

TRIBUNE

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CHRISTMAS, NEW
YEAR & THE
EVENT OF THE
YEAR

* VIETNAM

* CHRONICLE
DECEMBER 1 - 21

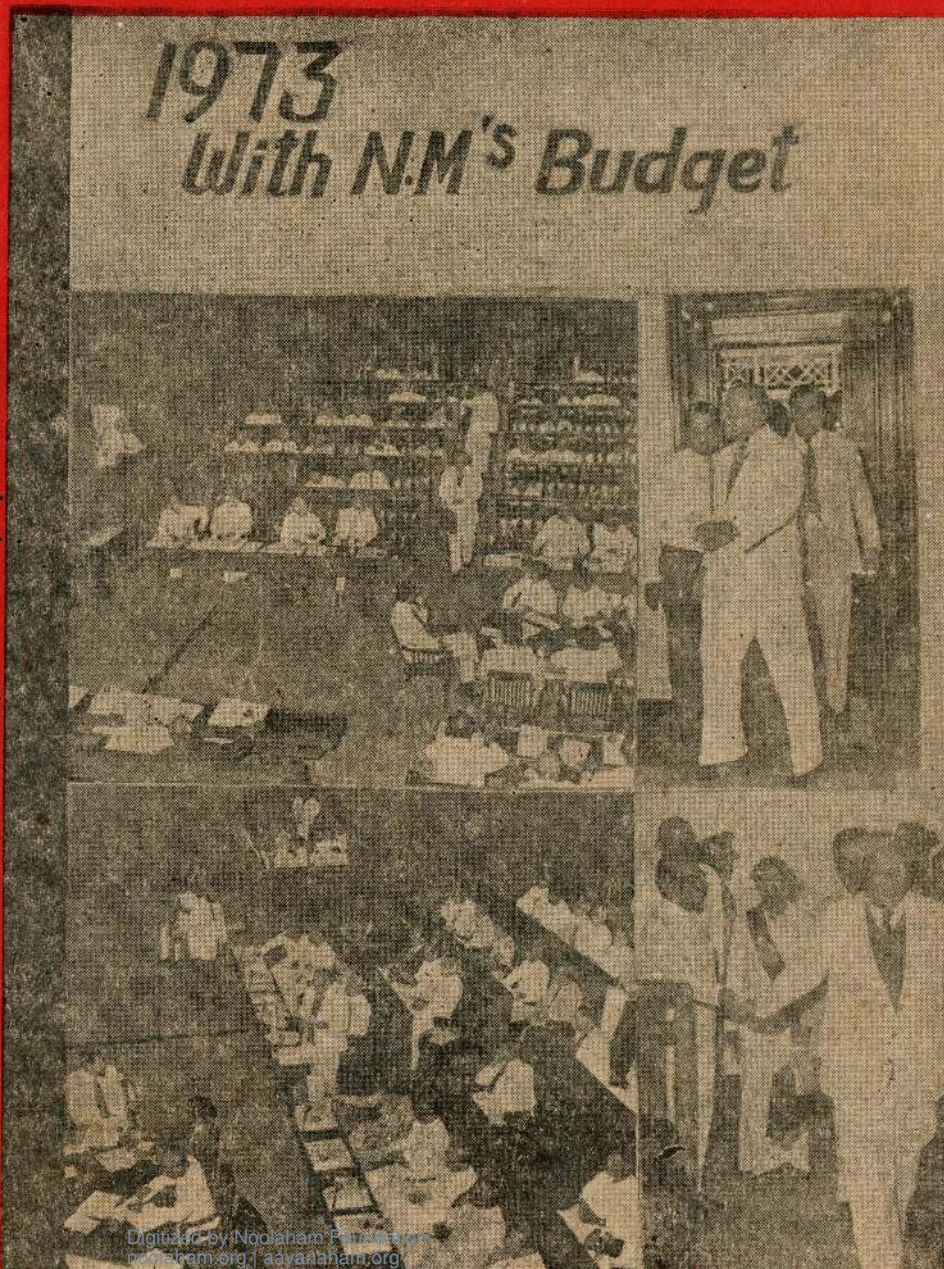
* SAFARI IN
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IN CONFUSION

1973
With N.M.'s Budget



Tribune

IN THIS ISSUE

Christmas, New Year and the Event of the Year

THE EDITOR in his *Rambling Notes* surveys the year 1972 in retrospect and has picked out the Budget presented on November 10, 1972 as the *Event of the Year* for Sri Lanka. He points out that the UF government has brought to a culmination the change in the way of life which had begun in 1956. The pattern of socio-cultural life in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, which had been fashioned by the Portuguese, Dutch and British rulers, on the basis of what obtained in the island and what had developed during the era of colonialism, has now changed. Christmas and the New Year (on January 1), had been widely celebrated in this island as it is still done universally throughout the world even today.

But in this era of Buddhist revivalism in Ceylon, Christmas has been pushed into the background as a purely Christian festival. In Ceylon, Christmas had been a cosmopolitan festival. Christmas Day is still a holiday. But not New Year's Day. The UNP, equally in the grip of Buddhist ideology, had circumvented chauvinist sentiments by having New Year's Day as the National Heroes Day holiday but the UF has no use for Natio-

nal Heroes nor the New Year's Day on January 1. Although this calendar had its origin in Western Europe and had been adopted by the Christians, it is accepted throughout the world today as the beginning of the year (even in Sri Lanka it is the beginning of the financial and administrative year).

The religious and astrological new year for the Buddhists and Hindus in Ceylon falls in mid-April and that has now been upgraded as the New Year in Sri Lanka. But we still have a sizable Christian community and the Government could well have maintained January 1 as a public holiday. But in the contemporary Buddhist theocratic state of Sri Lanka it would be futile to expect even small mercies like that for the minority groups which are part and parcel of the island.

The Editor also surveys international developments in 1972 and points out that in a year when the spirit of detente and non-tension has spread throughout the world, Vietnam continues to be a hotbed of fighting with the USA indulging in bombing raids which have shocked the world. *Sherlock Holmes* in his column delves into

the economics (and the socio-political dynamics) of the tourist drive and brings home the fact that Lankonians had become not only strangers in their own land but also a semi-ostracised depressed caste—the brahmin elite being the foreigner with hard currency. He also touches on the affairs of the Milk Board and on the question of paddy production. *Alkardi Muga* continues his *Safari* through Anuradhapura, Rajangana and Puttalam, but his comments on life and living in the agricultural countryside is what makes his contributions so interesting. *Canax* is on the problem of success and how one can get there (or get on) quickly, without too much trouble or hard work. In his column *From the Easy Chair* he analysis the economic implications of cribbing in examinations in that inimitable manner which is the hallmark of his style.

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RAMBLING NOTES

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Event of the year

1972:

In Retrospect:

Vietnam, ..

IN WISHING our readers the traditional good wishes for 1973, we are deeply conscious of the bleak and dismal prospects in store for everybody in Sri Lanka in the coming year. *Tribune* can see no silver lining in the sky—because all government plans for 1973 and the years thereafter are either self-defeating measures guaranteed by all normal rules to bring down production and productivity, or are mere paper plans of doctrinaire pundits, excellent at making analyses and evaluations, but miserable failures in the matter of working out practicable solutions and thereafter implementing them.

The Prime Minister has announced that 1973 will be PRODUCTION YEAR. It is no doubt good to emphasise that production and productivity are key to development and prosperity, but year after year we have heard the same cry for increased production with no avail, and we cannot be blamed for being sceptical of the value

of making a mere declaration that 1973 will be the Year of Production. Until we see the plans to be drawn up at the different conferences convened by the Prime Minister in January 1973, we will refrain from making any comments, except to point out that it is one thing to make fresh plans for production but it is a totally different matter to persuade people to work to attain targets, especially when every possible kind of *dis-incentive* has been imposed on those sections of the population which are immediately capable of organising production — and increased production — in agriculture and industry.

The new classes and groups which the Government have sought to upgrade through legislative measure like Land Ceilings, Income Ceilings, Compulsory Savings, and the like are inherently incapable, in our humble view, of responding to the call for increased production in adequate measure in the immediately foreseeable future. To seek to establish greater social equality by legislatively removing inequalities and disabilities by what are believed to be radical reforms is no doubt a desirable dream (nurtured by doctrinaire highpriests of half-baked ideologies), but the present over-hasty rush to level down inequalities will lead to decreased production—as everything done by this Government since 1970 is

guaranteed to do—and the result will be pauperisation of the nation as whole.

There has been a gradual but effective decrease of production since 1970. At first it was suggested that the decrease was due to the sabotage by the UNP and other rightwing forces. Then the excuse trotted out was the attempted insurrection of the pseudo-leftwing forces of the JVP. Whatever the excuse, we are now left with a major decline of production in 1972: less chillies and even less paddy was grown in 1972 as compared to the immediately preceding years. And the prospects for 1973 are none too good. In this context every effort made by the Government to increase production must be welcomed and must receive the enthusiastic support of all. But governmental actions in the last three years have driven many economically active sections of the community into the wilderness of frustration and inaction. Apart from this, the failure to solve the tensions between the two major communities have also deprived the Government (in advance) the wholehearted support of an industrious community.

There are only two possible motivating driving forces for economic development in a country like Ceylon: one is *patriotism* and the other is *profit*. And now that the *profit* motive has been blunted, especially so far as local

investors, entrepreneurs and agriculturists are concerned by means of all the ceilings and the tax laws, only patriotism is left—but without the discipline which stems from regimentation (as in China) the patriotic motive cannot deliver the goods. And, even in this, the Government's horizon is limited: its "patriotic" appeal can be mainly directed to the down-trodden sections of the Sinhala Buddhists, to the elite of the organised working class in Colombo and certain sections of the Muslim community—all of whom have benefited by largesse emanating from the government's efforts to level down social and economic inequalities.

ON THE COVER, we have a picture of the Minister of Finance on Budget Day, namely November 10. Although much has happened in 1972 in Sri Lanka, *Tribune* regards the Budget for 1973 as the *Event of the Year*. We are in no way seeking to emulate *Time's* "man of the year" on the cover, but on looking back over 1972 we are entitled to pick on the *event of the year*. Though some will be tempted to assert that the new Constitution inaugurated on May 22 as the most important event of this year, *Tribune* persists in the view which it expressed at the time the new Constitution was promulgated that it would prove to be transitory and ephemeral. All constitutions are liable to change, but in our view

the current Constitution of Sri Lanka has to undergo many fundamental changes before it proves to be a workable instrument to wield all the different peoples in this island into a united nation capable of breaking the economic stagnation in which this country is now enveloped. As it stands the constitution will not help take the country very far in the matter of national unity or economic development—and without national unity there cannot be any economic development, however much the slogan of socialism is shouted from the rooftops.

The new Constitution is an emotionally satisfying one for the Sinhala Buddhists who constitute a numerical majority in the country. Sri Lanka is a *de facto* theocratic state for the Buddhists. The Constitution satisfies the Sinhala language chauvinists. It will tickle the emotional credos of nationalist-minded pundits who see something wonderful in the creating of Sri Lanka as a sovereign and independent state severing *de jure* links with the British Crown (*de facto* they were severed in 1956) and in vesting power in the people under a new Constitution. *But the Constitution is not an instrument as yet for solving the problems of bread and butter of the people.*

At the auspicious time of 12.43 pm on May 22, 1972, the independent sovereign Republic of Sri Lanka was ushered into the

world by the midwives of the United Front. Whoever may have been the astrologer who picked on this auspicious hour, there is not the slightest doubt that it does not augur well for the island of Ceylon, now renamed Sri Lanka. This will not be the first time that an astrologer's choice of time will be proved to be wrong, and it is a safe bet that one does not have to wait for many years to discover how inadequate the present Constitution is to cope with the imperatives of the situation here. Already the "crisis" which has arisen over the Press Council Bill and the Constitutional Court is an indication of the inadequacies of the Constitution.

