

TRIBUNE



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Letter From The Editor

THIS WILL BE THE LAST ISSUE of *Tribune* before the new Presidential System of executive power comes into operation. The next issue will appear on the day Mr. J. R. Jayawardene takes his oath as the first elected President of the Republic of Sri Lanka. For sometime now, everybody with a grumble, has been asked to wait "until the presidential system" starts functioning on February 4. But even people, who have not started grumbling, but who have begun to get worried about the way the Government is going, have been told to wait patiently until the Presidential system is introduced. But many competent observers have already been heard say that they cannot see what Mr. J. R. Jayawardene can do after February 4, as President, which he cannot do now as Prime Minister. There are undoubtedly many constraints and limits on the powers of the Prime Minister in the present Constitution which will not be there to restrict the Executive powers of the President. Already, in the six months of the UNP government, we see a mess in many ministries and departments. A few ministers and departments are marking time living on borrowed time exposing the misdeeds of the past but without doing anything constructive—evidently they are also waiting for the presidential system. But some of them are already guilty of misdeeds, blunders and questionable actions which may be regarded as "corrupt" unless satisfactory explanations are forthcoming. Other ministries and departments are being administered in the most inefficient and amateurish manner that even a Presidential system cannot be of any help unless many VVIP and VIP heads roll—on the political guillotine. But, apart from the tenders and other matters which have already gained notoriety, there are two major problems before the President. One is the Budget and everything connected with Finance. The simple fact is that, in spite of all the fanfare and trumpet-blowing, there is nothing left of the Budget which was presented on November 15. There is no money for any development. The far-too-high a devaluation of the Sri Lanka rupee has wrought havoc on the ordinary cost of living—and the government has to increase its subsidies on milk foods. And unless the government also subsidises drugs and books, the popular base of the UNP will begin to wither away sooner than many expect. The stupidly low price for wheat flour has totally undermined the economy and disrupted agriculture. The President of the IMF, Witteveen—he will be relinquishing office in six months—is expected in Colombo on January 28, and Mr. Jayawardene and his team will have to do a great deal of lobbying persuading and cajoling to induce the IMF to pull any more of Sri Lanka's chestnuts out of the fire. The new Customs Tariff is a tragedy and Esmond Wickremasinghe's recent article discloses the depth of the disappointment and disillusionment in UNP circles in regard to the work of the Finance Ministry. The new President will want to salvage the Budget without letting down his ministerial colleagues—but how he can do this is a mystery! The second question which confronts the President is the Press. The *Lake House* and the *Times* are regarded by all people as government media, and, there is no doubt, they are. The credibility of the government depends to a very large extent on the contents of the papers published by these groups. Everyday, the credibility of these papers goes down, so does the credibility of the government. In newspaper circles, the malady that afflicts these two groups are known. Very soon, the entire reading public will know the truth. Simply put, in the old days, *Lake House* had only one boss—Wijewardene. Today, there are 141 and more bosses—Ministers, MPs and other VIPs. No reporter dares to publish the truth now. He repeats only the speeches and proposals of Ministers and MPs. True newsworthy stories are killed because some private financial undertaking might kick up a "row". It is same with the *Times* group. The *Dawasa* group has its ideological constraints and inhibitions which prevent its publications from blossoming out into being a truly free press. The UNP in its election manifesto promised a free press. Some of the legal constraints have been removed. Advertising is now doled out sparingly to opposition papers. But, apart from the Opposition daily papers, the dailies from the two big groups under government control seem to hide more than they reveal or publish. Free press and democracy will become a mockery if these two newspapers groups are not emancipated. It would be far better to restore the papers to the Wijewardenes and the Sangarapillais, or their heirs and successors, rather keep them in the official bondage they are in today.

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

● Police ● Malaria

Colombo, January 24.

If Mr. J. R. Jayawardene knows the number of people who are looking forward to basic changes in the administration after he takes his oaths as President, he will be surprised. He has more than a giant's-size task before him, and many wonder how he is going to set about the job. Everybody who matters knows what the problems are, but very few seem to know just what is to be done. Nearly everybody believes that if there is anyone who can deliver the goods, it is JR, but the confidence of some has been shaken because of indecisiveness he has recently shown in certain matters (e.g., extent of devaluation, price of wheat flour, etc) and his seeming inaction in regard to the scandals that have begun to proliferate (e.g. 40,000 tons of wheat flour without tenders etc., etc). The matters, which worry most people about the unsavoury features of administration in certain ministries, are easily overcome with deft re-shuffling, but there are more deep-seated maladies that need drastic rectification.

One of the most important (undoubtedly the most urgent) is the law and order problem and the responsibility of the Police for the continued deterioration of the situation. On last Monday, 23/1/78, the matter was again brought forcibly home to the knowledgeable. The *Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror* (not the *Sun*, which later complained it had been ignored) published a Defence Ministry communique under the heading **SITUATION IN GALLE NORMAL**. The communique read: "An incident has been reported where as a result of a private feud between a member of the Sinhala community and a member of the Muslim community a little tension has developed and some damage has been done to a shop in the Galle Bazaar. The CID reports that certain anti-government elements are attempting to exploit this situation to their own ends and to rouse communal disharmony. The government has sent a special team to investigate these incidents. The government deplors any attempt to create communal disharmony and

has taken the firmest action to ensure that thugs and unruly elements do not disturb the good relations existing between the different communities. The situation in Galle is normal and the public are advised not to believe rumours spread by the enemies of the people and the government."

From facts we have been able to ascertain, "trouble" had started when two Sinhalese had refused to pay for what they had eaten in the Boutique of a Muslim. The shop-keeper, naturally, did not want to pay "kappan", and instead of calling for the police (who has confidence in the police, anyway,) had taken the law into his hands and had, with the help of employees and friends, removed the shirt and sarongs of the two undesirables and sent them away in their under-pants. This was about a week ago. Then during the next four or five days, "incidents"—in the form of reprisals and counter-reprisals—had increased day by day until an explosive situation overtook the bazaar area. It was after that, it would appear, that local police thought it fit to inform Colombo and ask for help. The matter was soon brought under control and all the necessary precautions taken to prevent the spread of the "trouble". If only the Galle Police had informed Colombo that a "communal" conflict had begun, they would have at least received advice that would have enabled them to nip the trouble in the bud. Even after the communal disturbances of August-September 1977, the Police do not seem to have learnt any lessons.

A great many changes in the structure of the Police Force has been effected since August 1977. There are many more DIGs, Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Inspectors than ever before. DIGs have super new cars. So have Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents. These are assigned for their private use (as well as official). Many HQs have new blue colored Renault runabout cars.

In spite of several governmental circulars to the contrary, most of the police cars assigned to DIGs, SPs and ASPs are used more for private purposes than for official purposes. They can be seen carrying children to schools, wives for shopping and the families for parties. These officers spend most

of their time in their offices to look after files. They leave normal police work to Inspectors who in turn delegate their work to the ordinary constables. In reality, the burden of police work is carried out by constables. No ASP or Inspector, for instance, rarely, ever steps, into Court to conduct a prosecution—and the 'poor constable is battered out of shape by defence lawyers.

It will be interesting to recall the day-to-day activities of the top brass of the Police Force, but it will be waste of time and energy to deal in such trivialities. What is important is what J. R. Jayawardene should do to bring the Force up to scratch. A few thoughts strike us and we put them down for what they are worth. *First*, there should be a Code of Conduct and Duty for every rank of the Police Force—DIGs, SPs, ASPs, Inspectors and Constables. It is an excellent thing that Mr. J. R. Jayawardene has formulated a Code of Conduct for MPs. It has become necessary in the case of the Police Force. *Second*, private "official" cars must be withdrawn from all officers except DIGs and SPs (Grade 1). The number of Jeeps attached to each station must be increased—but to be used only for official police work by ASPs, SPs and others (and not to carry children to school).

Third, so much emphasis has been given in recent years to welfare and better amenities for the police that the actual duties and obligations of the police have been overlooked. Increased pay and allowances will not prevent the police from taking bribes. Only a new Code of Conduct, strictly enforced, in the contemporary context, can do that! Regarding bribes, it is only when the top brass and their families refuse "invitations" to five-star hotels for meals and week-ends (a meal costs Rs. 150/- a head and week-ends Rs. 350/- a day) that the ordinary constables itch for Rs. 10/- or a bottle of arrack will disappear.

There is only one word for the present attitude of the police to the law-abiding citizen—*lackadaisical*. The police at adifferent level seem to be friendlier with the anti-social and criminal (some in sheep's clothing) elements in the country than people the Police have to safeguard. The Police show little or no concern for the victim—the

man who is robbed, the man whose head is bashed, the woman who is molested. Their police attitude is: "you asked for it by owning property", "why did you argue with the thug?", "why did you not stay at home, woman?"

One can write a book on the Police Force as it is today. No names have been mentioned. They are also exceptions to every rule. But we have portrayed the general. How Mr. J. R. Jayawardene will set about rectifying the situation and eliminating the lackadaisical attitude of the Police—from top to bottom—is a matter of grave concern to all interested in the future of this country. Something must be done about the law and order situation. The writ of the government must run once again without the use of force or the army—or a perpetual Emergency. The Police are paid to do that. The government must see they do it.

The other matter which Mr. J. R. Jayawardene must concern himself about is MALARIA. Unless the dread disease is again brought under control, Mahaweli and all agricultural development work can be counted out of reckoning. *Tribune* has referred to the problem very often in its columns. More recently we had queried whether all the malathion has been sprayed or whether a good part of it has been sold. A *Tribune* reader who claims to have an intimate knowledge of the Anti-Malaria Campaign programme has sent up a copious memorandum on the subject. What we say below, is a concise summary of what he said

The intensive malaria programme which should have commenced on August 15, 1977, really started only towards the end of October. This was due to the communal disturbances. During this period a large number of the *Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC)* vehicles were taken over by the authorities. Furthermore, about 40% of the AMC personnel were displaced during the communal troubles.

The Sri Lanka anti-malaria programme was worked out in consultation with the WHO in February 1975 and an intensive programme was recommended. However, due to financial constraints. Aid had to be sought mainly to purchase Malathion, an organophosphorous compound which had to replace DDT. For this intensive programme over 20 million US

dollars were required. Ninety per cent of this foreign exchange was needed for the purchase of Malathion.

The programme envisaged the spraying of the structures in the malaria area with 2 gms per sq. metre, spraying at intervals of three months. This spraying programme has to be intensive for the first 1 to 2 years; later, in the third year, depending on epidemiological criteria, in certain areas seasonal spraying can be carried out based during the transmission periods (i.e. June/July and December/January). Besides indoor residual spraying with Malathion, radical treatment with anti-malaria drugs such as chloroquin and primaquin must be carried out. Prophylactic treatment must also be given to all persons in all malarious areas, and voluntary treatment must also be organised.

There are also other procedures that must be followed. *First*, there should be weekly intermittent flushing to kill larva in certain areas, like the Polgolla area and the Mahaweli diversion scheme. *Second*, there should be special projects for larviorous fish to determine the feasibility of using them to kill mosquito larvae in certain situations. *Third* larvaciding with larvacides must be undertaken in certain peri-urban areas whenever possible.

Fourth and most important one the closing of the disused gem pits. It is now admitted that 60% of gemming in this country is illicit. For instance 20,000 acres of this area extending from Elehera to Bakumuna to almost Polonnaruwa are pitted with abandoned gem pits, from 4 ft to 30 ft in depth. On an average each acre has 100 to 150 pits. The breeding potential of these abandoned gem pits is phenomenal. The AMC will soon be able, with two gift bulldozers, to fill 250 acres of the 20,000 acres. The final solution is with the Government and it will also be necessary to lease plots for gemming after obtaining a substantial deposit to ensure that the pits are filled up by the lessees.

Fifth, the Government must ensure that AMC vehicles are not taken over by the Security forces and GAs. from time to time. If the development of the country is to go on a stable footing this precaution is essential. *Sixth*, all

political interference and transfers and appointments must be stopped. Very often, a MP who does not like the nose of an AMC employee or has heard whispers (often wrong) that a particular employee or a group of employees had exercised his political rights by working for his rival in the last elections, demands that he be transferred out of his area. Such interference disrupts the work of the AMC.

Within these constraints and restrictions, the AMC has carried on good work, states our reader, and if the government will enable it to work consistently and systematically, malaria can be brought under control within two years.

Mr. J. R. Jayawardene has two Herculean tasks before him in streamlining the Police Force and ensuring that Malaria is brought under control.

+ +

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/E 236

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 Republic of Sri Lanka No. 302 (Part iii) of 27/01/1978.

S. Hulangamuwa.
Assistant Government Agent,
Acquiring Officer,
Kandy District.

The Kachcheri,
Kandy 12th January 1978

SCHEDULE

Situation: Madawala Village,
Udupalata Korale East Minor
Division, Tumpane D.R.O's
Division, Kandy District

Plan and Lot Nos.
Name of Land:
Galketi yawatte Lot 264 in
Supplement No.
4 FVP 133
Heengahatenne Lot 265 —do—
— do — Lot 266 —do—

BUDGET - 9

PROPOSALS

General - 2

On November 15, 1977, after the tea interval the Minister of Finance & Planning, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, had continued his Budget Speech in the NSA—the longest on record. This week we publish the second half of his preamble on his general proposals. It was after elaborating on his general proposals that he went on to his tax proposals.

The country has for much too long relied on a proliferation of subsidies of one kind or another which by pre-empting resources for consumption have severely limited progress towards development and employment. It is the Government's belief, however that our people and especially our young people, do not want charity but jobs. We cannot be a nation of beggars for ever.

Towards these ends, I propose in this Budget to begin to rationalise our extensive food subsidy and distribution programme which was introduced into this country as far back as 1943. Their continuation over the last three and half decades while attempting to ensure that the basic needs of the population were being met, has been at substantial cost to our domestic resource mobilisation effort, development and economic growth and to the maintenance of adequate production incentives to the farmer. We have over the years, in fact, helped the foreign wheat and rice grower at the expense of our own paddy farmer and still continue to do so. It is now proposed to reduce substantially the distribution of rice at subsidised prices by withdrawing the rice ration from that part of the population deemed to have incomes above a minimum level. The administrative procedures for determining this minimum level and for effecting the withdrawal are already in place and will be put into effect in the next two or three weeks, and I need not detain this House with the details. All I need say is that we have set the cut-off point at Rs. 3,600/- per year in terms of money income. The point

I must emphasize is the firm commitment on the part of the Government to protect the food needs of that part of the population which is below this minimum income level.

