

TRIBUNE

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WITH COMPLIMENTS

C. V. BHATT

The Age Of Corruption

THE EXCERPTS from the Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, takes a large number of pages in this issue. But we have used this space because we feel that our readers in Ceylon and abroad should have these relevant extracts from the Budget Speech at hand in order to understand the analytical comments and discussion on the Budget which various contributors have written and will write for the *Tribune*. Owing to the amount of space taken by these extracts from the Budget Speech we have held over many articles, but they will appear in forthcoming issues. Serenbid's article on current developments in the local political scene and *Pertinax's* article on the Budget will appear in our next issue.

ON THE COVER we have a few of the headlines which have appeared in the local daily papers on the growing corruption in the country and the calamitous increase in crime and lawless indiscipline in both the urban and rural areas. In every issue of *Tribune*, for long time now, we have drawn attention to the corruption, indiscipline and lawlessness which have become rampant in the country. Unless some stern measures are taken to check corruption and indiscipline, all efforts to increase production and productivity will come to

nought. This era in Sri Lanka will go down to history as the glorious age of corruption—in spite of all the tall talk about socialism, independence sovereignty and the like. Events and developments in Ceylon cannot be understood without constantly keeping in mind that corruption, indiscipline and lawlessness block every effort at progress.

THE IMPACT of the massive devaluation stemming from the Budget and the increase in the BTT has already begun to affect the costs of production of *Tribune* already. We have so far used art paper for our cover obtained on permits from the Eastern Paper Mills Ltd. But for the last fortnight such permits were not available and we have subsisted on paper we had in stock, but we have used up all stocks we had with the last issue. Now art paper is only available on the black and we have been told when new stocks are imported the prices will be much higher for obvious and well known reasons. We have therefore made a decision that we can longer afford the luxury of an art paper cover, and henceforth we will use, the cover paper we have for in this issue—as long as stocks are available.

IN THIS ISSUE, we have relevant and significant excerpts from the Budget

Speech in the *For the Record* From the next issue. We wish publish the *Revenue Proposals* of the Finance Minister. Readers will notice a major *credibility gap* between the trend and tone of the substantive part of the Budget Speech and the *Revenue Proposals* as much. Our commentators and columnists will deal with some aspects of this *credibility gap* in their articles in the forthcoming issues. We have also in this issue our customary feature *Chronicle* November 13-21. Our readers outstations and cut of Ceylon want us to maintain this feature giving, in fact, more space to it, if possible. We have also published the message of the Yugoslav Ambassador in Ceylon on the occasion of the National Day which fell on November 29. We have a topical article on current development in

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BUDGET 1972 – SIGNIFICANT AND RELEVANT EXCERPTS

We publish excerpts from the long and detailed Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance Dr. N. M. Perera delivered at the National State Assembly on November 10 1972.

AM very mindful of the honour and the privilege of presenting this Budget, and moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill on behalf of the United Front Government led by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. This is also the 3rd Budget that I have presented since the elections of 1970.

The new Constitution that we accepted on the 22nd of May, 1972, set the seal on our independence as a free country. It proc-

Yugoslavia. Sherlock Holmer, oldtime Tribune Investigator, is back again with us with an interesting piece completely devoted to CHILLIES. Alkardi Mugana continues his Safari, this time in the South and then he does a short turn in hills. He has told us that word Safari in Swahili means a journey, and the connotation of a hunting expedition had arisen only after tourists had gone on the rampage against wild life in the "dark continent". Canax has a scintillating piece on a new trend in our national life, and Sivagurunathan has a short story.

claimed in unmistakable terms, the elimination of all vestiges of our past tutelage under the British. Parliament became, in a true and vital sense, the instrument of the will of the sovereign people of Sri Lanka.

The Constitution adheres unambiguously to the strict mandate which we received from the people of Sri Lanka. We asked for a mandate in 1970 to establish in Sri Lanka as socialist democracy. We received that mandate in full measure. In accordance therewith the Constitution has pledged to realize the objectives of a socialist democracy. From this position, we cannot deviate. The fulfilment of this pledge involves, therefore, a break with the mental outlook of the past one and half centuries.

With the Constitution, we have generated a new political atmosphere. We must match it by generating a new economic atmosphere. Political independence must beget economic independence, if the political independence is to have any meaning. All of us, both present and past, have sacrificed to achieve the noble aim of political independence. It is now for us, of the present to sacrifice to achieve our economic independence. Economic in-

dependence means that we must free ourselves from the economic bonds that tie us to the imperialism of the West and their institutions.

THIS IS no easy task for a small country with limited resources and those not properly tapped. In a highly inter-dependent world, many factors beyond our control assail us from all sides. We are buffeted by the winds of change that raged through the big Western powers..... All this and more bring untold suffering to developing countries like us. 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 cannot 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.

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 lop-sided position cannot but lead to dissatisfaction, frustration and eventual disaster.

LET ME give precision to this point I am urging. In a total recurrent ex-

penditure 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.

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.

Another method of building a more satisfactory proportion is to ensure a greater intensity of work. A leisurely pace productive of 2 hours of output can-

not 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.

A tentative effort was made to mobilise our full resources in some planned way with the inauguration of the Five Year Plan last year. For various reasons that Plan did not get an auspicious start. This is not surprising. A Plan involves a disciplined and scientific approach to the task of development. We have not yet attuned ourselves to this kind of rigid discipline. We have for a long time enjoyed the benefits of our favourable economic factors in the world market and we were, therefore, content to bask in the sunshine of haphazard casual development. By and by, particularly after the Korean war, hard times have started knocking on our doors. We have not fully awakened ourselves to the straitlacing and hamstringing that the hard times have brought. We still

think individually and separately. Each for ourselves and in isolation still forms the major premise of our thinking. A radical transformation introducing a micro-economic outlook is taking time to seep down to society. Even the leadership is not fully imbued with the mental transformation that this involves. Confronted with the need for hard realistic decision with long-term perspectives, we get bogged down by the fear of a temporary loss of prestige and popularity. We become oblivious to the long-term needs of lasting prosperity.

THE BREAKTHROUGH will undoubtedly take time. We should not be unduly disappointed if the going is slow and heavy. It will be easy to feel frustrated and wend along easy paths. These difficulties can only be surmounted by the perseverance and persistent effort to enlarge the horizon of our thinking. Granting the limitations of a non-regimented society, we cannot say we have begun badly. The beginnings of planned development have been introduced. Some spadework has been done. The importance of planning has been bruited abroad. The benefits of planned effort have been highlighted. But the Plan has got moving slowly and somewhat unevenly.

We have not yet succeeded in mobilising the full resources of the country. The private sector which has to contribute over 50 per cent of the investment targets has not

been organised to ensure the fulfilment of their quantitative contribution. We have no means of quantifying their contribution to the plantation sector, tourism and hotels, to housing construction and generally to the furtherance of non-traditional exports. Similarly, the minor crop production that has shown a fair progress remains in the field of speculation rather than in the field of precise quantification. Even in the public and semi-public sector like Corporations, there is no exact information of the breakdown targets and the extent of the fulfilment of these targets. The quantification is vital if we are to keep meaningful pressure to ensure the fulfilment of allocated targets.

The basic idea of the Five Year Plan has been to increase productivity in both the agricultural and industrial sectors. What is contemplated is not merely to increase gross investments but to ensure that these investments will produce a commensurate increase in the Gross Domestic Product. The aim is not merely to increase the total production but also the rate of productivity, the unit rate of production should also go up. This is a sure basic for more and more employment to the young men and women who have been churned out from our colleges and other educational institutions.

This also means both the expansion of the quantum of employment as well as an enhancement of the rate of remuneration. The higher the level of productivity the greater can be the rate of take-home-pay.

A further outlet of gainful employment has already been embarked upon with the passage of the Land Reform Bill in the National State Assembly. Here again absentee landlordism has to be eliminated. The emphasis has to be placed on greater productivity and better utilization of the land to get the maximum returns for the country. The Land Reform Bill has to be taken in conjunction with the Productivity Bill which enjoins standard of cultivation on all land throughout the country. The concept that the private landlord has an inalienable right to do what he likes with the land even to the point of leaving it completely fallow and untouched has been thrown into the limbo of archaic anti-social ideas. Indeed these acts enthrone the modern concept that land inherently belongs to the society as a whole. The owner of land is the trustee for the society and must so utilize the land as to gather the maximum benefit for himself and for society as a whole.

Further steps have been taken to increase the productivity of land improperly or inadequately used by a virtual ban on the import of subsidiary food

crops like chillies, onions, Bombay onions, green gram etc. Inducements have been offered through subsidies for production and the Government is undertaking to buy these products at a price that will give a fair return to the producer and encourage him to embark on more and more cultivation of these crops. These activities are bearing fruit and a large number of cultivators are reaping the benefits of their enterprise.

IN THE LAST 3 years therefore, we have succeeded in making some impact on the agricultural sector. Although we have not had the same success in the industrial sector, cribbed and cabined by the strait-jacket of foreign exchange, a breakthrough is visible. Beginning with the demonetisation of the higher currency, denomination, I have endeavoured to bring home the importance of savings through the utilization of banks. Banking facilities have been widened. Consumption expenditure has been discouraged. Investment in productive enterprises have been encouraged. We have curbed the high rate of consumption expenditure that prevailed in 1963 and in 1969 when the rate of increase was 12.8 and 14.1 per cent respectively. In 1972 consumption expenditure shows a net increase of 5.3 per cent at 1971 prices. On the other hand, investment expenditure which declined by 11.2 per cent

in 1971 is expected to increase by 7.7 per cent in 1972. Public investment expenditure is expected to increase by 16.8 per cent after a decline by 21.5 per cent in 1971 due to the calamitous conditions of the insurgency. Yet much remains to be done in curtailing consumption expenditure and advancing investment expenditure both public and private on which so much of the success of the plan depends, and indeed our future depends. I cannot too strongly emphasize the imperative need for restraints in the field of consumption. We must jack up our savings to reach a target of 25 per cent of the G.D.P. and divert these savings to productive fields. There is no alternative road to economic salvation.....

