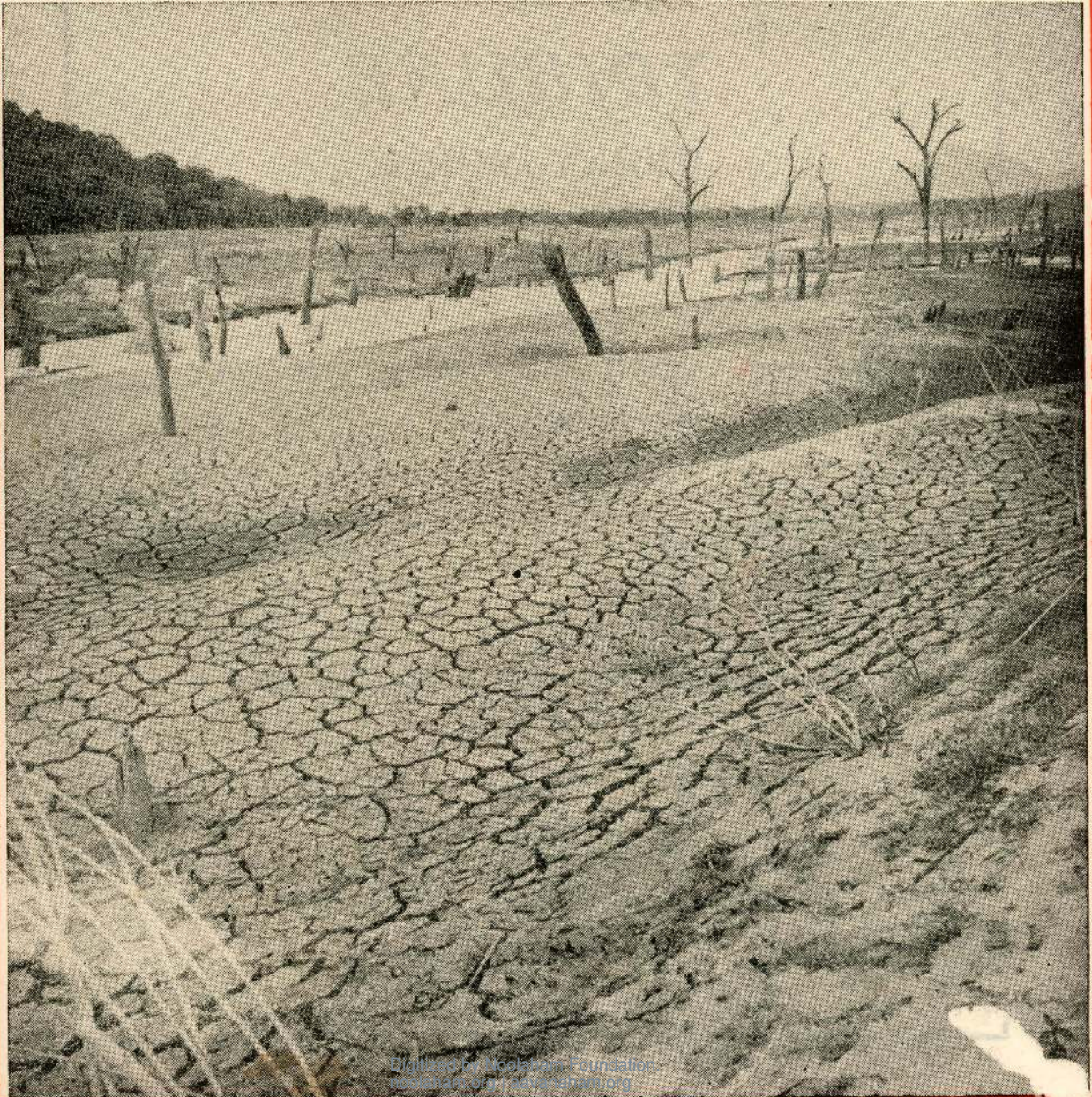


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From Our Desk

ON THE COVER we have a picture that shows what even the most luxuriant regions of this country would look like in a few years. Some parts of the country are already that way. Already in the early '60s, the forest cover had come dangerously close to danger point of thirty per cent. Today, the optimists say that the forest cover is just under 9 per cent, whilst the pessimists (whom we think are nearer the truth) say that it is no more than 6 per cent and that this too is fast dwindling. It is a happy augury, however, that President Jayewardene has "detailed a Police-cum-Army operation to crack down on those who are raping forests and posing a serious threat to the country's environment". The *Sun*, 8/10/79, set out the position very clearly: ".....the indiscriminate clearing of forests and particularly the illicit felling of timber, experts have warned, may cause serious geographical problems.....With intelligence reports having revealed that illicit felling is being carried out by highly organised rings a special Police and Army Task Force has now been formed to combat this problem. In a joint offensive carried out in the Polonnaruwa, Moneragala, Amparai and Batticaloa areas, the Task Force which set up a number of barrier posts has rounded up a number of persons found engaged in illicit felling." It is clear that the Security Forces have so far only succeeded in rounding up the smallest fry in the organised network felling timber illicitly. The big sharks, however, are the buyers of timber in Colombo, in the big towns and elsewhere—the saw mill owners, the timber merchants, the building contractors, furniture makers and the like. Unlike in the 1970-77 period when timber was limitlessly exported on permits, sizeable quantities are today being smuggled out categorised as other items. The best ebony (in small pieces) is regularly smuggled out as spices, or tea, or some other Ceylon produce. These unscrupulous exporters get fancy fabulous prices from violin makers for the ebony pieces, but the money remitted back is the lowest possible amount for the declared commodity. Our timber resources are also being smuggled out as high quality furniture in the name of export promotion. Permits are not difficult to obtain or forge that the furniture was made from legal timber from the State Timber Corporation. It is also known that a large quantity of logs in many saw mills are really illicit, but on which Forest Department seals of legality have been imprinted. One of the steps government must take to save our remaining forests is to ban the total export of all timber products including furniture even by diplomatic personnel, Sri Lankan and otherwise. Some of our diplomats who go abroad take vast quantities of furniture which they promptly sell at fancy prices whilst they themselves make do with semi-synthetic furniture available in the countries in which they serve. Another source of timber leakage is the large quantities of furniture that go as the personal luggage of foreign diplomats, UN and other experts who work even for a few months in the island. Unless this kind of export is effectively blocked, the finest quality timber (ebony, satin, nadun mahogany etc.) would disappear completely from our forests before the term of this government is over.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

- On Corruption
- Education, Transport, Agriculture

However hard one tries it is not possible to write a sunshine story about the situation in the country today. The government-owned media and the SLBC try hard—they repeat themselves hoarse about Mahaweli, FTZ, the export drive and the wonders that certain Ministers are about to achieve (only three or four of them seem to know the art of fixing such publicity for themselves and the projects that have not even reached the blueprint stage). But even these papers find it hard to keep the gloomier, the seamier and unpleasant stories out of their columns. News has a way of erupting into the national consciousness that makes it impossible even for those who want to hide to do so. The non-governmental press (pro and anti government) make more difficult for those who want to “manage the news” to do so. Suppression of news and even the slanting of news is nowadays counter-productive.

Take the field of education. When the *Tribune*, nearly 18 months ago, spotlighted the corrupt practice involved in the attempt to smuggle the daughter of a bookie into the Medical Faculty at Peradeniya, although she was not qualified for admission, we were assailed in Parliament by the Minister. Not a single daily paper took up this matter. The bookie-cum-night club operator was a generous host and had powerful patrons in the Governmental hierarchy. A Presidential directive to prevent such skulduggery was soon circumvented. There was a little initial stalling, then the rules were waived and changed and the bookie's daughter was given admission to the Medical Faculty. There were other similar acts of corruption in the field of education, but until recently the government media had drawn a blanket over it. The Establishment appeared to have turned a blind eye on it.

But what has happened today? The Ministry of Higher Education has come under the purview of the President. The Deputy Minister has been now made acting Minister for an indefinite period and an Education Services Com-

mission has been set up to administer the Education Department and its allied agencies. Nobody seems to know what has happened to the Minister of Education himself—he is said to be on holiday.

The President in a speech at Agalawatte on October 12 had said that there were over 5,000 allegations over teaching appointments. If instances of corruption like the bookie's daughter had been nipped in the bud, the Government would not now be confronted with 5,000 complaints. But this is not the only scandal in the Educational sector. There is the more sensational matter about the Bribery Squad catching an A/L Examiner getting Rs. 20,000 allegedly for increasing the marks of two students to a point where they could easily gain admission to the University. Headlines and front page stories immediately became the rule about this incident for the last fortnight, but it will soon be forgotten. In the climate and context of the avalanche of corruption that has overtaken this country especially in the import and export trade, in the Customs, in Transport, in Textiles, in the Administration, in fact in everything—a Rs. 20,000 bribe to alter examination marks is a small matter. In a society in which the personal profit motive has been made supreme without any restraints or constraints, every man and woman thinks that he or she has a price that must be exacted or extorted at any cost in the rat race, not for survival, but to be somebody. An A/L Examiner is therefore entitled to think that there is nothing wrong in collecting Rs. 20,000 to alter a few marks when greater personages than he think nothing about collecting twenty times that for services rendered.

Stories and allegations of such corruption are not confined to Colombo alone. From all corners of the island such stories have begun to overshadow life and living in the island. Basically most of them are true (there cannot be smoke without fire), but they cannot be “proved” in a court of law (often for reasons which are best not talked about). It is for this reason why the President wants to set up a Special Commission to work *in camera* and report to him personally about allegations of corruption against Ministers, MPs and other VIPs.

But while the country waits for this Commission, hideous reports about unbelievable corruption have begun to fill the Sri Lankan atmosphere. Very soon they will push the SLBC broadcasts out of the air. There are several wavelengths on which these allegations now circulate, but to listeners they provide juicy and meaty fare. Cabinet Ministers take pride of place and half a dozen or more of this tribe will soon be placed in the star class for alleged corrupt practices. In his October 12 speech the President, among other things, said, according to a report in the *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, 13/10/79, "During the last regime the UNP criticised the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike for its misdeeds. The present government therefore would not allow the same thing to happen again." The simple fact is (and it is a pity that the President has not yet cottoned on to the gravity of it), that in the thirty months the UNP government has been in power, corruption has grown so enormously that it now completely overshadows the worst in the SLFP period. Sociologists can examine why this has happened and whether this galloping growth of corruption is in any way connected to the sudden opening of the flood-gates of free enterprise, private profit and the total removal of all controls.

The President has a difficult task on hand to combat the new corruption, that has arisen since August 1977. He has made the first move by restructuring the Ministry of Education and Higher Education temporarily on the ministerial level, but permanently by setting up an Educational Services Commission. Steps like this should have been taken no sooner scandals like the bookie's daughter had broken out. This could have prevented what turned out to be a tremendous outcry in the most sensitive electoral sector in the country—teachers, students and parents.

Another sector that is sensitive electorally is Transport. And today, there are no greater or more disgraceful scandals than the CGR and CTB. The official excuses trotted out for the deteriorating services will not be accepted by anyone who knows. Only the government-controlled media publish such excuses interspersed with complaints from bus travellers and train commuters. If one examines the calibre of appointments to the top management boards of the CTB—central and regional

—one can understand the reason for the gross mismanagement and inefficiency of the service. If one analyses the excessive recruitment to the middle and lower ranks in the CTB and CGR (selected electorate-wise) one can get an inkling into basic causes for the collapse of the two services.

What is the use about complaining about the theft of CGR and CTB property when criminals, IRCs, thugs and other undesirables from certain unsavoury areas are recruited indiscriminately. The Railway Workshop, after nearly 30 months of dharmista rule, is working at about 20%—30% capacity—whatever the fairy tales the government media is persuaded to publish—and that is one reason why the CGR is limping so badly. Now a new excuse has been pulled out of the CGR cupboard of skeletons—bad railway tracks that need sleepers which have to be imported etc. etc. Why was nothing done about this for 30 months? Why was our timber suitable for sleepers exported or misused before the decision to import railway sleepers was made? Why were no experiments undertaken about cement-based sleepers at a time when we were exporting cement?

Whatever excuses or ga-ga stories are put out to explain the state of affairs in Transport, the President will do well to take note of the country-wide upsurge of opinion against the way the CGR and CTB are run, and the men who run them. In the ultimate analysis the UNP and the government will suffer at the next elections if the Transport Services continue to deteriorate for the next thirty months in the same way as heretofore.

Credibility in government propaganda has begun to disappear. People have not forgotten, for instance, the speeches made and the newspaper supplements published when a few hundred tons of rice were exported to the Maldives. Ministers had proclaimed that rice would no longer be imported but that very soon Sri Lanka would be a regular exporter. Now, the news has come that this country will import 300,000 tons of rice next year. People also remember that the export to Maldives was made when parts of the country were already in the grip of the drought which is now the excuse for importing 300,000 tons. Ministers now talk of exporting subsidiary foodstuffs like chillies, onions, potatoes, when

the local production of these crops has virtually collapsed.

The need to import 300,000 tons of rice next year, in our view, is not due to the drought, but to the total and complete shambles to which the agricultural sector has been reduced since August 1977. The drought could have caused a small shortfall, but the 300,000 tons needed is the result of mismanagement inefficiency, maladministration and corruption that has overtaken agriculture.

Agriculture is yet another sensitive electoral sector and it is time the President pays some attention to it.

