

TRIBUNE

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BUDGET,
EXAMINED

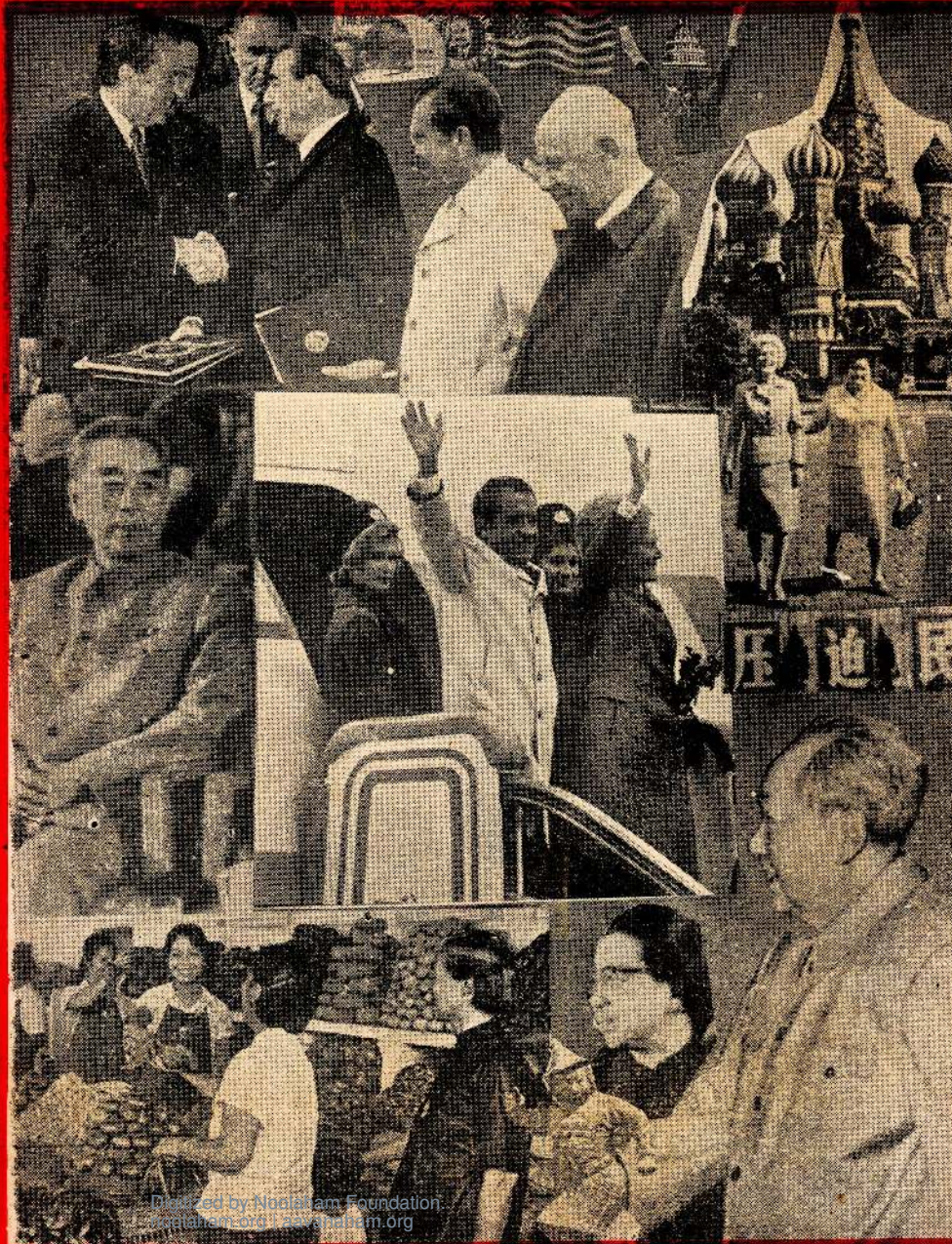
CHRONICLE
Nov. 1—12

NIXON WINS

ASPECTS OF
U. S. ELECTIONS

CANAX ON THE
BUDGET & THE
BY-ELECTIONS

SAFARI—OFF
THE BEATEN
TRACK



WITH COMPLIMENTS

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Tribune's Yardstick: Production and Productivity.

OWING TO A NUMBER OF UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, this issue will appear a few days later than schedule. We hope to catch up with the next issue, but there is always a big if in anything one attempts to do so nowadays. Last week, apart from everything else, seventyfive percent of the staff of *Tribune* were either down with the 'flu or had become involved in personal problems like funerals and the like. It is not always that such things happen, but what seems strange is that these unexpected obstructions are happening nowadays more often than in earlier days. Even the Budget Day this year was postponed twice.

In this issue we have a fairly lengthy note from the Editor on the Budget. He points out that the Budget has really been balanced by a massive devaluation of the external as well as the internal rupee, but he has not dealt with some aspects of the matter which is tantamount to retrospective devaluation, because firms which imported raw materials on deferred terms, at the request and insistence of the Government, are now called upon to pay FEECs on many articles which were FEECs-free earlier and which they had imported, used in manufactured and sold as finished goods.

Contributors like *Pertinax* and *Serendib* will deal with this aspect of the Budget in coming issues. The comments from the *Editor's Desk* on the Budget have a political pungency which will evoke howls from certain straight laced UF intellectuals that *Tribune* was now retailing the effete effusions of bourgeois logic. This kind of over-simplified apologia by calling names has no validity today—especially when Marxism in practice has developed a pragmatic aspect—in different countries it has taken different colours and forms. *Tribune* has one main criteria for all things Sri Lanka: productivity: whether productivity and gross production will increase by the measures contemplated, either now or even in some distant future, and if the measures of the Government, how ever pretentiously radical or revolutionary, militate against productivity, *Tribune* will not hesitate to say what has to be said. This paper is not himstrung with any compulsion (or inhibitions) about vote-catching for individuals or parties, but is interested in seeing Sri Lanka develop economically, whether under socialism, or capitalism or any other *ism* which will help this country to get out of the economic stagnation in which it finds itself.

IN THIS ISSUE a new columnist to our pages, using the pseudonym *Canax* has two pieces: one on the By-elections and the other on the Budget. We hope to have a piece from him in every issue. Our traveller *Alkardi Mugana* continues with his *Safari*. S. Sivagurunathan writes a small piece of reportage on *Marthelis*, a carter. We have our usual *Chronicle*, a record of events in Ceylon and elsewhere, from November 1 to 12. We have two articles on the mechanics of the US Presidential Elections—written of course before the elections. *Ariel* has dealt with the implications of Richard Nixon's landslide victory, but he will have more to say on the subject in the next issue. *Ariel* also refers in brief to the basic treaty between the two German states. For the *Record*, we have significant and relevant the Finance Minister's Budget Speech.

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RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

NOVEMBER 17, 1972.

THE BUDGET SPEECH was finally delivered on November 10, 1972. It was received with acclaim and applause by the back-benchers of the United Front parties: it was received in somewhat stony silence by the others. This was in the National State Assembly. Outside, the reactions have been mixed and uncertain. The daily newspapers were cautious, about what they said.

Some called it an SLFP-back bencher budget. Some said it was a hit-the-rich budget. Some felt it was an introduction-to-socialism budget. Some even ventured to call it a radical budget. Nearly everybody detailed the hardships which would be imposed on the middle class who constituted the majority of the income tax payers (in the middle brackets) and who would be deprived here after of the free measure of rice every week. Everybody bemoaned the impending rise in the prices of luxury, non-essential (and even essential) articles which was inevitable on FEECs rate being pushed up and being extended to all nearly all imports. The increased BTT.

Would similarly push up prices. The UNP was opposed to the Budget,

but it has so far taken a negative attitude to the Budget. In the absence of a new united (Dudley-JR merger) UNP programme, its spokesmen could only pick holes and point to the dangers which will flow from the Budget. The FP was in a worse plight: it has no political or economic thinking on matters like the Budget, or any other matter for that matter. Its spokesmen beat their chests and wailed that the Tamils were getting the thin end of the bargain on every matter. From the Opposition Parties in the National State Assembly, there has been no political analysis of the Budget. Like the Independents (W. Dahanayake, Prins Gunasekera, C. X. Martin, etc.), the spokesmen of the UNP and FP and taken pedestrian and parochial approach to the Budget appropriate to political wooing of the voters in Sri Lanka in the turbulent 1970s.

None of our Opposition Parties want to say anything which they feel would damage their chances at the next poll. And hence they go round and round the proverbial mulberry bush and point to what was wrong with the bush or berries it produced. The basic premise of the economic *malaise* afflicting Sri Lanka was never mentioned.

WHAT was wrong with this Budget and what has been wrong with all Budgets since 1945

(and to some extent from 1931) was the basic political philosophy underlying all budget-making: that voters should be given as much of everything free or at subsidised rates.

Ceylon was granted adult franchise from 1931 and from that time politicians and political parties have vied with each other—apart from raising emotional slogans mainly of a chauvinistic and pseudo-chauvinistic nature—in being able to offer voters free this and free that, and subsidised this and subsidised that. This has gone on for over forty years. Until 1945/46, there were some restraints on this spree of spending by the elected representatives of the so-called enfranchised masses by the “three watchdogs” of British colonialism in the State Council. But after 1946 all restraints were removed and in the last 25 years, the politicians have given this country the blessings of free education, free health services, old age allowances, subsidised rice, other subsidised essentials foodstuffs, subsidised textiles, subsidised housing, a free measure of rice every week, and a great deal of other social and welfare benefits unheard of in other countries.

Ceylon is not a rich country. The change of name, from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, has not brought automatic prosperity and wealth in its wake. All these free, semi-free, subsidised and pseudo-subsidi-

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dised benefits bestowed on the voters and their dependants have brought this country to the brink of near-bankruptcy financially—whilst unemployment, poverty, malnutrition and frustration continue to mount. But what many fail to realise is that it was not the economic stagnation and financial difficulties which this vote-catching policy of free rice, free education and free health which was the real curse, but the moral degeneration which has eaten into the soul of the nation, especially the voters of the privileged groups of the "common masses" of the majority racial, linguistic and religious sections which secured major political power under a system of parliamentary elections and adult franchise. The "common masses" of the lesser minorities in the island have also grown up in the same political atmosphere—the more "successful" among the minorities being those who were able to lick the political spittle of the different ruling elite in the country in the last 40 years—whilst at the same time grabbing the crumbs (big and small) left over after feeding the insatiable "masses" of the dominant voter-pressure groups in the country.

SRI LANKA has now become a nation of respectable beggars. We want things free at home. We want things free from abroad. We feel that we have become entitled to these free dizes of basic

essentials because we have been the victims of European colonialism for over 450 years and that we still continue to be the down-trodden victims of imperialist exploitation.

