

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW

Vol. 28 No. 32 — September 22, 1984 — Rs. 4.00

Next Week

- ★ LOCAL INDUSTRIES
—Hampered
- ★ CORRUPTION
—Roots
- ★ ETHNIC PROBLEM
—Way Out?
- ★ FOREIGN PRESS
—And Sri Lanka
- ★ WHY NESTLE
—Confidentially

GROWING CORRUPTION ...

Sri Lanka is today being continuously submerged in crescendo of high-pitched despair emanating from peoples at all levels. The refrain is that nobody seems able to end or even minimise the growing corruption that had taken vicious possession of this island euphemistically called a paradise by those who want more and more tourists here. To the foreigner with hard currency, local corruption is only the chicken feed necessary to keep the natives happy and to have a good time themselves buying tropical exotica and luscious human flesh at cheap prices. Whilst this goes on everybody keeps asking who is responsible for this growing corruption? What are the causes?

What can be done to end it? What is more, everybody has something to say on the subject. Only a few shrug their shoulders and say nothing. Some blame the politicians, and some the bureaucrats. Many point their finger at private enterprise tycoons, entrepreneurs, contractors, mudalalis, five-star businessmen and the smugglers—and all of them are said to be in cahoots with certain politicians and favoured bureaucrats. Very few, so far, have got round to blaming the system—because they take the system for granted and that it has come to stay except for occasional amending legislation.

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This question of corruption is something that must be probed and be openly discussed in every available forum. *Tribune* will be happy to publish the views of its readers on this subject. *Tribune*, for its part, will put forward thoughts to provoke discussion. A preliminary survey on the telephone by one of our Investigators has revealed that over 75 per cent of the persons contacted said that the greed of the politicians, especially Ministers, was the primary cause of the galloping corruption that has overtaken this country. About 10 per cent said that the open economy nouveau riche were responsible for the growing corruption while another 10 per cent blamed the smugglers. The balance said they did not know. A few ventured to say that the root cause was the excessively large public sector.

Why is it that most people think that politicians are responsible for the growing corruption? What is the relationship between politicians and the system that has produced them? Is there any way corruption can be reduced or even eliminated within the framework of the present open economy and parliamentary democratic system? Or is a revolution necessary to sweep away every vestige of the exploitative and profit greedy system that breeds corruption?

Next Week

* LOCAL INDUSTRIES — Half priced

* CORRUPTION

—Way Out

* FOREIGN

—And Sri Lanka

—Confidentially

HANDBOOK FOR THE CEYLON TRAVELLER

TRIBUNE

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This book is the work of many people all of whom have written of things they know and love. They will protest at being called 'experts' but experts they are on individual facets of Sri Lanka. Moreover, they have travelled the length and breadth of this country, seen, heard, experienced and above all, understood the land, its people and their life. It is this knowledge of the country and its people and the love they have for this island and the islanders that the compilers have tried to infuse into this book.

The revised edition includes several new chapters the first of which is the chapter on Buddhism — "A Religion. A People".

This book is not intended only for foreigners. We hope it will be a companion to our own people on their travels through the Island. It may perhaps, tell you of things you did not know and enrich your experience of seeing Sri Lanka in her many splendours.

A Studio Times publication

Why is it that most people think that politicians are responsible for the growing corruption? What is the relationship between politicians and the system that has produced them? Is there any way corruption can be reduced or even eliminated within the framework of the present open economy and parliamentary system? This book contains the answers to these questions.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

—Ethnic Problem—Paul Chis

ELECTION LAWS—For the Record

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE—Sept 10-16

INTERNATIONAL—Red Sea Masses

AGRICULTURAL DIGEST

—Gardens of Taprobane

—Mahine Products, Basil

—One-ox Plough, Butifala

SCIENCE AND MAN

—Population Myths, Eusebius

RELIGION AND CULTURE

—Rajavada Jataka, Hyderabad

—Furtive Mystery

TRIBUNE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The *Tribune* of September 8, spotlighted the exploitative operations of foreign Consultancy Firms. This question was "coincidentally" brought before Cabinet on Wednesday September 12 and, in our view, a very welcome decision was taken. The *Daily News* of 13.9.84 reported as follows: "Cabinet yesterday approved a memorandum from the Minister of State that a committee of experts be appointed by government to study and report on the subject of foreign consultants and contractors in the construction industry and that the matter be discussed with professional associations. The Minister said that many professional associations sought the intervention of government in safeguarding the interests of their members. These associations—The Institute of Engineers, Association of Consulting Engineers, Association of Construction Contractors and Sri Lanka Institute of Architects—were perturbed at the frequent employment of foreign consultants and contractors for projects when local companies had been unfairly discriminated against at the pre-qualification stage. Foreign contractors are also given concessions not available to local contractors. Sri Lankan engineers have often had to work under foreigners who are not even qualified engineers. The hiring of foreign contractors and consultants has led to unnecessary escalation of costs including foreign exchange. This has also led to the frustration among qualified professionals resulting in brain drain. The Sri Lanka Institute of Architects has cited that in the UK, USA, countries in the EEC, the Middle East, India, Australia, New Zealand and Japan non-nationals have to obtain registration from the local professional association before they are allowed to practice their profession. In many of these countries a foreign consultant cannot operate without entering into partnership with a local company. These matters will now be considered by a special committee to be appointed by Cabinet." On the same question, the *Island* of 21/9/84, in an editorial had stated: "The heart-felt cry of Sri Lanka's professionals has been heard in the sanctum sanctorum of the Cabinet at last and it has been decided to appoint a Committee of Experts to look into the representations made by professional bodies that they are being overwhelmed by the presence of foreign consultants and contractors to whom preference is given in the awarding of contracts and assignments. The present campaign touches primarily on the construction industry and the specific brief of the committee is to study all aspects of the role of foreign contractors and consultants in this sector, but needless to say this obsession with foreign expertise extends to all areas of professional activity in the country.... The Minister of State Anandatissa de Alwis who had disclosed the appointment of the Experts' Committee to newsmen had said that there were complaints that the hiring of foreign personnel had led to unnecessary escalation of costs involving even foreign exchange and this is an aspect of the matter which deserves the strictest consideration of the Cabinet. Has any assessment been made of the conspicuous waste which has been the result of awarding such contracts to foreigners when local talent is abundantly available?..." In an editorial on September 8, *Tribune* had said: "... There is no doubt that a number of Third World countries like India and Sri Lanka have technical and managerial capabilities to provide Consultancy Services. And for these countries to be at the mercy of Consultancy firms from foreign countries whose main objective is to jack up prices and inflate budgets to help Western contractors to make unconscionable profits is to say the least a sad reflection of our times. It would be interesting to know how much money Sri Lanka has spent on feasibility reports etc., from consultancy firms from the time of Independence and the coming of Foreign Aid..."

Chief Justice

It is not clear why the Government wants to continue with an exercise that savours of being punitive against the Chief Justice who is due to retire on October 22. *Tribune* in its issue of March 31, 1984 (Vol. 28 No. 22) had spotlighted the matter in its *Confidentially* column. This is what the column had set out. "IS IT NOT A FACT that a speech made by Chief Justice Neville Samarakoon at the prize giving at the Sinnathuray Commercial Tutor in Kollupitiya on Wednesday March 14 (and reported *in extenso* in the *Sun* of March 16 and in abbreviated form in *The Island* on the same day) has caused a flutter in governmental political devocotes? That whilst it is difficult to refute or controvert the truth of any statement he made, the point that is being made is that a Chief Justice in office should not have strayed into the arena of political polemics? That there is something to be said for this? That in the system of legal administration Sri Lanka has inherited from the British all judges are expected to keep out of what is termed politics? That there is no doubt that this is a necessary and welcome rule for obvious reasons that need not be detailed here? That over the years this convention which is a built-in condition of judges' terms of employment has been maintained by all members of the judiciary in this country? That Judges of the Higher Courts in particular have at all times zealously observed this convention.

"That at the same time it must be mentioned that there is an equally compulsive rule that no attempt should be made to politicise the judiciary or bring political pressure to bear upon functioning judges, in making their decisions? That in any system, in every era, class, caste, educational allergies, religious inhibitions and similar considerations have consciously or unconsciously influenced the thinking and logic of judges? That this is only natural in human affairs? That what is objectionable and unsupportable is when a government or its ministers bring pressure on judges to determine a case one way or other? That, unfortunately, in the years after Independence this country has witnessed attempts (sometimes successful) not only to politicise the Judicial system (whether in the interests of a left-oriented *ape anduwa* or a profit greedy smuggler-dominated open economy) but also to privately browbeat judges to make decisions to please power-brokers in the Establishment? That in more recent times some political block-busters had even used thugs, hooligans and criminals to intimidate judges by demonstrating in front of their private residences uttering blood-curdling threats? That what is even more alarming was that neither the Police nor the Government were able to identify the thugs and

arraign them before the Courts? That someone in the Establishment seems to have mesmerised the Police and other law enforcing authorities into a state of hypnotic inaction? That the country and the people have paid a heavy price for this? That the credibility of the government has suffered disastrously? That the reputation of some bright sparks in the Establishment now stinks?

"THAT IT IS TRUE that all this did not provide enough justification for Chief Justice Neville Samarakoon to break the golden rule that judges should not make pronouncements on public affairs of a political nature? That even if VIPs of the political establishment break the rule about interfering in the judiciary, judges, especially the chief justice, should exercise exemplary restraint to set an example to other judges? That there is no doubt that what Mr. Neville Samarakoon said is news-worthy and quotable? That talking about the July 1983 holocaust he said that it was wrong to call it an ethnic conflict? That to quote: . . . 'Take your minds back, ladies and gentlemen, to the last two or three years when terrorism and the terrorists were very active in the north. There was resentment building up among the people against the terrorists and the killings that were being done by the terrorists. It was not against the Tamils. And nobody who kept his eyes and ears open, who did not live in ivory towers, could see that resentment was building up, not only against terrorists but against the Establishment itself that was not taking proper action against them. And as a result what happened was that people were driven I think to take a hand themselves and in effect they told the terrorists 'what you can do we can do better'. And they did. And that stopped the killings of racialists. They told the Establishment specially one man in the Establishment 'if you can't stop it, we will stop it'. And they did it. It is unfortunate that the means to an end was racial. But I am sure if there was another way of doing it, it would have been done. And that is why I do not agree with this description. That it is ethnic, that it is racial. Well that is politics. Let us leave it aside. I am not expected to talk politics in my job . . .'

"That it was obvious that Chief Justice Samarakoon was determined to have a bash at one man—the President? That he made this clear in the concluding part of his speech when he commented on a statement the President was reported to have made that his was a 'pauper's salary'? That whilst Citizen Perera is entitled to comment on the President's salary, no Chief Justice has the prerogative to say what Mr Neville Samarakoon said? That while Citizen Perera has the right to say that President Jayawardene by his acts of commission and omission has laid himself open to criticism on political as well as personal matters, the Chief Justice (as long as he is in office) should have maintained a certain protocol in these

matters whatever the transgressions of the President or the Establishment? That apart from this, the fact is that among common people there is universal acclaim for what the Chief Justice said? That this is something the President and the Government should take serious note of? That is what *Tribune* said on March 31.

Now, in its anxiety to impeach the Chief Justice before he retires, the government introduced a resolution in Parliament signed by two-thirds of the total number of MPs, as required by the Constitution, and set up a Select Committee to recommend action on it. The Committee is required to report before October 20. But the Government, it is now learnt, is up against some serious obstacles. The resolution it had so unceremoniously rushed through Parliament, it has been discovered, has serious defects.... For instance, it fails to charge the Chief Justice with "proved misbehaviour" which, together with "proved incapacity", are the only two grounds on which a judge may be impeached and removed. The new Select Committee, it is said, will have to go through the same fact-finding exercise that the earlier Select Committee had done, i.e. to establish "proved misbehaviour" and or "proved incapacity".

Further, the *Forward* (15.9.84) has rightly pointed out that "Another major snag that the government faces is that it will have to eat its own earlier words about denouncing punishment for matters which were not offences at the time they occurred and were only

TRIBUNE

TR/BUNE welcomes feature and analytical articles on matters of current topical interest. They should be typed double-spaced and should not exceed 1,500 words. The ideal length would be around 1,000 words.