Mr. Speaker, our best expectations are that when the final administrative and census details are known, about half of our population will be so protected. Hence approximately 7 million people will continue to receive one pound of rice free and three pounds at Re. 1/- per pound per week as at present. Also their children under 12 years of age will receive a sugar ration of 1 1/2 pounds at the present subsidised price of .72 cents per pound, per month.

Despite the substantial increase in import costs of wheat which we can never hope to grow ourselves, flour will continue to be available freely at .60 cents per pound to the entire population of this country although at very considerable cost to the Government. I also propose to reduce the price of off-ration sugar from Rs. 5/- per pound to Rs. 3/- per pound to all. The ration, as I stated before, will only continue in respect of children under 12 years of age of those who belong to the protected category.

The above changes in the Food Rationing Scheme which I am now announcing in the Budget will, however, only be implemented from January 1, 1978, to enable the Government to have the time to carry through the necessary administrative and other changes.

My proposals relating to subsidies, therefore, are as follows:—

- (1) Rice on the present ration of one pound free and three pounds at Re 1/- per pound per week to approximately 7 million people at a subsidised cost of Rs. 1,250 million. The World Market price of rice is approximately Rs. 1.60 per pound c.i.f.
- (2) Flour to the whole country at .60 cents per pound at a subsidised cost of Rs. 770 million. The World Market price is around Rs. 1.40 per pound c.i.f. and may rise higher.
- (3) Sugar to children under 12 years of the protected category of 7 million people at 1/2 pounds per child per month at .72 cents per pound. The subsidy will be Rs. 55 million.

(4) Infants milk food to continue to be sold to all at present subsidised prices, the subsidy for which will be Rs. 50 million.

(5) Petroleum and kerosene at present prices, the subsidised cost to Government of which will be Rs. 400 million. There is a possibility of a further price increase by the OPEC countries.

(6) Fertilizer at 25 percent of the cost, the subsidised cost of which will be Rs. 600 million.

(7) Bus and train fares at present subsidised rates which will cost the Government Rs. 100 million.

The total subsidies on the above items, therefore, amount to Rs. 3,225 million in 1978. Mr. Speaker, if this total had been available for development, you will realise how many lakhs of people would have been employed on productive schemes in agriculture, irrigation, industries etc. with lasting benefits to the country. The total cost of the Senanayake Samudraya and the Head-works of the Gal Oya Scheme was Rs. 60 million at that time. How many Gal Oyas could be built if these subsidies did not exist?

My entire Budget is geared to greater production and greater employment. Apart from our plan to go ahead with all three stages of the Mahaweli Development Scheme immediately without waiting for 30 years as originally proposed, the Free Trade Zone which we hope to establish shortly, would also generate fresh employment and additional foreign exchange resources. A large-scale programme in housing, agriculture, fisheries, industries and in the plantations, will also provide considerable new employment.

Notwithstanding the substantial subsidies we have resolved to continue with, in order to ensure that our people are protected, I am yet in a happy position to provide for a substantial increase in capital expenditure. It is my intention that our development expenditure should be increased not merely to allow for the higher cost of imports of capital goods, but also to achieve a higher rate of development expenditure in real terms. To this end, I have decided to allocate over and above the pre-budget allocation of Rs. 2,098 million, a further sum of Rs. 1,400 million as capital expenditure of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the incentives given to local farmers by way of the increase in the GPS price to Rs. 40/- per bushel should, as we all hope, bring nearer the day, when this country can achieve self-sufficiency. We have in addition, as an incentive to production, decided to maintain the current prices for fertilizer, despite the substantially increased import cost, so that the producers could respond positively to the incentives being provided at such tremendous cost to the Government. But the Government is also mindful of its duty to protect the consumer, as well as the producer. To this end, we propose to set up a buffer stock scheme for rice, which will, by its operations, help to stabilise the open market price of rice at around its cost at the GPS price. Thus, it would help both the consumer and the producer. We strongly feel that, as long as the assurance is available to consumers particularly those who will now not be entitled to any rationed rice that they can get their rice at a stable price, they would only be too willing to go along with us to ensure that the dependence of this country which was once considered the Granary of the East, on import of food, particularly of rice, ceases as quickly as possible. I propose to set apart Rs. 200 million for the operations of the Buffer Stock Scheme.

My next proposal is designed to accelerate the creation of employment opportunities. I am announcing in this Budget that the Government has in hand, measures to embark upon a crash employment programme in the productive sectors of the economy. The budgetary arithmetic I shall outline at the end of my statement provides for three specific areas of activity. In the first place, substantial financial provision has been made in the Budget for the creation of 100,000 jobs in 1978. In the second place, as mentioned earlier, increased provision has been made for Government capital expenditure, in order to maintain and improve upon past rates of Government investment. In the third place, a nucleus of resources amounting to Rs. 300 million has been set apart separately in the Budget to fund a Development Bank which will be responsible for generating a wide variety of commercially viable projects in the rural areas

and to assist in the drive towards self-employment. Additional international support for this type of activity has already been lined up through the medium of the IFC which will contribute a credit line of 2 million US dollars to the Bank of Ceylon for disbursement through its branches, again on productive self-employment projects.

I have already said that the Government's belief is that our people, especially the young people, do not want charity but jobs and that we cannot be a nation of beggars forever. Until such time an effective and intensive employment programme gets going, however, we propose to implement, from January 1978, a scheme of income support of Rs. 50/- per head, per month payable to persons who have no gainful occupation. Those entitled to receive such income support will be limited to those individuals initially selected according to certain eligibility criteria. The total cost of the scheme will be contained within reasonable limits in 1978 and, while initially benefiting a substantial number of people, will be phased out, *pari passu*, with the creation of opportunities for gainful occupation.

In order to prevent imprudent expenditures which might frustrate our fiscal and other objectives, we intend to pursue very stringent criteria for approving supplementary expenditures. We intend to restrict the approval of supplementary expenditures to a minimum and normally after commensurate savings from other expenditure authorizations have been established, or additional resources have become available. At the same time, it is our intention to ensure that whatever monies are being voted as expenditure, not only get spent but get spent to the best advantage of the country, rather than to the benefit of a few individuals

(To be Continued)



BETWEEN THE LINES BY SERENDIB

● Flour Deal ● Railway Catering

*COVER-UP STORIES. The *Daily Mirror* on Tuesday, January 24, 1977 had a frontpage headline **BIG RICE IN FLOUR CONSUMPTION**. The report read: "According to official estimates, the consumption of flour will increase to 100,000 tons a month consequent on the invalidation of ration books of those drawing a monthly income of over Rs. 300. At present the monthly rate of consumption is about 75,000 tons. Highly placed sources told the *Daily Mirror* yesterday that the Government would shortly take a decision to ensure that the rise in the consumption of flour would not impede the accelerated programme of paddy production aimed at self-sufficiency in rice. In August last year when the price of flour was reduced to 60 cents a lb, the monthly consumption was only 45,000 tons. The subsidy per lb. was Rs 1/- . The sources said that the world Market prices of flour had risen to 225 dollars per ton, compared with 165 dollars per ton last August. The Government was able to purchase a consignment of flour at the old price from Singapore but there was no hope of buying at less than the present world market price in the future. The sources stressed that money saved by a 50 percent reduction in flour imports would grant jobs to an estimated 200,000."

Readers of *Tribune* (vide 21/1/78) will know that this story is a reply to points raised by *Tribune* without mentioning the name of *Tribune*. In our issue of January 21, we had pointed out that wheat flour at 60 cts a lb. not only cast an even heavier burden on the continuing food subsidy the country has to bear but was also a disincentive to paddy production. We had mentioned that as paddy growers cannot produce rice at anywhere near 60 cts a lb. with the present cost of production of paddy, many farmers understandably spent their paddy loans on sewing machines, transistor sets, bicycles and the like. This is an easily verifiable fact and many in the top echelons

of the government are already aware of it. The PMB price of Rs. 40 per bushel nor the paddy loans are adequate incentive to meet the 60 cents a lb. for wheat flour.

What is the answer the "highly placed sources" gave to CDM to meet this charge? That the government would shortly take a decision to ensure that the consumption of flour would not impede the accelerated programme of paddy production. What is this decision? Why is it being withheld like a great big mystery which only "highly placed sources"—(mostly foolish and ignorant bureaucrats too big for their shoes or sandals—should know. The options and alternatives are known. The price of wheat flour must be pushed up to Rs. 1.20 or 1.30 a lb. to cut foreign exchange subsidies to a minimum and also reduce the price of rice to about Rs. 100 a lb. and increase the subsidy to the local farmer through price incentives—not through happy-go-lucky loans. The mistake of the government in fixing the price of wheat flour at 60 cts. a lb. will cause serious repercussions if the price is raised now—but it is better to do it now than one year later when disaster has overtaken our finances and our agriculture.

The second point in the cover-up story by "highly placed sources" is an attempt to bamboozle the public that the 40,000 tons of wheat flour at USD 204 was an act of national salvation. We had exposed the *Daily News* cover up story of January 6 in this connection. The "highly placed sources" say that the prices have risen to USD 225 a ton compared to USD 165 in last August. And the sources comforted themselves by saying that buying at the "old price" from Singapore, would give the country a 50% reduction etc. etc. What this argument is, is not clear—it seems to betray the confusion in the thinking and logic of the "highly placed sources."

In the first place, the flour was not bought at the "old price". And, in August 1977, it was USD 155 a ton. (If they had bought at USD 165, some one was getting a "cut" of USD 10.) The price recently paid for 40,000 tons was USD 204. This was, on the date of purchase, at least USD 8 to 9 more than the world price. This means that the country overpaid by over

USD 300,000 that is Rs. 4 1/2 to 5 million. The "highly placed sources" can put this into their pipes and smoke the 4 1/2 million with a vengeance. If this was the lowest price on that day, and if prices were rising, can the "highly placed sources" explain why the "Government" bought another 58,000 tons one week later, at prices ranging from USD 196 to USD 202?

Whom are the "highly placed sources" trying to bluff? Just because the *Times* Group is a government appendage, should such tendentious stories be purveyed in its columns? It may fool a few readers for a while, but not many for all time. And in the meantime, the credibility of the CDM will vanish into thin air.

The "highly placed sources" have only to keep in touch with the commercial intelligence published in papers like *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times* and *The New York Herald Tribune* to know that USD 204 was an over-price at the time of purchase. A telex message to our embassies in Washington and London (unless collaborators exist in these offices) would have revealed the true prices. The Research Unit of our Central Bank probably has a Commercial Intelligence Section.

Whom are "highly placed sources" seeking to fool through the *Daily Mirror*? The CDM is now a readable newsworthy daily, but stories like this will ruin it.

+ + +

● Railway Catering

The *Sun* had a stirring headline on its frontpage on Friday, January 20: "MOHAMED FIRES BUFFET CAR MEN". The report read: "After a surprise check on the 'Yal Devi' yesterday, Transport Minister, Mr. M. H. Mohamed, ordered that those responsible for the maintenance of the canteen on the train be interdicted. Mr. Mohamed and officials from his Ministry conducted the inspection yesterday at the Fort railway station and are said to have found the buffet car attached to the train in a very unclean state with litter strewn all over the floor. He also found that passengers were being exploited with food and beve-

rage of a very low quality being provided at high prices. The Minister ordered that all those responsible for this be interdicted and officials appointed."

Only a week or two earlier, the Minister's versatile handyman, Secretary Elayaperuma, had secured the publication in a daily paper of an interview (vide *Tribune* 7.1.78) in which he had testified that the railway catering services had been brought to a first class standard and he had also paid compliments to a "honorary catering consultant". This same catering consultant, one week after, (vide *Tribune* 21.1.78) had proclaimed that restaurant cars would be attached to every "long distance train of

BOUQUET

WEEKEND

*A VERY BIG BOUQUET must be handed out to the *Weekend* for the two excellent investigative reports that appeared on January 15 and 22. The first one by Gamin Navaratne was a brilliant factual report on the state of the CTB under the doubtful guardianship of Minister Mohamed. The second by Eustace Wijesinghe, an equally scintillating piece, revealed the mess in the Education Department through the erratic administrative procedures of Minister Nissanka Wijeyaratne. The *Weekend* in recent weeks has developed independent journalistic teeth and has published investigative reports of high calibre with a great deal of contemporary relevance. These articles, if properly understood by politicians, will help the party in power. The credibility of the *Weekend* has gone up immeasurably. The daily *Sun*, of the same group, has to catch up with the *Weekend* in the matter of investigative reporting. The *Sun* still publishes far too many sunshine stories handed out by press officers of Ministers, often without disclosing the sources, and thereby giving the impression that they were *Sun* reports. *Lake House* and *Times* have lost the art of investigative reporting—they specialise in pro-ministerial apologia clumsily disguised to appear as "independent" reports.

more than 50 miles". *Tribune* had debunked both these sunshine stories. Minister Mohamed, thereafter seems to have gone on an inspection and "fired" (interdicted) the buffet car men on the Yal Devi. Firing men in the lower rungs have no meaning. (It can only create jobs for a few Wapathamulla boys or pave the way for a new private caterer for the Railway!) Sunshine story-teller Secretary Elayaperuma must be sacked for telling fairy tales!

Two days after Mohamed "fired" the men in the Yal Devi buffet car Secretary Elayaperuma persuaded the SLBC to report that first-class restaurant and buffet cars would be attached to 20 trains. Neither Elayaperuma nor the SLBC seem to have any regard for the PM's directive to cut out "sunshine stories" (The SLBC still continues to retail an overwhelming number of sunshine stories). The public now do not believe anything that comes out over the SLBC news broadcasts?

Who is bluffing whom about railway catering? Mohamed, Elayaperuma, Anura Gunasekera, the SLBC or some daily papers? Railway commuters are not fooled. They know what is good in the railway buffet cars—Maliban Biscuits.

THE WORLD TODAY

CARTER IN INDIA—2

FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW
January 13, 1978.

Foreign Relations Accord Survives Carter's Aside

New Delhi.

Pen-friends Jimmy Carter and Moraji Desai have further developed their cosy relationship following the US president's three-day visit for talks with the Indian Premier. This cosiness blossomed despite difference on nuclear policy, embarrassingly revealed when a reporter's microphone picked up a Carter briefing to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in which the President observed that he found Desai adamant on the nuclear issue

and then remarked: "When we get back I think we should write to him another letter, just cold and very blunt."

