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Letter From The Editor

WITHIN FIFTY DAYS from the time the Minister of Finance & Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, made his tax proposals in the NSA the government has had to hint that it was having fresh "re-thinking" on a number of its proposals, the most important being the new ration scheme based on the Rs. 300/- per mesem limit. The Ceylon Daily News of January 2 proclaimed in a banner headline on its frontpage RE-THINKING ON NEW RATION SCHEME: GOVT. TO REVIEW INCOME CEILING: OVER 50 FC ABOVE RS. 300 LIMIT. The report was carefully and cautiously worded—obviously inspired by top official circles. It read: "The Government will review its proposal regarding the revivification of ration books in the context of the declarations the Food Department has received. A decision on the final income ceiling of persons who will be entitled to receive subsidised rice and sugar will be taken this week. Official sources said the Government has decided to continue with the present rationing scheme until a decision was taken on the income ceiling. According to the sources, the analysis of the special householder's declarations reveals that over 50 percent of ration book holders will not be entitled to rations if the Rs. 300 income ceiling is applied. The Government's re-thinking is based on the lines that subsidies should continue to be given to more than 50 per cent of the population who are in the lower income group. Originally the new rationing scheme was to be effective in the first week of January but the data available to the Government based on the householder's declaration received so far indicate that a larger percentage of persons than earlier face hardships if the Rs. 3000 per annum ceiling is used for the withdrawal of ration books." What this means is that the government, on the excuse that over 50% were in the over Rs. 500 category, was anxious to re-adjust the ceiling. Tribune finds it hard to believe that between December 28 and January 1, it has been possible to process all the duly completed declaration forms. It is more likely that the government has decided to set a higher ceiling in view of the widespread uneasiness in the country on this matter. The government has probably also realised that only those who are on regular payrolls in the public and private sector and those who own cultivated land would have made true declarations. The overwhelming majority of the people earn much less than Rs. 300/- a month. But, there is however, a substantial number of self-employed persons, especially in the non-institutionalised trading community, who are known to have made false declarations about their incomes—they brazenly boast that they "cannot be caught out". Among them are gem merchants who sell or export their gems through one or the other big gem dealers or exporting firms. These gentlemen, like the mudalali gaj-gchiefs among the pavement hawkers, make more money than "permanent secretaries" and other highly paid bureaucrats, but they pay no taxes and therefore collect "free rice". The wage-earning employees in the public and private sectors will be the most seriously affected by this ceiling. But, this is a fact that could have been known even before this abortive exercise was announced on November 15. Moreover, the Government now has to increase the prices it fixed for flour and bread on November 15—fixed at that time with more enthusiasm than discretion. At the time of the Budget proposals, it was known that there were crop (wheat) failures in the USSR, China, Australia and Argentina. It was also known that Russia was in the market for large quantities of wheat. Internationally prestigious economic journals had predicted that wheat prices would skyrocket before the end of the year just as they had pointed from May 1977 that inflation had overtaken the USA and that a major economic crisis had gripped the capitalist world. As the crisis grew more acute, the "free enterprise" and the "laissez-faire" content of the capitalist system, which had begun to crumble from the world economic crisis of 1972 began to disappear completely before the protectionist regulations imposed in some of the richest industrialised countries. The growing burden of debt, strangulating the economies of not only developing third world countries but also many of the poorer developed countries, was recognised throughout the world. But, the UNP Government, with its star-studded galaxy of economic experts, did not expect, anticipate or provide for the upheavals that were round the corner. The Minister of Finance talked glibly of "free economy" and "free enterprise" at a time when such concepts were fast disappearing in the heartland of the richest capitalist giants. Mr. Ronnie de Mel devalued the Sri Lanka rupee without using the term "devaluation" even once. It was neatly done. Evasive terms were used to camouflage this operation. But all this cannot prevent the uncontrollable inflation such massive devaluation, without appropriate precautions, must bring any country. And Sri Lanka is already in the grip of inflation that will spell disaster if remedial action is not taken immediately. And it is only the beginning. The bottom has already begun to drop out of the gamble that was the De Mel Budget.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

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Colombo, January 7.

When this issue of *Tribune* appears on the new stands on January 14, it will be sixty days after the Budget, and seven days short of six months since the Government was elected to power. Last week, we had struck a pessimistic note about what has been done and what has not been done since the government was set up. We had considered development for the first five months upto December 21, that is about 150 days—but when the last number was released, time had marched on.

Time is running out very fast. Nearly six months out of the six years of the life of this government has already run out, and if this government and the Dharmista UNP hope to be re-elected in 1983, they should deliver at least a part of the "goods" they promised in the election manifesto regarding employment and cheaper food and essentials forgetting the unfulfillable promises made by certain Ministers during the last six months and similar promises they will continue to make in the rest of the period.

Such wishful thinking about promises to produce Pesaloi oil before the "next Sinhala New Year" laid the SLFP government low. The UNP will fast qualify for the same fate, unless the Leader of the party stops the rot and gets down to realisable targets and promises.

One thing, the UNP had promised: that it would make food cheaper and more plentiful; that it would end queues and corruption in the co-ops and the distribution of essentials. Much was promised, but the gap between promise and fulfilment is still very wide—and is daily growing wider. With imports, increased quantities of some food items were made available

at the old prices at the start. Off-ration rice was made available at Rs. 2.90. Flour was sold at 60 cents a pound and bread also sold at that price. Half the population were to be deprived of ration books and subsidised food on rations. But, food was still to be subsidised—flour and other items. All this was by leave and licence of the IMF. But even these promises have begun to tumble—with the massive devaluation and the global inflation. The price of flour and bread will and must be increased, as we indicated in our notes last week.

There was a painful and laboured effort by the daily press, which is "managed" by the government, with little or no camouflage to break the news gently to the people. In this exercise, the *Daily Mirror* did a better job than the *Daily News*. The *Sun/Weekend* papers, with an eye on circulation, played a maverick role. The *Daily Mirror* in its issue of Saturday, December 31, 1977 brought its *Reader's Corner* on to its front page with a headline WHY MORE FLOUR WHEN THERE IS RICE? A "reader" D. S. Perera from

Kadawatte, writing in faultless idiom softened the ground for the action the government would be compelled to take every soon.

Mr. Perera seemed to have read the mind of the government with telepathic intuition: "I have read with interest and concern the various news reports appearing in the local press and also broadcast over the radio on the increase in the consumption of flour and the price hike of flour in the international market. What baffles me most is the fact why we, as a nation should overnight become flour consumers when there is plenty of rice available in the open market even at a price? It is surprising that neither the Government nor its critics have given adequate thought to the issue why we should eat more and more flour which costs us so much in foreign exchange while not taking effective measures to channel our local paddy to the consumer. For instance, I wonder whether it has struck anyone of us of the inescapable truth that by consuming flour in larger quantities we are only helping the foreign wheat grower to fatten at the expense of our diligent and poor paddy cultivator. I believe the time is

RISING PRICES

COVER

THE MOTHER AND CHILDREN on our cover picture this week are from a fishing village near Negombo. They are typical of millions of ordinary people in this country who live on the verge of subsistence, a little above the hunger line. Very soon a large number of them, whose family income tops up over Rs. 300 a month, will lose their subsidised food ration book. It is a good thing that food subsidies are being withdrawn at least partially and in stages. This should have been done twenty five to thirty years ago. But if such withdrawal had come at a time when the country had foreign exchange reserves and other resources—as in the fifties—it would not have inflicted the hardships that are inevitable today. Withdrawal of subsidies, at this juncture, can be successfully effected only if the people affected get additional income. The Rs. 50 allowance to workers in the public and private sectors and the Rs. 50 dole to the unemployed are only minimal tokens in the context of the one hundred percent devaluation. Everything imported—from food to medicine—has doubled in price, but certain unscrupulous importers (like booksellers and pharmaceutical firms) have trebled and quadrupled prices. Some trot out the excuse that any imported bottle to pack pharmaceuticals now carry an import duty of Rs. 5/- a bottle—at a time when the local glass companies produce only bottles for Arrack and the Milk Board. Anomalies such as these could have been avoided with a little imagination and humanity among our bureaucrats. The prices of children's Food have more than doubled. Steps should have been taken to cushion the increase in the price of imported milk powder owing to devaluation—until local production of milk and milk powder increased but this has not been done. All prices are skyrocketing—particularly prices of local goods, eg. vegetables, fish and meat. How long can the MOTHER in the picture continue to smile?

Subsidised Wheat

now ripe for the Government to make an intelligent and careful examination of flour consumption in the country. I say so, because it was only the other day that I came to know that the flour now given to the consumer at sixty cents per pound really cost the Government nearly Rs. 1/40. 'Is this a luxury that our country can afford' should be the question that all patriotic citizens should ask themselves particularly at this crucial juncture in our country's history when every effort is being made for us to become self-sufficient and self-reliant. I am not a politician or an economist. But what I want to ask in all sincerity is why the Government should continue to subsidise unlimited quantities of flour to be eaten not only by the people but also by animals? The latest information I have on increased flour consumption is that it is now being used as animal feed too. Well this is an apparent abuse of a concession given by the Government. There is no doubt that the present situation has to some extent been created because of the failure on the part of the various governmental agencies and institutions to collect paddy from the producer, on time and to have the goods moving so that a continuous supply of rice could be made available to the consumer. The time is now ripe for the Government to do something to increase the consumption of rice and reduce the consumption of flour. I hope the contents of this letter would merit its serious consideration." It was a perfect brief for the government, but such casuistry was lost on the readers. It mentioned every single argument, the government was likely to use when raising the price of flour and bread.

This was followed up the next day in the *Sunday Times*, January 1, 1978 with a front page headline EEC ADDS TO GOVT'S FLOUR BURDEN. It was an exclusive story and could have come on the pages of *Sunday Times* only as an 'inspired leak': "Nations of the European Economic Community have lowered the subsidy on the export of wheat flour to Sri Lanka aggravating the Government's problem of meeting an unprecedented demand for flour by consumers. The EEC, the main successful bidders for the supply of flour, subsidised it at the ex-

tent of 105 US dollars per ton in September last year and brought it down to 90 US dollars in November. And now the subsidy has been further reduced, that according to information received by the Government yesterday, Sri Lanka would have to pay 20 US dollars more per ton in the future for flour imports from EEC countries. The development in the wake of the world market price of flour escalating from 165 US dollars to 215 US dollars per ton at a time when the Government reduced the price of flour to 60 cents a pound has created a major problem for the Government. The Government now has to persuade consumers who switched from their staple diet of rice to flour on an unprecedented scale to revert to rice. Importing 75,000 tons of flour monthly, which is the projected quantum to meet consumer preference is considered very difficult according to top sources. They stressed that such expenditure would affect economic development as well as incur the displeasure of the peasantry, which had been offered lucrative incentives to produce more in order to achieve self-sufficiency in rice. The Government is therefore faced with the alternatives of increasing the price of flour or rationing it. The latter seems plausible in order to channel money for the massive development programme the Government had in view."

This was a delightful New Year thought for people. They had been lulled into a myopic state of complacency that UNP's Dharmista government would be able to provide flour and bread at 60 cents a pound for a long time because of the political strings it had with the West. The price rise in flour and bread would be the first shot of realistic logic to end the illusion that the new government had taken the country into a new era of cheap food and prosperity.

On Monday, January 2, 1977 the *Daily News* was also used to soften the impending blow by hinting that Rs. 600 per month ceiling would be lifted and that more people would get the rations. Tuesday's and Wednesday's paper played it soft and it was only on Thursday, January 5 that the *Sun* departed from the slow and soft government breaking of the bad news with a thundering spread on

the front page: TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS, FOOD PRICES RISE—HIGH COST OF DRIED FISH AND CHILLIES, RATIONING SCHEME TO CONTINUE TILL FEBRUARY: "The Government is to continue the present scheme of rationing rice and sugar till the end of February. A decision on the new rationing scheme announced by Finance Minister, Mr Ronnie de Mel, in his Budget speech on November 15, would be made later, a Ministerial source told the *Sun* yesterday. There was no discussion on this at yesterday's weekly meeting of Ministers, the source said. This means that consumers will continue to get their normal quota of rice and sugar on the ration at least till the end of February. The Food Commissioner's Department has already sent out instructions to Co-operatives on this matter. Meanwhile the prices of several food items shot up yesterday. The Co-operative Wholesale Establishment which is the wholesale importer of these items has sent out a circular to all Co-operative Societies informing them of the charged prices. Here are some of the commodities that have gone up in price with immediate effect: Popular varieties of dried fish such as thora, bombili, sprats and katta from Rs. 2.85 a lb. to Rs. 7.50; Mathe seed (ulu haal) from Rs. 2.55 a lb. to Rs. 2.90, Cummin seed (sudur) from Rs. 4.24 a lb. to Rs. 8.30; Coriander from Rs. 1.30 a lb. to 1.92; Garlic (Sudu lunu) from Rs. 2.80 a lb. to Rs. 4.50; Pepper from Rs. 15 a lb. to Rs. 17/-; Chillies from Rs. 8.50 a lb. to Rs. 11/-."

It would be unfair to blame any Minister of the UNP or the Government itself for this sharp rise in prices. Global inflation is such that Sri Lanka can do little or nothing to prevent it pushing up prices of all commodities we import. Furthermore, the one hundred percent devaluation will also push up prices—unless, as we have stressed so often local production can be appropriately increased to offset the impact of the devaluation, at least partly. Unfortunately, even the little that could have been done in the agricultural sector has not been done—the Government is still in the phase of pulling down and

destroying the Kobbekaduwa empire (of the stagnant infra and supra structure edifices which had bred only inefficiency and corruption) and of setting up a new E. L. Senanayake empire of an all-island Agricultural Development Authority, Deputy Directors of Agriculture at every Kachcheri and Cultivation Officers for every Gram Sevaka division. A great deal could have been done to grow more food without waiting to set up this new empire of Dharmista Loyalis. And, when the E. L. Senanayake facade for Agriculture has been set up? what guarantee is there that it will function any differently from the Kobbekaduwa Empire? While Dharmista Ministers are busy destroying the old machinery to build some thing new, global inflation and the international economic crisis are gathering dangerous momentum. UNP's Dharmista philosophy seems to be so completely lost in parochial trivialities that it seems to be totally ignorant of the storms that are raging in the world around.