OO OO OO

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

by Ariel

• SALT 2 • China And Emerging Trade Patterns

PRESIDENT CARTER, after raising a hue and cry about the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba—a gimmick to tarnish the Havana Summit—is now pleading with the US Congress to approve the SALT 2 agreement he had negotiated with the Soviet Union. He has only himself to blame for what appears to be an impasse. He had overplayed the Russian troops bogey to such an extent that Senators and Congressmen had linked approval of SALT 2 with the withdrawal of the troops from Cuba. The Soviet Union did not oblige President Carter with even a strategic or symbolic withdrawal—it would have enhanced his chances in the presidential race because in the USA an anti-Soviet “victory”, however small and insignificant, is still a major vote-catcher—and he has had to turn several double somersaults in big talk ending up with a Caribbean Task Force and an increase of Marines in the US base in Guantanamo in Cuba. After this laboured exercise, President Carter has urged the Senate to approve the Agreement. A *Reuter* report datelined Washington, October 14, stated: “President Carter said yesterday that Senate rejection of the SALT II Treaty would give the Soviet Union a tremendous propaganda weapon. Mr. Carter said that if the treaty was turned down Russia could cite

it as evidence that the US was not committed to keeping world peace through arms control. The President's comments came in a two hour radio interview during which he answered telephoned questions from Americans across the country. Mr. Carter faced a range of inquiries touching on the US economy, Cuba and other world affairs. He sought to minimise one caller's concern that US military manoeuvres now sending marines to the US Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba would lead to fighting. The President said the United States periodically conducted such routine military exercises putting troops into and withdrawing them from Cuba. There is no prospect for a war or conflict or combat; he said. ‘It's a very safe thing to do’ At one of his White House briefings, President Carter warned that if the US Senate rejected the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) some European countries might turn towards the Soviet Union and weaken the NATO alliance. Using some of his strongest rhetoric so far in support of the treaty he said that the defeat of SALT II would give the Soviet Union ‘an unbelievable propaganda advantage.’ He said allies of the United States would seek alternatives to American leadership if the arms pact failed to win the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate.”

There is no doubt that the SALT 2 agreement is for the benefit of mankind. After many years of negotiations on limitations of strategic offensive arms, the SALT 2 treaty was signed in Vienna on June 18, 1979, by the representatives of the two largest world powers, Leonid Brezhnev and James Carter. The SALT 2 treaty, of course, does not completely rule out the danger of an outbreak of nuclear war. The limits it sets for the number of strategic weapons are still enough to annihilate most of mankind. Nevertheless, the SALT 2 treaty offers hope for gradually growing mutual confidence between the countries which are the leading powers in the two parts of a divided world. It would be wrong, however, to let satisfaction at the signing of the SALT 2 treaty to overshadow the fact that the treaty is yet to be ratified. Rightwing circles in the US Senate have for some time been making intensive preparations to torpedo the treaty, as the statements made by Senators Baker, Jackson and Garn

make abundantly clear. The treaty was, nevertheless, expected to be ratified by the US Senate as early as the autumn, but there are indications that the debate will be postponed until the beginning of 1980, and that the treaty may become an issue in the US presidential election campaign next year.

THE ALLEGATIONS by certain quarters that SALT 2 gives one-sided advantages to the Soviet Union are not correct in the reality of the existing military balance between the two world powers. They overlook the fact that the strategic forces of the Soviet Union are substantially less distributed territorially than those of the United States, that the Soviet Navy has more difficult access to world seas, and that in contrast to the United States, the Soviet Union does not use the territories of other states to verify compliance with the SALT 2 provisions. The signing of the treaty is a positive step forward in efforts to promote peaceful co-existence but this does not mean an abatement in the ideological confrontation between the two different social systems. The struggle between the two diametrically different ideologies goes on. The signing of the treaty is evidence of far-sighted statesmanship, inspired by the realisation that problems of the present-day world must be solved by political and diplomatic means, and not from a position of military strength. Furthermore the signing of the Second Treaty on the limitation of strategic offensive weapons between the USSR and the USA is a major new step towards the curbing of the dangerous and costly arms race.

The treaty and the other Vienna documents also represent a major step forward on the road leading to a general improvement of Soviet-American relations and thereby of the international climate as a whole. They are a major contribution to the prevention of a nuclear holocaust, make peace more secure and serve both the present and future interests of all peoples without exception. *Firstly*, the two states with the most powerful military potential agreed on a maximum limit to all strategic weapons systems, in the first place nuclear systems, (e.g. 2,250 launching pads for each side from 1981), excess weapons systems will be eliminated from the arsenals; the up-dating of existing systems and the introduction of new ones is subject to limita-

tions from the outset. All these measures will be based on the principle of equality and equal security. *Secondly*, this treaty has paved the way for the negotiation of a more comprehensive SALT III treaty which will deal with the even more complex, but nevertheless, as the present experience has shown, soluble problem of a more drastic reduction in strategic weapons.

Thirdly, SALT II facilitates the attaining of concrete results during numerous other negotiations on military detente such as on the general and complete ban on nuclear weapons tests; on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons; on the strengthening of the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as on the reduction of arms and armaments in Central Europe, in which the GDR, naturally, takes a particular interest. *Finally*, the SALT II treaty and the other measures agreed upon in Vienna between the leading figures of the Soviet Union and the United

**The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460)
As Amended By The Land Acquisition
(Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964
Notice Under Section 7(I)**

Reference No. 25/4/165

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 59 (Part III) of 19-10.1979.

W. M. T. B. Menikdiwela
Assistant Government Agent,
Kegalle District.

The Kachcheri,
Kegalle.
01, October, 1979

Schedule

Situation:— Situated in Batuwita village, Egodapota, Pattuwa, Dehigampal Korale (Ruwanwella) D. R. O.'s Division in Kegalle District.

Plan No.: P. Plan 22 1562

Lot No.: *Name of land:*
1 Alugollewatte Kumbura
2 Alugollewatta

States have an impact on political and military detente in general. It must be mentioned in this context the speeding up of an agreement limiting the supply of conventional armaments, the resumption of negotiations on the limitation of military activities in the Indian Ocean and the joint resolve to convene a Second Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to problems of Disarmament and a subsequent world disarmament conference.

IT IS ALSO NECESSARY to refer briefly to those who continue to speak and write about a "conspiracy of Super Powers". It stands to reason that compromise is required from both sides, if such complicated questions are to be solved. The attempt to act according to the inappropriate principle of "all or nothing" would have resulted in nothing in this case. In spite of the necessary willingness to compromise, it is not likely the Soviet Union will renounce its support of the anti-imperialist struggle of peoples throughout the world. In Vienna Leonid Brezhnev left no doubts about this stand, for instance when he outlined the Soviet position on such questions as the just solution of the Middle East problem, with due consideration of the right of the Palestinian people, the implementation of the rights to complete self-determination of the people of southern Africa, as well as the stabilisation of the political situation in Southeast Asia, with the observance of the right of the people of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea to their full sovereignty. Nor is the USA likely to abandon any of its political or strategic interests. President Carter's speeches have made it. The self-interest for survival of the two Super Powers made SALT 2 possible. It also serves the interests of mankind.

Furthermore, Leonid Brezhnev's recent offer to unilaterally withdraw 20,000 troops and 1000 tanks from the GDR and also to limit the storehouse of medium-range missiles in a bid to persuade West European nations not to embark on a costly programme of modernising and updating national nuclear arsenals has evoked angry reactions from President Carter and that the some Pentagon chiefs. They feel also from Soviet offer may lead to increased military detente between the Warsaw Powers and some West European countries.

The Chinese Prime Minister and Party Chief Hua Guofeng is now in Europe and at

the time of writing, many observers expect that he will throw his weight behind the US plea that NATO countries in Europe should increase and modernize their military strength. China's policies, postures and actions in contemporary global geo-politics have begun to compel the attention of political commentators and observers. Inside China, a seeming revolution is said to be afoot which, apart from its domestic political implications, will help the Peking Government to sell the country to the USA and European countries as one which was edging forward to "democracy". University students in Peking have been permitted to demonstrate and stage sit-in strikes to eject army units that had occupied university buildings from the time of the Cultural Revolution. Provocative wall posters have appeared in Peking and other towns. An article has been printed criticising Hua Guofeng for interfering with the independence of the judiciary—this is the first time that one has heard of "independence of the judiciary" in China—a concept unknown in that country from Confucian times to Mao's days. Reports have been released that 65,566 Peking officials "wronged" during the Cultural Revolution have now been exonerated or rehabilitated.

**The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460)
As Amended By The Land Acquisition
(Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964
Notice Under Section 7(1)**

Reference No. LD/A 561

It is intended to acquire the land described in the Schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 59 of 19-10-1979 (Part III)

D. M. Nandasena
Addl. Government Agent,
Kandy District.

The Kachcheri,
Kandy. 26 Sept. 1979

Schedule

Situation: Giragama village, Medasiya Pattuwa
Minor Division, Tumpane D.R.O.'s Division,
Kandy District.

Name of land: Kurundugahinne watte

Plan and Lot Nos.: Lots 1 & 2 in P.P. Maha 1870

This trend is coupled with the dethroning of the Great Leader and Helmsman Mao Zedong. He is being made the scapegoat for all the evils the West had condemned in post-1949 China. This is one aspect of the new China that must be watched very carefully. But more important is China's present thrust diplomatically and politically into the rest of Asia. A weak central government in India has enabled China to activate tiny principalities, like Bhutan, to talk of "independence" and small countries like Nepal to claim a new status. The Naga and Mizo revolts in Northeast India against the central government are traced to Chinese manipulation. Indian government agencies have revealed that these anti-government military units have been secretly trained and armed in China.

REPORTS IN HONGKONG MAGAZINES indicate that Chinese military assistance has recently been increased to rebels not only in the North-east of India but also in Southeast Asia. Strangely enough the reputed decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party for the activation of the "liberation" forces in South-east Asian countries is said to "follow on the way of the realisation of the revolutionary ideas of Mao." The current increase in the supply of weapons to rebel and "liberation" forces against existing regimes in Southeast Asia has evoked comment from many China watchers in Hongkong, Manila and Singapore. Many of them feel that China's readiness to increase the supply of arms to the rebel forces is tied up with the Western readiness to provide China with modern military equipment, weapons and also assistance in modernisation of its armaments industry. Weapons made obsolete by the new weapons are being passed on to the rebels, according to these commentators.

ANOTHER MATTER on which such commentators have begun to focus special attention to is impact of Chinese trade on South-east Asia. The USA, West, and Japan want China as a market to expand the sale of their goods and hence are slow or reluctant to increase their imports from China. The trading pattern of China with the Western countries and Japan at this juncture shows that the latter regard their economic contacts with China first of all as a means of expanding the market

for the sale of their goods and, hence are reluctant to increase their imports of Chinese products. As a result of this, China has developed a chronic deficit in its trade with the West and seeks to make up for it through trade and other revenues from the developing countries and Hong Kong. Such "compensation" for the unequal trade exchange with the developed capitalist states has become a reason for the economic friction between China and the South East Asian countries. And China has a powerful means of economic penetration in the region through ethnic Chinese who maintain close contacts with the People's Republic of China, and Peking draws very big sums of foreign currency from the South East Asian countries. This is achieved in the two main ways; one because China is always on the credit side in the trade with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (in the 1970-1977 period alone it amounted to some 3,000 million dollars); and through investment, family and other remittances by the *huaquia* in the region to China, which exceeded 1.500 million dollars over the same period. Besides, the South-East Asian countries' markets ensured over the same period the selling of

**The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 460)
As Amended By The Land Acquisition
(Amendment) Act No. 28 Of 1964
Notice Under Section 7(I)**

Reference No. LD/A 556

It is intended to acquire the land described in the Schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 59 of 19-10-1979 (Part

D. M. Nandasena

Addl. Government Agent,
Kandy District.

The Kachcheri,
Kandy. 26 Sept. 1979

Schedule

Situation: Kalugammana Village, Kalugammanasiya Pattuwa Minor Division Haris-Pattuwa, D.R.O.'s Division, Kandy District.

Name of Land: (i) Bogudupitiyawatte alias Rattalewatte and Pokunewala Kumbura
(ii) Bogudupitiyawatte alias Rattalewatte
Plan and Lot Nos.: (i) Lot 1 in P.P. Maha 1162
(ii) Lot 2 in P.P. Maha 1162

the Chinese goods re-exported there by Hong Kong, worth almost 1000 millions dollars.

Malaysia's biggest ever deficit in the trade with China last year and the reduction of the volume of Chinese purchases in Singapore seriously shook the hopes of those countries' business community that China's imports from South-East Asia might increase in connection with the beginning of the implementation of the "four modernisations" program. It appears that the "modernisations", far from resolving the trade contradictions between China and the countries in that part of the world, will, on the contrary, further worsen them because of Peking's growing need for hard currency.

Encountering difficulties in pushing its goods to the markets of the industrialised capitalist countries, China wants to increase its export to South-East Asian countries. Peking's methods to stimulate export production, including the creation of mixed enterprises oriented towards foreign markets, and also by attracting capital from Western government and private companies will lead to broad-scale export assault first of all in that region.

The expected influx of Chinese goods, combining low cost and updated production technology, will inflict considerable losses on the producers of similar goods in the South-East Asian countries. This is only one of the unpleasant prospects before the economies of the countries of the region. These economies will, evidently also have to suffer a still greater outflow of the capital of the ethnic Chinese to China (in Indonesia, for example, they hold 75 per cent of the national income), for China is taking steps to expand this source of currency revenues, too.

In this connection, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* recently wrote that the ASEAN countries are not enthusiastic as regards Peking's plans to attract the *huaqiao* capital for the "four modernisations". The magazine also pointed out that before long China will be a serious rival of the South-East Asian countries in the sphere of attracting Western private capital, state loans from the Western countries, and the assistance of international banks and economic organisations.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* of September 7, in an article about Singapore and China stated: "With a far cheaper supply of unskilled labour than Singapore, China in particular could

mount an export drive which would severely undercut Singapore's competitive position and make the island state no longer an attractive site for foreign investment in the traditional industries....."