Many of us, when confronted by the hard logic of contemporary realities that the real cause of the current tragedy is not colonialism but ourselves, by-pass the real issues by raising emotional slogans about pre-Portugeuse Chola expansionism and the post-British neo-colonialism of countries like India, Japan and the USA which seek to invest in Ceylon or even trade with Ceylon.

Neither emotional slogans about marauding Indian borahs and blood-sucking dravidian nadars nor oversimplified yet blood-curdling theories about imperialism and neo-colonialism can satisfactorily explain anymore the economic stagnation and moral degeneration of Sri Lanka vis a vis work attitudes, labour productivity and gross output. It is a sad but real fact that ever since 1931, and more specially ever since 1945, individual labour productivity has been getting lower and lower. Our politicians, and the economic pundits who rationalise for them, proudly trot out gross increase in the total output of industrial and agricultural goods. These have been obtained by expansion in acreages and greater industrial capacity secured through immense inputs

of capital and the application of expensive know-how and newer technological methods. But real labour productivity has been dropping every year with the result that real labour costs in Sri Lanka are among the highest in the world when—compared to the individual productive outputs in other countries.

At one time, the pundits said that productivity was low in Ceylon because Ceylonese workers did not have the necessary minima in wages, food, education, health and like to induce greater productive effort from them. Under this dangerous philosophy more and more of everything was accorded free to the working masses—and the result has been less and less productivity. A Sri Lankonion feels, that his vote entitled him to everything the worker in an affluent country got—without his having to work for it because he and his immediate predecessors had been exploited by colonialism and imperialism for many centuries.

Political parties, which had created this phobia among the common masses in Ceylon, have felt that it was necessary to pamper to this phobia. Even in the latest Budget Speech made by Dr. N. M. Perera on November 10, though he said some home truths about the low productivity levels in this country and the reluctance of the work force to attain minimum work norms, the underlying

philosophy behind the Budget was still the same: the poor downtrodden masses had to be uplifted with a free doze of everything, and the wages of the lowest paid in the state sector was increased to make a minimum of Rs. 180 a month.

Dr. Perera, in his apologetic best, pleaded with the work force to produce more and said that the United Front government had done everything to create a climate to induce the common masses to work harder: the foreigner had been hit, the local rich man had been pauperised and even those who survived were under permanent restraint with land ceilings, income ceilings, compulsory savings and high taxes.

In typical Laskian-LSE-neo Fabian Jargon, Dr. Perera set out the whole basic political philosophy of the Budget thus: "We cannot completely escape the repercussions of the economic actions of the big countries but we can cushion ourselves to bear these adversities with much less damage if we harden ourselves to develop our own resources to the maximum possible reducing our dependence on the outside vagaries to the minimum. To achieve this objective we must reconcile ourselves to a standard of living consistent with the level of productivity of the country. We must so order our economy that we advance in tune with the pace of our productive growth. We can-

not afford the luxury of privileged sections of the community enjoying a level of well-being far ahead of the rest of community.

"I am not thinking only of the privileged class who still enjoy the benefits of property ownership. There are others who have quite rightly struggled to improve their economic position in the setting of the capitalist structure of society. They have by virtue of the advantageous positions they occupied and by virtue of their organized strength ensured much for themselves in advance of the rest of the working community. They have raced too far ahead of the rest of the toiling people. Time has come for us to take a stock of the situation of the country as a whole. This is imperative in the light of the new political atmosphere that has been generated.

"Admittedly we cannot withdraw or deprive these sections of the economic benefits they have earned. But we must insist on their slowing down the pace of sectional advancement until such time as we can bring the rest of the community to move towards a higher level of economic betterment....."

This is the basic political motivation of the 1973 UF Budget. The exploiting classes were not to be liquidated at one go—as it had been done in many of the socialist bloc countries. But it was to be a slow process. And, like

the socialist countries, greater productivity was to be achieved by work-norms to be imposed from the top, but whether this can be done in Sri Lanka is a matter to be discussed later.

THE UNITED NATIONAL PARTY as the chief opposition party of the conservative right did not question this basic political objective of the UF nor the concomitant premise that a great many things had to be given away free.

The main trouble with the 1973 budget, as with all other budgets since 1946, was that there was too much that was free in it. It is one thing for the State to provide services but the people had to earn these services: they had to work for it. The UNP having started this demagogic gimmickry of free education and free rice and still hoping to come back to power on more free gimmicks could not afford to criticise the Budget constructively on the only basis possible: that the free element in it had to be reduced to a minimum.

UNP's charismatic leader still went about the country extolling the virtues of the free measure of rice which he had introduced when he was Prime Minister. It was in his father's days that free education, free medical services and subsidised rice was made part of budgetary structure of this country.

Inhibited in this way, the UNP was in no position to analyse the budget in critical and constructive terms. Having its eyes on the next polls; the UNP soft-pedalled any reference to the free subsidies.

There is bi-partisanship in Sri Lanka politics as between the UNP on the one hand and the SLFP-UF coalition on the other on the question on food subsidies and free handouts by the state. The Marxist and pseudo-marxist parties also subscribe most vigorously to supporting free handouts. The leftwingers have always provided the ideological rationale and logic for this system of free handouts.

But what all of them fail to realise is that anything given free and taken free, apart from the economic implications, brings about a moral degeneration of the human being, and this is what has happened in Ceylon.

In strict Marxist terms, only these who work are entitled to any benefits which accrue from the product. Those who not work (and those who are idle) have to starve. The Marxists summed up this attitude for the first phase of socialist reconstruction: from each according to his ability and to each according to his work and output. It was only when socialist state reached the affluence of a communist state that the dictum: from each according to his ability to each according to his needs, would begin to operate.

Though the UNP its allies on the one hand and the United Front and its allies on the other know that neither under capitalism nor under socialism is anything given away free the spokesmen from both groups will not mention this publicly—even when it comes to the crucial question of discussing the Budget and the future of the economic development of the country.

It is in this myopic atmosphere of make-believe that the Budget is being discussed in the National State Assembly and the country. At some later date and in later articles, Tribune will discuss the question about the possible impact of the sudden withdrawal of everything free in our budget and economy, but this is an exercise which can wait. In the meantime, let us briefly see what this Budget really is.

THE MAKERS OF THIS BUDGET have done a clever piece of work to advance the political fortunes of the LSSP within the outer framework of the United Front. The CP continues to tail behind the LSSP and with a new look its Central Committee issues academic statements on what should be done, and thereafter post-mortem analysis of what has been done. The SLFP and more especially its backbenchers are lost in the wilderness of modern political trends and the only thing they want is politi-

cal security and a reasonable chance to stay in power and return to power at the next polls. Therefore, they are willing to be led by the LSSP, CP and the radical elements in the SLFP who take their political logic and cue from the LSSP-CP.

All this is called radicalism and socialism through democratic means. Though Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other leaders of the revolution are referred to and are quoted, those who critically examine the politics of the Left in Ceylon realise that what passes for socialism in Sri Lanka today is a curious blend of the fabian socialism of the London School Economics from the thirties to the seventies, mixed with Stalinism, Trotskyism, Fourth Internationalism, Maoism, Titoism, and now Che Guevarism and Castroism.

It would be an interesting exercise for some interested scholars to lay bare the political thinking of the leaders of the Left in Ceylon and also the thinking and actions of the many bureaucrats in the Central Bank, Treasury and the Administration who have been infected by Laskian-Keynesian-LSEian brands of "Marxism", and who have played an important part in the economic and political life of the country from behind-the-scenes. It is well to keep in mind that Budgets in Ceylon, whether or earlier UNP or SLFP vintage,

and more recently of UNP coalitions (1965-70) and the UF coalitions (post 1970) have been formulated framed and orientated by UK-trained and LSE-trained economists and administrators who have dabbled with a little bit of socialism to help both the UNP and the SLFP, as well as the Left Parties.

These officials have the flexibility and ambivalence to serve all masters, and it is only those who let their enthusiasm get the better of their caution who are occasionally guillotined whenever governments change. By and large, the class of experts, technocrats and administrators, who have run this country for the last twenty five years and more come from one breed and have the the same ideological training, but the jargon they used have differed with the different political masters they have had to serve. This will make a fascinating subject when one has to examine budgets, budget-making and administrative implementation of budgets in Sri Lanka ever since it attained political independence in 1946/48.

TO COME BACK TO THE 1973 BUDGET, there is not the slightest doubt that it is a clever job of work on the part of the LSSP. It is perhaps its greatest political triumph in its history. With this Budget, the LSSP has entrenched itself in the hearts of the United Front

parliamentarians and especially its radical backbenchers. It has cut the ground from under the feet of the CP now split in two. And it has invested the LSSP with a new political stature and has set out to woo for itself small capitalists and small-holding and even bigtime agriculturists (growing tea, rubber, and other export crops) through rebates and subsidies. With this Budget, the LSSP is on the brink of becoming a big national party capable of challenging the UNP and the SLFP individually as well as severally. But the political *modus operandi* of the LSSP is to weaken and defeat the UNP in as many sectors as possible whilst infiltrating the SLFP and permeating its active ranks with LSSP political logic so that in course of time, the SLFP will be a political appendage of the LSSP.

The 1973 Budget is a clever piece of work primarily because it has won the support and applause of the UF backbenchers and generally neutralised the radicals and ultras in the LSSP and the CP—whilst it has also put through measures which has long been demanded by the IMF and the World Bank experts and the LSSP Finance Minister Dr. N. M. Perera thus hopes to proclaim that the IMF would shortly grant Sri Lanka credits SDRs and the rest of

the boodle which the World Bank hands out to its faithful loyalists.

The LSSP Minister and LSSP-minded officials in the Treasury and the Central Bank have produced a Budget acceptable to these who live in the pipe dreams of the Five Year Plan, acceptable to the SLFP and UF backbenchers who did not want the price of rice, flour and sugar touched (and none of the welfare expenditures cut), and undoubtedly acceptable to experts of the IMF who are always hamstrung by their own ground rules which will prevent them from piercing the eye-wash which this Budget really is in terms of hard realities and the fundamental perspectives of the long-term interests of Sri Lanka.

Whatever the eye-wash one must doff one's cap to the framers of this clever budget which has, at least for the being, satisfied so many different groups, some with mutually contradictory interests. And the Budget Speech itself was a remarkable exercise in sophisticated fabian frankness (with a touch of old George Bernard Shaw in his socialist heyday) coupled with soft-sell budgetary proposals that has left many people truly fooled.

