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SHIPPING CORPORATION

makes great headway

THE CEYLON SHIPPING CORPORATION is undoubtedly one of the most successful ventures undertaken by this Government. In the first place, this is the first Government since Independence which was able to set up a national shipping line. And secondly, unlike many governmental ventures, this Corporation has been able to run profitably from its very inception.

It will be recalled that private ventures were never able to break

into the shipping business. In the fifties there was an abortive attempt to start a national shipping venture with local capital. At that time, in the mid-fifties, it became clear that foreign shipping interests were violently hostile to any national shipping line developing in a country like Ceylon. These foreign interests were inclined to tolerate satellite shipping companies under their total tutelage so that international shipping ves-

ted interests were not challenged in any way—especially in the matter of fixing freight rates which brought high-profit freight rates.

When this private enterprise was unable to effect a breakthrough, the UNP Government promoted a government-local private capital-foreign collaboration venture known as the Ceylon Shipping Lines Ltd. The foreign collaboration, Norwegians in this case, sought to make this company nothing more than a freight brokering firm chartering vessels for governmental cargo at rates slightly cheaper than what Ceylon had paid before. The affairs of this company had become a public scandal owing to the activities of the foreign collaborators and some local entrepreneurs and a Commission had to inquire into its activities. As a result, the Ceylon Shipping Lines was not able to get itself on its feet in a big way and it limped along as a semi-government undertaking for many years continuing the chartering work it had done earlier. Its efforts to acquire ships and organise an effective national shipping line were not successful, although governmental streamlining after 1960 had ended some of the weaknesses and malpractices which had become inherent in the CSL Ltd in its early days.

It was only after the United Front Government had come to power in 1970 that a new and purposeful effort was made to set up a proper national shipping line. The Sri Lanka-China Shipping Agreement offered this country an excellent opportunity to own and buy ships on nationally advantageous terms. The Ceylon Shipp-

BOOKS

BOOKS are not easy to come by in Sri Lanka these days. And books, both those locally produced and those imported, are expensive. Even libraries find that their funds are not enough to purchase even a fraction of the new publications available today. Moreover, there are small libraries, off the beaten track, which find it extremely difficult to get any books at all. It is, therefore, encouraging that the envoy of a Commonwealth country has initiated a scheme which is pregnant with great potentialities particularly if the idea spreads to other agencies and institutions in a position to do like wise. It must be placed on record that Mr. Marshall, High Commissioner of Australia in Sri Lanka, in conjunction with CANZA (Ceylon-Australia-New Zealand Association) has successfully launched a scheme to donate books "to areas of need through libraries and institutions around the island." The essence of the idea, it is said, is to collect books from well-wishers in Australia, principally, but also in Sri Lanka—and now New Zealand too—and to donate them to needy libraries on a principled basis. "Out-of-town places are judged to be more needy than Colombo but the Project can, and is, embracing Colombo also. The subject of these books are wide-ranging but inevitably novels and light reading are prominent as well as educational books. A great demand is found to exist for children's, especially illustrated, books." In addition to donations of books from Australia and New Zealand, including donations from Ceylonese who have settled down there, High Commissioner Marshall has launched a local fund in rupees which can be used, and is being used, to purchase books available locally, in Sinhala and Tamil in the main, to supplement books received from well-wishers abroad. So far, Mr. Marshall has personally distributed books to libraries in Matale, Mannar, Vavuniya, Chunnakam, Bandarawela, Badulla and Batticaloa. Books have also been given to the Vidyalankara Campus (English Faculty) and the Soroptomist Club. Libraries interested in getting books and magazines from this Project should register with the CANZA Book Project at the Australian High Commission in Colombo.

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ing Corporation, which took over the CSL Ltd under its wing, had started with one vessel, and within four years the CSC has done extremely well. It now owns six vessels and it is yearly paying off the capital involved in the purchase with unfailing regularity. In addition, it is making ample profits after paying into the state coffers substantial sums in the form of taxes.