The rapport between Carter and Desai began with an exchange of letters soon after the Indian Premier assumed office last March. In their meetings last week there was much flattery, with both high-minded moralists praising each other's country for its commitment to human rights, basic moral issues, democratic institutions and the rule of law. Mr. Carter opened up a substantial bag of presents. The US President indicated America's willingness to help India increase its agricultural productivity and harness solar energy. A more significant field he mentioned was exploiting the water resources of the eastern region. Presumably, the US has been impressed by the spirit of co-operation now prevailing in the Subcontinent as demonstrated by the Indo-Nepalese agreement on developing river resources and the pact with Bangladesh on the Farakka waters.

It was observed that the hydroelectric project on the Karnali River, on which agreement has been reached, could not be financed by India and Nepal alone and that World Bank and other international aid would be necessary for its execution. To augment the waters at Farakka and prevent floods, India had been planning to link the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, a project which will produce full benefit for all only if Nepal, Bangladesh, India and China co-operate. The shape of American assistance to this project has yet to be determined.....

Among other points made by Carter in an address to the Indian Parliament were American willingness to aid India in grain storage and the use of *Landsat* satellite from which information will be received by an Indian-owned and operated ground station. The satellite facility will help forecast crop prospects, detect mineral and other resources and give disaster warning. India will share information thus gathered with neighbouring countries. The only protocol signed after the Carter visit related to this facility. The Indo-American Joint Commission which has been meeting here will spell out the manner in which the two countries can work together on

projects mentioned by the President.

Desai in his speech said two major threats to humanity were posed by nuclear arms and atmospheric pollution, against both of which Carter was crusading. But in order to adhere to non-alignment, Desai also mentioned that during his visit to the Soviet Union two months ago, the leaders of that country also had given him the impression that they were keen on eliminating the nuclear threat to mankind.

The only other reference to the Soviet Union was when the two sides discussed the Indian Ocean. While Desai stressed the need for peace in the zone and wanted both Moscow and Washington to avoid engaging in rivalry, Carter observed that his talks with the Soviet leaders had given him hope that some agreement could be reached. With the denial of Somalia's Berbera base to the Soviets, the Indian point is that there is no valid justification for the US building up of Diego Garcia as a naval base....

But the overheard presidential whisper to Vance gave a reminder that the new course of Indo-US relations contains hazards. Carter's remark about a "cold and blunt" letter came at the end of a 35-minute private talk with Desai on January 2. Neither Carter nor Vance was aware that a *Washington Post* correspondent was around and had taped the conversation. The President's comments cropped up before a formal press briefing when the correspondent produced the tape and asked how it could be claimed that there was agreement over the nuclear inspection and safeguard issue. Apologetic noises were made by presidential press secretary Judy Powell and Indian Foreign Secretary Jagat Mehta. Mehta asserted that Desai held the view that the newspaperman had been unfair to the President and as for himself that was the end of the matter.

But Carter appeared terribly embarrassed. So he departed from the prepared text of his address to MPs that evening. This was to be Carter's major policy statement and the text only expressed the hope that it would be possible for India and the US to co-operate in the energy field. But amid the thunderous applause, the President announced that America would

supply 7.5 tons of enriched uranium for the Tarapore power plant and make available heavy water which India badly requires for its yet incomplete atomic power plants. (An explosion in the Baroda, Gujarat, heavy water plant had put back the schedule for their completion by at least two years. Last year the Soviet Union also had promised to supply 200 tons of heavy water).

Hard bargaining is likely on the nuclear question. Desai is firm that for reasons of sovereignty India cannot agree to any new nuclear surveillance and that signing the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty does not arise as long as the nuclear powers maintain their arms pile.

Socially, the Carter visit was a success. Huge crowds greeted him and his wife everywhere. And in spite of all the security which his entourage enforced, the President drove in an open car, often standing up to return the people's greeting. One woman, however, may not have been happy. For a lunch in honour of the US First Lady, the wife of the US Ambassador had invited a score of women noted in India's public life—but not former premier Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

A. Hariharan

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SECULAR DEMOCRACY
January 1, 1978

Carter's Arm-Twisting

New Delhi, January 5,

President Carter has come and gone back—perhaps a wiser man. Shortly before he arrived he had issued a certificate to the Janata Government—India was now genuinely non-aligned. The new Government, however, had given up the usage of this dubious adjective that had threatened to isolate this country from the rest of the non-aligned world soon after the Janata party took over. One, therefore, wonders if the uncalled for certificate was intended to single out this country from the rest of the non-aligned countries for special status. May be he wanted the Janata leaders to believe that the United States was more willing to trust the new Government than its predecessor.

Be that as it may, Carter was in for a small surprise. He did not

find in his 'pen-friend' a very pliable person, the certificate and spirit of *bon homie* he exuded notwithstanding. Whenever, Carter talked of peace and development, Morarji Desai reportedly refused to leave the Soviet Union out. Morarji in fact went a step further and pointed out that peace in West Asia depended on the equation between Washington and Moscow. Nor did India yield to Carter's pressure on recognition of Israel. Recognition, Carter was told, depended upon peace in West Asia.

New Delhi's refusal to yield on basic issues is not surprising. This country is, indeed, in a position to negotiate with relative strength. India has reached a stage of economic development—what with foreign reserves accumulating—when it can dispense with the kind of economic assistance that the US government can offer—financial aid. We no longer need PL 480 to replenish our food stocks. We can buy if and when necessary. The same is true of advanced technology. India can certainly buy it whenever it is available, for it has demonstrated its capacity to export intermediate technology. What we really need is fair trade terms for our exports to industrially advanced countries—a need shared by all the developing

countries. On this score Carter could offer precious little, 'north-south' dialogue being carried on for the last several years has always been balked by the 'North's' persistent refusal to open its protected markets to developing countries on fair terms.

The only field left for 'cooperation' between the two countries was nuclear energy. And it is on this score that Carter was in a position to dictate terms. He, presumably, tried to do some arm-twisting, meeting tough resistance from 'adamant' Morarji Desai. India refused to open its nuclear plants for international inspection. It, however, conceded to subject foreign aided plants to international safeguards. For Carter this was not enough. He told his Secretary of State, Vance, "When we get back, I think we ought to write him (Desai) another letter, just cold and very blunt." The embarrassing remark was later explained away by both the guests and hosts. It nevertheless brings into sharp focus the real Carter—a tough, hard-headed man—remarkably different from the good-natured extrovert who uses elegant prose and moral platitudes to create a deceptive image.

It also highlights the kind of hard international realities our

COVER

GETTING READY

ON THE COVER we have a typical scene in a rural area where young damsels are getting ready for the day. For some weeks now, many many people in this island have been getting ready for a new day of Great Expectations, February 4. It will be recalled that a very large number of voters had hoped for a new era after July 21, 1977. The UNP was elected with an unprecedented majority and millions of Sri Lankans had looked forward for a better life. Six months have gone by and there is already near-universal disillusionment with the record of the Government. A few ministers have effected a few worthwhile changes. But the work of a large number of other ministers have been so disappointing that life has become harder for the ordinary man than before with no prospects for anything better in the near future. There are promises and sunshine stories galore, but the prices of the most essential items have doubled, trebled or even quadrupled, especially food, drugs and books. Queues are still long. The subsidies on rice and sugar have been cut, but they have been more than made up by subsidies on wheat flour, milk powder and other items. The price of flour at 60 cents a pound is a consolation but this will inhibit production of paddy, cereals and yams. Onions and chillies have been imported and local producers will grow less and less of them. The stink of multi-million rupee imports without tender procedures have begun to fill the air. Many staunch UNP loyalists have become scared with the WRITING ON THE WALL that has begun to loom large on the horizon. Several UNPites who had stuck it out for many years to fight for a better Sri Lanka are now talking of emigration—unless JR is able to do something after February 4.

Janata rulers have to contend with. Mutually shared 'democratic values' and 'moral concerns' certainly do not provide safeguards against erosion of sovereignty. Only the convergence of national interests make friendship between two countries durable. In which major fields do India's national interests converge with those of the United States? Given the economic compulsions within which a US Government has to operate, one may find that there is precious little for a developing country like India.

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NEW WAVE January 8, 1978

Arm Twisting, Carter Style

New Delhi, Jan. 6.

All the world's hopes of peace and freedom seem to be resting on Morarji Desai these days. At least, that is what the leaders of the Western world would like Desai and the people of India to believe. Jimmy Carter's brief speech at the airport contained fulsome praise for Morarji Desai. The exchange of correspondence between Desai and the American President had already made them personal friends and Carter knew (again from the correspondence) that Desai is "a man of great courage, of rectitude and dedication."

This somewhat unusual praise for the Prime Minister of a country which has never been among the like-minded nations for the US government would raise a few eyebrows in India and abroad. Desai was a member of the India government throughout the years of tension in Indo-American relations, though he may have had no direct hand in the formulation of the Indian policies at that time. The sudden discovery by an American President of the virtues of the Indian Prime Minister sounded a little curious.

But Jimmy Carter had come all the way with a purpose, and a little hypocrisy would be quite in order if it advanced his cause. The real objective of Carter was clear to all discerning eyes from the day that the visit was announced, though the Americans were trying to hide it behind a lot of

irrelevant words. US Vice President Walter Mondale had said that the visit was a tribute to India's reassertion of its faith in human rights. Some others had said that India had a great role to play in world affairs and hence the President had decided to undertake the trip. Carter had said that the purpose of his visit was to ensure that India ended any special relations that it might have with the Soviet Union. Official spokesmen were talking of India getting genuinely non-aligned after thirty years of commitment to the non-alignment of the spurious variety.

Behind all these words was hidden the most crucial objective of the visit to persuade Desai, if not the rest of India, that India must sign the non-proliferation treaty, accept international inspection of India's atomic establishments and agree to the legitimization of the discrimination between some nations and others in regard to the question of possession of nuclear weapons.

In fact, what Carter and the Americans left unsaid was clearly stated by the International Socialist, James Callaghan, who also happens to be the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Preparing the ground for his forthcoming visit to India, Callaghan said in an interview that India was in a position to give "very considerable leadership" on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. While welcoming Desai's recent statement that India would not undertake even peaceful nuclear explosions, Callaghan said, "Mr. Desai is as concerned to avoid proliferation of nuclear weapons as I am and we must discuss together how best we can ensure that this does not happen." And Callaghan, being British, only claimed that he had established "a good rapport" with Desai. (It takes a long time to make personal friends in Britain whereas one can make a friend in America through correspondence. The difference, however, is more a matter of semantics).

The calculations are in fact absurdly simple. But the western minds believe that stupid Indians would not be able to fathom them. If in the hubalaboo of political changes in India the western nations cannot make India sign the NPT, their hopes of getting it universally accepted may be doomed. And who could be a better recipient of the western ideas than a "mora-

list" like Morarji Desai who had repeatedly said that India would not, on ethical grounds, make the bomb! Hence the praise for India's morality, and for Desai's morality. If the old man does not bend to pressure, he might bend to praise!

Indians have been asking themselves a lot of questions in the last few days. The incarnation of morality that now rules America should know a few of these questions. Why does not President Carter announce some unilateral cuts in America's nuclear arsenal? Why does this votary of human rights order the manufacture of neutron bombs? Why are Carter's advisers so keen that America must be continuously in search of avenues to assume a lead in the arms race?

As for Callaghan, Indians have always believed that the country which can set an example to the rest of the world by renouncing nuclear weapons is Great Britain. After all, India's commitment to non-proliferation is not as important as the renunciation of nuclear weapons by a power which possesses them. Particularly in these days of financial stringency it might also be of great help to the British people.

Callaghan is wrong. It is not the Indian explosion "that caused a ripple to go round the world". It is the British explosion that did it long ago. Callaghan is now in an excellent position to undo the harm that his predecessors did to Britain. Once Jimmy Carter and James Callaghan gives some evidence of being sincere in their search for peace, Indians would be ready to join them. Till then it is not only the other wicked and moral leaders of India but also Desai who will remain adamant on this question, as Carter seemed to have now discovered to his disgust.

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NEXT WEEK

- ① POINT OF VIEW
—The LSSP And Strikes
 - ② AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
—Reports On Political Imprisonment In South Africa
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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Jan. 8 — Jan. 17

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

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8: Dishonest practices at the GCE 'O' level examination have reached alarming proportions according to the Commissioner of Examinations; the biggest offenders are private candidates who are assisted by some private tutoreries which have sprung up like mushrooms; among the many novel and ingenious methods detected by the authorities was the use of a loudspeaker from a vehicle parked near the examination centre to announce the answers to a question paper the candidates were sitting. The Finance Minister yesterday dispelled fears that the liberalisation of imports and the abolition of the licensing and quota systems will trigger off a spate of imports and a run on foreign exchange. The possibility of broadbasing the country's produce broking business is under active consideration by the Minister of Plantation Industries. A 'Rajaperahera' of unprecedented splendour will be held on February 5 in Kandy to mark the assumption of office of the President. The PM yesterday gave specific instructions to a team of French experts now engaged in designing the blueprint for the proposed new building for a NSA in Kotte that none of the existing houses and buildings in the vicinity should be demolished—SO. Sri Lanka, once the dumping ground for used double decker buses of the London Transport Services has now become according to local transport circles, a ready market for Britains second-hand motor vehicles; of a total of 2694 second hand cars imported last year, about 65% were imported direct from Britain. Three more foreign airlines—Czechoslovak Korean and Malaysian airlines systems will link Sri Lanka with the international network by providing weekly services shortly. Several big business houses, foreign banks, travel firms and airlines offices have abandoned large quantities of imported articles meant to be given away free to their regular customers, because of the high rates of duty levied by the Customs—ST. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications hopes to complete the direct dialling system throughout the island by next year—CM. When the judicial laws of the land are changed they will establish a 'family court' to deal with matters such as divorce, child welfare, juvenile cases etc.—EN. Twenty ministers of the UNP government will cease to be in office on February 4—the date on which the second amendment to the constitution will become operative. A series of new intelligence Gathering Units are to be set up in the Provinces; they will co-ordinate the intelligence that are being gathered by the networks Police, Army, Navy and Air Force into one central point. The IGP has set up a new Crime Co-ordinating Unit at Police Head Quarters. The coins of Sri Lanka will soon be much lighter this is because the govern-

ment will mint coins of aluminium instead of brass—WK. Petitions have been received by the Ministry of Food and Co-operatives saying that many people had declared false incomes when filling in the forms for withdrawal of rice subsidies—SM. Many MP's have told Ministers that they are unable to face their electorates due to spiralling prices and the failure to fulfil election pledges therefore they ask for a quick and permanent solution—RR.