After last year's traumatic experience, the LSSP Finance Minister did not want to place himself in

the danger of having to resign because his proposals were rejected by the backbenchers of the SLFP and the UF. This time, several meetings were held with the backbenchers, and their views were ascertained in advance. They did not want the price of rice, flour, and sugar increased: they did not want the subsidies touched and did not want social welfare expenditure cut. Instead they wanted the rich (and what was left of the privileged classes) hit right hard in the solar plexus. The Budget has all the trappings of an instrument to pamper the poor and hit the rich. In the background of land ceilings, income ceilings, compulsory savings and what not, it has been decreed that incometax payers will be denied the free measure of rice every (this incidentally meets at least in a symbolic way the IMF requirement of cutting down food subsidies.)

But the finest gimmick is the levy on the Sri cars. The under-privileged in Sri Lanka today have been aroused to indignation by the heavy influx of 5 Sri and 6 Sri cars after this Government came to power, and to meet the rising tide of emotional upsurge about these cars, the Government has decided that all Sri car owners will pay a special levy (once-and-for-all) starting with Rs. 100 for a 1 Sri car to Rs. 600 for a 6 Sri cars. To appease popular

indignation about the 5 Sri and 6 Sri cars, the Government has thrown into the witches' cauldron all Sri car owners—some Sri cars are already over 14 years old.

This is a demagogic gimmick to sell the Budget. Many of the other proposals fall into this category of demagogic gimmickery: the increasing of the minimum wage to Rs. 180 in spite of the inflation which will be really bring down the real value of money: the big talk about a Provident Fund for paddy farmers: the increase of the GPS price for paddy from Rs. 14 to Rs. 15 (the one rupee extra being for the super-annuation of paddy farmers).

This is one side of the picture. On the other, without once using the word devaluation or the IMF, the Budget proposals constitute the biggest devaluation of the external as well as the internal rupee possible under the circumstances. FEECs have been pushed up from 55% to 65% and now cover the entire range of imports barring a few. This is a massive devaluation of the import rupee and this will bring in its wake a rise in practically all luxury, semi-essential and even essential goods used by people in the country including the "common masses".

The increase of the BTT—Business Turnover Tax—on practically all categories of locally produced goods with increases ranging from 5% to 40% will result in an even greater devaluation of the internal rupee and though the results may not be felt for some weeks and months, the impact will be crushing.

With this massive devaluation of the rupee—part of the eye-wash of the Budget is not to call this devaluation but to refer to the exercise—through the mechanics of FEECs and the BTT—the LSSP Finance Minister has satisfied two major requirements of the IMF: a really substantial devaluation of the rupee and a massive scaling down of consumption expenditure. With the new FEECs and BTT, people will have no alternative but to cut down on expenditure even if they had some leeway after the income ceiling and the compulsory savings. By its own ground rules, the IMF cannot any longer refuse credits and SDRs to Sri Lanka.

AN IMF TEAM has arrived in Ceylon on November 14, that is within 4 days of the Budget Speech. It is no doubt true that the IMF usually surveys the economy of Ceylon after the Budget and makes its annual report by the end of January, but on this occasion they have come here with a promptitude

that shows some careful lobbying by Sri Lanka in order to expedite the convening of the Aid Consortium Club in January although they usually meet only in April or May. But the 1972 meeting had been postponed sine die and Sri Lanka is now anxious to have some action without delay.

The impact of this massive devaluation of the external as well as the internal rupee has been referred to in the discussion in Parliament though very few people seem to want to call a spade a spade and describe this FEECs-BTT operation as devaluation. Apart from this hidden devaluation, the main feature of the Budget is the methodology of making the Budget work. The crucial test is to increase production and productive levels.

This is how the Minister of Finance drew attention to the matter: "It needs no deep thinking to realise that the general economic progress of the diverse sectors of the country can only be achieved with the commensurate development of the Gross Domestic Product. A stagnant economy cannot provide plenty for all. It can provide plenty for some and impoverishment for others. Such a lopsided position cannot but lead to dissatisfaction, frustration and eventual disaster."

He referred to another aspect of the same problem. "Let me give precision to this point I am urging. In a total recurrent expenditure bill of Rs. 3000 millions, the emolument bill alone comes to Rs. 1,300 million—that is very nearly half the normal expenditure of Government goes in order to meet the salaries of public servants. This is a staggering figure. If the salary bill were to expand year by year, it can only be done at the expense of development. We shall soon reach a situation when even the salary bill will have to be met by borrowing because the normal revenue will be inadequate to meet the enormous outlay required for emoluments...."

But in this connection, he had something to say about the lower ranks: "Notwithstanding this enormous salary bill, the lower ranks are bound to be dissatisfied. They are finding it more and more difficult to make both ends meet. We cannot without serious hardship start lopping off from those who have enjoyed, certain salary scales. But we must draw in reins and not allow the salaries to gallop away with the rider. We must also halt the false standards that have been built up. All new comers must be made to reconcile themselves to much lower scales of salary. All are entitled to reasonable comforts. But

we cannot promote a false level of luxurious living."

And then he came to real crux of the problem: "Another method of building a more satisfactory proportion is to ensure a greater intensity of work. A leisurely pace productive of two hours of output cannot bring about the rapidity of development that is so urgent if we are to progress. Such an intensity of work must be the product of recognized norms which all working elements of the public and corporation sectors must adopt: We cannot leave things to the goodwill and good sense of the work force. Ingrained habits of a flabby outlook cannot be broken by voluntary good intentions. Work norms have to be imposed and insisted upon. Strict discipline will have to be maintained to observe the carrying out of these norms."

THE REST of the Budget Speech was a long and tedious exposition about the shambles which was the contemporary economy of Ceylon and the disappointing performances in economic development in 1971 and 1972 coupled with the wish and desire that 1973 would be better with greater production. Then came his budgetary proposals: it contained proposals to appease the backbenchers radicals, it set out the FEECs-BTT devaluation operation and other levies to bridge the gap, and finally some in-

centives to sustain production and even promote production.

The IMF had wanted the 1973 Sri Lanka budget to be balanced. The Finance Minister has done this with a little mathematical jugglery of figures to which the Leader of the Opposition, UNP's J. R. Jayawardene, had drawn attention (he even referred to the dishonest way in which figures and statistics had been utilised for balancing the budget.) All this will be examined by writers competent to do so in the pages of *Tribune* in the coming weeks, but in this piece *Tribune* is mainly concerned with the political *raison d'être* infused into the Budget by its framers.

There can be no better guide to spotlight the political logic of the LSSP UF than the weekly paper *Nation* which is published by the LSSP for the UF. In its issue of November 10, the frontpage lead of the *Nation* was entitled **BUDGET: KO'S OPPONENTS DEVELOPMENT. WITHOUT BURDENS ON MASSES.**

This was the opening paragraph: "There was no doubt about it. The long faces and dejected spirits of Opposition leaders and members as they trooped out of the chamber made it clearer than ever. Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, with superb artistry had produced a ball whose deceptive flight had lured his enemies out of

their crease and then sped round their legs to spread-eagle their stumps. They who had been so confident of sweeping him out of the grounds were now walking back to the pavilion completely perplexed with no option but to wait another year for a chance to avenge this further humiliation."

The *Nation* made it quite clear that the main political motivation of the Budget was to cause discomfiture to the parliamentary opponents of the UF, and more particularly of the LSSP Minister of Finance. The Budget, claimed the *Nation*, had knocked out the opponents of the UF. Very happily mixing the metaphors of the boxing ring and the cricket grounds, *Nation* was certain that the budgetary opponents of the UF and the LSSP had been silenced for a year.

Then it went on to explain how the great deed was done—detailing how the opponents had "miscalculated". This is what the *Nation* said: "All this disastrous miscalculation had been brought about by that Rs. 2,067 million gap between revenue and expenditure. It was such a yawning gap that it seemed the Finance Minister would have to put his foot in his mouth as the only means of closing it. The rich had been squeezed to the point of making further taxation unproductive. There was no way to find resources

for the biggest development budget in our history (Rs. 1,658 million) except by burdening the poor and slashing welfare expenditure."

After setting out the "miscalculations" of the opponents, the *Nation* then went to briefly explain how the Finance Minister did the trick. Through the rose (pink) tinted columns of the *Nation*, the reader was told about the different budgetary measures adopted as if they were some fundamental measures of great economic validity. The FEECS-BTT operation was not referred to as the massive devaluation it was, but such inexactitudes are possible in the kind of apologia which the *Nation* understandably dabbled in.

This is how the Gospel of the *Nation* stated about the acts of the great wizards "superb artistry" had knocked out the opponents of the LSSP (and incidentally of the UF.) "The Finance Minister did not pretend that he had a magic wand that could produce resources out of his hat. His options were few and his obligations irresistible. Thus he had, a number one priority, to provide incentives to step up productivity: hence increase of the GPS price for paddy, rebates of export duty to tea producers increase in the rubber price, guaranteed price for coconut oil, rebate of BTT on non-traditional exports,

promise of new wage scales for skilled workers. He had next to curb consumption still further in the higher income groups: hence withdrawal of free rice from income-tax payers, levy on motor vehicles, increase of the FEEC rate, extension of BTT to the Marketing Department. Thirdly, as the masses were already in great difficulty as the result of rising prices and scarcity of their essential consumption goods it was imperative that there should be no addition to their burdens: hence careful exclusion of essential imported items from FECS, increase of minimum wages and lower wage levels and refusal to touch rice, flour and raw sugar."

The *Nation* then went on to gloat over the discomfitures of opponents who had hoped that the UF would be compelled (in terms of the Seers Report or the Recommendations of the IMF) to slash welfare expenditure and reduce food subsidies. The *Nation* felt that the UNP and other opponents had wanted the UF to pull the chestnuts out of fire for them by cutting down welfare expenditure and slashing food subsidies. Such action, the opponents of the UF had thought according to the *Nation*, would kill two birds with one stone: it would bring down the UF government and at the same time make it possible for the UNP to formulate

a budget on more rational lines without being burdened with subsidies and free handouts.

"But what every Government opponent was waiting for was the slashing of welfare expenditure. The Dudley Seers Report had become their holy text. 51 per cent of total Government expenditure was welfare expenditure, said one newspaper, and quoted the observations of a Seers Commission member that "the alternative for Sri Lanka was either to cut down on the subsidies or have more unemployment." Much of this concern to slash welfare expenditure had little to do with any endorsement of the Government's progressive aspirations. Most of it had a dual motivation. On the one hand, it was hoped that by daring to do what the reactionaries could never attempt, the United Front would pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the UNP. On the other hand, the hoped-for withdrawal of free rice would so enrage the masses, it was thought, that the downfall of the Government would be inevitable. By intimidation of Government MP's and large-scale resort to bribery, not to speak of the lies and misrepresentation of the mudalali newspapers, the campaign against the United Front Government could be climaxed with its downfall and the curtain finally rung down on an unpleasant two-and-a half year episode."

