meeting some of her devotees at Sri Ramanashram who had come there to meditate in the presence of Sri Ramana as directed by the Mataji. The Maharshi attained Maha Samadhi in 1950, and two years later she came to Arunachala to lay the foundation of the Meditation Hall.

It is well-known that Sri Ramana laid special emphasis on the path of 'who am I' enquiry to attain pure, non-dual Awareness. This does not mean that he failed to appreciate the difficulties of his devotees in pursuing the Atma Vichara Marga. He did recommend the easier course of Bhakti Marga (Path of devotion). Of course, he meant the *prapothi* or total surrender. This is exactly what Shree Anandamayee is preaching. Here is a fine lesson by her to a devotee with a simple but beautiful smile: One day she was showing the various ways of worshipping God, and said: "Lose yourself altogether when bowing down to God with a single-minded devotion and you will obtain joy and power in proportion." She further added: "There are two kinds of **pranamas**: offering to Him your whole body and mind with all thoughts, desires, sense-impressions, love, affection, devotion, just like emptying the contents of a full pitcher to its last drop. The other way is like scattering face-powder through the minute holes of a powder-box: the major portion of your thoughts and desires is kept

back in a hidden chamber of your mind, and only a little dust is allowed to escape."

It is because that she had the strong conviction that there was no better example and guide than Bhagawan Ramana himself to 'Be quiet' that she directed her followers to his holy atmosphere for a few weeks' meditation to experience the 'thoughtfree state'. All glory to these two brilliant stars, who appeared in the spiritual firmament of India to shed light on a suffering humanity, which is threatened by the dark clouds of war on a global basis'. Both of them had no Guru to guide them in their spiritual life nor have they accepted for themselves the title of a mystagogue or initiation. In fact, they have not encouraged anybody to don the Sannyase robe without sufficient qualifications and attainments.

K. RAMACHANDRA

The death, this week, of Mr. Ramachandra of Jayanthipura, in Talangama, removes from our midst one of the most colourful personalities of a generation which has been involved in the changes in this island from the turn of the century. He had led a full life and lived to a ripe old age. He was a rare soul who was a source of inspiration and comfort to many. An article by him, on Shree Anandamayee Ma, sent to us only last week, appears in this issue of *Tribune*. Mr. Ramachandra was a reader of *Tribune* practically from its very inception over 21 years ago. He was not only a regular reader but an interested participant. Though in recent times, his interests were mainly religious and spiritual, he was a keen observer of contemporary politics. Over the years, some of his writings have appeared in the *Tribune* including his recollections of developments in the island immediately after the first world war. Right up to the end he was in touch with *Tribune* offering comments on what has appeared in our pages, sending us press cuttings and articles for publication and drawing attention to events of the day which needed comment and analysis.

SAFARI—March 1-6

On Men And Matters

by Alkardi Mugana

March 1,

Dejection, seeing no hope for the future, one's work of no avail, under the thumb of people who could, and, what is worse, would, destroy you; people who could undo everything you have tried to do. Thank heavens for a sick calf, lying as if it was dead, no hope for it, and yet as its sister or brother died before it, you do not want to let it go. So you hope it up as if it was sleeping. The sick calf, the dying calf, is the measure of one's own failures. So you turn to God. I had the good fortune of reading Professor C. S. Lewis on the psalms, and I read that the whole point of life is to be God-centred. God is not an insurance scheme. So as I stood reflecting beside the calf, and feeling very sorry for myself, I saw that the world was God's and that he made me, and that he would hardly make me to abandon me. The calf is still alive, and it is life is worth fighting for. The native doctor of medicine came to see its mother this time, and he also saw the calf and he spent more time with the calf than I have ever seen him spend with any animal. He was not silent, and yet he did not speak. He was pouring out his soul to the calf; he wanted the calf to live.

Then a man turned up, a friend, and we went along to see other friends of mine working, and what a difference they were making to the place, in groups of two, out of sight of each other, all on the same task, in pairs on a different job. One of them could write English but he could not speak it. I have had enough of this writing in riddles.

March 2,

The calf is not dead yet. This morning it stood for a short while after it had been hoisted on to its feet. It no longer shivers and its bowels have moved. It makes an assuring sight when its body has been propped up against a wall, and it is a devastating sight when it is lying awkwardly flat on the ground, as if it were dead. Some of the medicine it gets is strange, or it is adminis-

tered in strange ways. One of these was to blow something up the nose of the calf. It roused the calf all right, and for the first time it raised its head of its own. It was some form of shock treatment, but its effects did not last long. The butter or fat content of the milk is higher in the afternoon by several points. We are committed to selling out milk to the staff at a greatly reduced rate, and so we do not get the full benefit of the increased price in the afternoon, as we send away so little, then.