In the third quarter of 1977, according to an NSF report, "trade in the industrialised countries plummeted a catastrophic 9 percent as almost every advanced sector nation except Japan registered a sharp decline in both exports and imports. As the balance sheets were tailed for the quarter ending in September, exports from Belgium and France fell an incredible 19.2 and 17.7 percent, respectively, representing a collective loss of \$ 4.5 billion as compared to the first three quarters of 1976; US exports plunged 12.3 percent, or \$ 4 billion; and West Germany's exports declined 7.4 percent; according to the November issue of the International Monetary Fund's International Finance Statistics, imports fared no better, Belgium recorded an astounding 27.5 percent drop; Canada and France registered an 18.1 and 15.1 percent decline respectively; Italy's imports took a dive of nearly 15 percent; and imports to the Netherlands and Britain were both down 10 percent.

"The collapse of world trade is not the result of oil price in-

creases or gluttonous energy consumption by OECD nations, as some City of London and Wall Street liars would have you believe. In fact, US balance of payments with the Middle East oil producing nations is nearly even due to petrodollar investment in the US. The problem of trade is the problem of useless speculation by London and Wall Street in 'hot money' at the expense of productive investment in global industrial development. For the last year, the lesser developed countries (LDCs) have been ordered to remedy their chronic balance of payments deficit and increasingly precarious indebtedness by slashing imports

to the bone, intensifying austerity and increasing exports of particularly raw materials and cash crops. The result has been a £ 12 billion slash in imports to the LDCs, a sharp increase in exports, and a corresponding reduction in the balance of payments deficit.

"Mexico's trade and balance of payments deficits declined 80 and 68 percent, respectively, during the first two quarters of this year as compared to the same period last year. Exports were forced up by 30 percent; imports were cut 20 percent, including a 20 percent drop in capital goods and machinery purchases. In Argentina the military junta has led the

BOUQUETS

SUNSHINE STORIES

*THE PRIME MINISTER must be commended for the directive he has issued to State-owned mass media. The report in the front-page of the *Sunday Times* of January 8, 1977, sets out the position very clearly: "The Prime Minister, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, has urged the State-owned mass media to highlight achievements of employment-oriented projects by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and MPs of the ruling party in preference to public pronouncements of proposals to attain the purpose. Mr. Jayawardene has told the Minister of Information to resist any form of pressure from MPs of the ruling party for publicity for speeches which have no bearing on economic development attainments. The Premier's directive shuts out publicity for stone-lying ceremonies for buildings and premises aimed at satisfying people's aspirations. 'By all means give publicity when the building is constructed and the promises are fulfilled', the Premier has stressed. His order is a sequel to a complaint, by Ministers, their Deputies and MPs that what they say publicly is ignored by the State-owned mass media, particularly the SLEC and the Film Unit. Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Secretary to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting told *The Sunday Times* yesterday that the Prime Minister's message had freed the mass media from 'political pressure' in relation to publicity. Promises laced with politics could be broken and cause public frustration. Achievements could create public pleasure and admiration. 'No sunshine stories please', was the essence of the Prime Minister's order, Mr. Amunugama added."

Tribune has been at pains point out that sunshine stories, "promises" of what Ministers proposed to do and other "gundus" had already created a credibility gap between the people and the Government. The PM's directive that state-owned mass media should confine themselves to "hard news"—events that have already taken place and not castles-in-the-air speculations—was long overdue. A lit bouquet to the Prime Minister. It is necessary to see that this rule is observed. Even after this directive SLEC newscasts are full of reports of meetings where sunshine promises are smuggled in very carefully. Old habits die hard—when they are tied up with the vested interests of promoting causes or individuals.

*THE TULF, according to the *Sun*, has invited the Prime Minister, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, to attend a ceremony to mark the laying of the foundation stone for the memorial pillar and hall in the memory of the late S. J. V. Chelvanayakam on January 14, in Jaffna. It is not known whether the Prime Minister will be able to attend the function because of earlier commitments and engagements, but it is a happy augury that the TULF has got over its prelude inhibitions about inviting Sinhala Prime Ministers or participating in functions with Sinhala Ministers. The TULF has come a long way in developing political maturity so essential in the modern world. A well-deserved bouquet to the TULF.

population in order to register a 60 percent increase in exports this year. The government estimates a \$ 1.5 billion increase in reserves which will go straight to debt service. The rationale for these measures is that the "richer" advanced sector nations could, and would have to absorb the imports and suffer the export losses. But, what does this mean for the United States, once the most advanced technological nation in the world?

"The US trade deficit increased 30 percent or by \$ 2 billion to a record \$ 9.5 billion for the third quarter, precisely because of its enormous loss of exports. Coupled with this the downturn in US corporate earnings, contraction of new investment and bank loans and chaos on the currency markets, and the trade collapse spells the onset of a full blown depression in the US. Both domestic and foreign lending is falling. With interest rates edging up and the bond market in the doldrums, corporations are refraining from expanding or investing in capital goods, preferring to stay liquid just in case... US capital outflow to foreign investments for the first six months of 1977 was half that of the same period last year.

"Both long and short term claims on foreign held assets is flat over the first three quarters of 1977. There has been zero growth—negative growth in real dollar terms—in US investments abroad compared with a modest \$ 20 billion increase in 1976. US bank loans to foreigners fell \$ 1.7 billion in the third quarter, as compared to the £ 514 billion increase in the second quarter. Production of manufactured goods fell 28 percent in the first three quarters of 1977. The "import less, export more" policy foisted on the LDC's by London and Wall Street has worked so well that Europe's economies are now faced with the same deficit problems as the lesser developed nations.

"The "solution" while West Germany, Japan and the United States absorb the losses, the rest of Europe is to cut imports and their industry is to be dismantled across the board. That would account for the \$ 500 billion third quarter increase in the balance of trade for industrialized countries. Nations with the most drastic import cuts, like Italy and Belgium, actually moved into a

balance of trade surplus. Canada, whose high technology economy and skilled working class has been gutted, moved ahead of Japan with a near 500 percent increase in its balance of trade surplus. Britain increased its surplus by 60 percent through import cuts. West Germany, on the other hand, is being forced through the same wringer as the US. Its balance of trade surplus was cut 33 percent. Only Japan's modernized economy which enables cheaper production of goods, has been able to continue its expansion, but at a sharply reduced rate. Its imports were cut by \$ 500 million.

Internationally, those countries whose currency and trade are in the most advanced state of deterioration are fast increasing their Eurocurrency borrowing. Recently released figures from the Bank for International Settlements shows sharp \$ 17 billion increase in new lending to Scandinavia, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and South Africa, including a whopping \$ 5.4 billion to East bloc nations which cannot sell their exports to collapsed West European economies. There may be plenty of liquidity in the short term in the international markets, but there is also a contraction of credit due to insufficient profitable capital outlets and the City of London's deliberate withholding of funds from productive investment. The only investment going on now is debt rollover, deficit refinancing, and outright speculation, generating no new wealth. In the year through June, bank net lending on the Eurocurrency markets to the LDC's—loans that are not immediately redposited as reserves and generally go for financing imports or development projects—increased only \$ 300 million from the previous year. Yet, gross new lending totaled \$ 13 billion. The LDC's dispatched \$ 12.7 billion straight back to the Eurodollar market in the form of debt rollover...."

While orthodox US commentators seek to explain the fluctuations and vagaries of the down trend of the US economy, a critical examination has come only from minority groups which have campaigned for a total re-orientation of US objectives that would discard zero-growth policies in favour of development policies based on the export of advanced nuclear technology (Tribune will examine these in detail in later issues).

One such interpretative analysis of the current situation in the USA written on November 30, 1977, makes dismal reading. The way the dollar slid down vis a vis the yen in December confirmed the correctness of the analysis—whilst the evasive sophisticated and confused attempts in magazines like Time and Newsweek left one high and dry not knowing what to believe or what to disbelieve.

January 9,

The Prime Minister, in a speech at Panadura, on Sunday, January 8 has very realistically set out that the Government hopes to provide jobs for unemployed and also food to eat and houses to live in through the development of the country. The Daily News report of Monday, January 9 read: "There are 1.2 million unemployed in this country. My intention is to find every one of them jobs. As an interim measure, we are going to give the unemployed an allowance of Rs. 50 a month. The next step is to find them employed in the quickest possible time, said the Prime Minister, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, yesterday after declaring open a Seema Madiraya at the Sadhar-makara Firiveva, Pinwatte, Panadura. The unemployment problem is aggravated by 200,000 joining the ranks of unemployed every year, he added. Stressing the need to launch development projects, the Prime Minister said that by buying rice at Rs. 3 a measure and giving it free or selling things less than their cost price the Government found it difficult to find money for development. This year alone the Government needed Rs. 400 million for the Mahaveli Scheme which the Government had decided to complete in five years instead of the 30 years originally envisaged by Sirima Bandaranaike Government. Mr. Jayawardene said that a just and righteous society could not be built by laws. In such a society people should have jobs, food to eat and houses to live in. The only way to build such a society was to launch development projects but such development projects could not be completed in six years".

Mr. Jayawardene, it will be seen, has not made sunshine promises and he has endeavoured to paint the situation in realistic terms. He has stressed that through development work alone the objects could be achieved—and this means discipline and hard work.

In this connection, Mr. Jayawardene has a particularly hard job in disentangling the confusion that has obviously arisen in the Ministry of Finance because our bureaucratic financial think-tanks have made a mess of many matters connected with the IMF, Customs Regulations and Tariffs, etc. etc. Hastily drawn gazette regulations have added to the difficulties. In retrospect, although many had felt that the Ministry of Finance had done a splendid job on the Budget, it is clear that its attempts to regulate the economic activities of the country have left much to be desired. There are many acts of commission and omission that have to be rectified. And this has to be done soon.

Two reasons stand out as to why the Ministry of Finance has not been able to cope with some of the problems that stemmed from the Budget: first the technocrats at the Ministry do not seem to have paid adequate attention to the realities of the economic and financial crisis that has enveloped the capitalist world and they also seem to have accepted the thesis and formulae of the IMF without the caution that was necessary in view of the failures and disasters that have overtaken countries that followed the IMF or were compelled to follow it; second the Ministry seems to have been overwhelmed with an uncontrollable desire to indulge in racket-busting and exposures of the misdeeds of the last regime with the result that the priorities were mixed. Many feel that the Ministry should have concentrated on the constructive problems of budgeting, finance and planning and not been side-tracked into sensational racket-busting which should have been left to others. How Mr. Jayawardene will resolve these problems is hard to envisage.

Monday, January 10.

After the notebook for this issue was completed, interesting developments took place during the week-end. The response and reactions to our slashing criticism of the complacency that had begun to corrode the Dharmista UNP Government in the *Editor's Notebook* in the issue of January 7, took us by surprise.

Minister Gamini Dissanayake was the first to contact *Tribune* to tell us that the Mahaveli Project which the Government now

hoped to complete in six years was not the original 30-year project but a new revised shorter version where the emphasis would be more on irrigation and not on power-houses. He promised to send us the necessary particulars about the new Mahaveli Scheme which they hoped to achieve in the six years. Whilst the Minister was willing to assist the *Tribune* with information, bureaucrats of the Mahaveli Board took a more pompous and over-bearing attitude that Mr. Kahawita and *Tribune* were "backdated" in regard to Mahaveli and that our criticisms had no validity.

They did not seem to realise that it was their failure to keep the discerning press and the knowledgeable public informed about these matters that was the cause of the growing credibility gap which had already begun to envelop the government even before it was 150 days old. Bureaucrats (and even politicians) still seem to think that sensational sunshine banner headlines and back-scratching write-ups oozing with self-glory and self-praise in the daily papers known to be governmental adjuncts are sufficient to keep everybody happy. Such gimmicks, in fact, destroy credibility and bring disrepute and defeat to governments.

The other Minister who took the *Tribune* criticism in the way it should be taken was Mr. R. Premadasa. He explained that the UNP had pledged to build 100,000 houses in six years—this was an election pledge. It was not true to say that he had at any time said he would build 100,000 houses every year. He also detailed the work done by his Ministry in 150 days. He explained the problem of the pavement hawkers and said that they were being contained in certain areas and as time went on and alternate sites or occupation were found for them, they will be got off the pavements. He said that the crime rate, according to police, in some areas of Colombo were less because these pavement people were kept occupied in hawker-trade. Mr. Premadasa undertook to get one of his Secretaries to send *Tribune* a note on what his Ministry has achieved. The most refreshing aspect of Mr. Premadasa's short dialogue with *Tribune* was he insisted that the Government wel-

comed all efforts by the press to reflect popular sentiments and criticise the government in matters where such criticism was essential. This healthy approach to press criticism by the Minister Premadasa, who is tipped to be Prime Minister in the New Presidential set-up augurs well for the future.

Mr. M. H. Mohamed, the Minister who has come in for the sharpest criticism in the *Tribune* was thrown up against *Tribune* at a function in the most unexpected fashion. He adopted the old old dodge of the ostrich that buried its head in the sand and felt that nothing was wrong. Mr. Mohamed was not bothered about what *Tribune* had written. He did his best to pretend that *Tribune* did not exist. If *Tribune* had any "grievances" about the transport services, he would send a "reporter" to find out what they were. Graciously, he said, that the CTB and CGR were "difficult" departments, but proclaimed that things were better than they were. Minister Mohamed seemed to be a Minister of the SLFP and United Front variety who thought that if *Tribune* was ignored the public sentiments it voiced would cease to exist. Mr. Mohamed, is no doubt, one of the breed who feels the criticisms in papers like the *Tribune* are the concoctions of disgruntled and mischievous elements opposed to the government. So much for Minister Mohamed whom *Tribune* researchers say has secured more sunshine story headlines than any other Minister of the Government.

It is, in a sense, of futile exercise to discuss, at this juncture, the merits and demerits of different Ministers and the way they have functioned in the last six months because there will (and must) be a total reshuffle after February 4.

It is the work of Ministers newly chosen by the President after he is sworn in that must be evaluated after the lapse of a few months. *Tribune* cannot see how some of the Ministers can be allowed to continue in some of the Ministries and Departments they have so far looked after.

BETWEEN THE LINES BY SERENDIB

● Vice President

● Cabinet Reshuffle

* CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. The Select Committee to formulate constitutional amendments has sat everyday from January 7. It has had its hands full with 250 memoranda and has also listened to personal representations. It is not possible to discuss or examine within the scope of this note all the matters that need to be amended, but *Tribune* has stressed that amendments necessary to ensure the Separation of Powers in the Constitution should be given top priority. Together with this, priority will no doubt be given to Fundamental Rights that will help to ensure and effect national unity and Sinhala-Tamil amity.