The Ceylon Shipping Corporation has also started a number of essential associated and subsidiary companies: Colombo Dockyards Ltd., the Ceylon Port Services Ltd., and the Ceylon Tanker Services Ltd. It has started a scheme for training personnel for the merchant navy especially in officer cadres. All this constitutes a great step forward, a record which the Government can be justly proud.

Another important and interesting feature is that the Annual Report of this Corporation has been released on an up to date basis. There are several corporations whose reports are many years behind time. There are other corporations whose audited accounts have not been published for years. Recent governmental efforts have improved matters considerably, but there is no doubt that the record of the Shipping Corporation is hard to beat. If the Corporations which are lagging behind in the matter of their annual reports and accounts would take a lesson from the Shipping Corporation, there would be much greater public confidence in nationalised enterprises than there is today.

The latest annual report of the Ceylon Shipping Corporation was tabled in Parliament in the first week of May Day by the Minister of Shipping and Tourism, Mr. P. B. G. Kalugalle. It showed that the profits (gross) of the CSC had increased by more than double to Rs. 50 million in 1974. The gross profit in 1973 was Rs. 21 million. The net foreign exchange income allowing for all operational expenditures and depreciation of vessels amounted to 5.2 m. US dollars as against 3.6 million US dollars in 1973. The net foreign exchange surplus for 1974, after allowing for all operational expenditures and repayment of foreign loan instalments with interest amounted

to 2 million dollars as against 1.6 million dollars in the previous year, the report said.

The Corporation has made provision in a sum of Rs. 18 million for the payment of income tax in respect of 1974, and Rs. 1 million has been transferred to the Treasury as a contribution to revenue. The three subsidiary companies of the CSC also made substantial net profits during 1974 as follows:—

Colombo Dockyard Limited	Rs.
	723,000
(for August 1974—December 1974 only)	
Ceylon Shipping Lines Ltd.	Rs.
	724,000
Ceylon Port Services Ltd.	Rs.
	647,000

The report said the CSC has also received substantial dividends from the Shipping Agency Companies in which it has a 40 per cent shareholding.

The total capital employed in the corporation increased from Rs. 124 million at the end of 1973 to Rs. 163 million at the end of 1974. Of this increase of approximately Rs. 40 million, Rs. 15 million was on account of increased capital contribution by Government while reserves and surpluses of the CSC increased by 22 million. On the other hand long term liabilities decreased by 11 million.

‘With the expansion of its business the Corporation is taking steps to open a European representative’s office in London in mid-1975’ the Shipping Ministry had stated in a newspaper release.

IT IS CLEAR, that after three full years of successful operations and the progress registered by the Ceylon Shipping Corporation, that the CSC is not a flash-in-the-pan. There is every reason to believe that the CSC can take root as a major national venture which can give this island its sea legs. If a small country like the Maldives can build a successful merchant fleet of nearly 50 ships, even if a number of them are only on charter, there is no reason why Sri Lanka should not do better. Apart from everything else, Sri Lanka has cargo of its own to carry both to and from the island. And, further, the Corporation has been built up in spite of the intense hostility and subversive activities of international shipping interests entren-

ched in various conferences. Anyone familiar with the methods of these shipping interests will know how difficult it is for a new national carrier to establish itself.

In the fifties and early sixties *Tribune* had devoted a great deal of space to examining the octopus-like activities of these international shipping interests and how they had prevented Ceylon from successfully establishing a private national shipping line. These same interests had made it virtually impossible for the Ceylon Shipping Lines Ltd also from making any headway. International conditions have no doubt changed since then. Worldwide vested interests have been weakened a great deal, but to the credit of those who have made the Ceylon Shipping Corporation a success it must be said that they still had to face great odds to do what they have done.

The Suez Canal will re-open to traffic in a few weeks and unless some other catastrophe overtakes the Middle East, the Suez Canal is likely to stay open. This will bring a new importance and significance not only to the ports in the island—Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee—but also provide new opportunities to the CSC to expand in a big way.