The new Constitution discarded the principle of the separation of powers, and the National State Assembly is the supreme body—legislative, executive and judicial. But the trappings of an independent judiciary are maintained with a Court of Appeal to replace the Privy Council as the Court of ultimate authority—but all under the purview and jurisdiction of the National State Assembly. The Criminal Justice Commission Act and the amendments to other statute laws introduces a new phase in the history of the judicial system of this island. The Criminal Justice Commission Act is intended to cope with the special problems of insurgency and exchange frauds which have been

made possible, it is alleged, by utilising "loopholes" which exist in the ordinary laws of the land. But it is not clear whether the remedy is not worse than the evil sought to be rectified. The Criminal Justice Commission Bill did not find acceptance with four Communist Party MPs and they were "expelled" from the Parliamentary Group and were only re-admitted towards the end of the year after they had made amends in sack clothes and ashes.

The Land Reform Act, Amendments to the Rent Control Act, the Ceilings on Incomes and laws to enforce Compulsory Savings and a new tax system, are some of the legislation adopted by this Government to change the way of life in this country. There have, in addition, been serious crises in every political party in greater or lesser measure. But most of them were smoothed out in the course of the year. The "dispute" between Dudley Senanayake and J. R. Jayawardene took the UNP to the Courts, but a last minute compromise brought the two stalwarts of the UNP together again. But towards the end of the year, hard-hitting speaker Premadasa felt that he too deserved a place in the topmost brackets of UNP and his efforts to stage a showdown were thwarted by the combined forces of Dudley and J.R.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY went through a more

agonising trial. At the 9th Party Congress held in August, young hardlining militants, aligning themselves with veteran Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe as against Pieter Keuneman and his softlining comrades, captured an overwhelming number of seats on the Central Committee. The new CC does not like Pieter Keuneman, nor does he like them, but the CC cannot do without Pieter for the moment—and hence there is a stalemate with three factions inside the CP clearly apparent to knowledgeable political observers. Inside the LSSP too there was a similar revolt, but the top hierarchy was able to contain the revolt but not without significant changes in the composition of the CC in favour of the militant rebels.

The Tamil Congress is in two parts, one (with the MPs) co-operating with the Government, whilst the other has joined the FP in a Tamil United Front. The FP too had a major shakeup with Amirthalingam and the Eastern Province FP branches in a tussle for the President's post. The crisis was solved by Amirthalingam standing down. The FP boycotted the Assembly for sometime, and SJV Chelvanayakam has resigned his seat to compel a by-election in which he has challenged the Government to show that they "enjoy" the support of the Tamil people in the way the CP, LSSP some TC and other MPs

attempt to show, The FP suffered one defection when C. X. Martyn became an Independent (supporting the Government) and crossed over disagreeing with the FP on the new Constitution.

The Government itself has continued to command the supreme parliamentary majority it had from May 1970. It has steam-rolled all legislation it wanted through the NSA. The parliamentary majority of the Government is safe as long as the SLFP, with its 90 members, does not splinter. Although there have been rumblings about in-fighting within the SLFP, nothing of the squabbles within the Party have surfaced because of the charismatic hold of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike. But with the Budget last November, a new dimension has grown within the SLFP and the United Front. It is known in political circles that the original set of revenue proposals, including a drastic cut in the food subsidies, were held up because of the opposition of a few Ministers. The Prime Minister, it is believed, had firmly indicated that she was for the cut in the rice subsidy, but within 24 hours of the final Cabinet meeting, it is said, that the Cabinet was confronted with a memorandum signed by over 80 SLFP MPs (the number cited is 83) insisting that the rice subsidy should be retained and that the price of flour and sugar must remain

intact. With this *fait accompli*, which seems to have had the active support of two Ministers, the Minister of Finance had no alternative but to graft a new set of revenue proposals on to the Budget Speech which seems to have been left intact.

THIS IS ONE of the reasons why we have chosen the Budget Day on November 10, as the event of the year. The Budget Speech, and the Revenue Proposals which finally emerged, are a contradiction in terms. The Budget Speech itself, as has been pointed out in the *Tribune*, is an excellent analysis of the economic situation in this country in the most realistic and objective manner. But the revenue proposals, which are now part of the Budget did not flow logically from the Speech. A totally different set of proposals with a heavy slice in food subsidies would have been appropriate to the Speech.

The 1973 Budget presented on November 10 is a landmark in the history of the United Front. The massive victory of May 1970 was the beginning of a new era in the socio-political changes which emanated from the victory of the electoral alliance of April 1956. The United Front came to power with a fund of goodwill unknown in the recent political history of the island. But it expended this goodwill in double quick time. The abortive insurrection of April 1971 marked the beginning of the euphoria

which had enveloped the UF from May 1970. The four by-elections held on October 9, 1972 in which the Government fared disastrously, was clear proof that the euphoria which sustained the United Front was no more.

But the 1973 Budget marked another landmark, this time on the economic front. Whilst the April 1971 insurgent movement and the four by-elections showed the sharp drop in the political popularity of the government, the Budget presented on November 10, 1972 demonstrated that the Government had missed the bus in giving a start to the much-vaunted Five Year Plan. On paper, the Plan is an excellent exercise in econometrics, but it did not give a clue as to how it was to be implemented. Neither did the 1973 budget. The Five Year Plan should have swung into action in 1972, and it was hoped that at least the latest Budget would make it possible to get it off on a flying start to make up for lost time. But the Budget did not.

But now, as *Tribune* had prognosticated, the Five Year Plan may never get started at all. The foreign exchange budget for 1973, or what was left of it after the refusal of the Government Parliamentary Party to sanction a cut in the food subsidies, has gone for a six with the massive increase in

the world price of rice and sugar, and other foodstuffs, not to speak of other essential imports. The key to any economic progress in this country is agriculture, and it is this sector in which the United Front government has fared badly up to now. Without making provisions for alternative schemes for production, land and income ceilings have been imposed and this will inhibit production. Whether the PM's conferences scheduled for January will help to initiate some elementary form of the overdue Green Revolution in this country is a matter for speculation. But it is to be hoped that something will be done.

WHILST THE PROSPECTS on the purely domestic front are so dismal, the outlook internationally so far as Sri Lanka was concerned was not any better. Apart from the highly successful visit of the Prime Minister to China in June this year, Sri Lanka did not make any significant mark anywhere else in the world. In fact, at the Georgetown Ministerial meeting of non-aligned powers, Sri Lanka suffered a major rebuff. Her request that the next non-aligned summit be held in Colombo (no doubt in the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall due to be opened in early 1973) was summarily turned down by a steamroller majority of Arab-African nations—in spite of promises to the contrary by the Arab Powers. Sri Lanka felt bitter that

the Arabs, for whom Ceylon had done so much, should let her down so badly. Furthermore, Sri Lanka's relations with most Western Powers were strained, and there was an absence of cordiality in contacts with the USSR and other Eastern European socialist bloc countries. Sri Lanka continued to entertain the traditional Sinhala suspicions about the big brother attitudes of India, though Colombo has expressed hopes that the Indian Prime Minister will visit this island in the early part of 1973. At the UN and elsewhere Sri Lanka plugged the demand for a nuclear-free peace zone in the Indian Ocean region, and though everybody has paid lipservice to the virtues of such a scheme, nothing concrete has yet materialised to make it a living reality.

Sri Lanka is only a small dot in the world, and there are millions upon millions of people throughout the world who do not know that an island now called Sri Lanka exists at all though a larger number associate the word Ceylon with good quality Tea though they do not have the faintest idea of the location of this island. Whilst the political impact of Sri Lanka on the international scene cannot arouse interest of any significance in the world, the events which have occurred in the rest of the world have (and do have) a major impact on this island.

The inflation which has beset all western capitalist countries and the hopeless shortfall in the rice produced in Asia have had the most deleterious consequences for Ceylon, because this country imports industrial goods from the West and food from Asia. Apart from this, hot wars as in 1971, eg., Pakistan and India, have not disturbed the world in 1972, and a spirit of *detente* had emerged in many important sectors of the world. Nixon had visited China and Russia, and effected new bilateral relations with China and Russia of a peaceful nature. The cold war of the earlier era has been replaced by a *cool war*, or an era of peaceful co-existence. West Germany came to an understanding not only with the USSR and other Warsaw Pact powers but also recognised the GDR as a separate German state. Willy Brandt's *ostpolitik* was endorsed by the German people in the elections a few weeks ago. Japan's Tanaka also came to terms with China, but his party lost ground in the December elections to the socialists and communists. Trudeau did not fare so well in the elections in Canada, and Labour was swept into power in Australia and New Zealand and both have established diplomatic relations with China.

Bangladesh which came into its own with the return of Mujibur Rahman could not enter the UN

because of China's veto. India had more than its normal share of internal troubles with floods and drought devastating different parts of the country. Language riots in Assam and civil disturbances in Andhra over the Mulki rule took a heavy toll. But India was able to establish a partial *detente* with Pakistan after a summit meeting at Simla. Africa had its usual quota of coups, and Idi Amin of Uganda threw out the Asians and has taken over nearly all foreign undertakings in the country.

Natural disasters, airplane crashes and earthquakes had occurred many more times in 1972 than in any previous year in living history. Drought has paralysed Indonesia, and typhoons and floods have devastated the Philippines where Marcos has established a dictatorship on the pretext of fighting communist subversion. Sadat requested the Russians specialists and military advisers to leave Egypt in July and a break seemed imminent, but towards the end of the year a partial compromise seemed to have been arrived at. The Black September movement of Palestinian Liberation Movement created a sensation by striking at the Israelis at the Munich Olympic Games followed by a bloodbath which shocked the world. Letter bombs, hijackings and even the seizure of the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok showed how persistent and resourceful the

Palestinian Commands were, and on many occasions fighting flared up between the Israelis and the Syrians across the border. The fighting in West Asia was only child's play compared to the fighting in Vietnam. Although the US has withdrawn nearly all of its ground troops, and though Hanoi and Washington have been carrying on negotiations for practically the whole of the year, the fighting has gone on without respite.

The US had stopped its savage bombing of the North when the peace talks in Paris had reached a meaningful stage and it was believed that an agreement would be signed between North Vietnam and the USA at the tail end of October, but though this did not take place as scheduled Nixon won a massive landslide victory at the US Presidential elections on the crest of a belief that a peace treaty to end the Vietnam war would be signed before the end of the year. But on December 16, Kissinger told the world that the talks had broken down because the North Vietnamese were intransigent, and Nixon ordered a massive bombing of North Vietnam.

THE RENEWED BOMBING of North Vietnam has evoked criticism and condemnation in nearly all countries and the governments of many countries have lodged official protests. The con-

sensus of opinion throughout the world is that peace in Vietnam would have been a reality before the US presidential elections if the US had not gone back on the agreement Kissinger and Le Duch Tho had painstakingly negotiated with Le Duc Tho.

When the Kissinger-Tho talks were resumed in Paris with the avowed object of sorting out some minor issues, the world was led to believe that the peace agreement would be signed before Christmas. But this hope too had been blasted. Between them, the two star-writers of *The New York Times*, Mr. James Reston and Mr. Anthony Lewis, have summed up the main reason of the virtual breakdown of the Paris talks and what they say amounts to nothing less than intransigence on the part of the Americans. For, it is they who are now introducing into the negotiations an altogether new demand—that Hanoi accept President Thieu's undiluted sovereignty over South Viet Nam.

According to Mr. Reston, the "point of decision is really back in the White House. The question now is whether President Nixon is prepared to make a separate peace with Hanoi and the South Viet Name communists, and so far he has held back. Mr. Kissinger failed to get an agreement because he was not authorised to play the President's trump card." Mr. Reston points out however, that even after

Mr. Nixon decides to sign a separate peace agreement with Hanoi and the NLF, "Thieu might not go along." But, he adds, "until such a decision is made there will be no settlement."