Articles in *Tribune* do not represent any consensus of beliefs or any commitment to rigid inflexibility. Editorial views are only to provoke thinking and provide guidelines for opinion making. Nor does *Tribune* expect readers to sympathise with or accept views put forward in the paper. While *Tribune* seeks to keep clear and not get involved in controversial and contentious issues, it believes that it can do much to keep Sri Lanka public opinion informed by broad hospitality to divergent views than it can by identifying itself with one trend of thinking. Furthermore, *Tribune* does not accept responsibility for the validity or otherwise for the views expressed in any article, signed or unsigned, which appears in its pages. What it does accept responsibility for is to give them a chance to appear in print.

ymade offences *ex post facto*. Its first reversal of this position—namely, when it took away Mrs. B's civic rights for an alleged 'abuse of power' which was not an offence at the time and is even now too nebulous for even the keenest legal brain to comprehend—created a world-wide stink. Now the government is up against the fact that, whereas the Chief Justice made his celebrated speech which aroused President Jayawardene's ire on March 14, 1984, the Parliamentary Standing Orders under which the government seeks to impeach and remove him were only introduced by amendment over a fortnight later—i.e., on April 4, 1984".

It therefore seems unlikely that the new Select Committee will be able to finish its work until well into November 1984 at the least, by which time the Chief Justice would have retired. Indeed, even under the amended Standing Order, the earliest date on which the government can even move a motion for the C.J.'s removal is November 4. As the Constitution only provides for removal from office through the procedure that the government has now embarked upon, it will then be up against yet another problem, namely how to remove from office a judge who has already quit that office. This may require still further amendments to the Constitution and a law to legalise yet another exercise in *ex post facto* procedures. And further problems and legal amendments may be needed even to deprive the C.J. of his pension as a punishment. In the meantime, the Bar Association has asked the Select Committee for a date to place its views before it to show that the Chief Justice was not guilty of "proved misbehaviour" or "proved incapacity".

The government will be well advised to forget its vendetta against the Chief Justice and drop the matter before it brings more discredit on itself. The credibility of the government is not very high at the moment, but if it persists in "Operation Chief Justice" it will disenchant and demoralise many of those who still support the government.

THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE ETHNIC PROBLEM — 3

The Real Crisis

By S. P. Amarasingam

IN THIS SITUATION, the government, if it wants to survive and prevent an impending socio-political and economic upheaval, it should end the present impasse on the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic confrontation and also take effective measures to resolve or minimise the

difficulties caused by the high prices and runaway inflation that is fast pauperising all but a small elite in all parts of the island. In these circumstances, it is my view that to put Sri Lanka back on the rails there are certain issues that require short-term as well as long-term remedial action. Before I venture to point out what these issues are, it is necessary to refer to one simple historical fact that from the dawn of history, Sri Lanka, like India, had a society that was multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-caste. Ancient texts, classical literature and the chronicles of Chinese or Western travellers all testify to the fact that the traditional society was multi-faceted at multi-levels and that it had functioned at both the individual and societal levels in India and Sri Lanka. The importance of this has not been realised by political big-wigs and the ideological pundits enamoured of western political theory and the virtues of the western parliamentary system.

WESTERN NATIONALISM, based on dominant monolingualism and dominant mono-culturalism, has disrupted the framework on which our traditional society was based. Western policy distrusted and disliked multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. They were regarded as primitive, feudalistic and tribalistic: that they were incapable of effectively participating in modern economic development and commercial enterprise. *And what is unfortunate is that many present-day Sri Lankan intellectuals trained in the modes of thinking of the West regard multi-lingualism and a multi-level society as a burden and inconvenience, or even a curse.*

But a little hard thinking will make it clear to all, except those who refuse to see or understand that the underlying cause for the ethnic, religious, caste and cultural confrontations in the Sri Lanka of today is because Western political scientists and administrators and their Sri Lankan allies have refused to distinguish between the Western notion of nation, which veers around unitary symbols, and the traditional Indian-Sri Lankan notion which is "multi" at many levels. These gentlemen highlight the negative aspects of the ancient Sri Lankan society and insist that it, like Indian society, was "primitive" and "static" as its many languages, religions etc., had hindered "communication" and "development". Even a cursory look of the historical demography of Sri Lanka will disprove this contention.

According to D. P. Pattanayak (*India International Quarterly*, Vol. 11 No. 2, June 1984) "there have, no doubt, been large-scale internal migrations in the sub-continent throughout history because of war, pestilence and economic activities". And our little Sri Lanka was inter-linked with India. There have been Chola invasions. Sinhalese obtained help from the Pandyans to defeat the Cholas. Dynastic conflicts

existed, but these did not disturb the multi-dimensional and multi-level society on both sides of the Palk Straits. "There is evidence that a scion of the ruling family in Assam set up a kingdom in the Gilgit area; and that two girls from the family of Sindhas in Karnataka, through marriage into the Kalinga ruling families, became empresses of Orissa. There is evidence that stone-carvers from Madurai worked at the sun temple of Konarak; and that those from Tamil Nadu built temples in Gujarat. There is evidence of the Kashmir poet Bilhana residing in the Court of Karnataka; and of an Oriya musicologist being patronised by a Kerala King. People have always been moving around in pilgrimage, and the sea and land trade has encouraged this surge of movement. These are not signs of a stagnant society. Multilingualism has never stood as a barrier to communication in an interdependent society...." In Sri Lanka, Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays, Muslims and others have moved around the island. Neither language nor religion had been a problem.

But the invaders, prosleytisers and civilisers from the West brought the mono-model and did everything to disrupt the multi-dimensional of Sri Lanka's traditional society. The first step they took was to insist on a single language and make the ruler's race and religion dominant. The Westerners, for instance, adopted three strategies to discredit the multi-lingual system. *First*, the very being of local languages was questioned—especially those of minorities. The *second* strategy was to create discordancy among the different languages on ethnic and religious lines. *Thirdly*, the attempt was made to align minor and minority languages with fissiparousness and medieval backwardness, and the dominant languages with integration and modern development. It is not necessary in this paper to enter into a detailed history and a clinical analysis of how the West undermined Sri Lanka's traditional society. But they could not destroy it: they only subverted it.

But now, the time has come for intellectuals, politicians and ordinary people to do a little rethinking on all matters that bear on the realities of the current situation. *First*, it is necessary to purge politicians, pundits and others of ethno-centric and mono-centric biases and persuade them to foster an appreciation of interdependence among languages and cultures in a plural society. "In a plural society, languages are used in much the same way as dialects in a dominant monolingual society. None uses two dialects or two languages for performing exactly the same tasks. For example, in India, one employs the home language for intimate communication, the state language for formal official communication within the state, the neighbour's language for good neighbourliness and maybe for local regional economic activities. Hindi for internal movement and English and other foreign

languages for larger and selective commercial needs. There is no apparent clash of interests."

Pattanayak makes one important point which has great validity so far as Sri Lanka is concerned: "But when in the name of the mainstream the tributaries are sought to be choked, not only is turbulence created at different levels, but what is worse, the mainstream itself tends to get infected and dries up. In a multilingual and multicultural country, all language resources must be exploited for efficiency in communication and for social well being. Politicians and planners will do well to make note of language as a factor in the politicisation of social, economic, and cultural issues; and as a major non-economic factor in the economic development of the country."

THE ATTEMPT to make Sri Lanka monolingual overnight has led to the most fateful and dangerous consequences. There have been belated attempts to undo some of the damages through Constitutional devices but these "remedial" measures have come piecemeal too little and too late to be of much use. The Constitution of 1978 made Tamil a "National language" and it incorporated a Charter of Fundamental Rights among its provisions. But these Constitutional provisions turned out to be mere academic exercises in the context of the massive growth of hardened mono-nationalist chauvinism in the majority as well as the minority communities. Violence had replaced dialogue. State violence, majority mob violence and minority militant terrorism had taken over from politicians, who had failed to deliver the goods. Political parties had fallen down on the job. The political system based on Western thinking and logic is unable to provide any solution.

What is even more important is that the ethnic conflict has been internationalised. There have been exaggerations, distortions, half truths and gross inexactitudes. But the picture fed to the world was on a substratum of truth. The July 1983 holocaust and the outflow of Tamil refugees to South India brought New Delhi into the picture. Fifty million Tamils in Tamil Nadu constitute a powerful political sector in India's political structure. The Tamils have the support of another 150 million Dravidians in three other Southern States. What many in Sri Lanka refuse to see is that communal disturbances and political discussions apart, India is a highly integrated Federal Union. The North does not think or react differently from the South even if it be for different reasons especially on matters of relations with foreign or neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, politicians, bureaucrats and some ill-informed publicists in Sri Lanka wishfully think that where the Tamil problem is concerned the North will respond and act differently from the South. This is a mistake. And it has now been proved to be a mistake.

TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 22, 1984

While Tamil Nadu and the States in South respond emotively to the plight of the Sri Lanka Tamils, the North has become distrustful of the Sri Lanka Government because Delhi thinks that Sri Lanka has backtracked on Non-alignment and that it has moved into the orbit of the USA and other countries hostile to India. The Sri Lanka government's protestations about allegiance to strict non-alignment and the frequent declarations of friendship towards India are not taken seriously in view of statements on matters of international significance made in the United Nations and elsewhere. While it is possible to argue that Sri Lanka is following a rather cautious policy of non-alignment, it can be shown that it has taken every possible care to avoid treading on US corns or displeasing the West, even if it meant going against the mainstream of non-aligned opinion.

ON MANY QUESTIONS it has toed the US and Western line as against what the non-aligned countries did. More recently, Sri Lanka's determination to give the Trincomalee oil tank tender to what is undoubtedly a US shadow company, rejecting, it is alleged, the offers of the Indian Oil Company to match anything the other tenderers offered has undoubtedly made Delhi doubt the bona fides of the Sri Lanka government. This has added fuel to the outcry in India against Sri Lankan army excesses and mob violence against Tamils.

There are politicians, chauvinists and jingoists in India who have demanded that the Indian army should invade Sri Lanka. Though this gave Colombo an international propaganda handle, it was only able to rouse Sinhalese opinion, but it was unable to raise any alarm in the international scene. Mrs. Indira Gandhi repeatedly declared that India had no intention to intervene in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka or invade its territory. All that India was interested in, she said, was to offer her good offices to effect an amicable political settlement.

Even as Sri Lanka was trying to clear up the many misunderstandings that had arisen between the two countries, Sri Lanka surprised the world when it engaged the Israeli STBTT Mossad to help fight Tamil terrorism. The price Sri Lanka had to pay was to grant Israel virtual recognition by opening an Interest Section in the US Embassy. This step further antagonised India—both North and South. It also angered the Sri Lanka Muslim population: and the entire Arab world. The Israeli tie-up has lost Sri Lanka many old and tried friends and has invited criticism from inside and outside.

India-Sri Lanka relations have reached such a low state that even a questionable incident like the Madras Airport blast is attributed to Mossad agents who are said to have infiltrated into a Sri Lanka Tamil terrorist

organisation. And this story is widely believed in India and by many in Sri Lanka. The truth may be otherwise but the Mossad connection taints the Sri Lanka government in the eyes of many abroad and here.

Even more significant is the fact that the Sri Lanka government has lost the global propaganda war. Over the years, International Human Rights Organisations have succeeded in convincing the world that the Sinhalese and their governments (both the SLFP and UNP) had discriminated against the Tamil minority and used mob and state violence to suppress all protest. In spite of heroic attempts and a lot of blah blah, the Sri Lanka government's propaganda effort on the international front has failed to have any impact. And as it stands today, unless there is a political solution even the world's most reputed Public Relations experts will not be able to change the present image abroad of the Sri Lanka government. The recent happenings in Jaffna and Mannar—in spite of the few army and police officers being killed—found the world's biggest News Agency, TV and Radio networks fully and completely against the Sri Lanka government. Official statements, though reported, only provoked ridicule, disbelief and criticism. The government should take note of this.

To be concluded

X X X

POEM

AFTER THE FIRE

My thoughts dance
on the ashes of memories
Eyes of patriots glance
backwards through centuries.
They look askance
at us are we aliens?
Our tranquil days are over
Quiet minds are rare.
In peaceful suburbs
and in storied slums,
our undulating lives
on fire,
Now echo the unquiet
Cadences
Of these turbulent times
Hair-tingling pagan tales
muddle our dull minds
maimed by mad murmurs.