MONDAY, JANUARY 9: The PM speaking at Panadura said yesterday that there were over 1.2 million unemployed in this country and his intention was to give each of them jobs in the quickest possible time. The activities of the Political Authorities of the former government will soon be investigated; this follows several complaints concerning the misappropriation of millions of rupees under the decentralised budget scheme of the previous government. The Minister of Education yesterday stressed the importance of English as an international link language and announced that he hoped to have holiday 'immersion pools'. The consecration of the Ven. Swihin Fernando as the 11th Bishop of Colombo will take place at the Cathedral of the Living Saviour, Colombo on the 25th of this month—CDN. Legislation to appoint an Ombudsman is now ready and will be presented in the NSA soon. Findings of a preliminary survey by the Plan Implementation Ministry in the context of a study of the category of people leaving this country in large numbers is that on an average nearly 200 engineers, 110 doctors, 85 accountants have been leaving the country annually. Government schools re-open today but several hundreds of five year olds will have to wait till February 7 to be admitted to school—CDM. The PM is to lay down a strict code of conduct for heads and directors of state institutions after Presidential rule is introduced. The Controller of Prices has appointed 16 officers of the State Trading (Textiles) Corporation as authorised officers with price control powers. The Registrar of Public Debt, acting on behalf of the government has invited applications for a loan of Rs. 200,000,000 which carries a 10% interest. The Railway will soon have a new catering service on all long distance trains. Nurses with first-aid kits will travel on all trains in a new medical scheme to be introduced shortly—SU. The Ministry of Education has taken action under the Special Education Programme to provide accommodation to nearly 100 blind children in Grade I in ordinary schools.—IDPR No. 15. National liaison offices drawn from ten countries including Sri Lanka will meet in Bangkok today to discuss a co-ordinated plan of action for raising the standards of living of the lower strata of the population and increasing the welfare of the community—IDPR No. 17. Legislation will soon be introduced making it compulsory to make permanent those people employed either by the state or the private sector after six months service—DM.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10: A high powered conference has been called next week between officials of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Defence to work out far reaching amendments to the existing criminal laws in Sri Lanka. The government has approved a proposal to establish Employment Placement Committees in all electorates; these committees will select unemployed persons for appointment in government departments and other public sector organisations at both electorate and district levels. Sri Lanka and the US signed a PL 480 agreement yesterday for the sale

of 100,000 metric tons of wheat flour to this country on concessional terms; the total value of the wheat flour is 17.4 million dollars at current market prices, of approximately Rs. 270 million. Water meters will be installed in residences in Colombo and suburbs shortly to assess the daily use of water by individual households. The private sector will receive a substantial allocation this year for the import of drugs—CDN. Elected members of all local bodies will be required to declare their assets and liabilities; this will be enforced after the election to local bodies are completed under the present system of proportionate representation—CDM. All recruits to the Police service in the past five years are to be given an in-service training course under the new scheme that has been introduced by the deputy Minister of Defence to streamline the country's police service. A gazette notification revoking certain provisions of the Film Corporation Act was issued last night; in terms of this notification the private sector too will be allowed to import films to Sri Lanka—SU. The Mahaweli Scheme which will be finished in five years will be inaugurated on the 30th of this month; the first stage is estimated to cost 202 million and five lakhs of rupees and employ 2000 people—DP. The Commissioner of Examinations has taken a number of measures to prevent frauds and other dishonest practices at public examinations; all private candidates sitting public examinations will hereafter have to produce the National Identity cards or passport to establish their identity—CO. The PM has sent a message of congratulation to H. E. Mr. Bulent Ecevit, on his assumption as the PM of Turkey—IDPR. No. 3/78.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11: Several importers have betrayed the confidence placed in them by the government and committed abuses under the special licence system which gave them a new lease of life; they have imported and flooded the local market with non-essentials such as perfumes, refrigerators, jams etc. should they continue to cause such student in the economy in the future they will be severely dealt with said the Minister of Trade. The Sri Lanka Tea Board has allocated Rs. 90 million for infilling vacancies in tea estates and tea small holdings during the next five years. The capital involvement study made by the Ministry of Transport has ruled out the possibility of the electrification of the suburban railway. Air Ceylon's VC 10 flights with British Airways have begun; at present the flights are once a weekly will be increased to thrice a week from January 15. The Federation of Teacher's Associations of the University of Sri Lanka has urged the government to introduce a new University Bill ending the arbitrary administration of the campuses under the 'Period of Transition'. The first shipment of Canadian gift flour arrived in the Port of Colombo; the other shipment is expected in February; these two shipments, provided under Canadian Food Aid total 21,250 metric tons and are worth 5 million dollars—CDN. The government has reduced the customs duty on a number of imported essential articles with a view to bringing down the cost of some of these goods as well as to encourage more employment. The total amount to be given as housing loans this year has been doubled—CDM. The government is to revive the Resident Guest Scheme under which foreign nationals with monies from abroad, were permitted to make Sri Lanka their home. The Minister of Trade warned yesterday that the government would use its powers to deal with

those abusing the use of the special licence scheme. The Republic of Korea has gifted two all-wooden live fish carriers to the Maldives. The IGP yesterday confirmed the classification of a number of Police stations in the country. The city police force is soon to be augmented by an additional 1500 persons. The National Milk Board is to step up its monthly production of powdered milk to five million lbs shortly—SU. It is reliably learnt that the government will offer three district minister-posts to the TULFI. The new rationing scheme for food will come into operation from the 30th of this month—VK. The leader of the Opposition speaking at a meeting in Jaffna said that the goal of the TULFI was still a separate state and they would not change from that position come what may; this was definite and to achieve this goal we must find the opportune time to fight—EN. There is a mass exodus of experienced engineers from the department of Highways; the cadre of the department which is 70 engineers has only 45 working, and about 10 more are due to leave the department as they have got lucrative offers abroad. The Customs officers yesterday made a case to the Acting Minister of Finance and Planning for increasing the customs staff by 100 officers and for making the detection service strong and fast—CO. There is a lull in the movement of all vehicles coming to a halt because of the negligence on the part of officials in the Petroleum Corporation to place orders in time for break oil—LD.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12: The government last night gazetted the establishment of the Agricultural Development Authority; the authority is broadly designed to co-ordinate and improve the development of all cultivated and cultivable agricultural lands. The University Bill with provision for full autonomy in keeping with the Policy of the UNP will ready this month said the Minister of Education. Public servants will receive their pensions within a month of their retirement under a new scheme formulated by the government. A Sanghadhikarana—Ecclesiastical Court—will be set up for the first time in the modern history of Sri Lanka—CDN. The Colombo Municipal Council elections are expected to be held by the end of April this year. The quantum of foreign aid for the accelerated Mahaweli Project will be decided in Paris in May by the Aid Consortium for Sri Lanka—CDM. Political interference in police matters particularly in regard to transfers is expected to be one of the key topics the PM will discuss when he meets police top brass for a conference next week. Extensive intelligence and personality tests will soon be used in recruitment to the police service. The State Film Corporation will continue to have a monopoly in the import of films as before. Revalidated ration cards are expected to be related to the respective GA's of all districts today—SU. A large amount of chemicals and other implements believed to be for the production of hand bombs have been seized by the police in the Atchuvally district in Jaffna—EN. All Marketing Department sales outlets and CWE retail depots are to have 'Citizens Committees' to ensure proper distribution of consumer goods received by them. All arrangements have been finalised to recruit about 1900 teachers to be trained at 26 training colleges in the island according to the Ministry of Education—CO.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13: The profits earned from the United Exchange Rate introduced by the government will be passed on to the people through an all round

salary increase; it is likely that the PM, when he assumes office as the President will announce the extent of the increase. The Netherlands will provide six thousand tons of full cream milk every year for a period of five years valued at Rs.90 million. Medical equipment donated to Third World countries by the developed nations were mostly outdated for which spares were not available; this was the complaint made by several delegates who participated in the last commonwealth medical conference held in New Zealand. The government hopes to replant about 55,000 acres of tea land in an attempt to reorganize the tea industry which is still the largest source of foreign exchange to the country. The Tractor Corporation will standardise the import of tractor by the corporation to two brands of four wheeled and two brands of two wheeled tractors according to the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tractor Corporation—CDN. The TULF will adopt a 'wait and see' policy; this decision by the Executive Committee of the TULF at its meeting held at Batticaloa a few days ago was endorsed by the leadership today. The campaign by Mr. S. D. Bandaranaike MP for Gampaha to bring the SLFP, the LSSP, CP and the JVP into a new political alignment has met with lukewarm response from the rank and file of the respective parties—CDM. The Minister of Labour yesterday warned Sri Lankans against accepting employment in West Asian countries through mushroom agencies because the Dept of Labour had numerous complaints of harassment and exploitation. Speculation is reaching feverish heights in political circles with the possibility of one of the Opposition TULF's most senior politicians and by far the most senior legislator, Mr. C. Rajadurai joining the government ranks in the near future. The Chandragupta 627 foot long bulk grain carrier out of Bombay, bound from Portland, Oregon to Sri Lanka and Iran with grain floundered in high seas when it ran into a storm—SU. The TULF will not accept the district ministers posts said Mr. S. Sivasithamparam, one of the secretaries of the party—VK. There is a terrible shortage of doctors in the island at present there are only 1600 doctors in the government service, and 2500 are needed to run an efficient health services. All government teachers will have to serve for five years in remote and backward areas; after that they will be permitted to serve long in their own areas said the Minister of Education—DP. The Minister of Foreign Affairs leaves tomorrow on a goodwill mission to the Republic of Korea; he will sign a Cultural Agreement and an Air Services Agreement with the Republic of Korea and also hold discussions with South Korean authorities on economic co-operation and investment in the FTZ—IDPR No. 4/78. All public servants interdicted in connection with insurgent activity will be re-instated with immediate effect; these public servants will not suffer any disability with regard to their promotions and increments on account of their alleged involvement in the April 1971 insurgency; the period they were out will be treated as having been on no pay leave—CO. 10 million Rupees worth of foodstuffs go waste annually due to improper handling from the time of arrival to the Port to the time they are issued to consumers; this is revealed in a survey conducted recently—DW. The chairman of the Paddy Marketing Board said that if more paddy is not produced, the government would be forced to import it; the target of 3000 per month has only been half fulfilled—LD.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14: Three United Nations Agencies have pledged to assist Sri Lanka in its Export

Processing Zone Project in the Greater Colombo Economic Commission area; the UNDP, UNIDO and the World Bank have agreed to provide planning and advise and conduct feasibility studies for the project. Twenty one major shortcomings at the International Airport at Katunayake have been rectified at a cost of over half a million rupees. The 18th annual PATA workshop 1978 will be inaugurated by the PM on January 19 at the BMICH. The dwindling of the cattle population is worrying the Department of Agriculture; according to an official if the present rate of slaughter continues, there would not be a single draught animal by 1980. The Kalawana election petition was yesterday dismissed with costs by the High Court judge of Anuradhapura sitting in Colombo. Vihara Mahadevi Park has had a facelift with clearing up of shrub jungles and the installation of street lamps; it will soon have a police post as well—CDN. The Committee appointed by the Minister of Transport to probe the working of the railway has listed five reasons for the low morale among railway employees which has impaired efficiency. Schools have begun their new academic year but principals, teachers and students are still clueless about the textbooks to be used in most classes. The government will shortly settle a large number of outstanding demands of public servants. The total number of incidents of violence during the recent communal disturbances were 3242; of this the number of cases of arson was 1014 and looting 1161 according to a report from Police HQ's; Kegalle was the worst affected area—CDM. A scheme which will enable private sector employees to draw a monthly pension after retirement is to be introduced by the government shortly. A total of about 7.5 million people will have revaluated ration books from January 29; at the same time about 5 million people will lose their books. Liquor bars and liquor shops throughout the island will be closed on February 4, Independence Day when the country moves into a presidential system of government—SU. In every maha vidyalaya in the country, 100 students will be given scholarships every year—DP. The Minister of Justice told the TULF that they should not try and disturb the good atmosphere which has been created for solving the problems of the Tamils and they should co-operate with the government to achieve this—VK.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15: Large stocks of essential consumer goods, lorries, vans and motor spares to help reduce the cost of living and machinery, components and raw materials for local industries to boost the economy are on order under the government's import liberalisation scheme. The Water Resources Board last week began work on an irrigation project which is as ambitious in its scope as the diversion of the Mahaweli. A body known as the Unified River Valleys Development Authority will be set up to lay the infrastructure for the peasant settlements that will spring up in the areas that are encompassed by the Mahaweli Ganga Multipurpose Development Scheme, work on which will move into a new stage at the end of this month. The Ministry of Labour will shortly send a high-powered team to the Middle East to report back on the actual situation of thousands of Lankans now employed in the Gulf States—SO. A Ministry of Minority Affairs, possibly headed by a minority community MP, is the subject of political speculation associated with the government's efforts to ensure to the minorities equality of access to basic rights and opportunities. Over 1 1/2

million people have under-declared their incomes or submitted false declarations to the Food Commissioner in order to obtain free rice; this discovery was made by the Ministry of Food and Co-operatives when it processed the forms submitted by ration book holders. Functional specialists in the State Development and Construction Corporation are preoccupied with a struggle for individual status, power and empire building; this is one reason why the process of management has come to a standstill, this is one of the major findings of the committee appointed by the Minister to probe this corporation. All religious and cultural events to be held in Kandy to mark the PM's assumption of office as President will be met by the people and no government funds will be spent said the Minister of Agriculture and Lands—ST. The government is now examining the introduction of a series of far reaching measures aimed at curbing the spiralling cost of living; these measures may modify as well as supplement those already introduced by the Minister of Finance in his budget. A Singapore company will establish a big flour mill complex in the Prot of Trincomalee at an estimated cost of 32.8 million dollars. In one of his earliest moves to climb down from parliamentary life to take up duties as President, the PM gave up his presidency of the UNP Trade Union and handed over to the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs. A group of 14 millionaires from the US will be visiting Sri Lanka next month to explore the possibilities of setting up business ventures in the FTZ—WK. The PM said yesterday that legislation is soon to be introduced against people who disrespect and cause disgrace to befall MP's and Ministers by twisting their words—VK. The foundation laying ceremony for the commemoration pillar for the late S. J. V. Chevanayagam took place without any excitement, very quietly in Jaffna yesterday—EN.