The much publicised and over-sensationalised stories about Vietnam and Indo-China, emanating from Western capitals and Peking, must be examined in the context of the new economic patterns emerging in Asia.

LETTER

CONSERVATIVES AND PROGRESSIVES

Sir,

'Inna', does not give a correct picture of the Roman Catholic Church in his somewhat oblique comments on her (Sept. 22). He presents the controversy between the Conservatives and the Progressives as a division in the Church, almost a polarisation (this is an interpretation dear to journalists—vide *Reuter* reports on the Pope's visit to the US).

Conservatives and Progressives represent extremes of opinion in the church and are in no way representative of the main body. The Conservative is afraid of change, afraid that it might affect his faith and so he clings to the *status quo*. The Progressive, on the other hand hasn't much of a faith to be imperilled, so he welcomes change. He is a spiritual voyeur in search of a faith. Hence the generous charter that Perre Castel gives to a progressive church "ceaseless changes in the formulation of dogma, inventiveness and creativity in the liturgy...." etc.

No institution can hope to achieve stability under such conditions. The mainstream of opinion, on the contrary, accepts change only in so far as it defines more sharply the identity of the church. New structures and formulations have to be found for changed circumstances, but they have to be in keeping with the essential nature of the church.

Change also cannot be seen in crude mechanistic terms—change in the outside world to be reflected in a change in the structures of the church. Change in the world has to be assessed before a response is made. It is naive to think that a free play of forces (like a free market economy) will automatically bring about a renewed church.

Narada de Silva

15/5, Albert Perera Avenue,
Nugegoda.

Oct. 2 — Oct. 10

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

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2: The Minister of Agricultural Development and Research E. L. Senanayake said yesterday that the country was well on its way to self-sufficiency in rice as a result of progressively diverting the endeavours of the farmers towards new techniques and production. Freshers who started their new academic year at the University of Colombo yesterday were given a warm welcome: they settled down to study in an atmosphere of warmth and peace; there were no incidents of ragging. Ten thousand telegrams go by post each day, some 20,000 persons are waiting for telephones, about 200 complaints are received each day regarding telephone defects; these are only part of the problems worrying the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry—CDN. The President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene has expressed concern about the over-staffing of Government Departments and Public Corporations; a five-member committee has been appointed to investigate over-staffing of government departments and Corporations—CDM. Tampering with letters at the central mail exchange is continuing despite secret observations, the Post and Telecommunications Ministry Secretary C. J. Serasinghe admitted yesterday—SU. The Supreme Court today ruled that the Essential Public Services Bill due to be taken up in Parliament this afternoon "needs a special majority and a decision by the people at a referendum"; the 5-judge bench headed by the Chief Justice held that the Bill was consistent with article 3 of

the Constitution but inconsistent with article 11 and therefore needed the Special majority and referendum—CO. The Health Ministry is considering appointing western medical doctors to Ayurvedic Hospitals—LD. The SLFP has decided to nominate a candidate to the Galle by-election—DV. The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research has decided to increase the damages paid in crop failures to Rs. 1200 to those who have insured their crops; hereafter the bank will give agricultural loans only to those who have insured their crops—DM. The SLFP which unsuccessfully trying to hide the crisis inside the party from the masses has published a vote of confidence by the politbureau on their leader—ATH. Unrest in the LSSP because of publishing a government advertisement on the Essential Public Services Bill by the daily paper *Janadina* is increasing; a large number of members of the party have pressed the leadership to take disciplinary action against those who were responsible for the publication of this advertisement—DK.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3: Prime Minister, R. Premadasa last night moved an amendment to section 4 (2) of the Essential Public Services Bill in accordance with a decision of the Supreme Court—CDN. The President Mr. J. R. Jayewardene addressing the members of the Government Parliamentary group yesterday said that at a time when the country's development programme was being carried out at a fast pace, it would be a treacherous act if anyone promoted strikes and disrupted the essential services—CDM. The Essential Public Services Bill was passed at 6.30 a.m. today in Parliament. 128 voting "for" and 21 "against" after a marathon 15-hour debate—CO. The Government is keeping a close eye on how commissions which would have gone to Corporations are given to individuals; the Government is investigating how an individual was given the commission for importing tractors when it should have been paid to the Tractor Corporation—DV.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4: After a marathon 15-hour debate which ended early yesterday morning Parliament passed the Essential Public Services Bill with an amendment by a two-third majority, 128 votes for and 21 against; the TULF and the SLFP voted against the Bill. The Presidential Commission on devolu-

tion of power has been given an extra month to complete its work, Commission sources said yesterday. The CID is investigating 311 co-operative frauds, involving Rs. 100 million, committed during the period of the last Government. Food Minister S. B. Herat yesterday warned traders dealing in rice that he would flood the country's 10,000 co-operatives and 2,000 registered traders with good quality rice at cheap prizes if the price of rice goes any higher—CDM. The time has come for the people to choose between subsidies or development, because the country could not afford to have both said Mr. N. G. P. Panditharatne, the Chairman of the United National Party, when the All Ceylon Women's Front of the UNP met yesterday to elect its 45-member Working Committee and other officer-bearers—CDM. Pakistan which has been Sri Lanka's number one tea buyer in the past years has cried halt to purchases from this month; the news of this surprise move by Pakistan's military strongman General Zia-ul-Haq reached the local tea trade yesterday. The High Court of Colombo will have jurisdiction to bear all prosecutions, proceedings or matters in respect of offences committed under the Bribery Act in any part of Sri Lanka, according to regulations drawn up by the Minister of Justice K. W. Devanayagam. Lack of co-operation by government departments in the provision of infrastructural facilities and a serious shortage of transport for workers are impeding the Greater Colombo Economic Commission's efforts to develop Sri Lanka's investment promotion zone, GCEC Director-General Upali Wijewardene warned yesterday—SU.

A new party by the name of Podujana Party has been formed; the Party Secretary Mr. Satchi Ponnambalam at a Press Conference said yesterday that this party has been formed to obtain the essential requirements of food, clothing and shelter for the people, to develop the country without any distinction between race, language and religion; to relieve people from slavery under capitalists and to obtain equal rights for all people of the country—VK. The President has ordered the government to set up training schemes in every government institute and recruit personnel from the Job Bank; the trainees will be paid an all-inclusive salary of Rs. 250—LD. Over Rs. 500 million worth of goods for the country's

essential services imported by government departments and corporations are not being cleared for the last two years and are facing destruction—DM. The full control of the country's Agricultural sector has been handed over to the World Bank by an agreement signed on May 17, 1979; this has been revealed in a World Bank report called The Agricultural Extensions and Adapting Research Project; under this agreement from 1980, except for tea and rubber, all other cultivations and animal husbandry including paddy and coconut will be done on World Bank advice and plans; the crops that should be cultivated, the acreage for each item, the export of these agricultural items and the guaranteed prices for these items will be decided only on World Bank specialists recommendations; even the water supplies and the water control will be handled by the World Bank specialists—ATH.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5: President J. R. Jayewardene said yesterday that the Essential Public Services Bill was not meant to prevent legitimate strikes but to stop strikes which would disrupt the life of the community. Prime Minister R. Premadasa yesterday appealed to the leaders of the TULF to give up their parochial policies and think of the country as a whole; "forget the past and join us. We are still stretching the hand of goodwill and brotherhood; if you accept it, it will enable us to remedy the situation that has arisen," the Premier said—CDN. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike the Second Member for Nuwara Eliya Maskeliya told Rotarians yesterday, it must be admitted that the freedom enjoyed today in the country was entirely due to the prevailing Parliamentary system—CDM. Strike action aimed at disrupting the Government and the development process will not be tolerated; Prime Minister R. Premadasa said yesterday that there had been an enormous wastage of public funds, manpower, equipment and vital machinery during the past two years; this is my assessment of the situation now prevailing in the country; this has to be stopped, the Prime Minister told the first in a series of Government Agents conferences at the ARTI auditorium in Colombo—SU. Arrangements are being made for those who have been arrested in the Jaffna district and are detained to appear before the Select Committee and ask for their release from

detention—DP. Employees of the 70 Textile Mills surrounded the parliament yesterday to press the government to drop its decision to hand over the 70 textile mills to the private sector—ATH. A Government Economic Adviser has warned that the country will face economic difficulties unprecedented in the history of the country next year because of the capitalist economic and trade policies of the UNP government; this adviser has pointed out to the Cabinet that inflation will increase to 20% in 1980 from the present 14%—JD. There are disputes inside the LSSP, JVP and the Communist Party because of the unity policies between five parties; political sources say that there have been secret discussions to form a separate revolutionary party by those who will resign from the three parties—DK.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6: Doctors who are overstaying their period of leave abroad must return to the country before January 1, 1980. The government has decided to establish a Regional Fertilizer Warehouse at Kampurugama in the Weligama electorate to ensure adequate supplies of different varieties of fertiliser to the retailers of the southern region of the island; this warehouse will have a storage capacity of around 10,500 tons—CDN. About ten to 20 percent of the vegetables in the stalls of Marketing Department are either sold at a loss or destroyed every day the National Institute of Business Management which was commissioned by the Ministry of Trade and Shipping to report on the causes of the heavy losses incurred by the Marketing Department stalls has submitted its report and the Ministry is now launching on implementing methods to cut these losses. The Norwegian government has granted Sri Lanka 35 million Norwegian crowns as assistance for the regional development of Hambantota—CDM. Government will shortly lay down principles and rules to be followed by recognised private sector agencies in the recruitment of personnel for employment abroad; a three-member Cabinet sub committee has been entrusted the task of preparing the guidelines for this purpose. Sri Lanka's investment guarantee agreement with Singapore has been finalised and is likely to be submitted to Cabinet next week for sanction. Government is likely to make overtures shortly to the Pakistani

Government for a resumption of purchases of our tea by that country—SU. 20 Sri Lankans in the Middle East have written and said that the majority of women in brothels in the Middle East are Sri Lankan women; they say that local agencies are sending Sri Lankan women to brothels run by Arabs saying that the vacancies are for house-maids, nurses etc. The PM yesterday openly challenged the SLFP in Parliament to give notice for a debate on the accelerated Mahaweli Project—ATH. The President has ordered immediate investigations into reports from MPs that tea factories handed over to the Co-operative Societies for management are losing lakhs of rupees, production had gone down and many may have to close down—LD. It has been revealed that 80% of medicines given to hospitals are being stolen—DV. The Dehiwela-Mount Lavina Municipal Council had a Rs. 163,000 in its fund and out of this an official car for the Mayor has been bought for Rs. 146,000—DK.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7: Kerosene consumption in the country has dropped a substantial 25 per cent since the three-fold increase imposed on September 1. Officials are wary about the actual economies of consumption achieved by the price increase because of the hoarding that preceded the exercise. The Colombo Municipal Council has come up against a wall of 'diplomatic' silence in its efforts to determine the mind boggling rents that many Colombo based diplomats and expatriates pay for deluxe housing in the city; Prime Minister R. Premadasa recently directed the CMC to make a check on these rents and inspectors were sent round to determine what landlords were collecting. President J. R. Jayewardene said yesterday that the Government's development strategy was to explore other avenues of income outside the traditional tea-rubber-coconut tripod economy in a bid to push the country towards development; the President said the FTZ, the Mahaweli Project and the Greater Colombo Area Development Scheme were all important arms of this economic strategy. An American Tropical Botanist has warned that it will take 45 years to replace the forests due to be felled in the next six to ten years even if the Forest Department raised its annual reforestation target to 20,000 acres—SO. An Attorney-at-Law

was nabbed by officials of the Bribery Commissioner's Department on Friday night allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs. 20,000 from a student to obtain credit passes in the GCE Advanced level examination—ST. Government members have been debarred from making use of the armed services for any purpose; invitations to them could not be excluded without the specific permission of the President or the Defence Secretary; this directive has gone out from President. A top level investigation has been launched by officials of the Bribery Commissioner's Department and the Commissioner of Examination to uncover what is believed to be a massive racket in the alteration of GCE results. President J. R. Jayewardene said yesterday that if there was any person who could provide a formula to solve the oil crisis and bring down the sky-rocketing cost of living, he would be happy to hand over the mantle of his office to that person—be it a man or woman. A one-man committee appointed by Prime Minister R. Premadasa to examine the Ceiling on Housing Law has recommended that a tenant's right to purchase the house let to him (which is not a surplus house) be repealed—WK. Police which investigated how the criminals got modern arms, which even the defence forces did not have, has got a tip-off that these arms are being purchased for a large amount of money from foreign vessels by an organised group and sold to criminals; these modern arms are not even used in neighbouring countries—SM.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8: Reaction to the international Rubber Buffer Stocks agreement reached in Geneva last Saturday was very cautious in Colombo Rubber circles; the trade contends that pending a full study of the ramifications of the agreement no final opinion could be expressed on the immediate effects of the agreement on the world rubber market. Colombo's District Minister, Weerasinghe Mallimarachchi has started a war against bakers who cheat the consumer—CDN. The 105,000 students who sat the two GCE (Advanced) examinations under two different syllabuses will have to wait indefinitely for their results following investigations by the Bribery Commissioner's Department into the case of the attorney-at-law having allegedly accepted a bribe of Rs. 20,000 is over—CDN. President J. R. Jaye-