Atavistic taste of blood
lies beneath the smoke
and suffocating air
Silent within the jungle
hermitage

Bronze figures breathe
unmoved

Artistic treasures in the mud,
Buried prehistoric urns,
Await the prying hands
of budding archaeologists
Who sift the rocks
and shifting sands.
And still we live,
Surviving bombs and flames,
By bending with the gale,
not battling with gods.
Those gods are all
the same excepting names.

Jegatheeswari Nagendran



Govt.

Notice

**THE LAND ACQUISITION (Chapter 460)
AS AMENDED BY THE LAND ACQUISITION
(AMENDMENT) ACT NO. 28 OF 1964**

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7.

Ref.No. 94/ 3402

It is intended to acquire the land described in the Schedule below For further particulars please the Gazette Extraordinary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 314/2 of 10 September 1984.

SCHEDULE

Situation of Land: Kirinda Magin Ihala Gangabada
Pattu North, Matara District.

Name of Land : Nanadolawatte

Lot & Plan No. : Lot No. 01 in P. Plan No. 33/
1157

G. D. H. Thilakarathne.
*Acquiring Officer
Matara District.*

The Kachcheri,
Matara. 03. 09. 1984.

TRIBUNE, SEPTEMBER 22, 1984

FOR THE RECORD

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Change in Election Law

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT is greatly perturbed by the recent amendment to the law relating to Parliamentary Elections: Act No. 36 of 1984. *Background.* The Act seeks to deal with the serious security problem which marked the Jaffna DDC elections and the Referendum held in 1982. Prior to that for over 50 years, ever since 1931, the country had seen fair and free elections. Prior to the Referendum, security failures which affected the result of the elections were isolated, few, and could and indeed were remedied in the courts by way of an election petition; it could not be said before the Referendum that the victory of any political party at a general election could be called in question. *Statement of Problem.* CRM itself drew attention to the serious systematic malpractices, particularly intimidation at polling stations, which affected the result of the Referendum in statements issued at the time. *Appropriate Remedy.* The appropriate remedy, for intimidation of presiding officers and disturbances at polling stations would have been to appoint a commission of inquiry and to have used the machinery of the law and punished offenders in the courts. *Impact of New Legislation.* The government has, by the new amending Act, given statutory recognition to disturbances at polling stations: it has laid down to legal limits and scope of intimidation at polling stations. The executive has clearly abdicated its responsibility to maintain law and order at polling stations. *Hasty Legislation.* The Amending Act was rushed through Parliament and copies of the Bill were circulated to opposition M. P.s only at the commencement of the debate: its wording is tortuous, vague-obscure, and ambiguous. There was no time what soever for public consideration and debate, since the Bill was never made available to the public.

Some Provisions of New Act. Among its provisions are the following:—*a.* The result can be declared without a total count of the votes cast which will result in the disenfranchisement of voters, namely those whose votes are in the ballot boxes which may never arrive at the counting centre. *b.* An "information" which need not be in writing—made by a Presiding Officer under Section 47A (1) that it is not possible to commence or continue a poll due to "the occurrence of events of such a nature" will have far reaching consequences. The information is made to the Commissioner through the Returning Officer who is merely a post box. *The information is conclusive*

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of the existence of "events of such a nature" which is described as a "disturbance" in the marginal note. There is no provision for the holding of an inquiry either before or after the information. In fact, there need be no actual disturbance at all before such an "information" is sent; it may merely be a telephone call made by a Presiding Officer who is threatened by a politician with a revolver. The consequences are far reaching: Undersection 48 the counting can commence without the ballot boxes from the particular disturbed "polling station" having been received. The Returning Officer may then go on to declare a candidate duly elected without counting the votes from "disturbed polling stations".

c. A safety device which has many infirmities and is bad in principle is provided for in Section 47A (2). This section provides that the Commissioner may declare the voting at a particular polling station void. Such a power should be vested in the Courts and not in a member of the executive. The other unfortunate consequence is that this section provides for elections in instalments. Only the votes from the undisturbed polling station will be counted on election day. Since the Counting Agents and generally candidates will be present, the entire electorate will know who has come first at this count. The Commissioner will then subsequently have a fresh poll at the disturbed polling stations. By the date of the fresh count, the entire electorate will know, who has come first at the first count, and a swing in this candidate's favour is likely to develop.

Summary of Consequences. It will be possible for a candidate who is so inclined to create "disturbances" at polling stations situated in areas where his opponent is strong, and get the votes of the other polling stations counted. After he has come first in that count and is the virtual winner, the rest of the electorate will probably swing in his favour. The new amendment also permits a result to be declared even if ballot boxes are missing.

Conclusion. It is indeed a pity that the Ceylon (Parliamentary Elections) Order in Council of 1946, that great charter of democracy under which eight general elections and several by-elections were held and which permitted the people to democratically change their governments six times—the greatest right that the people of this country hitherto enjoyed—should now be sullied by an amendment of this nature.

Desmond Fernando
Secretary.

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TID BITS

● SHAVING

Shaving is a sin. That's official, according to Pakistan's top board of Islamic scholars. "To shave one's beard is a sin and persistently doing so is a major sin," the official Council of Islamic Ideology has announced. The council has proposed that beardless men should be barred from elections in Pakistan.

● RICE HUSK

JUST AS MUCH cement could be turned out from the 15 million tons of rice husk available in India as from traditional sources, according to the country's Industry Minister. The process has been developed at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, and steps are being taken to introduce the new technology in rural areas. *India News*.

● IN THE USA

NO SINGLE ethnic group forms a majority of the United States population. The largest of the minorities, the so-called WASPS, or white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, actually comprises less than one third of all residents of the nation. The second biggest minority is the blacks, with about 10 percent of the 220 million people in the country. In third place are the Hispano-Americans, most of whom trace their origins to Latin America. There are more than 12 million persons of Hispanic birth or descent in the United States. Some demographers say this minority is growing so fast it may become the second-ranking ethnic group by 1985.

● ONE-HORNED RHINO

A one-horned Java rhinoceros, said to be one of the world's rarest animals, has been sighted in Malaysian jungle near the border with Thailand. The World Wildlife Fund says only 50 of these animals exist in Java and was believed to be extinct in Malaysia. It was last seen there in 1932.

● BEGGARS

Indonesia is to dump 1,000 beggars on one of the country's most popular island resorts. Barracks are being built for them on the palm-covered Thousand Islands, a popular fishing, diving and sailing resort for tourists.

● SINGAPORE

Singapore Cabinet Minister S. Jayakumar told Parliament that foreign workers who fall in love with locals will incur the wrath of the Government and will be sent home if they want to marry Singaporeans. "Foreign workers are in Singapore for a specific purpose—to do a job," he said.

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September 10 - 16

DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWS-
PAPERS PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO

DN—Daily News; DM—Daily Mirror; DO—Daily Observer; ST—Sunday Times; SO—Sunday Observer; DMN—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; JTH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLDP—Sri Lankadipa; AD—Janadina; S—Sun; DV—Davasa; DP—Dinapathi; CM—Chinthamani; WK—Weekend; RV—Riviresa; DK—Dinakara; EN—Elenadu; IS—Island; DI—Divaing IDPR—information Dept. Press Release.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10: Papua New Guinea has displaced Sri Lanka as Australia's second biggest tea supplier; Indonesia retains primacy as the single largest supplier of tea Down Under. A top opposition leader yesterday called for "massive" rallies and demonstrations by "millions of Filipinos" to force President Ferdinand Marcos to resign and avoid a "disastrous civil war"—DN. The second wholesale vegetable market which was opened at Bandarawela recently, will cater primarily to the consumers in Galle, Matara and Hambantota districts—DO. A 200-strong police contingent yesterday tear-gassed and dispersed a massive crowd at a propaganda meeting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party at Akurana on the grounds that there would be attempts to cause a breach of the peace. The delay in the issue of national identity cards is causing much concern among the people in the Northern Province as they have to carry the ICs with them. Poor Lankan girls from villages are being duped into working as household slaves for affluent Sri Lankans in Los Angeles and other parts of Southern California. While a mid-sea battle was raging between a navy patrol and a boatload of terrorists off Point Pedro last week, the Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy was just miles away, off Madras staging naval exercises, among which was a search and rescue operation—SU. The LSSP Central Committee has decided to call upon the other opposition parties to resign from their seats in Parliament as a protest against the undemocratic actions of the government and demand a general election. Although he preferred to remain silent, he, as a Buddhist, did not agree with the recent Government decision to hand over the power of appointing the Diyawadane Nilame of the Dalada Maligawa to the President; steps had been taken to make representations against that decision by Buddhist societies in which he held key positions and those with which he had connections, said Mr. Tilak Ratnayake, Mayor of Kandy, at the recent monthly meeting of the Kandy Municipal Council—/S. The production of tea, rubber and coconut has decreased drastically while India which is competing with Sri Lanka has increased its production by 60 percent—DP.

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11: The State Department last week justified the sale of US-made M-16 rifles to Sri Lanka; a spokesman for the department told the Daily News that the US recognises the right of the Sri Lanka government to oppose "illegal violence".—South African police fired tear gas and rubber bullets and confiscated a film of British television teams as black unrest continued over the weekend in townships around Johannesburg—DN. The Treasury is having second thoughts about the reduction of the export duty on rubber by Rs. 2; it is reviewing the entire question and a decision will be taken when the Minister of Finance and Planning Ronine de Mel, returns to the country—DO. A passport in two weeks for qualified applicants, is the first assurance of the new Controller of Immigration and Emigration, C. W. Siriwardene. A top level inquiry is to be launched by the Ministry of Education and the Police to ascertain whether organised groups are attempting to destabilise the education system, by provoking students to boycott classes over ethnic issues. Two of the most crucial constraints to development in Sri Lanka were identified by Treasury Secretary Dr. W. M. Tillekeratne yesterday as the education system which has been inappropriate to produce skilled manpower and the consumption of all resources by the public sector which pre-empted private sector development. Opposition Leader Anura Bandaranaike is expected to meet President J. R. Jayewardene today about the dispersing of the crowd at an SLFP meeting at Akurana, by the police on Sunday—SU. The Judicial Review Committee on High Courts and Magistrate's Courts have recommended that all Magistrates should be on probation for at least six months during which time they should attend a refresher course and be instructed by means of lectures and talks by competent people in regard to their magisterial duties. Mahanayake Teros of Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters of the Siyam Maha Nikaya, ven. Panditha Sirimalwatte Ananda Thero and ven. Palipane Sri Chandananda Thero will meet President J. R. Jayewardene tomorrow to discuss the Government's recent decision to empower the President to appoint the Diyawadane Nilame of Dalada Maligawa—/S. The boycott of Courts staged by the lawyers in Point Pedro protesting against the violence in the area was called off yesterday—VK.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: A countrywide police alert went out yesterday and all military and police leave was cancelled, following the killing of fifteen passengers in a Jaffna-bound bus from Colombo, early on Tuesday morning. The proposed merger of all non-communist opposition parties to challenge Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Congress I Party in the next elections has been firmly rejected by a major opposition party—DN. Jewellery exports has risen from Rs. 3 million in 1979 to Rs. 33 million in 1983, according to a senior official of the Trade and Shipping Information Service—DO. Government is likely to

drop its decision to amend the Buddhist Temporalities Act to enable the President to appoint the Diyawadane Nilame of the Sri Dalada Maligawa. An Indian vessel which made an unauthorised entry into the Trincomalee Harbour on Monday, was detained by the Sri Lankan authorities and searched. A mystery virus that threatens to ruin more than half the yala paddy crop in the southern rice bowl has baffled agro experts. The all party conference will sit in two sessions on Sunday, September 30 to hold a full discussion on the proposals which will be made public on September 21—*SU*. The passports of all tourists making purchases from the Duty Free Complex at Kollupitiya from today will bear an endorsement giving details of the goods purchased. The Government of Japan has extended grant aids to the government of Sri Lanka aggregating to a total of Rs. 322 million for Food production promotion and for supply of equipments to the Ruhuna University. The second trading floor in Colombo's share markets opened yesterday with prominent businessman N. U. Jayawardene saying, "this is not a private club that provides for black-balling of members or of applicants". Strong market conditions prevailed in the tea auctions in Colombo yesterday following confirmation that India had imposed a freeze of tea exports on new contracts—*/S*. The electricity charges may be increased from next year—*DP*.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13: The armed forces will be given "whatever extra powers found necessary" and the whole nation will be mobilised to meet the terrorist threat, Minister of State Anandatissa de Alwis said after yesterday's cabinet meeting. President Reagan's decision to meet Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko has shifted the focus of the US presidential race from domestic issues to relations between the super-powers—*DN*. Representatives of four Opposition parties—the SLMP, LSSP, CP and MEP—met the President in Colombo yesterday to discuss the legal implications of holding by-elections while the emergency is in force—*DO*. Government yesterday decided to postpone its development work, especially in the Northern province in a bid to divert those funds to fight terrorism in the peninsula. The government will not go ahead with its proposal to amend the Buddhist Temporalities Act to enable the President to appoint the Diyawadane Nilame of the Sri Dalada Maligawa as exclusively reported in *Sun* yesterday. Business was not as usual when the Duty Free Shopping Complex in Kollupitiya opened after a 20-day closure, yesterday—*SU*. President J. R. Jayawardene yesterday gave an assurance to the four-party left alliance consisting of the LSSP, SLMP, MEP and the CP that by-elections will be held in the electorates of Minneriya and Kundasale with the relaxation of the Emergency in these two areas so that a free and fair election could be held. The official inauguration of the Victoria Project will not take place as scheduled next month; the official date has now