It is also necessary to mention that it would be in the national interest for the CSC promote a coastal shipping service as one of its subsidiaries. Freighters, carrying passengers, and small passenger vessels, would make possible the movement of people and goods round the island—and this should be on rates far cheaper than the

“Rented” Wife

Two years ago Edmund van Deusen, a chemist in San Francisco, advertised to rent a wife. From scores of applicants he chose a 33-year-old woman. They drew up a business—not marriage—contract to define their relationship. The “husband” promised to pay the “hired wife” a certain sum every month and allowances for holidays. The duties of the “wife” are in “the bedroom and the kitchen”. The “couple” have now written a book about their experiences.

air, the road and rail services which have unfortunately white-elephant overheads that make reasonably cheap rates a virtual impossibility for a long time to come. It will be cheaper to carry cement from KKS to Colombo by sea than by rail, and when oil is found in the North it will be cheaper to take the oil to the refinery in Colombo or to an additional one in Trincomalee (or elsewhere) by sea rather than either by road, rail or even through pipelines—all of which will entail far greater capital involvement and time than sea transport.

It is to be hoped that the CSC will not develop the maladies which afflict many of our nationalised ventures. Public vigilance, born of public interest in the affairs of the corporation, will alone keep these responsible for running the Corporation on their toes. The greater the public interest in various aspects of the Corporation will help to keep the CSC a profitable and efficient unit. And it is essential that its officials should develop a spirit of public dedication in their efforts to maintain good public relations with the people and especially its customers without being tempted to adopt arrogant attitudes of bureaucratic off-handedness.

Tribunania

When The PM Returns

THE RETURN OF THE PRIME MINISTER from her trip to Iraq, Jamaica, Guyana and Britain is awaited with great interest. She was very well received in Iraq, a country with which Sri Lanka has had very good relations for many years. Extremely good trade relations have also existed between the two countries, exchanging in the main tea with dates and oil. With the boom in oil prices, Iraq has become a rich donor and lender country. In Jamaica, at the Commonwealth Summit, the Prime Minister had presented some papers on vital

questions like the Brain Drain and also on the Peace Zone Plan in the Indian Ocean. Guyana was new territory for her, but reports indicate that her state visit was a big success. She is now on a private visit to the United Kingdom before she returns to the island this week, but it is likely that she will enter into discussions on matters of great importance to Sri Lanka whilst in London with the British authorities.

When she returns she will have her quota of problems some of which have taken significantly sharper forms than before. The Minister of Finance has made charges of a serious kind against the American Embassy in regard to the use of PL 480 funds. This had arisen when the American authorities had sought to transfer money lying to their credit in the Treasury and the Central Bank earning low rate of interest (1-2% probably) to commercial banks which now pay anything from 7% to 11% on long term deposits. The Minister of Finance had stated that he had stopped further transfers because he believed that such transfers were only a method of facilitating cloak and dagger support for local reactionary elements—with the general elections looming on the horizon in 1977.

The American Embassy has denied this charge most vigorously, but not as vigorously as the US would have done before the recent debacle in Vietnam. The events in Indochina seem to have robbed the US of a great deal of the "punch" which she had used in her diplomacy earlier and also in the language she had used in diplomatic communications. The US Embassy's denial was on a low-profile pitch, and this is no doubt a reflection of the current situation in Asia so far as the US is concerned. Washington probably thinks that she has to stoop a little to reassert her position once again in Asian affairs but with her wheat and food supplies, apart from USA's other economic resources, she still occupies commanding heights of power and wealth.

The Sarvodaya Movement, which has been accused of being fed by American (CIA) funds, has suggested that there should be commission of inquiry into the charges made by the Minister of Finance.

The leader of the UNP, J. R. Jayewardene, has denied receiving any money from US agencies. There is today a great deal of speculation as to what the Prime Minister will do in this situation. There is no doubt that the charges against the US Embassy in regard to the PL 480 funds has come at time when there were whispers that certain sections of the SLFP were inclined to collaborate with the UNP. In the cold war revolving



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around party politics in Sri Lanka, this kind of charge will embarrass even those a little right-of-centre because it would not be good for them to be smeared with the tar brush of being CIA stooges. The charges against the US Embassy, in the context of the current political situation, constitute a pre-emptive propaganda strike against all possible attempts to forge a new coalition of centrists and rightists and against all efforts to set up a National Government even before a general elections.