Mr. Lewis is even more blunt. "There is wonderful irony," he says, "in the belief, now being expressed on all sides, that the US will get peace only if it acts despite the objections of President Nguyen Van Thieu... Every day that there is no peace, American bombs continue to fall, mocking our declared intention to let the contending parties work out the political future of South Viet Nam. During the recent sessions of the Kissinger-Tho talks, US planes dropped an average of nearly four tons of explosives every minute, night and day."

Interestingly, the right-wing French newspaper, *L'Aurore*, says much the same thing as Mr. Reston does when it declares: "The essential question now is: who will be the master of South Viet Nam? Either General Thieu keeps the reins of power firmly in his hands or he surrenders them to the Viet Cong. No compromise is possible. Saigon fears that the American objective is to dress up and disguise an abandonment as an honourable treaty. Two months ago Mr. Kissinger believed that he could pull off this juggler's trick. But, alas, the manipulator lacked the necessary dexterity. President Nixon must now

enter the scene, and make one of the two Viet Nameese sides swallow its pride."

However, it is the prestigious French commentator, Mr. Raymond Aron, who hits the nail on the head when he writes in *Le Figaro* that "no text of any treaty will prevent the North Viet Nameese and the Viet Cong from continuing the armed struggle. Everything depends on their will and the terrain." And Mr. Aron adds: "Never since the end of the second world war has any civil war, especially the one in which the opposing parties got foreign aid, ended in a compromise. Power has finally landed in the hands of the one or the other."

IT IS WIDELY accepted that by escalating the bombing of North Vietnam, the USA was only trying to force Hanoi to accept certain American proposals to end the Vietnam conflict: that by trumpeting about its "aspiration for peace", the Nixon administration was seeking to divert US public attention and that of other countries from the global indignation aroused by the renewed bombing; that the bombing of North Vietnamese towns really amounted to genocide operations stemming from methods of mass annihilation through massive bombardments, shelling and mining of Vietnamese ports and even waging chemical warfare.

What observers in many countries have pointed out was that the US govern-

ment had repeatedly declared during the Paris peace talks about its readiness to reach a mutually beneficial settlement of the conflict in Vietnam. But suspicions have been created in many capitals that the Nixon Administration had only utilised the peace talks in order to better implement the Guam Doctrine by reinforcing the Saigon Army and also to persuade the US voters that Nixon was for peace in Vietnam. The renewed bombing has given fresh impetus to credibility gap which Nixon had created, and the US has witnessed a new outburst of protests against the war. World public opinion has condemned the latest bombing of North Vietnam and there is a universal desire for peace in Vietnam. It is this pressure of opinion both abroad and inside the USA which has probably compelled Nixon to step down the bombing of North Vietnam and permit the re-opening of the peace talks in Paris. US sources say that Hanoi would be now less intransigent and difficult, but it is also admitted that the US itself was now willing to make a few new concessions.

The Pope has stated that peace was desirable and that it was immediately possible. We can only hope that the fighting will end soon in Vietnam and more peaceful methods are adopted to resolve the many problem confron-

ing the war-torn people split into two halves in Vietnam. Without peace in Vietnam, there cannot be peace in Asia.

ON THE FLU FRONT

The flu virus is subject to extremely rapid mutations, so much so that the human organism frequently is unable to fight variations of the common disease. Now US researchers hope to defeat the versatile micro-organism by a hybrid obtained by cross-breeding several known varieties of virus and capable of providing the human organism with a defence against any of the basic forms of the flu. According to Associated Press, such a vaccine has been worked out by combining the viruses which caused the "Hongkong" flu epidemic of 1968 and the epidemic in 1965. The vaccine is to be used to combat the new flu wave expected this winter.

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

- * A New Caste * Milk Board
* The Tourist Bubble * Paddy

IS IT TRUE that our tourist drive has begun to have offshoot repercussions which have the most peculiar flavour? That in the days of the colonial raj, the white man, the *suddha*, was a privileged person with special caste rights and privileges? That today, in the era of the United Front, the foreign tourist with hard currency (even if he spends only rupees obtained on the blackmarket) has become a demi-god with special caste privileges? That even humble resthouses have been brought within the caste orbit of the tourist drive? That the new tourist hotels, motels, complexes are places which are out of bounds (literally) to nearly all Ceylonese—what with the income ceilings and other ceilings? That these are hard currency joints to which only the new caste of hard currency "tourist" visitors can go? That this new privileged caste, created by the tourist drive, has been imposed on the general public and the common masses of this country?

That very recently a very distinguished Ceylonese, now in retirement, had taken some foreign guests on a tour of the island? That these were guests he had known when he had served the country abroad? That he had taken these guests around the island himself? That at a resthouse, now streamlined for tourists, he had attempted to use a toilet and bathroom when he was stopped by the manager who told him that it was reserved for "foreign tourists"? That the manager did not know who he was and that the *suddhas* there were his guests? That it was a good thing the manager did not identify him because this incident might never have taken place if he had? That because this episode has taken place this story will reach the higher echelons of the government directly. That, in the meantime, lesser Ceylonese (or rather Lankonians) are being daily humiliated in our resthouses?

* * *

THAT MANY competent persons do not think that the tourist drive will bring the results expected in the economic sense? That in Sri Lanka tourism for foreigners is a parasitic industry? That a very large percentage of goods and even services provided to the foreign tourists are imported from abroad paying hard currency? That even if most of the tourists who come here pay hard currency (and not black-market rupees), Sri Lanka collects no more than a *compradore* brokerage on the goods and services imported from abroad for this tourist drive? That it would be different in a country which produces over 80% to 90% of the goods and services utilised by the tourists? That even in such cases the tourist industry is only a sideline industry of a semi-parasitic nature?

That the Japanese tourist entrepreneur, who was here for the PATA conference, said something very true—that tourism could not solve any of Sri Lanka's problems? That whilst agriculture could solve the island's economic ills, tourism would never be able to do it? That tourism in Ceylon was so far behind the times (when compared to other countries) that it would take years before proper standards could be established? That many VIPS in Sri Lanka were offended because this Japanese visitor had spoken the truth?

Is It True?

That it is time that persons in charge of the destinies of this island realised that the time and energy expended on the tourist drive will not produce the results expected? **That only a few private individuals and tourist entrepreneurs would become foreign exchange millionaires in double quick time! That apart from this, the benefits Sri Lanka would obtain will be less than minimal!**

IS IT NOT TRUE that this new tourist drive has created paranoic delusions among persons who should know better? That according to the new tourist rules many trading centres selling local products inside Sri Lanka, are now reserved only for hard currency visitors? That Ceylonese cannot purchase gems and semi-precious stones in the state-owned Gem Corporation showrooms in the Fort in Colombo? That owing to this Ceylonese continue to be at the mercy of sharks and cheats when they want to buy a precious stone? That this craze for foreign exchange can make people go nuts and do all the wrong things? That whilst there is a lunatic drive for foreign exchange through tourists (package tourists do not bring much foreign exchange and they probably take away more through smuggling gems and narcotics because of the super-duper VIP treatment they get at the customs), foreign exchange which had been provided to Sri Lanka

under various credit agreements have not been expended? That on December 31, 1972 will expire such credits from Britain and the Western countries amounting to several million pounds sterling, because a particular Ministry of the Government did not issue the necessary quotas to utilise these credits? That almost 25% of the foreign exchange available under these Agreements was not utilised because this Ministry has paranoic inhibitions about Ceylonese entrepreneurs being racketeers? That with the result local industries and other local productive units were starved of much needed raw materials?

That the only entrepreneur who today has *carte blanche* freedom in this matter are the new class of tourist entrepreneurs who are being allowed to make a fast dollar (and in other hard currencies too) without any questions being asked? That the older class of entrepreneurs (who did not stray into tourism or the new craze of non-traditional exports) are being squeezed out of existence without raw materials — and available credits for the imports of such raw materials were not utilised? That whilst this country was crying aloud for foreign exchange it seems a crime not to utilise foreign exchange which was in hand? **That in any other country the Minister concerned would be called upon**

to resign? That the top officials in the Ministry would be fired? That in Sri Lanka today nobody seems to be bothered about anything except to pay pooja to package-tour foreigners?

THAT ONE of these days, not very far away, our tourist crazy gentry would wake up to find all our package-tourists spirited away to the little islands in the Maldivé Group? That those who come here for the sun and the sea would find islands like Bandos in the Maldives a more attractive proposition than Hikkaduwa or Bentota? That only a few old men and women come to Sri Lanka to see its ruins and the splendours of its ancient culture? That the rest of them come for sea bathing and the other attractions centred round beach complexes? That visitors to Bandos have revealed that it was a dream place with goods and services which Sri Lanka cannot match? That the beaches in Bandos were clean? That there were no touts and pimps hanging about the place there? That there was no flotsam and jetsam on the beaches in Bandos? **That all this only showed that the tourist industry on which the present government of Sri Lanka seemed to place so much hope will soon prove an empty bubble? That this bubble will burst far sooner than many people expect? That before this happened it**

would be better to devote more time and energy to the main traditional economic wealth of Sri Lanka—namely agriculture?

* * *

IS IT NOT A FACT that things are getting curiously and curiously in the work and affairs of the Milk Board? That apart from everything else the Board has not adopted anything which resembles correct tenderboard procedures—in spite of repeated efforts to do so? That even members of the Board of Directors are amazed at the lack of any procedure in the award of tenders? That whatever procedure (or the lack of it) which exists would only help those who want to award contracts without proper scrutiny? That it was time that something was done to make the Milk Board adopt elementary tender procedures in awarding contracts worth millions of rupees?

That there was speculation in knowledgeable quarters as to what had happened to an inquiry which had been ordered into the affairs of the Milk Board no sooner this Government had come to power and the new Minister had taken over? That a high-powered team (or was it a one-man show?) had been appointed to make these investigations? That it was time that the findings of this Board of Inquiry are made public?

* * *

IS IT NOT SURPRISING that shortly after Sherlock Holmes wrote his

last column bemoaning the partial drought in the Wannai and other dry zone areas, a major cloudburst had descended upon these areas and rain had fallen in torrents during the last ten days before X'mas? That this rain has filled up the tanks and provided enough rain for December? That those who had sown three-month varieties of paddy in October or earlier have got enough rain without having to draw from the tanks in a way as to impinge upon water for the Yala crop? That those who have planted the 4-month variety of paddy like H4 need more rain in January?

That these December rains will bring in a more plentiful harvest than otherwise? That this will only partially increase production, and not bring production to the levels estimated by the pundits of the Department of Agriculture.

That in many places in the Wannai, the area sown this year is only two thirds of what was traditionally sown in the last five years? That this shrinkage was due to the breakdown in a large number of tractors (no spares and no tyres) and the inability of the cultivators to protect large extents or scattered plots because of the absence of guns and cart-ridges to keep the wild boar and other predatory animals at bay?

That with the world rice price jumping as much as £ 20 per ton (it was expected to jump more soon), Sri Lanka must pay

more attention to the problems faced by paddy cultivators? That the Land Reform Act, the Ceiling on Incomes, the new tax laws (and what not) are disincentives so far as production is concerned? That it would be impractical to expect this Government to reverse some of the measures like land and income ceilings in order to grow more paddy, but unless something drastic was done immediately there is not the slightest doubt that production will drop by leaps and bounds? That Sherlock Holmes knows that many fertile paddy lands have not been sown this year because the lessees who cultivated these fields for owners who could not cultivate them did not want to undertake such cultivation in view of the ceilings? That one has only to go round the rice growing districts to realise the extent of the unsown acreage?

That it is hoped that at the various conferences being convened by the Prime Minister in January 1973 these problems will be faced directly and squarely and solutions found? That doctrinaire dispensations based on the inviolability and infallibility of land and income ceilings, coupled with the new tax laws, must be avoided? That pragmatic solutions based on common sense will prove far more successful than mere "on-paper" effusions of doctrinaire pundits?

- A Diary of Events in Sri Lanka and the World-compiled from the English-language dailies published in Colombo.