But there is one matter to which adequate attention has not been paid. The Presidential System will not be complete without a Vice President. It would also be necessary for the President to have effective liaison with and some kind of "control" over the NSA. There are a large number of important reasons why there should be a Vice President and also greater interlinking between the President and the NSA—and there cannot be any serious arguments against both propositions.

There is one easy solution. The American example can be followed. The Vice President can preside over the NSA—in the USA the Vice President presides over the Senate. The President can be empowered to appoint the Vice President this time, but in the future the President and the Vice President can be elected by the whole people. This solution can, to use a cliché, kill two birds with one stone. The Amendments should also make suitable provisions for a proper relationship between the President and the NSA. Unless the President has a constitutional right to influence the NSA and vice-versa serious difficulties can

arise in functioning of the government.

*CABINET RESHUFFLE. With Mr. J. R. Jayawardene assuming the office of President on February 4, there will be a Cabinet re-shuffle according to all knowledgeable political circles. Ministers were appointed on July 23, 1977, to all portfolios that had existing under the outgoing SLFP government. Apart from the urgent need to rearrange departments and functions, the capacity and competence of different persons who have functioned as Ministers to discharge the ministerial functions have now become known. There have been many guesses and kite-flying in regard to the way Mr. Jayawardene is likely to switch ministers, drop ministers or choose new ministers. These guesses cover the entire gamut of the Cabinet. But the Ministries mentioned most frequently as those likely to see changes are Finance, Trade, Transport, Plantation Industries, Agriculture & Lands, Education and Foreign Affairs. There are suggestions of Ministers being switched, changed, promoted, demoted dropped and also chosen.

There are still just over two weeks to go before the changes are announced. And in these two weeks a great deal of thinking and re-thinking can take place.

Certain Ministers, (eg. Wijepala Mendis in Textile Industries) and some Deputy Ministers (eg. Amarasiri in Trade) who are known to have done a good job and are tipped for more important key Ministers. Some ministers who have done more talking than work are likely to be found safe ornamental berths, if they cannot be dispensed with altogether for party and other considerations. A few loyalists may save their heads for a while, but it is not likely that the President will have them in key places which will be responsible for development.

NEXT WEEK

- SCANDALS—Railways, Wheat Flour Purchase
- BUDGETARY MISTAKES

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS by Ariel

● Sadat's Failing Gamble

● Vietnam-Kampuchea

There are a number of complex "hot" spots in the international arena at the moment: Rhodesia, South Africa and Middle East—but more important than everything else is the border "war" that has broken out between Kampuchea and Vietnam, two socialist iraternal countries. In the Middle East, Sadat's calculations (or miscalculations) regarding Israeli intentions vis a vis occupied Arab territories and the possibilities of American interference to achieve a just peace in the context of the international Zionist Lobby have brought a touch of farcical tragic-comedy to Sadat's gamble in going to Jerusalem in November. Begin has made it clear that Israel will not move out of the occupied territory, that Israel will not tolerate an independent Palestinian State and the furthest Israel would go was to accord minor dozes of "self-rule" to Palestinians who accepted Israeli suzerainty in the west Bank and Gaza.

It looks very much like the way the British imperialists had treated occupied territory until they were driven out. Furthermore, Israel seems to have decided to increase Jewish settlements in all parts of the occupied area, Sinai, the Gaza strip and the West Bank. President Carter has swung from one end of the pendulum to the other—one day he was for a Palestinian State, the next day he was totally opposed to it—but it is clear that the Zionist Lobby can make him dance to their tune in spite of his hectic efforts to appear to be fair and just to the Arabs.

Sadat has been climbing down step by step in his demands and his courageous "coup" in going to Jerusalem and talking brave words to the Israeli Knesset now seems a horrible joke in a bad dream. The Egyptian President has come to the position that he is willing to grant Israel 5 years to give Palestinians their due. Sadat is making a last minute effort to mobilise support that can bring pressure to make Carter relent and pressurise Israel to be just.

The question today is how long Sadat can last. Will Washington have any more use for him? He has broken up Arab solidarity. He has softened up part of the Arab World to accept Israel with Zionist dreams of a state from the Tigris to the Nile. And, if Sadat cannot help Washington to have a new Pax-Americano-Aramco stability in the oil-rich Middle East, he will be overthrown in a "coup" in the same way that Diem was thrown out in Vietnam? Does Washington want a military regime in Egypt that will end all further vestiges (that Sadat has not yet succeeded in eliminating) of the Nasserism that wanted to bring economic freedom to the Arabs by fighting imperialism? These are the perspectives that now open out in the Middle East with President Carter openly supporting Begin's plan to continue the occupation of the West Bank and Sinai and increase Jewish settlements there.

President Carter is an evangelist who has fallen from grace. His somersaults on the Palestinian question have removed any credibility the world was prepared to give an American President on the Arab-Israeli question. His trip to India was a fiasco where his attempts to apply the screw on Morarji Desai on matters of nuclear flopped with a tape-recording of his private thoughts to Varce as recorded by a *Washington Post* correspondent. Nixon was finished with his tapes in White House. Carter is well on his way out to disaster with tape in New Delhi.

But while the Arab world has been split asunder by American diplomacy, the new situation in Indochina has begun to baffle many. What is really going on there? The *Far Eastern Economic Review*, datelined January 13, 1977 (but released one week ahead) summed up the situation thus (Nyan Chanda reporting): "An early morning broadcast from the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh cast off the last thin veil which has shrouded the latest secret war in Indochina—that between erstwhile comrades Cambodia and Vietnam. Following the December 31 message, in which Cambodia temporarily broke off

diplomatic relations with Hanoi accusing it of 'large-scale unwarranted aggression', there appear to have been a stand-off on the battlefield while both countries scurry to mobilise international support. The war of words reached a crescendo on January 4 when Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong hinted that Hanoi believed Sino-US collusion was behind Phnom Penh's military operations. He charged that Cambodia's policy of creating hatred against Vietnam 'is viewed favourably and encouraged by the imperialists and reactionaries in the world who nurture great ambitions in South-east Asia.' Peking has made no secret of where its sympathies lie, the Chinese media playing up the Cambodian charges while paying scant attention to the Vietnamese. And as Cambodian diplomats in Hanoi packed their bags, they were helped by almost the entire staff of the Chinese Embassy there. Later, the Chinese accompanied the Cambodians to the airport where the Khmers boarded a Chinese commercial flight to Peking.

"Cambodians have claimed that Hanoi's immediate motive was to look paddy and livestock in order to overcome food shortage, but added that Hanoi's strategic aim was to 'annex and swallow' its neighbour by making it participate in an Indochina federation. Since the diplomatic break, the Vietnamese have listed Cambodian attacks on Vietnamese territory since May 1975, including charges of rape and the massacre of women and children, and Hanoi's repeated efforts to negotiate. Unlike Phnom Penh, the Vietnamese have not attributed any motives to the Cambodian action other than referring to a 'deep and broad campaign among the people and army of Kampuchea aimed at sowing enmity towards the Vietnamese nation'. Judging by details provided by the adversaries, they remained on talking terms at least until February 1976, despite clashes which began in the spring of 1975. Even when preparatory talks on the border dispute broke down in May 1976, border liaison committees continued to operate, if perfunctorily, until March last year.

"According to Premier Pham Van Dong, however, the Cambodians severed all contact in April and also 'stepped up encroachments on our territorial sovereignty on an increasing scale' This chrono-

logy of deteriorating relations would seem to support a widely-held theory that domestic political turmoil in Cambodia in March-April—later described by Phnom Penh as Hanoi's 'attempted coup d'état'—may have provided the catalyst for the armed conflict. Neither side's accusations, however, explain why the escalation of the conflict and open break came when it did.

"If the Cambodian version is to be believed, it does not explain why Hanoi launched its biggest assault at a time when it was despatching Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh to ASEAN countries to convince them of Vietnam's good-neighbourly intentions. It is also curious that although the Cambodian decision to break diplomatic ties was taken on December 25 (the day before Trinh left Hanoi), it was not announced to the world until December 31, when the Vietnamese Foreign Minister was in Indonesia."

Nyan Chanda ventured a guess as to motives: "In any case, Vietnam's diplomatic initiative in Southeast Asia—rapid normalisation of relations with Thailand, reopening of its air corridor and Foreign Minister Trinh's visit to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines—is clearly linked to its escalating problems with Cambodia and more importantly, China. As has been pointed out, (Review, Dec. 20 77), Vietnam stepped up its contacts with the region to break through what it perceived as a Chinese attempt at encirclement. Not surprisingly, despite the serious development along its borders, Trinh continued his Southeast Asian tour, obviously trying to minimise the damage caused to his country's image. Despite unconfirmed reports that Vietnamese troops were advancing towards Phnom Penh, most serious observers discounted a Vietnamese drive on the Khmer capital.

"The Chinese commitment to Cambodia, although unstated, is clear to the Vietnamese. Any extreme move, such as an attempt to capture Phnom Penh, would provoke a sharp Chinese reaction—possible in the shape of military pressure on Vietnam's northern border—and in turn bring about direct Soviet involvement. Although Pham Van Cong warned that for its encroachment and refusal to negotiate Cambodia 'will have to bear full responsibility,'

ha called on "brothers and friends of the peoples of Vietnam and Kampuchea" to help resolve the conflict. While Vietnam stubbornly refuses to accept China's Three-World theory privately describing it as un-Marxist—it is pragmatic enough not to provoke its giant northern neighbour. At the same time, Peking would obviously like to see Moscow's influence in Vietnam and Laos broken and also prevent Hanoi from emerging as the dominant power in the region. But China's 'honest broker' image would prevent it from becoming involved directly in warfare in the region. And while it supports Cambodia's intransigent independent stance, the China of Teng Hsiao-ping is not fully in agreement with Phnom Penh's domestic policies."

In a separate article, Nyan Chandra examined some aspects of the background to the conflict. "Although Vietnam has not yet made the accusation, there was a strong suggestion in Hanoi that several Cambodia-based Chinese advisers were taken prisoner along with a large number of Khmer Rouge soldiers during a major Vietnamese military operation in October. The Vietnamese are also known to have prepared a documentary film on alleged Khmer Rouge atrocities against Vietnamese villagers in Tay Ninh province in September. A senior official in Hanoi's Foreign Ministry refused to comment, but a non-official source told this correspondent that the alleged capture of Chinese advisers was 'living proof' of who was behind Khmer Rouge attacks and made the Vietnamese aware of the explosive situation developing along its borders. Information on the fate of the Chinese advisers allegedly taken prisoner is sketchy. According to a diplomatic source, Peking refused to accept the return of the prisoners, denying that they were Chinese nationals. Other sources claim some prisoners have been released while others remain in Vietnamese hands. Whatever the truth of the claims and counter-claims, the Vietnamese capital has been tense since Cambodian Premier Pol Pot visited China. The clearest indication of worsening Vietnam-Cambodia relations came in October when the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry took the unusual step of briefing Western and Third World diplomats in Hanoi about the border clashes."

Many observers have stated that the escalation had come with the way Le Duan, Vietnam's Comm

Party leader was treated in Peking when he went there in November. The *Financial Times* of November 22, 1977 reported on the visit thus: "Mr. Le Duan, the Vietnam Communist Party leader leaves Peking tomorrow following a low-key brief visit which has not apparently narrowed the rift between Peking and Hanoi. He leaves without giving the customary return banquet for his Chinese hosts in the Great Hall of the People or making the ritual end-of-visit speech in the Chinese capital. He flies direct to Canton and from there to Hanoi without even a passing pretence at the provincial tour usual for visiting foreign leaders. On his arrival in Peking on Sunday he was accorded the standard official welcome with none of the lavish displays of Tien an Men dancing girls and the open car ride through the city with Hua Kuo-feng, the Communist Party chairman which honoured the visit of President Tito of Yugoslavia and the Cambodian Party and Government chief Pol-Pot recently.

"Le Duan met Chairman Hua Kuo-feng for talks on Monday afternoon, but as usual details were released. China is unhappy that the Spratley Islands are now in Vietnamese Communist hands, and as recently as the middle of last year renewed her claims to both islands, believed by all contenders for them, including Taiwan, to be rich in oil. The Vietnamese have been just as strident in their territorial claims to the islands. With China temporarily at least pursuing a more moderate line towards Asia's revolutionary movements in the interests of first containing the Soviet Union: with the stumbling block of territorial claims; with disagreements about who the real enemies of Marxism-Leninism are; and with the historical backlog of distrust of China by the Vietnamese who were once part of the Chinese empire, there seems little prospect in the immediate future of mutual friendship blossoming between the two neighbouring countries.

"In a small but significant gesture the Chinese showed their distrust of Vietnam by omitting to publish Le Duan's arrival portrait in full glowing colour in the *People's Daily*—an honour accorded to even the lowliest of Marxist-Leninist party leaders who visit Peking these

The *Asiaweek* of 9.12.77 had interesting details of this visit and especially how Teng had boycotted Le Duan: "The VCP leader had last visited Peking in September 1975, mainly to thank the Chinese for their support in the long war that had ended in victory for Hanoi a few months before. On that occasion his main host was Vice-President Teng Hsiao-ping, then riding high as acknowledged protege of the dying Chou En-lai; it was Teng who urged Le Duan then to rid Vietnam of Soviet influence ("super-power hegemonism"). Le Duan refused and, in fact, told Teng that it was pointless to expect Vietnam to take sides in the Sino-Soviet quarrel. At one dinner speech, Hanoi's man even hinted that the war might not have been won without Moscow's help. Perhaps for this reason Teng Hsiao-ping was nowhere to be seen during Le Duan's visit....."

"Two aspects of the Vietnamese party's visit were of special interest to analysts and diplomats in Peking and elsewhere. The first was the absence of Teng, not only during the talks between the two sides but at the welcoming and farewell ceremonies. The second was the vigour with which the Hanoi press reported the visit, in sharp contrast with its handling of Le Thanh Nghi's visit in August. (Then, it had taken the Vietnam News Agency three days to get around to acknowledging Le Thanh Nghi's talks with Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien; this time, the Hanoi papers gave same-day coverage, and in far more lavish terms)....."

"Diplomatic sources offer several theories for Teng's no show during the Vietnamese party's visit, and most of them revolve on a point which now seems solid fact rather than mere speculation. Teng, these sources say, has become not just a factor but a key figure in Hanoi's ideological differences with Peking. The Vietnamese are deeply suspicious of the "Three Worlds" theory resuscitated by Peking four months ago in Mao's name: they consider it a betrayal of international revolutionary principles, and they believe Teng is responsible for it. In short, Le Duan considers Teng Hsiao-ping to be a deviationist, and during much of his visit last week, he and the Chinese leadership engaged in a frosty competition to see who best remembered the late Mao."