Two wells are being dug on the estate, both quite close to each other. A section of the boundary has been cleared, that was not cleared for years, and it has yielded quite a lot of firewood, which we sold at seven rupees a square yard, a cube as it sometimes called stacked, or *yarra* in Sinhalese. The cattle are taken twice to the river in a day to try help make up the shortage of food. Most of the ground is almost bereft of grass, so fierce is the sun, so prolonged the dry spell. The man who cuts grass for the cattle manages to hand some up every day, but goodness knows how he does it. I have seen such bare ground grazed in the Trincomalee District, or I would not have believed it possible. March 3,

A barbed wire fence separated a cow and me. She came up to the fence, at me as it were, and this sort of cow would not come to be petted. A small boy asked me to move aside, as, he said, the cow wanted to come over on my side. She came right up, quite unafraid of me, for I was not many yards away, and high enough the fence was at that point, she cleared it with a neat jump, like hours jumping a fence at one of England's Premier house shows. This was one of our oldest cows, a grandmother, and bearing the name, small white, *Podi Sudiya*, in Sinhalese.

The calf died while I was away a short time, three hours, from natural causes in the presence of a perfectly reliable witness. Defeat, yes, and yet a victory, or, should I say, triumph? The great thing is to make an effort, confident of help, and when you lose you see that it was the effort that was worth-while, and the effort you made is never lost. It spreads.

mushrooms, like the atom bomb but more surely. Someone misbehaves, tells a lie, and is that man to be condemned? What of all his noble qualities? One thing is sure. I think Buddhists say it is the man who condemns himself, though the inexorable law of Karma. A man is what he is, a lover or a hater, but no judge of his fellow or even of himself men. The anchor, exemplar, the judge, is the creator become man.

March 4,

This is in the main a Buddhist country, but let us suppose this is a God-created universe, a very wonderful universe as we in Ceylon can still see. Then God made man in his image, to be Gods, and a mark of that you can see in the Fort, Pettah and the industrialized parts of the world, wonderful places, perhaps, but in a different way. South of Dondra there is only the Antarctic, but for some reason we, in Ceylon, have never thought to go have a look at it, even if it was just crushing in Antarctic waters. Now, if God made man in his image, it was surely not with the intention that we should exist without any idea of him. He must surely have laid down some rules for us, and there murder, sexual crime, stealing, dishonouring our parents, ruining a man's name, and covetousness become wrong because they upset God's conception of what the world should be and not merely because they are anti-social, for, after all as an example, every man must die and leave his goods behind. For the same reason that there are those commandments just mentioned, any form of idolatry becomes wrong, that is tinkering around with false gods, whatever they may be, and misuse of the true God, which amounts to using God's name for wrong purposes, or without the proper

respect due to it. There was a discussion today where the man who had last word said that the chief fault with us in Ceylon is that we try to keep a man down by not giving him a chance to show what he can do. That is why we are burdened with this—ism and that. This is just another form of covetousness. Immorality, of certain kinds, at least, those regarded as the most reprehensible, stems from idolatry. I do not think I need say any more about this.

March 5,

My reading in Isaiah today was this. Is not this the fast that I choose, to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the tongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Isaiah, chapter fifty-eight, goes on to say this. Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily. Then shall you call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.

Apropos of this, Bonaventure writing of Francis, both thirteenth century man, says this. With holy affection, then, must we think on the holiness of this blessed man that was of such wonderful sweetness and might as that it conquered wild beasts, tamed woodland creatures, and caught tame ones, and inclined the nature of the brutes, that had revolted from fallen man, to obey him. Bonaventure illustrated this with many examples of what actually happened.

There was a talk I had today, in a chance meeting with a man who turned out to be an Abbot-General. We talked of many things, inter-related subjects, and one conclusion we came to, something that he taught me, was that personal holiness, perfection if you like to call it that, is the most important factor in reformation in any age. In the beginning of monastic orders, he said, men joined them to achieve holiness or this personal perfection for themselves. That is why the monasteries made such an impact in those early days, and why they saw Europe though what became known as the Dark Ages, when barbarians ran riot.

March 6,

Isaiah goes on. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the "afflicted", then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath, a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth. Someone told me that we must not expect God to solve our problems, but to give us the strength to find a solution. He had told me a little while before, how our news is distorted, as the actions of a minority creep into the papers, leaving that of the majority out in the cold. The minority often, as it were, are the misfits, hence the distorted news, giving a wrong impression over a period of time. The majority of people are, as I think he said, law-abiding.

There was the case of a mother and son hopelessly at loggerheads. There was a possibility of money being withheld, money needed to employ people casually, on a casual basis. That came, giving us a breathing spell, but the problem has still to be resolved. A ceiling has been set on weekly expenditure, but money is readily available, over and above this, for projects. It is outsiders who benefit primarily from the projects, for they pockets the money.

LETTERS

The Tribune welcomes letters from readers. Short letters have a better chance of being published. All letters are subject to condensation for space reasons. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. Writers may request that their letters be signed only with initials or a pseudonym but preference will be given to those fully signed and bearing the writer's complete address.