The foregoing extracts are from what can be regarded as introductory and preliminary: in fact the crux and essence of the political logic behind the Budget and its proposals. In the following section we publish the opening paragraphs from his speech on the STATE OF THE ECONOMY. We have skipped the long and detailed examination of each aspect of the economy over the past few years and then we have picked up the speech in its concluding sections. The final revenue proposals are dealt with separately. Though

there is much that is repetitious, we have published some of these repetitive paragraphs because they serve to underscore the matters which were uppermost in the Finance Minister's mind.

IN MY LAST Budget Speech I mentioned that the outbreak of insurgent activities and its consequent disruption of almost every sector of the economy would of necessity affect the economic performance of our country in 1971. In the event, real economic growth as measured by the Gross National Product at constant prices increased by less than one per cent, compared with growth rate of 4 per cent in 1970 and annual average growth rate of 5 per cent over the last decade. The deleterious effects of the disruption caused by insurgent activities to our country was compounded by a deterioration of nearly 8 per cent in our terms of trade which had a more severe effect than in any previous year, so that the availability of goods, to the economy of our National income was very much less than our National Product. When an allowance is also made for a 2 per cent increase in the population the per capita real income of our country fell by 1.5 per cent from Rs. 702 to Rs. 691.

The disappointing growth rate was reflected in all the major sectors of econo-

mic activity. The agricultural, construction and commercial sectors showed negative rates of growth, while manufacturing and transport and communications grew at a diminished rate. Agricultural output declined as a result of a fall in the output of paddy, rubber and fishing. Paddy production declined from an estimated 77 million bushels in 1970 to 67 million bushels in 1971, and is attributable to adverse weather conditions, disturbances in the rice growing areas during the insurgency, reduced application of fertilizer and a reduction in the acreage harvested. Rubber production declined by 39 million pounds or 11 per cent to 312 million pounds. The fall in output was due to replanting operations and bad weather conditions which reduced the average yield per acre by 7 per cent to 657 pounds. Moreover, the very low prices that producers had experienced in 1971 may have caused some cuts in tapping.

The overall decline in agricultural production was offset to an extent by the improved production of tea and coconut. Tea production increased by 12 million pounds in 1971 and the average yield per acre increased by over 4 per cent. Average prices in 1971, which were the best for over a decade, may have also had an effect on tea production. Coconut production estimated at 2617 million nuts, increased by 7 per cent in spite of a threat

from a coconut pest. The improved performance in 1971 is attributable to satisfactory weather conditions and increased fertilizer application.

Construction activity as indicated by the value added in the construction sector declined in absolute terms in 1971. The negative growth rate of 8 per cent for this sector is attributable to the reduced availability of raw materials. Similarly the fall in absolute terms of commercial activity is directly attributable to the greatly reduced availability of commodities which in turn is a consequence of stringent import conditions on account of a tight foreign exchange situation.

The performance of the manufacturing sector was affected for similar reasons. Manufacturing activity increased by only 4 percent compared with an average growth rate of over 7 per cent in the past 5 years. This was in spite of an improved performance of certain public sector manufacturing corporations on account of better management and increased utilisation of existing capacity. The scarcity of foreign exchange continues to be the major inhibiting factor for the rapid growth almost of all the sectors of the economy.....

BEFORE I conclude this section on the financial review of the economy, permit me, Mr. Speaker, to summarise and comment on the high-lights of the fiscal trends in the last

five years. During the five-year period ending with the financial year 1970-71, Government expenditure grew at an average annual rate of 9 per cent or about the same rate as the Gross Domestic Product. Expenditures on general services, especially those on defence, grew much faster; their share in total expenditure increasing from 17 per cent to almost 21 per cent. Another item showing a very rapid rate of increase was interest on public debt, which increased from 6 per cent to 9 per cent of total expenditures. On the other hand, the growth of Government receipts in the five years up to 1970-71 did not keep pace with Gross Domestic Product, despite the fact that measures to mobilise additional resources were introduced in each budget since 1966-67. Accordingly while Government expenditures accounted for about 28 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, revenues of Government fell far short of this figure, and were around 21 per cent.

With a contraction in the value of our international trade, taxes on international trade and transactions, the largest source of revenue, have of necessity, shown a steady decline over the last three financial years. Taxes on production, consumption and domestic transactions on the other hand remained virtually constant over this period. Since

expenditure has consistently exceeded revenue, the salient feature of budgetary policy in the last several years has been a sizeable overall deficit equivalent to 6 to 8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. In most of these years while this deficit was financed to a large extent from foreign and non-bank sources, bank financing often accounted for a sizeable proportion of this deficit. The entirety of the capital expenditure as well as a substantial portion of current expenditure of the Government has been regularly provided by borrowing in one form or another. Any reversal of this pattern seen over the last several years requires fundamental re-thinking on our budgetary policy. In the light of these developments, several detailed comments are apposite.

I WOULD also like to preface any comments on fiscal developments by referring to two aspects of the budgetary problem in recent years. In my Budget Speech of last year, I made mention that no Finance Minister inherits a completely new budget. A budget of any year contains in the major part continuing commitments of Government which could only be modified as speedily as circumstances permit. This is true not only of sources of revenue but also of the institutional framework that stands behind the composition, type and level of public expen-

ditures. The other inhibiting factor for budgetary policy—something that is not often adequately recognised—is the severe constraint exercised on the budget when we are forced to contract the volume of our international trade transactions and are also limited by an economy that is growing very slowly. An improvement in the balance of payments can come about basically only through our export earnings. The direct budgetary effect of such an increase is through increased receipts from export duties and increased income taxes. The benefit accruing to the budget does not end there. The increased economic activity following from the availability of more imports results in further benefits to the budget through enhanced receipts from taxes on consumption and expenditure and income taxes on companies and individuals. A Finance Minister restricted by a stagnant export performance, the lack of availability of foreign exchange and a barely growing economy and hampered by a disruption of economic activity due to insurgency conditions, could do no better than achieve limited success unless the people of the country are prepared to break away from the economic stranglehold of such problems.

My theme, Mr. Speaker, in my previous Budget Speeches as well as in my public statements and wri-

tings is that we must make the greatest endeavours to live within our means. In budgetary terms, this means quite simply that we must generate a current account surplus, just as much as in the foreign sector I have made every attempt to progressively reduce the deficit on that account.

A surplus on current account can be generated either by increasing revenue or by reducing expenditure. The revenue effort has been intensified but I have serious doubts as to whether we can go much further along this line, except to rigidly enforce our revenue laws so that every tax payer pays what is due from him. On expenditure, I am more hopeful, but as I mentioned in my previous Budget Speech, it would finally devolve on the willingness and the consciousness of the people to respond positively to the immense problems we have. If the current activities of the Government are assessed over the last five years, there is not a single year which shows a surplus on current account after making provision for advance account activities except the financial year 1968-69. This, too, was possible only at the expense of incurring financial indiscipline in the external account.

THE ABOVE analysis brings into sharp focus the shortcomings of Government's expenditure policy. A policy of directing re-

sources to consumption at the expense of economic growth and capital formation does not augur well for a developing country like Sri Lanka. The channelling of increasing resources or welfare expenditure in the context of a limited growth in revenue impairs the availability of resources for development expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite frankly disappointed with the performance of our capital budget. Over the last two years, I have progressively made higher provision for capital expenditure. In the event, capital expenditure over the last two years has been virtually stagnant. If an allowance is made for increase in price of investment goods including the cost of labour, the actual value of capital formation is likely to have fallen. We must devote all our efforts to development expenditure of a productive nature. It is then, and only then, that we can achieve a satisfactory growth rate which would provide an adequate and better distribution of income and more employment to the people of our country.

Mr. Speaker, the level of borrowing to finance progressively increasing budget deficit has also caused me concern. If we borrow from foreign sources an increasing proportion will be earmarked out of our free foreign exchange resources, which would in turn involve a small

quantum of free foreign exchange resources for our development effort. Internal borrowing, on the other hand, increases the interest component of our recurrent expenditure.

I would not like to conclude this part on a pessimistic note. There are certain features of fiscal policy that I am more optimistic about. There have been years, in the time of the previous Government, when borrowing from expansionary sources was more than 25 per cent of the budget deficit. With great effort, often at the risk of considerable unpopularity with my Cabinet colleagues and with the people of this country, I have managed to bring down the deficit requiring bank financing down to manageable proportions. I intend managing budgetary affairs with the same financial prudence of the last 2½ years. All this has been done with great difficulty in the face of all the constraints and inhibitions which I mentioned earlier. I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to mention to all the Members present here, as well as to the people of this country, that it is only by productive development effort, especially of exports that we can break this economic stranglehold both internally and externally and provide a good life for as many of our people as possible.... PERMIT me to summarise the broad magnitudes of expenditure and revenue

as presented in the Draft Estimates, for the convenience of the Members of this Assembly. In the Appropriation Bill laid before you, recurrent expenditure of the Government has been estimated at Rs. 3,777 million. This is a gross allocation and no allowance has been made for under-expenditure. It is usual to allow an under-expenditure margin of 3 per cent or Rs. 113 million on these votes. When this is done, net expenditure on recurrent votes is estimated at Rs. 3,664 million. On the other hand, following a practice I adopted in my last Budget Speech, it is necessary to make a certain provision for extra-budgetary payments on the advance account operations of the Government. Members may recall that for the previous financial year I made a provision of Rs. 125 million. Following this practice and on an estimate of the cash requirement for such payments, I intend providing Rs. 100 million as net out-payments for these operations for the financial year 1973. Recurrent expenditure net, of under-spending but including the cash requirement for advance account operations, would therefore be Rs. 7,764 million. At prevailing rates of taxation Government revenue is Rs. 3,367 million. It can therefore be seen that on the basis of prevailing rates of taxation and current expenditure, there is a current account deficit of Rs. 397 million.