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Dec. 19 — Dec. 30

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

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19: Substantial assistance and collaboration from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have been pledged to Sri Lanka to launch the government's high priority accelerated Mahaweli Project, following negotiations on behalf of the Sri Lanka government by Mr. Raju Coomaraswamy, the PM's special representative who returned home yesterday morning after talks in Washington and Milan. The JVP has indicated to the government that it had collected substantial evidence of general excesses committed by the previous administration, to be placed before any commission appointed by the government. A major step towards communal amity was achieved yesterday in Jaffna when TULF leaders rallied round to accord a rousing welcome to the Trade Minister on his official visit to Jaffna. Several government MP's deputy Ministers, and even a minister have urged the government to take early action on the conclusions reached by the G. P. A. Silva Presidential Commission relating to malpractices in the Colombo Municipality. The government has decided to establish a Central Narcotics Intelligence Bureau which would function as a separate unit under the Police Department. The Minister of Labour announced yesterday that the government had decided to give many concessions to the workers shortly. Economic co-operation between Sri Lanka and Asian countries in general and the Soviet Union in particular figured prominently in the discussions between the Foreign Minister, Mr. Hameed and an Afro-Asian Solidarity Association delegation from the Soviet Union held in Colombo early last week. Mr. Ravi Shanker, famous Indian musician will be arriving in Sri Lanka today—CDN. The government has ordered a complete overhaul of the CID. The PM would soon call an all party conference to discuss problems affecting the Tamil speaking people, the Minister of Trade said in Jaffna. A large consignment of Bombay onions is due from Holland on X'mas Eve. The Central Bank has decided to extend loan facilities to farmers through commercial banks from next year. Strong support for the government's budget proposals has come from an unexpected source—the former SLFP Minister of Health and Local Government, Mr. W. P. G. Ariyadasa—SU. The National Youth Council is trying to form a youth army to be given work on a co-operative basis in the Mahaweli—DM. A special Committee has made the suggestion that consumers be given their rations on a fortnightly or monthly basis—LD. It has been decided that teachers and other officials in the Education Ministry should be transferred from one posting in two years time, and in this connection a Central Transfer Board will be formed—DW.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20: The Attorney General had served charges on 14 persons for bribery during the past two months; these included an Attorney at Law, a monk, a chairman of a productivity committee, four police officers and a Public Health Officer. No girl in Asia should marry before the age of 18 and no woman should have more than two children; so said the renowned demographer Prof. S. Chandrasheker speaking at a seminar in Colombo recently. There will be absolutely no problems for tourists and travellers both foreign and local in the NCP said the deputy Minister of Defence yesterday—CDN. The proposed constitution of Sri Lanka will be adopted by February 4 this year; this was disclosed by Mr. Premadasa in the Assembly recently. A representative group of Tamils in the North, having accepted the assurance of the government to do away with discrimination and create a just society, has decided to participate in the work of the Select Committee of the NSA for the amendment of the Constitution by giving evidence before it, Mr. S. Canagaratnam (TULF) second MP for Pottuvil yesterday crossed over to the government. The government has decided to draw-in rural youth to the Police Reserve Force; in line with this, at least two youths from each village will be included. The government has decided to increase the charitable allowance paid to destitute people from next year—SU. The government hopes to begin the scheme of teaching Tamil children Sinhala and Sinhala children Tamil to ensure greater national integration from next January; this will be done wherever teachers are available. The Salu Sala has distributed over 15 million yards of textiles for sale during the festive season. The Colombo Municipal Council has decided to confine its garbage collection and cleansing activities to the night, the City's Special Commissioner said today—CO.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21: A Commission will be appointed to probe the activities of the Janawasa set up by the previous government where Rs. 100 million worth of produce sold to brokers remains unaccounted; the money from the produce sold during this period of the previous government has not been deposited in the bank; this disclosure was made by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands in the NSA yesterday. The blueprint for a major step towards the solution of Sri Lanka's massive unemployment issue planned by the National Youth Service Council has been approved by the PM. The new Board of Directors of the Colombo South Co-operative society have discovered that consumer goods valued at a total of Rs. 4.2 million found their way out from co-ops managed by the Colombo South Co-operative Society. According to a special security plan formulated by the Ministry of Defence there will be screening of all persons selected for employment in commercial and rural banks by the police; electronic and burglar alarms will also be installed. The LSSP sponsored Ceylon Federation of Labour is prepared to join forces with those who are genuinely desirous of bringing into fruition socialist aspirations of the masses said the leader of the LSSP at a conference—CDN. The leader of the TULF has indicated that they are ready to have a dialogue with the government. Dr. W. Schattmann, Head of the Division for North-South relations and Non-aligned conferences of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany arrives today on a short visit—CDM. A top-level conference of senior state officers yesterday decided to recommend to the government the intro-

duction of stringent regulations to ensure the smooth distribution of food and prevent hoarding or black-marketeering. A Presidential Commission of Inquiry would be appointed shortly to probe the working of the Janawasa during the last regime the Minister of Agriculture and Lands said in the NSA yesterday. Top level talks between Sri Lanka and the Maldives on the frequency of flights between the two countries yesterday moved towards a deadlock. Some members of the government were favouring their families and relatives, the second MP for Harispattuwa said in the NSA yesterday. Three youths armed with revolvers are reported to have robbed Rs. 6758 from a petrol shed belonging to the Chennakam MPCSC on Monday—SU. The leader of the SLFP said that her party was willing to join any of the left parties as long as there were no binding rules—VK. In order to change the present education system in the country, a decision has been taken to consult leading educationists, parents, teachers etc; in this connection dialogue and discussions will be held throughout the country—DP. The leader of the Opposition yesterday asked the Egyptian Ambassador that Arabian countries should help the Sri Lanka Tamils in their freedom struggle—EN. The Ministry of Education is planning to re-introduce traditional text books in schools with a view to cultivating morality and discipline among schools children—IDPR No. 117.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22: The Finance Minister yesterday asked the Minister of Industries to take action immediately to cancel the contract for the Rs. 2,000 million Urea Fertilizer factory because the country would incur a loss of Rs. 400 million next year. Britain will give Sri Lanka a total of Rs. 112 million as outright grants; the money will be used for improving health and transport services, and for agricultural storage. The Commissioner of Examinations said that there was no truth in the GCE (OL) exam paper leakage so far; investigations were however continuing. Spareparts worth nearly 100 million rupees which cannot be used by any bus belonging to the CTB are lying in the warehouse of the CTB in various parts of the island. The Government will introduce legislation to compel industrialists and other businessmen to share their profit with the workers. The leader of the Opposition said in the NSA yesterday that the role of an Opposition party was not just to oppose everything and merely because they had given certain constructive suggestions it did not mean that they had ceased to be an opposition—CDN. The Booksellers Association has stated the reason for their increasing the price of books with immediate effect was because bills for books were settled even 3-6 months after receipt of consignment and therefore even for books which they had already sold at the old price, booksellers would have to pay the new exchange rates—CDM. The appointment of a high powered committee to prepare a procedural code for state corporations has been proposed to the government by Mr. R. Premadasa—SU. Plans are afoot to enable government servants to retire after a short service; a bill to this effect is soon to be presented in the NSA—DP. If there are losses in corporations in future, the chairmen will be taken to task—DW.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23: Protecting the life and property of the people of Sri Lanka without any caste, creed or religious bias is the prime obligation of the armed forces said the PM at the Commissioning and Passing out parade of the Sri Lanka Army at Colombo

yesterday; the three main duties of the army were protecting the motherland, protecting the children of the motherland and protecting the government the PM said. The Minister of Transport proposes to give the travelling public 1200 new buses, 17 new locomotives and sober drivers in 1978. The Deputy Minister of Defence said yesterday that 61 MP's were issued with weapons belonging to the army during the insurrection of 1971 for their security. Recruitment of Sri Lankans for jobs abroad, particularly in the Middle East may soon be handled by the state—CDN. The Minister of Trade has appointed a committee to look into the activities of the Marketing Department—CDM. Police stations on wheels to maintain law and order in areas where crowds gather is the latest innovation of the Deputy Minister of Defence. The Monetary Board has decided to open five Central Bank branches in the provincial capitals as part of the bank's increased activities in the development of rural economics. The Ministry of Labour has decided to set up self-employment oriented technical training centres in every electorate from next year. Four new police divisions are to be set up at Matale, Negombo, Hatton and Hambantota from January 1 next year. A fully-fledged Electronic Telecommunication Institute is to be set up in Sri Lanka shortly. Talks between Sri Lanka and the Maldives on civil aviation matters have reached a deadlock and informed sources say the Maldivian delegation left in a huff—SU. The Minister of Education has ordered that arrangements be made to accommodate in schools all children of five years and above and within school going age—IDPR No. 122. Frauds in the weighing procedure have been discovered in the Steel Corporation and the devices used to do this very good quality weighing scales were typewriter ribbons and pieces of galvanised iron—LD.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24: A bill to establish 'The Greater Colombo Economic Commission' was gazetted yesterday by the Minister of Finance and Planning; though there is no direct reference to the bill, it seeks to implement the UNP's proposal for the establishment of a Free Trade Zone. The CID has been asked by the government to discreetly screen nearly 1500 persons who are to be appointed as members of 280 multi-purpose co-operative societies. The Third Reading of the UNP government's first budget was passed in the NSA yesterday evening without a division but with the SLFP and TULF expressing their opposition. Mr. Yoon Yul Kim, a national of the Republic of Korea has been appointed the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Sri Lanka. The Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning told the NSA yesterday that the Customs department would be re-organised shortly.—CDN. The Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs said in the NSA yesterday that the Ilangaratne Conference Hall at Galagedara was built at a cost of Rs. 56,000 using money belonging to the Hataralidda Multi-purpose Co-operative society when Mrs. Tamara Ilangaratne was the MP for Galagedara. The Minister of Education has said that every school in the island will have three periods a week allotted to the link languages, Tamil or Sinhala from grade 6 to 8 and two periods a week in Grades 9 and 10—CDM. A Cabinet sub committee has recommended that legislation be introduced to ban politically-motivated strikes. Police Conciliation Boards are to be constituted in each village to settle minor disputes where complaints are made to the Police stations. Extensive mobile and foot patrols will be

conducted by the Police throughout the festive season in a bid to ensure maximum protection for residents of Colombo and the suburbs—SU. To afford protection to travellers by train, the security guards will be supplied with guns—DP. Mail bags containing GCE (OL) answer scripts were found to be missing in Trincomalee while they were being transported from the PO to the Railway Station—EN.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25: Imported nylax sarees airfreighted into the country last week will be available to consumers at Rs. 80 and Rs. 90 each before the end of this year; over a million yards of synthetic textiles from different countries arrived here last Thursday. Christians in Sri Lanka, along with believers throughout the world, forget their denominational differences today to be united in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and of Christianity. The Ministry of Finance has directed the facility presently offered by the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank to Sri Lanka nationals residing abroad to open and maintain accounts in Sri Lanka denominated in special foreign currencies to be made available through all commercial banks operating in Sri Lanka—SO. The Customs last week cracked open a big foreign exchange racket whereby large sums of foreign exchange collected from tourists, gem merchants etc. are sent overseas through outgoing tourists—ST. As a result of the reduction of the price of flour from 80 cents to 60 cents, it is reported that the monthly consumption of flour is rising to an all time high of 70,000 tons which means an annual consumption of 840,000 tons; hitherto it was 40, to 50,000 with an annual consumption of 500,000 tons. The government of the Netherlands has decided to grant one million US dollars to finance the services of a highly qualified technical team which will advise the government on the strategy for the accelerated implementation of the Mahaweli Scheme. M. K. Victor Ivan alis Podi Athula, seventh suspect in the April '71 insurgency, has written a book in Sinhala on the insurgency, which will be out shortly—ST. The government has decided to permit the operation of Swiss style secret numbered bank accounts in Sri Lanka. Tough new laws conferring powers on the President of Sri Lanka to advise any minister to seize the private assets of errant traders will be introduced in the NSA. The newly set up Silk and Allied Products Development Authority is to venture in a big way with foreign and local collaboration to develop the sericulture industry. Over three thousand million worth of goods are rotting in the warehouse of the Colombo Port and nobody seems to bother about this massive waste—WK.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26: Leaders of the LSSP and the CP are being asked by some of their members to accept the proposal of self-determination to the Tamils; though there is agreement in certain quarters some of the veterans of the party hold a different point of view—VK. The government will bring in legislation soon to provide loans to people who wish to buy houses—EN.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27: A Statutory Committee of Inquiry to investigate misdemeanours of the seven-year Sirima Bandaranaike government will be set up soon according to a recent government decision. Two test papers of the GCE-OL Level examination which ended last week have been cancelled; they are the Arithmetic and Physics papers, which will be

held afresh in January. The TULF is keeping the doors open for dialogue with the government said the leader of the TULF. The World Bank last week indicated to the Sri Lanka government that at its request a consultant outfit from Netherlands would visit the country to work out the implementation strategy of telescoping the working of four of the major projects under the Mahaweli Scheme. Mr. R. Premadasa wants to make Colombo the Garden City of the East; at his initiative various steps have been and are being taken to make the city attractive—CDN. Incorrect estimation and determination of drugs and stock levels have resulted in the accumulation and subsequent wastage of certain drugs while other essential items are in short supply in medical institutions. The Posts and Telecommunications Dept will increase the postage rates for all overseas bound mail matter—surface mail, parcel mail and air mail with effect from January—CLM. CID investigations into the leakage of question papers for the GCE-OL examination have revealed evidence which points to an organised plot to disrupt the examination, informed sources said yesterday. The Bill to set up a Greater Colombo Economic Commission is to be placed on the country's statute books in the first week of January. The Asian Development Bank has come forward to assist in rural electrification in Sri Lanka. Private sector firms and industries are expected to provide employment opportunities for 10,000 people in an effort to help the government to solve the unemployment problem. A leading engineering firm in India has proposed a joint venture with Sri Lanka for a variety of steel products which are in a development stage here—SU. Committees are to be set up in all districts to investigate job opportunities both in public and private sector and to appoint suitable candidates for each post. The Minister of Education has decided to set up separate Mahavidyalayas for boys and girls in each district—DP. There will be a new system to recruit personnel to teaching posts and the number of educational districts will be increased to 30 from next year—EN. The PM has sent a message of felicitation to Mr. A. A. M. Van Agt, on his assumption of office as PM of Netherlands—IDPR No. 240/77. Students who pass the CCE (AL) but do not enter the University will be given employment in 30 districts where 600 estate schools will be taken over for this purpose—DW.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28: A major step towards the achievement of communal amity will be through the introduction of amendments to the constitution to accommodate basic requirements of the minorities; the amendments will follow closely the recommendations of the Select Committee of the NSA which is now functioning to revise the constitution and will be directed at resolving minority issues. The Colombo YMCA has expressed its strong disapproval of a person calling himself Rev. Nakulugamuwa Sumaraja announcing his intention of being admitted as an Attorney-at-Law. Plans are under way to formulate a 'Social Insurance Scheme' which would benefit workers in the Private Sector. Television broadcasts of a limited nature were recently beamed from Colombo to local viewers through the Overseas Telecommunication Service Unit. Sri Lanka is to have a 'Project Link' soon, where reports of development projects needing foreign aid will be available. In keeping with the policy i.e. government to re-commission all the airfields abandoned during World War II, the Commander of the