NEXT WEEK

- * MAHAWELI—Development and Resources
by R. Kahawita
- * VIETNAM'S LIBERATION
—Anniversary and Elections
- RAILWAYS
—Once more

Confidentially

* CTB * Beggars
* Mosquitoes * CGR

IS IT A FACT that the incentive bonus paid to CTB bus crews, (now being frshely implemented) was having the most curious and interesting repercussions? That as we have had no official intimation about these incentive bonus schemes, we have no alternative but to go on the reports received from many quarters? That in order to stop the pilfering of fares by bus crews and other malpractices the bonus scheme was devised to give a percentage of the total collected during a shift of 8 hours? That in the case of long distance journeys targets were fixed for each trip? That though we do not know the actual targets we are only setting down a target just to illustrate how the scheme is said to work in practice? That on a long distance run, say from Kandy to Colombo, a target of say Rs. 500 is fixed for the trip (it may be more or less)? That if the target is reached and a collection up to the minimum of the target fixed is handed in, a certain percentage is paid out to the bus crew to be shared among them? That this was also done to ensure that buses did not run empty refusing to pick-up passengers at stops? That it was felt that pilferages would be less? That one unfortunate consequence of this target system is that bus crews now overload buses to the point of danger? That in addition there is an unhealthy rush (at top speed) to get to crowded bus halts in order to pick up passengers? That this kind of hectic rushing by different buses have resulted in many accidents? That CTB know-alls assure us that the scheme ended pilfering based on the non-issue of tickets? That the only defect now was overloading? That efforts, they tell us, were now being made to reduce the accident rate? That another complaint received (this mainly from the oustations) is that bus conductors, who are vested with discretionary power to charge for luggage and small "cargo" carried

on the top of the bus charge far too much for such parcels? That rural folk who carry small sacks of vegetables or other produce to market towns are charged enormously high rates? That receipts are issued? That passengers cannot complain on this score? That these excessive rates were charged so that targets are pushed up? That it would be in the interest of the public if CTB authorities fix some guidelines regarding charge; for luggage? That there is a great deal of heart-burn in rural areas about the rates charged even for small parcels?

IS IT NOT FACT that in spite of the enthusiastic work of the Tourist Police and the Department of Social Services to round up beggars, the number, who inflict themselves on the public, are as large as ever? That these beggars flit from spot to spot unlike in the past when they took permanent stations in certain areas? That, in the past, areas had been carved out for certain beggars or groups of beggars? That these hardy professionals now turn up at the most unlikely places where people shop? That they make it a habit to haunt the entrances of eating houses and hotels away from the Fort area? That they make themselves a nuisance at the houses of Colombo residents? That professionals, semi-professionals and amateurs now descend in hordes on Colombo households? That such beggars are a nuisance in the sub-urban and outstation areas? That the rounding up of beggars in the areas frequented by tourists has pushed them to the areas where local people reside? That this shift of the beggar nuisance from the tourist-frequented centres to other areas has only added to the troubles of local population? That this can be counted as one more painful consequence for local people stemming from tourism? That the beggar problem should really be tackled on a national scale and not merely an exercise to help foreign tourists spend a FEECs-subsidised holiday in Sri Lanka without paying a levy to the beggar population?

IS IT NOT TRUE that even more troublesome than the beggars are the mosquitoes which have invaded the city of Colombo during the last few years? That today mosquitoes are an army of occupation which the Health authorities of

the Colombo Municipal Council do not seem to be able to combat? That several anti-malaria units in the oustations, however, are able to keep the mosquitoes at bay? That "jungle areas" are today generally free of the mosquito menace? That in Colombo city mosquitoes rule supreme? That in the area around the BMICH and its environs mosquitoes are found in millions? That in Colombo 1,2,3 and 7, where most of the top delegates to the Non-aligned Conference will be accommodated, mosquitoes have become a greater menace and nuisance than all the beggars in Sri Lanka put together? That there not enough mosquito nets in Colombo to combat the mosquito menace in the city? That mosquito nets are not a guarantee of mosquito-free sleep? That our mosquitoes have even become acclimatised to air-conditioned rooms? That it is time that the authorities paid some attention to this matter if Colombo is not to acquire a reputation for its mosquitoes in the nonaligned world?

IS IT NOT A FACT that the new coaches from Rumania, now being used by the Railways on certain runs, have disappointed all commuters who had hoped for something better? That *Tribune* has already been inundated with letters and telephonic complaints about the total unsuitability of these coaches? That *Tribune* has now asked some of its investigators to travel on one of these coaches to report on the complaints? That all commuters who have got in touch with us say that the seats are uncomfortable, that there is no leg room, that it is difficult to get in and get out and that the ventilation is so poor that it is a veritable oven when travelling in the hotter and drier parts of the country? That the old British, Chinese, Indian and locally-made coaches were heaven compared to the hell now called the Rumanian coaches? That even on short suburban runs these coaches will prove unpopular? That passengers are soon likely to go on bended knees to the Minister waiting the "stinking" old coaches in preference to the new red-coated Rumanian coaches? That much more will be heard about these coaches soon?



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