been postponed until such time Mrs. Thatcher will be free to participate in the function—*/S*.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14: At this week's tea sale an all-time record was established for a Nuwara Eliya BOPF when a line from Park State Plantation was sold for Rs. 150 per kilo; the previous record was Rs. 132 established by the same estate few weeks ago. An international forum of 40 government ministers, bankers, academics and civil servants today proposed eight major steps to serve as guidelines for solving the third world's debt problems—*DN*. The second MP for Harispattuwa R. P. Wijesiri will contest the Kundasale by-elections on the UNP ticket. A revised insurance scheme for fishermen and their boats has been introduced by the Fisheries Ministry in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation and the National Insurance Corporation. Around 150 Sri Lankans who had illegally entered France have been arrested by the Police, the SLBC reported last night—*SU*. Government yesterday decided to launch a combined programme, involving four agricultural research stations, to combat the mysterious "Yellow Disease" now afflicting large areas of paddy in the south. The dollar appreciating rapidly this week, jumped by five cents yesterday in the financial markets in Colombo; it moved from Rs. 25.49 on Wednesday to Rs. 25.54 yesterday. National Security and country's defence will receive top priority in the next year's budget which will be presented in Parliament on November 14 by Finance Minister Ronine de Mel; according to Ministry sources, three billion rupees will be allotted for Defence—*/S*. In view of the present situation the by-elections in Trincomalee and Paddirippu will not be held as scheduled; but the by-elections at Minneriya and Kundasale will be held as proposed; this was mentioned by President Jayawardene to the Opposition parties which met him—*DP*.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15: National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said in Nuwara Eliya yesterday that he was keen to guarantee the security of the plantation workers of Indian origin and create an atmosphere in the sector free from anxiety and suspicion. The United States will reconsider its earlier decision to withdraw from UNESCO only if the United Nations agency makes major reforms by the end of 1984, a senior Reagan administration official told Congress yesterday—*DN*. "The preamble to the Vaddukoddai resolution does not state the facts and is historically incorrect; the actual position is that instead of a division from the dawn of history the Sinhala and Tamil people have always lived together in what the TULF now proposes to call an 'Eelam'", Ven. Madihe Pannasseha Maha Thera says in a statement issued to the press yesterday. Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman yesterday welcomed the Second Chamber proposal, but with the reservation that all communities should be equally represented in

it. The Shipping Corporation of India announced that due to adverse weather conditions in the Rameswaram Talaimannar route, the India-Sri Lanka ferry service will be suspended from mid-October to the end of December 1984—*SU*. Rural Industrial Development Minister S. Thondaman said yesterday that terrorism could never infiltrate the plantation sector unless the authorities themselves created a situation to force plantation youth to become terrorists. The Mahanayake Thera of Asgiriya, Ven. Palipane Sri Chandananda Mahanayake Thera on behalf of the Samastha Lanka Uttara Maha Sangha Sabha (All Ceylon Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha) has in a memorandum addressed to President J. R. Jayewardene rejected the concept of a Second Chamber as a solution to the crucial problem facing the country today. Two armed youths are reported to have forcibly entered the Jaffna Central College and walked out with a Roneo duplicating machine and a typewriter—*S*.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16: The Review Panel appointed by the Controller of Immigration and Emigration C. W. Siriwardene is busy processing nearly 3,000 passport applications at the Galle Buck Office. President J. R. Jayewardene will open the 1,001 bed teaching hospital at Kotte tomorrow at 9 a.m. With campuses scheduled to reopen on January 1, and the intensive course in English for new entrants expected to start in early November, this year, the University Grants Commission is now seeking the help of vice-chancellors, teachers, students, parents and the media to help deal with the problem of ragging at universities—*SO*. Sri Lanka's immediate economic worries have abated as both fiscal and balance of payment deficits have lessened and there has also been a lessening of the current account deficit in the balance of payments. The Minister of Textile Industries Mr. Wijeyapala Mendis has informed the Government that if the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills operate at 90 percent efficiency with limited utilisation it would lose around Rs. 2.5 million per month. With the office of the Diyawadane Nilame due to fall vacant shortly there is brisk canvassing with candidates calling on the members of the electoral college and asking for their support—*ST*. The duty is the only thing that is free at Colombo's showpiece shopping centre—the Duty Free Shopping Complex in Kollupitiya; everything else from purchasing to staff movements is entangled in a web of red tape, security, bureaucracy and sometimes absurdity, which is making itself felt at the most sensitive end, the customers. In order to ensure that no outsiders enter the universities without prior permission, all universities have been instructed to see that every student possesses his or her national identity card as well as the undergraduates identity card—*WK*. The immigration authorities are now in the process of working out a method to detect applications made

by some Sri Lankan nationals for more than one passport. The nomination to any of the forthcoming by-elections of a representative already elected by the people will disqualify the representative not only from holding the nominated seat but even the seat he held at the time of nomination. While censorship shows of sex oriented adult films have full capacity attendance by the Public Performances Board, the nationally produced Sinhala films appear to be shunned by most members of the PPB. Customs are to exercise extra vigilance on the import of motor vehicles—*S*.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

By Ariel

• Red Sea Mines • Mecca

The world continues to be in trouble. And the troubles seem to be increasing in number, volume and intensity each day. Even the proverbial silver lining which in the past had occasionally lighted up dark and dismal horizons is no longer seen. But in the midst of developments that bring death and destruction, there also erupt strange events which raise a laugh or produce a blush. Not so long ago we had Reagan's nuclear joke in which he ordered Russia to be bombed out of existence. It was said to be an off-the-record jocular aside which the microphone had picked up. It made his officials blush while they wanted everyone else to laugh. But this cowboy-style kidding has done no harm to Reagan in his bid for a second term. This is probably because he is a master performer before a TV audience while his challenger Mondale is a colourless personality lost in clichés which have no punch.

Then, there was the hunt for Red Sea mines. According to a sharp-tongued commentator, this much publicised search had only produced a lot of red faces and that the first country to look silly was Egypt. On August 1st, three weeks after the first blast, near the Gulf of Suez, Egypt denied there were any mines. The Egyptian prime minister said the waterway was "completely safe". A week later Egypt declared that there were mines and that Iran had probably laid them. A few days later the defence minister was "70% sure" that Libya was the culprit.

News agencies in Paris, London and Beirut were phoned by somebody claiming to represent the terrorist group Islamic Jihad, saying that it had planted

190 mines. Government-controlled Teheran Radio promptly congratulated the Jihad. Next day the Iranian Prime Minister denied any knowledge of the organisation at the same time disclaiming any link between the mining and Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini condemned the mining outright. Most western analysts doubted whether the Jihad group had the know-how to place the mines, which by mid-August had hit, at least 17 vessels. Suspicions fastened mainly on Libya, in particular on a ferry called the *Ghada*, because it had taken 14 days over a trip from Suez to the Ethiopian port of Assab and back, which usually takes only four. Arab papers also pointed fingers at America and Israel. The Americans it was argued laid the mines to give themselves an excuse for interfering in the area. Why, a newspaper in the United Arab Emirates had asked, had no Israeli or American ship been hit? But the funny thing is that not a single mine is known to have been found by the British, American, French, Italian and Russian ships searching the area. On August 13th an American news agency reported three mines found "floating below the surface". The next day Lloyd's in London reported a "sighting". But the mines never appeared. At the end of August a British naval commander revealed that a lavatory "sitting upright on the seabed" had been discovered.

This search for mines in the Red Sea will become one of the greatest folk tales this decade, if not the era. The largest Armada ever assembled in peace time, to search for mines had failed to find a single mine in the Red Sea where 17 ships had been damaged since July but no explosions were reported after 15 August. Britain, France and the United States had sent ships and helicopters to assist Egyptian vessels in the hunt for the mines in early August. Italy later joined in and two Dutch mine hunters had joined in the search. The Russians too had sent in a mine-sweeper. The origin of the mines and who planted them has remained a mystery. None of the claims or accusations have been proved and experts are now talking less and less of mines and more of "explosives". Suggestions have been made that explosives may have been wrapped in plastic, making detection extremely difficult. The theory would also explain why most of the damage caused has been minor. All the vessels which have been hit managed under their own steam to reach a port for repairs. In the midst of the furore, Egypt had threatened to close the Suez Canal to any country found to have been involved in the mining the Red Sea waters, but nobody was found guilty.

When the Red Sea fantasia was nearly over another drama in the same region hit the headlines. This time it was Mecca in Saudi Arabia. There were street demonstrations there on September 1 by pilgrims gathering for the annual Haj pilgrimage. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia had immediately appealed for peace among Islamic nations. Libya's Colonel Gaddafi had

also issued a call for calm and peace among the pilgrims. Reports indicate that Iranians on Pilgrimage had staged a demonstration near the Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest shrine. The Iranian news agency had said more than 150,000 Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims had taken part in the demonstration, but a Saudi official said their numbers were nowhere near that figure. He said they had dispersed peacefully outside a building which had a huge colour portrait of Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, across its entrance. He also said that the security police had surrounded them and dispersed them.

Commentators have pointed out that with each Haj pilgrimage Saudi Arabia is learning in greater measure the splendours and miseries of being the keeper of the holy places of Islam. With air travel and other modern methods of travel, more and more people are able to do the pilgrimage. For the past five years the number of pilgrims has been around 2.5 million each year. This year's number is estimated to have topped the 3 million mark, half of them from abroad and the other half from Saudi Arabia. "The Saudi government's anxiety for its own security is made difficult because no Moslem can be denied entry into Saudi Arabia to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, to the nearby village of Arafat and to Medina, unless he is a criminal and perhaps not even then. In 1979 the Grand Mosque at Mecca was seized and held for a time by an anti-Saudi fundamentalist group. In 1980, following the Islamic revolution in Iran, Shia supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini had tried to use the Haj to propagate their ideas. The demonstrations and pamphlets, containing thinly veiled attacks on the Saudi government, were disliked by most pilgrims, because the Haj is regarded a period of spritual peace when controversial discussions are to be avoided. The brandishing of portraits of the Ayatollah, although Islam prohibits human representation, served to remind the majority Sunnis that the Shias were outsiders. The Saudis arrested the leaders of the demonstrations and deported them—religious obligations notwithstanding.

"By then the Saudis were feeding the names of every pilgrim into computers, so they were able to build up a blacklist of unwelcome Shias, many of whom were refused entry in succeeding years. After the clash between the Iranian and Saudi air forces last June the Saudis took a harder line. The Iranians asked for 200,000 Haj visas. The Saudis at first said none at all, but relented and agreed to 150,000. The latest Iranian demonstration in Mecca on September 1st was less noisy than earlier ones. Shia supporters of Iran in Lebanon complained this year that the Saudi consulate in Beirut was issuing visas too slowly, and a Shia gang burnt it down on August 24th. On September 3rd a Lebanese Shia, claiming to speak for the "Islamic Jihad" group, threatened to deliver "a deadly blow" against the Saudis in Mecca. Islamic

Jihad has a fearsome record of successful terrorist attacks, so this was not a threat to be taken lightly. The Sunnis of Libya have also made trouble this year. On September 1st an aeroplane carrying Libyan pilgrims, and 20 cases of weapons was turned back from Jeddah airport."

The privilege of looking after Mecca now brings to the Saudi Government difficult problems which seem to keep on increasing. It is a dilemma that the Saudis cannot easily resolve.