wardene has detailed a Police cum Army operation to crack down on those who are raping forests and posing a serious threat to the country's environment; Sri Lanka's forest cover has dwindled from the required 20-25 per cent to nine per cent of the total land mass, the Government has learnt; the indiscriminate clearing of forests and particularly the illicit felling of timber, environmentalists have warned may cause serious geographical problems—SU. World Bank specialists have advised the CTB not to recruit more employees; a top CTB official said that a recent survey has revealed that there are over 3,000 excess workers in the CTB. The Food Stamp system has become a big muddle and co-operatives are facing an acute shortage of cash; the government has not drawn up a scheme to convert stamps into cash and the co-operative sales are full of stamps—ATH.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9: Bio-gas plants are to be set up in all model villages and aided self-help housing schemes which are now being established in various parts of the country under a program launched by the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa; the Ceylon Electricity Board, will undertake the setting up of these units following a directive issued by the Prime Minister. Fourteen trained and experienced men have resigned from the People's Bank during the last three months—July to September this year; the People's Bank is the second State sponsored commercial bank which faces the problem of an exodus of personnel from its service; the other is the Bank of Ceylon. The results of the 75,000 candidates who sat at the last April GCE A-level examination will be released on schedule—within a fortnight from now, an Education Ministry spokesman said yesterday. Jaffna's Government Agent, Mr. Yogendra Duraiswamy addressing a number of receptions and meetings in the Jaffna district recently told the people of the North that they will have only themselves to blame if they do not join the mainstream of national development taking place all over the country. The National Film Exhibitors Guild (NFEG) has complained against the high rates of film hire levied by the State Film Corporation—CDN. The CID which is assisting the Bribery Commissioner's Department has stumbled on the possibility that some students with bogus marks could already be in the seven universities

as it has been established that the marking 'fraud' exposed recently has been going on for two to three years; this has been revealed following investigations into the case of the Attorney-at-law, who is an examiner, now in remand for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs. 20,000 from a GCE (Advanced) level student as a gratification to give him increased marks—CDM. Government is likely to increase the price of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) shortly. Saudi Arabia has agreed that its grant of US \$ 50 million (Rs. 750 million) to Sri Lanka should be immediately committed to either a water supply or power project. The Ministry of Education was yesterday debating whether to proceed with the correcting of answer scripts or suspend the two GCE advanced level examinations held in April and August this year—SU. Shri Jayaprakash Narain expired in the early hours of Monday at the North Indian town of Patna; India is mourning his death for seven days; the last rights will be performed today with state honours at Patna.—DP.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10: Pakistan has decided to import at least 15 per cent of its requirements of tea from Bangladesh according to reports reaching the tea trade here; this decision taken last week will not, however, adversely affect Sri Lanka's tea exports to Pakistan. The Final Report of the NEDECO Consultants, appointed by the World Bank to assist in formulating an Implementation Strategy Study, will be out soon; an interim report of the Accelerated and the long term Mahaweli scheme had been prepared and published by the NEDECO Consultants prior to the Aid Consortium Meeting in May 1979 official sources said. The Land Reform Commission had already paid out over Rs. 3 million in settlement of claims regarding unlawful take-over of movables, including tractors, vehicles and furniture, in the initial stages of the implementation of the LRC Act by the last government—CDN. The President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene will open the first stage of the big silk weaving project at Agalawatte on Friday; this will be the first big industrial project that will be sited at a raw material producing area.—CDM. Shareholders of rupee companies are to directly receive a percentage of the compensation payable to the companies, in terms of amendments to the Land Reform Law, the Chairman of the

Land Reform Commission said yesterday.—SU. Serious doubts have been raised about the adequacy of the country's highways system to cope with the ever expanding transport fleet which is taking an increasingly heavy toll of the roads. A World Bank team which was in Sri Lanka earlier this year focused attention on this problem—CO.—DP. The Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration Mr. D. P. I. P. S. Siriwardene said that it is difficult to fulfil the policies of the government to communicate with Tamil-speaking people all over the island at the same time due to the shortage of translators—VK.

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OUTCRY IN U.K.

Down With Bureaucrats

by Jo Grimmond

This article appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, London, on April 23, 1979. It was entitled "A Liberal View: Down with Bureaucrats" With the current interest in bureaucracies and bureaucrats in Sri Lanka this article will be of interest to readers in this country.

PRESERVE US from the Callaghan Complacency. To hear dear old Uncle Jim talk you would think he was blind to what goes on under his nose and deaf to the complaints of the public from which Ministers are increasingly isolated. Social contracts, compacts, concordats have become a joke. Even while he speaks, new strikes are called and new pay claims far in excess of 10 per cent. lodged and too often granted. Meanwhile the serfs, which is what some Socialist Ministers appear to think they are, cry for some relief from government, from regulations, from not only the weight but the intolerable muddle of taxation. Uncle Jim talks as though heaven would break out on earth if inflation were reduced to 10 per cent. You don't need to be a mathematical genius to work out what 10 per cent, annual loss in value would do to the £ in your pocket. People are worried about rising prices, about education, about the waste and incompetence they see on every side. Yet all the Govern-

ment does is to promise more of the same medicine.

SOCIALISM has lost all idealism. Social Democrats who used to tell us they believed above all things in equality now seize the highest paid jobs available. We have Government arms salesmen—how the ghosts of the capitalist “merchants of death” so righteously denounced by socialists must be laughing. The sale of arms seems the only discernible object of Socialist foreign policy. Socialists, so far from breaking the old boy network, appoint their friends and backers to more and more posts in their ever extending empires. No wonder British industry and finance creaks when so many of its top posts are filled with men of no experience and often little ability.

The Socialist party is now in the hands of State socialists. They promote the Corporate State, “corporatism” being the polite word for fascism. Just as because to accuse anyone of “striking” would be to wound their delicate sensibilities we must speak of “industrial action”, so no one must mention fascism, but the fascist, bureaucratic or Corporate State is what modern Socialists are creating.

Bureaucratic blight is the deadly disease from which we suffer. It has spread like Dutch elm disease leaving desolation in its wake. It goes far beyond the Civil Service; indeed many civil servants do not suffer from it. It is the disease which makes people judge their fellow citizens not as friends, neighbours, human beings but according to the role they play. As the disease creeps on, everyone will be press-ganged into an association or trade union. They will obey the dictates of that association, however silly or immoral. They will look to it to push them up the ladder of a “career structure” however stupid or idle they may be.

The object of each association is not to serve the public or do a good job. It is to serve its own interests and those of its hierarchy. No criticism of the association is permitted. The members need take no pride in it (indeed who could take any pride in NUPE?) They must abandon all of what used to be called professional standards. They must never admit to having enough, far less suggest that they might take less, or work longer, or be better employed. “Always demand more

money and a bigger empire” is the motto of the true bureaucrat. If there is resistance, twist the public’s arm at a time it will hurt most.

The bureaucrat is deeply conscious of the pecking order. He particularly likes payment in kind, perks, provided cars (nowadays even provided clothes), conferences, free jaunts, and above all conformity. As he is always spending other people’s money, economy is of no interest. Indeed he accepts waste as a prestige symbol, preferring to sweat in an over-heated office rather than turn the heating off. But surrender to democracy does not suit everyone. In politics the collapse of the social democrats has left a void. If you are looking for new political ideas on the Left and are not content to be a statistics or apparatchik in a bureaucracy, where do you turn? Most probably to one of the numerous Marxist sects. They are frankly anti-democratic. If they were to become the only new thought on the Left, that would be the end of democracy.

THAT IS THE REASON why it is so vital that Liberalism should prosper, offering an alternative Left or progressive ideology, an ideology descended from John Stuart Mill, the co-operators, guild socialists and earlier sociologists such as those who built the garden cities. It should in fact stand for democracy as against bureaucracy: for the dispersal of power against its concentration, for the community against the State, for industrial co-operation against fascism and for the free market against State monopoly.

Democracy, which is far more than majority rule, entails treating men and women as ends in themselves—not members of an association or people with this diploma or that. It means respecting their freedom of action and encouraging non-conformity as against forcing everyone into one mould. Political power does not reside at Westminster to be “devolved in dribblets downwards. It resides in the people, to be delegated by them for some purposes to their representatives.

All men and women cannot of course be made equal but if each community is encouraged to develop its own potential then communities can be made more equal. Co-operatives give the worker a stake in his work, they stimulate efficiency, they interest

their members in their success. (An extraordinary feature of British trade unions is that they take little or no interest in the efficiency or profitability of the undertakings from which their members get their living). The free market guarantees the public against exploitation and offers the maximum choice to as many people as possible. I believe too that an alternative strategy for progressives would call a halt to the proliferation of social services and payments for this, that and the other and bring in a national minimum income.

There should be plenty of room inside Liberal society for variety. I do not suggest therefore that all or even most industry should be turned over to co-operatives. But I do suggest that recent history confirms common sense in showing that the least efficient or satisfactory form of industrial organisation is the nationalised monopoly. The small business of various types is an infinitely better bet. Indeed I often think that moonlighting will eventually have to carry British Leyland until that dinosaur withers away.

It must be obvious too that the more people share in the free-enterprise market economy the more popular it will be. The more workers look to a share in the profits for a substantial part of their remuneration, the less inflation and more production we shall see. And the production of more goods which are wanted is the way to meet inflation. If we are to make full use of new technology then its benefits must be shared.

It is the bureaucratic attitude too, with its worship of size, waste and conformity, which is running the face of Britain.

Appalling pollution was caused in Shetland over three months ago yet no Minister came up to investigate. Thousands of sheep in one island were covered in oil. The Government did nothing. I got in touch with Unilever. They sent someone up within 10 days and produced drums of cleansing material and treated the matter with humanity and urgency—free of charge. The contrast between public authority apathy and private enterprise urgency is glaring.

I do not deny that for some objectives Liberals and Conservatives could co-operate. In fact I believe democratic parties will have

to co-operate. In the face of what is happening to the Labour party the threat to democracy must force the democratic parties together. West Germany has prospered under coalitions. Many people think, rightly I believe, that a hung Parliament for a time would be a good thing for a country sick of endless and harmful legislation and regulations.

But let me finish by saying two things. The best and most urgent step we can take to check the slide through fascism and bureaucracy to totalitarianism is by reforming the voting system to ensure that a Government representing only a small minority in the country does not ruin us. Secondly, the health of the country requires two nation-wide democratic parties to carry on a dialogue. It is vital to us all that the Liberal party replaces Labour as the alternative to Conservatism. A Liberal vote is not wasted, it is essential to our future.

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W A T E R

The Most Capricious Thing On Earth

WATER OCCUPIES a crucial place in nature as life would be impossible without it. The first cell developed in primitive seas and since then almost all chemical reactions in animal or plant cells take place in water or other liquid environments.

There is no other substance to be found in the world in such large quantities and in three states simultaneously; solid, liquid and gas. The total volume of the earth's water reserves is a staggering 1,386,000,000 cubic kilometers, if this total were spread out evenly over the earth's surface it would form a liquid blanket 3700 meters deep. (It's worth remembering that 71 percent of the human body is water).

Water is the simplest of compounds. It is made up of one oxygen and two hydrogen atoms. Nevertheless it remains one of the strangest of substances because its physical, chemical and biological properties are quite unique.

IT HAS BEEN PROVED that water has surprising qualities and unusual behaviour, precisely the qualities that allowed life on Earth to begin and flourish. According to chemists, because water is a compound of hydrogen it should boil at 80 degree Celsius and freeze at 100 degrees Celsius. As a result the liquid form should become steam at room temperature. (Just imagine how hot we would be if everything were boiling around us.) The strange behaviour of water—it boils at 100 degrees Celsius and freezes at 0 degrees Celsius—leads to the interesting conclusion that the presence of liquid and solid states of water on Earth is an anomaly, indeed.

Furthermore, water has another very abnormal property: it has a tendency to remain in a liquid state and its temperature does not change dramatically. A great deal of energy is required to transform it into ice or steam. So, when we chill a soft drink with ice, it isn't the ice that actually chills it, but rather the amount of heat the ice robs from the soft drink so it can melt, that makes the temperature of the soft drink drop.

In 1912, major newspapers throughout the world carried the news of a catastrophe: the HMS Titanic had sunk after colliding with an iceberg. In chemical terms the Titanic was a victim of one of water's anomalies, icebergs weighing thousands of tons float in water like corks.

Normally almost all liquids contract as they get cold and, as they become solids, they contract even more. Usually, a solid is denser than a liquid. Water is an exception. It is the only compound that expands as it solidifies. If it were to contract, ice would be heavier than water and would sink. Imagine what would happen if the polar ice cap instead of floating were to sink and build up on the ocean floor? Obviously not very good news for the human race.

There are eight new varieties of ice that have been discovered that are produced at pressures that reach 20,000 kilos per square centimeter and that are denser than water. Fortunately these ices have been developed only under laboratory conditions and don't exist in nature. Of all the marvellous qualities of water probably the least known is its property of creating an exceptionally resistant surface film, formed by the strong mutual

attraction of its surface molecules. The surface tensile strength of water is so great that things will float on it...even when they are heavier. You can try it yourself: place a coin, a needle or a razor blade carefully on the surface of a bucket full of water and you'll find that none of them sinks.

The lives of certain animals and insects is closely related to this surface film. For example, the water strider lives on the water surface and never submerges or goes on land. It can't crawl or swim; it can only skim along the surface on its outspread legs (like a skier on snow). Similarly, mosquito larvae, water beetles and some snails hang down from the water surface. Varieties of fish, such as Siamese fighting fish, make bubble nests on the underside of this film, lay their eggs and nourish their babies there until they're ready to swim. A long time ago scientists noticed that the cleaner the water, the harder it is to break through the surface. Clean water even if not completely pure (there are always impurities), is not strong as some steels. For example, if there were a really pure lake on the earth, people could walk or skate on it.