Finally, the *Nation* paid a tribute to the Prime Minister and the SLFP backbenchers for standing by the principles adumbrated by the LSSP as being the best ideological bedrock for the U.F. With the help of this *manthra*—a political *open sesame*—the LSSP wizard had opened the fabulous caves of Alladin, and if we are permitted to mix our metaphors again, the LSSP had found a magic lamp to light a new *deepa* for Sri Lanka to bring forth Sinbad's *genie* to produce untold wealth for this Island.

All that was necessary, as a first step, was that the parliamentary opponents of the UF had to be knocked out flat, and this the *Nation* claims the 1973 Budget has done.

"The Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Government as a whole have cheated the reactionaries of this happy ending to their tribulations. They have given the people a Budget that will find enthusiastic support from all its working sections. Some sections of the white-collar workers, especially Income-Tax payers will find the Budget's withdrawal of free rice a fairly heavy blow. But they will be re-assured of the seriousness of the Government's pledge to bring them relief as early as possible through the process of rapid economic development."

THERE WILL be rapid economic development now says the *Nation*, in terms of the PM's Five Year Plan, without any "burdens on the masses".

This is all very good on paper. But development can only come from work and work by the "common masses" pampered by all governments since independence. In the language of our LSE-trained Treasury and Central Bank experts productivity levels must be raised individually as well as jointly. It has also dawned on them and the Minister of Finance that increased productivity cannot come from the good sense of the work force. How are the work norms they talk about to be imposed?

Although the entire failure or success of the Budget turns on increased productivity, there is not the slightest clue in the Budget as to how this is to be achieved. In simple terms, how is the Government going to induce state employees who do no more than two hours for the eight-hour pay they get? They shall do adequate work for the pay they receive. This infection of idling, lazing, going-slow and absenteeism has spread from the public sector to the private sector.

The work force and the trade unions have now no further excuse for not doing

enough work. The rich and privileged classes have been hit out of existence. Land ceilings, income ceilings, compulsory savings and the rest of the paraphernalia devised by UF bureaucrats and politicians have liquidated the middle and upper classes in this country. And what is important, all development work, based on the personal profit incentives which has motivated action in this class, has been stopped. (All appeals to the private sector by this government will prove abortive: and savings from this quarter will also drop as incentives have been wiped out. The new incentives being offered to them in this Budget is regarded as Trojan's Horse tactics (again mixing metaphors) to make them lay a few golden eggs—and then kaput).

Under the circumstances, the Government has thrust the burden of economic development on the "common masses," on the workers, peasants and farmers, the UF government has wooed with such solititude. Personal incentives have been reduced to a minimum where farmers and agriculturists are concerned. The open market

the Government talks about is a farce. Where is the new production to come from?

The future of the Budget and the Government boils down to this: can the Government persuade the work force in the public sector and elsewhere to increase productivity and gross production?: Is what is left of the private sector going to respond to Government appeals and the new incentives to increase production—uncertain as they of their own existence after they succeed in laying a few golden eggs?

All the big talk about the Budget will vanish into thin air if productivity levels and gross production do not register upward jumps in the coming months.

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NOVEMBER 1 - 12

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1: This is the 62nd day of the bank strike. The Press Council Bill is to be tabled on November 7. A Soviet Trade Exhibition opened in Colombo today. By a gazette notification, the price of the *pol* extra special arrack and double-distilled very special extra arrack will go up fifty per cent in price: from Rs. 12 to Rs. 18 and from Rs. 16 to Rs. 24. The *gal* arrack of Rs. 8 and Rs. 10 a bottle will remain the same. Tea prices registered a further drop in the auctions yesterday. President Allende's government in Chile resigned yesterday. Premier Trudeau's party only secured a lead of one in the parliamentary elections in Canada and he had no alternative but to form a minority government—Canada has had similar minority governments for the last 15 years. President Thieu of South Vietnam was still blocking the peace agreement negotiated by Dr. Kissinger between the USA and North Vietnam. By a four to one majority, the Supreme Court of India held that the Government of India's newsprint order for 1972-73, fixing the ratio of advertisements to news, as violative of the freedom of speech and expression and the right to equality before law as guaranteed in the Constitution.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2: This is the 63rd day of the bank strike and the Police whilst permitting a meeting of 26 trade unions to express sympathy with the strikers have refused a permit to stage a mass demonstration along the streets. The Education Department is unable to find room for 13,000 children who have applied for places in the kindergartens of the main Colombo schools: over 30,000 had applied for places. The Government has arranged for a forward shipment of 30,000 tons of rice from China against the 1973 contract which has still to be negotiated: this advance shipment is to meet a shortfall in local paddy purchased by the Paddy Marketing Board and its consequent failure to meet its commitment to supply 400,000 tons to the Food Department in 1972. According to a recent IMF report, the Colombo consumer price index which is the only price and cost-of-living index in Ceylon, had to be used with caution as it was

out of date because the consumption pattern of the Colombo working class was based on a family budget survey taken in 1949-50. The CP has issued a statement on budget making and has suggested that the rich had to be hit first to earn more revenue—before any other measure to touch subsidies and the like were considered. The full gazette notification released today increased the prices not only of the *pol* (Rs. 12 and Rs. 16 arrack) but also beer and other locally produced spirits: also cigarettes were up by a cent each. Language riots erupted in the Indian state of Assam yesterday once again: and the army had been called out to maintain law and order. The delineation of the maps on the Kashmir front was still not complete and India has offered to do everything on her part to finalise the maps.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3: The 64th day the bank strike and there has been no talk about a settlement. The *CDN* reported that Sri Lanka had lost a multi-million dollar Jap offer to set up a shipyard in Trincomalee. The paper also reported that the latest increase in the excise duty on tobacco, beer and spirits would bring in an additional Rs. 42 million revenue to Government: Rs. 36 million from tobacco and Rs. 6 million from liquor. The storekeepers of 4 major C.W.E. stores in Colombo were interdicted following detections in the distribution of hard-to-get items. November 29 has been fixed as nomination day for the KKS seat. The *Suri* in a frontpage news report stated that even "NON-ESSENTIAL CONSUMER GOODS" may go up in price "shortly". The party Congress of the LSSP which was expected to start today at the New Town Hall was likely to produce a great deal of "heat and tension". According to press reports, the Cabinet of Ministers had fixed the salary of the President of Sri Lanka at Rs. 3,500 a month tax-free. In the language riots in the Assam, Bengalis, were the victims of Assamese mobs. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas Hume, now in Peking, had several meetings with the Chinese Premier Chou En Lai and exchanged views on a wide range of world affairs.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4: The banks strike had now entered the 65th day and reports indicated that a settlement was being

stalled over the question of the probationers. Today was Divali Day and was a public, bank and postal holiday. Although the LSSP leadership is not expected to face any serious threat from the younger radicals at the Congress which opened behind closed doors yesterday, it has been forecast that the discussions would be lively and that some results might be most "unexpected." The English instructors of the Peradeniya and Colombo campuses have condemned the entire set of English textbooks now used in schools: they have told the Committee of Inquiry into the teaching of English that the textbooks should be revised radically forthwith. The US government yesterday increased the amount loaned to the Government of Sri Lanka under the wheat flour agreement of December 1971 by 10 million US dollars (Rs. 63,650,000): the increase will be delivered between the period December 31, 1972 and June 30, 1973. The *Daily Mirror* had a frontpage story that the blackmarket was fed by the CWE, and it said that this "confession" was made by no less a person than Minister Illangaratne. Heavy rains had caused floods in the Puttalam area. There was also heavy torrential rain in the Uva and the eastern province. Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada announced that his Liberal Party would remain in power as a minority government. The US delegation to the Vietnam peace talks in Paris insisted that peace was at hand. The election campaign in the USA had reached an acrimonious level. The USA was taking obvious steps to face the realities of a Vietnam truce and ceasefire: but President Nixon had declared that no date had been fixed for signing the agreement. In a major Cabinet reshuffle President Allende took three senior army officers and two leading trade unionists into the Cabinet.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5: The 66th day of the bank strike and 26 trade unions at a rally yesterday demanded that the Government should settle the strike without attempting to break the strike. The *Observer* had some pre-budget speculations that Prof. Dudley Seer's report would be a guide to the Budget particularly his suggestions that FEECs should be increased and be made to cover a wider range of commodities. The LSSP Congress scheduled to conclude today

was expected to produce some "surprises" when the new Central Committee was elected. The Government had planned to open 10 more police stations in the North Central Province in a bid to curb the menace of armed gangs and terrorism. The *Weekend* had a special supplement against the draft Press Council Bill now before the National State Assembly. Tea prices has continued to drop during the last few weeks. Nixon wanted peace with honour in Vietnam and he said that he was delaying the signing of the agreement to make sure that he did not make any mistakes. The Democratic candidate Senator George McGovern said that there might be another 4 years of war if Nixon was re-elected on Tuesday.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6: The 67th day of the bank strike. The LSSP Congress avoided a major crisis when some of the leading supporters of the "second" political resolution withdraw their support because the Party leaders threatened to quit the Cabinet and Government if the second resolution was adopted: nevertheless the virtually "withdrawn" second resolution received 92 votes as against the 340 for the hierarchy's official resolution. But the young rebels of the LSSP had captured very nearly half of the 55-member Central Committee: and some of the oldest veterans of the LSSP were either eliminated from the Central Committee or lost their ranking. Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe returned from Moscow on Saturday, and Mr. B. Y. Tudawe left for Moscow on Sunday. The *Sun* reported that Ministers could in future use their official cars for private purposes as well: deputy ministers would be able to have a car allotted to them on payment of a monthly fee of Rs. 150 and this car could be used for their private work as well: ministers and deputy ministers will have official drivers: that government agents will be able to use their official cars for private purposes on the payment of a fee: and finally, officials not below the rank of secretaries were also entitled to use official cars for private purposes on the same terms as deputy ministers, i.e. payment of Rs. 150 a month. Dr. N. M. Perera has assured the LSSP Congress that the Budget "won't be that bad" and this had sent LSSP spirits soaring. President Nixon was confident

about peace in Vietnam on the eve of the presidential polls in the USA. It was reported that there was no serious rift between Saigon and Washington. It was confidently predicted that Nixon would win on Tuesday.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7: The 68th day of the bank strike. At a four-hour meeting of the Government Parliamentary Party, the PM had indicated that the implementation of the Budget would be decentralised: but it was clear that the backbenchers of all parties, especially those of the SLFP, did not want the food subsidies to be touched: they did not want any increase in the price of rice, sugar and wheat flour: and they did not want any cut in the welfare measures. The budget, which was due on November 9 was put off until November 10—no doubt to enable Government to make new adjustments to the budgetary proposals in view of the attitude of the backbenchers. Everything was set for the presidential polls which will take place in the USA today. The USSR celebrated the 55th anniversary of the October Revolution today on its National Day. The British Government last night announced a 90-day wage freeze. There was a letter bomb blast in Bombay: it was found that several had been posted in India to addresses in the U.K.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8: The 69th day of the bank strike. The Press Council Bill which was tabled before the National State Assembly was challenged before the Constitutional Court. The Finance Minister, according to the *Daily News* had told the Parliamentary Party that it cost the country over Rs. 100,000 day to sustain the programme for the rehabilitation of the insurgents. Today was the Muslim festival of Ramazan and it was a public and bank holiday. The