SRI LANKA'S

Marine Products

By Paul Scheur

Sri Lanka is not unique in its underutilization of the sea as a source of food and raw materials. Virtually all countries bordering on the ocean share this neglect. In order to improve this situation, a suitable organization, presumably CISIR should immediately prepare an inventory of available resources in manpower trained in all facets of marine science, in facilities (e.g. stations, boats, ponds, etc.), and in library resources. Short-term upgrading of skilled manpower may be underwritten by various UN agencies (FAO, WHO), by the East-West Center in Honolulu, or by the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM).

ICLARM is the activity initiated January 1, 1975, by the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, which aims at a major improvement of the aquatic resources for the people of the Pacific and of Southeast Asia. It is currently headquartered in Honolulu. Its director Dr. Philip Helfrich, has indicated to me that they do not feel strictly limited to the Pacific area. Requests

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by Sri Lanka for aid with training or requests for a particular knowledge and experience in the marine area would be given the same consideration as similar requests from a Pacific country. (P.O. Box 3830, Honolulu, Hawaii 96812, USA). Long-range manpower and facilities development should be planned as part of natural products development in general, following completion of the inventory.

Since *algae* are photosynthetic plants and primary producers in the food chain of the sea, they should be considered first. *Unicellular algae* are an excellent protein source and have been grown in experimental outdoor culture (*Nature*, 254, 594, 1975). To my knowledge, no large-scale production facility is in operation, but marine scientists should follow the pertinent literature for new developments. *Red and brown macroscopic algae* (green, brown, and red are the major divisions) have long been used in various parts of the world as food, fodder, fertilizer, or as a source of potash and iodine. Most of their uses are highly localized and not readily transferable to other cultures, except for the use of fertilizer, which is on the increase. Annual production in western countries is about 40,000 metric tons, of which 35 percent is produced in Norway.

Red and brown algae are no longer an industrial source of potash or iodine, but they have become an important raw material for the extraction of *alga polysaccharides*. These so called *phycocolloids* have no nutritive value, but they are valuable in the food industry as thickening, stabilizing, suspending, and gelling agents. The current annual harvest is approximately 17,000,000 metric tons with a market value of Rs. 2,275,000,000. Virtually all of this is harvested by fishermen, divers, specially built boats, or simply gathered after storms, none of it mechanically. Attempts are under way to culture the red alga genus *Euchema* in the Philippines for production of *carrageenan*, which is a widely used gum, particularly in milk products. Current price of carrageenan is about Rs. 20 per pound.

Marine algae have so far found no significant medical applications, with the exception of *algin* (one of the polysaccharides) as a laxative, for making dental impressions, and as a medium for laboratory culture. Kainic acid is an anthelmintic (Digenin, Helminal), produced by the red alga *Digenia simplex*, first isolated and studied by Japanese workers.

Only one marine *invertebrate* serves currently as the source of a biomedical raw material. A gorgonian from the Caribbean elaborates a prostaglandin, which can be transformed in the laboratory into a physiologically active substance. Another marine natural product of an *annelid*, *neriostoxin*, served as the template for a valuable insecticide, which is marketed in

Japan under the trade name Padan, with an annual production in 1972 of 1,500,000 kg.

Mariculture of invertebrates for food or pearls is highly successful in various parts of the world. Many more organizations are experimenting with additional crops. Developments in this area should be followed by the fisheries staff. A very simple kind of mariculture, of the brine shrimp *Artemia*, which is in great demand as a food source in mariculture, can be carried out in brackish ponds, with virtually no other investment.

Similarly, culturing of fish is highly successful in many areas and additional species of fish are currently under study. To commence such a programme Sri Lanka will constitute a major long-range commitment.

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GARDENS OF TAPROBANE — 2

By Count de Mauny

New Years Day

Taprobane, January 1 — Midnight.

The Old Year ends in an apotheosis; the New Year begins in silence; a temple bell, far away in the jungle, heralds its coming. The Dondra Head lighthouse punctuates the night every fifteen seconds; the heavens sparkle with stars; the Moon-flower shines like silver; the "Queen of the Night" fills the air with the perfume of incense. Sitting on one of the stone benches, I await the New Year. She knows where to find me, for nothing escapes her; like God, she sees everything; young and proud; she laughs at the Old Year that is now departing; she will have her own way, and no power on earth can stop her. She refuses to speak; I can only wait and see, wait for the fate which she holds in her hands.

5.45 a.m.

Now the Sun holds a levee in honour of the New Year. I stand at attention on the terrace, waiting for His Majesty. The sky, the sea, the gardens are still wrapped in the grey cloak of dawn. The scene changes suddenly. The great Master of Ceremonies spreads over the sky a pale yellow veil; the awakening dawn replaces it with a pale blue one, spangled with silver; the sea remains pearl-grey. Nature, after this first effort, seems to stop and breathe. Punctuality being the politeness of kings, His Majesty enters at the stroke of six; solitary, ineffable, clothed in palest gold. He rises slowly above the grey-blue cliffs, a golden disc surrounded by a golden halo: he sheds

his radiance over water, earth and sky; the sea unrolls a trail of gold at his feet.

The flowers awaken from their dreams of the night, and begin to open their calices. The Morning Glories are the first to bloom. The trees crown themselves with scarlet, orange, mauve, gold and silver; the birds intone their matins, their shrill notes blending in a wild and natural harmony; the Kingfisher, peacock-blue and fawn, and the Golden Oriole, all yellow gold but for the black velvet hood, streak the air like precious gems; the Honey bird, clad in metallic blue, hovers above the flowers, sucking at the nectaries without disturbing the petals; the emerald Barbet plays from branch to branch; butterflies as large as birds, their wings encrusted with ruby, sapphire and turquoise, offer their beauty to the Sun. An Orchid bends under the weight of a bumble-bee as black as night. The deep blue sea reflects the white-and-red sails of the fishing-boats as they spread over the bay, cross the coral-reef, and melt into the horizon.

Shall I ever forget that morning of September, now nine years ago, when, quite by chance, I first saw Weligama Bay, and in the centre of its are the red granite rock, covered with palms and jungle scrub rising from the Indian Ocean; an emerald in a setting of pink coral? I swam across the new strait, scrambled over rocks and briers, and reached the top of the rock. The view from this plateau was admirable: below me was the Bay outspreading its long arms towards the ocean, until they were lost in the haze of the far distance; the coral-reef, sparkling with the diamonds of the spray; the sea, turquoise-blue, streaked with amethyst-purple. Beyond far beyond, the bare horizon; there was nothing between me and the South Pole.

Entranced by such beauty, I sat for a long while on a boulder overhanging the sea, wishing that this island lost in the Indian Ocean were mine; picturing and planning what I should do with it. I felt my heart beating with the over-whelming desire to create, the pride of creation, and to find in it peace, the nearest thing to happiness. Yes, it would, it must, be the home which I had dreamt of for so many years past! Six months later this anonymous rock, the abode of crows, had become my "Taprobane", the "island of dreams," my home.

The Oracle had spoken; February the first being an auspicious day, the foundation-stone was laid of the home which was to be the confidant of all the secrets of my splendid isolation. The same day, axe, shovel, tape-measure, line and pegs in hand, I began with the help of Raman and a few coolies, the work of tracing and laying out the "Gardens of Taprobane," which were to satisfy my passion for flowers, my craving to create, my dreams of ideal beauty. I had before my

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eyes the ideal for which I was striving; spell-bound by the subtle atmosphere of the East, I was determined at all costs to preserve it, so that the Garden of Taprobane should be the living expression of the perfection which had been my life's longing: perfection of atmosphere, which awakens and feeds that which is best in us; perfection of beauty, which had become necessary key to perfection, which had escaped me as long as I tried to discover it in human beings, and which I knew I should find in Nature, of all things imperfect the nearest perfection.

Simplicity is one of the attributes of perfection. To this I would conform, and the beauty of my garden should be the beauty of simplicity, of harmony with Nature, whose effects I would emphasize without ever clashing with them. A rock, an acre and a half in extent, crowned with palms, tangled with boulders and jungle, sixty feet above sea-level, its slopes, of varying steepness, ending in the waves; to make of this a thing of beauty, filled with specimens of all the rarest flowering trees, shrubs and tropical plants; such was the problem to be solved. It is said that the artist, before using his brushes, must see in his mind's eye the effect of the picture he intends to paint. My inherited passion for flowers and gardens has given me the unconscious intuition of what should be the garden of my dreams; wherever I have been, even when my stay was confined to a few weeks, I have left behind me, as a souvenir and an object-lesson, a garden.

Each one of my creations has been the expression of a phase in the development of my taste, a step forward towards my ideal; a garden which by its beauty and the perfume of its flowers, by the perfection of its arrangement, and of the surrounding scenery, was to be the realization of my dream, filling the gaps of an already long life, softening the asperities of the years left to me, and giving me that happiness which is to be found not without us, but within. How often have I sat for hours on a rock overhanging the sea, where, even before the laying of the foundation-stone of the house, a stone bench of the Italian Renaissance had been placed! There, lulled by the sound of the breaking waves, and amused by the turtles playing hide-and-seek among the rocks, I revolved in my mind the points of the garden I would make, and pictured to myself its different aspects.

The tropics were then almost new to me. I was vaguely aware of the exuberance of the tropical vegetation, but I did not know how to adapt it to my needs. The sea might prove to be a friend or an enemy. The sea was the frame and back-ground of the gardens; would it enhance or spoil the picture? The climate, in a land of perpetual summer, had nevertheless its seasons. What trials might not the two monsoons have in store for me? What would be

the result of consecutive months of drought? What the effect of the tropical sun on flowers of unimaginable delicacy? Would the storms and the torrential rains wash Taprobane into the sea? Against what insects and pests of all sorts should I have to wage war? I should have to study the matter and buy my experience at a price. I should surmount the difficulties—for where there is a will there is a way—but I must be prepared for many disappointments.

The subject soon became an integral part of my thoughts. I could already see, one by one, the concrete results of my plans; their justification, their union and harmony; the magical effect of the *tout ensemble*—not yet awhile, but ten years hence, when my trees, shrubs and plants would have reached maturity. I knew already that five months, growth in the tropics is equal to that of so many years in England. On such knowledge I based the future and removed the first sod of earth.

To be continued

x x x

AROMATIC HERB

Basil

Plants with edible aromatic leaves are raised in kitchen gardens to be used for flavouring dishes. Cultured women of the country are discovering new and more delicious practical recipes for using these aromatic herbs. *Basil* is one such. It is used very widely in the Western countries and in Egypt as a dish-flavouring herb. In India, the plant comes up luxuriantly under minimum care but very few know its value as a household flavouring agent. The Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*—family Labiatae) is closely related to the sacred plant "*Thulasi*" (*Ocimum sanctum*). In Hindi, the Basil is known as Bantulsi. In Tamil, it is called *Thiru-neetu-Patchai* and is a favourite of God Shiva.

The whole plant is considered to possess medicinal value. It was the common herb administered for all urinary complaints sixty years ago, before specific allopathic medicines were discovered. Its herbal cooling effect was so well known that every wayside sherbet shops in India during 1920-1930, added a little Basil before handing it over to the customers. I have enjoyed this drink in my childhood days. The Basil seed is black in colour and is as small as the seed of *Amaranthus* (keerai). It swells up to the size of pepper and appears as an attractive globular translucent jelly blob, resembling the Papaya seeds, when soaked in water for a few hours.

The plant itself is attractive and grows to a height of 40-50 cm as a single stalk, which ends with its

terminal flower-stalk which resembles the Thula flower spike. However, the flower parts are bigger and the central stalk longer reaching a length of 10 to 15 cm. The attractive leaf-cutter-bee is specially drawn to this bilabiate flower and it is a grand sight to see this bee (one centi-metre long) with coloured blue green stripes on its abdomen, hovering near this flower stalk, remaining stationary in the air, for nearly two to three seconds. The leaves of Basil are bigger than that of Tulsi and are ovate with a pointed tip, reaching a length of 5 cm. When the plant pleasant smell is quickly wafted by the air, which is a special characteristic of this garden herb. Scientists feel that distinct types with higher flavour content can be selected in this species.

The plants are raised from seeds, which spill out of the dried fruit as it matures. It takes a few weeks for the seeds to germinate. When once the plant is introduced into a garden, there will be a series of plants growing all through the year with self-sown seeds. This hardly aromatic herb loves bright sun light and is grown in small beds. It also comes up well in pots. A flower pot, 25 cm in diameter, can maintain five plants to maturity. The plants flower in four to five weeks, time and continue to live for nearly one year adding a number of side branches.