DECEMBER 1 - 21

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1: The 92nd day of the bank strike. A delegation of Japanese businessmen arrived in Colombo yesterday to study investment potential for foreign capital. Arguments were continued before the Constitutional Court today. A Water Conservancy delegation from People's China was in Ceylon to survey irrigation projects and to examine the problems of flood control of the Kaluganga, Nilwalaganga and the Uda Walawe valley. The average cost of living index for the first nine months of 1972 was 7.1 percent higher than the average index for the corresponding period in 1971. There has been a major drain of talent from the State Engineering Corporation. President Nixon met a special envoy from President Thieu in a bid to persuade South Vietnam to agree to ceasefire in terms of the agreement worked out between Hanoi and Washington.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2: The 93rd day of the bank strike, and the Ministry of Finance issued a statement that there was no truth in the suggestion made by the Union that negotiations were being conducted with a view to settling the strike. Mr. N. Shanmuganathan, ex-leader of the Pekingwing CP, stated that the TUF decision to launch a satyagraha campaign was arrived at in Madras when certain FP leaders visited India. The Land Reforms Commission began its sittings today to study 5,400 declarations under the Act. The *Daily Mirror* reported that two shipments amounting to 1000 tons of chillies would arrive "by the end of next week" from Pakistan and China: the price was £ 172 a ton. The UNP has submitted a resolution to the National State Assembly that all those detained without trial or charges should be released forthwith. The last date for making declarations under the amended Inland Revenue Act has been postponed to January 15 from December 15. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake told the visiting Japanese delegation of businessmen that Sri Lanka welcomed foreign investment in tourism. Mr. Hector Kobbe-

kaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, speaking at Udunuwara declared that the Government was taking steps to take over 68,000 acres in the Kandyan areas for alienation among the landless. The Labour Party was tipped to win the polls in Australia today. The countdown began today for the Apollo 17 moonshot. President Nixon suspended the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam as peace talks went on to a "climax".

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3: The 94th day of the bank strike. All Sunday newspapers put up their prices from today because of the increased costs of production. Marginal income tax payers, according to a communique of the Ministry of Finance, under the Pay-As-You-Earn scheme will be exempted from paying their tax: they will however have to forego their free measure of rice: a marginal taxpayer is defined as one who does not pay a tax exceeding Rs. 3 a month. The price of batteries for cars, tractors and other vehicles has gone up by at least 20%. Two boats carrying white and brown sugar sailed into Colombo yesterday: this is expected to relieve the scarcity experienced in many parts of the country. According to the *Times Weekender* some of Japan's leading business tycoons had reportedly opened a dialogue with Sri Lanka's private sector as a prelude to the setting up of export-oriented joint ventures. Arguments were continued before the Constitutional Court yesterday and the arguments had not concluded. The nett loss incurred by the Salu Sala for the current period was Rs. 24 million. According to a report from *Reuter*, President Nixon had declared a few days ago that he "loved the Chinese—the Chinese are the ablest people in the world." The Labour Party had won the elections in Australia: Mr. McMohan who had been the Prime Minister for the last two years conceded defeat to Mr. Whitlam who leads the Labour Party. The only English-language newspaper in Kampala, the *Uganda Argus*, was nationalised by the Idi Amin government yesterday.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4: The 95th day of the bank strike. According to the *Ceylon Daily News*, official government sources had "revealed" that the Planning Ministry had been receiving a continuous flow of inquiries from would-be investors of foreign capital

since the announcement of the White Paper on Foreign Investments. A fresh effort was being made to restore normalcy in the Karaiyoor area in Jaffna. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the World Bank team which was here recently on an on-the-spot survey "is reported to be satisfied with Government's new fiscal measures to cut down the subsidy": the two-man IMF team, which was here for a fortnight, is reported to have said that at least some "headway has been made to cut down subsidies." According to the *Sun*, new recruits to the public service in future, particularly higher grade and middle grade clerks, are to receive lower salaries than at present: the scheme if accepted by the Ministers will be implemented from January 1973. The Labour Party's win in Australia after 23 years in the Opposition came as a surprise in many capitals though pollsters and political observers in the country itself had predicted a Labour victory. The countdown for the launching of the Appollo 17 launching was going on smoothly. Students in Pakistan vehemently opposed Bhutto's suggestion that Bangla Desh should be recognised.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5: The 96th day of the bank strike. Two more suspects in the CJC trial were produced before the court yesterday and their identities were admitted in court: of the 41 accused only 32 had been before the court so far, and now 34 were before the court. According to the Minister of Communications, Mr. Leslie Goonewardena, the CTB was now "out of the red" after paying off a debt of Rs. 70 million. Answering a question in the NSA, the Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, revealed that a sum of Rs. 1,161,405,862,80 cts. was the amount outstanding for repayment on loans obtained prior to 1956 as on October, 1 1956: the amount outstanding for repayment on March 31, 1965 of loans obtained during April 1, 1956 to March 31, 1965 was Rs. 3,446,908.18 cts. Air Ceylon had earned a nett income of Rs. 4 million out of the DC 8 aircraft during the last 8 months. The withdrawal of free rice from income tax payers was effective from yesterday. According to the *Sun*, Sri Lanka has put forward a series of concrete proposals to the Tamil Nadu government to curb illicit immigration and smuggling. According to the *Times*, there has been a marked drop in

the sales of many business establishments and this has led to a stoppage in production and in some cases to an easing off of working shifts. There was a great deal of excitement in political circles in New Delhi owing to report that the CIA was involved in a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Apollo 17 spacecraft was all set for the blast off. Talks about the Vietnam negotiations were continuing in Paris with smiles and handshakes, but agreement seemed very elusive.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6: The 97th day of the bank strike, and the Government had indicated that the Ministry of Finance had given permission to bank managers to re-employ the strikers on terms to be laid down by the management: every one of them would be treated as new entrants, etc. etc. The *Daily News* published an enthusiastic report that the Japanese Team was satisfied with the investment climate in Sri Lanka and that our ports could be used as transshipment centres for Japan's imports. The *Daily Mirror* report on Japanese investment was less enthusiastic: it stated that the Japanese wanted a more "attractive climate" for ensuring foreign investment. The National Savings Bank had been able to collect over Rs. 60 million as savings during the last eight months. The State Pharmaceutical Corporation will take over the bulk of the drug imports for 1973. Public meetings were being organised all over the Kandyan districts to congratulate the government for taking over estates to distribute land to landless people. Mr. Gough Whitlam was sworn in as Australia's new PM yesterday. The Army Commander-in-Chief took over power in Honduras after a coup. A plane crashed in the Canary Islands in Spain killing all 155 tourists in the plane. The Vietnam talks in Paris had been suspended to enable the negotiators to get fresh instructions from their governments. Apollo 17 astronauts were in the final rehearsals before launch. The new Australian government had decided to recognise China and establish full diplomatic relations.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7: The 98th day of the bank strike. The constitutional Court must convey to the National State Assembly its verdict on the Press Council

Bill within 14 days, under the express provisions of the Constitution, Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and of Justice, told the National State Assembly yesterday: Submissions had been made before the Constitutional Court that the 14-day limit was not imperative. The Government yesterday decided to increase the price of basic cottons from Rs. 2.12 to Rs. 3 a yard. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Communist Party had decided to expel L. W. Panditha and V. A. Samarawickrema for anti-party work and factionalism. Ceylon was to import 50,000 tons of rice less from China during 1972 because a bumper crop was forecast for Mahā. After the astronauts and mice had taken their positions in Apollo 17 yesterday ready for a blast off, the spacecraft was sent into orbit this morning, 2 hours 40 minutes behind schedule. The Australian Prime Minister outlined a new foreign policy. Japan will open an embassy in Peking this January.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8: The 99th day of the bank strike. The Leader of the NSA Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, stated that as the Constitutional Court had failed to give its verdict within 14 days, the second reading of the Press Council Bill would be proceeded with regardless of the Court's decision. The Speaker announced this ruling on an Opposition objection that the NSA could proceed with the debate on the Bill. L. W. Panditha and J. A. Samarawickrema, in a statement on the threat to expel them from the CP, stated that Dr. Wickremasinghe was now a "prisoner ultra-leftist", and stated that they would appeal against this decision. Apollo 17 had started off on a perfect takeoff and was now on its way to the moon. Dr. Kissinger was now back in Paris to resume his talks with Hanoi's negotiators. Indonesia has decided to import 175,000 tons of rice to meet the current acute shortage caused by a harvest failure after a prolonged drought. Mrs. Marcos the wife of the President of the Philippines was slashed in her abdomen and on her arms in an assassination attempt: she was reported to be out of danger. India and Kashmir finally settled their line of control in Kashmir after the two Army Chiefs met yesterday: with this the Simla Pact comes into full operation.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9: The 100th day of the bank strike, and there were reports that the strike would be settled after the weekend. The Speaker of the National State Assembly, Mr. Stanley Tillekaratne, stated yesterday that he would give a ruling on Monday on a request made by the Opposition for an immediate debate as a matter of public importance on the situation that has arisen as a result of the decision to go ahead with the second reading of the Press Council Bill. The Government had spent Rs. 6 million on the Rehabilitation Camps up to October this year. The Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission announced the verdict of the CJC on legal objections which had been raised against the validity of the Act that the Criminal Justice Commission had no power to adjudicate on the validity of the Act which brought it into being. The *Sum* reported that the Constitutional Court would continue its sittings on Monday—in spite of statements made in the NSA—as two more petitions had yet to be heard. Apollo 17 went racing to the moon with a few hitches and snags being reported, but which were quickly overcome by the astronauts themselves. President Allende of Chile was on a state visit to the USSR and had a fresh round of talks with Soviet leaders at the Kremlin. The USA was still hopeful about a Vietnam peace at an early date, but Hanoi's Mrs. Binh expressed some pessimistic sentiments and stated that President Thieu was for the continuation of the war.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10: The 101st day of the bank strike. The *Observer* had a banner headline that ninety had escaped from Wirawila and that two detainees had been killed in the attempt at midnight on last Friday by the inmates of the detention camp to stage a large scale break out: "according to the latest information about 90 persons have escaped." The Chairman of the Paddy Marketing Board had stated that the PMB had handled 25 million bushels of paddy during the Maha 1972. It was reported that nearly 12,000 youths were to be given 9,000 acres of land to start livestock farms and cultivate subsidiary foodstuffs: these lands consisted of 14 estates recently taken over by the state: from Panwila to Maskeliya: processions and public meetings were being planned to herald

this measure. The *Times Weekender* predicted that it would be a "black christmas for most people" because of spiralling prices and dwindling incomes. Air Ceylon celebrated its 25th anniversary today. It was reported that three out of every ten person in the city of Colombo lived in a shanty slum. Singapore's Foreign Minister Rajaratnam was expected to arrive in Ceylon on a four-day state visit. Apollo 17 was now reaching the moon and everything was going according to schedule. President Nixon is reported to have sent fresh instructions to Paris to Dr. Henry Kissinger.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11: The 102nd day of the bank strike and rumours were afloat that the Union was likely to throw in the sponge: union circles admitted that the strike had failed: and the government was taking a tough line as it had from the beginning: the government's five points for taking back strikers were reported to be as follows: (1) at the discretion of the bankers, probationers to be taken back on a new probationary period of one year; (2) pension rights may be restored to those members of their staff who had pension rights as on August 31, 1972; (3) confirmed employees returning to work to be placed on a short probationary period; (4) medical benefits on an ad hoc basis pending formulation of a new scheme; and (5) provident fund rights as enjoyed on August 31, 1972. The *Daily News* had another bubbling story about the Japanese desire to invest in Ceylon: that they were ready to invest over Rs. 1000 million here mainly in the fields of industry, tourism and fishing. The *Daily News* reported that only eight persons were involved in the Wirawila incident: that three had escaped, two had been re-arrested, two had been shot dead and another was injured.