Sri Lanka Air Force has decided to restore the Koggala airstrip for commercial flights. The WHO has set aside 2 million dollars for Sri Lanka in its bi-annual budget for 1980-81 to improve health services in this country—CDN. Private sector employees who refuse or fail to pay the special budgetary allowance of Rs. 50 per month to their employers will be punished. Complaints have been received from several patients about the present prohibitive prices of drugs. The Commissioner of Examinations yesterday categorically denied that two question papers of the CCE OL exam have been cancelled—CLM. The PM has offered a special amnesty to all State employees who kept away from work on account of the disturbances in August and September. The government is now reviewing the position regarding the country's flour stocks and supplies, with a view to making changes in the price. The PM has appointed a top level committee with powers to take all necessary measures to eliminate corruption and thefts in the Colombo Port. The government is to set up an 'open' university for workers, farmers and others interested in becoming graduates or obtaining post graduate qualifications. Every village in Sri Lanka will have a female police reservist as well as a male, who will be trained to keep the local police stations informed on crimes and movement of criminals in the village—SU. 26 leaders of trade unions will sit on the same platform today when they chair a meeting in protest against the Budget—VK. The leader of the TULF has urged the youth to remain patient for three months by which time it would become clear what the government would do for the Tamils—EN. The price of a pound of flour is soon to be raised by at least 25 cents—LK. Canada will give a grant trade loan of 80 lakhs of dollar to Sri Lanka for raising the standard of living—LD.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29: The Minister of Justice yesterday urged judges and lawyers who were attending the Administration of Justice Seminar in Colombo to help him ensure that the law served the causes of litigants and the masses as it should. The government will next week introduce legislation in the NSA to prosecute Mr. Felix D. Bandaranaike and Mr. A. H. M. Fowzie and others on whom strictures were made by the Commission appointed to inquire into local bodies. The People's Bank will release Rs. 100 million as loans to farmers for the current Maha paddy season which ends in May and a further Rs. 20 million to cultivators of subsidiary food crops. A bill has been gazetted to provide gratuity payments to Indian repatriates both in the labour and staff cadres who have served for more than five years in an estate. Many foreign investors who find it difficult to export their industrial products have indicated their willingness to set up ventures in the Free Trade Zone here according to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs—CDN. Large consignments of goods including tin plate and milk powder consigned to the National Milk Board are lying in the port of Colombo for several weeks. Over Rs. 114 million in foreign exchange earned by CRA holders is at present lying idle in eleven commercial banks as they are unable to find suitable avenue of investment—CDM. The government will shortly introduce legislation to bring about a broad based people's sector profit sharing scheme. The price of off ration rice is to be reduced by about 50 cents a measure—SU. The ferry service between Talaimannar and Rameshwaram which was suspended due to bad weather conditions will be resumed

on the 3rd of January—VK. The new cabinet of ministers and the district ministers under the amended republican constitution will take their oaths of office on Monday, February 6; the government has decided to declare this as a public holiday to mark the occasion. India has declared her intention of not exporting more than 225 million kilos of tea to international markets during the fiscal year 1978 which begins on March 31—CO. The Minister of Education has decided to take several steps through the medium of education to build up racial harmony—LPR No. 127. There will be no shortage of flour or bread as adequate stocks were available said the Food Commissioner—ATH. In the Emergency ward in the hospitals, at times, there is not even one doctor in attendance—DW. The government will pay Rs. 300 per ton of Sugar cane and a 100/- extra per ton for transport costs—DM.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30: Radical changes including the abolition of the Constitutional Court and the vesting of the power of judicial review in the highest court in the land are among the main recommendations of the Administration of Justice Seminar which ended in Colombo yesterday. Fully equipped ayurveda hospitals with provisions for indoor and outdoor treatment will be set up in all major towns in the country within the first three months of the next year the deputy minister of Health said yesterday. The Ministry of Education in its vast educational reforms structure is now considering a proposal to set up Adult Education schools in every electorate—CDN. Two more committees were appointed yesterday on the instructions of the PM to probe into incidents of political victimisation by the Sirima Bandaranaike regime from January 1970 to 1977. The government will tighten the procedure relating to the issue of new gun licenses in order to ensure that firearms are issued only to bonafide users. The Minister of Education yesterday cancelled the Physics and Arithmetic papers of the CCE 'O' level examination after CID evidence that there had been a definite leakage of the questions—CDM. Over Rs. 200,000 worth of valuable literary works on the arts and culture of Sri Lanka sponsored by the Cultural department have been stored for a number of years in a garage of the Department and the entire stock has been moth-eaten. Far reaching changes in the administrative structure of the Central Bank are to be made next month in view of the larger role the bank will be called upon to play in the development of the country. A total of 7321 new vehicles were registered with the Commissioner for Motor Traffic for 1977. A one man committee was yesterday appointed by the Minister of Housing and Construction to probe the alleged irregularities and malpractices in the implementation of the Ceiling on Housing Property Law—SU. From January 1, MP's letters will be taboo for applicants for public sector jobs; the government has decided that from this date the production of such a letter would be a disqualification for employment in the state and public sectors. All ration book holders irrespective of their income will be entitled to draw their full sugar ration of 1 1/2 lbs per person in January—CO. Applications have been invited by the Ministry of Education for recruitment of 3,000 uncertified teachers; about 3 1/2 lakhs of applications have been received for these posts—DPR No. 130. The Arithmetic and Physics papers of the CCE O Level which were cancelled will be held on the 28 of January—IDPR No. 133. 48,000 tons of flour will be unloaded in the Port before the end of January.

WHAT THE COUNTRY
NEEDS—2 (part 1)

A Sound Educational Policy

by R. Kahawita

This is the second part of the second instalment of Mr. R. Kahawita's series about A Sound Educational Policy.

Today we hear from all quarters that "Life must start at the village level." I use the word "life" in the broadest sense that one could interpret it to mean. The average child starts his school in the village and in a village environment. There are several short-comings in his development compared to an urban dwelling child. To make good this difference the village child should also start his "school training" at three years at the Montessorie or kindergarten levels and continue till 5 years to step into the elementary school. Therefore the first village level educational institution is the "kindergarten workshop."

"The Montessorie or Kindergarten Workshop" should be in each village with teachers trained in the techniques of the system, resident in the village. The Workshop, decent quarters for the teachers, and other facilities should be constructed by the Central Government and maintained by the Village Council. The administration of each "Workshop Unit" must be by a parent-teacher association with assistance from the Village Council. All the recurrent expenditure must be paid for by the Village Council from rates etc. collected by the VC, and grants from the Central Government. This is what I call the first step in equalising the background of a village child to a sophisticated urban child.

The next step is 5 years to 13 years, normally 11 years plus two years of observation to study the application of each child to enable to advise the parent on the next step of his child's education programme. The parent must decide this, the "Assessment Board" will only guide the parent in decision making.

This stage is normally called Elementary Education which also should be in the village and in a village environment. One School may be able to cater for the needs of one, two or three villages as long as "the marching time" is not too much for the child.

The school buildings, teachers' quarters, facilities and such other amenities to bring the child and parent in contact with a "better way of life" in the village should be provided by the centre—or may I say all capital expenditure on the complete school complex must be met by the centre. The work-a-day administration of the school must be in the hands of a Parent-Teacher Board. The recurrent expenditure—maintenance of buildings and equipment should be met by the Village Council from its revenue and grants from the centre.

The quality and standard of school buildings should be much better than the cattle shed type we see today in our villages. The school complex must be a model of planning, standard of buildings, health and environment facilities and also the quarters for the teaching staff. The latter should be what an average village family would like to copy for his own home, built in materials readily available to him in the locality. To me, this is what is meant by rural development. Start with the community-owned buildings so that they develop a sense of possession "and of a quality".

The distribution of elementary schools depend on many factors—population, marching time, transport facilities, number of villages coming within a single Council etc. This is a detail to be worked out by the denominations and Village Councils.

At this stage the religious denominations must come in and where possible and practicable—the denominations should take over management with Parent-Teacher Boards.

Into this category also falls the Pirivena schools, "The JR administration" has placed an obligation in its policy statement, on the religious groups to create a new society based on human and moral values. It's more, our own conscience dictates that we must participate in the bringing up of our children in a moral and religious atmosphere to achieve this

the leadership must come from the Religious Bodies, who must step out of their Cathedrals, Temples and Mosques into the villages and assess the potentiality of developing the moral man according to their individual religious teachings, set up schools and deploy their own teachers for elementary education and the teaching and practice of religion. In this context I am not tired of repeating what the ruling party's manifesto has said—"We shall obtain the assistance and co-operation of all religious groups to ensure that all children obtain their primary education in a national and religious environment and make religious education an essential feature in education thereafter. We shall render all assistance to reorganise and revive the system of Pirivena Education." This has been endorsed by 52% of the voters, and the ruling party has pledged to fulfil every one of its promises.

The initiative must be taken by the parents with the collaboration and support of the religious leaders and groups; work out plans and details as to how they can assist and co-operate with the administration to fulfil the undertaking given to the people. This obligation is not only for primary education but also "for education thereafter". All religious organisations have experienced educators in their ranks and it is for them to give the leadership and put forward schemes for the government to approve and concur.

The next age group in the education system should be 13 to 18 years. Eleven to thirteen is the observation period to assess the aptitude of each child and channel him to a discipline most suited to him. These two years will also be spent in the Elementary school. At the end of the two years of observation will indicate the first drop outs from the school-going child population. They would have completed their elementary education at 13 years. Children who show ability to take advantage of further education will go into the next "Education Compartment"—Secondary education. These institutions should be at electoral levels—not that they should have any political significance or influence. The suggestion is purely for administration, facilities, transport and to bring the growing child its first contact

From A Christian Viewpoint

with urban life. The number of such Secondary Education Institutions in a particular electorate will depend on the school-going population and distances to be covered by a pupil in attending the school.

At this level—i.e., 13 to 18 years groups, education should be canalized into two major streams. (A) for those who are not suitable for higher or University education and (B) group who are suitable for higher academic education and for the professions. This is in keeping with the revised policy statement on public examinations—GCE (Ordinary Level) for the former stream and GCE (Advanced Level) for the latter stream. Thus age-groupwise the former group will continue to age 16 years and the latter to age 18 years.

The (A) group on completing the course will go into employment or into a further two years or more training in subjects or disciplines in keeping with the National Development plans both in the private and public sectors—this training will be in trade schools, technical training Institutions, Technical Colleges and practical training schools.

The (B) group will continue for further two years to the advanced level for University or professional education. Those who are successful in the (A) level should be selected to the University or professional schools by a competitive examination so designed, to emphasise the disciplines or the professions the students have selected to follow.

In the proposed scheme the first drop outs will be at age 13 years as already mentioned. The second drop out is at age 16 years. The third drop out at age 18. Those who are selected for University or professional schools will normally finish their courses in the universities.

The number and location of Trade schools, Technical Training Institutions, Technical Colleges and practical training schools will depend, like in other categories on the student population with a direct ratio to the numbers moving forward after the two-year period of observation—11 to 13 years. Thereafter, the numbers that will get channelled into various teaching establishments can be data processed for their computer analysis.

The number and distribution should be so determined.

Presently there is a suggestion to set up "22 Universities—one in every electorate". This may be just a talking point. The country does not require so many unemployed or unemployable graduates—for University education connotes graduates. What the country needs is employable people in keeping with the programmes of development, administration and services in keeping with our GNP growth rate. Like family planning higher education should also be released to the GNP growth rate.

Before the country thinks of scattering Universities all over the island, the need for training Institutions to render the present unemployables employable, and send out the present schooling population as employables in the next few years must get priority and the immediate attention of the administration. More of the Trade schools, Technical Training Institutions, Technical Colleges and practical training schools should be established in every electorate where there is a need. These establishments should not be misnamed as Universities because the products develop a false sense of values. This is the problem with the present day unemployed youths.

The content of education is the most important, particularly in a developing country like Sri Lanka, but with a very old cultural heritage, a social organisation based on an aryan civilization with the village as the focal point where springs the fountain head of authority; such a background cannot be changed overnight and replaced with ideologies. The new society must grow from the roots of the old society and all that can be done is to encourage the development of a new society without attempting to graft or sub-plant a new concept of life. The tool we have for this is the "content of education."

As a matter of Policy, it has been decided that all Sri Lankians must be tri-lingual—Sinhala, Tamil, English. Therefore, teaching of the three languages must be a part of the school curricula. But when is it to be started?

Primary or Elementary education starts at 5 years. The teaching of the two indigenous languages—Sinhala and Tamil should start a 5 years and continue through to 11 years. Up to this

level, reading, writing and arithmetic and the learning of the two languages should be compulsory. Explaining further, reading and writing in Sinhala and Tamil should be compulsory. Learning of other subjects—arithmetic, religious knowledge and practice of religion must be in the "mother tongue" of each child. These subjects too must be compulsory. Additional subjects may be drawing, civics, hygiene, handicrafts, elementary geography and environmental mechanics up to 11 years. During the next two years, two years of observation, the child should be introduced to elementary science, mathematics and applied mathematics and agricultural sciences. The depth of teaching of these subjects are to create an interest in the child's mind to enable him to sort out what he likes and assist the Board of Observation to determine what the child's interests are. At this level—i.e., 11 plus, the child should be introduced to English up to the completion of elementary education. Up to this point the child has been "educated" in the three languages. Arithmetic, Religious Knowledge and practice of religion, drawing, civics, hygiene, handicraft, elementary geography environmental mechanics, elementary mathematics, science, applied mathematics and agricultural science.