Provision for capital expenditure in the printed Estimates laid before this Assembly is Rs. 1,658 million, of which contributions to Sinking Funds and amortisation payments are Rs. 373 million. When a margin of 20 per cent is allowed for under-expenditure from the figure of Rs. 1,658 million less the provision for Sinking Fund contributions and amortisation payments, net capital expenditure is Rs. 1,401 million. This is almost 30 per cent higher than the anticipated capital expenditure for the previous financial year over a 12 month period. The gross Budget Deficit or the sum of resources requirement on the current account and net capital expenditure is therefore Rs. 1,798 million.

In financing this Budget Deficit of Rs. 1,796 million, I propose to borrow Rs. 600 million from domestic non-bank sources; Project loans and grants, net of under-utilisation, will also contribute Rs. 141 million towards the financing of this deficit. The Ministry of Planning and Employment estimates that Rs. 400 million would be available through Commodity Aid in 1973. A further Rs. 50 million would be available as administrative borrowing. Since I intend confining bank borrowing to an extent of Rs. 150 million the total resources from all these sources would be Rs. 1,291 million. This would still leave an unfinanced gap of Rs. 507 million.

Mr. Speaker, it is pertinent at this stage to analyse in greater detail the significance of an unfinanced gap of a magnitude of Rs. 507 million that remains with me after raising over Rs. 3,300 million by way of revenue and almost Rs. 1,300 million through borrowing from a variety of sources. This clearly points to grave difficulties in the public finances of the country. In fact, I would go further and state that the difficulties in the public finances of the country is only a manifestation of a more fundamental malaise that permeates the basic aspects of the structure of our economy, which I referred to at length in the earlier part of my Speech. The significance of this crisis can be seen in several ways. Four-fifths of the unfinanced gap of Rs. 507 million is due to a current account deficit. It is also about one-seventh or 13 per cent of our total revenue efforts. To put it in another way, it is almost a third of the Budget Deficit and of the net provision the Government has made for capital expenditure. What is the cause of this and what are the solutions we have before us in terms of the options that are available? MR. SPEAKER, you may recall that not only in my previous two Budget Speeches but also in the course of this Speech, I have highlighted the fundamental causes for these difficulties in the public finances of this country.

Quite simply, our productivity has fallen well below the hopes and aspirations of this Government and the people of Sri Lanka. When the productivity of a country is low, the incomes generated are also necessarily low. This means that we have neither the capacity nor the ability to provide a reasonable income through redistribution alone for the poorer sections of our community.

Increased productivity for the betterment of the masses can only be achieved by harder work effort supported by greater investment. The latter clearly involves a restraint on our consumption and increased savings to supplement the fruits of greater work effort. I need not labour the point that the malaise in our economy is compounded of three basic factors all of which are basically inter-related to each other. The severe pressure of unemployment and the concomitant result of the restlessness of the youth of this country, to an extent to attempt to tear up the very fabric of our democratic traditions, is the most fundamental one. The shortage of goods and their high prices, associated with the chronic shortage of foreign exchange are the other aspects which continue to inhibit our productive activities.

Mr. Speaker, all this clearly shows that greater productive effort by every section of the community with the Government pro-

viding the greatest possible support through capital expenditures, is the only way by which we can pull ourselves out of the economic morass that we are in. To reduce this unfinanced gap by means of a reduction in capital expenditure would therefore clearly be both unwise and incorrect in this context. Obtaining more resources through borrowing is also not a satisfactory solution. The borrowings from domestic sources are either limited or they would increase prices, and any way, would increase the interest cost of such borrowing.

IT MAY not come as a surprise to Members of this Assembly that we are paying for borrowed funds at an interest rate of 9 per cent per annum. In 1973, payments of interest alone require Rs. 504 million. This exactly corresponds to the unfinanced gap which I am confronted with. The magnitude of this problem is better appreciated when it is seen that 80 per cent of the unfinanced gap is because of a current account deficit. Quite simply this means that we are consuming now and not creating sufficient productive assets to leave with our future generation who have to repay these debts. In addition, in the case of foreign borrowing it constitutes a further call on our export earnings resulting from a lesser availability of foreign exchange for development

purposes. Likewise economic activity and productive capacity is so low that we have almost reached the limit of raising revenue through taxation. As I mentioned earlier in my Speech, greater revenue through taxation can come about principally through a rigid enforcement of our tax laws and ferreting out tax dodgers. All this means that our efforts in solving the economic crisis before us would have to be by having a long and hard look at the current expenditures of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, any country whether developed or developing like ourselves, can spend through Government appropriations for three basic purposes—for *defence and internal security; for welfare and consumer subsidies; and for productive developmental expenditure.* An examination of the patterns of public spending in any country would clearly indicate that a Government has only a choice of incurring expenditure on any two of the three forms of expenditure that I have mentioned earlier. I can either spend on internal security and welfare expenditure; or on development expenditure and welfare expenditure; or on internal security and development expenditure. When the problem is seen in these terms the options that are open to us at this critical stage of our development are unambiguously clear.

THE INSURGENCY created by sections of misguided youth in our country in 1971 makes it imperative that we must spend large sums of money on the internal security of our country. That is a basic pre-condition; for, without internal security there can be neither development nor the flowering of our democratic institutions and our cultural traditions. This is the price we have had to pay for the insurgent movement of 1971. Government has provided almost Rs. 275 million in current expenditure for the internal security of our country. If the provision for internal security was less, that amount of money would be available for either welfare expenditure or developmental activity. Unfortunately it cannot be so. Then, again, we cannot do without capital formation and productive activity of the greatest possible amount in the shortest possible time.

This is why I have provided a net amount of over a billion rupees in 1973. It is for this reason that this Government has been continuously harping on the theme of productive effort. The Five Year Plan is the guideline for this development activity. It is for this very reason that I mentioned that we must reduce our consumption to make available every bit of our money for development activity. We must consume and live within our means.

I have indicated to you in the earlier parts of my Speech that over the last several years we have been consistently living beyond our means. This is why there has been a crisis in our balance of payments and grave shortages in the availability of goods now. The scarcity of goods and their high cost are in themselves a clear indication of the lack of productive effort in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I have gone to such lengths, often to the extent of boredom, to explain clearly to the people of this country the basic facets of the economic crisis that is before us and the options that are available for a fundamental solution of these problems. Clearly, we cannot do without either internal security or development effort. What we can do is to call upon the people of this country to shoulder a greater responsibility by relying less on the welfare measures of the Government and turning their attention to the greater task of productive activity.

Mr. Speaker, the need for internal discipline by adjusting our consumption

to our productive effort and to increase investment to supplement the fruits of greater work effort has been compounded by the crisis on our balance of payments. You may recall that earlier in my Speech. I set down in detail the major causes that contributed to this crisis. Falling export earnings, increasing import prices consequent on adjustments to the major international currencies over the last 12 months and the tendency to follow inflationary policies by developed countries have worsened our balance of payments position and severely restricted the availability of foreign exchange for our development effort. In this situation the Government has carefully examined ways and means of cushioning the effect of these forces on the cost of living of the lesser affluent sections of the community and of insulating them as far as possible from the revenue measures I intend adopting.

The concluding section containing the Revenue Proposals to bridge the Gap and Balance the Budget will be published in a subsequent issue.

REHABILITATION EXERCISE

Reuter reports that Peking plans to hold an exhibition in London of antiques found in China in 1966-69. The displays will include sarcophagi of a Han dynasty prince and his wife, who were buried 2,000 years ago, a statuette of an Eastern Han dynasty "winged horse" Tang porcelain, and silverware and brocades of the Sung dynasty. The British news agency also explains why articles found in 1966-69 have been chosen for exhibition. These were years of the "cultural revolution." "Peking," it says, "is very conscious of the fact that the Red Guards were widely portrayed abroad during the cultural revolution of the 1960s as destroyers of China's cultural heritage." Hence the desire to show that large-scale excavations were carried out then too. In short, not everything was destroyed, something useful was done as well.