CHILDREN, and even adults, are sometimes overcome with a desire to eat ice. Is it actually tasty? Or is just child's play? No. It turns out to be quite complex.....

In a research laboratory, chickens had two feeders; one with regular water and one with chipped ice and melted ice. It was a very simple experiment, but the results were surprising. The chickens drank the regular water without any fuss, but flocked to the melted ice feeder. The chickens had a passion for it, as if the taste were very special. A month and a half later the test chickens were weighed and it turned out that those that had drunk the melted ice were much heavier than the others. What accounted for these marvellous properties of melted ice? Ice has a specific crystal structure. Regular water is also a liquid crystal. Their molecular structures follow very strict patterns, and the pattern is different in both. When ice melts it retains its earlier molecular structure for some time. As a result, while it looks like normal water it still has the molecular structure of ice. Due to this, the chemical activity of melted water seems to increase and it enters into a host of bio-chemical processes more easily than normal water.

Scientists also believe that the structure of the water in the bodies of living things is similar to that of ice. As a consequence normal drinking water has to be restructured before it can be assimilated. This would explain the secret cravings for ice and melted ice. Melted ice can be directly assimilated without undergoing a molecular transformation.

"So, don't be surprised if 50 years hence doctors prescribe melted ice for certain disease, or if it replaces regular drinking water. Obviously this is speculation, but this nuclear age we live in is full of surprise. We'll see.

—Courtesy: Marvpesca, Havana

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25 Years Ago

TRIBUNE, September 18, 1954

Robert Senanayake Did Not Know

Tribune, September 18, 1954

Dramatic developments are expected to develop from a letter which *Tribune* is able to reveal has been written by Mr. Robert Senanayake to the Registrar of Companies concerning a company which was mentioned in last week's issue of this paper. Readers will recall that one of the companies listed by our Special Investigator as one of those connected with Mr. Emil Savundranayagam was EASTERN TRADERS LTD. The letter relates to this company. The letter dated September 11, 1954 reads as follows: "Dear Sir, I have read a report in the issue of the *Tribune* dated September 11, 1954 in which a reference has been made to me as one of the Directors of the Eastern Traders Ltd. With a view to checking the correctness of this report, I have caused an examination of your file to be made and I am informed that my name has been submitted as a director of this company, and that the form containing the names has been registered by you in file No. PVS 852."

"I am now writing officially to inform you that the report in the *Tribune* was the first intimation I had that my name appears

on the list of directors of Eastern Traders Ltd. I would wish you to note that I disclaim being a director of this company. I would also wish to state that my consent was never sought or obtained for election as a director of Eastern Traders Ltd. I recall that the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Eastern Traders Ltd., was brought to my office at Ceylon Theatres by Mr. Cyril Gardiner and I was requested to sign these documents as one of the subscribers and I acceded to that request and duly signed the Memorandum and Articles of Association. My share-holding in this company was one Rs. 10/- share and there was no call for the payment of the money due on this share which up to date remains unpaid by me."

"I would also wish to add that I never attended any directors meeting of this company nor have I received notices of such meetings, or the copies of the minutes of such meetings or any other meetings that may have been held by this company. I am now very surprised to learn at this late stage that my name has been registered as a director of this company. I would, therefore, request you to be so good as to cause my name to be deleted from the list of Directors of Eastern Traders Ltd., for the reason that I have never consented nor agreed to be a director of this company. In this context, I think it is proper that I should point out that mistakes of this nature would not occur if the necessary provision exists for obtaining the written consent of persons whose names are submitted for registration as directors of a company. Yours faithfully, Sgd. R. P. Senanayake."

We believe that the Registrar of Companies has forwarded copies of this letter to the directors of the company, who are Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner, Mr. K. Mahendran, Mr. Cyril Gardiner, Mr. Sangarapulle Sellamuttu, Mr. Emil Savundranayagam and Mrs. Savundranayagam for their comments.

Mr. Robert Senanayake's letter contains a serious allegation against certain promoters of the Eastern Traders Ltd. In this connection we cannot too strongly endorse the last paragraph of Mr. Robert Senanayake's letter. The absence of a provision stipulating written consent of persons appointed or elected as directors is a major anomaly in our company law. Tomorrow we may have a heap of mushroom com-

panies filing returns with Cabinet Ministers and other VIPs as directors in order to use their names to business advantage. This anomaly must be remedied immediately.

Tribune will keep its readers informed of developments in the affairs of EASTERN TRADERS LTD., and its "parent" company TRANSWORLD ENTERPRISES LTD. Tribune may also be in a position to offer information about two partnerships, registered as business names by these two limited liability companies as partners entitled EASTERN ENTERPRISE and EASTERN ENTERPRISES.

x x x

SRI LANKA

A Green Desert

—in half a millenium—

by K. Kanapathipillai

RAPING OUR FORESTS

Sir,

I am sending an article on SRI LANKA — A GREEN DESERT IN HALF A MILLENIUM for publication in your valuable journal. At a time like the present when millions of cubit feet of very valuable 'first class' timber is being cut and taken away both by private, illicit 'poachers' and the State Timber Corporation from the Batticaloa and Amparai districts without any attempt being made by the exploiting agency to replant even a few saplings, I think this article might help to bring sanity to those who are responsible for this wanton destruction of the country's natural wealth.

The Batticaloa and Amparai districts are the poorer for it for timber that has taken hundreds of years to grow has been mercilessly cut and taken away without any form of reparation being made by a systematic programme of adequate replanting.

K. Kanapathypillai

52, Angle Road,
Batticaloa.
3rd October 1979

THIS APPEARS to be somewhat of a shocking caption for an article on the future prospects of a country's plant wealth: its natural vegetation. It is much more than a disconcerting commentary—a rather gloomy forecast. But facts will have to be faced, for they obtrude on our attention, and are so glaring and impinge so forcibly on the least potent of our powers of observation.

Events move; they are seldom stagnant, especially natural phenomena, since they assume a different phase every day, every season, every year, every century and every millenium.

Man, thinking and reflecting entity that nature has intended him to be, cannot afford to adopt an ostrich policy. He can only ill-afford to blindfold himself and obstruct his own vision when shocking and loud changes are taking place at every moment in Mother Nature's physiognomy—in the aspect of nature's features. They thrust themselves into the focus of consciousness of even the most casual and untrained of observers.

He can see for himself the beneficial changes that are brought about on him by a thick clump of plantain trees or any other luscious vegetation in his garden. It provides for him an ameliorating condition in the state of the weather and climate that is highly beneficial. It appears to have conspired with all the environmental factors—air, water, sunshine and soil conditions to produce what modern ecologists have called 'Micro-climate'. Despite the fact the general trend of events, in so far as weather and climate of a particular place are concerned, may be inhospitable—dry, grilling, hot, oppressive and stuffy—a plantain grove or a cluster of Gliricidia or Tabesia bushes in the open sun-bathed garden, does certainly prove to be a blessing. It helps to provide the 'green gloom' that one would yearn to have in such a scorching environment. A number of micro-climatic pockets, 'mini-oases', arranged in a reticulate pattern will certainly go a great way to improve the climate of an inhospitable and barren area. In the Jaffna peninsula, thanks to the untiring efforts of the Jaffna farmer, the presence of these mini-oases has a salutary effect on the entire peninsula, which, though dry, differs considerably from the rest of the dry zone. One seldom feels bored in being in the

rural areas there, for every clump of vegetation, has been carefully planned with the deepest concern and attention so as to enable it to yield the best of results in providing man's needs and in improving man's environment.

IN THE REST OF SRI LANKA, it would appear, from events relating to the exploitation of forest wealth, shifting cultivation and the hasty and ill-advised introduction of colonization schemes, that the primeval forest is, as often as not, being destroyed, and that the ancient verdure, will, in another five hundreds years or so, be lost for ever.

The trees so valuable and so umbrageous depart in flames, and no adequate steps are being taken to see to the re-clothing of the naked land, and to hide our crass ignorance on the subject of husbanding our forest resources. Although now and again frantic efforts, which are no other than sporadic attempts, have been made—at best they appear to have been made—to put a stop to the *destructive exploitation of forests*, no permanent state department, irrespective of the influence of political parties in power, has been set up to attend to this very pressing and impending national calamity.

It must be admitted, and we agree with E. A. Worthington when he says that: "*the condition of the forests affects directly or indirectly the water supplies, the fertility of the soil, fuel and timber supplies for domestic and industrial use, and the possibilities of agriculture for subsistence as well as for export.*" Forests play a major role in the economy of Sri Lanka, and they have become useful in various ways: e.g.:

*Economically they can supply some of the most valuable of cabinet timbers such as satin wood and ebony that can fetch a very high price in foreign markets.

*They conserve water, since they play the part of a gigantic sponge that absorbs and retains water in the soil.

*They conserve the soil, and help to maintain the fertility of the soil.

*They have a mitigating influence on the climate and help either to increase the rainfall or maintain the rainfall received at the optimum level possible.

Perhaps, the most valuable natural wealth that Sri Lanka may be said to possess to an appreciable extent and can boast of, is, her forest cover; and in this context emphasis has to be laid on the grim fact that once she loses this wealth, she cannot ever hope to regain it. *Deforestation will certainly spell the total crash of the country's economy.* It is with this cardinal theme in mind that the future mobilizers of the natural wealth of this country should set about their task of planning its economy; be it industrial or agricultural. Why in the name of goodness is this output in the absence of an input? Why this exploitation in the absence of an adequate and planned feedback? Is it not bad economy—bad management of the wealth of our home?

NOW, HAVING REALIZED the correct magnitude and true significance of this stupendous task, it may be asked: How can the State set about resolving this problem? First of all they have to find out how, up to now, man has been interfering with his natural environment, and what ill-effects such interference has had on silviculture. We shall call this the unplanned, wanton, destructive exploitation of forests and other forms of greenery. Under this head we may include the following operations:—

*Uncontrolled heavy cutting of forest timber trees and demolition of forests going on at an alarming rate.

*Destruction of scrub jungle for faggots, fire-wood, fence sticks, broom sticks, wattles, rattan, wicker etc.

*Wanton destruction of forest for shifting cultivation or 'chenas'.

*Covering up and filling up of swamps and marshes for the purpose of reclaiming cultivable land.

*Combing the jungle for medicinal herbs and poisonous plants.

*Tampering with pasture by permitting cattle to over-graze on it and close-crop it.

Here is an instance. If one travels from Pottuvil to Kataragama, and thence to Ambalantota via Wellawaya one will be painfully impressed with the curse of the evil effects of heavy cutting of timber trees and the demolition, for colonization purposes, of useful

and valuable jungle cover that once formed an interminable sea of green. Perhaps similar, if not worse, scenery may be met with in the North Central, Northern, Eastern and North Western Provinces. The writer has been reliably informed that thousands of rupees worth of valuable first class timber is being cut and spirited away along the Pottuvil-Wellawaya route, and that some of the unconscionable guardians of our forest reserves are making hay while the sun shines. The raping of the forests is going on at a terrific rate despite the fact there are very stringent laws in our statute books aimed at safeguarding our forests. But due to the lukewarmness of the guardians of our laws and those who execute them they are as much violated as observed. If this sort of insidious and sordid practice were to be condoned and suffered to continue, all the valuable dryzone forests will soon be divested of their first class timber trees. Besides, such inroads have been made into the otherwise impenetrable jungle that there will come a time when they will turn

out to be timber extorting highways. The people of this country will, in the near future, be compelled to face the irrevocable consequences of the destruction of very valuable forests. *It is all up with our forests.*

In the same alarming rate at which first class timber is being exploited in Sri Lanka's dry zone forests, *the devastation of scrub jungle*, which is only a phase of the forest cover that has already been mercilessly ravaged, is going on in the neighbourhood of our villages where the people depend for their supply of faggots, firewood, fence sticks etc. on the adjoining shrubbery. This would mean that the 'micro-climate' of the village, which, to a considerable extent, has been determined by the contiguous vegetation, will soon get disturbed and change for the worse. This is a fact the baneful implications of which are very little known to the village folk who seldom or never appreciate the necessity of measures which involve a curtailment of their fringe and immediate benefits.

FORESTS

IS IT NOT TRUE that Minister Gamini Dissanayake has announced some excellent measures to stop the rape of our remaining forests which deserve the fullest measure of public support and the topmost priority even to the extent of setting up a special office in Colombo to which complaints and petitions can be directed so that immediate action can be taken? That the public must be encouraged to send in news of all attempts at illegal fellings? That there is no doubt that it would be difficult to deal with miscreants as it was during the last regime? That timber contractors pursue and woo MPs for timber permits? That MPs bark at Kachcheri and other officials? That the MPs win the day and Contractors get the permits, rape the forests and make money? That it will be interesting to see whether the Minister and the Government will deal with these MPs to save our forest? That Sinharaja in 1970-77 is a joke compared to what is happening today (e.g. in the Anuradhapura district among others)?

EVEN THE STATE appears to be more bent than the people on making revenue by the uncurbed licencing and the exploitation of the scrub jungles for the supply of fence sticks and brush—wood for betel, snake-gourd and other vegetable plots. In this respect Mr. A. J. W. Hornby had this to say as far back as 1923: "As the population increases and the available areas of forest decreases, the results will be more and more serious and yet the forest areas are the only reserves on which agriculture can draw for its expansion". This is a matter that merits the most careful attention of our town and village planners; for, every village or even urban settlement, should have one or more micro-climate mini-oases that would help to maintain the climate at the optimum level. Landscaping is perhaps that aspect of town and country planning that has to be given due attention; and every occupant of our villages and towns should be so educated as to appreciate the aesthetic and micro-climatological value of designing their own characteristic landscape vegetation. Every umbrageous tree, every single bush, every shrub, every liana, every pool and pond and puddle, every rock and every beck, and every park and every paddock, should be so sited and so 'licked into shape' and trimmed and

laid out as to give the entire village or township a face-lift and a feature of its own: something peculiar to and characteristic of the environment. In fact every human settlement, be it rural or urban, should have a distinct facies, and plant life helps to enhance the aesthetic aspect of man's settlements. Shouldn't we, in pursuing this matter, take our cue from the English and Japanese rural folk who take considerable pride in maintaining the peculiar æsthetic physiognomy of their towns and cities and hamlets.