MONDAY, JANUARY 16: A Commission of Inquiry to report into malpractices, abuses and wastage of public funds over the past seven years in the various departments and institutions under the Ministry of Fisheries is to be appointed shortly. The initial project of the accelerated Mahaweli Scheme will be launched on January 30. Educated Sri Lankans who left the island in the past seven years owing to faulty policies followed by the last government have now begun to come back said the Minister of Health. Mrs. Vimala Kannangara, Minister of Shipping will unveil a portrait of the PM in the Katunayake Airport. A Worker Resources Pool has been started in Kotte by the MP for the area, the Speaker of the NSA. All MP's will receive Rs. 1 million each for development work this year. A top priority probe carried out by the Central Bank of the orders of the PM has revealed that letters on credit have been opened with banks to import Rs. 1,6000 million worth of goods after the post-Budget liberalisation scheme; of this amount less than 1% constitute orders for so-called luxury goods; this it is said exploded the myth that the country was flooded with luxury goods after the liberalised import policy. Thousands of unemployed Tamils in Sinhala areas with a working knowledge of Sinhala and educated in Tamil are in luck's way as they have a good chance of being selected to teach Tamil to Sinhala children in schools—CDM. Far reaching amendments to the present Companies Ordinance, have been recommended by a committee of senior lawyers appointed by the Bar Association. The Minister of Labour has instructed labour officials to visit workplaces and check whether all employees

are being paid the Rs. 50 special allowance. No CTB buses would be permitted to transport people to political meetings and no political demonstrations would be allowed in future, the PM has told a delegation from the UNP trade Union organisations. India has granted Sri Lanka a credit of Rs. 100 million rupees to purchase goods from India, the Minister of Finance said today in New Delhi—SU. The government is taking action to import 1000 lorry chassis as there is a terrible shortage of lorries to transport goods from the port—DP. The Pottuvil MP who recently crossed over to the government has said that if relief does not come to the Tamil people within two years he would resign—EN.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17: India has granted credit to the extent of Rs. 300 million—the highest level of credit ever given to Sri Lanka by her—to finance the purchase of capital and intermediate goods and 50,000 tons of wheat. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has sought the advice of the Attorney General with regard to the application made by a Bikkhu to be admitted and enrolled as an Attorney-at-law. The election petition that was filed against Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, second MP for Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya has been withdrawn—CDN. The government has warned manufacturers of consumer goods that if they continue to fleece the public frustrating the election pledges of the UNP, stern action would be taken which would result in their having to 'face the wall'. The government has decided that all local bodies should directly handle development work in their areas; this was earlier done by the Territorial Civil Engineering Organisation. Trincomalee Port is now gradually rerutning to normal after years of virtual inactivity, due to frequent labour disputes. Eleven central dispensaries in the Anuradhapura district had to be closed in the past few months due to various reasons but most due to shortage of staff, drugs and equipment—CDM. Consumers will soon have to pay more for their flour and sugar—as a result of a rise in the world prices of these items. The Minister of Fisheries on a visit to Mannar and Mullaitivu said that he has decided to provide housing loans, water supply facilities and many other benefits to fishermen. The Fisheries Corporation will go into the dried fish trade soon, on a decision taken by the Minister of Fisheries. The Finance Minister said yesterday that India has agreed to extend a record amount as credit to Sri Lanka because Sri Lanka was becoming more credit worthy in the eyes of the donor countries—SU. The PM said that he would not permit anyone to indulge in bribery in his government and if anyone did that they would be dismissed forthwith—VK. The Minister of Local Government has instructed the Colombo Municipality to begin immediately the construction of a new library building for Colombo—CO. H. E. Mr. Nafi Sulaiman, was appointed by the Government of Iraq as Ambassador to Sri Lanka—IDPR No. 7/78. H.E. Mr. John Olatunji Omoludun, has been appointed by the government of Nigeria to Sri Lanka concurrently with residence in New Delhi—IDPR No. 6/78. An agreement was signed between the government of Sri Lanka and Prima Ltd, of the Republic of Singapore on the 17 September for the construction of a flour mill complex at Trincomalee; after 20 years of operation the entire flour milling complex will be gifted to the government of Sri Lanka; it is estimated that the government will save Rs. 150 million per year on the cost of imports of flour—IDPR.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION

During The First 150 Days

—Performance Of Work—

LEGISLATION

(1) Far reaching changes were effected in the system of Local Government elections by the enactment of the Local Government (Special Provisions) Act. For the first time in the history of Local Government in this country, elections to Local Bodies will be held on the basis of proportional representation. The new Act will also provide for the direct election of Mayors and Chairmen of Local Authorities. This new law, which was enacted after a deep study of the pattern of Local Government elections during the past several years, will change the pattern of Local Government in this country by doing away with the system of Wards and provide for the direct election of Mayor/Chairman and members on a system of proportional representation. It is hoped that this will help to eliminate parochial consideration in the election of members and will also help to eliminate corruption and irregularities in the election of Mayor/Chairmen of Local Authorities.

(2) A glaring anomaly in the Municipal and Urban Council Ordinance was the absence of bye-laws to control parking of motor vehicles. Though parking has become a big problem due to the unprecedented increase of vehicles, the local authorities were powerless to implement a planned system of parking of vehicles. In order to control parking, the Municipal and Urban Council Ordinances were amended empowering these Councils to make their own bye-laws to control the parking of vehicles, other than CTB Buses. These bye-laws will enable the local authorities to relieve vehicular congestion in the fast developing Municipal and Urban areas.

(3) Legislation was enacted to confer ownership of houses to more than 10,000 tenants of houses vested under the ceiling on Housing Property Law and who were

put to lot of hardship under the existing laws. Amendment to the Ceiling on Housing Property Law, which was passed in September, 1977 empowers the Commissioner of National Housing to transfer outright the ownership of these houses where the standard rent does not exceed Rs 25/- per month to the tenants occupying these houses without any further payments. This fulfils a promise of the Government.

(4) Genuine one-house owners in this country were undergoing lot of hardships due to difficulty in recovering their houses from the tenants. For the first time relief has been provided to these one-house owners without, at the same time causing hardships to the tenants of these houses. The Commissioner of National Housing will step in to provide alternate accommodation to these tenants and give back these houses to the owners. The Rent Amendment Law No. 10 of September, 1977 provides for this relief. This too fulfils a promise of the Government.

ADMINISTRATION

(1) The gross mis-use of power in the administration of Municipal, Urban Councils and other local bodies was a common feature during the time of the last regime. The situation got aggravated with the illegal extension of the life of these local bodies. There was a crying need for the appointment of Presidential Commissions to inquire into these mis-deeds.

(2) A Presidential one-man Commission was set up under the Chairmanship of Mr. G. P. A. de Silva, retired Chief Justice to inquire into various malpractices in the Municipal Councils. This Commission has already submitted its interim report after completing its investigations into the activities of the Colombo Municipal Council. The Commission is now investigating the other Municipal Councils.

(3) A Presidential one-man Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. W. D. Gunawardena, retired Commissioner of Local Government to inquire into the malpractices of the Urban Councils.

(4) Notices have been published by the Commissioner of Local Government inviting representations in respect of malpractices in Town Councils and Village Councils.

(5) Pending the passage of the Local Authorities Special Provisions Law and new elections to be held for all Local Authorities, action was taken to dissolve all Local Authorities which remained un-dissolved as on July 22, 1977. Special Commissioners were appointed to all these Local Bodies.

(6) The development work of the Local Authorities were completely neglected with the Territorial Civil Engineering Organization taking over the development work under their wing. The Territorial Civil Engineering Organization became such a huge, impracticable unmanageable system and the worst sufferers were Local Bodies. The Government therefore, decided that all Local Authorities should directly handle all development work in Local bodies. Technical officers who belonged to the Local Authorities and who were taken over by the TCEO were reverted back to the Local Government Department on a decision made by the Government. These technical officers are now posted to the various local authorities and they have been assigned the development work of the local bodies.

(7) Two lakhs of rupees have been allocated to each electorate for the year 1978 to meet the expenses of Village works to be undertaken by the local bodies.

(8) Rs. 3 million has been set apart for the establishment of Public Libraries in each of the 108 Village Councils where there are no libraries at present.

(9) The source of revenue of Local Bodies have been dwindling over the years. This has been a sore point with all local authorities. A Committee has now been appointed to explore ways and means to increase the source of revenue of all local authorities.

(10) Tenants in the Housing Schemes owned by the Local Authorities have been living on a rent-purchase basis all these years. Action has now been taken to transfer the ownership of these houses out-right to the tenants.

(11) Duplication Road, which was closed for traffic at Slave Island Junction has now been opened after a lapse of one year. The lighting of Duplication Road has been undertaken and the shrubs and weeds are now being cleared.

(12) The Colombo Municipal Council was directed to appoint

Co-ordinating Officers, one for each of the 47 wards. Four Supervising Officers have been appointed to supervise their work. These Co-ordinating Officers will be responsible to co-ordinate all services like garbage clearing, repairs to roads, street lighting, water supply, drainage etc. This scheme is working very satisfactorily and from the statistics available it is noted that the scheme is improving daily. The largest number of telephone calls received by the Municipal Council in the past was regarding defective street lighting. Now hardly any complaints are received regarding this matter. These Co-ordinating Officers have come to stay and residents have sent letters that they are a boon to the City. Co-ordinating Officers go to the field for 2 hours every day and ascertain the difficulties of the public and remedy these defects.

(13) A scheme of Traffic Wardens has been introduced in Colombo to regularize parking of vehicles. They are now functioning in the Pettah, Fort and Kollupitiya areas. They eliminate the need for the purchase of expensive parking meters. This will be extended to Welwatte area next month. Further areas will be covered in due course. This scheme has been welcomed by the Police and the public. Not a single case of theft of parts of cars have been reported after the inauguration of the traffic scheme. Each Traffic Warden gets an average of Rs. 18/- a day for 5 hours of work. This has enabled the Colombo Municipal Council to give employment to a large number of unemployed young girls.

(14) All defective lights in the streets have now been repaired. The long drawn out tussle that took place between the Ceylon Electricity Board and the Council regarding the switching off and the switching on of street lights was settled by the Ministry. This has now become the responsibility of the Colombo Municipality and the Council is now in a position to ascertain delays and identify the lights that are not working. Prompt action is being taken to repair these lights.

(15) Every street in the Colombo City is now being manned by two employees who are responsible for cleaning, weeding and in general keeping the street clean. Their

names have been noted down at the beginning of the street.

(16) All Local Authorities, including the Colombo Municipal Council have been directed to attend to urgent repairs of all the pavements and side-walks in the respective areas and to keep them clean thereafter.

(17) Various improvements are being effected in order to ensure improved and efficient water supply to Colombo and the suburbs.

(18) A Committee was appointed to draw up a programme to implement the Government Policy of building 100,000 houses within the 6 year period of the Government. This Committee has submitted its report and implementation of the programme has commenced.

(19) The following incentives have been provided for private house developers; removing the restrictions that governed these incentives earlier.

(a) Those who construct houses where the floor area does not exceed 500 square feet would be given 100% exemption from income tax on the profits realized from the sale of such houses;

(b) Private developers who construct houses where the floor area exceeds 500 square feet but does not exceed 1000 square feet would get 50% exemption from income tax on profits realized by the sale of such houses;

(c) Employers who build houses for their employees will be granted 100% exemption from income tax from all expenditure incurred on such construction.

(20) The amount of money available for housing loans per year has been raised from Rs. 30 million to Rs. 45 million. The bulk of the increase will be channelled to improving housing in rural areas.

(21) Under the 100,000 houses programme, 50,000 houses under self-help will be built during the next 6 years. The Department of National Housing has identified sites and will shortly commence construction on 6,000 self-help houses to be completed in 1978, dispersed throughout the country at a cost of Rs. 38 million. At least 5,000 of these will be in rural areas.

(22) The Department of National Housing has also inaugurated a programme for the up-grading of

rural houses. Two Pilot Projects—one at Bingiriya and one at Kuliya-pitiya—are to commence shortly, and depending on the results, this will be extended throughout the country. Money has been provided for this for 1978.

(23) The Department of National Housing has acquired land and will shortly commence the construction of two new townships, each consisting of approximately 2,000 houses at Seeduwa, North of Colombo and Kottawa, South of Colombo. In addition, land has been acquired for several other large housing estates totalling a further 4,000 units and here too construction work will commence shortly.

(24) Relief has been provided to tenants in housing schemes by exempting them from the payment of rates to the local authorities.

(25) A Committee has been appointed to review the hardships caused to house-owners under the Ceiling on Housing Property Law and to examine in general the work of the National Housing Department and recommend improvements.

(26) In order to avoid delays in the construction of buildings, it has been decided to re-introduce the system of building construction by inviting public tenders. This system will be implemented side by side with the direct labour system.

(27) A Committee has been appointed to investigate the work of the Building Department to recommend ways and means of implementing programmes more efficiently in the Buildings Department.

(28) A new distribution system has been inaugurated by the Building Materials Corporation by introducing one retail out-let in each electorate. These are affiliated to the 18 wholesale depots throughout the Island.

(29) Rs. 40 million worth of building materials is being imported in order to ease the severe shortage of building materials.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

(1) Night Bazaars, unprecedented in the history of Sri Lanka have been started in the Galle Face area, Kandy, Galle and Moratuwa. A Sunday Day Bazaar has been started on Main Street, Pettah.

(2) A beautiful Fountain has been installed in the Beira near the Night Bazaar site and the large crowds that throng the Night Bazaar every Saturday speak for the success of the Night Bazaar.

(3) The Beira Lake has been transformed completely and a Boating service in the lake was inaugurated.

(4) The Island in the Beira Lake, opposite the Colombo Commercial Company is being developed as an Amusement Park named "Singithi Uyana" for the children. This will be inaugurated shortly. Mr. Munisamy, who was occupying the Island has left the place with gentle persuasion and with the provision of adequate housing.

(5) The Beira, neglected for over centuries has taken on a new life by the joint efforts of the Colombo Municipality, the Colombo Commercial Company and with the co-operation of other Departments, Corporations and the Private Sector.