It is yet to be seen what impact this charge by the Minister of Finance will have on the undercurrents of the local political situation.

The question on everybody's lips is what the PM will do when she returns. She has a great deal to be thankful for the wheat that Sri Lanka has got under PL 480 as a result of which this country was able to de-ration flour and make it readily available on the market. Will she endanger future supplies of such wheat and also sour relations with the US by tilting to the side of the Finance Minister in regard to his charges against the US Embassy? Or will she follow a course which will restore equilibrium by tactful handling of a delicate situation? To do this must she unbend a little in the other cold war which has been going on for some months now? It will be recalled that the Finance Bill or the Revenue Bill embodying the revenue proposals has still not been adopted by the Assembly. It is known that there have been serious differences on opinion in the Government in regard to the proposals and those suggested by the Finance Minister have not found total acceptance in other quarters whilst the proposals put forward by other Cabinet circles have not been acceptable to the Treasury. It is a strange situation where nearly six months after the Budget, the Finance Bill has not been passed. In fact, it is said that no acceptable draft yet exists.

After the Pentagon Papers, Watergate and now Vietnam and Cambodia, the USA has become an excellent whipping boy in the internal cold wars that go on in every country. The disclosures of CIA activities in several countries have added to USA's difficulties. But

there is also no doubt that in this period of economic difficulties (even for the USA with unemployment at 8% and a flood of Vietnam refugees on its hands) Congressional Committee must be looking for ways of making the dollar stretch to the fullest. It is on record that the US Government has been seeking to place its funds abroad under PL 480—as distinct from the counterpart funds—in deposits which earn the highest possible interests. Such transfers involve serious questions. The withdrawal of huge sums from low-interest paying government banks and Treasuries to high-interest paying commercial institutions may, in some countries, affect temporarily at least, the cash liquidity position of the Governments concerned.

Furthermore such large deposits in commercial banks will have significant impact on the money market in the country. At the moment, in Sri Lanka with austere credit regulations and the crying need for liquid cash by exporters, industrialists and agriculturists, interest rates have risen so high in the unofficial market that reputable finance companies are offering as much as 15% for medium-term deposits from members of the public. It is argued by local newspapers, fully backing the Finance Minister's charges against the US Embassy, that the US would not be interested in earning higher interest rates and that its transfers were only a cover for cloak and dagger activities. On the other hand, with the worldwide hue and cry against the CIA, Washington will be chary enough to downgrade such activities, at least until the storm blows over. Furthermore, the world after Vietnam is a different one and US policies are likely to undergo such far-reaching changes that a comprehensive re-orientation of all its policies are likely.

A more serious consequence of the PL 480 flour is the impact it will have on local agricultural production especially in cereals. Already the bottom has dropped out of the subsidiary local cereal market (except rice which is still in short supply in the open market). This is an aspect of PL 480 which must engage the attention of Government if it wishes to pursue its policy of attaining food self-suffi-

ciency. The recent shipments of PL 480 flour has resolved the food crisis which had arisen as a result the drought last year, but it has led to several new crises in the field of agricultural production which have to be dealt with immediately.

STOP PRESS

FULL INQUIRY ESSENTIAL

The *Daily Mirror* of May 8, 1975 editorially praised Minister Chelliah Kumarasurier for "dealing so speedily with two of his two senior officials." The editorial did not indicate why action had been taken against the two "senior officials" concerned. Various news reports have appeared about a cancelled foreign trip, about unauthorised letters and suggestions that there was an attempt to leapfrog through a subterfuge from an international conference to a job abroad. It is good that the Minister Kumarasurier has taken prompt action against these gentlemen, but it is not enough to keep them on "compulsory leave". It is more important that there should be a most comprehensive inquiry into how an occurrence of this nature had been possible at all: an inquiry into all the ramifications that prompted a shooting star of post 1970-origin to attempt the astronomical feat of jumping from a limited Sri Lankan universe into a much bigger universe where the international jet set prevailed. *Tribune* investigators will focus attention on some very important matters to show the Minister and the Government that a far-reaching inquiry-in-depth should be instituted on this matter. This inquiry will also no doubt reveal why the affairs of the Postal and Telecommunications Departments are today in such an unholy mess.