From here, after the process of elimination, the pupil proceeds to the next educational slab—13 years to 18 years. Those who drop out from schooling at 13 are to be guided into agricultural and industrial labour, apprenticeship to blacksmiths, carpenters, stone masonry, brick and tile making etc., according to the local conditions and employment opportunity at village level.

In this slab there should be a short course taking the pupil to GCE (Ordinary Level). This should be more or less a continuation of the Primary education, thus completing the education programme of the average child. The curricula for this course of three years, apart from the general education, should be supplemented by practical training for agriculture, applied arts, commerce and industry. At the conclusion of this three year course and after the GCE examinations the pupil should be issued a certificate—the school Leaving Certificate indicating the attainments in the compulsory sub-

jects and the achievements in special subjects.

The compulsory subjects should be, in addition to the mother tongue of the pupil, one indigenous language—Tamil or Sinhala and English, pupil's religion, elementary mathematics, science and social science. Optional subjects should be vocational courses that will lead for employment in commerce, industry, agriculture, elementary teachers training courses, junior civil service jobs, non-technical supervisory jobs etc.

This group of pupils will be terminating their education at 16 years. From here they may proceed to further vocational training schools where training may last a further year to three year courses depending on the vocations. This training should be in the technical schools, Technical Training Institutions etc. referred to above.

Those students who have been selected for higher studies during the observation period and on the results of attainment in general subjects will proceed to the advanced level for another two years course before the GCE (A) Level examination. The pupil will be guided into one of the sections covering philosophy, experimental sciences, mathematics and mechanical sciences—social and economic science—to be in keeping with the faculties available at the University level. The selections to the various faculties of the Universities should be by a competitive examination of a very high standard to limit the entries for higher studies.

At 18 years the student enters the University where he will follow specialized courses, in general terms—arts, sciences and professional study courses etc. As in some of the well known Western Universities, each course of studies should have its own standard to merit entrance to the course.

Those students who clear the GCE (A) Level but fail to enter a University course should be provided with alternative institutions to train them for careers in the upper sectors of administration and management in the public sector establishment and in private sector industries, commerce, plantation industries etc. These courses should be employment orientated, and trained to make up positions of responsibility. In designing the

courses of studies at these institutions, there must be close liaison as to the needs, quality and standard of training, and annual intake potential with the public and private sectors.

These institutions are to be termed Training Colleges maintained and managed by the State and subsidized by Industry, Commerce, Corporations and Boards etc. by annual grants to the institutions. A fee should be levied from the students in the way of a term entrance fees.

(To be Continued)

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FOR THE RECORD

The Floating Rupee

BEFORE THE BUDGET

November 1, 1977.

These are the new parity rates of foreign currencies in relation to Sri Lanka Rupee announced last night by the Central Bank, amending the parity rates announced by an extraordinary gazette of September 12, 1977.

These parity rates were the last in the process of the crawling "peg", the new government fixed before the massive devaluation in the Budget.

Country	currency	Unit	Parity
Australia	Dollar		Rs. 9.5542
Austria	Schilling		0.5278
Belgium	Franc		0.2416
Canada	Dollar		7.6783
Denmark	Krone		1.3930
Federal Republic of Germany	Deutsche Mark		3.7592
France	Franc		1.7601
Hongkong	Dollar		1.8162
India	Rupee		0.9968
Italy	Lira		0.0097
Japan	Yen		0.0341
Kuwait	Dinar		30.0030
Malaysia	Ringgit		3.5376
Netherlands	Guilder		3.5126
New Zealand	Dollar		8.4049
Norway	Krone		1.5576
Pakistan	Rupee		0.8658
Philippines	Peso		1.1556
Saudi Arabia	Riyal		2.4320
Singapore	Dollar		3.5617
South Africa	Rand		9.7688
Sweden	Krona		1.7814
Switzerland	Franc		3.8160
United Arab Emirates	Dirham		2.1959

United Kingdom	Pound	15.1515
United States of America	Dollar	8.5275

AFTER THE BUDGET

On November, 17, 1977

Currency	per 100 Units	Buying	Selling
U.S. \$	Rs. 1597.00	Rs. 1603.00	
£	Rs. 2904.30	Rs. 2915.30	
D.M.	Rs. 711.12	Rs. 714.12	
F.F.	Rs. 328.75	Rs. 330.25	
Yen	Rs. 6.5075	Rs. 6.5375	
Indian Rupees	Rs. 184.95	Rs. 185.75	

On November 19, 1977

US \$	Rs. 1595.00	Rs. 1601.00
£	Rs. 2906.10	Rs. 2917.10
D.M.	Rs. 710.95	Rs. 713.95
F.F.	Rs. 328.65	Rs. 330.15
Yen	Rs. 6.5550	Rs. 6.5850
Indian Rupees	Rs. 185.10	Rs. 185.90

On December, 21, 1977

U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1,567.00	Rs. 1,573.00
£	Rs. 2,943.75	Rs. 2,954.75
D.M.	Rs. 744.30	Rs. 747.30
F.F.	Rs. 329.35	Rs. 330.85
Japanese Yen	Rs. 6.5130	Rs. 6.5430
Indian Rupee	Rs. 186.60	Rs. 187.40

January, 4, 1978

U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1551.00	Rs. 1557.00
£	Rs. 2980.25	Rs. 2991.25
D.M.	Rs. 739.20	Rs. 742.20
F.F.	Rs. 330.45	Rs. 331.95
Yen	Rs. 6.4670	Rs. 6.4970
Indian Rupee	Rs. 187.60	Rs. 188.40

January 6, 1978

US \$	Rs. 1532.00	Rs. 1538.00
£	Rs. 3024.50	Rs. 3035.50
D. M.	Rs. 745.50	Rs. 748.50
Mark	Rsl 333.50	Rs. 335.00
FF	Rs. 6.4675	Rs. 6.4975
Yen	Rs. 189.60	Rs. 190.40
Indian Rupee	Rs. 189.60	Rs. 190.40

January 11, 1978

US \$	Rs. 1549.00	Rs. 1555.00
£	Rs. 2973.25	Rs. 2984.25
D.M.	Rs. 721.75	Rs. 724.75
F.F.	Rs. 327.55	Rs. 329.05
Yen	Rs. 6.4090	Rs. 6.4390
Indian Rupee	Rs. 188.60	Rs. 189.40

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The Export Of Manpower

By A Tribune Investigator

The Weekend of January 1, 1978, had a front-page boxed article **PREMIER URGED TO STOP EXODUS OF LABOUR TO W. ASIA**. The report read: "An exodus of Sri Lanka's skilled middle grade workers is causing grave concern to the Government. Statistics called for during the past week by the Ministry of Plan Implementation of the number of skilled workers, exclusive of doctors and engineers, who have left the country have, it is stated, been shocking. Most of these skilled workers comprise some of the best carpenters, masons, tractor operators, cinematograph operators, drivers of heavy duty vehicles etc., whose skill is urgently required in this country in view of the proposed major developmental programmes of the Government. The Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction, Mr. R. Premadasa is reported to have brought this matter to the notice of the Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayawardene and called upon him to stop this mass exodus of Sri Lanka's talented men. According to Labour Ministry sources most of these skilled men have been lapped up by private sector agencies recruiting personnel for development projects, particularly in the West Asian countries. The proportion has been rather high last year, it is stated. For instance for every 1000 the Labour Department recruited for overseas employment the private sector employment agencies recruited 10,000. The Labour Department had no control over this type of recruitment, these sources added."

Similar exhortations about restricting the export of manpower have appeared in our papers with unflinching regularity. It seems a contradiction for top politicians of this country to bewail the existence of two million unemployed and at the same time denounce the export of manpower to a market where they receive very high wages. If skilled and semi-skilled labour are attracted to these manpower-short countries, what this country should do is to expand its vocational training centres so that Sri Lanka can train the presently unemployed for jobs here and abroad.

We publish on this page an article by a Tribune Investigator. He was himself an unemployed youth, presently under-employed, and if his writing displays a degree of passionate emotionalism, it is understandable. —Ed.

A GREAT DEAL has been written about Sri Lankans who go to the Middle East for employment. Most of the stories appearing in print, so far, however, tend to give a distorted picture of the situation. In the pursuit of sensation, the Press has highlighted complaints made by a few persons who seem to have been sent back to Sri Lanka by their employers abroad for understandable reasons. Attention has also been focussed on the genuine plight of a few unfortunates who have suffered at the hands of unscrupulous recruiting agencies and persons intent only on making money.

All this has created in the public mind an image that is very true, real or happy. It is therefore necessary to examine the whole ques-

tion in a detached and objective manner.

From Alaska to Taiwan, there is today an exodus of workers unprecedented in history. They are all bound for the Middle East. Even the workers in affluent countries like the USA and West Germany are heading in that direction because they can earn so much more than they do at home. Other Asian countries have also grasped this opportunity eagerly.

Is there any reason why Sri Lanka alone should miss this great opportunity? Considering the parlous state of Sri Lanka's foreign exchange resources and the massive unemployment problem we are faced with it would be foolish

not to make the best of the chance offered.

The Middle East which has lain dormant like a sleeping giant has just awakened to the possibilities provided by Oil. This lifeblood of the world's commerce and industry has brought the Arab states immense wealth. They are building Ports, Airports, Factories and entire Cities. The Arabs are in a hurry to develop their long neglected nations and to do this they are prepared to spend lavishly. That is why workers get such good wages and terms in these countries. In the old days, young men were advised to go West and earn their fortunes. Today all eyes are turned to the Middle East. And this boom in employment opportunities is providing the world, especially the poorer countries of the world, with an unique opportunity that should not be missed.

As with any other human undertaking, everything has not gone well where employment in the Middle East is concerned. A few employees were sent back home for the very reasons for which they lose their jobs here—inefficiency, misconduct etc. and for political and trade union activities forbidden in those countries and of which the employees concerned were made aware before they were appointed to the posts. No one can break the laws of the land in which he is employed—and trade unionism is forbidden in all the Arab countries, but the lack of which is compensated for in extra remuneration.

Then of course, there are the local mushroom agencies that exploit human beings and hold the poor trusting workers who go to them to ransom. They are responsible for a great deal of what goes wrong. There may also be bad employers in the Middle East. But most of them abide by their contracts. The fact is that one single failure or mishap receives wide publicity, but the thousands who have made good and earn well, are not talked about or written about.

UNEMPLOYMENT in this country is a growing problem. Those without jobs in Sri Lanka number almost two million at the moment. Annually a quarter million join this vast army of the unemployed. This problem has plagued every Government since Independence. To

Mechanics Of Manpower Export

date, successive Governments have failed to find even a partial solution to it. Inextricably linked to the problem of unemployment is the nagging lack of foreign exchange. These two factors work in a vicious circle against the island's economy. So long as the country lacks foreign exchange so long will the unemployment problem remain unsolved.

This was one of the main reasons for the downfall of the SLFP.

And yet there are those who propagate the myth of a 'BRAWN' drain. It must be pointed out in this connection that 'BRAWN' idling at bazaars and street corners is inflammable stuff. One of the main reasons for the 1971 insurgency was the frustration and hopelessness experienced by the unemployed youth of this land. Therefore, the idea of a 'brain' drain or a 'BRAWN' drain is only valid in a country that has enough jobs to offer all her citizens. In the present context in Sri Lanka it is absurd to even think in such terms when there are just not enough jobs to go around.

It has been mooted in certain quarters that there will soon be a shortage of semi-skilled labour in this country. How such a statement can be reasonably justified is mystifying. While two million unemployed are desperately seeking a means of survival—while those who have jobs are woefully underemployed and are hardly above the starvation level of existence, the stark fact is that those who have the 'brains' and the 'brawn' have to eke out a miserable hand-to-mouth existence. How can there be any sort of drain on our intellectual or manual manpower resources? Is it not better for these people to go out into the world and better themselves and in the process contribute to the nations welfare?

Those who make such an issue of the 'brain' and 'brawn' drains forget that these workers too would like to enjoy the good things in life that those who decry the exodus possess. Houses, limousines, gadgets around the home that make life pleasant and comfortable. Certain classes of people alone have no exclusive right to these things. Every citizen of the country has a right to them. Those who try to deny these people their right to grasp the wonderful opportunity that has come their

way through the vast job market in the Middle East must never forget what caused the rout of one party can cause the debacle of another and that history has a bad habit of repeating itself.

STRANGE THOUGH IT SOUNDS, while some prominent citizens are adducing reasons why Sri Lankans should not seek employment in the Middle East, the Labour Department and some Corporations are actively engaged in recruiting staff for foreign "capitalists" in those countries. This is being done absolutely free of charge. What is more, these State institutions are spending their time and energy and the tax payer's money to do so. In a country where the foreign exchange situation is causing anxiety, here are Government institutions subsidising the business activities of oil rich Middle East entrepreneurs.

Why should the Government refuse to accept legitimate dues from Employers in the Middle East who are perfectly able and willing to pay up to US \$ 200 per employee and in certain categories up to about \$ 1000 per employee. This is another undertaking started by the previous Government that should be stopped forthwith. If certain investigations are carried out this government might well discover shocking corruption in certain transactions where the government gets nothing while certain corrupt officials fatten themselves on takings made from the sweat of poor workers.

This is one reason why the Government should not dabble in this business. There are others. For instance, if the canvassing and jockeying that goes to fill vacancies in State organisations is any criterion, there is bound to be a substantial amount of political interference and favouritism and bureaucratic bungling in the selection of candidates for employment. All this can only result in the wrong kind of persons being sent abroad for employment. This poses a serious threat to the image of Sri Lankan labour now held in high esteem in this vast employment market.

There are good reasons why this business should be left in the hands of registered, reliable and

proven foreign recruitment agencies. The Labour Ministry is now taking an interest in this field. What the Government can do is to exercise constant vigilance even over those few agencies allowed to carry on business so that the highest standards of integrity and ethics can be maintained. This is not like exporting lobsters and cattle and vegetables. This is a business that deals with human lives.

That is exactly why it would be bad for the Government to indulge in this business activity. While the State can exert its authority to curb the activities of businessmen and compel them to adhere to a certain code, the State cannot exercise that same authority over itself. This is proved a million over by what has happened in every business the previous regime took over—even in essential public utilities like the CTB and the Port of Colombo.

