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The Headman System in the Balance

"Last Vestige of National System of Government"

ABOLITION of the Headman System and the transfer of the functions of Headmen to local government institutions, a proposal by the Member for Dehiowita, was the subject of considerable discussion in the House of Representatives.

The system referred to is the Kachcheri System of administration, the whole gamut from the Government Agents to Vel Vidanes. Allegations were made that most of the Headmen—there were about 4,000 in the Island—were prone to bribery and corruption. The charge was also made "that the Headmen today are running about in cars when some time back they did all their travelling in bullock carts."

Various sins of omission and commission were saddled on the village headmen and the entire system was said to be outmoded and antiquated. There were speeches made on either side, both in support of and opposing the retention of the headman system, but the debate began on the footing that the system should be abolished. The debate on the motion stands adjourned.

EARLY HISTORY

In the year 1920 as a result of certain representations made a Commission was appointed to go into the question of reform of the headman system, and a few changes were ushered in on the recommendations of that Commission but the system itself continued to operate. In the year 1931 when for the first time the masses of this country came into the political arena and the people exercised the franchise, another Commission was appointed during the first State Council. The report was issued and a debate ensued in 1937 and the subject was taken up very seriously by the State Council. The debate continued for several days. The debate was not on the question whether the headman system should be abolished. The proposition was that a reform of the headman system was urgently needed and the House was called upon to accept the recommendation of the Commission which was not for abolition of the system.

It is of interest to quote the remarks of the then Minister of Home Affairs on the question of provincial administration during that debate:

"I was very much impressed with the speech of the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Lands when he said, 'Don't blame the headmen. The headmen system has been used for many years by the various Governments—the Dutch Government, the Portuguese Government and the British Government—for their own Imperial purposes, and to those governments the headmen system proved to be very effective and very useful machinery.' The Hon. Minister argued that in the same way, under good Ministers the headmen system may be converted into an instrument of usefulness to this country.

SUITED TO ORIENTAL COUNTRIES

Referring to the headmen system, Mr. M. M. Wedderburn who gave evidence before the Headmen Commission submitted the following dissent:

"It is based on that principle of personal Government which has hitherto proved most successful in Oriental countries. It depends on the close and friendly relations between the headman and the villagers, to whom the abstract idea of 'Government' means little or nothing. They have always been accustomed by tradition and temperament to seek and obey the orders of personal representatives of a personal sovereign, and have in return expected and received the personal care and protection of accessible and paternal rulers."

OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS

Gate Mudaliyar Goonetilleke, retired Atapattu Mudaliyar of Galle, in his evidence before the Headmen Commission expressed his opinion thus:—

"In my opinion the headmen system has served its time and should therefore be discontinued. Its purpose was to serve as a channel of communication between the illiterate and inarticulate masses and the Government. The masses are now sufficiently intelligent to make their voices heard either by direct representation or through unofficial channels more intelligent and far more sympathetic than the chief headmen of today. It is not the head-

men who have contributed to this improvement in the condition of the masses; it is the inevitable result of the march of time. The spread of education, the civilizing influence of social and commercial intercourse, contact with world events through the medium of the vernacular Press, the march of democracy, and not the least, keener religious activity and propaganda, have all tended to make the masses realise their rights and privileges of British citizenship and to assert them."

LAST VESTIGE OF NATIONAL SYSTEM

During the course of the present debate the Member for Vaddukoddai who opposed the motion for the abolition of the Headmen system said:

I feel that the last vestige of our national system of Government is

going to be removed if this motion succeeds. There was a time when, in our country, the headman system worked very well. In any country, for the purpose of administration there ought to be decentralization and co-ordination of the various activities of a Government. In the provinces the Government Agents co-ordinate the various activities; in the districts the D.R.Os co-ordinate the various activities—formerly the D.R.O. was called a Maniagar or a Ratamahatmaya. But in the villages that co-ordination was done by the headmen. This sort of co-ordination ought to exist, and when we have that co-ordination, it will be certainly better for the country. There should be a headman in each of the villages, one who will really be the leader of the villagers. Those

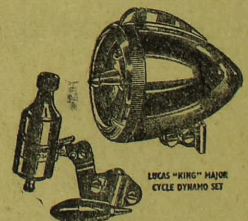
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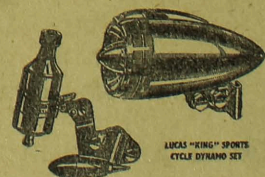


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Prorogation of Parliament

AFTER the meeting of Parliament on the 28th instant there will be no sittings till July 7 on which date the next session of Parliament will begin after it has been prorogued.

The ceremonial opening of the Second Parliament which normally is held in June, will this year, be postponed for July in view of the Coronation of the Queen in June.

At the new sessions, shortly after the debate on the Governor-General's address, the Budget for the financial year 1953-1954 will be introduced, which will include provision for the second Six-Year Plan of the Government.

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Should Pastimes During Austerity be Banned?

By T. M. G. Samat

IN times of austerity one's views of things changes. Expenditure has to be reduced to a minimum and new works that can be postponed must be postponed and monies voted therefore frozen. The future seems to lose the importance it holds in normal times. Grappling with difficulties the nation has to carry on.

In these circumstances is it right for people to enjoy themselves or indulge in pleasures of any kind without concentrating on the job in hand?

Many will say it is wrong. They would advocate that local authorities should not permit the holding of circuses or the opening of more cinema houses than necessary for the country. Motor race meets and all sorts of "shows" would be frowned on by them and no doubt even a proposal to suspend national celebrations until better times might receive enthusiastic support from them.

Nevertheless anything that is said of indulging in pleasures during times of austerity must be considered whether such pleasures are just wasteful or whether such pleasures would prepare us mentally and physically for the strenuous task of "digging our own vineyards more intensively."

It must be said that no triumph, moral or material was ever won by people who set down and moped nor was it ever won by people who with the reduction of the price of arrack ran out the country's stocks of arrack. The crux of the matter is this—we could deny ourselves many luxuries and perhaps even some necessities but can we deny the prime need for fitness?

Austerity, however terrible, is only one incident in the history of peoples, a stumble one might say, in the march of time. Through war and peace the life of a people must go on and amusement of the people

is one part of this life. It is no service to future generations to let the pastimes of a people die out.

It must be remembered that food problems and financial stringency brought crises before but the enjoyments of the people survived and later expanded and flourished. It would seem a pity that so many sports meets have to be cancelled, so many soccer competitions postponed and rugger tournaments not held owing to austerity. National games during Sinhalese New Year are a veritable elixir of life in this Island and if these games have to be suspended owing to austerity there will soon be few precious things in this Island.