CHRONICLE

MAY 1—9

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
 COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
 PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; TOC—Times of Ceylon; DM—Dinamina LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa.

THURSDAY, MAY 1: In a May Day message to the workers and peasants the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, reiterated the Government's determination to implement all the provisions of the UF manifesto and take whatever other measures that are necessary to achieve the goal of socialism—CDN. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, in a statement issued on the liberation of South Vietnam said that the victory of the liberation forces of the PRG heralded the dawn of an era of peace in the region where the people had suffered for more than three decades—CDM. Education Minister's Private Secretary, Mr. A. H. M. Farook, was arrested by officials of the Bribery Commissioner's Department yesterday afternoon for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs. 1,000: according to official sources the bribe had been given to obtain a Sinhala teaching appointment—CDM. In his opening address at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, Jamaican Prime Minister, Michael Manley, said that the most important issue facing mankind now was how to manage distribution of the world's wealth: the 33 nation Commonwealth Summit opened on Tuesday. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally to the liberation forces yesterday ending a generations of war against the Japanese, French and Americans and among Vietnamese themselves, in which over a million people died. Prince Nordom Sihanouk of Cambodia supported communist style reforms proposed by Cambodia's new Khmer Rouge rulers and thanked them for confirming him as head of state. American Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, warned Americas' potential enemies not to be encouraged by the collapse of South Vietnam to test the US commitment to defend its other allies: Americans viewed the evacuation of Saigon with some anger, considerable frustration, some sadness and a feeling that their sacrifices of the past ten years had been pointless: most Americans seemed to hope that now the US would switch its focus to problems closer to home.

FRIDAY, MAY 2: A crowd of nearly four lakhs surged over the Galle Face Green yesterday for the UF May Day rally—the biggest ever May Day rally to date: the massive and seemingly endless United Front procession took nine hours to march the four miles from Havelock Park to Galle Face Green: yesterday's May Day rally was the most peaceful witnessed in the city: the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, addressing the UF rally called upon the people to continue to give support to the Government and not permit reactionaries to raise their heads again: the Minister of Finance: Dr. N. M. Perera's warned the United States through its embassy in Colombo not to interfere

with the internal affairs of Sri Lanka: he said this because he had found that the US withdrawals of their PL 480 funds in the Central Bank had been far too excessive: Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction, asked "will Mr. J. R. Jayewardene succeed where Van Thieu of South Vietnam failed?" the UNP rally held at the Town Hall premises attracted large crowds: addressing the rally the President of the UNP, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, said that if the UNP returned to power capitalism will be wiped out: he pledged to nationalise within 24 hours, those institutions owned by persons who had 'licked the boots' of the UNP formerly and were now 'licking the boots' of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and other UF leaders: the Opposition leader was emphatic that there would be no repealing of any progressive legislation introduced by the present Government—CDM & CDN. The Kankesanturai—Colombo Fort train services which was disrupted after the major derailment last week near Medawachchiya returned to normal today—TOC. The Royal Commission inquiring into instances of recent ragging of Maths teachers at the Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka commenced proceedings this morning: the Commissioner is Mr. W. Kularatne—CO. Education Ministry has decided to make socialism as a compulsory subject for higher classes in schools throughout the country—JD. PRG said that South Vietnam will follow a policy of peace and non-alignment in its relations with foreign countries: US Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved a bill to provide upto 50 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Cambodia through international organisations.