NOVEMBER 13 - 21

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13: This is the 74th day of the bank strike: the banks continued to give the public limited but effective service. The five members of the Constitutional Court will meet this week to decide on the three members who will sit to hear the petitions that have been submitted challenging the Press Council Bill. The *Daily News* reported that talks on the stalemated fisheries agreement between Sri Lanka and the USSR were likely to be re-opened shortly. Income tax payers will only lose their rice on their ration books when they stop getting their free measure of rice on December 4. Income tax payers would be able to buy two measures of rice a week at Rs. 1 a measure. By a gazette extraordinary it was decreed that the maximum retail price of a box of matches with not less 50 sticks was 7 cents. The *Sun* reported on its frontpage that the new Budget will send up the cost of living because of the increase in the FEECs rate and the BTT. The GCSU's general council welcomed the new Budget. Mr. Bernard Soysa was unanimously re-elected the General Secretary of the LSSP. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, meeting last Saturday, resolved that the problems of the Tamil-speaking peoples should be satisfactorily solved in order to promote inter-communal harmony and national unity. The Ministry of Agriculture plans to give 13,000 members of the Cultivation Committee training in productivity for one year during 1973 under the auspices of the Agricultural Productivity Act. The United States, it was reported, was ready to sweep away all mines in Indo-China waters. Israeli's PM Golda Meir was ready to meet Egyptian President Sadat anywhere at anytime to discuss a peace settlement. There was a big search in England as well as in India for letter bombs posted recently in India: already over 150 such letter bombs had been found.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14: This is the 75th day of the bank strike. The *Daily News* reported that drug prices were likely to go up by at least 45% percent because of the new FEECs rate and rules. The prices of many consumer items were likely to go up also. The *Daily News* also reported that the young

radicals who had captured 26 of the 55 seats in the LSSP's Central Committee were kept out of the Politburo at the elections last weekend: the radicals had hoped that they would get representation in the politburo on a proportional basis as a "tendency" but were disappointed that the hierarchy had treated them in this way. The debate on the Budget opened in the National State Assembly today. The *Sun* reported that drugs, full cream milk and other consumer articles would cost over 65% owing to the new FEECs rules. Book-makers were now back in business after the budget had included increased BTT rates for bookmaking and other allied industries. The *Daily Mirror* reported that the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Cost of Living was taking necessary measures to see that the private sector and the state corporations could absorb the price hikes resulting from the higher BTT and FEECs. President Amin has decreed that Asians left behind in Uganda (because they were citizens) would be physically removed to villages to work in farms and agricultural units. Former Argentinian President Peron will fly back to his native land after an exile of 17 years in Spain. Saigon was still opposed to the peace agreement negotiated between Hanoi and Washington.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15: This is the 76th day of the bank strike. The Government had not yet made any decision about the price of Lakspray—because according to the new FEECs rules full cream milk powder had to pay a 65% FEECs. Twenty six trade unions in the public and private sectors yesterday pledged to stage a token strike in support of the current bank strike. The Price Control Department has warned traders to bring down the price of chillies—now about Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 in the retail market in Colombo and elsewhere (when available)—though the article was not price-controlled: if the prices were not brought down, the Department would have no option but to requisition and confiscate stocks and sell them at fair prices. According to the Price Control Department the cost of production of a pound of chillies was only Rs. 3. The UNP had submitted that the Press Council Bill should be sent to the Constitutional Court for adjudication as to whether it violated the Constitution. The

Observer reported that more than seven lakhs worth of goods were missing from the CWE stores at Bankshall Street. President Suharto of Indonesia had arrived in Paris on a visit to France. The DMK in Tamilnadu had split into two and the dissident group (ADMK) led by film star M. G. Ramachandran had called for an statewide hartal today.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16: The 77th day of the bank strike. The Government, according to a note issued by the Ministry of Trade, had decided to import dried chillies from India and Pakistan and that an order had already been placed for the import of this item. Owing to the increase of the FEECs rate and its extension to more imports the cost of production of a pound of tea was likely to go up by seven cents. According to the *Daily News*, unofficial negotiations have begun to end the bank strike: the Commissioner of Labour is said to have taken the initiative in the matter. The Ceylon Mercantile Union yesterday denied it had pledged to join the token strike by the 26 trade unions in support of the current bank strike. According to official sources, only about Rs. 400 million would be free of FEECs out of a total import of Rs. 2300 million. The State Pharmaceutical Corporation was likely to import over 75% of the drugs required next year. According to the *Times of Ceylon*, the Government would explore the possibility of getting a meeting of the Aid Ceylon Club convened early in January; and it would discuss this suggestion with the IMF which arrived in Ceylon yesterday. There were new signs of flexibility in Hanoi and Saigon as fresh talks are expected in Paris early next week between Le Duc Tho and Dr. Kissinger. France has announced that it will explode the H-bomb next summer in the Pacific. The UN asked Portugal to free its colonies by 98 votes to 6. There were fresh meetings of North and South Koreans to continue talks on re-unification.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17: The 78th day of the bank strike. The Minister of Finance had told the National State Assembly that drugs will not cost one cent more. The Communist Party issued a statement yesterday on the Budget: the Party will support the Budget in spite of the shortcomings that had been

pointed out by the CP. The Budget provided only a temporary cure for the ills of Sri Lanka, it said. The President by a Gazette Extraordinary has put off the nominations for the KKS seat which had earlier been scheduled for November 29. The prices of school textbooks published by the Government have been increased. The Constitutional Court will take up two petitions against the Press Council Bill tomorrow. It was announced that Government will in future issue chillies on the ration book: one ounce every month per ration book at 60 cts. an ounce, that is Rs. 9.60 a lb. The CWE Flying Squad together with the army and police have launched an islandwide campaign to ferret out hoarded stocks of chillies. The *Times of Ceylon* reported that a stock of chillies seized in the Pettah by the Army was sold on the spot at Rs. 3 a lb. It was reported that several CWE frauds running into lakhs have been unearthed. The delineation talks between India and Pakistan over the line of control in Kashmir has run into difficulties and matters have reached a point of stalemate. Hanoi has asserted that it will not agree to any changes in the treaty already agreed upon.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18: The 79th day of the bank strike. At a seminar on Incentive Wages, Minister Pieter Keuneman said that the present wage system was still based on the assumptions that are more akin to the colonial past than to the new reality of an independent and sovereign republic. A Kekirawa farmer has handed over a harvest of 5000 lbs of chillies to the Minister of Internal and External Trade. It has been proclaimed by gazette notification that the punishment for incometax payers who draw the free measure of rice after December 4 will be imprisonment for a period of two years and a fine of Rs. 5000. Drugs and Lakspray will come under FEECs payments but there will be no price increase until the present stocks are over. The *Sun* had a speculative story on the frontpage that the 79-day old bank strike was likely to be settled next week. The papers published the new parity rates of the Sri Lanka rupee as gazetted on the night of November 13: the Sri Lanka rupee was now at 6.71 to the US dollar: it was only 5.9 earlier. Five ships had brought 35,000 tons of rice

during the course of the week. The USSR raised the possibility of terrorists in the future using atom bombs. Peron received an enthusiastic welcome from his supporters in Rome whilst en route to Argentine from Spain. 41 million West Germans will go to the polls tomorrow.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19: The 80th day of the bank strike. The Constitutional Court took up two petitions against the Press Council Bill yesterday. The other petitions will be taken up on Tuesday, November 21. Official sources claim that big hoards of chillies have been found by the raids conducted by the Flying Squad, Army and the Police in Colombo, Balapitiya, Vavuniya, Killinochchi and other areas. The *Times Weekender* reported that the Central Bank has called upon druggists to pay 65% FEECs levy on a shipment of drugs they had imported some months ago on the three months DA terms. The Central Bank has revealed that net Public Debt has totalled Rs. 9,028.5 million—the first time it has exceeded the Rs. 9,000 million mark. The *Times* also reported that 17 trade unions led by the Central Bank Employees Union will hold a meeting next Wednesday in a bid to settle the commercial banks' strike. Curfew had to be imposed in Gurunagar in Jaffna because violence and fighting stemming from the clashes had erupted again. An Egyptian military delegation had arrived in Moscow but secrecy surrounded the visit and its objectives. President Bhutto declared that it would be possible for India and Pakistan to arrive at a bargain on the Kashmir line.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20: The 81st day of the bank strike. It was a Maha Poya holiday. The Government was now, according to the *Daily News*, considering what exemptions should be allowed for persons falling within the Rs. 2000 ceiling on monthly disposable income. Government sources said that nearly 6 tons of chillies had been so far unearthed by the raids. Though the CP was critical about certain aspects of the Press Council Bill, it will not oppose the Bill at this stage. The Ceylon Plantations Workers Union (CPWU) has stated that the Tamil United Front (TUF) was a separatist movement led by bankrupt bourgeois politicians who were seeking to exploit the just grievances of the

Tamil speaking peoples for their selfish and ulterior aims. Pro-UF trade unions were planning to hold rallies to support the Budget. A major clash between students of two Faculties was averted at Peradeniya campus during the weekend. The last date for sending in applications for Identity Certificates was on November 30, but no penal action would be taken against those who had taken genuine steps to apply, like taking their photographs. The last date for sending in declarations under the Land Reform Act was at midnight today. Early indications were that Chancellor Brandt and the Social Democrats would be returned to power with a comfortable majority.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21: The 82nd day of the bank strike. A summit meeting of the UF Parties were expected to meet today to discuss among other matters the case of the four CP MPs who were suspended for opposing the Criminal Justice Commission Bill. The Government will soon establish a National Population Council at Ministerial level to co-ordinate health and population activities. The *Sun* stated that the cost of living continued to soar. There was a big fire at the Asian Cotton Mills and the loss was estimated at Rs. 1 million. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the differences between the hard liners and the soft liners in the CP remained unsolved. A Bill imposing a ceiling on houses was tabled in the Assembly today: it imposed a ceiling on the number of houses that could be owned by an individual and a family and also a ceiling of 2000 squares feet on new houses to be built. Chancellor Willy Brandt's coalition government was back in power with a bigger and convincing majority. Dr. A. M. Malik, former Governor of East Pakistan, was sentenced yesterday to life imprisonment by a special tribunal: he was charged with collaborating with Pakistani occupation forces and with waging war against Bangladesh. Fighting had broken out on the Israeli-Syrian border.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes, *Tribune's* old Investigator, has once again been mobilised into service. Owing to the great importance of the agricultural sector this star investigator will for sometime hereafter mooch around in the rural areas and also in the bureaucratic offices where decisions are made and unmade about agricultural production. Apart from this Sherlock Holmes will keep his ears and eyes open about under-the-counter activities of VIPS, politicians, corporation bosses, clay-footed bureaucrats and the like who make life in Sri Lanka more difficult than it should be—with their corruption, nepotism, favouritism, downright cheating and other acts of skulduggery. Sherlock Holmes will welcome information about matters which need investigation. Letters addressed to Sherlock Holmes care of *Tribune* will be passed on him even when he is rampaging through the countryside.