Observer reported that the Ministry of Agriculture expected a harvest of 87.8 million bushels of paddy for 1973: the programme estimates that 1,483,000 acres will be cultivated with improved varieties of paddy: of this 839,000 acres with new high yielding strains which had been developed in Sri Lanka. Senator McGovern, quite early in the day, conceded victory to Nixon and assured Nixon of support in all Nixon's efforts for peace. The victory scored by Nixon was a landslide one. President Idi Amin closed Uganda's border with Tanzania for a week in view of the deadline for the exodus of Asians. The FRG and GDR had finalised the treaty establishing the relations between the two countries each recognising the other as a sovereign independent state.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9: The 70th day of the bank strike. The *Daily News* front-paged an obviously inspired story that there were many PRODUCTIVITY INCENTIVES IN THE BUDGET: PROVIDENT FUND FOR PADDY CULTIVATORS, TAX EXEMPTION FOR AGRICULTURISTS. The report stated that a provident fund for paddy cultivators and tax exemption for categories of productive agriculturists were two measures likely to be included in the United Front's third budget to be presented tomorrow. Informed sources said yesterday that tax exemption would be given in the case of all agriculturists except these engaged in the cultivation of tea, rubber and coconut. The *Sun* reported that a serious rice shortage was feared as a result of a "slow down" in the purchases by the Paddy Marketing Board. The currency issue of the Central Bank reached a peak of Rs. 1,457,450,888 by September 30, this year: the only occasion when the currency rose above this figure was during the demonetisation exercise in 1970 when it reached Rs. 1,661.8 million: the increase in currency

issue in August and September this year was Rs. 185.7 million: at the end of July 1972, the currency issue had been only Rs. 1,271.8 millions. Nixon had a sweeping landslide victory winning in 49 states and scoring over 61% of the popular vote compared to McGovern's thirty odd percent. Nixon's victory was hailed in Moscow as well as in Peking. However, the Democratic Party maintained control of both houses of Congress and had the majority of Governors.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10: The 71st day of the bank strike. The Budget Speech was delivered in the National State Assembly in the afternoon: it was a pamper-the-poor and hit-the-rich budget with a massive devaluation of the rupee through an increase and extension of the FEECs and the BTT. The backbenchers of the UF cheered the Finance Minister repeatedly for not touching the rice subsidy, but there was bewilderment among other sections. The corruption in the CWE was spotlighted at public meetings and in the press. East and West Germany ended the 20 odd year cold war with the initialling in Bonn and Berlin of the basic treaty between the two German states. President Nixon planned a major Cabinet reshuffle following his landslide victory.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11: The 72nd day of the bank strike. The daily papers published the details of the Budget and made cautious comments. From all accounts the UF backbenchers and the rank and file of the UF parties had apparently welcomed the Budget proposals. Fighting had erupted again yesterday on the Golan Heights on the Israeli-Syrian border. Pakistan announced its decision to pull out of SEATO and hinted that under certain circumstances it would pull out of CENTO. New batches of letter bombs, presumably sent from India by the Arab Black September Movement, reached London and Geneva yesterday.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12: The 73rd day of the bank strike. The newspapers published the details of the gazette notification on the new Business Turnover Tax levies; the levies on luxury and (so-called non-essential goods) had been moved up variously at rates ranging from 5% to 50%. The implications of the new FEECs rate were also analysed in some papers and it was shown that even drugs and pharmaceuticals would be subjected to the FEECs. The papers reflected the prevailing confusion regarding the position of income tax payers, who will no longer get the free measure's of rice, as to whether they will be entitled to sugar, flour and other basics on the ration book. The licenses of five Petroleum Corporation dealers were cancelled for refusing to sell products in stock-presumably fearing a price hike following the increase of FEECs. A US peace envoy Haig went to Saigon to meet President Van Thieu: press reports indicated that he was given "stony reception". South Vietnam continued to oppose the agreement negotiated between Hanoi and Washington.

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U. S. ELECTIONS: THE GERMAN TREATY

RICHARD NIXON'S landslide victory was expected. Election polls three months ago had predicted the percentage of the popular votes each candidate would receive with a fair amount of exactitude. The *London Economist*, 11/11/72, aptly summed this up thus: "a comparison of this week's polls with the state of opinion polls in August suggests that, for any effect the campaign had on the public mind, both candidates might have as well have retired to bed three months ago. In that way they would have saved nobody knows quite how much money, but certainly at least 70 million dollars."

Nixon now joins the small company of US Presidents elected by more than 60 percent of the popular vote: Harding in 1920, Roosevelt in 1936 and Johnson in 1964. The size of the majority, judging from past history, was no assurance that "a huge majority presages a happy Administration or a country easy to govern. And he, accordingly, responded on Tuesday night (7/11/72) with gravity and little outward jubilation to the news of his resounding success." And it was certainly a resounding victory

winning fifty of the state^s and taking 60.7% of the popular vote to McGovern's 37.7%.

There had been many election surprises in the pattern of voting for the President. Many states which had traditionally voted Democrat went Republican this time: Hawaii, Arkansas, and Pennsylvania. But in spite of this good showing in the Presidential elections the Republicans did not fare as well in gaining control of Congress. In the House, the Republicans were only able to pick up 12 seats, and in the Senate where they needed 5 to claim a majority they dropped two seats. The Democrats made a net gain of one governorship.

At the time of writing, critical political analysis of the implications of the US polls are not yet available. The *Time* magazine brought out a rush edition dated 20/11/72, but the analysis was cursory. However, it made one significant point which it endeavoured to expand: something more complicated was occurring than the presidential landslide indicated. In one sense, America had clearly swung

toward conservatism and Nixon may take the vote as an essentially conservative mandate....."

The consensus of opinion was that Nixon would have won no matter whom the Democrats had nominated. Nixon was the incumbent and he was the former anti-communist fanatic who had come to terms with both Communist China and Soviet Russia. He had brought back most of the troops from Vietnam and his tougharm policies of bombing Vietnam had finally brought Hanoi to the negotiating table. And the Democrats, unfortunately, had picked a sure loser. McGovern's speeches and statements were those of an evangelical preacher and not that of a person who had to lead a rich and powerful nation. And, he showed he was not sure of himself: the way he muddled the Eagleton affair, his uncertain economic policies and the vague uncertainties of his Vietnam policies all contributed to his poor showing.

The *Economist*, 11/11/72, felt that the size of Mr. Nixon's victory was evidence that the Americans were coming back on course again in the world. "The re-election of Richard Nixon should be the end of one myth about America. For the past eight years, since angry blacks started breaking up American cities in 1964, it has been an article of the conventional

wisdom that the United States was a country so bitterly divided against itself—by race, by the Vietnam war, by the generation gap—that it could no longer play a major part in the leadership of the non-communist world. General de Gaulle used that belief to justify the sort of foreign policy he wanted to run away; it helped to shape Mr. Heath's ideas, and a lot of other people's. For a time in 1968 and 1969, it almost seemed that the conventional wisdom was right, although even then things were not quite so bad as they looked to those who thought who knew America if they knew the upper middle class of Manhattan and Washington and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Now Mr. Nixon's victory has shown the resilience of the other and much bigger America. The size of his majority, the issues that gave it to him, and the fact that a wet day and a moderate turnout probably, actually helped Mr. McGovern, are all evidence of how far the United States has pulled itself together again".

The *Economist* was hopeful about the future: "...it was Mr. Nixon's foreign policy that made him unbeatable, and his foreign policy has probably given the Americans the few years of peace and quiet they need to complete the recovery. The very special character of that policy is only just

becoming fully apparent. For all the glitter of his negotiating style—the descents upon Peking and Moscow and, Mr. Kissinger's virtuoso performance as an airborne peacemaker—the aim of Mr. Nixon's policy has been essentially defensive. He has seized the opportunity given to him by the quarrel between Russia and China, and by the fact that both of them need economic help from the west, to persuade the two great communist powers to suspend their argument with the western world...."

NOT ALL VIEWS expressed in Britain were as enthusiastic or hopeful as that of the *Economist*. Peter Jenkins, writing in the *Guardian*, said: "With luck the United States will survive another four years under Mr. Nixon's malevolent sway and then find a president who can bring some inspiration to humanity, decency and understanding to this difficult job.... I am not going so far as to compare Mr. Nixon with Hitler. However, I do seriously contend that his re-election should be viewed with repugnance and deep foreboding."

Other comments are equally interesting, and reference is made here to some of them which have become available to us. As Mr. William Millinship, chief American correspondent of *The Observer* reported—after pointing out

that "now, if ever, is the time for the real Nixon to stand up"—the American press has been trying to answer not just the question "Now what?" but also the question "now who?"

"And," adds Mr. Millinship, "the answers have ranged, from bitterly exaggerated jokes about the choice of concentration camps that the 'unleashed' Nixon would give American liberals to suggestions that, no longer having to worry about the Republican right wing, he could now show his true compassionate self and polish his niche in history as a peacemaker abroad and healer at home."

Moreover, it is not only the pro-Labour *New Statesman* which shares the forebodings of Mr. Jenkins and thinks that for the next four years America will be "saddled with an administration whose arrogance of attitude will be matched only by carelessness of conduct." Even the *Tory Spectator* declares: "It is easier to welcome McGovern's defeat than Nixon's victory. The Republican party's campaign has been dirty even by American standards, and if the President's hands are technically clean, his reputation has nevertheless been stained by the behaviour of several of his closest supporters."

But, as *The Spectator* goes on to say, the chief

job of the American chief executive is "neither to sweep clean nor spiritually to lead. It is to accept the responsibility of determining the major policies of the world's chief power. Because the presidency is the world's most serious political job, we can and do welcome the re-election of the world's most serious politician. There can be no doubt that no better-equipped American is to hand to deal with the problems ahead."