The plants are usually free from pests and diseases and this has added its value as a culinary herb without the taint of insecticides or pesticides.

Hindu



ONE-OX PLOUGH

Eases Farmers' Burden

By John Madeley

"This is something our ancestors never dreamt of" was a farmer's astonished reaction as he watched a new technology being demonstrated by the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA) at its Debre Zeit Reserach Station in the Ethiopian Highlands. A dramatic departure from traditional practice, a plough was being pulled, not by the usual pair of oxen, but by only one. ILCA engineers had successfully modified the traditional plough yoke and harness mechanism to allow just one ox to do the drawing. To farmers in Ethiopia, and in other parts of the developing world, this transformation could be of enormous benefit. For these farmers, having to use two oxen can be expensive if not ruinous. Only wealthier farmers are lucky enough to own two such animals. Indeed, surveys carried out by ILCA found that 20 per cent of Ethiopia's highland farmers did not possess

any oxen at all—and that at least 30 per cent owned only one animal. Just under half the farmers had two. Farmers with less than two animals have either to borrow or rent them at ploughing time. Some farmers may share their animals, but as farms are often very scattered, this means that farmers may have to tramp long distances, robbing them of productive time. Renting either one or both oxen in Ethiopia may mean having to pay the equivalent of 200 kg of grain plus the maintenance of the ox for the rental period almost half the purchase price of the animal. Farmers with less than two oxen are also caught in a position where they often cannot borrow or rent the animal or animals they need at the best time for planting. Being dependent on others, they may not be able to cultivate their land sufficiently early to ensure timely planting and give themselves the best possible chance of a good yield of the food crops they urgently need. ILCA surveys found that the number of oxen that farmers owned strongly influenced the area they cultivated. Farmers with two or more oxen plough at least 2.7 hectares; those with one ox crop 1.9 whereas those with no oxen prepare an average of only 1.2. In addition, farmers with more oxen grow a greater proportion of cereals, which are very labour-intensive and require more draught power for land preparation, but which have a higher market value than pulses.

The assumption that two oxen are needed for cultivation was challenged in 1982 by two members of the ILCA team, Frank Anderson and Guido Gryseels. Believing that a single ox might be sufficient, they decided to make a comparatively simple modification to the traditional maresha plough. Abiye Astatke, the team's agricultural engineer, replaced the traditional neck yoke with a simple inverted V-type yoke and a swingle-tree, joined by two traces made of nylon ropes. A simple metal skid was attached under the shortened beam to overcome the tendency of the modified maresha to penetrate the ground at an oblique rather than an acute angle. Tests showed that the single ox could cultivate 60-70 per cent of the area ploughed by a pair. Cultivation was slightly shallower than with the traditional maresha, but the desired depth could be reached by going over the ground. The advantages of the single ox arrangement are therefore that it cuts costs for the poorest farmers, makes it more likely that they can cultivate when they need to, and could mean higher food availability in low income farming families.

There are other advantages too. Ethiopia alone has some six million draught oxen. Widespread use of the single ox could dramatically reduce numbers. Fewer breeding and replacement stock would be needed—and the animal food available would therefore be spread less thinly, meaning more food for each of the remaining oxen. The improved nutritional

status of the ox would enable it to plough faster and more efficiently. In addition, grazing pressures would be reduced, thus lowering the risk of environmental degradation. More timely cultivation of larger areas of land would lead to increased food production and allow more balanced cereal/pluse rotations to be practised. Single ox technology has the further advantage that it requires only a minimum investment—the new yoke and harness can be made mainly from local materials and the modifications to the maresha can be carried out by the village blacksmith. Farmers in the Ethiopia highlands are now testing the new technology. As far as the ox is concerned, the days of the pair may be drawing to an end.



THE BUFFALO

'Tractor' cum 'Milk Giver'

The most recent Census of Agriculture conducted in 1982 has shown a total buffalo population of 562,297 for the entire island. This is a serious situation. There appears to have been a rapid depletion of the numbers of these animals with increase in human population which had nearly tripled within the last 25 years. Here was an animal that would have substantially contributed to the national milk output as well as bridged the meat supply situation of Sri Lanka. This total buffalo population figures has also been broken down into 24 administrative districts and farm holdings. The same Census has also provided data on the buffalo in terms of age, sex and type.

The buffalo is a "fixture" in the rural landscape of many Asian countries. Sri Lanka is no exception. But unfortunately there has been no overall policy for understanding the many faceted problems of the buffalo in relation to agriculture, in the different agro-ecological conditions, in relation to milk and milk products and the production of meat. There are several possible reasons for this neglect of the buffalo. One, is its very familiarity which has made many people take this patient and placid animal for granted? The fact that these animals are largely assets of small farmers and peasants may be a contributory factor in the urban-oriented planners, overlooking the need for a closer study and understanding of a valuable resource. The unquestioned and non-selective adoption of techniques of agricultural and livestock production from industrialised countries and the availability of comparatively cheap fuel and artificial fertilizers and the promotional campaigns that have been carried out by interested parties in support of these imported products have also contributed towards the neglect of the buffalo.

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All the years, Sri Lanka's dependance on imported agricultural in-puts such as fertilizer and machinery as well as the heavy dependance on imported milk products have cast severe burdens on the financial resources of the country. After the escalation of fueled prices, fertilizer is no longer a cheap commodity. Agricultural machinery, specially the four-wheeled and two-wheeled tractors are pricewise completely out of the reach of the small farmers who constitute the backbone of the agricultural sector of the country. *It is for these principal reasons that comprehensive "umbrella" studies on the Sri Lanka buffalo should be undertaken with a view to stabilising an overall policy framework relating to all important aspects of the buffalo.* Once such a study is completed, it will be possible to identify various sub-sectors which will require more detailed and in-depth studies into technical as well as socio-economic and cultural conditions, having a bearing on the utilisation and management of the buffalo in different regions of the island. The proposed study should be an inter-disciplinary one which combines the relevant technical disciplines as well as the social science related disciplines such as economics and sociology.

A "Workshop on Water Buffalo Research in Sri Lanka" sponsored by Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with developing Countries (SAREC) was held in Peradeniya in November 1980. A large number of Sri Lankan scientists from the Department of Animal Production and Health, the University of Peradeniya and the Agrarian Research and Training Institute participated in this Workshop. In the recommendation on research priorities contained in the Interim Report it was stated that: "The Workshop was of the opinion that wider understanding of the management and utilisation of buffaloes in different agro-ecological zones and at varying socio-economic levels is required. It was therefore recommended that a large scale survey of indigenous buffaloes be undertaken on a multidisciplinary basis....." Having made this recommendation, the WORKSHOP proceeded to identify the matters which required study and understanding of an overall nature. These areas are:

- (1) Buffalo population in terms of numbers;
- (2) The pattern of geographical distribution;
- (3) The patterns of ownership;
- (4) Herd sizes and the nature of the composition in terms of male/female/age group/etc.;
- (5) The prevailing methods of feeding and management and possible areas of improvement;
- (6) The present patterns of utilization for draught, meat, milk and other by-products and possible areas for improvement;
- (7) Reproduction, disease and mortality;
- (8) Disposal of stock;
- (9) Socio-economic and cultural aspects related to the proper development and management of the buffalo;
- (10) The relationship of the buffalo in relation to other livestock.

There is thus an urgent need for an inter-disciplinary study to be carried out both at *theoretical* level, collating and analysing the already available data along with field surveys in selected locations to cover all matters identified above. This would then provide the correct focus. *Courtesy A.I.C.S. Ltd.*

SCIENCE, DEVELOPMENT and MAN

POPULATION AND POVERTY — 4

Cart Before Horse

Prof. A. C. J. Weerakoon

I have given you some account of the origin and growth of the Malthusian Myth; what are its consequences for us? *First:* All the scientific work that has been done on growth of population is ignored. Malthus claimed that living things increased in numbers according to a geometric series, so that a population would grow with ever increasing rapidity till it met with disaster—a famine, for example, which, to quote his own words, "with one mighty blow, levels the population with the food . . .". Since the nineteen-twenties there has been a considerable amount of research done on the growth of animal populations, both in the laboratory and in the field; and it has been demonstrated over and over again that a newly established population grows at first slowly, then faster and faster, this accelerating phase continuing up to a certain point only, beyond that point growth becomes slower and slower until it ultimately ceases. (When the size of such a population is plotted on a graph against its age one gets a curve rather like a much drawn out letter S, which is known as the sigmoid or logistic curve). As the population grows it seems to generate a growing resistance in its environment, a resistance which gradually reduces the growth-rate of that population to zero.

The research studies referred to above have also clearly demonstrated a *second* characteristic feature of growing populations: after the period of active growth just described the population settles down to a period of balance, when its size fluctuates above and below a mean value. There are many reports of such research findings in the book "principles of Animal Ecology" by Allée and his colleagues, but I should like to tell you about a local animal to which the same principles of population growth seem to apply, the Giant African Snail, known to us as the Kalutara Snail. In the past few decades this animal has gradually extended its range eastwards from Africa, and has

just made its appearance on the Pacific coast of the U.S.A. It lays a few hundred eggs at a time and, since both male and female organs are found in the same individual, *every* snail in a population is a potential producer of eggs. When it invades a new territory its numbers increase with explosive rapidity. Nothing man has hitherto tried has succeeded in restraining this explosive increase of the snail. Yet, after a time, the explosive rapidity of the growth ceases and the population ultimately settles down to fluctuating but relatively steady size. This check in the explosive growth of the snail population is not due to its having exhausted its environment of food, nor to epidemic disease, nor to the activity of some new predator, on a large scale.

Exactly how the environment controls the reproductive rate of an organism (reducing it as its population grows) we are still rather in the dark about. The environment of an animal is a very complex structure and there can be little doubt that it exerts its control in many different ways. Nevertheless, we do have some clues, and of these the most significant from our point of view are perhaps those supplied by the research of Sloanaker on rats. He reared five groups of rats through six generations, subjecting them all to the same conditions except in one particular—the protein content of their diet. This varied by steps of 4 per cent from 10 per cent in the food of the first group to 26 per cent in the food of the fifth group. Throughout the eight years of this experiment he kept the rats under careful observation, and amongst the many interesting things he discovered were the following: The length of reproductive life, the fertility, the number of litters per pair, the number of babies per litter, all these were as a rule greater in a group reared on a diet containing less protein than they were in a group reared on a diet containing more protein.

The significance of these findings should be immediately apparent to you. It is well known that the poorer classes in this country (and in any country) consume less protein meat and fish are costly foods, and breed faster than the richer classes. And the same relationship holds as between the poorer countries like India or Ceylon and the richer countries like Britain or the U.S.A. There must, of course, be many reasons why the poor breed faster than the rich. The promiscuity of their living conditions forced on them by their shortage of housing, their earlier marriages, their relative lack of cultural interests to occupy their spare time, the utter impossibility of their saving enough money for any worthwhile purpose—all these must tend to raise their birth rate; And it is necessary to note that all these causes ultimately spring from their poverty and low standards of living. But in addition to all these it certainly seems very likely that they breed faster because they eat less well. This conclusion, to which Sloanaker's experimental results point,

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is directly contrary to the view propagated by Malthus and by the Neo-Malthusians, that the poor are poor, that they eat less well, because they breed too fast. Malthus and the Neo-Malthusians commit the blunder of putting the cart before the horse.

Whilst I am on the subject of modern work on Population Growth there is another very significant investigation I must tell you about. Raymond Pearl, one of the world's leading authorities on population growth of man and of the lower animals, together with another American, Reed, showed in 1920, that the growth of the U.S.A. population between 1790 and 1910 could be described by a logistic equation—that is, it increased in the manner I described to you at the beginning of this section. And by means of its logistic curve they *predicted* what the U.S. population would be in 1920, in 1930 and in 1940. Then, after these three censuses had been carried out, these two scientists together with a third, named Kish, examined the census returns and showed that the populations as actually counted had differed from their predictions by a mere 1.0 per cent for 1920, by a mere 0.25 per cent for 1930, and a mere 3.7 per cent for 1940. Even the largest of these differences, 3.7 per cent, was of the same order of magnitude as the probable error contained in the enumeration techniques. So, the human population too has been shown to increase logistically, and not geometrically as claimed by Malthus.