The *Daily Mirror* reported that members of the staff of the thirteen estates taken over by the Government on November 30 had been rendered homeless and destitute: these members and their families had been thrown out of their homes and their belongings too have been looted. The Constitutional Court met this morning and the Chairman, Mr. T. S. Fernando, stated that the Court would "uphold the Constitution of a sovereign people." The three astronauts over-slept yesterday after taking sleeping tablets, and

Apollo 17 swung into moon orbit yesterday. At the general election in Japan yesterday, Mr. Tanaka's ruling Liberal Democrats were reported certain of a comfortable majority.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12: The 103rd day of the bank strike and speculation was rife as to when the strike will be officially called off. At the meeting of the National State Assembly yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition Mr. J. R. Jayawardena, announced that the Opposition was withdrawing the demand for a debate on the crisis centering around the Constitutional Court because of the decision of the Speaker and the United Front Government to permit a full day's debate today. The Constitutional Court had meanwhile listened to arguments on the petitions yesterday. Mr. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore's Foreign Minister, arrived in Colombo on a four-day state visit: he had informal talks with the Prime Minister and other leaders. The Government, according to Ministry of Justice sources, had decided to appoint another Criminal Justice Commission to try the alleged foreign exchange and currency racketeers. The Minister of Finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, has authorised the creation of a new stock amounting to Rs. 3,243,000 at an interest of 9% per annum: the new stock is issued in part conversion of the Rs. 26,830, 100, 2½ percent National Development Stock raised in 1967-72. At the sitting of the Constitutional Court this morning, the Counsel for one of the petitioners said he wished to summon the author of the Bill in question, namely the Minister of Information. The debate began in the National State Assembly about the "political crisis" stemming from the fact that the Constitutional Court had not given its verdict within 14 days. Apollo 17 astronauts were preparing for a descent on to the moon's surface. The Japanese polls revealed a big swing to the Left: the Liberal Democrats lost many seats whilst the Socialists and Communists increased their representation. President Allende arrived in Havana on a state visit to Cuba: he flew from Moscow to Havana after completing his visit to the Soviet Union. President Bhutto stated yesterday that Pakistan was not committed to recognising Bangladesh.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13: The 104th day of the bank strike. The daily papers reported yesterday's debate at length in the NSA on the situation created by the Constitutional Court not giving a verdict on the Press Council Bill within 14 days: Government spokesmen were insistent that the Court has ceased to exist with the expiry of the 14 days: some Ministers, especially the LSSP Ministers, wanted the NSA to proceed with the Press Council Bill forthwith, but Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, the author of the Bill, said he would not proceed with the Bill "till they find a way to get an adjudication on the Bill"... The members of the Constitutional Court submitted their resignations today, Mr. Dheragoda in the morning and the Mr. T. S. Fernando and Mr. Cooray in the afternoon: The Constitutional Court did not sit today. Mr. P. G. B. Kalugalle, Minister of Shipping and Tourism, will visit Moscow next week to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations of the formation of the USSR to deputise for the Prime Minister who had been invited to the celebrations. Singapore's Foreign Minister Rajaratnam met the President and other leaders in Colombo. Apollo 17 astronauts were roaming on the surface of the moon. The Vietnam talks entered acrucial stage in Paris and a great deal of pessimism was apparent in knowledgeable circles.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14: The 105th day of the bank strike and it was reported that the employees union at a general meeting yesterday decided to call off the strike if there was an assurance that there will be no victimisation. The Constitutional Court stood adjourned and nobody was certain what would happen next. According to official sources, only one percent of the 15,000 suspected insurgents who were held in rehabilitation camps had succeeded in escaping during the period after June 1971. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, told the NSA yesterday that he was bound to consider any suggestion made by any member of the Assembly to "improve and perfect the present Constitution and to make it workable." The Government is considering a proposal to bring down the cost of white sugar to Rs. 2 a lb as the stocks held were not moving at the present price of Rs. 2.50 a lb. The talks in Paris were held in secret in an obvious bid to end the deadlock which seems to have

arisen. Apollo 17 astronauts found orange-coloured soil on the moon's surface.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15: The 106th day of the bank strike and the final negotiations were being conducted by the Minister of Labour to secure a return of the strikers: it was admitted that the strikers had lost and that the Government and management had broken the strike. The Chinese Trade Minister was due tomorrow to sign the fifth of the Five-Year Rice-Rubber Agreements between China and Sri Lanka. According to police sources as revealed to the Observer bombs, and other explosive material were being manufactured in various parts of the country and were being stored. The Apollo 17 astronauts were preparing to blast off from the moon's surface. The Chinese Prime Minister accused the US and S. Vietnam of delaying the peace in Vietnam. The United States rejected the suggestion by South Vietnam's President Thieu for a temporary truce for the Christmas holidays. Hanoi demanded that the agreement finalised in October should be signed.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16: The 107th day of the bank strike, and the Finance Minister told the NSA that the bank strike was over: the question of non-victimisation did not come within his purview: he had told the managers of the state banks to take back all strikers who returned to work. In the NSA yesterday, the PM disclosed that Bangladesh PM Mujibhur had asked her to intervene with China regarding entry to the UN: she said she had raised the matter with Peking. The PM also stated in the NSA yesterday that stern action would be taken against all those responsible for distributing "scurrilous sheets" about the Army. The Government announced that it has cut down the price of white sugar from Rs. 2.50 a lb to Rs. 2 a lb. The Asian Development Bank has approved a 3.1 million US dollar loan (£ 1.2 million) to Sri Lanka for a fisheries project to increase production: it will be utilised to purchase engines and fibreglass plastic material for boatbuilding. The Sun states that Government was likely to appoint a new Constitutional Court. The PM stated in the NSA yesterday that the North Korean Embassy will not be reopened in Colombo until after the CJC

trials were over. Minister T. B. Illangaratne declared at the general meeting of the CWE employees union that if the CWE failed, the private sector would be called upon to take over. Mr. Willi Brandt was sworn in yesterday as the Chancellor of the West German Government. White House spokesmen indicated that various difficulties in the Vietnam peace talks had arisen both with North Vietnam as well as South Vietnam.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17: The 108th day of the bank strike and the Bank Employee's Union met once again in general meeting to confirm the decision about calling off the strike and go back to work tomorrow because they had received adequate assurances that there would be no victimisation: the decision to go back to work was adopted by an overwhelming majority. The *Observer* spotlighted a story about cleaning up the Colombo Co-ops. The *Times* reported that difficulties had arisen in the trade talks with China because China wanted the current world price around £ 53 a ton for rice whilst Sri Lanka started negotiating from a point a little under £ 40 a ton. Apollo 17 astronauts were on their way back and had been ordered by Mission Control to go to sleep. At a press conference in Washington yesterday, Dr. Kissinger revealed that the Paris peace talks had broken down and blamed Hanoi for raising one frivolous issue after one was solved.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18: All bank employees who had gone on strike returned to work: they were required to sign new agreements setting out fresh terms of employment. All daily papers gave great prominence to a speech made by the PM at the SLFP Youth Rally at Kandy yesterday: she warned the youth and the nation about foreign doctrines, preaching violence and conflict: she stressed the need for hard work and honesty. The Rally passed a resolution wanting the removal of Minister Baduddin Mahmud. According to the *Times* a crowd of 300 people led by a chairman of a Janatha Committee attempted to take away some private land in the belief they could do so under the Land Reform Act: the police was summoned and thwarted this attempt. President Idi Amin has announced that he would take over all foreign business undertakings

and plantations. Apollo 17 was on its way back to the earth.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19: The fifth five-year trade agreement between Sri Lanka and the People's Republic of China, to begin on January 1, 1973, was signed yesterday: the protocol for 1973 which, is usually signed at the same time, will be finalised later because there was no agreement on the price of rice. According to the *Daily Mirror*, China has granted Sri Lanka an interest-free cash loan of Reminbi yuan 4.5 million (Rs. 11.93 million) in convertible currency: repayable in 20 years after a grace period of 10 years: the exchange of letters providing this loan took place in Colombo on December 16, 1972. The *Sun* reported that "two top CID officers have been sent on compulsory leave: one is a gazetted officer who was closely associated with the security operations of the Prime Minister while the other holds the rank of Inspector..... Temple Trees and offices of the Security Branch have been placed out of bounds for them:....." "This move comes in the wake of CID investigations under way into alleged attempts by certain elements to plan an attack on Colombo and the suburbs. Already 65 persons have been taken into custody under the emergency regulations.." A severe and prolonged drought in Indonesia—one of the major suppliers to the Australian tea market—has among other factors helped to give a firm undertone to the Ceylon tea market. The United States resumed full-scale bombing of North Vietnam as from yesterday.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20: A full moon poya day and a holiday. The Government has been informed that a special meeting of the Aid Consortium Group in connection with the aid requirements for Sri Lanka for 1972 may be held early in January 1973. This decision is the result of the study made by a two-man IMF team which was here at the end of November to study the economy in the context of the 1973 budget. Two hundred tons of chillies have come from Pakistan (and 200 more are expected shortly) and these will be distributed in non-chilli growing areas through the co-ops at the rate of one ounce per month per raction book at 60 cts a lb, i.e. Rs. 9.60 a lb: no chillies will be distri-

buted in the following districts—Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Moneragala, Jaffna and Hambantota. A number of bank clerks who reported for work have been told to wait for employment until the police have completed inquiries into complaints of damage to bank property, machinery, etc. The *Daily Mirror* cited the latest report of the London *Economist* to say that the outlook for Sri Lanka in 1973 was extremely bleak. The *Sun* reported that the Cabinet will decide tomorrow what should be done about the Press Council Bill and the Constitutional Court. Apollo 17 was today hurtling towards the earth. The 27th session of the UN General Assembly ended yesterday. US bombers continued to blast Hanoi's main cities.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21: According to the *Daily News*, the second Criminal Justice Commission to try exchange control violations will be named this month: the Commission is expected to sit by mid-January at the latest. The Asian Development Bank yesterday announced that it has approved 8 million US dollars to Sri Lanka for the Bowatenna power project. Leading educationists and administrators continued to stress that a good knowledge of English was necessary in Sri Lanka. Four trade unions affiliated to the Pekingwing-oriented Ceylon Trade Union Federation have rejected the leadership of N. Shanmugathasan and removed him from office: this was announced by Mr. Higgoda Dharmasena, the secretary of a new federation of Pekingwing TUs. Nearly 50 persons are feared to have lost their lives in a massive earthslip which has buried a whole area in the Diyanilla village near Ragala: the earthslip has also destroyed a tea factory: no bodies had yet been recovered. According to the *Sun* it will be an austere Christmas this year owing to the high prices and the scarcity of goods. Three bombs are reported to have been flung at the house of Jaffna's Mayor, Mr. Alfred T. Durayappah: no one was injured but the front part of the house was damaged. The *Daily Mirror* reported that rice purchases from China would cost Sri Lanka Rs. 65 million more this year for the same quantity: China had originally wanted £ 53 a ton but is said to be willing to close the deal at £ 51. Tomorrow is the 50th anniversary of the found-

ing of the USSR. Apollo 17 astronauts splashed down safely and in excellent style yesterday. US bombers continued to blast North Vietnam whilst technical men prepared to continue the suspended talks in Paris. China has condemned the US and has given Hanoi the fullest assurance of support.

'WHITE' AND 'DD' ARRACK PRICES UP BY 50 P.C.

The price of "white" and "double distilled" arrack has been increased by fifty per cent, Excise Commissioner Mr. H. B. Wijekoon announced in a circular to his officers yesterday. Mr. Wijekoon's circular said a bottle of "white" earlier sold at Rs. 12 will now cost Rs. 18 and a bottle of "double" distilled, priced earlier at Rs. 16, will now be sold at Rs. 24. The price increase will come into immediate effect, the circular, said. But there will be no "white" or "double distilled" arrack on shelves today excepting at tourist hotels which will be served with their normal quota of DD only. Excise Department sources explained that the department was conserving its stocks of "white" and DD for issue during the Christmas season. The supplies for November and December will be issued to dealers after December 30.