SATURDAY, MAY 3: Addressing the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth Summit Conference in Jamaica, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, said that although UNCTAD and FAO had been pursuing proposals for the stabilisation of prices for commodities by means of commodity agreements for the past 10 to 15 years, she was sorry to state that very little progress has been made so far in the finalisation of any international agreement for tea: she welcomed the statement made by British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson, that something must be done urgently for tea—CDN. Mr. L. H. Sumanadasa, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka, told the Commission inquiring into recent incidents of ragging at the Vidyalankara Campus that there had been instances where students had become insane, hospitalised for serious injuries and left the University resulting in the blasting of their future because of inhuman ragging—CDM. The British Housewives League, an organisation with a fair punch in the tea buying trades in England, decided to boycott Brook Bonds tea to highlight the plight of workers in British owned tea estates in Sri Lanka—CDN. Rs. 1839.6 million more had been spent by the country on imports last year than in the previous year—CDN. The Acting Prime Minister yesterday thanked the Police and Services personnel for the excellent manner in handling the crowd and traffic in Colombo on May Day—CDM. A five-member committee has been appointed by the Minister of Housing and Construction to facilitate the obtaining of housing loans—DM. The Viet Cong yesterday claimed to be in full control of South Vietnam. Thailand's Foreign Minister said yesterday that US no longer had a moral obligation to Thailand and that the country would rely on itself: he was commenting on the

statement made by Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, that the US had an obligation of moral nature to Thailand where American forces are to be reduced. The US House of Representatives vetoed President Ford's bill for the rescue operations in South Vietnam.

SUNDAY, MAY 4: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing the executive sessions of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference said that Sri Lanka fought for its independence and treasured democratic liberties, and Sri Lanka was therefore well able to understand the agony of Africa today: she further said that cause of African liberation received Sri Lanka's support as far back 1961 when she first attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference—CO. According to the 1974 annual report of the Central Bank, of a total production of 76.8 million bushels of paddy, the Paddy Marketing Board was able to purchase only 27 per cent or 20.8 million bushels in 1974: surveys conducted in certain areas has shown that 37 to 48 per cent of paddy was kept for personal consumption and seed paddy—CO. A gift of 573 metric tons of paper from the UNICEF for the printing of school text books arrived in Colombo: in all the UNICEF is expected to provide 400,000 dollars worth of offset printing paper to the Educational Publications Department in 1975—ST. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, yesterday opened the first ever Export Fair at the BMICH: the Fair which was visited by several would-be foreign buyers of Sri Lanka products is expected to boost the country's export trade—ST & CO. Seven men alleged to have been responsible for the waylaying of a bus and the killing of a Police Constable at Kebithigollawa recently were arrested yesterday in the jungle off Vavuniya: when arrested the men carried arms and ammunitions and the Police described them as insurgents—VK. On an economic aid agreement between Sri Lanka and Hungary, the Hungarian Government decided to grant a loan of £4 million to Sri Lanka before the end of this year—LD. US and South Vietnamese evacuation ships carried thousands of South Vietnamese refugees across the Pacific towards the Philippines and Guam Island: officials put the figure closer to 100,000 refugees.

MONDAY, MAY 5: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, at a press interview during her recent visit to Baghdad had said that Sri Lanka welcomed foreign investment but this should not be misinterpreted to mean that the country was offering an open licence for exploitation by foreigners: the Premier said that any investment that was mutually beneficial to both countries was most welcome—CDN. Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, addressing the eighth annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank in Manila last month had said that there was no glimpse of hope in the near future and the outlook for primary producing countries including Sri Lanka was particularly bleak: he further said that there will be further privations and reductions in our already low-living standards and there were no hopes of achieving any substantial economic growth for many years to come CDM. According to the Central Bank, external credit transactions have in recent years resulted in the progressive increase in Sri Lanka's total indebtedness—CDM. Sri Lanka has accepted in principle the proposal by Malaysia that rubber producing countries should set up an international rubber buffer stock—CDN. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka giving

evidence before the one-man commission that is probing into the incidents of ragging at the Vidyalandara Campus was of the view that ragging in any form should be banned—CDN. The Government is expected to announce a crash two-year development program on May 22—Republic Day—VK. The TUF has decided to launch a civil disobedience procession and has requested all shopkeepers in the Tamil speaking areas to put the shutters up on the day preceding Republic Day—VK. The North Vietnamese News Agency announced the arrival of a first PRG plane to South Vietnam on Saturday. Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip arrived in Hong Kong for their first visit to this British Colony. Israeli Foreign Minister raised the hopes of resuming dialogue with Egypt through the good offices of US Secretary of State Dr. Kissinger.