(6) The Yihara Maha Devi Park has taken on a brighter look than ever before and in two weeks time when the work is completed it will turn out to be one of Colombo's attractive spots. It has been planned to keep the Park open till

10.00 p.m. daily. A Park Warden is being appointed and a Police Post will be installed in the area in order to ensure protection for the public. An Amusement Park is being opened up with a Cafeteria. Three unused fountains are being re-activated.

(7) The Municipal Council in collaboration with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce has distributed all the Roundabouts in the City to various private firms and Corporations for development.

(8) Two hundred hand-carts are being utilised by the Colombo Municipal Council in collaboration with the Colombo Commercial Company (Engineers) Ltd. for the disposal of garbage in the City of Colombo. This is bound to give a new look to the City of Colombo where, for several years, 400 tons of garbage has been collected daily with only 20 lorries, each of which are more than 20 years old and with 5 lorries breaking down daily.

(9) Work regarding the landscaping of the Galle Face Green has commenced.

(10) Accelerated development has re-commenced on the Maligawatte Development Scheme.

(11) The blue-print for the Pettah Development Scheme and the Fort Development Scheme are nearing completion through the intensified efforts of the Colombo Master Plan Authorities and the Town and Country Planning Department.

(12) Work has commenced on the re-development of the Pettah Markets.

(13) The construction of the new St. John's Market and the new Market at Maligawatte has commenced.

(14) An intensive programme of slum clearance and provision of new housing for slum dwellers has been undertaken in the City. Work has already started at Dias Place, Wolfendhal, Ambagawatte at Narahenpita and at Lockgate Lane (Canal Bank). Work is also due to commence at Madampitiya in order to re-house slum dwellers at the Summit Pura and at Slave Island opposite the Rio Theatre for slum dwellers in Slave Island.

(15) The completely neglected Mutwal Canal is being cleaned and re-constructed and work is due to be completed by the end of this month.

(16) Accelerated development has been initiated with regard to the Sacred Area development programme at Kataragama and Kelaniya. Work has also commenced on the Seruwila Sacred area scheme.

(17) Local Authorities in collaboration with the State Engineering Corporation have undertaken the construction of Pre-cast bridges to improve transport facilities in inaccessible village areas.

Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction,
Colombo 1. January 12, 1978.

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IN THE NSA

January 19th, 20th.

by Tribune Lobby Correspondent

LAST WEEK the National State Assembly passed into law two bills, the Finance (Amendment) Bill and the Greater Colombo Economics Commissions bill. The latter dominated the proceedings because the Free Trade Zone it sought to establish was a centre of controversy. The Constitutional Court ruling and the Prime Minister's surprise move to delete the clauses held to be inconsistent with the Constitution added to the interest generated. The Prime Minister's gesture was one which only a consummate politician of his calibre could make. Nothing would be lost as the necessary amendments in the substantive law could be easily made and an attempt to reach a parliamentary consensus so necessary for a Bill of this nature could never be a loss but a gain.

However the Opposition consisting of the TULF and SLFP chose to oppose the Bill. The Member for Nallur, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, who was the main spokesman for the TULF gave as the reason for their opposition the socialist policies of the TULF and the failures of other FTZs in the region. The problems that could arise from two economies operating side by side in one country were raised both by Mr. Sivasithamparam and by Mr. Kathiravelupillai, Member for Kopay, who used the very colourful phrase "a nudists' colony in a convent" to describe the situation. The implications of allowing an Authority to administer a large area inhabited by a sizeable

Notice under section 7 of the Land Acquisition Act (Ch. 460) as amended by the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act, No. 28 of 1964.

Reference No. ATH 10/128

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Republic of Sri Lanka No. 302 (Part iii) of 27/01/1978.

SCHEDULE

D.R.O.'s Division: Attanagalla
Village: Nambadaluwa
Name of Land:
Lot. No.: 1
Plan No. P.P. Co.: 4525

D. W. Abeywickrama
District Land Officer.

The Kachcheri,
Colombo.
Date: 06.01.1978

chunk of the population were very ingeniously connected to the demand for a separate state by Mr. X. M. Sellathambo, member for Mullaitivu.

The SLFP which did not have the freedom to manoeuvre as easily as the TULF because of its policy statements on foreign investment and initiatives on a FTZ of its own had as its spokesman Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, second member for Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya. Without disassociating himself completely from the earlier SLFP stand, he brought forward the arguments regarding exploitation of labour, pollution, transfer of technology, usurpation of powers of local authorities and in general the possibility of the failure of the FTZ to live up to expectations. The threat to the country's economic and political sovereignty posed by a FTZ seemed to weigh very heavily on him. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike used the debate as a forum to expose and embarrass her erstwhile cabinet colleague Dr. N. M. Perera for his acquiescence regarding her proposal for a FTZ. Common points raised by the TULF and by the SLFP were the possibilities of exploitation of labour by foreign capitalists because of the non-applicability of labour legislation such as the Industrial Disputes Act and the possibility of excessive profits being made by the investors. Objections were also raised regarding the nature and extent of land demarcated for the FTZ. Mr. Bandaranaike also attempted to show that all the bad things in the industrialised countries would be concentrated in the FTZ such as pollution, retrenchment due to recession, repetitive labour and high-flying life styles for the executive of the investor companies.

The government spokesmen based their arguments on the worldwide acceptance of the inevitability of foreign investment. As Minister for Trade, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, put it, the only alternative to foreign investment was the complete scrapping of all subsidies. The price one would have to pay for that would be too high. So foreign investment became inevitable, he said.

The fears of the Opposition regarding low wages in the FTZ were pooh-poohed by Mr. Ronnie de Mel, Minister of Finance and Planning who gave an assurance

to the House that wages and working conditions within the Zone will be much higher than in the rest of the country. One got an indication of the government's hopes regarding the FTZ from the speech of the Minister of Trade who visualised the FTZ as an "economic catalyst" and a turning point in the country's economic development. The Prime Minister spoke on the same lines when he saw in the FTZ a means of solving the unemployment and cost of living problems and in the event of the failure of the FTZ and other economic programs of the government, he foresaw new and unknown forces coming to power.

The government spokesmen who constantly drew attention to the SLFP government's proposals for foreign investment emphasised the fact that the FTZ concept had the advantage of limiting the operation of the multi-national Corporations to a specified area. Within that area, they could behave even like "robber barons" Mr. Jayawardene said. The bill envisaged industries coming up outside the specified area due to raw material or other factors which would be licensed with the Zone authority. This drew much criticism but when the theoretical argument was connected to the reality of the proposed Trincomalee Flour Mill, one saw some members of the Opposition placed in an uncomfortable position. This could have been the reason why the TULF benches were not full when the division was taken.

The Prime Minister in his reply to the Opposition reiterated the urgency of the need to create employment opportunities and to develop the country. He saw in the TULF's opposition an indifference to development in the South and in the SLFP's opposition the desire to oppose all measures of the government. He also added that while all clauses held inconsistent with the Constitution which affected trade union rights would be deleted, some other clauses such as those affecting exchange control would not be deleted because of problems of implementation of the law. Therefore, this became, in spite of the earlier dramatic gesture, a Bill that had to be passed by a two thirds majority under Section 52 of the Constitution. And, in 130 votes for and 12

against, the government got a higher majority.

An announcement in the House by Mr. Percy Samaraweera, Acting Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs regarding the reinstatement and revocation of all penalties on political victims in government and local government and in corporations was another matter of interest in the House last week.

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FROM OUR READERS

TWO REPLIES

* Answering 'NAD'

Sir,

As a regular reader of *Tribune*, within the last three months, I had come across the regular communications to the Editor by a gentleman (or lady—I don't know!) under the pseudonyms "Regular (recently) *Tribune* Reader—A Jaffna Tamil" (*Tribune*, 24.9.77; 15.10.77) and "NAD" (*Tribune*, 29.10.77; 26.11.77; 24.12.77) from Colombo.

As this person (I've to refer to him in this way, because I don't know to which gender he belongs to; nope, he will pardon me.) had noted,

"I am not seeking to hide my identity for any special reason or because of some phobia, but purely because my contribution may be received in a better light than otherwise."

As the reason for his 'masking', I accept his word and write my humble comments regarding his views on the racial problem, and how I differ from him, for the better enlightenment of the *Tribune* readers.

According to NAD, "Every other political party has rejected the idea" of Eelam (*Tribune* 29.10.77). I humbly ask NAD why? This is because, all other political parties, UNP, SLFP, LSSP, CP, MEP, and even JVP (both, Rajaratne-based and Wijeweera-based) are Sinhalese oriented. Even the broad-based UNP of the pre-1956 era, to outwit SWRD.B, cooed with the 'Sinhala only' cry. In the post-1956 era, not a single Tamil was able to raise his head, even in the so-called Marxist parties. What

happened to Bala Tampoe and Nagalingam Shanmugathan, in the 1960s? These two differed from FP in their ideals, and they were fighting for the unification of Sinhala-Tamil masses. But, when factionalism broke out, those comrades who worship Marx and Lenin, chid and derided them in the spicy communal communism! Hence, in the post-1956 era, every other political party lost the right of representing Tamil minority, virtually to the FP (then) and TULF (now). So how can we expect the Eelam proposition to be accepted by 'other political parties' who are interested in preserving the 'Sinhala-only' bases?

May I recollect at this instance, what happened to the Sinhala-Left leader, Mr. Edmund Samarakkody in the 1965 elections. For the fault of asking parity status for Sinhala and Tamil, Samarakkody had to suffer the most humiliating defeat faced by a Left leader in the hands of Sinhala masses. He polled only 274 votes in Bulathsinhala, although being a sitting MP at that time. And mark you, he was the 'David' who collected over 10,000 votes when he pitted against the 'Goliath' D. S. Senanayake in his pocket-borough Mirigama constituency, in 1947 election. D.S.S. polled around 25,000 votes. That was the price, Samarakkody had to face at the hand of Sinhala voters, when he asked parity status for Tamil also!

NAD refers "The voting pattern, despite statistical jugglery of every description, points to a vote against Eelam." (Tribune, 29.10.77) I don't want to disturb his way of thinking. But, as Rev. Fr. Joseph Mary had put it "regarding Tamil Eelam—be it fact or fiction—it is vital to ask not HOW MANY have voted for it, WHY people have voted for it." (Tribune, 12.11.77), I also like NAD to think on the lines for answering this mystery. If I am not boasting, I would like him to glance at my "OPEN LETTER TO COMRADE COLVIN" (Independent, Nov. 18.1977) to get a birds-eye-view on this matter.

NAD bubbles with ebullence that "It was a great speech of the Bishop of Kurunegala, the Rt. Rev. Lakshman Wickremasinghe at a meeting recently in Jaffna. He was a brave man to say such brave words." (Tribune, 29.10.77) Yes, I accept it was a great speech,

but I will commend Rt. Rev. Wickremasinghe as brave, if he has the same enthusiasm to repeat his speech in Kurunegala, or in Colombo (Hyde Park) or in Anuradhapura or in Kandy! not—otherwise.

I suppose NAD leans too much on the present Prime Minister (soon to be a President). I don't blame him for that, because a good politician, as defined by Winston Churchill, is one who would say that 'this' would happen tomorrow, and the next day he should be able to reconcile the masses and tell, why 'that' thing had not happened, because of 'this'.

In Sri Lanka, we have good examples for Churchill's definition. In the Election manifesto, the politician will say that "Tamil-speaking people have numerous problems.. The Party, when it comes to power, will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as 1) Education 2) Colonisation 3) Use of Tamil Language, etc."

But, after capturing the power, the politician will say, "that particular legislation cannot be changed now," and "Colonisation policies of D. S. Senanayake will be followed in the same way," and so on, with (without!) knowing that the "problems" are not remedied, but still aggravated!

Regarding the Education, NAD is full of praise for the PM and his Minister of Education, saying, "His first act of doing away with the evil of standardisation will go down to history as the first step towards reconciliation with the Tamil community". Yes, I agree if it is so, in spirits; but still we don't know how the standardisation had been removed. And NAD throws a punch on TULF, 'How churlish of the TULF not to have made known its appreciation of the removal of that curse?' Why I ask NAD?—The proof of the pudding is in the eating, dear; and the Tamils have to wait till the release of the list of University Admissions 1978 (most probably around April or May 78, at the earliest:— imagine the plight of the students, who are eligible for 1978 admissions, but have to sit for the April 1978 examination also, to prepare themselves for 1979 admissions, if the 1978 list doesn't include them! what price our bureaucratic bankruptcy!), to see whether standardisation had been removed, in words or in deeds.

Until then, TULF need not show its appreciation, I suppose. NAD says "I have never been to a University", but I humbly claim that I had the fortune (or is it misfortune!) to pass the standardisation barrier and enter into the portals of our University, and I personally feel how this sole-factor alone had sowed the seeds of 'Eelam' in the minds of Tamil youth.

S. Sri Kantha

10, L-Block,
Ground Floor,
Government Flats,
Colombo 4.
12.1.78

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* Christian Rebel

Sir,

The "Christian Rebel" who, on Christmas Day, remained at home, nursing like a perfect Pharisee the thought that "Jesus was nearer to him than to the rest of mankind who dressed gaily and went to praise the Lord," does not sound very convincing.

First of all, he seems to have got all his notions of the Bible mixed up. Those words: "Do you love me?" etc. were not spoken on the Cross, but on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias after Jesus rose from the dead; they were spoken not to John, Jesus' best friend, but to Peter. In the context the words 'feed my sheep' (in Latin, 'pascere') have to be understood to mean 'tend', take care of, look after my sheep. It is not a question here of giving bread or rice to Christ's disciples, but true guidance and preaching the doctrine of Christ.

Of course somewhere else Jesus enjoins us to feed the hungry, but not in the text our rebel quotes. Even so, the question I would like to ask is this:—Is there any season during the year when Christians are more generous to the poor, especially to the poor children, than on Christmas Day? What does Santa Claus mean? Is there not greater joy on Christmas Day in giving than in receiving?

I can vouch on my part that in this little corner of Deniyaya where we Christians are far from being the majority, more than two thousand rupees were given in gifts to the poor either in clothes or in rice and curries, or in useful items for their school.

Who does not know that the hospital patients, cancer wards or prisoners were treated to food and carols, to share in the common joy?

"All that tamasha (of Christmas) would not have pleased Jesus. He was more concerned that the people be provided with food," our friend says.

That reminds me of a certain banquet when Jesus told another rebel that one could help the poor always, but that Mary Magdalen had done no wrong in 'squandering' (!) three hundred denarii on perfumes, symbolically in preparation for Jesus' burial.