—Editor

IS IT TRUE that the Government was 'caught flat-footed' about chillies owing to the fairyland reports prepared by officials about the chilli production during 1972? That the reports about production figures for 1971 were incorrect and that all estimates for 1972 were more fiction than fact? That the projected figures for 1973 would be akin to space fiction—unless the Government took some serious steps about alleviating the difficulties of the real cultivators (and not the favourites of MPs who get the loans) and eliminating the corruption in the Marketing Department and

other state purchasing agencies? That unless the grievances of the real cultivators were removed all the reports of the high officials of the Department of Agriculture can be consigned to the wastepaper basket? And unless the corrupt and arrogant bureaucrats of the Marketing Department and other purchasing agencies of the Government are brought to heel the genuine cultivators cannot be blamed for wanting to sell their chillies to private traders at prices lower than what Government agencies proclaim to be their purchase price for chillies?

IS IT NOT TRUE that the paper reports of the Department are based on "reports" of field Overseers, Cultivation Officers, Agricultural Officers, Extension Officers and the like who have a vested interest in inflating the acreage under cultivation and the gross volume of production? That rarely, if ever, are these figures checked by officials who have no vested interest in inflated acreages and sputniked production figures? That if such a check were done the empires built by departmental reports would crumble like a pack of cards? That Ministers and the like are ever willing to believe the figures provided by officials who are adept at flattery? That VIPS dismiss all criticism as the evil work of political opponents (labelled reactionaries by some and as left-wing subversives by others)? That colourful reports of peak production centres (like Visvamaddu and Muthuyan Kaddu for chillies) are glorified to lend colour and background support to reports of bouncing island-wide production figures?

That the latest report of the Director of Agriculture on the question of chillies has not yet been made public? That according to the Director, Mr. Jinendradasa, in the year 1971, "148,500 cwts were estimated to have been produced in addition to the rural sector and urban

dwellers producing their domestic requirements in their chenas, fields and home gardens"? That he cannot be blamed for using the term "estimated" for the production figures? That one would expect the Department to be more accurate about commercially grown chillies in rain-fed fields and lift-irrigated farms? That if Department officials are inclined to do the job they are paid for, it would not be difficult to assess, with a fair degree of accuracy, the chillies which are grown commercially? That it is only when the Department ceases to use camouflaged techniques to hide the light of their research under the bushel of deception that this country will be blessed with accurate figures? That the same report speaks of a projected production in 1973 of 415,500 cwts with 47,500 acres of new land coming under cultivation? That in 1973, according to the same report, 72,350 acres will be under chilli cultivation? That, of this, 50,000 acres will be rain fed? That 4550 acres will be as a rotation crop on paddy land? That 17,8000 acres will be on highland with lift irrigation? That at this level of production, according to the Director, the demand will be met and prices stabilised? *Glory Hallelujah!*

IS IT NOT TRUE that it is this kind of moonshine report which fools everybody? That when prices skyrocket, the usual formula of blaming the trader,

blackmarketeer and the hoarder is trotted out to explain why chillies are scarce and prices high? That even the Director of Agriculture has sought to cover the bogus figures of the department by speaking of artificial shortages created by hoarders and blackmarketeers? That the customary mumbo-jumbo about blackmarketeers is an excellent cover to rush imports from India and Pakistan? That melodramatic raids unearthing a few thousand pounds of chilli will satisfy the sadistic whims of bureaucrats who have fallen down on their jobs?

That everything that has happened now was anticipated by those who knew the facts about chilli production in 1972 and the current chilli market? That as early as August-September this year even VIP bureaucrats had been told by Sherlock Holmes that his investigations had made it clear that unless there were imports the local price of chilli would reach Rs. 30 a pound in December? That this would not be due to hoarding or profiteering but simply to the operation of the inexorable laws of supply and demand? That Sherlock Holmes had further told them that owing to the corrupt acts of commission and omission of the governmental buying agencies the limited stocks of chillies would pass into the hands of the traders who cannot resist the temptation of making a

fast buck whenever an opportunity presented itself?

That these bureaucrats laughed at Sherlock Holmes and stated that their estimates were foolproof and that the cultivators would flock to the government buying agencies like the Marketing Department to sell their produce? That it is now clear that all this big talk of VIP bureaucrats has vanished into thin air? That they now take cover behind the Emergency Laws and requisition and confiscate stock from traders and sell them at ridiculous prices? That press reports showed that army units seized chilli stocks and sold them at Rs. 3 a lb? That this kind of Robin Hood bravado (considering the fact that co-ops will in future sell an ounce of chilli at 60 cts, i.e. Rs. 9.60 a lb) makes a mockery of the open market?

IS IT NOT TRUE that purchasing officers of the Marketing Department are even bigger racketeers than the traditional traders? That not long ago Sherlock Holmes went to one of the purchasing depots of the Marketing Department (MD) in a chilli growing area in the North? That Sherlock Holmes was *incognito* when a cultivator arrived with four bags of dried chillies? That the cultivator said that two bags were top grade number one quality: that one bag was number two quality and that the fourth bag was bad quality because rain had affected the chil-

lies whilst drying? That the cultivator told the purchasing officer that all his chillies were from Maha Illapalama No. 1 seed? That the purchasing officer told the cultivator that he was busy and wanted the cultivator to come back in the evening? That when the cultivator insisted that he had to get back to his village before dark, the bureaucrat lost his shirt and shouted at the cultivator? That when Sherlock Holmes intervened (still *incognito*) and told the bureaucrat that this was not the way to treat a cultivator, the bureaucrat looked at Sherlock as if to say who the hell are you and what do you mean by interfering?, but on second thoughts told the cultivator to open his grade one bag? That the bureaucrat peered into bag and looked at a few chillies, and shouted why bring this rubbish here? That this was not even third grade chillies? That the cultivator should take it away and dump it in the tank? That the cultivator in desperation said: can you tell me the price at which Government buys grade one chilli? That he bureaucrat flared up and told the cultivator that the should not waste his time by asking him silly questions and that he should vamoose with his chilli bags before he was thrown out? That Sherlock Holmes could not resist the temptation to ask the official the same question as to what the Government's buying price

was? The official most curtly and insolently said that the Government had fixed no such prices for the open market and that he had authority only to buy it at the old GPS price of Rs. 3.50 a lb for grade one? That the cultivator thereafter went away with his four bags of chillies? That as he left the premises a MD peon told the cultivator to take the chillies to a trader who was a few doors away who would give him a fair price? That the cultivator took the chillies there and sold his grade one for Rs. 6 a lb and the other grades at slightly lower prices?

The very next day Sherlock Holmes borrowed half a sack of grade one number one MI 1 chillies and went to the same depot and asked the bureaucrat whether he would buy them? That the official had sniffed and said that the Marketing Department only bought "in bulk" and not small quantities like the 20 or 30 lbs in a cutty sack? That Sherlock Holmes was still *incognito*? That the MD bureaucrat refused to state a buying price. That the only thing he would say was that if Sherlock Holmes brought "bulk" (5 cwts to 10 cwts) he would consider buying at prices a little higher than the old GPS price of Rs. 3/50. That, when Sherlock Holmes persisted in wanting a price mentioned, the bureaucrat said that the MD might give Rs. 1 higher than Rs. 3/50? That when Sher-

lock was still there a cultivator brought two sackloads of *bandakka* and wanted to know whether the MD would buy it at 10 cts a lb because traders had offered him only 8 cts a lb? That the cultivator was told that the MD was not buying *bandakka* at the moment because there was a glut in Colombo and told the cultivator to sell it to the trader? (Two days before this Sherlock Holmes had bought *bandakka* in Colombo at 70 cts a lb).

IS IT NOT TRUE that Sherlock Holmes investigations during recent weeks have revealed that purchasing officers of the MD regularly re-bought the *bandakka* and other vegetables, which had been refused by the MD, from certain traders who had bought them—and higher prices were charged to the MD? That the difference was split between the trader and the buying officer of the MD? That some cultivators kept in with the purchasing officers by supplying them with *gal* and *pol* once or twice a month?

That many had wanted Sherlock Holmes to take up the matter with the authorities and report such errant officers? That Sherlock Holmes saw no point in chasing individuals who might be only reprimanded or transferred for such practices? That what has to be changed was the system? That the Marketing Department must

Message from the Yugoslav Ambassador on the occasion of the National Day On Nov. 29.