This sentiment, too, seems to be widely shared. Hailing Mr. Nixon as a "dynamo abroad and a tranquiliser at home." *The Daily Mail* gushes: "He is the right man at the right moment and we are glad to see him back. From our point of view, Mr. Nixon has shown himself to be a friend of Britain and a strong supporter of the Western alliance."

The New York Times has gone out of its way to 'salute' the vanquished senator and to declare that it expects him "to carry on with dignity and with honour in the Senate. The moral force of his challenge," the paper continues, "will have lasting impact. He spoke to the conscience of America on the cruel and senseless war in Vietnam. If the majority of the nation seemed not to respond, he did at least courageously bear witness to the sense of outrage which millions of Americans feel."

Once again, Mr. Peter Jenkins is a lot more outspoken when he declares: "George McGovern is a ten times better man than Richard Nixon, and let him be remembered when the stains of Nixon's presidency have been scrubbed out from the American heritage."

Both *New Statesman* and *Le Monde* have emphasised that the one pledge Mr. Nixon cannot afford to disregard is that on "bringing peace to Viet Nam." This lends an edge to Mr. James Cameron's comment on the subject in the first of the two publications. "The Viet Nam war," he points out, "is petering out as it began and as it endured, in evasions, prevarications, double talk and deceit. Its ending is as inglorious as its inception. Mr. Nixon offers us peace. His effrontery and cynicism are almost past acceptance. What does the third rate Napoleon think he has got? The nine points of Hanoi are, look at them how you will, no whit worse nor better than the conclusions, of the Geneva agreement of 1954, when the awful John F. Dulles set in train all this filthy brutal misery. Viet Nam has endured 15 million tons of bombs and accepted a million dead. Some day the U.S. will fork out nearly 10 billion dollars to restore in Viet Nam that which she destroyed."

At least *The Washington Post* has reminded President Nixon that his policy towards the Indian sub-continent "has not yet recovered an appropriate balance as between India and Pakistan" and therefore his new administration must "seek a new and proper involvement in the region. If Mrs. Gandhi is still bitter at the 'Nixon tilt' towards Pakistan," adds the *Post* "in her reserve, may lie the basis of a new and positive relationship with the U.S. — a relationship other developing countries also might find attractive."

WITH ALL the excitement about the US presidential election, adequate attention was not paid to the "basic treaty" between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. The initialling of this treaty was a great historic event. It normalises relations between the two German states. The German Riech was established by Bismarck just over a hundred years ago; and today there are two German States which have come to recognise each other as two separate, independent and sovereign units.

This treaty and all it implies removes a focal point of tension in the heart of central Europe. The Christian Democrats had criticised Mr. Brandt for persisting in conducting negotiations for this Treaty even after the dis-

THE 'GREAT LEVELLER' IS AT IT AGAIN

by CANAX

solution of the Bundestag and a fresh general election was pending, but the German Chancellor was impelled by the logic of his *Ostpolitik* to pursue his negotiations with the GDR to a finality. The treaty will be signed and justified after the elections, if Mr. Brandt wins.

The treaty is the result of three years of hard-headed bargaining. Both sides have made concessions to make agreement possible. The West German constitution swears by the concept of a united Germany and public opinion in the Federal Republic cannot yet reconcile itself to the existence of separate German States. In the preamble the two sides have restated their respective positions on the question of reunification, with the GDR asserting its rights as a sovereign independent State. Each side looks upon the treaty as a stepping stone to the goal it has in view. But Bonn realises that reunification is no longer possible unless the situation in Europe changes radically to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc.

The treaty in effect means that Germany has reconciled itself to its own division into two States. The effort of Mr. Brandt had been to make this division as tolerable as possible by improving human relations and opening up trade and cultu-

FUNNY THING the Leader of the Opposition took the words right out of my mouth, and the thought out of mind. I have for years greatly enjoyed Budget Speeches, never the Budget Proposals, from way back when Mr. J. R. Himself played the role of Finance Minister. He then

probably liked his own Proposals as well, which is only natural.

Reading through NM's Speech, though, it occurred to me that the Doctor had overlooked a couple of money-saving points, possibly because they were obvious.

I was disturbed somewhat when he said that the Government had provided employment for 120,000 people in two years, but quite alarmed when he indicated the "staggering figure" of Rs. 1,300 million as being spent annually on public servants' salaries alone. If the salary bill were to expand year by year, he said, it could only be done at the expense of development. That simply won't do. We don't want to be cited in the text-books as another classic case of arrested development, do we?

I don't know if he's looked at it my way, though I doubt he has: NM's problem, if he doesn't mind my saying so, is really not massive unemployment, but chronic employment, which gobbles up more and more of the national cake every year, leaving little or nothing by way of dough to fertilize the Five Year Plan

ral channels. The treaty guarantees free access across the borders. The GDR has made an appropriate gesture by freeing thousands of political prisoners, most of them West Germans. The unfreezing of the relations between the two German States has been made possible by the realisation in Bonn that the GDR has consolidated itself and that the four big powers, as their joint declaration shows, wanted a detente. The Big Four retain their rights and powers under their quadripartite agreements and there is still no overall German peace treaty. But it must be hoped that these matters will be resolved during the European security conference. In the meantime, the admission of both Germanys to the United Nations will seal the dismemberment of what Bismarck had hammered into one unified State.

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BUDGET

I suggest, for a start, that he save a bit on the Rs. 1,300 million by closing down all the Employment Exchanges in the country. Who needs them, anyway? Not the Government, I think. Just a letter from your friendly MP should work wonders, and invariably does. (It has the added advantage of making MPs feel important, too.)

THE DOCTOR could, if he is serious about the job, take it from there and do some more pruning. All he has to do is look around. He may end up doing away with the whole Public Service, but that can't be helped, for sentiment has no place in, as the Doctor said, "the new political atmosphere that has been generated."

What has a place, however, is the matter of self-preservation, since it doesn't cost much, only "large sums of money" for internal security, some piddling amount like Rs. 275 million a year. I don't know why he bothered to mention it at all. To stay alive and be stagnant is, I guess, far better than to develop and die. No one can accuse the Government of not getting its priorities right.

I thought the Doctor's Speech set the tone very nicely by referring to May 22, 1972 as setting the seal on our Independence and our freedom from the imperialism of the West.

I can feel it in my bones, this freedom, and I know we are now totally free to demand aid from the West in cash, and in kind, or else. It's a heady feeling to realise that, once free, even little chaps like us can make the big boys out West shudder and shake with trepidation. A little bit of moral blackmail, like a little bit of totalitarianism, goes a long way.

I thoroughly enjoyed the para about us getting buffeted by the winds of change raging through the West. The Arab-Israeli conflict, he said, blocked the Suez Canal and gave our economy a shuddering jolt. Very true. Even truer was the one about freight rates being jacked up by big capitalist combines, only he said it gave us a pain in the neck, which shows the Doctor is not as well up on Anatomy as he is about the Economy. It gives us a pain all right, but most people here seem to feel it in the stomach, which is way down from the neck, or should be, unless Evolution has played some monkey tricks while I wasn't looking.

Again, when British Sterling was made to float, he said, we received a nasty jab on our balance of payments. With all due respect, when British Sterling floats, our balance of payments sinks—to a new low. And when the Yen goes up, we pay a

heavy price for their goods, he said. I for one have lost my yen for that tiny transistor for which they're asking fancy prices in the blackmarket.

ALL THIS THE DOCTOR RELATED to show the whole world to what extent poor we are at the mercy of the imperialists. After such a promising start he disappointed me terribly, for when he got to the crunch, he got cold feet and let the Imperialists get away scot free. When he got to the State of the Economy, I thought that was where he would really lambaste the dirty imperialists and their dirtier machinations, but he merely said our agricultural output and rubber production were both affected by "adverse weather conditions." Period. Yes, yes, but who do you suppose was behind it all? By leaving it unsaid, the Doctor was being unfair by the Almighty. People might go away with the idea that adverse weather is, after all, only an Act of God.

Soon after the Doctor had made known his diagnosis and issued his Prescription, I sought out a well known businessman who I hadn't met for years. As I remembered him, the man was big made, broad shouldered, and six feet tall. The man I met, however, was really an apology for his former self; he had lost a lot of weight, which was under-

Death of a Gentleman

By S. SIVAGURUNATAN

standable, and even more height, which was not.

It was a real weird story the man had to tell. Seems he had all along been at the Top, or thereabouts, in business. Then the Doctor had his say, about a universal levelling-down, and that did it. From a sort of Board Level he found himself, overnight, at Ground Level, and wonders if he'll go down any further. His only consolation is that he can't go down too far, not more than six feet under, at any rate.

Did he have anything to say on the Budget? In answer, he told me about a Doctor (not from the LSE) who had tried for years, in vain, to cure his patient of a malignant tumor and finally, in desperation, stopped giving advice and gave him the bill instead. The patient was cured instantly. Pity, he also died of shock instantly.

I still don't know why he told me that story. There must be a moral in it somewhere, but I'll be damned if I can spot it.

MARTHELIS of Mapegama and his bullock cart will not be seen in the streets of Kurunegala anymore. No more will he call at the washerman's huts in the early hours of the day to collect the laundered clothes. The young ones of Mapegama with whom he was such a favourite will not come out to greet their "Marthelis Mama". He is dead.

Marthelis was fifty-five years of age at the time of his death. He was a big burly person with pleasant manners and an inexpressibly winning smile.

Fortune did not smile upon Marthelis. Born into a large family, his had been a struggle for existence. He was strong-willed, courageous and led an exemplary life. He neither sought nor received help from any quarter and believed in fighting his own battles.

That which broke his heart was the death by cobra-bite of his eldest son. He had been the apple of his eye. Life had dealt Marthelis a cruel blow. This was the only time he had wished that

he too was with the dead. But for the sake of his two unmarried daughters and the children of his dead son, he wanted to live and endure any suffering. They restored in him the zest for living. Without him they would become helpless and destitute. The money he earned from his bullock cart, he spent on them. He would forgo his meals; but made sure they had theirs.

MARTHELIS is now dead. At long last he has joined his son. As the sun, a fiery ball, was disappearing behind the horizon, he was laid to rest at the village cemetery. The young and the old were present in large numbers to pay their last respects not only to a fellow villager but to man of indomitable courage, a champion of the under-privileged and above all, a good Buddhist. With Marthelis gone, his cart lies idle on the road-side. The bullocks, his constant companions remain tethered to the trees, silent, eyes misty and chewing the straw. These beasts too seem to be longing for their master who had lavished such care and kindness on them.