THE GOVERNMENT can also assist in promoting employment abroad for Sri Lankans by launching large scale crash programmes to provide the necessary skills. Such State institutions like the Urugodawatte Training School, the Nurses Training Schools, the Hotels School and the National Apprenticeship Board could play a vital role in this project. Large industrial establishments in the private sector too should be induced to contribute towards its success. Barbers, waiters, cooks, carpenters and masons could receive their training in such programmes.

The long range objective of any Government must be to provide remunerative and attractive job opportunities to the unemployed and the underemployed people of this country. Such opportunities of employment now abound in the Middle East. Other Asian nations have been quick to seize the chance to ease their employment problems and at the same time earn valuable foreign exchange. For Sri Lanka this would be the best way to solve the unemployment problem at least partly and at the same time ensure substantial foreign exchange earnings to invest in urgent development projects.

In 1976, India earned over US \$ 450 million from remittances sent home by her citizens employed in the Middle East. Taiwan, South

Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangla Desh have all benefitted similarly. In the present acute financial stringency that holds this part of the world in its vice like grip, the Middle East job market is indeed a gift from the Gods. But any Government that tries to impose too many restrictions and regulations on the Arab nations is taking a step in the wrong direction. Any Government must ensure the safety of its citizens and see that they come to no harm, but this can be done in the ways mentioned earlier without imposing laws that cannot be enforced in any case and which will only induce the Arabs to look elsewhere for their manpower requirements.

Other countries have tried it and paid the penalty. India and the Philippines are two examples. They passed impossible laws that involved the foreign employer in red tape and the Arabs looked to other countries for people to work for them. Now desperate at tempts are being made to woo them back.

Let us face facts. The customer with gold does not like to wade through red tape and kick his heels in government offices. His time is valuable and he wants to be treated properly. The Arabs who are in the market for workers to help them develop their countries will likewise go to the place where they can transact their business with the least bother and delay.

For the employees themselves and their families, a job in the Middle East means Salvation from want and hunger and the gateway to a better and more meaningful existence.

As nearly all employees go on a bachelor basis, they send home the bulk of their earnings for the upkeep of their families. Even a basic labourer receives a minimum monthly wage of Rs. 2000/- and his earning capacity is enhanced by generous overtime. Those in higher categories earn anything between Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 15,000/-. A few who reach the top can make as much as Rs. 50,000 a month. Food, accommodation, medicine, laundry and transport to and from work is free. The employee has very little to spend on. Except for clothes and cigarettes, he can keep his pay packet intact.

In terms of the benefits this would bring to the country, we have to take a look at the statistics. The Middle East will need within the next five years over 2.5 million workers for its many faceted projects. Saudi Arabia alone will absorb 1,500,000 of them. If Sri Lanka is able to supply just a 100,000 of these, think what it would mean to our unemployment problem. Apart from that, if each of these 100,000 workers send home US \$ 100 a month the country would gain 120 million dollars a year. Translated into Sri Lanka rupees this would mean 1.9 billion in our currency. The figure for a five year period would stagger the economists. This does not take into account the foreign exchange that comes in as fees earned by the Agents who supply the manpower. Must we go with a begging bowl for aid when we have the means to earn it without humiliating ourselves?

There is yet another obvious benefit that will accrue. Today the National Carrier is in such a disastrous mess. Tomorrow it can become one of the most profitable airlines in Asia. Every Sri Lankan who goes to the Middle East can be airlifted by Air Ceylon. The airline can also bring them back home on the termination of their contracts and carry them to and fro on holiday travel in between. The Middle Eastern run alone will make the airline a valuable foreign exchange earner for Sri Lanka. What is now a total liability on the nation can soon become one of its finest assets.

These facts and considerations are compelling reasons why Sri Lanka should pay attention to the export of manpower. It will be more profitable than the tourist trade and more fruitful and less anti-nation than exporting timber, lobsters and prawns.

THE COMIC GENIUS

Charlie Chaplin

by Basil Perera

In the turbulent thirties, when a few sawdust Caesars bestrode the world like Colossi (*albeit* with feet later proved to be of clay) and many were the famous "Names

in the News" serialised in the *Sunday Observer*, Emil Ludwig wrote of Charlie Chaplin: "What is the fame of Gandhi compared with him who has shaken the world as only the figure of Christ has done before him? There is no one yet who has sustained such world-wide fame and yet remains so simple and unaffected." Although Bernard Shaw had named Chaplin "the only genius developed in motion pictures", when asked to write an article about him, he refused. "Good wine," he declared, "needs no bush".

It was Chaplin's genius that popularised the cinema in the days of the early silent films and gave it its first world-wide appeal as an art form. He produced the kind of comedy that had an universal appeal and could be understood by intellectuals and uneducated alike. The theme of struggle for human happiness remained paramount in all his work. That is why his films reached the hearts and endeared him to millions of ordinary people. Once a comedy director asked Chaplin: "What are you making now?" "Oh, the same thing," he replied, "Getting people in and out of trouble."

Charlie Chaplin was born in London. His parents were English music hall artistes. Young Charlie himself had his first stage experience when only 7. In the early days of the films, he migrated to the USA in 1910, and after some time on the stage took to film work. With his baggy pants, bowler hat, stage moustache and walking stick, he became an immediate success, well-known the world over. His genius popularised the cinema in the days of the early silent films and gave it its first wide appeal as a new art form.

Social Critic

From the start Chaplin's films were full of sentimental sympathy for the underdog. In fact, the Tramp he created symbolised the little man lost in the jungle of capitalism. But it was under the impact of the Great Depression and the rise of fascism that C's crusade took direct reference to social issues and he openly came out as an outspoken social critic.

Modern Times (1936) his film about the Depression which pilloried the factory system and showed the police shooting down strikers while hunger and insecurity stalked the land infuriated

the American industrialists. Yet in making this devastating attack on capitalism, Chaplin was funnier than ever before. This film was also a landmark for Chaplin in another way. It showed that the master of the silent film had turned successfully to the sound film as well.

In *The Great Dictator* (1940) Chaplin brilliantly ridiculed the hollow emptiness of fascism. But in unmercifully satirizing the poltroon offences of Hitler and Mussolini he did not fail to show how dangerous they were to humanity. Later he told a delegation of Soviet youth who met him in the USA: "People everywhere are making a great deal of noise about the invincibility of the Nazi troops. This breeds fear, and fear demoralises people, takes away their faith in their own power. I wanted to get rid of that fear, to show people that Hitler in reality is a pathetic figure obsessed with a mania for power, a poseur and a buffoon who incidentally pinched my mouse tail."

Monsieur Verdoux (1947) made at the beginning of the cold war was a satire on the munition makers and the morality of a society which makes heroes out of men who kill by the millions but condemns to death a single murderer. Verdoux was a good, loving father who murdered rich widows solely as a business in order to maintain his bourgeois way of life.

Persecuted

Meanwhile, during the war, Chaplin had refused to be a mere onlooker while a struggle was being waged to save civilisation from the fascist vandals. He had spent more time campaigning for the "Medical Aid to Russia" Fund and for the opening of a Second Front in Europe than in his film studios. In a famous speech he had said: "On the battlefields of Russia, democracy will live or die."

Summoned to appear before the Un-American Activities Committee, he sent a brief note stating: "I am not a Communist. Neither have I ever joined any political party or organisation in my life. I am what you call a 'peace-monger'. I hope this will not offend you."

All these activities aroused the fury of the ruling circles in the USA. And in 1952, during the McCarthyite days while sailing with his family to London, he learned half-

way across the Atlantic that the US Attorney-General had instructed immigration authorities to detain him on his return as an 'unsavoury character' and 'undesirable alien'. The Tramp had become a pariah in the land of his adoption.

Later in a statement issued in London he said: "Since the end of the last world war I have been the object of lies and vicious propaganda by powerful reactionary groups who, by their influence and by the aid of America's yellow press, have created an unhealthy atmosphere in which liberal-minded individuals can be singled out and persecuted." He added that every American was a "prisoner on probation with a chain round his leg" and could be jailed any time for disagreeing with the policy makers in office. Saying that he could not work under such conditions, he refused to return to the USA and took up residence in Switzerland saying "I'm much freer here."

A King in New York was Chaplin's searing satire against the witch-hunting anti-Communist hysteria of the Un-American Activities Committee.

Stalin Prize

In 1953 Chaplin was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize for the Promotion of Peace among Nations. Accepting it, he paid tribute to the peace policy of the Soviet Union.

On that occasion, Paul Robson another great people's artist and Stalin Peace Prize-winner, wrote to him: "More than ever the world looks to your enlightened artistry for new gifts of love and laughter, the tears of compassion and the ennobling spirit of humanity with which you have blessed us through the years. Your affirmation of life and beauty so poignantly portrayed in your films unite you inseparably with mankind everywhere."

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LETTERS

Dehiwala Electorate

Sir,
Fortunately for the "Newest MP" (Mrs Sunetra Rupasinghe) the electricity supply was restored (for the third time) in the nick of

time to hear, on the programme "Behind the News", that she had made her maiden speech earlier that evening—November 29, 1977.

Twice during that very evening the Prime Minister's speech on the budget was blacked out by long electricity failures. These interruptions made quite meaningless the contribution made by the PM to the budget debate.

During the last few months people in the Dehiwala electorate—and the suburb of Kohuwala in particular—have been plagued by a series of electricity failures. It would be a good enough kick-off point for the new and fair MP to delve into the electricity failures that have plagued those who voted for her and more important those who voted against her.

And that is not all, she should insist that those responsible should give their explanation in the same public forum as this letter and that their explanation be couched in a language that laymen could understand. We are not interested in watts and amps; power factors or transformers all we want is a regular and reliable supply of electricity which we pay for and if we do not get it we must know the reason why.

For obvious reasons, Mr. Editor, I must remain anonymous, it does not need much imagination to think of what will happen to my electricity if my name and address were known!

Kohuwala.
2.12.77

Wayfarer

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King Belshazzar

Sir,
Mr. R. W. Wickramanayake's letter in the *Tribune* of December 17th poses a number of questions about the famous incident at Belshazzar's feast in Babylon, to wit:

—This transpired in the 6th Century, BC., 2500 years ago, rather than 3500 years ago;

—On seeing the mysterious writing appear on the wall, King Belshazzar's knees "smote one against the other", not his feet, which is rather more awkward to do.

From Our Readers

While it is correct that King Belshazzar, the Chaldean, was slain that night, and that Darius, the Mede, took over the kingdom of Babylon, we have no evidence that Darius was responsible for Belshazzar's demise.

Politics in those days were not simpler to follow than at present.

H. Levin

18, Albert Crescent,
Colombo 7,
19-12-77

Problems

Sir,

Politics has been the main reason for the downfall of Sri Lanka, after the independence. Political parties in the past must take the blame for this. This disaster is due to the implementation of schemes such as the National Languages, free Education and Health, the free issue of rice, the more recent suppression of the Freedom of the Press, the nationalisation of Ceylonese owned property and estates and the interference with the independence of the Judiciary.

This is a golden opportunity for the present Government to put an end to most of these schemes.

There is another aspect that the Government has to look into and that is to cause investigation to be made to ascertain as to how some people became wealthy in the last seven years. The present Minister of Finance, Mr. Ronnie de Mel acted quite rightly in restricting the free issue of rice to those earning less than Rs. 300/- per month. This scheme too should be done away in the near future and then only will the people produce more food. Similarly free education and health should be restricted to a certain category of people and those who can afford to pay for their services, must be made to pay for it.

The Prime Minister Mr. J. R. Jayawardene has already allowed the freedom of the press and has set up an independent judiciary. This indicates his sincerity to do a good job of work.

The burning question is the National Languages. The only way open to solve this problem is to make Sinhalese, Tamil and English all official languages. This

will greatly benefit the students both at home and abroad and bring Sri Lanka in par with most of the other leading nations and also solve the Sinhalese-Tamil problem.

There should be no discrimination in education and employment prospects. Employment must be on merit. All nationalities must be treated equally irrespective of race, religion or caste.

There is only one person who can solve all these problems and he is Mr. J. R. Jayawardene. However remember that he is neither a magician nor has he "Alladin's wonderful lamp" for it to be done overnight.

Have patience and bear with him. It will take him two to three years or even more, to undo some of the wrongs that have been done and he will do it.

I would therefore appeal to the people of Sri Lanka to have faith and trust in him and help him in every way to achieve this end.

Long Live Sri Lanka.

Jack Van Sanden
(Retired LIG Police)

18, Seventh Avenue,
Campsie,
NSW 2194,
Australia.
Dec. 18.1977

Rajendra

Sir,

I find that V. Rajendra, one of the relief announcers of the SLEC comes in for some strong criticism in your issue of 24.12.77. I am not surprised because in this country we have always had strange views on how Ceylonese should speak English.

When a foreigner speaks Tamil or Sinhala badly we are not pleased but we excuse him because, after all, he is a foreigner. On the other hand when a man like the Rev. L. J. Julian, a missionary teaching at the Theological College Pilmatalawa, speaks Tamil almost like a Tamil, we Tamils are happy. We do not complain that he is trying to imitate the speech of a Tamil and that he has no business to do that.

However, this is really what we do in Ceylon when an English announcer tries to speak English

as much as possible like an educated Englishman. We protest in Parliament about it. We write to the papers complaining that it is getting on our nerves. One admires the strong nerves of the people of India who can stand their announcers speaking more like Englishmen than ours can ever do.

V. Rajendra has a deeper voice than the average Ceylonese and we call him pompous. He pronounces English somewhat better than some of the other local announcers and we say we prefer the latter. Everybody is pleased when an announcer pronounces "however" as "how wever" and "New Year" as "New Wyear". Because Rajendra gets such words right we cry "down with him". What a strange attitude.

R. E. J. A. Setukavalar

29, Somasundaram Avenue,
Chundikuli.
31.12.77

Recruitment To The Police Service

Sir,

It is an undeniable fact that the recruitment to the Police Service during the past 7 years had been done in a slipshod manner, regardless of the high standard required in the former days. It is also evident that during the August Disturbances the Policemen had been found to have been not merely on lookers, but had actually taken an active part in the assaults on innocent Tamil citizens and given every encouragement to the law breakers in their nefarious activities, as was revealed in the evidence recorded at the Mannar Courts when six victims of police and Army attacks, charged the former ASP Mannar with causing simple and grievous hurt, encouraging arson, looting and damage to houses and property.