What a stimulant of the body and relaxation of the nerves the enjoyment of a cricket match or a visit to the cinema or a holiday with a change of scene can be? Undoubtedly such relaxation can contribute towards a new mental approach to many a problem and new thinking can mean everything towards the solution of a problem. There has to be a limit to austerity or it could get the human equation all wrong leading to lesser efficiency and no progress.

What should be the objectives of a nation during austerity? The most important thing is to show that the people's way of life can sustain and renew itself by development, by producing a superior quality of product by managing affairs with efficiency and economy and transacting everything with diligence and probity. In other words there should be an upsurge in our national activity.

The State after all is one of us and unless we are able to nurture it by efficiency, enterprise and effort it will certainly cease to be able to nurture us. So it is particularly important to recognise that to assure oneself of fitness in every respect to be able to carry out one's daily task is an individual responsibility of the citizen.

The Headman System

(Continued from page 1)

leaders, in the ancient days, were able to do very efficient work because there was in them an inherent nobility. They were men of means and they were always looked up to by the people of the area for guidance. If we could have such people, certainly, then our headmen system will prove a very efficient system, and, as in those ancient days, these headmen could co-ordinate their activities with those of the Gansabhawas or Panchayats. Similarly, now also, if they co-ordinate their activities, there will be real freedom and independence in our country.

DUTIES OF HEADMEN LISTED

It is pertinent to note that during the debate in 1937 on the recom-

mendations of the Headman Commission it was pointed out that there were 100 departments and 200 sub-departments. Today the number must be double that. The duties of headmen are being carried out by various departments. Those duties are listed in the Headmen Commission Report, as follows: Work connected with Crime, Public Health, Education, Land Settlement, Survey, Excise, Agricultural, Irrigation, Rubber Control and Tea Control Departments, Elections, Village Committee Administration, Gun Licences, Motor Vehicle licensing, Cart licensing, Estate duty, Cattle, Births and deaths, Vaccination, Crown lands protection, Producing persons of unsound mind before the District Judge, Opium licensing, Reporting cases of rables, and so on.

Elizabeth The Second, Queen of Ceylon

IN moving the Royal Titles Bill (second reading) in the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister, said that it is proposed to adopt the title as far as Ceylon is concerned "Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Ceylon and of Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth". The Bill before the House sought the assent of Parliament for the adoption of this title.

The Prime Minister explained that owing to a variety of proclamations that were used on the accession to the Throne of Queen Elizabeth II, discussions were held during the last Prime Ministers' Conference to see whether any uniformity as regards the title could be observed.

Unfortunately it was not possible for all the Commonwealth countries to adopt one single title and therefore certain principles in the adoption of a title were accepted.

UNIFORMITY IMPRACTICABLE

Firstly it was decided, said the Prime Minister, that it was impracticable to have a uniform title for use in the Commonwealth countries; secondly, if different forms are to be used in the different parts of the Commonwealth the common element in all should be as large as possible; thirdly the title used in all Commonwealth countries would include the phrase "Head of the Commonwealth" and a reference to Her Majesty's other realms and territories; fourthly the use of the phrase "by the Grace of God and Defender of the Faith" would be a matter for decision by each individual Government. The present title reads as follows, "Elizabeth the Second by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the seas, Queen Defender of the Faith".

OPPOSITION ATTITUDE

The Leader of the Opposition recalled what he termed as "One of the most lurid descriptions of the proceedings of the Commonwealth Conference in London headlined in our papers of the waving the Kandyan convention."

The Prime Minister: Before the Hon. member proceeds, I wish to say that there was no such incident at all.

Mr. Bandaranaike: I am glad to hear it; But these are things that appeared in our papers from their correspondents in England.

The Prime Minister: I did not even see it.

Mr. Bandaranaike stressed that the entire position of what was formerly the British Empire and the British Dominions had radically altered today in the form that it has taken in the Commonwealth of Nations. It was correct that formerly the Crown, that is the British King or Queen was really the link that bound the Dominions of that period to England. It was the only legal link. It was a common allegiance to a common Sovereign. He was in favour of accepting the term "Head of the Commonwealth", without the term "Queen of England" as Queen of Ceylon.

VAVUNIYA MEMBER SUPPORTS BILL

Mr. Suntheralingam: If I understand my good friend, the Leader of the Opposition correctly, he asks why should Elizabeth the Second, Queen of England, be Queen of Ceylon? In fact that expression is only an allusion to our past. We have been under British rule for a number of years, so the continuation of the Queen of England as

Queen of Ceylon is no new thing. In the whole Bill there is no reference to the Queen of England. It is not a question of the Queen of England being still the Queen of Ceylon. But the fact remains that today the Independence Act of Ceylon provides for a Queen of Ceylon. In fact the very enacting Clause to the Bill says "Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty"; before that it was "the King's Most Excellent Majesty". It was not an Order-in-Council. It was abrogated by the Independence Act and the Queen has no power today to legislate for Ceylon by Order-in-Council. I do not want it to be said that the Queen, as Head of the State of Ceylon, has the power to enact any legislative enactment. We have accepted that position right through. To this day we maintain that it must be the "Queen's Most Excellent Majesty" but the question that should be considered is this. When we come here we take the oath of allegiance before we transact any business. After we take the oath of allegiance we enact everything in the name of the King or the Queen. Today both in law and in practice the Head of Ceylon is Queen Elizabeth II. The oath that it is proposed that the Queen should subscribe to at the Coronation, if I remember rightly contains the words "Queen as the Head of the Realm..... I shall perform my duties according to the laws and customs of each country". The Head of Ceylon is that person, Queen Elizabeth II not the Queen of England. The point is this. The very fact that this title is here must not be considered by itself. It must be considered in terms of the oath and the various laws and customs of Ceylon and I do earnestly hope that in a matter of such delicacy as this the House will not proceed to a division.

P. M. CLARIFIES POSITION

The Prime Minister clarified the position. He said: "The great difference here is that the "Queen of Ceylon" was inserted and not "Queen of the United Kingdom and of Her other Realms and Territories". I say that the expression connotes the true significance of our relationship with Queen Elizabeth II. She is not Queen because she is Queen of the United Kingdom but because she is Queen of Ceylon under our own constitution and we have the power to alter that constitution if we like. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition must know unless he does not understand the constitution which was passed when he was a member of the Cabinet, that the Queen will act as Queen of Ceylon only on the advice of the Prime Minister of Ceylon. This is not a matter in which we need get so worked up as if some difference in the status of this country is being brought about by giving consent to the Bill. The status of the country will be the same. It is only the title that will be altered. I hope all Hon. members will support the Bill.