Finally, it is important to remember that history itself has proved Malthus wrong. In 1798, when he claimed that misery and poverty and vice in Britain were the result of there being too many people in that island, the population of Britain was about seven millions. Today (1954) it is nearly seven times that size, and yet her people are much better fed, much better clothed, much better housed, much happier than they were when Malthus wrote. Nor can one save the Malthusian position by arguing that this is due to the extra food and wealth that flows into Britain from her colonies and neo-colonies for then it becomes obvious that before one dare preach the necessity of population reduction to the peoples of the colonies and neo-colonies one must first restore to them the food and the wealth now taken from them.

To be concluded

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ENVIRONMENT

Dangers of Eucalyptus

By B. Ramakrishna Rao

Angry farmers in Karnataka recently protested against the large scale eucalyptus plantation under-
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taken in the State and threatened to destroy these plantations if a World Bank aided 10 million dollar eucalyptus forestry project is not scrapped immediately. This comes in the wake of comments made by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at a meeting of the parliamentary committee attached to the department of science, technology and environment against the planting of eucalyptus at the cost of traditional farming. Mrs. Gandhi told the members of Parliament to educate the farmers on the harmful effects of planting eucalyptus and suggested plantation of traditional and more useful species like neem. The environmental department has, long before, made it clear that the attempts of State forest departments to plant eucalyptus in ecologically threatened areas should be resisted. While in Karnataka, more than 2.5 lakh hectares of forest and rainfed farmlands have been brought under eucalyptus, in the north western States of Punjab and Haryana, eucalyptus plantations account for nearly 1 per cent of the total area under cultivation. In recent years, the Karnataka State forest department's now found love for the exotic eucalyptus: seedling are sold at a throw-away price of 25 paise each—has come under severe criticism from planters, agricultural experts and ecologists. Planting of fast growing, drought-resistant eucalyptus in India was taken up in mid-seventies with the express objective of ending fuel wood crises in rural areas.

The plantation drive received a severe jolt in early 1980 when the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Management brought out a report highlighting the ill-effect of eucalyptus to rural Karnataka. The report entitled '*Social, Economic and Ecological Impact of Social Forestry in Kolar*' come down heavily on the wide spread planting of eucalyptus in a once fertile and rain-fed area growing food crops. Wrote Prof. Bandopadhyaya, one of the authors of the report, 'The monoculture of the eucalyptus violates the fundamental ecological principle of genetic diversity . . . by championing the cause of eucalyptus, politicians and industrialists are tampering with ecology about which they know very little.' Citing the findings of the Soil and Water Conservation Research Institution, he observed: 'While the indigenous pine trees consumed 760 mm of water a year, eucalyptus consumed 1200 mm. Because of the low interception of the rain water, run off and soil erosion increased with eucalyptus. The anti-eucalyptus lobby also points out that the growing water scarcity and top soil erosion in the verdant, undulating Nilgiri hills are as a result of wide spread planting of eucalyptus. They say Nilgiri hills are fast losing their fertility and beauty due to the replacement of natural forests by the eucalyptus plantations.'

But the social forestry experts refute the argument saying that the water scarcity in Nilgiris is not due to

eucalyptus planting, but as a result of unscientific cultivation of potatoes causing the erosion of topsoil. The forest department of Karnataka, which is faced with the arduous task of erasing the impression created by the anti-eucalyptus lobby, strongly contends the propaganda that eucalyptus, by its voracious in-take of ground water, induces a process of aridity. Says Mr. Shyam Sundar, Chief Conservator of Forests: 'The argument that eucalyptus absorbed as much as 80 gallons of water a day is not based on reality. For this, a plantation area with eucalyptus planted two metres apart should receive nine centimetres of rain per day. Taking half of this as average, the yearly uptake of water should be 1642.5 cm which is unbelievably high. But no part of the country where eucalyptus has been planted, receives so much of rain. In fact, eucalyptus grown on Nilgiris for over a century used only 35 cm of the 135 cm rainfall there. According to him the wrong notion about eucalyptus is mainly due to the pooling of all the negative qualities of 600 and odd species. But the eucalyptus hybrid adopted in India, rather than being a wasteful feeder on water, is one of the most efficient utilisers of scarce water resources and it produces more dry matter with less water when compared to other native species, he says.

For Mr. Sundarlal Bhaguna, the patriarch of the popular eco-consciousness movement going by the name of 'Chipko', the eucalyptus plantations are an open invitation to a host of natural disasters. Mr. Bhaguna is emphatic that planting of eucalyptus in the Uttara and area in the foothills of Himalayas has been mainly responsible for the drying up of water resources, stunting fodder growth and shooting up of overall temperature by one degree centigrade. According to him, not even grass grows near eucalyptus. Mr. Bhaguna's tirade against the eucalyptus has not gone unchallenged. A farmer belonging to the pro-eucalyptus lobby, refuting the statement, says an integrated study of all eucalyptus plantations on scientific lines is yet to be carried out to assess its real impact on environment. In most cases the planting of eucalyptus is done in semi-degraded areas and it is not fair to hold eucalyptus guilty for losing soil fertility, he avers. Joining issue with Mr. Bhaguna, another wild life expert said that because of its light crown which allows more infiltration of sunlight, luxuriant undergrowth is a conspicuous feature of eucalyptus plantations. At the Black Buck Sanctuary at Rainbennur, fodder availability to the grazing fauna increased considerably after the introduction of eucalyptus, he points out. Farmers in Gujarat claim that they grow vegetables in the eucalyptus plantations. All said and done, marginal farmers in Karnataka see a potential threat to their existence from eucalyptus, they allege that rich and politically influential agriculturalists, with an eye on massive economic returns,

have taken to eucalyptus planting on a massive scale. The marginal farmer also traces the near chronic drought and erratic rainfall in many parts of the State due to eucalyptus plantation. They complain that wells, ponds and tanks in many villages have dried up after this ecological monster was planted. Eucalyptus is also said to have contributed in a big way to the decreasing yields of cereals and millets by taking away previous farmlands one factor that sociologists blame for rampant malnutrition in India's rural hinterland.

In mid-1983, hundreds of small farmers in the Tumkur district expressed their ire against the forest department's new-found love for eucalyptus by storming the State nurseries and destroying thousands of saplings. Not to be left behind, within a few days farmers in the neighbouring districts of Hassan and Kolar, wearing green towels—a symbol of protest—followed suit. While the ecological ill-effects of eucalyptus are very much in the realm of dispute, its social and economic consequences are quite conspicuous. Essentially, eucalyptus was introduced with the motive of increasing that fuel and fodder availability to obviate the rural poor's dependence on forests. Deforestation, needless to mention, has been at the root of ecological disasters in India's rural backyard. But as it turned out, more than 90 per cent of eucalyptus would only go to meet the massive needs of rayon and paper industries, leaving the rural poor where they are. It is exactly for this reason that eucalyptus has been dubbed as a 'commercial and industrial species'. Prof. Bandopadhyaya alleges that the forest department has hatched subterfuge in collusion with industrialists and politicians for growing eucalyptus as a substitute to traditional food crops in many parts of Karnataka. As a result, the flourishing ever-green fields in many rural areas of Karnataka have yielded to brown, skyward looking eucalyptus plantations. Alien conspiracy has also been suspected behind India's keenness for the eucalyptus plantation drive. As Mr. Bhaguna says many industrially advanced countries, never willing to disturb their own ecosystem have cleverly sold the idea of planting eucalyptus to the Third World countries. Most areas of Philippines have taken to the cultivation of Subabul to meet the pulp requirements of Japanese industries; this is identical to India taking up large scale plantation of eucalyptus. But, in Addis Ababa where eucalyptus is grown on a large scale much of the cooking is done with the eucalyptus wood and leaves. Ethiopians also use eucalyptus wood for making tool handles, furniture and telephone and fence poles.

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RELIGION, CULTURE LITERATURE

RAJOVADA JATAKA

Dukanipata

This story the Master told whilst he was living in Jetavana, to explain how a king was taught a lesson. This will be set forth in the Tesakuna Birth. It is said that one day the king of Kosala had just passed sentence in a very difficult case involving moral wrong. After his meal, with hands not yet dry, he proceeded in his splendid chariot to visit the Master; and the king saluted him, his feet beautiful like the open lotus flower and saw down aside. *Then the Master* addressed him in these words. "Why, my lord king, what brings you here at this time of day?" "Sir," said he, "I missed my time because I was sitting on a difficult case, involving moral wrong; now I have finished it, and eaten, and here I am, with my hands hardly dry, to wait upon you." "My lord king", replied the Master, "to judge a cause with justice and impartiality is the right thing; that is the way to heaven. Now when you first have the service of a being all-wise like me, it is no wonder if you should judge your case fairly and justly; but the wonder is when kings have only had the advice of scholars who are not all-wise, and yet have decided fairly and justly, avoiding the Four Ways of Wickedness, and observing the Ten Royal virtues and after ruling justly have gone to swell the hosts of heaven." Then, at the king's request, he told a story of the olden time.

Once upon a time, when Brahmaḍatta was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta was conceived by his Queen Consort; and the ceremonies proper to her state having been duly done, she was afterwards safely delivered. On his name-day, the name they gave him was Prince Brahmaḍatta. In course of time, he grew up, and at sixteen years went to Takksila for his education; where he mastered all branches of learning, and on his father's death he became king in his stead, and ruled with uprightness and all rectitude, administering justice with no regard has to his own will or whim. And as he ruled thus justly, his ministers on their part were also just; thus, while all things were justly done, there was none who brought a false suit into court. Presently all the bustle of suitors ceased within the precincts of the palace; all day long the ministers might sit on the bench, and go away without seeing a single suitor. The courts were deserted.

Then the Bodhisatta thought to himself, "Because of my just government not one suitor comes to try issue in court; the old hubbub is quiet; the courts of

law are deserted. Now I must search whether I have any fault in me; which if I find, I will eschew it, and live a good life hereafter." From that time he tried continually to find some one who would tell him of a fault; but of all who were about him at court he could not find one such; nothing could he hear but good of himself. "Perhaps", thought he, "they are all so much afraid of me that they say no ill of me but only good," and so he went about to try those who were outside his walls. But with these it was just the same. Then he made inquisition of the citizens at large and outside the city questioned those who belonged to the suburbs at the four city gates. Still there was none who had any fault to find; nothing but praises could he hear. Lastly, with intent to try the country side, he entrusted all government to his ministers, and mounted in his carriage, and taking only the driver with him, left the city in disguise. All the country he traversed, even to the frontier; but not a fault-finder could he light upon; all he could hear was only his own praises. So back he turned from the marches, and set his face homewards again by the highroad.

Now it fortuned that at this very time Mallika, the king of Kosala, had done the very same thing. He too was a just king, and he had been searching for his faults; but amongst those about him there was none who had any fault to find; and hearing nothing but praise, he had been making enquiry throughout all the country, and had but then arrived at the same spot. These two met, in a place where the carriage-road was deeply sunk between two banks, and there was no room for one carriage to pass another.

"Get your carriage out of the way", said King Mallika's driver to the driver of the king of Benares.

"No, no driver," said he, "out of the way with yours. Know that in this carriage sits the great monarch Brahmaḍatta, lord of the kingdom of Benares".

"Not so, driver," replied the other, "in this carriage sits the great king Mallika, lord of the realm of Kosala. It is for you to make way, and to give place to the carriage of our king!"

"Why, here's a king too", thought the driver of the king of Benares. "What in the world is to be done?" Then a thought struck him; he would enquire what should be the age of the two kings, so that the younger should give way to the elder. And he made enquiry of the other driver how old his king was, but he learnt that both were of the same age. There upon he asked the extent of this king's power, wealth, and glory, and all points touching his caste and clan and his family; discovering that both of them had a country three hundred leagues long, and that they were alike in power, wealth, glory and the nature of their family and lineage. Then he be-thought him that place might be given to the better man; so he requested that

the other driver should describe his master's virtues. The man replied by the first verse of poetry following in which he set forth his monarch's faults as though they were so many virtues:—

*"Rough to the rough, King Mallika the mild with mildness sways,
Masters the good by goodness, and the bad with badness pays.
Give place, give place, O driver! such are this monarch's ways."*

"Oh," said the man of the king of Benares, "is that all you have to say about your king's virtues?" "Yes", said the other—"if these are his virtues, what must his vices be" "Vices be it, then," quoth he, "if you will; but let us hear what your king's virtues may be like". "Listen then," rejoined the first, and repeated the second verse:—

*"He conquers wrath by mildness, the bad with goodness sways,
By gifts the miser vanquishes and lies with truth repays.
Give place, give place, O driver, such are this monarch's ways."*

At these words both king Mallika and his driver descended from their carriage, and loosed the horses, and moved it out of the way, to give place to the king of Benares. Then the king of Benares gave good admonition to king Mallika, saying "Thus and thus must you do;" after which he returned to Benares, and there gave alms and did good all his life, till at the last he went to swell the hosts of heaven. And king Mallika took the lesson to heart; and after traversing the length and breadth of the land, and lighting upon none who had any fault to find, returned to his own city; where he gave alms all his life and did good, till at the end he too went to swell the hosts of heaven.