In maintaining our flora unhampered and uninterfered with by man the subject of *shifting cultivation* deserves special attention. It is perhaps the most devastating contribution that man has been making in Sri Lanka to the demolition of his environment. This practice had been the mainstay of village agriculture from very early times. Despite its many hazards it has been permitted to continue under the guise of '*Chena*' cultivation and colonization schemes, and timber exploitation by the State Timber Corporation. The dangers are manifold. Land brought under this system of agriculture is reduced practically to a sterile condition. Every year fierce annual firing of grass has destroyed the trees and the pollards and replaced them with coarse 'Mana' and 'Iluk' grass. The soil gets depleted of its manurial contents; and tends to get denuded, eroded and shifted. At first a firm sterile crust forms on the soil; then it gets desiccated; and the final stage is the transportation of the soil particles by wind, water and other weathering agents.

Hence, in areas where shifting cultivation has been practiced the destruction of forests has gone on beyond the safety and permissible limit. It is the ruinous stage of land utilization. In wet areas, however, as it is in our wet zone, where the dry season is limited, *shifting cultivation changes virgin forest into scrub forest, and thence to a kind of bush or 'patana' vegetation.* But it must be borne in mind that the dry-zone monsoon forests have already been completely shorn of valuable forest trees by shifting cultivation that had been in practice in the Pottuvil—Wella-waya—Ambalantota triangle. When reafforestation is not carefully and prudently managed by bare land being replanted with suitable vegetation-shelter-belts the outcome will be

rather disastrous, resulting in an irrevocably parched and sun-baked landscape tending towards the prevalence of semi-arid conditions; dwindling remnants of which may still be seen as 'Kalapuwās' and 'liwayās' and lagoons and sand dunes and bogs found all along the Western, Southern and Eastern Coastal belts.

THROUGHOUT THE CHEQUERED HISTORY of the cultivation of swamp rice in Sri Lanka, the story is often repeated, 'that the marshes and swamps have been successfully reclaimed and brought under cultivation. The swamps of the Madampe River, Kelani Ganga, Mahaweli Ganga, Kalu Ganga, Gin Ganga, Deduru Oya, Gal Oya and other rivers are typical examples of swamps and marshes that have been put to some use or other—swamp rice and sugar cane being two of the crops that can be successfully raised on them apparently with very little adverse effects on the climate, provided a micro-climatological network of green pockets are so designed, as to litter the area thus exploited.

The study and practice of the Ayurvedic system of medicine in Sri Lanka have been obtaining from very early times. Perhaps this system of medicine, entailing the use of medicinal herbs, has had a great vogue in the past thousand years or even more; and as such, Ayurvedic practitioners, especially those belonging to the Buddhist clergy, and Hindu 'pariharis' and 'Vedharalais' have been combing the jungles for medicinal and poisonous herbs and trees. This practice, where very little effort has been made at maintaining nurseries and conservatories, might have led to the disappearance and even extinction of some of our very rare official herbs, trees and shrubs such as 'pei-pudol' (wild snake-gourd), Rose periwinkle (*vinca rosea*), *Hydnocarpus* (*Makkilu-T*) and 'kaka palai' (*Gelonium*); only two exceptions among our poisonous plants, namely, *cerbera* (*kaduru*) and *Nux vomica* (*strinch-nine*) have not gone extinct, nor do they appear to face extinction. Hence lest our very rare and valuable officinal plants become extinct it is the bounden duty of the State to have them cultivated in specially maintained conservatories or natural reserves.

Since there are no proper pastures and grazing commons for cattle, they have been allowed to graze in jungle clearings and what

may be called park-lands; and in consequence continuous close-cropping has led to the ruination of commons of pasturage. It is time that we in Sri Lanka made a special study of the subject of pasture cover, since a well-maintained grass cover crop arrests soil erosion especially when stoloniferous, rhizomatous and soil-binding strains like the elephants grass are planted. In addition, these cover crops become drought resistant and also help to bind the soil. For this purpose *Digitaria* grass which is rich in minerals, protein and carbohydrates may be successfully tried out on our 'patanas', and elephant grass on our 'talawas'—dry zone parklands.

(To be continued)



WATER RESOURCES BOARD—1

What's Wrong With It?

by A *Tribune* Investigator

Drought has devastated many areas in Sri Lanka in recent years. Even parts of the once luscious coconut triangle have been badly affected. The story of the lack of water in many areas in the island has been told many times. So also the fact that groundwater exists in plenty in nearly all parts of the country.

In this connection it is pertinent to refer to an article in the *Reader's Digest* of June 1979 entitled *Mother of A Thousand Wells* written by Romy Pabel. It said: "In 1965, India suffered one of the worst droughts in its history. Green fields turned into wastelands and what few wells there were dried up. 'In God's name, help us!' Sister Baptista, a Dutch missionary stationed at Nandanagar on the outskirts of Indore, wrote in a letter to the Dutch aid organisation NOVIB. 'It is horrible to watch helplessly as thousands of hapless natives perish of hunger and thirst all around you.'

"The letter was to have an effect that is still multiplying today. For Sister Baptista, 'Mother of a Thousand Wells,' as the Indians call her, is the initiator of a remarkable irrigation project that is saving the region's population from hunger and disease, has brought employment to the area and is providing the people with a model village filled with new structures.

"Her cry for help came at the height of the worldwide Food for India campaign. Pope Paul VI, UNICEF, UNESCO, church and secular charitable societies everywhere were calling upon all mankind to come to the aid of the starving Indians. The Dutch Television Network was broadcasting a series of documentaries about the catastrophe and had scheduled a program for Saturday, February 19, on which political and church officials were to appeal to the public for donations....."

"At the close of the program, van Westerlo asked Sister Baptista what she needed most urgently. 'A water pump and a man', she answered spontaneously. As the resulting laughter died down she qualified her request: the man was for operating the pump, and by a pump she meant a well-boring rig. The region's chronic water shortage had kept agriculture at a submarginal level, and prevented industrial development....."

"Then, on February 22, three days after the memorable broadcast, the Dutch newspaper *De Tijd* reported: 'Sister Baptista is to get the well rig for which she asked her countrymen on Saturday's TV program.' Of the money collected, NOVIB had set aside \$ 409,000 for the purchase of appropriate equipment. On May 3, well-boring master Dr. Frank Braadbaart and a hydrologist were flown to India for an on-site survey.

"Several days later, their report arrived in Amsterdam: 'Prospects for drilling are favorable.' On May 9, 1966, NOVIB bought a 33-foot-tall US-made boring tower with compressor from a French firm in Le Havre. On May 15, the rig arrived in Bombay. Two days later, at a depth of 984 feet, the boring bit struck water, which gushed to the surface in a strong stream. An enthusiastic crowd of children joyously splashed in the small lake that formed. Indian women hastily caught the precious liquid in pails and water pitchers, fearful lest the well immediately dry up. It is still gushing today....."

This was in 1966.

"I visited Sister Baptista at Nandanagar in the summer of 1976. Everything at the social welfare center sparkles with proverbial Dutch cleanliness. 'The water pumps—we have four of them now—are a heavenly blessing,' says Sister Baptista. 'Our fields can now

be irrigated even during periods of drought, with the results that crops are better and there's less hunger. The sudden abundance of water allowed Sister Baptista to press on with new projects. Near the center she founded a leper colony, ISHAWA, where about 250 of these outcasts currently live. Since even cured lepers are not accepted by existing communities, the energetic nun's next step was to set up a building fund and start a new village. So far, 20 blocks of six little houses have sprung up of which one houses a cured leper family and the remaining five, other families. There is also an outpatient hospital, where Brother Henry—a Missionary of the Divine World—and trained native nurses look after well over 3000 patients.....

"As I looked at the roses and hibiscus that were blooming everywhere, Sister Baptista pointed across the land: it is dotted with tiny pumphouses, each sitting astride a nearly drilled well. More than 1000 have been completed. Indian specialists have now replaced the Dutch engineers who trained them and the drilling rig has moved further into Indore Province. And with the water have come new jobs. Farming families sell surplus produce from their now-fertile fields. Local farmers come daily to the farm the social welfare center owns to be taught new techniques by an Indian engineer. And Industrial development is growing."

The Indore region receives far less rain than Sri Lanka—and over the centuries billions of gallons of underground water has undoubtedly been stored beneath the upper crusts of our soil. This underground water is also more easily replenished here by a bountiful nature than in other places—by two monsoons at that.

In spite of this, many parts of Sri Lanka, are becoming desertified. The Water Resources Board, allegedly in charge of this work, to all intents and purposes, appears to be dead or moribund.

Why?

Can anything be done to activate it?

A Water Resources Unit had been in existence as part of the Irrigation Department for many years. It is reputed to have carried out "investigations" for many years, but did not get round to exploiting groundwater. The

last Government set up the Water Resources Board (WRB) as an advisory Board. But it did nothing to make an effective breakthrough on the groundwater front.

The UNP, after it came to power in July 1977 reorganised the Water Resources Board with grandiloquent promises. The present WRB seems to have carried on in the same way as the superceded Water Resources unit of the Irrigation Department and the Advisory WRB of the SLFP—"investigating" until the skies fall down with no attempt at fruitful exploitation.

With all the mighty resources of the Sri Lanka government, the WRB has not even done tiny fraction of what Sister Baptista has been able to achieve in Indore with just one well-boring rig.

Has anyone wondered whether there is groundwater in the areas in our island where the coconut trees are dying in thousands today? Our information is that there is groundwater and that the coconut trees need not have been allowed to die. Who is responsible for this situation? The WRB, or the Coconut Board or the Coconut Minister?

But what is holding up the WRB, which is in overall charge of finding and exploiting groundwater? What's wrong with it?

Tribune will attempt to answer these and connected questions in a series of articles.



SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT—2

● Gramodaya ● Nagarodaya

by Devaratnam Danforth

VERY NEARLY 85% of our country's total population live in the villages. Understandably therefore the Movement's main thrust so far has been directed at the rural sector. This is called **GRAMODAYA** or Village Awakening.

I am reminded of an exquisite piece written by Rabindranath Tagore in which he describes villages, a description that cannot be excelled. "In their keeping is the cradle of the race. They are in closest touch with the fountain of life. They provide people with food and joy and the simple poetry of life, and with those inner ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produces and in which she finds delight".

They are nearly 3000 Gramodaya Centres throughout the country. The activities are geared to local resources and local needs. These include: **Pre-schools.** Children under 5 years are brought to these schools by the parents and are cared for by Sarvodaya trained Sevikas. They are given freshly laundered clothes for wear during the time they spend in the school. They are not taught in the conventional manner—for instance reading or writing. They are too young for such an exercise. Stories are related while they are also helped to sing and dance. In addition they are helped to acquire healthy personal habits. In the evenings the parents take them to their homes.

Youth Groups:— Older children up to the age of 14 are provided opportunities to meet, read newspapers and participate in cultural, religious and sports activities.

Mothers Groups:— This group consists of the mothers of children who participate in the activities of the Centre. They are initiated into the teaching techniques of pre school teaching. Elements of personal hygiene and nutrition are explained to them.

Vocational training in Carpentry, Mat Weaving, Masonry, Batik, Bamboo, Agricultural Dairy Farming, Light Engineering, Woodwork, Brick making, Printing, Beedi Making, Packing of spices and Bag making is given at the Centres in addition to other possible handicrafts. The objective in vocational training is to help participants to set up in self-employment in course of time. In our country where the level of school drop outs and non school goes in high, the opportunities thus provided in vocational training under the Gramodaya programme is most beneficial in the rural areas.

Planning for these rural areas is formulated by the people of the areas themselves based on their perception of their own perceived needs and the resources available to them locally. The primary responsibility for the implementation rests also solely with the people participating in the Gramodaya exercise.

THE CO - ORDINATOR at each Gramodaya Centre is a Sarvodaya trained Sevika. The participating members of each project are exposed to the local problems and helped to identify and harness the potential resources in the area—the objective being the satisfaction of at least some of the Ten Basic Needs defined

by the Movement. In any exercise of this nature it seems that some guidelines which come to my mind and which I describe below may also be helpful, in addition to the guidelines already defined by the Movement itself. (a) provide opportunity to understand the requirements and dynamics for eradicating poverty and squalor through an integrated process; (b) promote self-reliance; (c) study how effectively to mobilise and organise rural people; (d) co-ordinate with the central and local government agencies and departments.

An extremely successful Gramodaya project is the Tanamalwila Development Education Institute and Farms. This is a 500 acre settlement area where the main activity is agriculture. The Sarvodaya Quarterly Report for the first quarter of 1978 states "that the highest income earned during this season is from this settlement area of fifty two youths". This project has attracted much attention.

NAGARODAYA. Until last year the Movement has not started work in the urban areas. In 1978, at the request of the Ceylon Social Service League which had been functioning in the City from 1912 at Deans Road, Maradana the Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya took over the management of the League's activities. This programme is called Nagarodaya or City Awakening.

THE PROBLEMS IN A CITY are different from those that surface in rural areas. A programme of work designed for a City cannot without modification be super imposed upon a rural community. It is a fact that consequent on the push and pull effect, more and more people are drawn to the city. There was a time when urban policy was determined by the interests of a minority of people. This is no longer possible when the fabric of the city population has dramatically changed in texture. The task now is to create conditions of living suitable for all—even for the most deprived segment.