The House divided: Ayes 43: Noes 18.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

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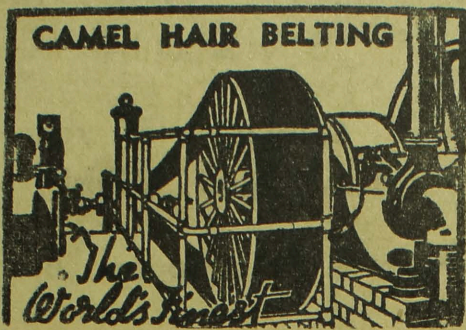
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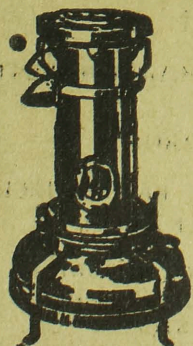
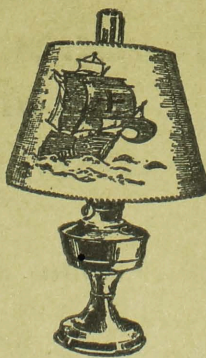
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HITTING THE HEADLINES

By Stanley Morrison

RECENTLY, in the course of one of his dynamic utterances, Sir John animadverted against judges and such common mortals (as opposed, I suppose, to Ministers of State) for having attempted to rival each other in what he called hitting the headlines. But Sir John quite obviously was unaware that in uttering this obiter dictum he was himself hitting the headlines with a vengeance. In fact, he little knew that he was providing the newspapers with wonderful copy.

What were Sir John's actual words on this occasion? No; I will not quote them for fear that Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara (who often disbelieve newspaper reports of what they themselves say on public platforms) would charge the newspapers with having misreported Sir John. Anyway, whether I quote Sir John's actual words or not, the newspapers can always rest assured that Sir John will never deny what they attribute to him. He has never been known to accuse the newspapers of misreporting him. In fact, if they actually put into his mouth words which he never uttered (a habit of some imaginative reporters) he would be the first to accept ownership of those words in the belief that a newspaper reporter has a better idea of what the public expects Sir John to say than he does himself.

In the course of a long public career Sir John has strewn his path with enemies because he has never been afraid to say anything which he personally felt was right even if he wounded some of his own circle of friends in saying so. However, I do not go so far as Oscar Wilde as to say that Sir John has no enemies but that his friends do not like him. His friends understand that beneath his rough exterior beats a kind heart and that he has never been known to let a friend down. And as for his enemies, he has so many that he had stopped counting them long ago. In fact, many of his enemies have not met him personally or got to know him in any way. Hence, they have not been able to penetrate his rough mask. Those who have succeeded in doing so have become his staunch friends. The truth is that Sir John never keeps a grudge. His enemies are all on the surface, and he is only too willing to shake hands and make friends with anyone who has done him an injury if the other fellow is sincere in wishing to have his friendship. The word revenge is not in his vocabulary.

Now to return to the headlines which Sir John hit with such violence—an accident which he does not wish to see happening to others—Sir John during the same week hit the headlines twice. Once, when he objected to judges and others hitting the headlines in a spirit of rivalry. On the second occasion, when he castigated a fellow Minister and some educationalists, who had attacked the Christian missionaries. On this latter occasion he said something that warmed the hearts of Christians of every denomination when he said that, if he had the power, he would bring back to Ceylon all the missionaries who had left this country. He praised the wonderful work of humanita-

rianism performed by missionary bodies. There is no doubt that as a result of that one illuminating statement of his he won the votes of the six lakhs of Christians in Ceylon and he could now safely appear in a predominantly Christian constituency (staunch Buddhist though he is) and win hands down against any opponent.

One can only hope that Sir John will not take his own advice, but would go on hitting the headlines as long as he has the strength to stand on a platform, confronted in the front seats by inspiring beves of select young women and supported in the rest of audience by he-men who like to hear a man tell them some unpalatable truths. One cannot help feeling that if Ceylon's newly-won independence is to be of any value to the people at large, the country badly needs hard-hitting leaders who indulge in straight thinking and who will not hesitate to expose the crooked thoughts of politicians and others who try to mislead the people with popular slogans, cheap catch-phrases and by uttering inflammatory words which rouse sectional jealousies and envies.

Sir John can do a great service to a nation not yet completely integrated by putting these purveyors of poison in their proper places and by silencing them whenever they spue out their frothy phrases and pernicious bunkum in public. In doing so, he will go on making enemies and his enemies will try to retort by hitting him below the belt, since they are not accustomed to hit out straight and fearlessly like himself. But he has never worried about criticism. The man who said he was becoming more and more like Collette's cartoons of himself cannot be hurt. Besides, the man who can so enjoy Collette's caricatures of himself must be a highly civilised being since, it is said, the mark of a civilised man is his ability to laugh at himself. The difference between Sir John's reaction to the lady reporter's question: "How do you like Collette's cartoons about you?" and the reaction of some others who were asked that question represents the difference between an urbane, affable, hearty, honest-to-goodness human being and the kind of narrow minded fellow, puffed up with a conceit of himself, who resents criticism of any kind and would like to bask forever in the sunshine of his sycophants' flattery.

And now, Sir John! let's have some more straight lefts and right hooks from you. When as a staunch Buddhist, you spoke up so manfully on behalf of Christian missionaries, you did a great service to the whole country and to the Buddhist community particularly. I say 'the Buddhist community particularly' because I know, from personal experience, that the genuine Buddhists (who try to live according to the precepts of the sublime teachings of the Great Master) do not betray their Teacher by indulging in the kind of malicious talk and actions against which all his noble teachings are directed. If other genuine Buddhist leaders would follow your fine example, they too would be helping to build up a truly united nation instead of trying to break up a small community of different races and creeds into fragments—and leaving behind them a legacy of hatred, envy and all uncharitableness. TODAY MORE THAN EVER COURAGE IS NEEDED FROM OUR PUBLIC LEADERS IF A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY IS NOT TO BE SCARRED BY THE RAVAGES OF THE STRIFE OF RACES AND CREEDS.

Postscript: May I utter the hope that those who think differently from Sir John on many matters would buy, read, and treasure that wonderful little masterpiece entitled "Straight and Crooked Thinking" by Robert H. Thouless?