Abuses are abuses, and we shall be the first to condemn all waste and selfishness; but it would be niggardly of us to rivet our undivided attention on the miseries of this world and never open our hearts and smile at other aspects of human life, such as the joy at the birth of a child, especially when that child happens to be the very God whom we adore.

This world is not wholly a valley of tears. There are mountains, too, to regale you with the solemn glory of a beautiful sunrise or the broad expanse of a grand landscape.

Nay, even to relieve the poor, we ourselves need a good dose of infectious joy.

Tell me, don't the poor themselves enjoy Christmas and forget for a while their miseries at the sight of the Crib, the Christmas feast of lights, the decorations and lilting songs? Do they expect every day to be Good Friday? Are they incurably unhappy because their fare is not as abundant as their neighbour's? Man does not live on bread alone.

Our rebel, I feel, would have done better if, instead of misanthropically lying on his bed and philosophising about the wickedness of the 'fat cats singing God's praises' on Christmas Day, he, too, had moved out and offered something, whatever he had, to share his joy with the poor. Then Jesus would have been nearer to him, indeed!

C. Jannaccone, S.J.

Deniyaya.
10.1.78

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THE CARAVAN FAMILY—I

Getting Ready

by Ina Trimmer

I am going to tell you about two little girls and their brother, Varuni, the eldest was thirteen years old. She was tall for her age with long, rather thin legs and long wavy hair tied in a pony tail. Varuni was a good all-round athlete. She was in the school basketball team, and she was her class champion in running jumping and swimming. She swam so well that she had won several prizes. Ranjit, the second in this small family was eleven years old. He was short like Mummie who Daddy said was a tiny little thing. Ranjit was good at cricket, better at Cricket than lessons. This worried Daddy a bit because he wanted Ranjit to be as clever as himself but all the same he was proud that Ranjit would one day be in his college team. Niloufer, the youngest called Nila for short was the baby though she was already nine years. Nila was very pretty. She had short curls and large dark brown eyes, and she was very fair. Daddy called her sometimes his "Sudu Kella", for love. Nila was going to be a dancer. She had begun dancing lessons two years ago and could stand on her toes for quite a long time; she even had a habit of walking on her toes. Then there were Mummie and Daddy, Mummie who looked like a little girl herself and Daddy so tall and handsome. He was what is known as a Diplomat. He went flying to far away countries, met a number of people, talked a lot, and came back bringing presents for everybody.

Daddy had just returned from England. Varuni, Ranji and Nila had gone with their Mummie to meet him at the airport. They were all very excited. They knew there would be presents for them, Varuni wanted an under-water swimming set. Ranji had asked for the best cricket bat that Daddy could buy. Nila who was still very babyish chose a walkie-talkie doll as big as herself and Mummie of course wanted clothes. She could never have enough of sarees and bags.

So they all went to the airport to meet Daddy in their large cream and red car, and then they came home and talked. Daddy with Nila on his knee, while Ranji sat on

the arm of the chair and Mummie and Varuni drew theirs up quite close. Everybody was most excited and happy.

Then Daddy said, "Children, I have a big surprise for you and Mummie."

"What is it? What is it?" they shouted, "tell us quickly".

"We are going to have a caravan. I saw a beautiful caravan in a motor show in London, and I thought we must have one too. Then we'll tour Ceylon and Mummie and I will show you three children what a beautiful island we live in. One day perhaps you will also go, I hope, to far countries, but before you visit them you must first see and know your own land. I don't want anyone to think that my children are ignorant of their own country when they go visiting other places."

"Daddy", said a small voice, "what is a caravan?"

"Silly", said Ranji, "Nila doesn't know anything. All she knows is about dolls."

"A caravan is a little house on wheels", answered Daddy giving her a hug.

"Does it move?"

"Of course it does", said Ranji. "It's like a great big car, but sometimes another car drags it."

"Quite right"! Daddy patted Ranji "He's clever is our Ranji".

"Of course he is," said Mummie proudly. "He reads a lot."

"Well", said Daddy, "the Caravan I saw in London was terribly expensive, so I'll get one made here, exactly like it, but it will cost less. I'll buy a second-hand lorry and turn it into a caravan".

"Daddy when? When will you buy the lorry?" asked the children, excitedly.

"At once."

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes! I'll see about the lorry tomorrow. I know of a good one that is for sale. We must have it ready for the holidays".

"But Daddy", broke in Mummie, "This is already June. It won't be possible."

"You wait and see what I can do. But all of you must help."

"Yes!, Yes!, We'll help. But how?"

"Mummie must sew the curtains. Varuni and Nila will help her. Ranji, you must come into

my work-room and we will make all sorts of little gadgets."

Daddy was a clever carpenter and Mummie called his work-room his play pen. He had a large saw that worked by electricity. It made funny noises and frightened everybody but Daddy who in five minutes cut through a large plank which if done by hand would take almost half a day.

It was not long before he came home and said, "I've bought the lorry. Who likes to go and see it?"

The whole family jumped up. "Where is it?" said Mummie. "What make and what horse power?" asked Ranji, "and is it in perfect condition?"

"It's a Dodge" daddy replied, "come let's go and see it".

So they all got into the car and went to see the lorry. It was like a house, so large. Daddy pointed to one place and said, "This will be your room children and that part will be the kitchen." Here will be the dining room and here, our bed room but in the evenings we will sit out on top, because I am going to have it fitted up something like a two-decker bus."

"Wonderful," said Mummie, but the children could not understand how an old lorry which used to carry tea from the hill country to Colombo could be made into a house to live in. However, Daddy was very clever so they were content to wait and see.

One day at the end of March there was the tooting of a horn in the garden.

"Children" called Mummie, "come and see". There was Daddy standing by a beautiful little house on wheels.

"The caravan' the caravan!" shouted Ranjit.

"Daddy-ee" screamed Nila.

Mummie ran out "we want to see it, we want to get inside", she said.

In a minute Daddy fixed a little step-ladder on to the back and everyone trooped in. "Here's the dining room" said Daddy. From the sides he pulled out a table and five chairs, all painted green. There was cupboards all round and shelves painted cream. A thin partition and a door led to the two rooms one for Mummie and Daddy, and the other for the three children. There were inset cup-

boards for clothes and hanging mirrors, and beds for each one, arranged like those in a railway sleeper, one above the other. Nothing was missing; everything was there for comfort, including a little bathroom and toilet just beyond, with wash basin and all the necessary taps.

Last of all came the kitchen. "Oh!" gasped Mummie when she saw the kitchen. Daddy had not forgotten anything. There was an oil stove, a table for cutting things on, shelves and cupboards, a sink and goodness knows what not.

Then they all came, out again and climbed up a little ladder on one side, to the top deck, where there were more folding chairs and a table.

"This is where we'll sit in the evenings, and at the further end we shall take our luggage and a small tent in case of necessity should we wish to sleep or eat outside." Daddy looked at Mummie — "Now," he said "it's your turn, you and Varuni must sew the curtains and the cushions while Ranjit and I will attend to the gadgets."

What a day that was when the Caravan came home, ready to take them wherever they wanted to go!

Mummie went shopping and bought material for curtains and cushions and she and Varuni and Ayah were busy sewing. Very soon all the little windows were dressed up with curtains, cream colour and green. The effect when it was all finished was lovely. In the dining room each chair was a different colour. Mummie chose cream and Daddy wanted green. Varuni said she would like yellow but Nila began to cry saying that she wanted blue. So Varuni said, "all right" "Let her have blue". Then mummie suggested orange and Varuni agreed. Ranjit wanted red. Daddy said, "Son, are coming events already throwing their shadows?" and no one understood what he meant, except Mummie who laughed.

The dining room looked really lovely when it was all finished. There was even a bowl of flowers on the dining table.

At last everything was ready and they waited only for the Easter holidays to begin. Daddy had taken one month's leave and weren't the children excited.

"Mummie will we sleep also in the Caravan?" asked little Nila.

"Of course you silly," answered Ranjit. "What do you think a caravan is for? To go to the shops and to drive about?"

Nila was a little afraid of Ranjit, so she didn't say a word.

Then one day Daddy came home with a big map of Ceylon. "Children come and look where we are going."

"I don't like geography" said Nila.

"Not geography idiot. We are only going to see where and where we are going", said Ranjit.

Daddy took Nila on his knee. "Come along baby, come and see where we are going and hear about all the wonderful things we'll do together."

They all pressed close up to see better.

"Now, here's Colombo", said Daddy pointing with his finger. "I propose that we start off along the West Coast, leaving Colombo early in the morning. Where would you like to lunch Mummie?"

"Somewhere near Hikkaduwa".

"Not Coral Gardens. We must avoid, whenever possible, man-made places. But I know of a lovely spot close by where we can bathe in Nature's own pond. And I suggest we spend the night on Unawatuna Beach."

"Where's that?" asked Mummie.

"Not far from Galle. We must make Galle our headquarters for a day at least. There is so much to see there."

Before anyone could say a word, Ranjit began to scamper around, jumping and dancing. "Golly! That's super-duper. Nihal, my friend, said there's wonderful bathing at Unuwattuna."

"And from there, where do we go?" asked Mummie.

"We'll run through Weligama of course and pay a flying visit to Matara, then on to Dondra or Devinuwara a city of the Gods, where we'll stay the night. You must climb the Light house, one of the highest in the East, a wonderful place of scenic beauty."

"And then", broke in Ranjit impatiently.

Daddy's finger moved down on the map, further south past Tan-

galle to Hambantota. "We'll lunch here" he said but we go on for the night to Yala."

My goodness what a commotion there was when Daddy said Yala. Mummie hugged him, Nila kissed him but she wasn't sure where she kissed him. She only knew it must be a wonderful place because everyone was so happy.

Varuni whispered "It's a dream realized," while Ranjit scampered about shouting "Hooray! Elephants! Forests!"

It was impossible to talk because no one would sit still, so Daddy gave up in sheer disgust, and called Mummie out to the Verandah and told the children to go and play.

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TALES OF WOE

● C.G.R. ● C.T.B.

Rail Transport

Minister Mohamed talks airily of the wonderful service that the CGR will provide in a few months when 16 new locomotives and innumerable carriages arrive as a result of his recent trip to India. But the fact of the matter is that the locomotives have not been ordered yet nor shall we see the fruits of his present endeavours within the next two years. Special locomotives and carriages have to be manufactured to suit the conditions particular to our country, and before this new equipment arrives, the CGR services would have deteriorated beyond redemption.

Why does Minister Mohamed not come down to earth after his recent flights including his flights of fancy? He should even at this late stage get down to basic facts and find down-to-earth solutions. The salvation of the CGR lies in the quick introduction of efficiencies into CGR maintenance and operation activities.

Firstly, let the Minister look at output of new equipment from Ratmalana. Out of forty Bogie Covered Goods Wagons for which parts were imported over the last three years, only one solitary wagon has come out of the massive Ratmalana Complex over the last three years. Out of nearly four thousand wagons owned by the

CGR only a meagre three hundred make a loaded trip in any one day. Compare this with lorries which run up and down to Jaffna or the deep South with an overload every forty eight hours. Can anyone truly believe that there is a future for CGR freight after digesting this one fact? Should this country invest in more railway wagons at this juncture? Should not the railway administration be compelled to utilise existing wagons more efficiently rather than throw good money after bad on new wagon purchases which in any case will not be seen on local railway lines in the next few years?

Similarly purchase of new carriages, power coaches and locomotives is not the way to solve the railway's problems in the field of passenger transport. The Rumanian coaches which were bought a few years ago are so uncomfortable that they have brought disrepute in their wake. Ten of these coaches have been taken out of service already for sharp wheels and a high railway official has remarked that all one hundred and forty Rumanian coaches will have to be withdrawn within the next few weeks unless the supply of wheels complete with tyres is rushed through to change this desperate situation immediately. Tyres with thin flanges are a source of great danger.

Including the new Rumanian coaches there are one thousand one hundred coaches of which six hundred are overdue for scheduled repairs and are thus unsafe and in poor condition. Should not repair of existing stock be accelerated in preference to purchase of new stock? New stock attracts agency commissions. Repairs save the country's resources. Against an established target of 32 overhauled carriages out of Ratmalana workshops in a month, the average over the last three months has been only seven with a fantastically low output of four carriages in October. One of the best sawmills in the country has been brought to a standstill because of inefficiencies in the purchase of timber logs. Should not somebody answer for this lapse?

Already two of the ten brand new power coaches which arrived in Sri Lanka in 1977 have been withdrawn from service with broken propellor shafts. Only six

out of the previous batch of ten power coaches which were introduced into service two years ago are runners today. These power coaches which should have been overhauled at Ratmalana workshop after six, and twelve, thousand running hours have not sighted these shops yet. The obvious inference is that this equipment is being run to death. The plight of locomotives is similar. At no time in the recent past has more than nine out of fifteen W2 Class diesel hydraulic locomotives been in use at any one time. Three have been permanently out of service with crankcase damaged. These crankcases are the major and most expensive component of the diesel engine on these locomotives. Crankcases and crankshafts were damaged because inexpensive connecting rod bolts on high speed engines were not replaced at twelve thousand hours as per manufacturers' recommendations. The bolts failed with extensive consequential damage to the engines. Key railway personnel apparently do not learn from mistakes. Or is it more likely that they have no choice. If they act correctly there would be no railway service worth talking about from tomorrow. Virtually all the railways backbone of W1 & W2 locomotives—nearly sixty of them—are in service—without attention in Ratmalana Shops—to which they should have been subjected months and years ago. These locomotives can go to pieces or literally fall apart in service at any time any day. This is the service the public of Sri Lanka gets from its Ministry of Transport. Are not the Public entitled to a change?

This state of affairs is not the fault of officials. Politicians pamper workers. The most irresponsible of these workers cajole and bully themselves into positions as worker leaders, from where their irresponsibilities bring organisations to a standstill. The sooner responsible politicians locate the seat of inefficiencies, the sooner will this country take its first tottering steps towards prosperity. An essential ingredient for success is integrity, intelligence and dedication among people who wield power. They must be sure of their objectives and the path towards such objectives.

Rails

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Road Transport

It was very refreshing to read your comments about the article on the Ceylon Transport Board. It was equally heartening to note that the Prime Minister himself has also intervened in the transactions proposed by the Board in regard to purchase of buses and spare parts. The public has been reading almost daily what the Minister of Transport proposes to do. In as much as I have got sick of reading about the proposals of Minister Mohamed and his advisers, I am certain that the public must also be tired to the death reading of the proposals.