The Nagarodaya Centre with the office at Dean's Road, Maradana, is responsible, under supervision of Sarvodaya Headquarters, for the management of the Day Care Centres at Mutwal, Maligakande and Kompanniveediya. Pre-schools, Youth Groups and Mothers Groups are run here on the same lines as the Gramodaya schemes. It is understood that the possibility of starting vocational training programmes

is receiving the consideration of the Movement. This Centre will naturally be a Pilot Project and the lessons of experience learned here will determine the scope of other Nagarodaya Centres.

With the rapid progress achieved by many countries, the number of cities in the world has grown. In the 19th century, there were only three cities—London, Paris and Tokyo—with over a million inhabitants. Today this number has risen to around 125. Thus the problem of meeting the needs of cities has assumed a very important dimension that cannot be ignored. The City of Colombo faces tremendous problems with the population very near the million mark. It is here that one meets the harshest living conditions that poverty can impose upon a human being. Cities are de-humanised and de-personalised. Hardly anyone finds the time to think of his brother. In this context the potential for the Nagarodaya programme in the City of Colombo is great. This is recognised by the Movement and the index of its concern is the acceptance of responsibility for the management of the Day Care Centres.

The 23rd Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities was held in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg in September, 1977. The theme of that was "Improving the quality of life—a challenge to local authorities". Dr. Walter Scheel, President of the Federal Republic of Germany in the course of his address asked the question "What really is the quality of life"? Answering the question himself Dr. Scheel said: "To give a definition is certainly not easy. I am myself not able to provide a convincing answer. But I do think that the quality of life would not be equated—as has long been done—with increasing material prosperity.....The search for a quality of life is very much a search for self-confidencewherever possible the thinking should include the great historical and spiritual traditions of City cultures".

Thus the task will be determined by man's long-term social needs. A better quality of life can become an attainable goal only through citizen participation through governmental and voluntary agencies. All programmes under the Sarvodaya umbrella are honed to achieve his objective while at the same time not

condition and release the citizen from the insufferable pain of poverty and hunger.

THE WELFARE of any City or Village depends largely on the sense of responsibility of the citizens. All Voluntary Associations are dedicated to the achievement of this objective. Programmes are designed to further this. External circumstances and material conditions may do much to improve the quality of life, but by themselves they are not adequate to ensure this. Much more is required. Well being is also a question of justice, freedom, personal relations and opportunities for self-development. Voluntary Organisations have a big part to play in building human beings—an integrated whole personality.

I am reminded of a story I have heard often. A father was deeply absorbed in the book he was reading. His little son constantly disturbed him. Thinking how he could keep the little chap quiet he hit upon, what he thought was a remarkable idea. He pulled out a map of the world and tore it up into several pieces, gave them to the son and asked him to put them together. Having done so he got back to his book. The child was back very soon, much sooner than expected and proudly presented the remade map of the world. Nonplussed the father asked "How did you do it so soon, Son"? "Well dad, there was the picture of a man at the back. I put him together and I got the map of the World".

In like manner the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and other Voluntary Organisations are all helping to put man together. Once this is achieved the righteous society we are all trying to build cannot be far off.

X X X X

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

Official Exchange Rates of Commercial Banks to their customers for Telegraphic Transfers fixed on Tuesday this week were as follows:—

CURRENCY	PER 100 UNITS	
	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1565.50	Rs. 1568.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 3365.75	Rs. 3371.75
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 868.30	Rs. 869.90
French Franc	Rs. 370.45	Rs. 371.15
Japanese Yen	Rs. 6.6830	Rs. 6.6980
Indian Rupees	Rs. 192.00	Rs. 192.40

SUMMIT: First Day

by S. P. Amarasingam

On Monday, September 3, at 10.25 a.m., President of Sri Lanka, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene who was Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement for the last three years, declared the Sixth Summit officially opened and called on Fidel Castro, President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba, to deliver the opening address.

The meeting started 25 minutes behind schedule because President Jayewardene gave time to late-comers and others who insisted on greeting and talking to old friends on the floor of the auditorium to settle down in their seats. Turning to the Cuban leader, Mr. Jayewardene said, "On behalf of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries allow me to express my congratulations and my best wishes to the Government and the people of Cuba and to their leader, His Excellency President Fidel Castro. I am conveying the feelings of this Assembly when I express our profound debt of gratitude and appreciation to the Republic of Cuba for its generous hospitality, warm friendship and excellent preparation for this meeting."

Representatives of 94 states and national liberation movements were present at the opening of the 6th Summit Conference—the largest ever—at the Palace of Conventions in Havana. Fidel Castro spoke for one hour and twenty five minutes. It was frequently interrupted by applause. Fidel began his speech by recalling the memory of Houari Boumedienne, the late President of Algeria, who was one of the most firm and enthusiastic promoters of the policy of non-aligned and who was chairman of the Movement from 1973 to 1976.

At the conclusion of Fidel Castro's speech, Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Van Dong walked up to the rostrum and threw his arms around Fidel. Then he greeted Kurt Waldheim, who was sitting with the Presidents of Cuba and Sri Lanka and Ricardo Alarcon, Cuban deputy minister of foreign affairs. As chairman of the Movement, Mr. Jayewardene congratulated Fidel for what he described as "an inspired speech" and proposed that the text be included

as an official document of the Conference. His proposal was accepted by general acclamation.

This was followed by speeches by representatives of the regional groups, expressing their gratitude to the host country. Africa was represented by Kenneth Kaunda, president of Zambia; Asia, by Ziaur Rahman, president of Bangladesh; Latin American by Aristides Royo president of Panama; Europe, by Spyros Kyprianou, president of Cyprus; and the national liberation movements by Oliver Tambo, president of the African National Congress of South Africa.

No sooner the speeches by the regional representatives was over, the Egyptian delegate, Foreign Minister Boutros Ghali, asked the chair to allow him to exercise his right to reply to Fidel's critical remarks about the Camp David Accords and Egypt's Treaty with Israel since he considered that "Egypt was in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle". Mr. Jayewardene told Ghali that he would be given the floor in due time (Egypt was on the agenda) and that the inauguration of the Conference was not the proper moment to make a statement on a point of order. He also said that as his mandate would be ending within a very short time he would convey the Egyptian delegate's request to the new chairman "I want an assurance from you that he would give me the right to reply" Ghali demanded. Mr. Jayewardene said that he could give no such assurance, but said that he was sure he would be given a chance to say what he wanted.

At 1.45 p.m. the chairman called a two-hour recess.

Before carefully examining and analysing the speeches of Fidel Castro, President Jayewardene and other speakers that day, it would be helpful to readers to set down the notes I had made that evening. That is what I had written.

"In his inaugural address President Fidel Castro paid a handsome tribute to Sri Lanka. He said, 'Mr. Chairman, Junius Jayewardene, I would like to express my sincere recognition of your constant concern for the future of our movement and democratic respect for the dissimilar components of this powerful association of countries and wise prudence you have shown in a very very difficult situation our non-aligned countries have had to face

in the past three years—which have not been easy. In spite of distance and economic problems your small country has made a noble and worthy effort to live up to the honourable responsibilities entrusted to it in Colombo.'

"Castro's was a fighting and militant speech for political freedom and economic emancipation. He named names and named countries and in the end he said, 'perhaps this speech inaugurating this conference has been somewhat undiplomatic, not quite in line with protocol, but no one should doubt the complete sincerity with which I have spoken.' Right through the speech he had stressed that Cuba would adhere to non-aligned principles. 'We have worked tirelessly to create the material and political conditions to make this event a success. We have respected and we will continue to respect the rights of all members of the movement. We have fully and scrupulously fulfilled our duties as host country and will continue to do so. Our views will not always coincide with those of each and every one of you. We have many close friends at this conference, but we don't always agree with the best of them. We hope that everyone will speak out with the greatest freedom and honesty and feel that he is being heard with respect, and consideration. The combined experience of all of us gathered here can produce tremendous results. Certain topics are controversial and certain words may seem strong. If anything we say displeases anyone, please understand that we do not mean to hurt or wound. We will work with all member countries—without exception—to achieve our aims to implement agreements that are adopted. We will be patient flexible, calm. Cuba will observe these norms throughout the years in which it presides over the movement. I declare this categorically.' *Arab, African and Latin American journalists and delegations with whom I am in touch say that they have nothing to complain about Cuba's conduct so far.*

"There is not the slightest doubt that Castro's speech was a masterpiece of strategy. He made the Palestinian issue the main and central issue before the conference—he dismissed Kampuchea with a few words. The anti-Cuba and pro-Western lobby had tried to make the Kampuchean issue the central issue and thereby put Cuba and Vietnam on the mat. Castro has now won the hearts and support

of all Arab states—except Egypt of course—and a very large number of African states.

"This has put Yugoslavia into a fix because it cannot seek to ignore the Palestinian issue. About Camp David he said: 'the Camp David agreement is a flagrant betrayal of the Arab cause and of the Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian—all Arab peoples including the Egyptians. It is a betrayal of progressive peoples of the world. true peace can never be built on such injustice and such a machiavellian policy, such betrayal and flimsy bases. Instead of one gendarme for the Middle East, the Arab world and Africa, imperialism now wants two: Israel and Egypt if peace really exists between Egypt and Israel, why does Egypt need all the weapons it is getting—even though they aren't as sophisticated and modern as the ones that are going to the Israelis? How will these arms be used, except against the peoples in the area, including the Egyptians themselves. the Movement of the Non-aligned countries should roundly denounce the Camp David Agreement.'".

"To make matters easier to win Arab sympathy, the Egyptian representative, no sooner Castro had concluded his speech, rose to a point of order and demanded that he heard. Mr. Jayewardene who was presiding at that time said he would have his opportunity at the appropriate time when the Egyptian issue came up for debate—it is an item on Agenda. Not satisfied, Ghali raised the matter when the afternoon sessions began when Jayewardene was due to make his statement and Castro who had been inducted as Chairman gave him the floor.

"Boutros Ghali made a spirited defence, of Sadat and Egypt but he raised a hornets nest. Several Arab states spoke on this point of order and damned Egypt. A large number of African states including Madagascar, which had been expected to back Egypt, criticised the Camps David agreement. Latin American delegation attacked Egypt. Asia was generally silent except Iran and Vietnam. When this barrage was over—Castro called upon President Jayewardene to make his statement, two hours behind schedule because of the Egyptian intervention.

"President Jayewardene's references to Cuba were received with rounds of applause. 'The

people of Cuba have received us with warmth and affection.....we will do our best to help them in their work.....I am also happy to welcome Cuba to the Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement for the next three years. I wish to urge all members to co-operate with the new Chairman not only in making this conference useful and productive but also in ensuring that our founding principles are preserved and strengthened.'

"But what has won the hearts of the Cuban people are his words, 'we have all discovered, I am sure, that among your people you are affectionately known as *Companero*, a Spanish word which means a mixture of companion and comrade. Throughout your leadership of Cuba, your attitude—as seen in your writings, statements and interviews—has been that a nation's progress can be and must be achieved through ceaseless effort directed at bringing the greatest good to the greatest number. I am sure that at the end of our deliberations in Havana, and beyond, we will realise and remember that we are all *companeros*, despite those differences of approach and emphasis that are inevitable in a movement as large and diverse as ours.....'

"The general consensus among all the delegations I have met" mainly African and Latin American is that the speech was wise and statesmanlike in which he has taken an overview with the philosophical and cultural background of Sri Lanka. Though President Jayewardene did not use the cliches and terminology of the radical liberation movements of the day, the speech was welcomed because it supported the ideology of liberation in words that did not get into the polemics of the era. It is also regarded as a fitting statement from an outgoing chairman. African delegations are happy that he has extended support to the fight against racism and apartheid.

"There are of course the pro-Western enthusiasts who feel that the speech was weak because it did not chide Cuba for trying to push radicalism. An American correspondent said that Jayewardene should have spoken out against Vietnam vis a vis Kampuchea and also defended the Camp David agreement. Arab journalists had expected a much firmer support for the Palestinian cause but they realised that Jayewardene was only expounding the general principles on which the Non-

aligned Movement was based. A Latin American journalist said that though Jayewardene has not used the word 'imperialism' even once, the meaning of what he wanted to say was clear. In his speech he had drawn attention to the practice Sri Lanka had introduced of informal consultations as a prerequisite for consensus.....it is now accepted that the Hameedian technique of prior consultations has become part of non-aligned methodology.

"Many delegations have welcomed the importance President Jayewardene has given to disarmament and the struggle for economic betterment. All in all the Sri Lanka President's speech, although not an exciting or militant speech—as most speeches at the Conference tend to be—has brought Sri Lanka respect as a moderate leader among the small and known as the Non-aligned among the Non-aligned."

BEFORE ANALYSING Fidel Castro's speech in detail it would be useful to refer to the speeches of the four regional representatives in the morning immediately after the new Chairman's address. Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, spoke first. He said he considered it an honour to have been asked to "propose a vote of thanks for an extraordinary speech delivered by an extraordinary mind in an extraordinary country....." Speaking as one of the many African leaders, he said, "allow me to assure you, Comrade Castro, that the great majority of us in the African continent admire, love and appreciate your revolutionary zeal when tackling the problems of humankind." Kaunda went on to say that in his inaugural speech Fidel had raised a great number of points worth meditating on and that this way of approaching the burning issues of the international scene was in keeping with the ideals of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries. He concluded by saying, "if we are truly anti-imperialists we should admire Cuba; if we are truly anticolonialists, we should admire Cuba; and if we are truly antifascists, and antiracists, we should admire Cuba." And turning to Fidel, he added, "We admire you, we love you and we are on your side."