Intensification of Food Production

FOR purposes of food production the total provision in the current financial year is Rs. 3,500,000. Out of this an amount of Rs. 714,813 being 15% deduction imposed by Parliament on the total vote was deducted and actually an amount of Rs. 2,785,187 was only available for expenditure this year. It is not possible to meet the overall cut of 15 per cent. on the total vote from other available funds. The Department of Food Production having been created only in July, 1952, it was too early then to estimate the actual requirements in the current financial year. The full impact of the various food production schemes could not be assessed at that time. The additional sum required now is estimated at Rs. 1,568,000 according to a revised estimate of the required expenditure. A supplementary estimate made up as follows was submitted to Parliament for approval.

1. Minor Irrigation works	Rs. 600,000
2. Salvinia	168,000
3. Subsidy for manure	300,000
4. Subsidy for wells	200,000
5. Pumps	300,000
	1,568,000

MINOR IRRIGATION WORKS

The total estimated expenditure for the current financial year on minor irrigation works alone amount to about Rs. 4,000,000 and only an allocation of Rs. 1,900,000 has so far been made. Quite a substantial portion of this sum is to be spent on minor irrigation works, a number of which has been carried over from last year due to lack of technical staff. From last year onwards, the training of a few Irrigation officers

has been going on for supervisory duties. Thus more works have been taken over this year than it had been possible in the past. By the intensification of food production, more and more cultivators have been pressing for minor irrigation works to benefit their fields.

WELLS AND PUMPS

For greater intensification of high-land cultivation of onions and chillies, a scheme of subsidy for wells have been introduced in September, 1952. Over a thousand wells are expected to be sunk in the dry zones in the North under this scheme. In other parts of the island also many hundreds of wells are being sunk under this scheme. An allocation is needed for this purpose. The subsidy for wells will be given only in respect of wells intended for the development of new lands.

For intensification of the transplanting campaign the cultivators should have sufficient water during that period. To get over this difficulty a scheme has been drawn up for providing as many pumps as possible for use of cultivators during this period, particularly in the Wet Zone. In the Dry Zone generally when the tank water runs below sluice level, pumps are required for pumping water for saving the Yala crop, as generally in the Dry Zone the Yala crop dies due to lack of water.

It is expected that over a hundred pumps costing between Rs. 300,000 and Rs. 400,000 will be needed to push through this scheme. All pumps provided under this vote will remain the property of the Government.

Far more manure is being used now than in the previous years. During the last six months of the existence of the Department of Food Production manure has been issued for an acreage of 120,000 as compared to about 10,000 acres during the corresponding period the previous year. The manure is subsidised and the subsidy has to be borne from the allocation mentioned above under the revised estimated expenditure on food production.

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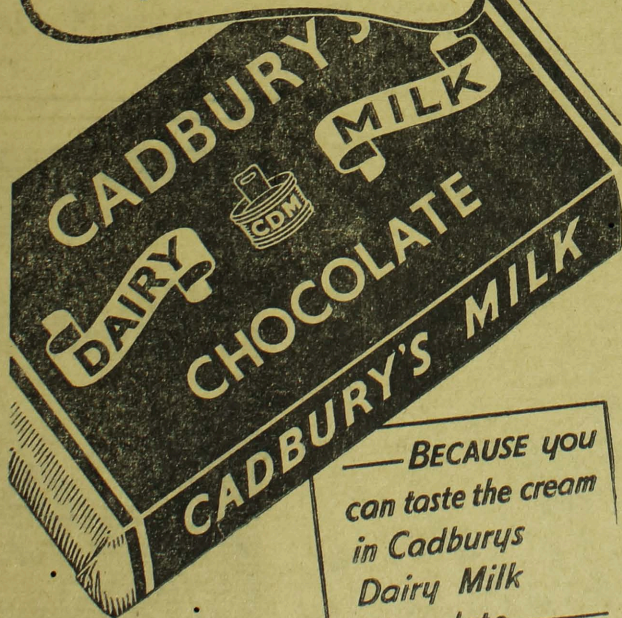
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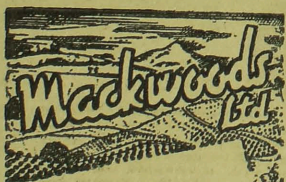
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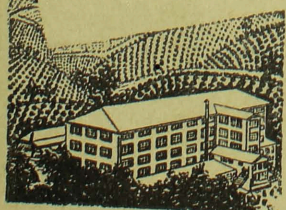


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PLANNING FOR BEAUTY

THE Festival of Arts which the Ceylon Arts Council proposes to organize deserves the unstinted support of everyone. It is a significant fact that in a country in which the people never tire of pointing out the works of art of their ancestors had created, there is hardly any evidence of continuing tradition of public appreciation of the Arts. A few standout modern efforts to create beautiful parks, gardens and buildings are hardly sufficient to meet the charge that could be made to the modern Ceylonese who is indifferent to beautiful things.

What we have to show of our work in the spheres of Art and Architecture in the modern era were for the most part executed and designed by the Colonial Office. It is worth reflecting on this phenomenon. Peradeniya and Hakgala Gardens and the little park at Gampaha and the Victoria Park in Colombo are the only worthwhile parks and gardens in the Island all of them created in British times. During self-rule that we have had in varying degrees from 1931 onwards, there has been no major undertaking of this nature in any part of Ceylon. Here and there a few far-seeing Chairmen of Urban Councils had made an effort to include parks and gardens in their plans of development and with the limited resources available to local authorities. These are far too small for the rapidly developing towns outside Colombo. Millions have been spent on the other hand, on roads and buildings of all kinds and if anyone had attempted

to build an ornamental fountain, the Press and the public would assuredly have raised a howl over the expenditure. In this dismal picture of modern Ceylon's indifference to our artistic tradition, the only redeeming features have been the efforts made by the Minister of Transport and Works, Sir John Kotelawala, who has given some consideration to the architectural aspect of modern Government buildings and institutions. In the creation of the new University at Peradeniya, for example, the architectural features are above reproach and will be on the credit side of our Art Ledger.

Sir John's effort at building the beautiful Independence Memorial Audience Hall is another landmark which will survive this age. In the design also of the bigger junior schools and Central Schools in many parts of the Island, the architects working under his direction have made earnest and successful efforts to provide buildings which are not only useful and functional but are also beautiful.

It is, therefore, timely that a general co-ordinated effort should be made to evolve a plan for beauty. This could only be done by getting together those who are skilled or are devotees of the different branches of artistic efforts. This purpose has been achieved by the creation of the Arts Council with Sir Richard Aluvihare as its President. Sir Richard in a recent letter to the Press has sketched in outline the general nature of the work that has been accomplished and that is going to be done. It is only one of its many means to organize the Arts Festival. As Sir Richard says the Arts Festival is not an end by itself, but is merely a part of the general effort to create a deep and wide interest in aesthetic matters. Having created this interest it is hoped the Arts Council would co-ordinate the artistic efforts so that there will be informed enthusiastic, and energetic cultural revival in Ceylon.