Meanwhile several liquor shops in Colombo ran out of black arrack (silent spirits) yesterday. Excise sources said pre-budget hoarders of arrack were active again in the city. Colombo's excise men on Monday swooped on a licensed liquor dealer in a southern suburb of Colombo and seized a hoard of liquor worth Rs. 15,000. The government expects to collect an additional Rs. 5 million by the new price increases. The reason why there will be no distribution of the stocks at new prices till December is that there are insufficient quantities now and the Excise Department has thought it best to distribute what they have around the festive season in December.

—Ceylon Daily News.

ON GETTING THERE

The Pillars of Success

By CANAX

Mr. Bogoda Premaratne, our Commissioner of Examinations, is the undisputed winner of my Prize for Initiative. I haven't decided, however, what form the Prize should take. There can't be much fun in getting—or giving—the usual ornate Certificate on parchment; he probably has enough of those from his schooldays, collected at every annual Prize-Giving. I would really like to award something he'll treasure, like a set of stolen examination papers, but the going rate for it is so stiff my purse won't stand the strain. I am not ashamed to admit it for I know Mr. Premaratne will understand, and it's not just the increase in FEECs.

I don't know if Mr. Premaratne is, in the strict sense, an educationist, and if he isn't one, I think he should be. He talks a language students should easily understand when he warned them about the gravity of 'cribbing' at exams.

Now nobody put it quite so succinctly during our time, way back in the '40s. As I remember it, and I remember it pretty well, nobody explained the gravity of 'cribbing', though a lot of our precious time was wasted day after day on a subject that may

be fairly close to it, I didn't understand then, and I don't understand now, what it all meant, but my physics teacher used to go on and about the specific gravity of solids and liquids, but not one word, I swear, about 'cribbing'. To be charitable in retrospect, my teacher may have been silent on the subject because he couldn't decide whether to classify 'cribbing' as solid or liquid. Even the genius of Einstein would have been stumped, and a good thing too he never got to wrestle with that one, for the world would have been the poorer for it. He'd never have got to give us his Theory of Relativity, which taught us the world was One Big Family with, say, the Americans being, relatively speaking, truly close kinsmen of the Chinese. (As you can see, Nixon merely took over where Einstein left off.)

To get back to Mr. Premaratne and my Prize for Initiative. I award it to him unhesitatingly for he is the first and only man to see this country's problem of educated unemployed in its entirety. If he wasn't the first to see it, at least he was the first to frankly tell us about it, which alone

is good enough when it comes to initiative.

Had we been lucky enough to have someone with the insight of Mr. Premaratne in the 1940s, my friends and I (how about your friends, if not yourself?) would never have done what we did. But with no one to guide us on the straight and narrow, we had ourselves a ball by 'cribbing' our way through college. While some boys competed with each other simply to see who would become first in class, and then first in public exams, we set ourselves a somewhat broader target of not merely achieving the same result, but doing so while 'cribbing' all the way. Not that there was any need for it, I dare say, but it was so much more fun doing it our way.

Our youthful exuberance, even irresponsibility, has doubtless contributed in some small measure to the problem now faced by this country, assuming my friends and I were not unique in our novel approach to exams. Just multiply us a couple of thousand fold and you have an idea of the problem right there before your very eyes. Unfortunately for this country, Mr. Premaratne arrived, in a sense long after, not before, his time—and ours.

Mr. P. informed the youth of today that this year's GCE 'O' Level exam will cost the Government five million bucks. My

son seems to have got the idea, goodness know from where, that the Government spends all that money just to buy back the question papers that never fail to leak shortly before every exam. I have done my best explaining that Governments don't act that way, even going into details of monetary policies about stimulating circulation of money, buying back papers not being one of them, but I doubt if he believes me. The youth of today won't believe anything but lies, and all I have to offer is the truth. He thought I was joking when I said that buying back 'leaked' papers was not as justifiable as buying leaking ships or creaking planes.

My wife thinks I am the cause of this credibility gap at home because, she says, I have never lost an opportunity to brag about my schooldays, with singular emphasis on the whole of a time we had 'cribbing' right under our teacher's noses. Then Mr. Premaratne comes along and knocks me without much ceremony, or much effort, and, says my wife, I suddenly change my tune. Naturally, the boy doesn't know what to think, according to her.

But according to me, the boy thought sufficiently to ask, making it appear only as a matter of academic interest, just how I 'cribbed' in my time. I felt he was far too young to develop an academic

interest in this or anything else, and refused to be drawn out further on the subject. My wife felt I was only alienating the child even more by my refusal, and I am waiting for someone to tell me what that means. She always clouds simple issues by the thoughtless use of such new-fangled lingo. (I've heard of adult alienation, like the feeling right now between me and my wife, but never imagined kids could feel so adult.)

In my defence, all I can say is that we lived, as schoolboys, in a totally different age, and therefore, 'cribbed' as schoolboys, also in a totally different age. Unemployment then was no more than a poorly-defined and even less recognised spectre on the distant horizon. We could hardly have been expected to look at things the way Mr. P now makes one look at it.

Now that Mr. Premaratne has opened my eyes, I can see the whole horrible picture; 'cribbing' is what has swelled the ranks of the unemployed to such unmanageable proportions over the years, with a good 30 per cent (at least) of it made up of those who should rightly have been 'also rans' in the Academic Race.

The Government should take meaningful steps, be they forward or backward, to come to grips with unemployment. To do

that it is useful to get to the root of the problem, which in this case in the public exam, as we have just discovered, thanks to Mr. Premaratne's initiative. Our youngsters should be strongly discouraged from 'cribbing' at exams, if they can't at once be discouraged from sitting for them altogether. At least it's a start.

If I may offer a word of advice, and I do so as a father (of only one son, and it's not always he makes us feel we have one too many), the Government should vigorously pursue Mr. Premaratne's initiative but refrain from advising youngsters, as he did, "not to take chances, because in the final run it is not worth the trouble." The trouble Mr. P had in mind was penalties in the form of debarrment from exams for a certain period of time, to life. As the saying goes, boys will be boys, so we can safely assume girls will be girls, if for nothing else than that neither can help it. Both boys and girls will take the warning to heart and not take chances, but not as Mr. P intended. They'll do their damndest to ensure they don't get caught 'cribbing', for only then does the exercise become "not worth the trouble". If that happens, we'll be back to square one and the whole operation will prove self-defeating.

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SAFARI IN CEYLON

Nov. 27 — Dec. 11.

WANDERING IN THE N. P. & N. C. P.

Anuradhapura, Rajangane, Puttalam: Tractors, Buffaloes, and Ploughing, Elephants and Wanderoo Monkeys, Chilli Cultivation.

by

ALKARDI, MUGANA

RUPEES TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND (Rs. 25,000) is what somebody paid for his tractor and he bought it new two years ago. Now it is giving him trou-

From the Easy Chair
Continued from page 20

Instead, I suggest they not be told the truth but fed a pack of lies, which our youth will readily swallow. Let them chew on the futility of cribbing because it no longer gets anyone anywhere. Tell them that passing exams has lost its glamour, not a means to an end, but the end itself. And get them to spare a thought for the biggest fib of all—that failure at exams won't admittedly get one into a job, but then, neither will success, so why bother? That 'cribbing' in short, won't get them to where the gravy is, because there isn't any.

It just occurred to me that our youngsters are an ambitious lot, ambitious enough to think the sky's the limit. If the Government wants to stop them in their tracks, quietly remind them that it is not every boy, or girl, who can become a Prime Minister.

ble, and he has to put pressure on his debtors to find the money to pay for the new parts, the costs of which run into several hundreds. Work gets delayed because all this takes time, and the delay each time can run into several days. The tractor after two years' use looks as new as on the day he bought it.

All this reminds me of another man who not so many years ago had trouble with his new tractor, and this caused quite a bother judging by the amount spent on it. They certainly worked very late into the night, and even then, if I remember right, they had to get new parts. If all this was done at no additional cost, the tractor being new, I do not suppose it was much consolation.

If there is any lesson to be learnt from all this, I would say it is—only get a tractor when you can afford to keep it idle. I remember a friend in England telling me many years ago that he could not afford to keep his tractor idle.

I think he must have meant that he had a debt

to pay off the tractor. So I seem to remember he had a horse, a farm horse, or two quite capable of working he could not have meant that he himself had to keep working. He had bought the tractor when he could not afford it, and felt he had to get his money's worth out of it, is what I think he meant.

The great thing about the farm horse and the buffalo is that they replace themselves, and in return for the grass they eat and the feed they get, they give you manure. It is also much more healthy following or leading a horse or buffalo than it is sitting on a tractor all day, I would say, and inhaling it's fumes. But I do not deny that a tractor has its place, providing you do not have to get rid of the buffalo and the horse, for there are days suited to each, and this depends on the weather.

In this part of the Anuradhapura District five years ago and more, I remember that people used to hang around waiting for a tractor to come and work their land. Now they no longer do so, and they get on with the job themselves without the tractor. They even seem more happy. They are certainly more self-reliant. There are more people working now than there were then. This is because there are more people around. Many of the ones I knew then are married now and there seems to have been an

influx of people, too. Judging by the amount of jungly vegetation around, I would say that the land is waiting for more people.

Of course, all the paddy land has probably been taken up. Those who cultivate *chenas* do so with more of an air of permanency. They no longer seem to look on their *chenas* as a piece of land to be worked for a mere two years, but they still use the same word, *Chena*, or more precisely, "*hena*", to describe it.

There is no longer that feeling that children must go to school for the prescribed time, that they must sit for such and such an examination, and take it up year after year when they fail. Some of the older children have not got out of that habit of mind, but those who have already discarded these false notions seem no worse off for it. Children are going to work, as far as I can see, younger than children were a few years ago, and they seem the better for it. In fact they seem quite proud of it, and I am sure they are.

The cost of hiring a tractor to plough an acre is Rs. 80/- Then when you have sown your seed and the paddy has grown and it has been cut, it takes about three or four stacks to contain all the paddy gathered for threshing. Then you hire a tractor to thresh this paddy at a cost of Rs. 25/- a stack, and also hire ten men to

do the work of threshing with a tractor, and I can personally vouch for the fact that it is gruelling work. But if you hire buffaloes, you pay the man who loans you the buffaloes four bushels of paddy which works out to Rs. 60/- at Rs. 15/- a bushel. For Rs. 60/- you hire the buffaloes to plough you an acre and to thresh all the paddy on it three months or so later. For threshing paddy with buffaloes, you can at a pinch get along, with two men, although it is better to have four, and the work is not nearly so hard as with a tractor although it takes longer. So you can say that the cost of ploughing and threshing with a tractor is more than twice as much as it is with buffaloes and it requires more than twice as many men. But then there is the time factor. The best answer I can give to this is that of the Chinaman who, when he had asked why the group, who had lifted him in their car from New York to Washington, was so excited and was told they had broken the record for the journey by one minute, asked what they proposed to do with the minute saved. His question, of course was its own answer.

One night at about nine, a man said, "Elephants have come", I expressed unbelief. He said, "That is my brother's voice shouting at them. Let us go and see". We crossed the road, and crossed his yard,

and going round to the back of his house, went towards his field. He said, "If you are unable to run, you had better stay here. The elephant might chase us". I returned to the house. His mother was already at the back door with a lamp. The man took a quick turn round his field and returned. In the meantime we could hear two or three voices talking loudly to each other across some other fields. The next morning we learnt from the brother that he had been within a few yards of the elephant, that he had had great difficulty shooting it away, and that he had had to shin up two trees while doing so. The elephant had spoiled about a quarter of an acre of his paddy.

I learnt from another man that the elephant had also been in his *chena*. It was a lone elephant. The elephant was reputed to have crossed the road too and he was still across the road, towards a village, nearly two miles away, where a man had been killed about twenty months before. This man had not been afraid of elephants, and he had gone too near a lone elephant which had then chased him and killed him.