TODAY Yugoslav peoples are celebrating their 29th Anniversary of the founding of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

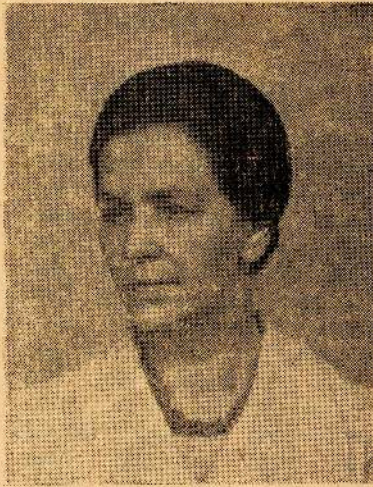
During the world war II, people's representatives, members of the Antifascist Council of the Nation-

Continued from P 17

be made to proclaim its buying price for all locally produced articles each day at every depot? That the stuff brought by genuine Cultivator, must be bought whether it was 10 lbs. or ten cwts? That the MD vans must scour the countryside and buy the stuff (as they are expected to)? That reports about such trips must be checked and counter-checked? That MD employees should know the farms in each area and visit them regularly to buy produce in the same way that traders did (and still do)? That unless the Marketing Department and other government purchasing agencies functioned properly, it would be better to leave everything to the private trade so that the laws of supply and demand would operate in a free market? That the corruption of government agencies made it easier for the unscrupulous trader to operate big rackets with the connivance of government officials?

nal Liberation of Yugoslavia, approved on November 29, 1943, the legal acts concerning the future socio-political system of a multi-national community as the socialist democratic Republic.

For nearly three decades now, the country is being built; at the same time, its socio-political system



and structure have been built and when necessary adapted and re-shaped. The most adequate and applicable solutions for various problems are sought. By introducing the self-management in economic, political and all other spheres of social life, the man, in fact, governs such a society. Yugoslavians are aware of the complexity of such social processes.

But they know that their socialist self-managing society is capable of fighting all conflicts and difficulties. Therefore they are determined to persist. At the same time they are ready to talk openly about all problems confronting them, including their own weaknesses, before the Yugoslav and world's public opinion. Under such conditions positive results have been achieved in economic development of the country. Also in education, culture, arts and sports.

From a relatively underdeveloped country, whose pre-war national income per capital was only about 200 dollars and today it already reaches about 750 dollars, an industrially developed country emerged. The annual rate of economic growth is 7.3%; the total output of production, comparing with the pre-war period, has been increased by 11 times. Many new factories have been built; also, hydroelectric power projects and new roads, schools and hospitals, etc. For the last 10 years, the foreign trade volume was enlarged by three times, or per annual rate of 11.7%. The living standard of all population has overall increased. Education for all citizens is free; over one million of students attend about 1,850 secondary schools and about 250 higher educational institutions and universities.

THE PEOPLES of Yugoslavia are fully aware of

the fact that the further development of socialism in their country, in a way, is dependent on the state of affairs in the world. Therefore, the guideline for the general orientation of Yugoslavia in foreign policy and for her activities in international matters is a continuous struggle for peace and security, for sovereignty and equal co-operation between all states, for overcoming the difficulties in economic development of the under-developed. Hence, the maximal engagement in solving of world-wide problems is the constant characteristics of such a policy. Those are the postulates of the Yugoslav foreign policy which is in full conformity with principles of the active peaceful coexistence and non-alignment.

Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka are maintaining very friendly relations and fruitful co-operation for many years. Both countries are striving for a faster economic development and the building of socialism; by doing so

the specific conditions are guiding them to seek for specific solutions; the solutions which lead to the same aims. The cooperation in international matters is basically determined by many common interests, and therefore, their stands on many international problems are identical or very similar. Constant activity of Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka in non-aligned movement and in the UNO is the most adequate expression of their foreign policies.

Friendship and mutual respect, which for years exist between the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the Yugoslav President Joseph Broz Tito, contribute, in particular, to a very fruitful bilateral co-operation.

I am taking this opportunity to convey to the people and the Government of Sri Lanka my most sincere wishes for further successes in building their country and attaining overall wellbeing.

YUGOSLAVIA SRI LANKA

Co-operation between Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia dates back over almost twenty years, during which time numerous contacts were established, from those between the two countries' leaders to meetings between economists, representatives of socio-political organizations, cultural workers and artists of the two countries. This closeness is the result of a common orientation towards non-alignment and very close views on trends in the modern-day world. Faced with similar political and economic problems, both countries are in favour of solutions which are mutually similar and frequently identical. This was most evident in numerous international forums such as the United Nations, the conferences of the non-aligned countries and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Successful economic co-operation has also developed in a positive political atmosphere. The best results have been recorded in investment projects.

Foreign Economic Relations In Social Plan of Development of Yugoslavia From 1971 to 1975.

ONE OF THE BASIC factors of the economic development as a whole, foreign economic relations, has been given an important place also in the social plan of development of Yugoslavia up to 1975. The degree of the entire economic development depends for a good part on the degree of efficacy and breadth and complexity of the incorporation of Yugoslavia's economy into the contemporary stream of the world economy, especially international trade.

One of the pre-eminent aims of the further development of foreign economic relations is the expansion and intensification of the existing commercial relations which Yugoslavia already has and the opening of new possibilities and fields of co-operation (joint capital investments, industrial co-operation deals and business technical co-operation, etc) between Yugoslavia's economy and the economy of other countries.

All this should be based on and be harmonious with the planned internal courses of the economic development and its foreign component. As a beginning, the basic principles of the transitional, and later ramified foreign exchange and

foreign trade system have been determined. The main tendency is towards the liberalization of foreign-exchange and foreign trade transactions and the realization of the convertibility of the dinar as one of the pre-requisites of Yugoslavia's complete integration into participation on the world market in terms of equality.

The bearer of the foreign economic relations continues to be the economic organization, while conditions are gradually being created which will equalize the domestic with the world market in regard to criteria and conditions of business. The transitional solutions for the foreign-exchange and foreign trade system went into force in 1972. The new measures of monetary credit policy should contribute to the faster growth of exports of goods and services. Besides this, the positive trends in this field will also be effected by a more up to-date and adequate system of taxation. The machinery of duty refunds will also be perfected, which indirectly means incentive to exports, while domestic production will be protected to a required degree and volume by means of

a ramified system of customs and non-customs regulations.

THE BASIC TASKS in the development of the foreign economic relations up to 1975 are the following.

Further dynamic growth of volume and value of overall foreign trade, with the faster growth of exports than the growth of production and imports, with a high degree of growth of invisible revenues (the tourist trade, workers remittances, etc.), imports ensuring the rational supplying of production and the market with indispensable raw materials, equipment and consumer goods;

The lowering of the deficit in the trade and payment account and increasing of foreign-exchange reserves;

More harmonious rational regional structure, greater participation of developing countries in Yugoslavia's overall trade, efforts to expand trade with the hard-currency area, while lowering the trade deficit; finally, intensification and the further development of trade with the East-European socialist countries.

IN ADDITION to the strivings for the stabilization of internal economic courses, changes will be made in the foreign-exchange and foreign trade system which should be backing for these strivings. These are also the conditions for the realization

of the convertibility of the dinar. Owing to all this, administrative influences upon the foreign economic relations will be removed, and a realistic policy of the par rate of the dinar will be pursued.

During the period between 1971 and 1975 an average growth of exports of goods and services is put at about 12 percent annually, compared with 11.7 percent during the previous five-year period. On the other hand, imports should grow at the rate of 10 percent.

It is realistic to presume the further development of the tourist trade and inflow of foreign exchange from the tourist trade and a greater demand for services in transportation, construction engineering and international trade. Upon these grounds, the foreign exchange-inflow will be increased at the rate of 14 percent to 16 percent, or from 814 million dollars in 1970 about 1.6 milliards in 1975. The share of earnings from invisible transaction with other countries in covering the costs of imports should be increased from about 29 percent in 1970 to about 37 percent in 1975. This will also make for another important goal—a lower share of foreign loans in covering imports. THE PLANNED TRENDS of exports and imports of goods and services should make for a cut in the deficit in the balance of

payments of Yugoslavia to about a third of the deficit in 1970, which would no longer be an excessive burden upon Yugoslavia's entire balance of payments in view of the considerable increase in the overall foreign trade (by 1.7 times)

The utilization of foreign resources (loans, etc) will increase steadily in volume until 1975 (although the share of these loans in covering imports will diminish in relative terms.) Greater and more significant joint investments of capital by domestic and foreign enterprises are also planned (along with improving the pattern and method of utilizing resources aimed at modernizing and reconstructing the industry), while a special effort will be made to increase the participation of united resources in the overall foreign resources.

Credits are likely to be utilized to a greater extent for the importation of equipment which will especially contribute to hastening the modernization and reconstruction of the present industrial plant, better foreign liquidity and easier and more flexible transactions with foreign countries.

Much greater use should be made of foreign resources on the basis of contracts on joint capital investments founded on longterm manufacturing co operation.

If the basic aims of development of foreign economic relations are reached it is expected that the country's liquidity in relations to other countries will be better, relations will be liberalized and the dinar will be made convertible in the near future.

ANTI-HIJAK DOGS

Seriously alarmed by the increasing instances of airliners being hijacked for ransom, American aviation companies are looking for an effective way to combat the crime. Demand, naturally, creates supply. Albert Black, owner of a private detective agency, recently proposed replacing armed guards with specially trained German shepherd dogs. In the course of a demonstration, one of these dogs, sniffed out a concealed pistol, a short-barrelled rifle, military clothing smelling of gunpowder in a suitcase, and a packet of marijuana. When Al Bonner, Vice-President of the Air Line Pilots Association, agreed to act as a subject and pulled out a gun, the dog charged him and wrested away the weapon. The Federal Aviation Administration is thinking of purchasing canine guards for 25 airports.

DOWN SOUTH AND IN THE HILLS

By *ALKARDI MUGANA*

THE ROAD from Bentota to Elpitiya was green all the way, unrelieved, by any colour, with even the paddy fields and the bark of the trees merging into the green. What stuck me most were the young rubber trees, the paddy fields ready for ploughing, and the cinnamon. Most of these seventeen miles was an area of young rubber. I understood that the ploughing is mostly done with a mammoty, and rarely did I see cattle. They were certainly not doing any ploughing, but there were parties of men out turning the sod. Cinnamon grows to a height of about six feet.