Three Ceylon Portraits in U. S. Exhibit

NEW YORK — (USIS. — Young people from Ceylon, Iran, India, Turkey and Pakistan are represented in a 30-country children's self-portrait exhibit currently on display here at Columbia University.

The exhibit entitled "Myself" features three self-portraits from Ceylon; four from India; two from Turkey; one from Pakistan and one from Iran.

On view in the main hall of Columbia University's Teachers' College, the exhibition has proved so popular that it has been extended until March 27.

Appraising the display, Professor Edwin Ziegfeld, head of Columbia University's Fine and Industrial Arts Department, said:

"A few show artistic promise, but that is not what makes this exhibit significant. The significance lies in the fact that the children

have taken a look at themselves, appraised their basic characteristics, and put the result in picture form. In only a few cases have they attempted to glorify or improve themselves. For the most part, they have played down or ignored attractive features which are readily apparent in their photographs. To my mind this is an unusual means of developing international understanding."

The exhibition of 211 portraits by young people of from four to 18 years of age includes pastels, water colors, tempera, charcoal and special materials. The self-portraits were selected from 4,000 pictures collected over an 18-month period.

There is much interest in the display on the part of child psychologists, Ziegfeld said, but most of the viewers are just ordinary people interested in seeing what children can do.

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SOVIET JUSTICE IS NOT DEMOCRATIC JUSTICE

Says Quintus Delilkhan

THE sensational release of the Soviet doctors who were held on various charges is irrefragable proof that Soviet justice is not democratic justice. It is purely arbitrary. It is not meant to dispense justice such as the law of democratic countries provides to the person under a charge of crime. Soviet justice is only an instrument of political power.

An extraordinary combination of circumstances has served to expose the complete hollowness and unreality of Soviet justice. The people of any democratic country would not be called upon to face a situation of this grotesque kind. The reason is that justice is meant to protect the individual. A charge against a citizen of a democratic state would have to be according to the terms of the law which assures equality of treatment for all men. Any attempt even to destroy men must be subjected to the strict procedure laid down. There can be no interference with the judiciary and the normal course of justice.

All these are dearly-won privileges for the members of a democratic state. They have not however themselves to fight for these advantages. They have been fought for and obtained for themselves and their posterity by those who have striven for centuries to build up democratic states on the fundamental basis of liberty.

When the followers of the revolutionary point of view tell you that they would wish to be permitted to introduce their ideal form of government, let it not be forgotten that Soviet justice is the kind of justice which they offer Ceylon as against the prevailing system of justice. Are we prepared to consider such a change as being to our advantage? Are we bettering the condition here by inviting such a system to prevail in this country?

And yet this alone is the kind of justice which Marxism can promise. It can promise no other. It is not based upon any of the concepts of liberty and justice to which we have been accustomed. Would we desire this innovation, just because there are some restless revolutionaries who are desirous of a change?

It is effrontery on the part of the revolutionaries in this country, who are seeking to overturn our democratic order, to tell us that they are going to make this country happier and more prosperous by their system. If they are deluded and obsessed, there is no reason why we should be helpers in the revolutionary desire to give us the kind of government in which there is no chance of our ever again knowing the blessings of the system of justice under which we live today.

When those who criticise the parliamentary system of government under which we live are hottest in their destructive zeal, let us remember that they are people who are doing their best to deprive us of the benefits of justice which we now enjoy. This is the whole purpose of their wanting to get to power and be able to exercise an arbitrary authority over the people who will have no rights of the kind they now enjoy, once democracy has been overturned.

Communism cannot thrive except by violence. The first step on coming to power would be for the Communists to establish a police state. Then justice automatically goes overboard.

The Communist will not admit this, and he says that all this is unkind propaganda about communism.

But the press now carries a story which has stunned even the supporters of communism.

Injustices under the law do occur in democratic states. They are mistakes which happen in spite of the elaborate precautions which have been taken to prevent such occurrences.

But in Communist countries, and under the Communist order, crimes against individual liberty are committed because the individual is completely subjected to the necessities of the state which, in the last analysis, come to mean only the will of one dictator or of a small group of men in temporary alliance with him.

No wonder that in the instance under notice the Communists themselves say that their system of justice has been exposed to the world as farcical, though it must always be cruel to the victims who suffer under such a travesty of communism. However carefully guarded, and however speciously defended, that which is inherently evil in a system reveals itself sooner or later in its true nature. Communist justice is not even good for its own people, but it is something odious to the people of the democracies. We certainly do not want it in Ceylon.

BEHIND CLASS STRUGGLE—THE COLOUR AND POSTS

(Continued from last issue)

TROTSKYITE ambition is not restricted evidently for posts in University Societies. They are even anxious to call themselves sportsmen (which explains perhaps the Trotsky-Table Tennis alliance). According to a circular by the Vice-Chancellor on the award of Hall colours—only those who have actually participated in games will get colours! This is in order to prevent, according to the Vice-Chancellor, a recurrence of what happened in Colombo when during the war some got swimming colours, when the swimming pool was closed, because they were Trotskyites. Thus behind the so-called class struggle goes on the desperate posts and colours struggle.

NEXT year the University Right-wing group will lose the services of some of its most worthy stalwarts. Among those who will leave the University having finished their course will be Messrs. Tudor Wijesiriwardena (Hony. Joint

Secretary of the All-Ceylon U.N.P. Youth League), Mervyn de Silva (President, Jayatileke Hall), A. P. Ranatunge, J. M. Handy and Miss Parameshwari Paramanadan (President, Sangamitta Hall) while wishing them all the best in the future we are certain that they will continue to give their utmost for the cause for which they have so unselfishly served as undergraduates. Watch out Trotskyites at large! As much as the Right-wing will lose some of its leading members so too the Trotskyite ranks will soon be depleted of some of its prominent University Tuck Shop revolutionaries—Cooray, Perera, Kuruppu, Gunadasa, Soysas—all of them. Thank God! It will be amusing to see them behind Bank desks (if they get there) drawing their pay packets from a tolerant U.N.P. Government. One of them has actually changed his name from M.dasa to the more "respectable" Wickremanayake, just in case someone checks up on his University political record. Wither Trotskyism from the Tuck-shop to the Central Banks.