TUESDAY, MAY 6: A full-scale inquiry has been ordered by Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, in to an alarming increase in gold smuggling out of Sri Lanka: this follows a series of complaints and reports to the Finance Ministry and Ministry of Defence and External Affairs of the serious consequences the country would face if this type of smuggling was allowed to continue—CDN. Sugar is expected to be cheaper from September after the Government exhausted the present stocks which were bought at a higher world market price—DM. The Criminal Justice Commission (Exchange Frauds) fixed May 18 as the trial date in the case in which Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, a former Governor General, and three others were charged for exchange violations: the Commission also reserved for May 20 its order on the question whether Sir Oliver Goonetilleke who was absent from the Commissioner's sittings could be represented by Counsel—CDN & CDM. The UNP has cabled the Prime Minister in Kingston calling upon her to discuss with other leaders the summoning of a conference of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean "to frame proposals for the preservation of the independence of these states": Mr. Jayewardene, President of the UNP whose cable said that the request to Mrs. Bandaranaike was a resolution adopted at the UNP's May Day rally—CDN. The Ministry of Local Government, Public Administration, Home Affairs and Justice has sent out instructions to all Government Agents that speeches of a partisan political nature should be avoided on Republic Day meetings—CDN. In the first three months of this year the Ministry of Housing and Construction has given Rs. 9 million as housing loans—CO. Following a survey conducted by the Industries Ministry, the price of cotton textiles will be further reduced in a few months time—TOC. Thousands of people facing starvation are swarming over the border from Bangladesh to India's West Bengal. American officials said that nearly 507 million dollars will be needed to look after the 150,000 refugees from South Vietnam expected to end up in the United States. The New Military Government of South Vietnam has ordered the immediate closure of all foreign missions set up by the former Government

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7: Mr. Shire Inoue, President of the Asian Development Bank, will arrive in the island this month for further discussions on the setting up of massive fertiliser project: Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, expressed opinion that the project would definitely be started at the end of this year: the project is expected to fulfill the total needs of the country in addition to an export production worth Rs. 100 million

a year—CDN. On the basis of a paper submitted by the Sri Lanka delegation to the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in Jamaica, the question of brain drain was taken up for discussion: the Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, speaking on the discussion said that a more flexible approach to the problem was necessary—CDN. Dr. Gamani Corea, Secretary General to the UNCTAD, in an interview to the *Daily Mirror* has said that a solution to the commodity question would be of major significance to Sri Lanka which was for too long been the victim of poor and unstable prices for her principal commodity exports—CDM. The Credit Council Department Bill was passed yesterday in the NSA without any discussion as the Opposition said that it was in full agreement with the Bill—CDM. The leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, speaking at adjournment time denied the allegations that the PL 480 funds, which were withdrawn by the US Embassy in Colombo, was being used to finance the UNP: Mr. Jayewardene assured Dr. N. M. Perera, Minister of Finance, who had made this accusation, that the UNP sought to come to power only through an election and not by using PL 480 funds or of any aid from a foreign nation—CDM. Stern security measures have been taken at the oil drilling site at Pesalai following two fires within two days: Police suspect sabotage—CO. For the first time in the history of Jaffna, 130 Sinhalese families were given lands to build houses by the Government^s the Government Agent Jaffna, Mr. Vimal Amarasekera: acquired 40 acres of coconut land in the Jaffna Town, for the purpose—LD. Saudi Arabia has put at the disposal of Pakistan ten to twelve million dollars for construction of the World's biggest mosque in Islamabad. United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, warned that the world food situation was critical for 400 million people, half of them children. Dr. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State, said at a television interview that Soviet Union played a constructive role in the evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese from Saigon.