A By-Election Secret

BY CANAX

NOW THAT the mini-General Election is over, one shouldn't take too seriously the stuff that leaders of the major parties say for public consumption in the wake of the results. The party cadres expect that, and one of the first things a Party politician learns is to keep the rank-and-file happy, especially in adversity. (If you're thinking of rats deserting a sinking ship, remember it's your thought, and you're welcome to it.)

Since the by-election I've had reason to radically change my views about politicians. I am now convinced, from what a close friend with the right (and left) connections told me, that politicians are, by and large, actually human, considerate and thoughtful. Of each other, at least. It's just that they try hard to conceal their feelings, often with a remarkable degree of success.

I've been privy to a secret for sometime now, but with the elections well behind us I can't see any harm in sharing it with you. But I'll refrain from naming names for, as they say in some ads, it wouldn't be fitting to do so. Suffice it to say that my sources are impeccable. As you will see presently.

My friend was there with the political high-command when the Ratnapura results was announced in the wee

hours of the morning. So I'll tell it the way he told me. The victory was a bitter blow indeed, after all the trouble the Party had gone to. No wonder the announcement was greeted with loud wails in concert, a reaction which, my friend said, prompted an involuntary tear or two from him as well.

A Very Important Person was the first to recover a sense of composure. Daintily wiping away a tear with a lace hanky, the VIP said to no one in particular, "I don't know how to face them after this. They'll think we didn't try hard enough, though goodness knows we did."

A somewhat lesser VIP whispered a few consoling words, then turned to my friend and said, "You know how upset we were when we virtually swept the board in 1970. Four seats is not a lot, true, but we wanted them to have all four because we believed in democracy, and the interests of democracy are best served by having a strong opposition.

MY FRIEND knew just how badly they felt about the Ratnapura mishap, so he offered to go round to the other side and explain. The high-command considered this for a moment in silence, it seems, which was broken by the lesser VIP's almost rhetorical question: "What

can we say? More to the point, what can we do now to show them we really care?"

"I know!" said the Very Important Person suddenly. "To make up for Ratnapura we'll give them TB Tennakoon. He'll prove a great asset if they're thinking of reviving the Temperance Movement."

Everybody present felt it was a stroke of genius, including my friend, to whom a Party stalwart had explained, "After all, it's a small sacrifice to make for Democracy." Such tiny, unselfish gestures do help to renew one's faith in Man's ultimate goodness. Or Woman's for that matter,

"I'll even go over myself to show we're really sorry," the VIP had added in earnest, but the offer was promptly howled down. "No! No!" they had all shouted in unison, "even Democracy is not worth going that far!"

"Thus it was with a lofty sense of mission that my friend had called over at the HQ of the other side, but the place was strangely silent. "Anybody home?" he had called out.

"Three out of four," said a voice from within. He sought out the voice and discovered it belonged to Another Very Important Person. He began to explain the purpose of his visit, but was quietly hushed into silence.

"We quite understand," the AVIP had said, gently puffing on an expensive

On Getting Election Results Quickly

BY RICHARD P. WILSON

briar. "We all make mistakes, but we know they did their best for us." The AVIP went on to explain how he thought Ratnapura had gone awry.

MY FRIEND reported back and everybody was overjoyed that there were no hard feelings over Ratnapura. "But," said the Very Important Person, "what did we do wrong there?" My friend repeated what he had been told.

"My goodness!" exclaimed the VIP, "why didn't we think of it before?"

The Party Secretary was promptly summoned. "See that this order is circularised at once," said the VIP. "As a general rule, no prospective candidate of ours should in future attempt to clean loaded guns close to Nomination Day."

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THANKS to computers, massive banks of telephones and 130,000 poll watchers, U.S. Presidential election returns will be flashed to the most distant regions of the United States within minutes on November 7. And within a few more minutes the returns will be sped around the world via teletypes and radio. In 1860 the news of Abraham Lincoln's election to the Presidency did not reach the nation's newest state, Oregon, until two months after the balloting. This year Oregon's citizens will learn within five minutes, how for instance, the Gubernatorial race in distant New Hampshire was decided.

There will be 540 contests throughout the country that Americans will want to know the outcome of, including the contests for the Presidency, 18 state governorships, 33 Senate seats and 435 seats in the House of Representatives. Votes will be cast to decide those contests in 170,000 precincts.

The task of tabulating these votes for the news media falls on the **News Election Service**, a cooperative of the three major radio-TV networks—ABC, CBS and NBC—and the two major wire services, *United Press International* and the *Associated Press*. The News Election

Service will spend two million dollars keeping track of the ballots of 84 million to 85 million voters. The three broadcast networks, after receiving the data from the News Election Service (NES), will spend about eleven million dollars in analyzing, projecting and disseminating the news. The NES, which had ten fulltime employees nine months ago, will have 140,000 on the payroll Tuesday, including 130,000 feeding tallies from all voting precincts. Many of these part-time workers will be college students or civic-minded citizens belonging to such groups as the League of Women Voters.

THE POLL WATCHERS will steadily report the votes in the 170,000 precincts by telephone to six regional centres—in Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago Cincinnati, Philadelphia and New York. From these centers first the partial and then the complete results will be transmitted on data-punch cards over a national bank of 2,000 telephones to a prime computer center in New York's Times Square. There they will be tabulated and digested by the NES computers and fed to the computers of the news services and broadcast networks. It is these latter computers that will enable network analysts

to predict the outcome of contests, if not too close, within minutes after the polls close.

This is the second Presidential election test for the NES system. For years the news services were the principal counters of the unofficial election returns. Each Associated Press reporter, for instance, would telephone results from the precincts he was covering to his local desk. Consolidated totals would then go out on the service's teletype wires. The broadcast networks thus had to rely on the news services, which were primarily organized to serve radio and television's slower competitors, the daily newspapers. So in 1964 the broadcast networks attempted to seek faster coverage by sending their own reporters to monitor the votes in the nation's precincts.

The networks had no trouble covering New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary, in March, each of the three hiring about 300 reporters to staff the state's precincts. State primaries held over a period of months each Presidential election year are used to test the popularity of candidates and to obtain support for their nomination at their party's

nomination convention later in the year. But by the time the California Primary came around in June, and nearly 95,000 reporters had to be hired to monitor votes in the state's 31,000 precincts, the manpower could not be found and the reporting of votes was incomplete. The networks had to fall back that year on the wire services. From that experience came the organization of NES.

THE FIRST national test for NES came in the 1968 Presidential election, but the computer went haywire and recorded in some instances impossible vote totals. This year NES officials are confident no such mixup will occur. For one thing, the master computer center in New York has a "fail-safe" setup—two separate banks of computers will receive and digest all returns, so if one fails the other can carry on. To guard against any local electrical failure, one bank of computers has been set up in the Times Square office and the other in the Financial District downtown on Broad Street.

NES simply collects vote results. It leaves the analyzing and the projecting to the networks. The networks feed the NES

totals into their own computers and, basing their computations on past voting patterns in selected key precincts, may be able to project a Presidential winner shortly after the polls close on the Eastern Seaboard—three hours before polls close on the Pacific Coast.

The network effort to keep the listeners and viewers informed of the 1972 election's events began as far back as November 1970. Since then small armies of network staffers have been researching past election results, programming their computers and seeking out those "bellwether" precincts that may tip them off to a voting trend. NBC election broadcasters, for instance, have selected 2,650 barometric precincts to help them project the overall vote, plus, 1400 "tag" precincts for computer analysis of economic, racial and religious voting patterns. At CBS, broadcasters like Walter Cronkite will monitor computer readouts on 3,200 precincts, half of them changed since the 1968 election.

If the election on November 7 turns out the way most observers now expect, all three networks may be in a position to project the Presidential winner while most of the public is still at the dinner table.

Other Questions on Election Day

BY MARY SHERWOOD

IN FORTY FOUR of the 50 United States, voters next Tuesday will determine whether they want specific changes in their own states as well as who the Federal and local officials will be. A look at the variety of questions is a reminder that a number of matters affecting daily life are still decided on a state-wide rather than a nation-wide basis. This results in some confusion, of course—what is legal in one locality may not be legal across the next state line. It also has the effect of making one state a sort of laboratory for change, which may be picked up by other states if the changing appears to have been successful, or may stand briefly as a horrible example to be voted down next time by the voters who first endorsed it.

Ten of the states will vote on some aspect of judicial reform. Each state has its own separate court system, with authority in matters covered by state laws; the state judges are usually elected by the people. Several of these "judicial reform" measures spell out new provisions for selection, removal or discipline of judges.

CALIFORNIA will vote whether to restore the death penalty. The United States Supreme Court earlier this year said that the death penalty as it was administered constituted cruel and unusual punishment and hence was unconstitutional; however, the court left open the possibility that states could make capital punishment mandatory for specific crimes. The California proposal would require the death penalty for four crimes—treason, train-wrecking, prejury in a capital case, and the killing of a prison guard by a life-term inmate. The proposal would also give the legislature power to impose the death penalty in all cases of kidnapping, murder and rape. California's Senate recently rejected a proposal to restore the death penalty. A campaign led by prison guards resulted in more than a million signatures demanding that Californians be permitted to vote on the question, and thus it appears on the ballot.

Signed petitions added another proposal to the California ballot—one that would make it legal for

an adult to possess, cultivate and use marijuana. Another proposal would outlaw boycotts of farm products, an attack on the lettuce and grape boycotts of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Worker's Union.

Michigan will vote whether to allow physicians to terminate a pregnancy at the patient's request during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. Michigan Law now permits abortion only if the woman's life is in danger. North Dakota voters are also voting on a proposal to liberalize the abortion laws. At present, laws generally permit early abortion in New York, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, and the District of Columbia. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule this term on the legality of Texas and Georgia Laws against abortion.

COLORADO voters will be asked to vote on whether to prohibit the state from levying taxes and appropriating funds for the 1976 Winter Olympic games. Some Colorado residents oppose holding the Olympic in their state because they think it will be costly and result in

unnecessary exploitation of recreation areas. Colorado, Michigan and Oregon will also vote whether to replace property taxes for financing public schools with other forms of taxation.

Oklahoma voters will decide whether to permit the sale of liquor by the drink, which is legal in most other states. Several proposals reflect the growing interest in environmental protection. Washington and California will consider proposals concerning the regulation of shoreline use and development; South Dakota will decide whether to ban hunting of mourning doves; Florida and New York will vote on the issuance of bonds to acquire land and construct facilities for outdoor recreation and natural resources conservation.

The Women's Rights Movement is in evidence on the state ballots. Louisiana voters will have a chance to repeal the present state regulation that women are generally exempt from jury service. New Mexico and Hawaii will vote on proposed state constitutional amendments guaranteeing women equal rights under the law. Texas, Alaska and Ohio will vote on holding a convention to revise their state constitutions.