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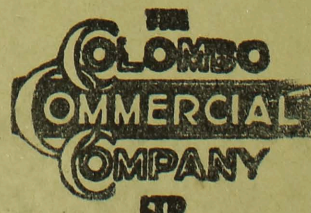
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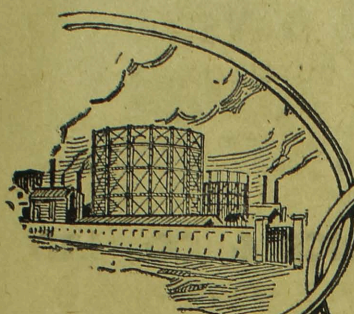
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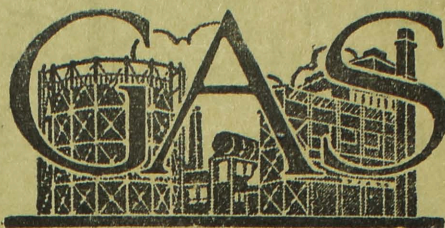
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Compensation for Requisitioned Property

THE Requisitioning of Land (Amendment) Bill which has been passed by the House of Representatives is intended to clarify the position in regard to payment of the maximum compensation for damage during the period of occupation. The original Act passed in 1950 was primarily intended to enable land to be requisitioned for services or for use or occupation by the forces. That Act provides that in the event of any such land being damaged compensation is payable in a sum equal to the cost of making good the damage which may occur during the period for which possession is retained under the Act, but no provision was made as to the maximum amount of compensation payable for any such damage.

MAXIMUM PAYABLE

The Amending Bill provides that the maximum amount of the damage compensation will be ordinarily fixed at the market value of the land when derequisition takes place, with a special proviso, in cases where the market value has gone down lower than the market value prevailing during the period of requisition, for awarding additional compensation. That is one of the purposes and a new sub-clause has been inserted, making it clear that in cases of compensation for any damage which may have occurred prior to December, 1950, will be assessed in accordance with the principles set out in the then existing law, namely, the Defence (Compensation) Regulations 1941. The other main point is that in the case of lands which were in possession under emergency powers but which were de-requisitioned on or before December, 1950, it was anticipated that all claims for compensation would have been finally disposed of by December, 1952, by tribunals constituted under the Defence (Compensation) Regulations. In view of the possibility that all such claims might not be disposed of before the winding up of the Compensations Claims Department, provision has been made to substitute a Board of Review for the tribunals. The quantum of compensation will not be affected.

FURTHER ELUCIDATION

A further elucidation of the subject was given by the Member for Colombo North in view of the legal language of the Bill which may appear a little involved. By way of illustration explaining purpose of the amending Bill he said: "If a land worth Rs. 5,000 was requisitioned some years ago and today the authorities put up a building worth Rs. 25,000 and if it is to be de-requisitioned today and the market value of the land today is Rs. 7,000, what is the position? What happened under the existing Act was that a claimant came before the tribunal, claimed the Rs. 7,000 for the bare land, claimed another Rs. 15,000 for the purpose of demolishing the building and bringing the land to the state in which it was before—bare land—and got away with Rs. 22,000 and also got the building on the land."

That is the position under the law as it is now and the amending Bill seeks to alter it. The object now is to remedy that evil. If the land is today worth Rs. 7,000 he will be entitled to compensation in another Rs. 7,000 and nothing more, whether he gets the building or not. If he can get the building he can, if he likes, demolish it. The Bill goes further. Though the value is Rs. 7,000 today, in between the period of requisitioning and de-requisitioning if it was worth Rs. 10,000 then a tribunal, the competent authority had the discretion to give him that Rs. 10,000. Viewing the Bill from any point of view, it is fair by the owner and by the tribunal that makes the compensation. The object of the amendment is to limit that damage to the maximum, to the market value of the land, and the claimant is getting back his land as well.

Purely Prefatory

AMID UNCERTAINTY

LAST Monday eve saw me, comfortably ensconced in a Ladies' Compartment of a train bound to Galle. Scandalous?.....

It all happened this way. I was waiting to take train at the Fort Station. When the train came, I found it a rather difficult task, to forge myself ahead of the surging crowd, thickly lined like a swarm of locusts. Knowing only too well that, my small, fragile physique was not equal to the Herculean task, I preferred to stand behind with suppressed anger, and allow the pressing crowd of longs, coats, handbags, sarees, frocks, sleeveless blouses—and Sherwanis, for that matter, if there were any—to board the train.

Within a few minutes the whole crowd had clambered in. The train was fully packed; almost every door was swinging to and fro, with some passengers bearing a you-can't-come-in look holding on to it. I ran along the platform. But in vain.

The guard's shrill whistle made me nervous. In the midst of this mental excitement, I spied a "Ladies' Compartment" close by. 'No time to stand and stare', I said to myself (thanks to poet Davies), and made a bee-line towards the officially prohibited compartment (I mean officially prohibited for all things masculine).

Without further ado, I might add that, with the kind permission of its only occupant—an obliging lady, beautiful by all accepted standards, and possessing a bosom of no mean protuberance—I was soon seated in the "Ladies' Compartment."

After a few moments of self-imposed silence, we got to talking things. Gradually she unfolded her history (or so it seemed) to me. She told me she had been divorced from her husband. Reason?—He was an excessive wine-bibber, did not care for her or her children (she had two kids), and also had a mistress elsewhere!

"I'm getting married again," she said. I smiled, "I've got to," she continued emphatically, "because I must bring up my children. 'I hope this one doesn't prove to be a replica of the first,' I said. 'I know him well,' she replied.

The train steamed into a station. I told her that was my destination, and proceeded to open the door—

when she fished out of her handbag a small white card bearing her name and address, and gave it to me.....

SINCE that evening, I have been pondering about the question of unsuccessful marriages and allied matters. I suppose it could be safely postulated that a happy love affair or a successful marriage is a comet-like phenomenal rarity. "There are two tragedies in life," says Bernard Shaw, "one is not to get your heart's desire; the other is to get it." This is no idle paradox, but a trenchant truism.

There are many extremely pathetic tales of people who have led the lives of recluses, or gone mad, or committed suicide, through some unhappy love affair or marriage.

A Cardiff bachelor, who had been jilted by his sweet-heart at an early age, and whom neighbours always thought poor, spent most of his time on a hard chair, in the kitchen of his barely furnished home. Finally at the age of eighty, he was found hanging by a rope from the banisters. He left over £25,000.

Disappointment over a love-affair, made Miss Hilda Kendall, Lady of the Manor at Sinnington, Pickering, Yorkshire, retire to her mansion, close shutters and doors, lock her £1,500 car in the garage and live a hermit life. She had lived like that for thirty years, till she was found dead in the floor.