There was a school boy I met who goes to school all right, but who manufactures ties when he is at home. He employs ten people. He designs the pattern of the ties himself and makes the material. The designs or the arrangements of the designs were certainly unusual, smart, and very modern. He sells the ties at various prices, and Rs. 20/- was one price he quoted for a tie he showed me. What I saw of this boy convinced me that if a man wants to be self-employed he has to start young, and that there is nothing like one's school days to do so.

As far as the paddy fields went, Elpitiya was to me a kind of watershed. All the fields on the Ambalangoda, Galle side of Elpitiya had been sown with paddy, in complete contrast to the Bentota side.

IN ELPITIYA, as they say, but, in fact, two miles out of it, is Fr. Cyril Edirisinghe, the maker of snake stones. These stones have been known to fail only once, and this was when the owner of the stone misread the directions, and soaked his stone in milk after the patient was brought to him. He then applied the stone saturated with milk on the wound and it would not hold. The directions are that the stone should be soaked in milk after it has drawn the poison from the wound, and not before, and that it should be rinsed and dried before using it again.

Fr. Cyril Edirisinghe also gave me some interesting information about Muthurajawela and Kerala. If you pass along a certain river in Kerala, near a place called Changanacherry, or Allepey, or even in Kottayam, and do so in steam boat, you will have the extraordinary experience of looking out of the boat, over the river bank, on to people

working far below the river in paddy fields, not so far away. How do they come to do this? What extraordinary engineering feat, what experts from U.N.O. or the Universities, enable paddy fields to subsist by a bund with a width not much more than that of a narrow road, at a level well below that of the river? It may interest the reader to know that the peasants did it themselves, peice-meal, over the course of years on a democratic basis.

At Muthurajawela, a much simpler problem confronts us than that which faced the Kerala peasants, and we might learn something of how they reclaimed their land. The reclaimed area is now the granary of Kerala. Long ago, when the peasants found a shallow piece of flooded land by the river, they built a bund round it, and pumped out the water by hand, and the bund on the river side was always much bigger. So groups of peasants went on doing this until all the land was reclaimed, and the river trapped between its artificial banks.

This left the river out, but left a problem of what to do with their rain water. This was siphoned off into channels and pumped into the river. At first this was done by hand, and when the machine took over, the government supplied the current. An acre of paddy in the

reclaimed land is worth a fortune, and the reclaimed land covers an area of hundreds of square miles.

In the Muthurajawela area, the land is below the level of the sea during the south-west monsoon. Canals from Negombo and the Kelaniya river run through the area. At the Kelaniya end the canal floods its banks during the tide. This could be controlled by having a sluice gate there, and the water in the Muthurajawela could be pumped out into the sea and the canals by using the same method that is used in Kerala.

It would be worth while some Pamunugama people making the trip to Kerala to see how the reclamation was done there, and they might go at government expense. We do not know what Fr. Cyril Pieris' idea is, but it involves government aid. If the Kerala example is taken, the actual reclamation of the land could be done without any aid whatever.

In the Elpitiya area, I found the Maddhu tree, which I think I had seen growing in the Bibile region, but I discovered here that the unopened leaf which is quite a long one, can be eaten in a curry, the quantity required being at the rate of about one leaf for three persons. I have already said in a previous safari note that the kernel of the maddhu seed can be made into flour and used for

a variety of purposes. The maddhu is quite a handsome tree, and looks like a palm.

Shortage of fodder was the reason I thought why buffaloes are not much used for ploughing here. Some one suggested another reason. He said that the mud was too deep for either buffalo or tractor. I have never seen neater paddy fields.

Cinnamon, I noticed is inter-planted fairly thickly out in rows, between coconut trees. It is one of our minor but important, export crops. Some people are turning to passion fruit.

Through Ambalangoda and right up to Boosa, I had to stand in buses, and with my head up against the hood of the bus, I could see nothing of the road, of the countryside. When I did stoop to take a look, I saw a cattamaran, which reminded me that I was now in the land of the outrigger canoe and not in the land of the thep-pang. There were model outrigger-canoes for sale outside the New Oriental Hotel in Galle, smart ones at prices which could make the buyer value his purchase. They were of various sizes. Monkies made out of coconuts were very popular with the tourists.

In Holland, I was told, two or three families band together and farm in common. It is a drift back to the land, but not for

any of those that might make people drift back to agriculture in Ceylon. They do it to be sure of eating good food, uncontaminated with chemicals. Their domestic arrangements, however, give each family all the privacy it wants. Their houses are separate.

Galle fort looks fine from the town across a wide esplanade. No one would suspect, just looking at it that, another town exists inside the fort.



WE WERE on the Kandy road. Out of Colombo we were soon passing, with each mile, young paddy and coconuts, and later on, rubber not so prominently situated as the coconut. At the foot of the hills the paddy was either more mature, though not yet seeded, or the fields had not yet been sown. Among the foothills themselves, and up the Pass, and even beyond Kadugannawa, we were back among young paddy: transplanting was going on in places, all done by women, or else the fields were all ready for this operation.

The coconuts reminded me that we now have in Ceylon a Coconut Production Authority which works through four Boards, and these are Research, Cultivation, Processing and Marketing. Processing is concerned with the manufacture of products from

the coconut; Cultivation is an extension service, liaising with the producer. Research is situated out of Colombo. Cultivation and the Authority are in the Y.M.B.A. Building in the Fort, and Processing and Marketing are in Duke Street.

The issue, so far as there is an issue, is whether to work through legislation that is dictatorial, or by persuasion, which is democratic. It is a temptation for the bureaucrat to fall back on dictatorial methods, and as such, Communism must be the bureaucrat's heaven, and haven.

Perhaps a lesson should be learnt from India. Pretty well all the five-year plans were successful, their targets achieved, but so far as the intention of having five-year plans at all went, they were a complete failure, achieving the opposite effect of what was intended. This is brought out very forcibly by Ronald Segal, an African expert, in his book, "The Crisis of India", published some seven years ago. Five-year plans have a measure of the dictatorial about them. Let us forget them.

Such rubber that I saw by the road-side was young rubber. There seemed to be patches of jungle about. These jungles would be called woods in England and over there they are a part of the landscape. Small woods which can be delineated by the eye

are called copses. I have seen these copses, too, in India.

THE MAHA OYA at Mawarella was in spate, and the Mahaweli Ganga looked in spate too. Our long distance bus drivers must be among the best in the world. They treat our narrow roads like autobahns.

At Galagedara I saw rubber interplanted with cocoa. I was told that rubber can also be interplanted with coffee. Coffee and cocoa trees grow to a height of about fifteen feet and they both do not need much sun.

A word about transplanting. The seed paddy is sown thickly in selected fields. When they are about a foot high they are gathered into bundles, and are then sown two plants at a time just by sticking them in the mud with the fingers. The transplanters move backwards, just as a woman does when scrubbing the floor. Fields which have been transplanted are a delightful sight, very pleasing to the eye. When this method was first being popularised in Ceylon, it was known as the Japanese method of sowing paddy.

Lankatilleke Vihara, near Alakoanga, must be one of the most imposing sights in Ceylon, and it matches anything I have seen in France, where you get these imposing edifices in

the Avergne. It is best looked at from the road opposite, from where you can also make out the fearsome steps out into rock that lead up to the Vihara.

It was at Kegalla that I caught my last bus on my way back to Colombo. The bus had come from Kandy, and I thought that the driving was by no means sure, but after Warakapola, where we had our break, we came like an express train, until we got caught up in the congestion at Peliyagoda.



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An Idea Is Born, Alas

By CANAX

THE ONLY good idea to emerge from the Budget Debate so far is not—and I'm sorry if I disappoint the Doctor—the elaborate yarn spun by our Financial Wizard that his fiscal measures were, in the classic definition, all things to all men.

It was the one put forward by the MP for Katana, Mr. K. C. de Silva, to make MPs unofficial SPs (Superintendent of Police). He also requested the Government's serious consideration for making MPs unofficial PMs (just Post Masters, not Prime Ministers) and unofficial SPs again (this time, Superintendents of Prisons). The reason, he said, was that MPs now faced many difficulties in getting work done in their respective areas.

I think it's a great idea and any man, or woman, who is not already aware of the difficulties MPs face in getting work done—for us, you and me, who else?—should be forthwith deprived of his, or her, vote. In addition, of course to other perks like free rice and liberty. Such people would seem to have, by their inexplicable apathy and indifference, forfeited their right to be considered adult, intelligent, thinking beings capable of using such a potent and dangerous weapon as the

Vote with care and circumspection. (They might, conceivably, even use it for, not against, a reactionary group which, I think, calls itself the UNP.)

I doubt, though if, even one solitary person can be found in the whole country who is unaware, not to say unmindful, of the difficulties MPs face in doing their jobs to the satisfaction of everyone, including themselves. But Mr. de Silva placed the fact on record nevertheless, and put forward his idea. THIS GREAT idea should receive the serious consideration it deserves from the Government. Even a cursory glance will clearly show that the idea will solve most, if not all, of an MP's problems, and anything that will smoothen the way of an MP must, in the final analysis, also be good for the Government as well. (If you think having a disillusioned populace makes the going rough, the additional burden of a group of disgruntled MPs is hardly likely to make the going great.)

If a cursory glance shows the idea's obvious advantages, a careful study—which is what Government do as a matter of routine, in any case, since no Government has as yet claimed credit for a careless study—may show its not-so-obvious disadvantages.