Future recruitments to this service calls for careful selection of candidates, who should have an unblemished character. With the increase of tourists flooding Sri Lanka it would be desirable in the interest of the country to ensure that police recruits are proficient in all three languages. Those with a good knowledge of English should

be given preference. Even during the British regime all field officers in government service had to be proficient in all three languages and they had to pass an EFFICIENCY BAR EXAMINATION to qualify for increments and promotion to a higher grade within a stipulated period of their service. Before the Government implements the teaching of all three languages, Sinhalese, Tamil and English in our schools, the UNP government will do well to ensure that all public servants, particularly in the Police Service are proficient in all three languages within a number of years as do in the case of the Official Language.

M. A. Punnia Puvirajasinghe

"Kuruchandra Inpam"
Mannar.
1/1/78

Love Always Multiplies

Sir,

If we wish to work towards a unified nation, it is vital all the people belonging to different religions in this country did all they can, to wipe out once and for all petty jealousies, racial hatred and other divisive tendencies to restore peace and harmony and an all time unity among all people in this soil to make this an indivisible land.

For one thing all religions are based on 'Love' as the unifying force behind. Also as a Hindu, surely I believe all love in this world is expansion or multiplication and not division. And all selfishness is contraction or positive stagnation. Love is therefore the greatest need of our time. All religionists who want to work for the unification of this country, must take their petty mindedness, racial rivalry and all other divisive tendencies, and make a bundle of them and sacrifice it to the Fire-God, and then come forward to work for the peace and harmony of this country. To whatever religion we may belong, after all it is 'Love' that pays everywhere. So long as there is no feeling of disunion amongst us, 'Love' will reign supreme in us when we can never use disagreeable and unwholesome

language towards even the greatest opponent. Hence it is time in the name of greater national interest, all citizens of this soil gave up their life of loveless interests and tendencies and affectionately joined hands together to work unitedly for the future progress and prosperity of this pearl of an isle.

N. Sri Kantha

Alwis Town,
Hendala.
13.12.77

Inania of this, that and the other

By INNA

Contemplation- Revolution

"Hello, is that you? Did you get my letter?"

"Yes, I did. But what kind of talk do you really want in seminar style?"

"Oh anything. Doncher-know. Give us a wide sweep from Contemplation to Revolution."

This was a real conversation of January 1977 between a knowledgeable person who wanted a fuller christianity preached and practised in his church and a dedicated woman of a religious group vowed to be a little "different" from the run-of-the-mill actives and contemplatives. They were proud they were different from the rest of the contemplative world because they seemed to have had no truck with seeing to man's (or woman's) material needs within the push towards the Integral, total man.

The eager woman who ended that phone-conversation was more eager about her founder than about her findings from her scriptures and hoped that the will of God and the Kingdom would graciously, condescendingly coincide with what she thought was His will and His Kingdom. She loved prayer, adored contemplation, almost cut scrap-book pictures of the great mystics and slogans of Meister Eckhardt and Ruysbroek, "never missed a charismatic meeting at all". She felt unhappy, she told a companion, "that she felt she was more worried

about the act of contemplation than of contemplation itself, but "what's to be done" she had added. "Doing" meant being active, and she was no activist! She had joined a contemplative order that was out in the streets, a la rigueur.

Then came the bombshell. She read Cullinan and her defences broke. Cullinan, the Benedictine contemplative of Ampleforth Abbey, member of the Commission for International Justice and Peace, CEC/Oxlam. Now she "feels like dull lead in the head" referring to her discovery of her former waywardness in this regard) as she reflects and contemplates actively in her coastline-town convent. Here are some of the lines that brought her down to His earth:-

Contemplation is reflexion, meditation which must help us in the process of selection, of extracting the root things that are happening p. 2.

Contemplation is necessary: a person who is unable to withdraw from society sufficiently to see it for what it is, a dangerous person(p. 2).

Daniel Borigan said: Contemplation today is subversive activity (p. 2).

Looking back through history the lesson is clear enough: the men who set the social change in motion are not those who have achieved a colossal amount. They are those who have introduced powerful ideas with very immediate implications on the things people do and the life-styles they lead (p. 12).

Theoria (Greek sense, ideas) and practice, the actions of living out the truth, must mix. It is an explosive mix. Such a mix is possible only through what Toybee calls withdrawal and return, what I would call the art of withdrawing into the contemplative order to return, at a more radical level, to the political (p. 2).

Cullinan cuts into you diamond-wise, when he gives the story of his talk to a Group of nuns in South London. After his talk, one said: "Oh, father, you make me feel all political". Another Sister standing next to her said:

"Oh, I don't know, he makes me feel all contemplative".

Cullinan asserts: "Now I think that is one of the greatest compliments I have been paid, because I think that the two go

very closely together and that it is completely false dichotomy to say that contemplation is irrelevant, that what we need is to be political. The balance between these two makes political activity or involvement in society really effective. We need both: but of course we are bad at the contemplative" (p. 12).

Let's take it. We are coast-huggers and fearful to launch out into the deep, lest in our lack of faith we get caught in the storm and feel we are perishing, our whims and our ways, our walls and our stalls, our lands and our bands. And so for real contemplation, no takers. For acts of contemplation, plenty. A plenty.

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SOME REFLECTIONS

On A University Campus In Batticaloa

by Fr. E. Crowther S. J.

In Sri Lanka, if not everywhere, 'education' or more correctly instruction, or even more precisely the possession of a certificate that one has satisfied a closed circle of persons called examiners has been sought for almost exclusively economic reasons. Education was expected to provide a stable and secure livelihood.

There seem to have been four ways in which education of this type was attempted. (1) in the colonial era with English as the medium of instruction in schools based on English models. This conferred advantages on the well-to-do as education had to be paid for, tuition fees being charged. Hopes of employment were actually realised because the limited supply did not exceed the demand.

(2) through free English education. This was claimed to give equal opportunities to the poor, by the abolition of fees. Hopes of employment were not always realised, as there was a glut of certificates.

(3) Through education through the national languages. This was proclaimed as giving equal opportunities to an even greater number than before. This only resulted in a greater glut of certificates

and more disappointments. The supply exceeded the demand even more than before.

(4) Through multiplication of campuses. This was expected to give equal opportunities of university education to all who desired it and were judged fit by the examination. Actually there was a glut of unemployed frustrated university graduates. The multiplication of campuses did not solve the problem of unemployment; it only aggravated it. One more campus in Batticaloa or anywhere else will aggravate it still more.

One of the aims of a campus in Batticaloa is to reduce the cost of university education for candidates from the Eastern Province. But there will not be a sufficient number from the Eastern Province to fill a campus of even moderate size. Entrants from other parts of the country will have to be brought in away from their homes. The problem will exist for them. The problem will not be solved but only shifted to other territories.

In the last analysis, only a very small number of the Eastern Province will enter the university; and of this small number only a few will obtain the employment they expect. So the university will fulfill the hopes of only a few, and not of the Eastern Province as a whole. There are more urgent and more immediate needs of the majority to be satisfied. This majority should not be fooled with a mirage of a campus in Batticaloa.

It may be said that the benefits of university education will indirectly filter down to the masses. Before that happens, our graduates must realise that they have a debt of gratitude if not of justice to the poor thousands whose money has enabled them to obtain the education they possess. They should try to better the condition of their poor benefactors even at some personal sacrifice. But instead in general they use the very education they owe to the money of the poor to exact even more from the same poor in the way of higher salaries and other emoluments. They even sometimes totally desert them for more lucrative employment abroad. Can I be blamed for looking askance at an educational system which seems to tend to culminate in breeding parasites?

Can I be blamed for not being in favour of increasing that breed by establishing one more campus? Am I an obscurantist? No Christian can be an obscurantist. He believes that truth liberates. He believes that knowledge of God and His Son, that is knowledge in depth of Reality is Life, eternal Life. I cannot be an obscurantist. I hope I am trying to be radical and not peripheral. St Sebastian's Parish, Batticaloa, 30.12.77.

The Land Acquisition Act (Cap. 469) as Amended by the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act, N. 28 of 1964.

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7 (1)
Reference No. K/Mahaweli 175/9

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Republic of Sri Lanka No 300 (Part III) of 13.1.78

G. G. A. Malalagama
District Land Officer
Kandy District.

The Kachcheri,
Kandy.
30 December, 1977.

SCHEDULE

Situation:-

Kahala Ihalgammedda (Part and Nawayatenne Bazaar Villages, Ward No. 10 Kahalla within the Municipal Council Limits of Kandy, Pathadumbara AGA's Division, Kandy District

Name of Land: Plan and Lot Nos.

- Weeramudunehena alias Beeramudunehena Part of Assmt. No. 33/4, Pathingiya Road.
- Lot 53 in P.P. Maha 1406
- do- Lot 59 in P.P. Maha 1406
- do- Lot 60 in P.P. Maha 1406
- do- Lot 61 in P.P. Maha 1406
- Nawayatennehena, Assmt. No. 322, Madawala Road.
- Lot 62 in P.P. Maha 1406
- Nawayatennehena, Part of Assmt. No. 324, Madawala Road.
- Lot 63 in P.P. Maha 1406
- Nawayatennehena, Assmt. No. 354, Madawala Road.
- Lot 67 in P.P. Maha 1406
- do- Lot 68 in P.P. Maha 1406
- Nawayatennehena, Assmt. No. 356, Mydawala Road.
- Lot 69 in P.P. Maha 1406
- do- Lot 70 in P.P. Maha 1406

Confidentially

● Ambassadors ● Rotarians ● CIB Elite ● Customs Cheats

IS IT NOT A FACT that the *Sunday Times* of January 1, 1978 had a sensational frontpage piece entitled NINE CAREER MEN IN DPL RESHUFFLE? That the story was written by Editor E. P. de Silva? That the story read: "Nine career diplomats are expected to be appointed shortly as Ambassadors. They are: Mr. Ben Fonseka (Bonn), Mr. V. I. B. Mendis (Paris); Mr. G. Gunasingham (Sweden); Mr. M. I. M. Hussain (Moscow); Mr. R. Koelmeyer (Oslo); Mr. Elmo Ziegelaar (Peking); Mr. K. Manikkalingam (Rangoon); Mr. N. Balasubramiam (Belgrade) and Mr. A. T. Moorthy (Pakistan). Two other career diplomats already hold ambassadorial rank. They are Mr. A. Basnayake, High Commissioner in Delhi and Mr. Bernard Tillekeratne, Ambassador in Tokyo. The following appointments are also to be made: Mr. B. J. Fernando (United Nations) Dr. W. S. Karunaratne (Washington), Mr. A. C. Weerasinghe (Nairobi) and Mr. P. A. Silva (Brussels)?" That there is no doubt that this sensational story had a touch of kitesying in it? That it is a newspaper's licence to indulge in such speculative stories which do nobody any harm but which spark off interest and dialogue and debate in regard to very important matters of topical urgency? That from all reports there is no doubt that this story raised a storm in many places? That the *Sunday Times* story at first glance, appeared to be a Foreign Office officialdom's "leak"? That it looked to person's knowledgeable in such matters, like a Foreign Office list of appointees that had either been approved by the Government or was on the verge of being submitted to the PM for his approval? That the publication of the list stirred several hornet's nests in many important places? That according to popular rumour foreign Minister Hameed virtually

hit the ceiling and had wanted a full-scale inquiry as to how the "leak" had taken place? That he wanted the CID to be called in? (That the indignation betrayed by the Minister showed that the story, though speculative, had a basis of truth)? That appeared that the career men—long neglected and discriminated against—waited to share the ambassadorial posts now vacant? That it is also known that it was 1st Minister Hameed alone who was upset by the publication of this story? That some of the top king-makers of the UNP hierarchy also had a similar list for ambassadorial posts with a majority of party loyalists and a small minority of career men? That this list was also being readied to be presented to the Prime Minister? That Party enthusiasts jumped to the conclusion that foreign Office bureaucrats had "leaked" their list to the *Sunday Times* to score a *fait accompli*? That the *Sunday Times* story brought everything under the table to surface? That this question was likely to be taken up at the UNP Working Committee meeting on Friday, January 6?

IS IT NOT TRUE that there is a great deal of animated talk in Rotary circles whether members of the organisation who sell books have conformed to the ethics of the organisation? That *Tribune* has not so far been interested in the aims and objectives of the Rotary? That it has always regarded this organisation as a gathering of heavy-bottomed types who have made good and who look on the rest of humanity as lesser beings who have to be "locked after" by Rotary? That in spite of this general attitude to Rotary, *Tribune* has maintained cordial relations with a few of the Rotarians who can still be regarded as human? That one of them recently came over to *Tribune* with a card that set out the *Four-Way-Test* or Code of Conduct of Rotary? That the *Four-Way-Test*, like the sermon on the Mount, is something nobody could quarrel with? That briefly they could be set out thus: (1) Is it True?; (2) Is it fair to all concerned?; (3) Will it help to build goodwill and better friendship?; (4) will it be beneficial to all concerned? That these are soul-stirring high-principled objectives? That Rotarians are expected to act in terms of these guidelines?

That *Tribune* was asked whether a Rotary member who earned his living by selling books could be regarded as a good Rotarian if he sold books imported under the old order at prices which can be considered as unconscionable even under the new devalued rates? That if the *Four-Way-Test* is applied strictly, no person who indulged in such black-marketing can be called a Rotarian? That Colombo Rotarians are perturbed that one of their members has been guilty of violating the *Four-Way-Test*? That among other things, he sells books? That the less said for the moment, the better?

IS IT NOT TRUE that people of Colombo, especially those living along the Negombo, Horana and Fitiyandala areas have been condemned to witness a sorry spectacle every morning and evening? That while they stand patiently in the hope that they can eventually squeeze into or hang onto a grossly loaded bus, to add from his work, they see beautifully maintained buses fly past by the hundreds? That the distinguishing feature of all these special CTB buses is that there is not a single standee therein? That all passengers are seated comfortably and they gaze contemptuously on their less fortunate brethren in the bus queues? That this privileged elite are CTB workers on the way to and from work at Werahera and Ekala? That they travel free? That they will not allow these buses to be used on normal passenger service even in case such "fine" buses should come to a halt unexpectedly at some place on the route of the special service? That hundreds of buses thus only do two round trips a day? That all that these buses do are two empty trips and two with non-paying passengers? That this state of affairs must cease soon? That the rule should be that what is good for the general public is good for CTB workers? That CTB workers must also learn that they are not privileged "masters" who can hold the people of this country to ransom?

IS IT NOT TRUE THAT the *Daily Mirror* frontpage story on Thursday, January 5, about a customs fraud regarding "transistor cassettes" was perpetrated by a firm whose boss has been picked to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Free Trade Zone?

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