Mrs. Anne Whitlock Channon was a gay, happy woman of forty-two, when she went one night with her husband to the Grand Theatre, Brighton. He went for a drink in the interval, and returned to find her talking with a man in the next seat. His jealousy provoked a quarrel. When they arrived home she declared: 'I'll never set foot outside this house again.' She kept her word for thirty-five years, until her death.

Strange are the ways of love, and uncertain the course of marriage. In this respect, one should certainly admire our bachelor Premier—a noble, and shining example, who unhampered by matrimonial ties, continues to work for the greater benefit of the people of his country.

NOW to come back to the lady in the train. Why did she give me her name and address? Perhaps, I should not ask this question publicly—but your columnist is all the same a publicist. Is she a genuine divorcee or (proceeding a posteriori) does she belong to that noxious class of society—the demi-monde? I am not sure which.

K. Rajendran

G. C. S. U. BRANCH FORMED IN COINTEL

THE inaugural meeting of the General Clerical Service Union Branch in the Trincomalee District was held on Monday at the Kacheri Welfare Room at 5 p.m. presided by Mr. K. C. Nythiananthan, President of the Parent Union. Associated with him was the Hony. General Secretary, Mr. Daniel Gonsalkorale.

The Organising Secretary, Mr. Mervyn St. C. Nicholas, welcomed the guests.

Messrs. Nythiananthan and Gonsalkorale addressed the gathering on the aims and objects of the G.C.S.U.

The following were elected office-bearers:—President: Mr. T. Umaphysivam, Vice-Presidents: Messrs. P. Weerasekera and K. Sandarasegram, Hony. Secretary: Mr. Mervyn St. C. Nicholas, Hony. Treasurer: Mr. C. Ponniya, Hony. Auditor: Mr. A. Bertus de Alwis. Committee Members: Messrs. R. Kandasamy, Victor M. Nicholas, S. Pathanjali, S. V. Jesuthasan, T. H. Joseph and S. Candasamy.

It was also decided to send the following as delegates to the Annual Conference at Colombo in May:—The President, Hony. Secretary and Treasurer together with Messrs. S. Rajespirasingham, T. H. Joseph and A. E. Marcou.

Proceedings concluded with a Social.



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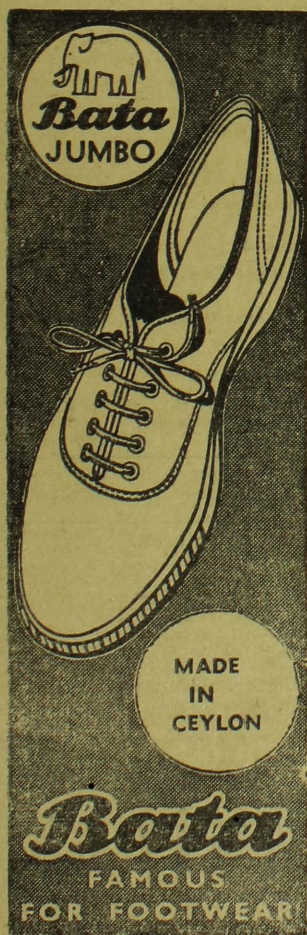
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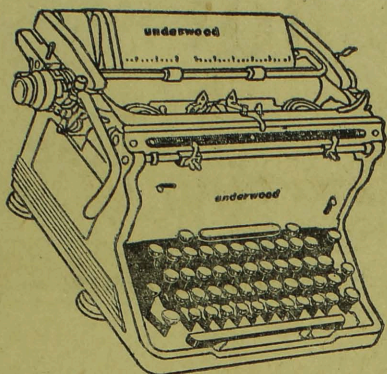


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SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS

By M. S. A. Farouk

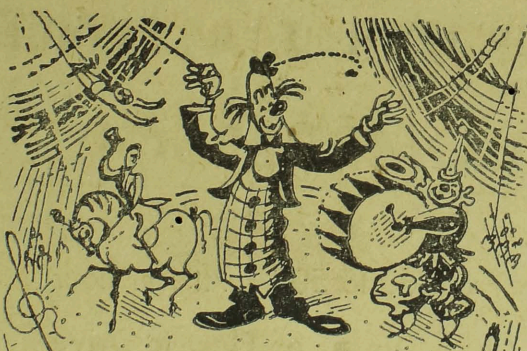
MOST of us are superstitious of something or other and it is seldom that we pay attention to find out the reason for our belief. There are various superstitious beliefs prevalent among us so much so that whatever work we do we always believe that there is some 'other force' working with us. This belief in this hidden force is what we generally term as 'being superstitious'. But some of the so-called superstitious beliefs are generally accepted that it is hard to break the faith.

One example is that of a black cat whose crossing one's path is considered to bring some evil. This is one typical example. There are plenty in number but what one fails to understand is the reason for our belief in them.

The tendency to be superstitious develops in us from our early days. When young our parents and elders try to pacify or frighten us by telling various stories which at times suit the occasion but when once they are frightened to hear they usually become fixed in our minds, as we grow we are always reminded of our fear which we became used to in our infancy. Sometimes we are told that it is bad to bath on Tuesdays because we are sure to fall ill or we are told not to

go out in the night after taking fried food because some devil will frighten us or any such similar thing is told merely to control us for the moment. But these simple warnings do have a profound influence on us in that we, as young ones have a weakness to believe in them which as time goes on becomes embedded in our mind that we almost have a faith in these superstitious beliefs. This irreligious faith is to a very great extent the root cause for our failure in life because we are tied down by our false faith and belief in a false conception. If this belief is to go on generation after generation, people will become so prone to believe these so-called 'superstitions' that ultimately life itself will be to them nothing but a mere following of 'superstitious powers' which will ultimately control their whole system.

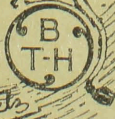
Thus it is very much better if everyone of us could from our early years cultivate our mind to think in the right direction and not be influenced by evil forces that are usually detrimental to ourselves. We are living in an age which is very proudly termed 'modern' and by which is generally meant that we are civilized and that we have reached a stage when we could understand right and wrong and as such 'enlightened' beings let us not indulge in or yield ourselves to minor evil forces which, in the longrun will try to become a part of ourselves.