Speaking on behalf of the Asian countries, Ziaur Rahman, president of Bangladesh, praised Fidel for the work he had done ever since the founding of the Movement and called him "a

fighter for peace and freedom" Rahman thanked the host country for its preparations for the Summit and the welcome given the delegates, drew attention to the need for a plan of action, a plan that would result in a consensus of opinion and in co-operation among the non-aligned countries. He criticised all kinds of interference or intervention in the internal affairs of any country.

President Aristides Royo of Panama said, "If there is any continent that really knows what exploitation, intervention, colonialism and neo-colonialism mean, it is the Latin American continent," adding that the Non-aligned Movement was very important to the Latin American countries because the Movement's principles included that of non-interference. Royo described as Fidel's speech "full of content and motivation." There is no small people nor small voice when it comes to fighting for a great and worthy cause, he said. He added that the liberation of Panama had not been fully achieved. He also stressed that the struggle for economic survival should be waged along with the political struggle.

Spyros Kyprianou, the president of Cyprus said, "we support unity among the non-aligned and solidarity among the non-aligned peoples, and we are firmly on the side of the principles in which we believe as members of this group, of this Movement, which was founded with the purpose of serving humankind, with the aim of making the aspirations of humankind a reality." He went on to say that his country has been struggling for the cause of peace and freedom in the world since it had achieved independence and yet it had become the target of attacks and invasions beginning in 1974, and therefore it was taking part in the Conference with 40 per cent of its territory under occupation, one third of its population refugees and thousands of its people dead or missing. "In the next few days," he said, "we will be discussing matters of great importance for the whole world and particularly for our Movement. Nobody has any doubt as to the difficulties involved in finding solutions to these problems, but we are convinced that the principles and the ideals we have embraced, our spirit of solidarity and our determination to make progress will lead us along new channels and will give new dimensions to our Movement."

Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress began his speech by thanking the outgoing chairman, President Jayewardene, for his services to the Movement. He also conveyed a greeting to the people of socialist Cuba "a country that won its liberation through the sacrifice of its people" and said that he wanted to pay tribute to Fidel Castro for his revolutionary commitment to the cause of the common man. "As liberation movements," he added, "we are perfectly aware of all the manoeuvres, attempts and plans that were cooked up to prevent the holding of the 6th Summit Conference simply because Cuba was the host country." He drew attention to the large number of countries and heads of state and government attending the 6th Summit, saying that it was a serious defeat for all the efforts that had been made not only to prevent the holding of the Conference in Cuba but also to destroy the Non-Aligned Movement itself. "This response by the members of the Movement attests to the extent of their commitment to maintain this Movement alive, to enable it to go on struggling for the hundreds of millions of people whom we represent here today."

The work in the Sixth Summit, as in earlier Summits, was divided into three working groups: the Political and Economic Committees and the Plenary.

A special Foreign Ministers' Plenary meeting was also held parallel to the Summit to discuss some of the issues up for consultation following the meeting of Foreign Ministers.

(To be Continued)

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

● Cement Tenders

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, there was more to our story about the non-mentioning of names when cement tenders were opened at the BMC in recent times. We had in this column on September 1, set out that *vis a vis* CEMENT TENDERS. "Commercial circles are agog with stories of the unique practice followed by the BMC in opening tenders. Unlike in all other places, where the names of the tenderers

and their offer is read out the BMC's Tender chieftains open the sealed envelopes, mention no names, only prices, And this system is followed in spite of protest. Believe it or not, the non-reading of names makes possible many malpractices and therefore corruption. Ugly rumours have begun to circulate. The least the BMC tender board can do is to follow the universal practice of mentioning the names of the tenderers when the proposals are made."

Further investigations, partly prompted by explanations by the BMC management, brought some revealing information. Up to July 1977, the old BMC hierarchy did not permit anyone to be present when any tenders were opened. As to why it was done this way, it is not necessary to discuss today. After August 1977, in pursuance of the open society of free enterprise, tenderers were permitted to be present when tenders were opened. For a few months, the BMC continued to have its monopoly in the import of all building materials, but this was ended after the Budget of 1977. But even after this, all tenderers were present when the tenders were opened—and names, prices, quantities, delivery dates etc., were duly mentioned.

In the course of 1978 and 1979, the private sector began increasingly to compete with the BMC which also submitted tenders from principals whose sole agency was held by the BMC.

With the throat-cutting tactics of the private sector, a new development took place. No sooner tenders were opened and details released some traders contacted the lowest tenderer by telex and purchased the entire quantity he had offered without any reference to the tender. The foreign seller is always happy to sell without waiting for the results of the tender—a bird in the bush theory always operates. It is a fact that in a commodity like cement which is in short supply on a global scale, the BMC found that the lowest tenderers no longer had stocks when they were called on to supply and the unscrupulous local purchaser of the same stocks demanded higher prices. To prevent this kind of sharp practice, the BMC at the opening of tenders read only the prices, quantities and delivery dates but not the names or addresses of suppliers. This has naturally created a major uproar among certain big

importing firms who had made good money on cement by using information released when tenders were opened. In fact, in some cases the foreign suppliers had been contacted and the stocks purchased long before the Tender Board finished its work for the day.

The "ugly rumours" we referred to were no doubt set in motion by importers who stood to gain by names of suppliers being released, and the backwash of these rumours no doubt reached us. The publication of this news has thrown light on another aspect of the free-booting and double-dealing that has come into existence as a result of the free enterprise system.

Believe it or Not, even the BMC and some sections of this government have begun to realise that restrictions and restraints are essential if the free enterprise system is not to be overwhelmed by corruption and malpractices (entailing higher prices for the consumer). All in all, on this matter the BMC Tender Board, with persons from outside the BMC has done well to outwit Sri Lankan sharks who are earning world wide reputations for slick operations.

—Sherlock Holmes

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LETTER

Mannar C. T. B.

Sir,

Members of the Ceylon Transport Board Employees Co-operative Welfare Society attached to the Mannar Depot have protested against the Chairman of this Welfare Society over the change recently introduced w.o.f. 1/10/79 which they alleged imposed severe hardships in money, time and unwarranted leave of absence for three days between the 12 and 14th of every month, when they are required to present themselves physically to obtain a Loan Application Form at the Head Quarters of the C.T.B.E.C.W.B. at Nugegoda.

Having obtained the form in person prospective Loan seekers have to return to the stations, perfect the forms, obtain the signa-

tures of guarantors etc. and send them by post to the Secretary, C.T.B.E.C.W.S. Nugegoda, who would advise them in due course to present themselves for a second time at Nugegoda for a draw of the lucky member who is to get the loan that month. The number of persons entitled to draw the loans are limited to 1%, i.e. one person for every 100 members of that depot.

In the case of the Mannar Depot, where there are only about 200 members only two would be the lucky drawers of the Long Term Loan repayable in monthly instalments. In a letter addressed to the Secretary, C.T.B.E.C.W.S. an unmarried women employee at the Mannar Depot says:—

“Mannar is 202 miles away from Colombo and I am not in a position to travel alone to Colombo. My father should accompany me and he is employed in a Department in Mannar. We both have to avail of three days each and pay the Bus or Train fare to and from Colombo, Nugegoda. The application for a Loan from the C.T.B.E.C.W. Society will entail the following expenditure:—

Three days leave for me will cost me 15/- x 3	—	Rs. 45.00
Three days leave for my father will cost 30/- x 3	—	Rs. 90.00
Train or Bus Travelling for both		Rs. 53.20
Food and Lodging for both		Rs. 40.00

Total		Rs. 228.20

This women employee has appealed to the Secretary C.T.B.E.C.W.S. Nugegoda posing the logical question: “Should a Member spend Rs. 228/20 to collect the Loan Application Form alone?”

According to the new rule, having collected the Application Form in person, a member should perfect it at his station and send it by post and when called upon by the Secretary in Nugegoda, the applicants will have to call again for the second time to be present at a lucky draw, as all applicant were not granted loans as only 1% of the 200 odd members would be entitled to get those loans per month.

Representatives have been made to the Chairman, Northern Regional Transport Board, Jaffna and other authorities spotlighting

the hardships imposed on the CTB Workers who are now compelled from 1/10/79 to obtain three days leave twice or even more in order to enable them to travel to and from Nugegoda for this purpose.

The members of the Mannar Branch C.T.B.E.C.W.S had sent their Depot Representative, who had been earlier entrusted with all work in this connection, to represent matters to the Chairman at Nugegoda, where it is said the Welfare Representative from Mannar was addressed in vulgar language and peremptorily ordered to return to Mannar and to carry out the Chairman's unpopular directive. The 202 members have also petitioned the higher authorities to intervene and to revert to the original arrangement under which only the Depot Representative was authorised to deal with all loan matters. The dignitaries have also requested the Area Accountant to suspend all deductions from their paysheets pending a settlement of the problem.

The shortage of buses and frequent breakdowns of buses keep several buses off the road and if, as pointed out by the workers themselves 10 or even 20 applicants for these Long Term Loans from their Co-operative Welfare Society went on three days leave between the 12 and 14th of every month, the bus service in the Mannar District would definitely be disrupted. In their appeal to their Chairman, the Mannar CTB workers have said in no uncertain terms that they were not in favour of going on leave for the purpose of obtaining those loans, as they feared that too frequent leave for this purpose would considerably affect and disrupt the present skeleton services against which the commuters had made repeated representations to the Hon. Minister of Transport.

Magi A. Punnia Pavrajasinghe

Mannar.
8.10.79



HELD OVER

● BELIEVE IT OR NOT

- Airport Scandal
- Nuwara Eliya

Confidentially

Orchid And ADA—I

Is it not significant that a large number of readers responded to our appeal in our issue of August 25 for comments on the letter of the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA), dated April 17, on the story we had published entitled *An Orchidaceous Venture* on March 24, 1979? That readers will recall that we had raised some very pertinent questions about this venture and in reply we received the letter from the Director-Agricultural inputs, G. R. Chandrasiri, which we published on August 25 inviting readers to examine the project report and other documents sent to us by the ADA which were too voluminous for publication? That a number of readers called at our office to look at the ADA source-material before making any comments and others sent us their comments without such examination? That most of them wanted their comments kept anonymous—they were small orchid growers and did not want to be victimised—but a few did not mind their names being disclosed? That our investigators have now "processed" these comments and have combined them with conclusions we had ourselves come to on this orchidaceous venture and these will be published in this column in the coming weeks? That shortly after the appeal for readers' comments was published on August 25, the ADA wrote to us stating that we had still not replied to the points raised in their letter of April 17? That whilst we apologise for the delay we must say that we did not think this orchid business was of such national importance that we should rush into expeditious replies especially when we were aware that this venture would expend itself in trying to get off the ground? That, furthermore, we did not pay much attention to the ADA's letter of April 17 and the subsequent reminder because neither of them sought to contradict any of the matters brought out in our article of March 24, but only suggested that the "inaccuracies" in our article "will be obvious to any person who cares to read the project report?" That it is for this

reason we invited the "public" to read the Project Report—written in the usual officialese mumbo-jumbo that will stump even the most learned (except those experienced in the art of wading through such verbiage to find the truth)?

That *Tribune* will also reply to the darts flung at it for spotlighting the unsavoury features in the orchid venture after the preliminaries have been dealt with? That readers will remember that the letter of April 17 pompously proclaimed that "the reading public today are intelligent with an inquiring mind and they must be interested to see the 'other side of the coin' before they draw their conclusions.....I shall therefore be obliged if you will publish this letter in your journal...." That the ADA will be surprised with what these intelligent readers have come up with? That the same letter accused *Tribune* of carrying articles "derogatory" to the ADA: and that facts, figures and information used by us were obtained from "vested interests" opposed to the ADA? That the letter also accused *Tribune* of taking cover under "journalistic licence" to discredit the "programmes undertaken by this Authority"? That *Tribune* was also accused of carrying "inaccurate information with a view to bringing discredit to this programme, the Authority and certain individuals....."? That such provocative statements will not silence us or distract us from the main purpose of pinpointing matters of national consequence? That leaving these inconsequential matters alone for the moment, we must say that the general consensus is that a close study of the Project Report, far from contradicting any of the issues raised in our article (of March 24), confirm what we have said in more than ample measure? That for one thing a very substantial loan of Rs. 4½ million was requested from the State Banks on behalf of 1000 participants? That not one cent of income would accrue to growers till after the lapse of 3 years? That before a grower earns any income he would have paid the bank interest of Rs. 1,092 and also expended at least another Rs. 1,500 before he earned the first income from the Project?

(To Be Continued)

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*At the rate
Trees and forests are still being cut.*

*Sri Lanka
Will soon be a Green Desert*

- Already the forest cover is less than 9% — Some say its 6%. Anyway, it is far below the 25% regarded as the barest minimum.

Lands, Land Development and Mahaveli Development Minister, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, said that he was concerned above illicit felling of timber now taking place on a vast scale throughout the country. Today, illicit felling of timber had become a national past-time and people who resorted to this had the backing sometimes of powerful political and other personalities.

“Whoever these people are, the Government is determined to stop the denudation of forests because it was posing a threat to this country. We must stop it now because if we do not, the last tree in this country will be felled at the beginning of the next century.” Mr. Dissanayake said.

— *Ceylon Daily News, October 5, 1979.*

- Its not illicit felling alone, but the “legal” felling on permits issued at the Instance of MPs and other VIPs that had reduced the forest cover below danger point.

*It's not enough to plant new trees—
every tree take years to grow.*

*It's imperative to stop felling—
primeval jungle cannot be replaced.*

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