Off The Beaten Track

Elahera, Batticaloa, Bibile: Chillies, Grape Vine, Buffaloes & Ploughing, Child Labour: D.S. & S.W.R.D.

By ALKARDI MUGANA

THE RAIN this last month has been so much the roots of the chilli plants have gone rotten, and this is said to have caused the present dearth of chillies. But meanwhile chillies continue to be planted from Rajangane to Manakandarawawa (that is from the Puttalam-Anuradha pura road to the Mihintale-Trincomalee road), because the smaller younger chillie plants do not suffer the same fate. The rain, too, has seemed to have stopped these last two days. Four days without rain is enough to constitute a drought in these parts when there are chilli plants to be transplanted. It has not rained here for four days and in Anuradhapura for two and so the sowing of chilli has been held up. The cleaning of land goes on for sowing.

Hardly had I written these words that there was such a shower of rain that all the roads, not tarred, were slippery for bare feet and sandals. The farmers have received the rain with mixed feelings. They hope there will not be too much of it. There is a peculiar phenomenon that I learnt of today. The tanks at Kekirawa are dry, while to the north and south the tanks are full, and at places, too,

such as Galkulama to the north and Dambulla to the south, which are quite close to Kekirawa.

At Naula, on the Dambulla—Matale road, I had to wait about an hour and a half for a bus to take me to Elahera where I had to wait another two hours for another bus to take me further along the Polonnaruwa road, and so it went on. But I learnt something else: it is now possible to go to Mahiyangana from Dambulla without having to go along the main Kandy or Batticaloa trunk routes and you can do this by going through Elahera.

The route looks more direct so far as one is able to follow it on the map, and the place where one meets the connecting bus from the Mahiyangana end is not even named on the latest Motor Map of Ceylon issued by the Survey Department and said to have been revised in 1971.

It is strange that the Survey Department does not name this place, but names a village called Mullegama at the northern top of the Monaragala District as having a Resident Dispensary, when the whole village has been abandoned for years. Nor

is a fairly important road from Bibile to Namal Oya, or Namal Oya Junction, between Inginiyagala and Amparai, so much as traced. These are only a few things I have noticed over the last few years about the Motor Map issued by the Survey Department.

WHAT A LOT of nonsense is written about child labour in Ceylon. It is written by people who have no real conception of what they are talking about; they think almost in clichés. If the reader had seen, as I had done, a fourteen-year-old and a nine-year-old working in a paddy-field, alone and without supervision, and with such intelligence, he would know what I am trying to get at. "Father owns the land, but we get the profit" said the 14-year old. Some of the work these children were doing was pioneer work, too, and how quickly they worked.

Very well meaning people goaded on by international organizations, would make children into lazy louts, dabbling in purely academic objects at school, and fit neither for manual work or for other work that calls for any initiative. The current *Catholic Messenger*, in its innocence, devotes part of two pages to the so-called veil of child labour. If half the energy that goes into condemning child labour went instead into condemning Family Planning, how much more good would

be done. People filled with a sense of public service usually only see the form, they seldom see the fact. They do not see things as they really are. In the case of child labour, it is not the inadequacy of the remuneration that matters but the sense of fulfilment that a child gets, and this far outweighs anything else. Even technical training given in a school is quite inadequate for most people unless it is really vocational. There is no substitute for learning the 'hard' way, and no amount of time spent in school can compensate for this, where it is lacking.

In this part of the world, around Elahera, there is said to be a drought for more than six months of the year because rain only falls for four. What a contrast the country must be during this time to what it is now when everything is green and lush.

THERE ARE farmers who scorn government subsidies, because they say it involves too much red tape and time. They buy whatever has to be bought and do not ask for the subsidy; time is too precious. It was one of these farmers who told me that the tractor plough either digs too deep or it skims the surface. Either way it does not really turn a good furrow. With the buffalo drawn plough, he said, it was different. Anybody who has used a plough can appreciate this. Paddy, he also said, does

not need a deep furrow; it does better with a shallow. A yoke of buffaloes will one plough half an acre in a day, but one farmer said that if the buffaloes are well yoked they can plough an acre. One acre of cadju nuts gives a higher financial return than an acre of paddy, and farmers may switch from one to another for a change.

Equal to an acre of cadju nuts, I was told, is an acre of mung-atta, but the best of all is an acre of chilli. All these can be sown in paddy-fields, but at the Yala season only, which is the current one.

Ploughing a furrow is much like steering a boat. You must fix your eye on the furthest point and take your general direction and stick to it. You must not deviate for every little mistake you made in your last furrow or you will never steer a straight one. You guide the plough by leaning it over to one side or the other. I am speaking here only of ploughing with buffaloes. There is a rhythm in life, and this rhythm is sometimes upset by turning to the tractor.

A bushel of paddy is sown to half an acre. Children are sometimes stumped on to what an acre is or as to how many acres they have sown, and if you want to know how many acres a piece of land comprises of all you have to do is to ask how many bushels of paddy were sown in it, and if

you get the answer ten bushels, you know that five acres were sown.

Seeing buffaloes swim is a wonderful sight. Only their mouths are above water, and their bodies are scarcely perceptible. They look for all the world like hippopotamus. The ones I saw today were crossing a filthy flowing channel, quite wide, and they were obviously out of their depth in the water. They were crossing all of their own accord. Looking at them in the water, their bodies and heads submerged with only their mouths showing, it appeared a wonder that they did not sink. There were eight mouths moving across the water, and facing into the on-coming current. When they emerged from the water on our side, they proved to be hulking beasts with one of them a calf. The calf had swam strongly as the rest. They did not seem tired by their swim but went all at a gallop.

IT IS A REVELATION to hear the villagers talk about the achievements since Independence. D. S. Senanayake's contribution they say, was positive, and what he achieved are a part Ceylon's life today. They are to be seen if you wish to look for them. It was not so, they say with Bandaranaike, his achievements were nil and are nowhere to be seen. There were new creations. They do not seem to regard nationalization as a creative

act, and, of course it is not.

To put Bandaranaike's achievements at naught is a harsh judgement of the people. Some of the better read say that his contribution was more in the realm of the spirit, which is something not so tangible, and that if people have become disillusioned with him it is because of the way events have taken a turn in Ceylon.

Here is a tip for pipe-smoker. if you do not like your tobacco, rinse it with wine and bee's honey, or with brandy. The proportions are ten drops of honey mixed with a teaspoonful of wine and then two ounces of tobacco. A teaspoonful of brandy can be used instead of the wine and honey. Ants do not attack honey used in this way. It must be the tobacco which keeps them away-try if you do not like the smell of your tobacco either. I got this from a pipe-smoker.

We were talking of vines and the question arose as to why grapevines do not grow in Nuwara Eliya. Nuwara Eliya is wet and cold and is has frost. And so do the grape-growing areas of France.

But France has both frost and snow, and yet grapevines do not die there. In France, the vines go into winter-quarters, as it were; they stop growing with the onset of the cold

season, and so when the frost hits them, they are immune to it and able to bear through till the spring when it gets warmer and they start growing again. In Nuwara Eliya, it is warm enough for the vine to keep growing throughout the year. And so it does not go into winter-quarters. And when the frost hits it, it is unready for it and dies. There are quite sharp frosts in Nuwara Eliya.

There is a vine, I was told, which must be at least a hundred years old, growing in Talawila, and so it must be about as old as the church which is there. But I was also told that it is most unlikely that any vine would live two centuries. Tholagatty, I hear, is about the only place in Ceylon which makes wine out of grapes. It is in the Jaffna Peninsula.

In Batticaloa, it does not rain for over six months of the year, and this at a single stretch and so grass gets very parched. This is the common problem of the Wannu. Some people say that the N.C.P. is the most fertile district in Ceylon, and that Vavuniya is more fertile still. The problem of course in these places is shortage of water: so much rain falling in a short time, and then none for the rest of the year. As for cattle-rearing in the Wannu, there is another problem. In addition to the fact that grass does not grow for such a large part of the year, the grass

itself is not of a very nutritious kind.

IN THE BIBILE region I saw a man weaving ropes out of *linea* bark. I give the name for the tree used in the area. I do not know whether it is the general Sinhalese name. The tree grows quite big but it's bark of the smaller trees that is used. The rope is extremely tough, and it can be used for roping buffaloes. With the course of time the ropes made from the *linea* bark mellow, and it begins to have a feel almost undistinguishable from other rope, although it looks of much better quality. The man who was making the rope seemed to be doing so with great facility. The rope will keep for two or three years even when used every day. The tree is found in the jungle.

Bibile and the Mahiyangana area must be quite the hottest in Ceylon. The only relief it has from the heat is, strangely enough, in the dry season, when it can be quite cold at night.

I came across a fruit which I have never seen before. The fruit looks more a vegetable growing

on a tree, and when it is not fully ripe it tastes like a very sour *billing*, but fully ripe, it is a most delicious fruit with plenty of flesh. The name of the fruit is *Kamaranga*. There also grows in these parts a fruit called *maddu*. It grows by the thousands or hundreds on a tree that looks like a stunted palm. This fruit cannot be eaten off the tree, but the kernel has to be separated from the husk, dried in the sun, and then ground into a flour. One of the things that can be made from this flour is roti.

One very good way of making money, if not a living, is selling firewood. The wood has to be three feet long, and stacked fairly tightly in a heap one yard high by one yard wide. So with the length of the wood it forms a cube. The cube of wood sells for Rs. 4/- which is about a days wage, but the success of the business depends on one's luck in selling it. The wood cannot of course, be rubbish. I was surprised to see rubber growing fairly extensively in the Bibile area. Two things struck me on the road from Bibile to Mahiyangana.

The first was the amount of murunga grown; these trees seem to have been planted quite extensively. The second was the quantity of long *mana* grass that I saw. There seemed to be no cattle to eat it. And yet cattle will eat and enjoy *mana* grass. Can it be that there is no water in the dry season for the cattle? And yet, I was assured that there is.

The bus to Mahiyangana was crowded; from then onwards there seemed to be as many standing as there were sitting, right up all the hair-pin bends, and until we got to Kandy. Cardamons in a shop at Hunnasgiriya reminded me how extensively cardamon is grown on the hills above, even above the tea. Then there was cocoa and coffee about Teldeniya. All this reminded me of the cloves. I think that is grown round Kadugannawa. I saw a very rare species of red plantain being sold in a boutique at Hunnasgiriya and I wish I could remember the name of it. My journey down the Kadugannawa Pass was on the same day that earth slips occurred on the railway line above us, as we learned from passengers who joined us.

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