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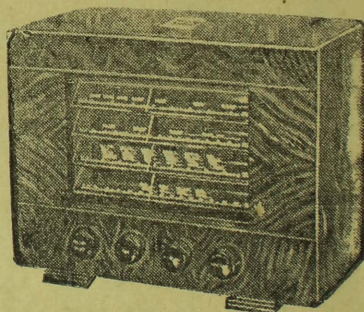


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Towards A Commonwealth Development Plan

Major questions which, if satisfactorily solved by the Prime Ministers, will set the pattern for wider proposals likely to command United States and Western European support", says Julian Amery, M.P., in a contribution to the "New Commonwealth".

THE Conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers which met in London in January, 1952, defined the aims of the Sterling Area as a return to convertibility and multi-lateral trade. Plainly, these ends will not be reached until the Sterling Area countries can increase production to the point where they can either pay for their imports or do without. The creation of new wealth is thus the key to the recovery of sterling. We need, in short, a Commonwealth Development Plan. To draw up such a plan should be the main task of the Commonwealth Conference. Development calls for investment; for the direction of money, skill and machinery into work on which there is no immediate return. Where is the investment for a Commonwealth Development Plan to come from? Each Commonwealth country must, of course, provide much of its own development capital. But, if there is to be an overall Commonwealth plan, the United Kingdom will still have to be its main backer.

AN INDEPENDENT PLAN

A Commonwealth Development Plan would, of course, bear fruit sooner if United Kingdom investment were matched by investment from outside the Sterling Area. The United States has the greatest surplus of liquid capital and productive power in the world. There are limits, however, to the extent of dollar investment that the Sterling Area countries should expect. The United States' private investor finds unrivalled opportunities for secure and profitable investment in North and South America. The new Republican Administration in the United States is unlikely to favour any increase in Aid programmes. This is not to say that American investment, both Government and private, cannot be obtained. But it can never be the corner-stone of a Commonwealth Development Plan. The best, perhaps the only, chance of obtaining American investment lies in having an independent Commonwealth Development Plan which Americans will find it in their own immediate interest to support.

FREER CONVERTIBILITY

The United Kingdom Government may be pressed, at the Conference, to move towards a freer convertibility of sterling. The aim is right. But it must be pursued with great caution. The Sterling Area is in a worse position today to face an experiment in convertibility than it was in 1947. For one thing, its gold and dollar reserves are much lower. For another, the sellers' market is gone. Our balance of payments' position and prospects, indeed, are so precarious that the sterling countries could only face even partial convertibility with the dollar if they were to substitute a much stronger system of tariff preferences and other trade restrictions for the present system of exchange control. This, indeed, is what they have already done in Europe. The pound has been kept largely convertible with Continental currencies through the E.P.U. This result, however, has been achieved only by imposing rigid restrictions on all imports from Europe.

PRICE OF GOLD

The Conference must also consider the question of the price of gold. Seventy-five per cent. of the gold produced in the free world is mined in the Sterling Area. It is difficult to see why we should any longer accept that the value of one of our most valuable resources should be quite artificially depressed. The question is of great importance to South Africa and Australia. It affects the whole balance of payments position of the Sterling Area. It is be-

coming of some concern to Canada, an increasingly large gold producer. All this suggests that the time has come when the Commonwealth Governments should join together to press for a substantial increase in the price of gold.

PREFERENCE

The United Kingdom cannot put pressure on other Commonwealth Governments to increase their preferences to Britain. It should, however, point out that other Commonwealth countries have a great interest, too, in helping the United Kingdom to find markets for its exports. Unless Britain can find such markets and so balance her accounts she will be driven to a further devaluation, with serious consequences for all holders of sterling balances. In the same way, her ability to contribute investment to a Commonwealth Development Plan depends very largely on her ability to achieve a surplus on her balance of accounts. The United Kingdom Government might also remind the other Premiers of the burden which it bears for the administration and defence of the Colonies: the Colonies whose dollar earnings largely cover the dollar deficits of the sovereign countries of the Commonwealth. These points should be put frankly. There is no need for excessive diplomacy in the family circle.

CANADAS POSITION

No Commonwealth Development Plan would be acceptable which did not take account of the special position of Canada. Whatever the strict logic of economics, the rest of the Commonwealth cannot regard Canada as a dollar country and nothing more. Nothing, moreover, could do more to solve the dollar gap than to repair the breakdown in Anglo-Canadian trade relations. How could this be done? Increasing United Kingdom preferences to Canada could help in so far as it diverted dollar purchases from the United States to Canada. British support for an increase in the price of gold could also be a contribution. But, beyond these things, there is a need for a more imaginative approach to the problem on both sides of the Atlantic. The U. K. Treasury should take the initiative in allowing more dollars to migrants to Canada, and to would-be investors in Canada. In return, Canadians should agree to accept sterling as money up to a given amount. This amount might be equivalent in value to United Kingdom investment in Canada. It could be guaranteed against devaluation in the sense that re-conversion into dollars would be at the original dollar-sterling rate. Several proposals have been made with this end in view. We cannot expect Canada to join the Sterling Area. It would be a great thing, however, if she would agree to serve in economics — as she already does in politics — as a bridge between the United States and the sterling Commonwealth.

THE PROBLEMS

Here are some of the problems which must be discussed by the Prime Ministers, and some of the solutions which the United Kingdom Government should take the lead in proposing. How far the other Commonwealth countries would follow such a lead is matter of conjecture. So long as the United Kingdom hesitates, they are likely to be cautious.

Britain must come out clearly at the Conference for a Commonwealth Development Plan. It is now plain that the economics conception elaborated at Bretton Woods, Geneva, Havana, and Torquay are illusions. Something must be put in their place. Here a special responsibility falls on the Sterling countries. The trade of the Free World is still conducted in sterling more than in any other currency. If therefore, the sterling countries can agree among themselves, they will set the pattern for wider proposals which may command the co-operation of Western Europe and the support of the United States.

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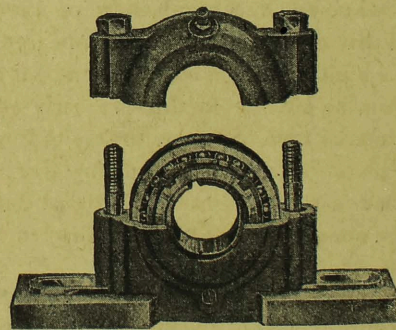
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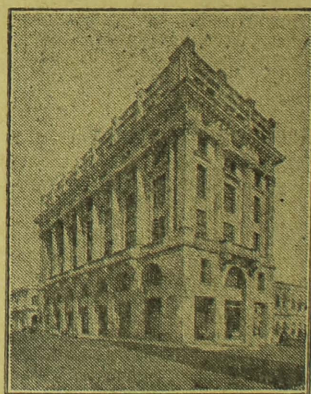
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