Shall we pause awhile and see what has been achieved? First achievement of that Ministry is to paint the buses green. What a colossal waste of public funds: is it not true that some one stepped in and imposed a surcharge on the lackeys who are indulging in cheap antics and bringing discredit to the government of J. R. Jayawardene. This brings to my mind the similar buffoonery of the co-operatives which started painting all their buildings blue when Mr. Llangaratne was Minister for Co-operatives. What has happened to Llangaratne? He has been thrown into the dustbin of history and will probably only merit a foot-note in any future historian's effort in writing the history of this country. Minister Mohamed is qualifying himself for a somewhat similar fate, at the rate in which he is proceeding. Does a green band around the bus chassis give an extra seat inside the bus, or make the bus crew more considerate?

Next is the Green Circle bus. It is still too early to say anything positive about this service, but it does seem to serve some purpose, because these are more frequent and at least it is not so crowded. Some remarked that any one travelling in Minister Mohamed's buses hardly need the attentions of a masseur. The rest of the intentions are still intentions. It looks as if the proposals to extend the rail service beyond Matara and Batticaloa will never be under-taken; and whoever made that decision to stop this further wastage must be thanked by the public. The rail services are so rotten already that the public will not want this persecution extended. The Rumanian coaches

are adequate reminders of man's inhumanity to man. One has only to travel on the northern line to know it's travails. And further, to sell these seats as sleeperettes is downright cheating. It is as bad as the Post Office accepting telegrams and transmitting them by ordinary post! To what depths have we descended. Surely this country deserves something better.

Another positive achievement of the Ministry of Transport is it's news coverage. It is obvious that the Minister has around him a surfeit of newspaper reporters, to cover his every move. His Press Officer deserves his thanks. But does the Minister know, or has he been told by his men what the public thinks of the services run by his Ministry? Minister Mohamed has been seen inspecting bus stands, receiving garlands and possibly partaking of refreshing food—after all did you not refer to a fantastic bill paid by the CTB for a couple of days spent by some officers in a five-star hotel? Now, where does all this add up to? As surely as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, Minister Mohamed is bringing immense discredit to the excellent government of J. R. Jayawardene. Has Minister Mohamed ever attempted to board a bus? Has his Chairman or other officials ever attempted to do so? They have been seen in ostentatious cars passing bus halts when the lesser mortals like you and me and others hang around at bus halts, waiting for buses that never come.

Several have remarked that a Ministry such as this should be given to a dynamic person like Minister Premadasa. They say that within one WEEK the service will improve or that heads will roll. In the Cabinet re-shuffle expected after 4th February, it will be opportune for this Minister Mohamed to be moved to a less demanding position such as for instance Sports or even Cultural Affairs. What he probably wants is to be a Minister and enjoy the perquisites of office. To make him a District Minister will ruin the district. Surely the UNP has dynamic young men to take over this Ministry? Political compulsions may be there but JR is strong enough and wise enough to take firm steps. Harold Macmillan did this once—in the night of the long knives. Why cannot our own brave JR?

Roots

WORLD LEPROSY DAY

An Appeal

by Al-haj S. M. A. Raschid, J.P.
Chairman of Leprosy Association
of Sri Lanka

The 25th Anniversary of "World Leprosy Day" will be celebrated in all parts of the World on Sunday 29th January 1978. This is a day dedicated not only to ameliorate the suffering and hardship of the leprosy patients but it is also a day devoted to offer a silent prayer on behalf of the leprosy patients, and to draw the world's attention to take tangible and meaningful steps to wipe out all lingering taboos and fears, so as to ensure that no victims of leprosy be condemned, by any section of society, to die a slow and monstrous death.

To commemorate this Day the Leprosy Association of Sri Lanka will be distributing Cash, Clothing, Uncooked Food, Vitamins, Disinfecting Soap, Milk, Tinned Food, Invalid's Food etc. to the families of all Leprosy Patients in Horana, Panadura, Moratuwa and Wadduwa. Next year it is hoped that the entire Western Province will be included and eventually the Association hopes to cover the whole Island. Contributions in cash and kind towards this laudable cause may be sent to the Associations Headquarters at No. 490, Havelock Road, Colombo 6.

World Leprosy Day is being celebrated not due to the initiative taken by any international organization such as the UNO or any other group of nations but due to the initiative of a far-sighted individual, a humble journalist, whose heart bled at the unjustified prejudices and the intolerable injustices inflicted on millions of silent and helpless suffering in all parts of the world including those living in countries acknowledged as advanced and affluent. His name is RAOUL FOLLEARAU a Frenchman who is now aged 74 years. So much has been done by one to so many that the leprosy patients, most of whom have not even seen a photo of his, affectionately call him PAPA RAOUL, our Apostle..

Due to his untiring efforts, today, in several countries endeavours are being made to treat leprosy patients as fellow human beings and not as

World Leprosy Day

outcasts of society. Steps are vigorously being taken to treat them as any other patient in ordinary hospitals. The public is being educated to realize that leprosy is much less contagious than tuberculosis and that leprosy is not hereditary.

Although the World Health Organization claims that there are only 11 million lepers in the world, knowledgeable medical circles are of the view that 15 million is a more realistic figure, as it is only now that in many parts of the world a systematic and scientific survey is being done in case finding, particularly among school going children

The unfortunate aspect as far as we Asians are concerned is the fact about 50 cent per of the victims live in Asia. Sri Lanka's estimated figure is in the region of 15,00. In other words one out of every thousand leprosy patient in the world lives in Sri Lanka, and one in every thousand citizen of Sri Lanka is a patient!

The task of evolving ways and means to arrest the spread of the disease is not an easy one. This complex task becomes all the more intricate when one is made aware of the fact that the majority of newly detected patients are school going children. Every month about 50 to 60 new cases are being detected.

Those who are not directly involved or concerned in arresting the spread of this once dreaded disease may say that as long as sulphone drugs which are cheaper than Aspirin, are readily available there is no reason to worry. Their complacent attitude will be shattered and they will be rudely shocked and surprised to learn that about 60 per cent of known cases in Sri Lanka wilfully, if not maliciously, refuse to take regular and systematic treatment by visiting the free Government Clinics at least once a month. Therefore there is every likelihood of the disease spreading even if there be less than 5 per cent amongst the defaulters who are considered to be infectious patients by virtue of these patients not taking regular treatment. Only when the patients reach the stage of loosing a finger or toe do they realize the gravity of the disease. When the patients reach this stage no amount of medication can make a finger or toe grow again! Rarely can drugs at

this late stage prevent the patients becoming permanent cripples, being an eye-sore, a burden on society and helpless pests on the economy of the country. The Association, in spite of very limited funds at its disposal, has endeavoured to entice the patients to visit the clinics.....

It is not my intention in this article to create panic or despondency; it is not my intention to paint a frightening and gruesome picture: but it is certainly my intention with the vehemence at my command to alert the attention of the laymen in Sri Lanka that anyone who has any form of lesion, skin rash, discolouration or insensitive spots on any part of the body particularly on the skin, tip of the nose, ear lobes, should NOT ASSUME it to be "Aluhang" or "Thema!" as this condition is referred to in Sinhala and Tamil respectively and should not be overlooked in any way.

They should in their own interest, in the interest of their children and those who are near and dear to them, in the interest of the entire nation obtain the view of a qualified and competent physician whose services are readily available, free of charge, in all Government Hospitals. At the Colombo General Hospital the services of a qualified and competent physician is available on all week days from 8 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. at Room 21 of the OPD (entrance through Regent Street).

I specifically urge that a qualified and competent physician should be consulted because in our own times, as late as 1953, a pathetic death occurred in Central America. A leading and an educated citizen observing some peculiar spots had consulted his doctor who had diagnosed it as leprosy! Dejected and down heartened this citizen committed suicide a few days later by jumping through a window from the fifth floor. At the post-mortem it was conclusively established that it was NOT leprosy but it was too late—a valuable life had been unnecessarily lost, yet it was truly a great calamity. Here was a glaring case of a man dying NOT OF LEP-ROSY but of BEING A LEPER! Let us on this memorable day, the World Leprosy Day, resolve that no such tragedy should be permitted to occur again in any part of the world!

It will be most appropriate to conclude by quoting an avowed declaration by Papa Raoul the Apostle of the leprosy patients. He declared: "Let there be no misunderstanding about overcoming 2000 years of terror but the liberation of lepers will be emblazoned in the history of humanity as a victory fully as great as that of the abolition of slavery. Then this century already branded "The Century of the Atom Bomb" will be renamed the Century of "Victory over Leprosy".

Many readers of Tribune have asked us why the quality of paper in the last three issues have "deteriorated". Tribune has been regularly printed on Valaichenai White Printing paper. Even when the National Paper Corporation issued us only newsprint—when they had no stocks of Valaichenai paper in their Colombo stores, we were always able to exchange the newsprint for printing paper on the market. With the new administration at the NPC, Tribune has not been able to obtain Valaichenai Printing Paper and there is none in the market—except with a few favoured printers and dealers who are new to the market with their own ramifications. The imported newsprint which Tribune was issued by the NPC this month—at a higher price than Valaichenai printing paper (single crown size)—is so bad that it disintegrates when type and ink touch the paper. We await the small mercies from the NPC to obtain supplies of suitable paper. Even Valaichenai paper when it is made available (if ever, to magazines like Tribune), we are told, will cost more than before. A free press cannot exist without suitable printing paper at reasonable prices. This is a matter the Government must look into.

Confidentially

More About "Tenders"

IS IT NOT TRUE that certain bureaucrats of the government have now become so cock-sure of their political backing and patronage that they have begun to throw discretion to the winds and tender procedures into the waste paper basket? That last week this column had spotlighted the manner in which 40,000 tons of wheat flour had been purchased at US \$ (USD) 204 a ton which was well above the world market price at the time the order was placed? That the total disregard for tender procedures has now become a widespread disease in this UNP administration? That even when tender procedures are seemingly followed there are so many "tricks of the trade" which give a particular supplier an advantage over other suppliers? That tender notices often appear calling for the supply of, for example, engines or heavy equipment? That in the first tender notice details of specifications are not mentioned? That only in the last tender notice—there are often two or three of them—the specifications are set out? That the time, between the last notice (with the specifications) and the closing of the tender is so short that most suppliers do not have the time to fulfill all the requirements or have the time to get all the details from the manufacturers or even for the makers to prepare estimates for the engines with the specifications mentioned? That the "trick" in this business is that one favoured supplier is secretly and unofficially supplied with the specifications even before the first notice appears? That the bureaucrats who are in cahoots with the supplier concerned give him a long time to have all estimates ready and prevent other suppliers from doing likewise by denying them adequate time? That it has become necessary for the Dharmista part of the UNP to step in and see that the "last" tender notices (with full specifications) are published giving all suppliers enough time

to submit complete tender quotations? That if this were done then the racket between certain bureaucrats (and technocrats) and the suppliers who get advance information to the disadvantage of other suppliers (who are not given enough time) can be ended? That the way these tenders are now "worked", there is no doubt that a selected supplier has a virtual monopoly? That this kind of racketeering makes a farce and mockery of the tender procedure? That it is a total negation of "competitive tenders?"

IS IT NOT TRUE that the reference in this column last week about the way 40,000 tons of wheat flour was purchased from Prima Mills in Singapore has created a major *furor* in governmental and political circles? That Opposition circles have begun to sit up and feel that it would not be long before they can denigrate the UNP government in an effective way? That more information has now become available to *Tribune* about the scandalous purchase of 40,000 tons by the Food Department? That the Food Department's attempt to pretend that offers from other suppliers were "bogus"—only intended to "disturb" the advantageous purchase of the 40,000 tons from PRIMA—is an excuse that nobody will take seriously? That if the Food Department officials felt that the subsequent offers were bogus they could have put them to the test immediately? That, instead of doing this, the Food Department had requested offerors to keep the offer open on three occasions—during the course of which time some offerors had to withdraw because they were participating in international tenders elsewhere? That eventually on January 12, the Purchase Board met and concluded the following purchases (on the basis of firm offers valid until the 10th): (a) 33,000 tons from Uni Ocean Singapore: 15,000 tons for shipment May/June/July at USD 195.90 C & F—Singapore origin; 18,000 tons for shipment February/March/April at USD. 198.15 C & F—Argentine origin; (b) 13,000 tons from Uni Rice Singapore, 1000 tons January shipment USD. 195.00, 12,000 tons shipments April/May/June at USD. 201.75 C & F; (c) 10/12,000 tons from ETS. Soules Paris at USD. 202.50 March shipment provided sellers agree ship Argen-

tine origin and confirmation and bank matters at sellers expense? That this conclusively proves that the earlier purchase privately of 40,000 tons on an exclusive negotiation basis from PRIMA MILLS was not justified? That the deviation from the usual practice of the Food Department and from the universally accepted business practice of competitive quotations or tenders has cost the country and the ratepayers a very substantial amount of valuable foreign exchange? That this kind of official bungling or racketeering has not been witnessed during any previous government since independence? That the Food Department desecrated the New Year by entering into the contract with PRIMA for 40,000 tons at USD 204 a ton when the world market price at that time was between USD 190 and 195 per ton? That by this deal the country lost USD 300,000 at a time when the country is doing its best to save foreign exchange for the development of the country? That it is now known that even officials concerned had realised, within 24 hours of concluding the "secret" agreement with PRIMA to purchase 40,000 tons, that they had made a "blunder"? That was why the officials concerned had dilly-dallied for a few days and bought an additional 58,000 tons at prices ranging from USD 198.15, 195.90, 201.75 and 202.50? That the officials had finally wanted the "final" offers by January 10 and concluded these purchases by January 12? That before this, the officials, who had developed suspicions that the "blunder" in concluding an agreement with PRIMA mills might be misinterpreted as an act of grave corruption, rushed to publish a Watergate type cover-up story in the *Daily News* that this purchase had saved the country Rs. 7 million? That though they claimed to have saved the country Rs. 7 million by purchasing 40,000 tons at USD 204 a ton, they had indicated in the *Daily News* cover up story that they had invited new offers closing on January 10? That what has amazed thinking people in this country that within six months of the new UNP government such acts, likely to arouse public opposition on the score of corruption, have begun to proliferate and shake the confidence of people who had hoped for much good from the government?

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