I chanced to come across his widow and the child born after his death when I was leaving that village later on that morning. I thought that the elephant that had killed her husband must be the same elephant that I had learnt

about the previous night, and I wanted to send back a word of warning to the first village. All this reminded me of an elephant which had been within twenty-five yards of a house while I was sleeping on its open front verandah, about one year before, and whose footprint we could see quite clearly the next morning. I was not a little taken aback that a wild elephant could have been so close to me without my knowing it.

The man, who had told me the night before that his brother's voice indicated that he was trying to chase away an elephant, had had about two thousand of his own chilli plants eaten by *wanderoo* that evening while he was in his paddy field, and he was most upset not only by his loss but also because none of his relations seemed to have done anything to prevent it. None seemed to have noticed what was going on. This reminded me of my own experience of the *wanderoo* monkey being particularly active raiding crops between five and six in the evenings. This is the time I think when the farmer is most lulled into a sense of security because the monkeys are not always there. Farmers in the Dry Zone spend a part of each year watching their crops by night, singly or in pairs, in small watch huts called "pallas" which may be on a tree or on stilts or

even on the ground. These *pallas* are always small but even the tree *palla* has a small fireplace. It can be dreadfully cold and there is usually a heavy dew. Towards the morning they can usually get some sleep. This is followed by the day's work, then back to the *palla* at night. The whole family has sometimes to do this work of watching and I have even known the women folk go sometimes. The old women are a very important element in a village. They know the whole "works" as it were, and the young members often go to them for instructions. The old women can even give these instructions without venturing into the fields. They seem to know the details of every field.

Apart from this *palla* work by night and occasional ventures out to catch fish, and very special occasions when a part of a village may keep awake the whole night over some ceremony, a village usually goes to bed early.

On the roadside was a tea shop that was also selling goods. It was a spacious room, was well laid out and contained two beds. I asked the *mudalali* how many *cadjans* he had bought, and he said three hundred. The walls and the roof were entirely built of *cadjans*, and he used three hundred. He had bought them at Rs. 15/- a hundred, and the entire structure

had cost him only Rs. 45/-. It was built quite artistically and the sides were not everywhere entirely enclosed, but the man showed me how by letting this section down here and something else there, the whole place could be made cozy and give an air of reasonable security for the night. It is one obvious way of solving housing problems.

Bathing is a problem in places, for you do not just go into the bathroom and have a bath. It involves a long walk to the tank and so it takes time. Although buffaloes bathe in the tank, and the clothes are washed in it, the water is quite safe to drink if it is clear, but there comes a time with most tanks, the small ones, when you cannot even bathe. It is not safe to eat the fish in it. There are too many fish for the water. Before this happens, nets, which have been carefully kept all the year, are brought out, and are used to net the fish. It is quite an exacting task, involves a lot of splashing, and it keeps you on the move, and you have to move fast. You string the fish, as they are caught, on a vine. On some of the very large tanks you may find a few professional fishermen with their *thep-pangs*. Much of the north-east monsoon has to come yet.

When chillies are planted man goes ahead loosening the soil with a mamoty

at the distance the chillies are to be planted from each other. He is followed by another or else the same man going over the ground twice; who drops two small chilli plants at each place where the earth has been loosened. This done a man digs a hole by merely inserting his finger in the loosened soil, and pops the roots of the two plants in and covers up the hole. If it rains within five days, the plants will be all right, if it does not, they will probably die. The planting of the chillies must be done while the soil is moist in any case. I saw a Moslem farmer make two holes in each loosened spot, and plant the two chilli plants not in the same hole, but about two inches from each other. The actual planting of the chillies is a great strain on the back of the legs, because you are bending over making the holes with your fingers popping the plants in and covering up. You can imagine what it is like when you have some thousands of chillies to plant, several thousands to an acre. It is much worse than digging up potatoes.

After many months an elephant was back two houses away from the house where once I was asleep on the front verandah while the elephant was at the back. This time it had uprooted several plantain trees and eaten a few and I went along to look at the damage. This was

also quite close to the house, and the elephant had almost to skirt another house to get there. The place was about hundred yards from the main Jaffna-Kandy road, too. He took a bit of shifting, if I remember what I was told correctly.

The tanks are far from full, and people are hoping for rain. The paddy fields are in various stages of cultivation. Some still fallow.

This particular safari I intend to conclude by going back the way I came, via Puttalam. From Nochiyagama to Rajangana, the land was almost park, partly because of the paddy fields, and partly because the rest of the land had been cut down so many times, quite thoroughly, for chenas. The paddy fields, were like Babel, some growing paddy, others not touched, some looking as if they never would be touched, not this time anyway.

At Rajangana, by the main road, I saw one man transplanting paddy, while I saw another man sowing his seed broadcast. I should imagine, as few men can do this as can climb a coconut tree, because the seed has to be well spread out and it had to cover the field evenly. Seeing a man broadcasting paddy is one the finest sights in the world, because it is done so gracefully. One man working with a mammoty told me he did not use the plough. Not with buffaloes, he said,

and the tractor is impossible, nor did he use buffaloes, he said, to churn up the field into mud; he used just the mammoty to turn over the soil.

Last evening I saw a boy in his early teens rounding up his cattle at the top end of a large tank bed. He did it on the run while shouting "Ho, Ho" on a high note. He had to run among almost as large a herd of buffaloes to do so. The buffaloes were not his. His cattle were separated easily enough from the buffaloes. I thought there must be at least a hundred head of cattle. He said he did not think there were that many nor did he have any idea how many there were. He could not hazard a guess. There were, he said, too many to count and I felt he was right.

The grass on these wide and open spares in Puttalam is covered with a blue flower, and it all looks most attractive. These grow wild, but it reminded me of the daises and daffodils that you get in spring in the privately owned English parks. They are planted on the lawns and the woods, and after the long winter they look most exciting when they flower. The *sooriya* tree in Puttalam is in flower. It is an extraordinary sight because each tree has two distinctive flowers, one a red and one yellow. The yellows catch the sight

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Safari in Ceylon

Continued from page 24

more in the sun, but beside each yellow flower there is a red, but the flowers cannot be seen from under the tree; they encase the tree. I should say that the yellow flowers on each tree outnumber the red.

The Puttalam lagoon is a fine sight because it is so vast. The far side appears on the horizon, a long even ribbon of trees two inches high, so far away it is.

The *thal* tree that grows in arid zones serves many purposes. The wood of the trunk is made into afters; but it is more often used to make baskets and mats. The fruit can be eaten in four different ways; three cooked and one raw. The tree also provides toddy, the Ceylon beer, one of the three different kinds of toddy you can get. So there is no part of the tree that is not used for something.

At Pallay, the junction for the Cement factory and also for St. Anne's, Talawila, some others and I got into a bus so crowded that I felt sure it would not hold us, but it did. At Negombo I found that the fibre-glass fishing boat had become very popular replacing the *thep-pang* quite a lot. A fisherman told he had born using his outboard mottn for six years. He had just had a little trouble with it but is was still going strong.

A MAJOR STEP FORWARD

by A Special Correspondent

Rangoon,

BURMA is one of the most interesting countries of Southeast Asia, a sharp blend of distant past and forward-looking present. New factories rubbing shoulders with ancient pagodas. Buffalo-drawn wooden ploughs are found alongside modern tractors of the Soviet "Byelarus" or Czechoslovak "Zetor" make.

It is during the last ten years that the most significant changes have taken place in the life of this nation of 28 million. Led by the Revolutionary Council which came to power on March 2, 1962, Burma has shaken off the grip of the foreign monopolies that used to control all branches of her economy. Gone are the signs of foreign companies and banks. In their place have appeared signs in Burmese, on which you may read the words "People's" and "State-Owned".

Holding the commanding heights in industry, trade and finance, the state is able to accumulate the necessary resources and channel them to the development of the economy, culture, education, public health and social security. In the years that the Revolutionary Council has governed the country, oil production and mining output has increased by more than half, 17 new if factories have been built

and 15 more are under construction. There are 6,665 tractors working Burma's fields today, compared with 429 in 1962.

Equally great is the process of change in Burma's public life. The working-man is now held in honour and esteem, and concepts like Exemplary Worker and Hero of Labour have taken firm root. Worker and peasant seminars and the People's Worker and Peasant Councils have become an established part of the Burmese scene.

AN EVENT of the greatest importance was the First Congress of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), held in Rangoon on June 28-July 11. The Congress consummated the process of building the new party, which the Revolutionary Council had been working on steadfastly for a long time past.

When the revolutionary democrats came to power in March 1962, they at first had only the army to lean on. It was during the struggle to consolidate the progressive regime, the struggle against the bourgeois and landlord parties that had ruled before, that the process of forming the new political organization began. As early as July 1962 the Revolutionary Council published a Provisional Statute of the BSPP, in accordance

with which the party was organized in two stages. Initially it was a tightly centralized cadre organization, with the leadership in the hands of the Revolutionary Council and a party Central Organizing Committee (COC) appointed by it. The Revolutionary Council's political declaration, "The Burmese Way to Socialism" rejecting the capitalist path and providing for the reconstruction of society on socialist lines, was proclaimed the programme of the party. Shortly after, a statement of the party's ideological principles was drawn up. It recognizes the objective existence of the class struggle, the historical inevitability of the replacement of one social formation by another, and the decisive role of the masses in history. At the same time, the ideological conceptions of the BSPP show the influence of Buddhist philosophy.

In March 1964 the Revolutionary Council passed a National Solidarity Protection Act dissolving all political parties and public organizations except the BSPP and in effect establishing a one-party system. Over a million people responded to the Council's call to join the BSPP.

THROUGHOUT the transitional period the BSPP leadership devoted much attention to the training of party functionaries and activists. A Central School of Political Science was founded for this purpose in 1963, and thousands

of functionaries who now form the backbone of the central and local party leadership bodies have received ideological training there. The course of instruction included the ideological and organizational principles of the party, the fundamentals of political economy and dialectical and historical materialism, and some of the classical works of Marxism-Leninism.

The BSPP guides the activities of the central and local People's Worker and Peasant Councils, which have an aggregate membership of over 6 million. Founded in place of the dissolved trade union and peasant organizations, these Councils are playing an ever greater role in the life of the new Burma.

AT THE AREA and district conferences which preceded the Congress the delegates not only debated the draft of the new Statute and the directives for the economic development plan but, the Burmese press pointed out, made specific suggestions for further improving the work of the government machinery, in which bureaucratic methods still persist.

As mentioned above, the Congress met from June 28 to July 11. It was attended by 825 voting delegates and 302 with voice but no vote, representing 73,369 full members of the party, 260,857 candidate members, and 763,133 sympathizers.

COC Chairman General Ne Win called in his

speech at the Congress for close unity of the party ranks and discussed the more urgent of the problems facing the country. Foremost among these, he said, was the adoption of a new Constitution. For Burma has for nearly ten years had no elective government bodies; in its struggle against the political enemies of the new regime the Revolutionary Council was obliged to restrict democratic liberties. The abolition of the bourgeois parliamentary system was directed against the exploiter classes, and it helped to strengthen national solidarity. But it also had some adverse effects, for in a measure it affected the interests of the working people too, depriving them of the opportunity to exercise their constitutional rights.

THE WESTERN press seized upon this to accuse the Revolutionary Council of dictatorial government and intimate that the old order of things ought to be brought back. One voice that swelled this malicious bourgeois chorus was that of erstwhile Burmese Premier U Nu, rejected by his own people and now ensconced on foreign soil.

Speaking of the nature of the future Constitution, COC General Secretary San Yu stressed in his report to the Congress that it must be founded on the principles of socialist democracy, for it is a socialist democratic society that Burma is setting out

to build. Following adoption of the Constitution, the Revolutionary Council will hand over power by due process to a representative National Assembly.

It is proposed that the new Constitution shall formally prohibit the exploitation both of man by man and of nation by nation. That will be an earnest of the national unity so necessary to maintaining the integrity of the Union of Burma. It will help importantly to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the Burmese and the national minorities, particularly considering that the enemies of the new Burma have long been trying to break up the Union by spurring on the separatist movements led by Shan, Karen and Kachin feudal chiefs and fanning the smouldering embers of armed conflict, which is badly hurting the economy and is a source of constant political tension.