When the Master had ended this discourse, which he began for the purpose of giving a lesson to the king of Kosala, he identified the Birth: "*Moggallana was then the driver of king Mallika, Ananda was the king, Striputta was the driver of the king of Benares, but I myself was the king.*"

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THE ROMANTIC ORIGIN OF

Hyderabad

By Z. H. Kazmi

Once, during a lively chat, a friend of mine asserted that Hyderabad was by far the most elegant city of the East. A visit to this colourful capital of the erstwhile

Hyderabad state and now of Andhra Pradesh, convinced me that it was no exaggeration. Ranking fifth among the cities of India in respect of population, Hyderabad has retained much of its oriental charm. It was founded in 1589 by Sultan Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah, fourth King of Golkonda, who name it "Bhagyanagar", after his wife, Bhagyamati. It became Hyderabad after she was given the title of Hyder Mahal.

History has it that Bhagyamati, born of humble Hindu parentage in a small cottage where now stands the imposing landmark of Charminar, met Prince Mohammad Quli, the then young heir-apparent of Golkonda, in quite dramatic circumstances. While filling her pitcher one day from the flooded Musi river, she was swept away by the strong current. Hearing her cries for help, the prince, who was then on a joy-ride, plunged into the swirling waters of the river and rescued her from the jaws of death. But this proved to be more than a passing act of chivalry, for he was smitten by her simple beauty and she, overwhelmed by sense of gratitude, developed a deep attachment for him. Thus began one of history's rarest romances, involving a prince and a pauper, and that too belonging to different faiths. The news of the prince's love for the girl reached his father. The Sultan frowned upon the "waywardness" of his son, and put him under the strict watch of his Prime Minister. Obedient as he was Mohammad Quli abided by his father's will and suffered the pangs of separation with restraint. Bhagyamati, an accomplished singer and dancer, also waited for the fulfilment of her love. On the old Sultan's passing away, the trumpets from the ramparts of the fabled fort of Golkonda heralded the reign of Mohammad Quli, and she drove in state from her crumbling cottage to his royal residence as his Begum. A great Patron of arts and architecture, music and literature that he was, Sultan Mohammad Quli spared no efforts to make his dream city—Hyderabad—worthy of Bhagyamati.

"No city in India approached Hyderabad in beauty and grandeur... the city spread over five kos (17 Kms). All the roads run parallel and water channels line both sides of the streets and rows of trees are planted alongside them", wrote Farishta, the noted Persian traveller and historian of the medieval period. "The city has been most artistically planned and constructed and has very wide Roads, says M. Tavernier, the French traveller, who happened to visit Hyderabad as it sprang up majestically on the banks of Musi. But Hyderabad of today is no more the city built and adorned by Sultan Mohammad Quli. After Golkonda surrendered to Aurangzeb in 1687, the city bore the brunt of the Mughal attack. It was pillaged and plundered and almost all its beautiful structures were razed to the ground. However, the Charminar was one among the few to escape the fury

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of the Mughal armies. The Charminar (meaning four minarets) is another treatise demonstrating the architectural talents of the era as well as the patronage extended by Sultan Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah to the finer aspects of human endeavour. It was built to commemorate the cessation of an epidemic of plague that took a heavy toll in his domain. With a Muslim mosque and a Hindu temple built side by side on its roof, this "Arc de Triumphe" of the East still stands in the heart of the city as a true monument of the remarkable religious tolerance of its noble builder. The building has a square hall with an arch in each of its faces and lofty minarets at each of its angles. Mounted on the 55 metre-high minarets are the small domes with gilt terminals; and each is surrounded by three galleries. The parapet is adorned with panels of lattice work of great variety and design. Below it runs a small arcade with an ornamental cornice coming next and again a larger arcade and another ornamental cornice.

The magnificent Mecca Masjid which has also survived Mughal pillage was built by Mohammad Qutub Shah, the sixth King of Golkonda, in 1614. It was further beautified and expanded by Aurangzeb in 1692. Constructed entirely of stone, the mosque is a superb example of stucco decoration in exquisite Indian polished plaster. Some 10,000 devotees can offer prayers at a time here. In the southern side of its extensive court lie buried the remains of all the Nizams from the time of Nawab Nizam Ali Khan who died in 1803. One of the chief attractions of the twin city of Hyderabad-Secunderabad is the Hussain Sagar, a fascinating sheet of water, sprawling over an area of seven square kms. It was constructed by Sultan Mohammad Ibrahim, the third King of Golkonda, to supply sweet water to his capital. It was named after Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Mohammad who along with his children, was denied water for three days by the cruel Omayyads. There are also several other pretty lakes in and around Hyderabad. About 10 kms from the city is the famous fort and royal tombs of Golkonda, the ancient capital of the Qutub Shahi Kings, who ruled over Deccan from 1517 to 1687 AD. The fort contains the remains of the Qutub Shahi buildings and a host of palaces called the Nau Mahala. Here it so seems that every stone speaks a story and every gust of wind tells a tale.

The general plan of the tombs of Golkonda Kings is a dome standing upon a square base which is surrounded by an arcade of pointed arches. The gallery is single or double storeyed and the architectural effect is quite elegant. The interiors of the domes are laid out with interesting arches in infinite variety and the middle of the floor is occupied by the sarcophagus of polished black stones. At one time the walls and cupolas of all the principal tombs were

adorned with glazed tiles, fragments of which can still be traced on some tombs. The architecture of the mosque attached to the tomb of Hayat Bakshi Begum (mother of Mohammad Qutub Shah, the sixth King) shows that under the broadminded Qutub Shahi Kings, Hindu motifs and decorative devices were in free use even in religious buildings. Noted among the structures built in the early part of the present century are the buildings of the Osmania University, constructed in 1918 and named after the late Nawab Osman Ali Khan, the last of the Nizams. There are few buildings in India which can match their majestic structure. The design is primarily a mixture of Hindu and Muslim architecture of the Deccan, each having distinct characteristics of its own and together providing a unique blend. The grand staircase and the highly ornate ceiling greet a visitor as he steps into the entrance hall of the Law College. The well-furnished library has about one lakh books including rare manuscripts in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Telugu, Marathi and Kannada. The University has another distinction to its credit—it is the first in the country to impart university education in an Indian Language, namely, Urdu.

The most magnificent among the latest buildings in the city is the Falaknuma Mahal, built by Nawab Sri Veqarul Umer. Now worth Rs. 10 crore, this palace is replete with rare and beautiful paintings, books and other pieces of art. The facade is in the Grecian style. The pretty vestibule is fitted with marble seats, surrounding a marble fountain. The Chowmahla and the King Kothi (the residence of the Nizam) are among the other palaces which are noted for their architectural splendour. Established in 1931, the Hyderabad museum has a large variety of exhibits arranged on cultural basis. The public garden, one of the biggest city gardens in India, is a combination of the zoological and botanical gardens. One of the great attractions for tourists in Hyderabad is the famous Salarjung Museum. Nawab Mir Yusuf Ali Khan, popularly known as the Salarjung III, who died in 1949, left behind a vast collection of art treasures which forms the basic collection of this museum. These have been systematically arranged in his own palace. The valuable collection includes some rare and choice works of both Eastern and Western art, original Indian manuscripts; originals of European paintings and sculpture, Dresden chinaware, French furniture, swords and daggers of Mughal emperors, and precious pieces of jades and enamels. It has the largest collection of art works acquired by any individual in the world. The ruins as well as the existing structures in the capital of the Qutub Shahi King, which figured prominently in the medieval history, truly recall the glory and greatness of Golkonda.

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CONFIDENTIALLY

• Tender Tales • Air Tax

IS IT NOT TRUE that a story is going the rounds in commercial and political circles that the Chairman of the Ceylon Fertilizer Corporation (CFC) has submitted his resignation? That up to the time of writing these notes it is not known whether the resignation has been accepted or whether it has been withdrawn? That according to all who know anything about the Fertilizer world and about this Corporation, this particular Chairman has an impeccable record of integrity and that it therefore came as a surprise to many that he had decided to tender his resignation? That as it happens in Sri Lanka, or elsewhere, there appears to be already scrambles by various individuals to become the Chairman of this Corporation? That there is a great deal of mystery as to why this Chairman decided to submit his resignation? That in the meantime, commercial circles are still buzzing why a tender for 30,000 tons of Urea at US \$ 155 per metric ton (MT) C & F Colombo was not proceeded with after a delay of two and a half months? *That all are agreed that neither the Minister concerned nor the Chairman—both of whom are said to have excellent track records—had anything to do with either with this delay or for abandoning the tender?* That the question is being asked as to who was responsible for this "bungling" if it was not the Minister or the Chairman? That commercial circles are interested in finding out who was responsible for this "bungle" costing the country nearly Rs. 35 million especially as the Corporation Chairman had insisted that the original purchase at \$ 155 per MT should have been made whereby the Corporation could have saved this money? That what is more significant is that the local agent of the Pakistan tenderer with connections with certain powers—that he has not been black listed but only the Principal has been black listed? That what is still more significant is that the order was placed with the Pakistan Principal and the present order at enhanced prices was also placed when the Minister concerned was away from Sri Lanka? That it is suggested that it is to avoid all such complications and interference that the Chairman has submitted his resignation?

IS IT ALSO NOT TRUE that there is a great deal of bazaar talk about the way the State Distilleries Corporation calls and deals with the annual tenders for rectified spirits? That last year the tender was called on the basis of separate deliveries? That it is said that tender conditions were flouted and that the order was placed with one tenderer on the basis of one shipment? That what commercial circles are anxious to find out is whether the whole or part of the massive saving the tenderer would have made was passed on to the Corporation? That what is said is that if the original tender had called for one shipment for the total annual requirement other tenderers would have submitted

offers far lower than for single shipments? That it is now whispered that this year the tender is to be awarded to a tenderer whose samples are said to have arrived twelve days after the closing date? That evil tongues are therefore naturally tempted to say that this tenderer would have been able to know of the analyses of samples of other competitors? That there are even whispers that the local multi-national which was awarded the tender did not have the Power of Attorney from the foreign company as required in the tender documents? That this column will be happy to receive further information to add to what we have said or to correct us if we have erred?

IS IT NOT A FACT that there is great deal of heart-burning and discontent among ordinary householders about the water tax? That this column has received a letter which reads as follows: "This month, I received the first bill for water tax. It was for January showing 82 units and charging me Rs. 372/-. On checking the meter card, I find the consumption for the months of February and July between 90 to 143 units each month. This means my bills after January will be over Rs. 372/- to 663.05. The quarterly rates paid to the CMC is only Rs. 443/- which works out to only Rs. 147/ per month for my house. After the initial shock, I made inquiries from my neighbours and found that while a few received bill for only Rs. 30/- to 50/- for January the majority like me, have been billed between Rs. 300/- to 1,100/- the majority are the over 500 ones. I am not an engineer but having some knowledge of these meters as an industrialist, I did some testings with the help of a small electric water-pump which I have. This pump when directly fitted to the mains supply showed, a faster flow on the water meter, than when a single tap was opened. Collecting the same quantity of water at different times of the day or night. I found that the meter readings were not the same. At times when air gets into these pumps the centrifugal action of the pump does not draw water, but I found the water meter working even then. Even without a pump, if all the taps are closed and a large quantity like about 50 gallons are collected through one single tap at different intervals, the discrepancy in the meter readings can be easily verified. Another way is to fix a tube tightly to a tap and make the water flow into a bucket. Then one can see the large quantity of air bubbling out, specially in the day time than late in the night, when the flow of water is strong and steady. Thus it is my contention that what the water meter registers is not only the water (by volume) but also the air that passes through the tap. Is it right to bill us for the air that flows through our pipes? Are we not being illegally charged?" That this kind of meter billing is called air-tax and not water-tax? That all wonder whether something cannot be done about this tax on air that goes through the water mains? That this can easily become an election issue?

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