The idea, while solving MPs difficulties, may also create new ones, but happily not for them. So if anybody has to worry about that, it is neither MPs nor the Government, only such nondescript cogs in the bureaucratic wheel as official, full-fledged Superintendents of Police, Post Masters and Superintendents of Prisons.

Even here, any difficulties that may be experienced by such officials will be, to be sure, of their own making. Only those tied to a disgusting colonial mentality and who mistakenly wish to adhere rigidly to what they fondly call "the chain of command" in matters administrative, are likely to run into snags. Such people had better learn, and learn pretty fast, that this country has now come of age and put the period of the British Raj firmly behind it. What we have, instead, is the Lanka Raj. (Also the Lanka Rani, but she is invariably in deep water, mostly hot, and is better left there.)

SRI LANKA is now in the sink-or-swim stage of its own political development, which is a pretty advanced stage to be in. Where we get to from there is another matter, and one that should rightly be the concern of future generations. Our objective, now, should be to learn to swim. If, on the other hand, we sink, that's just too bad for future generations, I guess.

Talking of swimming, our bureaucracy should, without exception, be made to learn the art in much the same way as new entrants to the Public Service are expected to acquire proficiency in, or at least a working knowledge, of the Official Language. It will teach them that survival is hardly ensured by fighting the medium. When, later, they find themselves confronted not merely by ARs and FRs, but also by unofficial SPs, unofficial PMs and, again, unofficial SPs, the lesson will come back to mind vividly, even gratefully.

Public opinion seems to have taken to the idea in a big way, and Mr. de Silva seems to have started something even he didn't I'm sure, bargain for. The trouble with such a great idea, as with all great ideas, is that, once publicly expressed, every Tom, Dick and Harry, and a lot of others whose names don't even sound anywhere near those, wants to adopt—and adapt—it to suit himself. What cheers me up, and I trust it does Mr. de Silva too, is that his idea's easy adaptability is also a measure of its greatness.

Some of the suggested adaptations, like mine for instance, would probably horrify Mr. de Silva, for they appear so far removed from what he had in mind. But there—perhaps I should say here—it is. I like to think my adaptation does not

do violence to his idea, though I jointly well know it does.

I COULD, for example, talk to the SP of my area as the equal he really is, and even advise him whenever I feel he's barking up the wrong tree, which is more often than he'll care to admit. How often have I been a helpless onlooker in the past when the Police arrested a chap I have known since he was that high, and who I could vouch for as a man of honour and integrity, as a suspected thief. I could have sworn on everything I hold sacred, little though it may be, that the chap would never rob me, but you think the Police would have listened? Even if they had, I know what their reply would have been—that it was not me the fellow robbed. So what does that prove? Only that the victim deserved to be robbed, anyway. It's this type of broad outlook that bureaucrats sorely lack. With my status as an unofficial SP I could soon put things right, and help the Service acquire the essential human touch the IGP has been urging on it, but in vain.

I could play a similar role as an unofficial Superintendent of Prisons too, but I can't off-hand think how I could help as an unofficial Post Master. Maybe I could bring some order to the chaos that is the postal service right now by advising the PM in my town to continue sending telegrams by post,

but send as many letters as possible by telegram. I know he'll thank me from the bottom of his heart, or the bottom of his stomach or whatever, depending on how low his gratitude can get down to.

I think I'll really be useful, to myself also, in the role of an unofficial and one-man Vice Squad raiding the co-op store and all the shops in my place. I won't have to spend any more of my precious time waiting in queues for the essentials that never seem to come my way. I'd never be short of anything and, if I can help it, neither will all my friends and relatives. They may not, of course, need my generosity if they too have a similar unofficial status conferred on themselves, in which case I'd do well to remember it's the early bird that gets the worm.

A HIGH OFFICIAL in the Public Service, bureaucrat that he is and always will be, didn't think much of my musings. He had a queer notion that the country would then be in the grip of anarchy.

Put that way, it does seem a bit much. No, we can't have every man a law unto himself. Just one man, perhaps, or better still, just one woman.

The Secret Torment

By S. SIVAGURUNATHAN

Most of the patients in our ward had a steady stream of visitors; but not the one occupying the bed adjoining mine.

He was a lonely and silent figure always lost in deep thought. He would be seated on the bed with his legs touching the ground. Stockily built and bare-bodied he had a round, un-shaven face. His curly hair could have been the envy of our film heroes. With his beedi he would not part company—a chain smoker of sorts. The words: "Kamala is my Goddess, Her Feet I worship", was tattooed on his broad chest. When the ward doctor came on his rounds, I had seen him examining a large wound on this patient's right thigh. Once I heard him telling the doctor that he wanted to leave the hospital. "You must remain here for a few more days", the doctor advised him. The tattoo marks and the wound aroused my curiosity. I decided to break the ice.

Bandara, I learnt, was his name. He was twenty-two years of age and the only son in the family. His mother had died after a prolonged illness. Soon afterwards his father contracted a second marriage, an arrangement that did not meet with the young man's approval. When conditions became intolerable,

Bandara left home to fend for himself.

After going hither and thither for many months he found employment, at last, under a blacksmith. Realizing that he had been wandering aimlessly he was determined to make good. He threw himself heartily into the toilsome job.

Bandara's diligence and devotion to duty was taken note of by his employer, the Baas Unne who soon entrusted the smithy to the lad. By a quirk of fate he was also given accommodation in the Baas Unne's house which was situated about three miles away from the work place.

The only other occupants in the house were his nineteen-year old daughter Kamala and a son of twelve years, Sena by name. The mother had died a long time ago.

When Bandara set eyes on Kamala, he was swept off his feet by her beauty of face and figure. He fell head over heels in love with her. Kamala too was attracted irresistibly towards him. It appeared that the two were cut out for each other.

The two young lovers would meet frequently at the "Pihila" across the paddy fields and pour their hearts out. The old man was blissfully oblivious of these clandestine happenings. Their happiness, however, was short-lived.

One day the Pol Mudalali, his wife and son called on Kamala's father. The purpose was to discuss matrimony. The Mudalali's family belonged to the correct caste and they were long-standing friends at that. The old man was happy at the thought that his friend's son should want to take his daughter as bride. The coy maiden served the visitors tea and betel.

When they left, Kamala was asked by the father what she thought of her suitor and whether she liked to marry him. Kamala dropped a bomb. She told the father, in no uncertain terms, that she could not agree to the proposal as she had pledged to marry Bandara.

The father's hopes were dashed to the ground. He was seething with rage and indignation. He beat her mercilessly. Even her brother Sena, failed to restrain him.

"I will not allow you to marry a tramp like Bandara. That ungrateful fellow will be thrown out of the house", the irate father further warned the daughter.

Having let off steam in this manner he retired into his room. That was the last time he saw his daughter. Sometime later, neighbours stormed into his house to inform him that Kamala had been run over by a train. The girl, in fact, had committed suicide.

The news of Kamala's tragic death had been conveyed to Bandara by

Sena. He was stunned and distraught with grief. At the same time he feared the old man's wrath. He tarried not to collect his belongings as he had to make a quick getaway.

Bandara continued his story: "Kamala died during the month of February—on the twenty sixth day to be exact. Since then, on this date, each year, with unailing regularity, she has been appearing in my dreams. With hair dishevelled, tears running down her cheeks and arms outstretched she would utter in anguish: 'Bandara my heart still belongs to you. Please come to me, my beloved'!

"At such times I am roused from my sleep and then fall unconscious. I come round after about fifteen minutes.

"I came here at the beginning of this year. On the much dreaded night I had my dinner in a nearby hotel. Thereafter, I returned to the garage where I am presently employed. I used to sleep in a corner of the garage on an old car-seat. Sleep overtook me only after I had made a fire with some twigs and rags to keep the mosquitoes away.

"Kamala struck again. She was as usual pathetic to look at. When I regained consciousness, I found that I was lying on the fire which, in all probability, had died away for the weight of my fall. My sarong was partly burnt. I also came by this wound on the thigh

Should man search for civilisation in space ?

Intelligent civilizations have probably existed in outer space for billions of years and it is in man's interest to make contact

and it required hospitalization."

Needless to say, I was intrigued. "You loved Kamala. She returned the love. She took her life because her father had been tactless. You have to be absolved from all blame. Why should she continue to haunt you?" I asked Bandara.

Bandara was his silent self again. He was perspiring profusely and his eyes were misty. I thought he was lamenting his lover's death in the privacy of his heart.

Bandara stirred into action. He got down from his bed. He was wincing. The wound must have been painful. The sweat on his face he wiped with a towel. Taking a beedi from under his pillow, he lit it, puffed and placing his right hand on his chest said:

"I have built a temple for my Kamala, here; but she will torment and haunt me for the rest of my life. It is true that circumstances conspired against us. I had committed an unpardonable sin. In a moment of weakness, I crushed a beautiful flower. At the time of her death, Kamala was two months with child. She was carrying my baby."

according to a leading American space expert. "In all likelihood intelligent civilizations have existed in the galaxy for four or five billion years". Dr. Bernard M. Cliver told the closing session of the 23rd international Astronautical Congress held in Vienna recently.

Dr. Oliver said, "It appears from our calculations that present-day technology is capable of mounting a very effective search for extra terrestrial peoples. The question we must ask ourselves, is 'is it worth about half the cost of the Apollo programme to try such a search?' Dr. Oliver said, "The biggest barrier to making such an expenditure is that we cannot guarantee success". He said it was probably that civilizations do exist in outer space and added, "it seems very probable that many of these (civilizations) have established interstellar contact. "If so, then communication has been taking place between civilization for aeons, and beacons may well exist to help young races, such as ourselves to join this galactic community". Dr. Oliver said.

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