In the meantime, the supporters of U Nu in Burma who continue their subversive activity against the legal government of Ne Win are suffering one defeat after another. The Burmese government managed to arrest several agents of right wing forces in October this year. At the same time many supporters of U Nu who tried to create illegal anti-government organizations were also arrested in the country. Pursuing the path of open armed struggle, these forces adopt all possible measures to

obtain fire-arms in big quantities. Their task is facilitated by American and West German "benefactors" who dream of overthrowing the present government in Burma.

At the press-conference in Rangoon in connection with the arrest of U Nu agents, samples of American made modern small arms and military ammunition were put on display. U Nu army leaders, Bo Yan Naing, U Thwin, Bo Let Ya and Thin Win, are now reported to be using personal helicopters of American make. With the help of the Americans one of the closest assistants of U Nu—U Lo Yon is said to have acquired in the South Vietnam much fire-arms and ammunition. To ensure their economic interest for the future, the private trade circles of West Germany are reported to have assisted U Nu's supporters to acquire 14 military aircraft of German make. To use these aircraft U Nu's supporters are said to be building an airfield on the territory of Thailand in the close vicinity of Burma-Thai border.

In this connection the position of Thailand looks more than strange. At the time when in South-East Asia one can notice processes leading to the detente of situation in this region, and when steps are being taken to end military warfare in Vietnam, reactionary Burmese emigrants are given refuge on the Thai territory and are

permitted to engage in activity aimed at the unleashing of a new civil war in Burma and creating a new hotbed of international tension.

GRIM STATISTICS

Professor Andre Sicard of France told an international congress of road accident medicine, held in Paris in mid-September, that more than 65,000 people were killed in car accidents last year in just eight European countries, and hundreds of thousands sustained injuries. In France alone road accidents took a toll of 16,000 lives. In the United States, incidentally, the number of people killed on the roads in the same year came to 55,000. Pointing out that the number of such accidents was growing steadily, Professor Sicard said every second person born in these eight countries in 1972 would at one time or another become the victim of a car.

America Votes in Confusion and Fear

By
SCHOFIELD CORYELL

New York,

In an America rent with conflict and frustration—plagued by unemployment, inflation and rampant racism at home while waging a genocidal “push-button” war abroad against a people it cannot destroy—the very anxieties and fears of the vast majority of ordinary people have temporarily prevented them from rejecting the policies of dishonor and catastrophe the Government has been imposing on the nation.

FOR ONCE, it would be inaccurate to say that “the American people had no choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the rival political twins known as the Democratic and Republican Parties”. The choice existed and was presented with rare clarity in the form of Senator McGovern’s campaign platform. He launched a courageous attack on the war in Indochina, calling for a pull-out of American armed forces; the dumping of the puppet regime of Thieu, the acceptance of the right of the Vietnamese people to shape their own political future. This he conscientiously combined with a sharp attack on the injustices of a tax system geared to the interests of the corporat-

ions; and with a projected alternative budget that would give priority to urgent human needs. What more could anyone expect?

Yet the choice was not perceived as such by the voting millions. Many a newspaper columnist caught the spirit of the thing: “The unpopular Nixon landslide” was the way one *Times* writer put it. “I have no particular liking for Nixon,” said one typical voter, an industrial worker of Cleveland, Ohio, “but I don’t trust McGovern.”

Basically, however, the reason for this paradox should have been obvious to anyone: For the forces of change and reform—the young, the poor, the black, the women—that had momentarily prevailed at the Democratic Party’s National Convention, were roughly brushed aside and neutralized by the united bureaucracies of both major Parties and by the overwhelming forces of the big money that, seeing the McGovern candidacy as a threat and a challenge, united as never before behind the incumbent.

“Top Businessmen Report Strong Support of Nixon” was the headline of a story describing the outcome of

a *New York Times* survey of 1,281 of American industry’s most important executives, including the presidents of nearly all the corporations listed on the New York Stock Exchange. According to the poll, no less than 91.4 per cent of those questioned expressed strong preference for Nixon, and only 6.7 per cent opted for McGovern. The Nixon campaign was more than amply financed—its handsomest contributors are the most powerful industrialists and financiers in the country—while McGovern’s campaign depended on a large number of small offerings.

THE FIGHT to discredit and destroy McGovern shifted into high gear almost immediately after he won the Democratic nomination. The first big attack came from influential forces inside the Democratic Party itself in the form of the drive to dump the first Vice-Presidential candidate, Eagleton, accused of concealing a record of psychiatric treatment.

McGovern acquiesced, rejected his first choice after momentarily defending him, and chose a more astute politician—Sargent Shriver—as his running mate. But from that point on, essential forces of the Democratic Party kept up a running campaign to undermine the liberal Senator.

An active Democratic Party worker confided to me in a moment of exasperation in the midst of the campaign: “McGovern’s worst enemies are within

the Democratic Party—even those elements who are nominally committed to him. Everywhere they spread rumours against him, denigrate him in every way conceivable. For example, in a district of Ohio strongly dependent on war orders for its precariously full employment, a team of Democratic Party organizers was going from town to town spreading the line that McGovern's proposed cut-back in war spending (an essential aspect of his programme) would deprive the workers there of their livelihood. And throughout the Party the word was spread that the deliberate, soft-spoken McGovern was unreliable, indecisive, unstable—a wild eyed-visionary without an ounce of commonsense. It was only too obvious that these reactionaries would infinitely rather see the Party lose than McGovern win."

Under these circumstances, the Republican Party had an easy time of it, stressing McGovern's dangerous "radicalism", and his so-called tendency to change his mind from day to day on vital matters. It appealed outrageously both to the widespread yearning for peace and to the racist prejudices of the overwhelming majority of the white population.

THE PEACE question—which should have been McGovern's strongest point—was largely destroyed as an issue by the spate of last-minute "peace rumours" that flourished as a result of Kissinger's sensa-

tional trips to Paris for consultation with the Vietnamese. Kissinger's press conferences, as well as his repeated White House statements and hints, kept alive the hopes for a peaceful settlement of the long and unpopular conflict, but at the same time appeased the forces that want a military "victory" over the "enemy" or fear the economic consequences of peace.

Meanwhile—behind the barrage of propaganda—the American air war continued and was even intensified, raining on the Vietnamese more death and destruction than ever before. Then the White House came up with a brilliant gimmick—the peace terms were being resisted by Thieu! Not by Nixon! And to convince those who might question his peaceful intentions, Nixon tence to the withdrawal pointed with untiring insistence of American ground troops from South Vietnam and to his highly publicized trips to Peking and Moscow!

The Republican Party Platform proudly states: "Before this Administration a Presidential visit to Peking would have been unthinkable. Yet our President has gone there to open a candid airing of differences so that they will not one day lead to war. All over the world tensions have eased as, after a generation of hostility, the strongest of nations and the most populous of nations have started discoursing again." The reference to the improvement in

US-Soviet relations was equally lyrical.

WHILE EFFECTIVELY deflating the war issue—and simultaneously expanding the war—Nixon's forces exploited to the hilt the most explosive issue in the country today—racism—and the relations between the ethnic groups that compose the American population.

The Nixonites appealed shamelessly, and with thinly disguised code words, to the fears and anxieties of the White majority which has not yet reconciled itself to the idea of an open society, and still prefers to express its discontents against those at the bottom of the ladder rather than those at the top—the impoverished living in "we fare", the victims of racial and national discrimination.

This was, in fact, the key to the Nixon victory. For the recent upsurge of the Blacks—forcing in many instances the local power structures to make a few concessions to the irredemands—has brought to the surface and intensified the deep seated racial prejudices of the Whites. Nixon and his campaigners knew how to use these prejudices to their own advantage.

Central to this aspect of the Nixon campaign was the President's demagogic opposition to "forced busing"—the taking of Black children in buses from their slum areas every morning to somewhat better-equipped schools in predominantly White neigh-

bourhoods. This policy—adopted by many local administrations in response to the anti-racist pressure of the Blacks—has been extremely unpopular with vast sections of the Whites, and this racist resentment helped swell the Nixon vote, not only in the South but in the Northern cities as well.

TYPICAL of this situation was the conflict that broke out on the eve of the election in a White lower-middle-class district of Brooklyn. The local school authorities had decided to “bus-in” some 32 Black children each morning from the overcrowded slum area of Brownsville to Wilson High.

Under the aegis of the Parents' Association, the Whites of the community, mainly Italian and Jewish, rose in anger and fear against this attempt, as they saw it, to impose an alien element on them and to “tip the racial balance” of the school. The parents declared a boycott against the school, urged the children to stay home, mobilized racist mobs before the school each morning to greet with jeers and insults the score of Black children who were being brought in by bus.

It was a strange spectacle indeed—the threatening mob behind the police lines, the blue helmeted police roaming everywhere, the children emerging from the buses under heavy armed escort, the helicopters circling overhead! The boycott was more than 90 per cent effective—for over a week, very few White children

attended classes although most of the teachers continued to report for duty, resentful of the parent's pressure on them to stay home. Courageously, the Black children, a small minority in the school and the neighbourhood, continued to defy the mobs by going to school. Meanwhile, day after day, groups of children—hostile bands of Whites and Blacks—milled around the area, occasionally making contact and furiously fighting each other. The boycott was finally called off, but the solution is not yet in sight.

By their attacks on “busing” and their promise to put an end to these feeble attempts at desegregation, Nixon and Agnew won increased popularity with the normally Democratic, Jewish and Catholic, White working class constituencies of the Northern cities. This explains Nixon's unusual victory in New York City itself.

BUT EQUALLY significant was the Nixon sweep of the White-supremacist South. The absence of the racist demagogue Wallace (taken out of the race by an assailant's bullet) helped channelize the entire fear-ridden White vote of bias and hatred into Nixon's lap. Thus the Democratic Party (mildly “liberal” in the North, racist and neo-fascist in the South) lost the region south of the Mason and Dixon line to the Nixonian Republican Party and its highly successful “Southern Strategy”, which means an appeal to racist prejudice, not only

in the South but throughout the nation.

The election results—Nixon's victory over the American people, over decency and justice—reveal the fact that the White majority in the United States, while disturbed and insecure, is not yet ready to come to grips seriously with the very genuine issues raised by the McGovern candidacy: the power of the military industrial complex, the massive destruction of Vietnamese people by American bombs, the inequities of the tax system, the crime of inequality and racism.

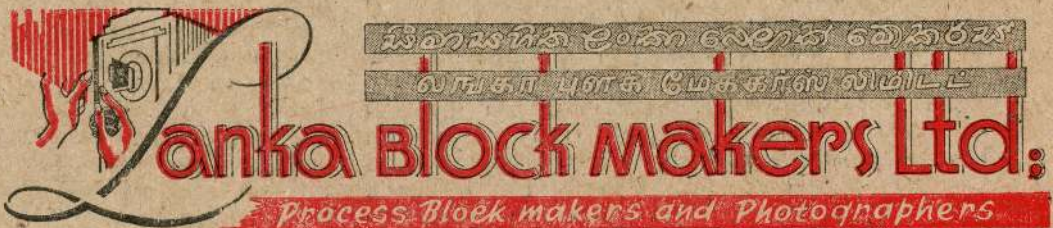
The “Young, the Poor and the Blacks”—while they are a significant force—do not represent the absolute majority of America; and the powerful rulers of this country, the business interests that control the jobs and the productive machine, are quite united among themselves and able to befuddle and mystify the bulk of the people.

Yet Nixon's victory may be but the prelude to a period not of social peace but of intensified conflict and struggle. For higher taxes and rising prices, racist repression and unemployment will continue to drive increasing numbers to anger and desperation and if the repeatedly promised peace in Indochina does not soon materialize the youth and others as well have no option but to resume and step up their fight to make the “American dream” come true.

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