THURSDAY, MAY 8: Nine persons are dead, several missing and thousands were rendered homeless in the floods that have ravaged Ratnapura and neighbouring areas—CO. Farmers engaged in paddy cultivation for the Yala season will get fertiliser at Rs. 70 per hundred-weight while others engaged in other crops will have to pay Rs. 110 per hundredweight: the Fertiliser Corporation will make fertiliser available to the farmers, through the co-operatives—CO. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, arrived in Guyana for a three day visit—TOC. The practice hitherto allowed to import synthetic yarn under the Convertible Rupee Accounts has been banned by the Government; the reason for the ban was that this created a difficult situation for the local synthetic textile manufacturers—CDM. Investigations are being conducted into a big scale dope smuggling between Sri Lanka and the Maldives—CDM. The Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, speaking at the 30th anniversary of the anti-fascist celebrations quoted the incidents in Chile and said that in Sri Lanka constant vigilance must be exercised to ensure that unconstitutional opposition to the Government was not advocated—CDN. In accordance with an election pledge the Government yesterday decided to pay equal salaries to English trained teachers and Swabasha trained teachers: hitherto Swabasha trained teachers were paid lesser salaries than English trained teachers—JD. At a Parliamentary Group meeting

of the UNP held on Tuesday, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP and leader of the Opposition, has said that he would definitely resign his seat in the NSA before the end of this month—ATH. Thousands of letters and telegrams are being received daily in the White House opposing aid to South Vietnamese. Japan has recognised the new Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. US Secretary of State yesterday confirmed the sale of Hawk anti aircraft jets to Jordan but denied that America was favouring the Arabs over Israel.

FRIDAY, MAY 9: In a statement issued to the press yesterday the American Embassy in Colombo categorically denied misusing PL 480 funds: the Embassy said that the reason for the recent heavy withdrawals from the Central Bank from the PL 480 funds was to deposit the money in legally available financial institutions to secure higher interest rates: the Embassy said that the withdrawals were definitely not to help any political party—CDN & CDM. At the end of the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in Jamaica Sri Lanka's proposal to make the Indian Ocean area a peace zone was accepted—CDN. A resolution sponsored by the Deputy Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, Mr. P. R. Ratnayake, to frame legislation to ban resigning MPs from recontesting has found favour with the majority of the members of the Government Parliamentary Group: it is understood that legislation to this effect is already being framed: when a reporter contacted Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and Justice, on this matter he has refused to comment—CDM. Speaking at a meeting in Wennappuwa electorate, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, said that the SLFP would never have an alliance with a capitalist political party like the UNP—CDM. At a reception given to the Acting Prime Minister, Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, and his ministerial colleagues in Jaffna yesterday, Mr. Senanayake said that it was impossible to divert the Mahaweli waters to the Jaffna peninsula: the Acting Prime Minister and his entourage were given a rousing welcome when they landed at Palali airport on an official visit—VK. Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade, said yesterday that it is very unlikely the price of sugar will be reduced by September but there is a possibility of the price of flour being reduced to half of its price by September—VK. Cuban Premier, Fidel Castro, said that his country could open talks with the US in return of a lifting of a trade embargo on essentials. Soviet leader Brezhnev said that communist victories in Indo-China could help develop detente between US and USSR.

For News Behind The News

Read

TRIBUNE

Regularly

TRIBUNE, May 17, 1975

On the Coconut Estate

By ANATORY BUKOBA

March 11,

DRUMMING AND SINGING were coming from a house as I came by at night. When I came nearer, it seemed to me as if a *Balli-gedara* was in progress. This is usually put on with a hired *Balli-gedara* troupe, whose day-time occupation is usually farming, to confirm the recovery of a person from an illness. When I intruded, I was met and greeted with the news that a man had seen a ghost, that he had been frightened and that a devil had then taken possession of him. The story was not quite consistent, for it varied in important respects as different people told it to me that night and the following day. The second version was that he had seen a devil disguised as a ghost. The damage was done when he spoke to it. In the second account, the white figure had, they said, assumed enormous proportions before taking possession of the man.

My second informant told me that that he had himself seen this spectre a number of times. It hung about the part of the Estate near the main road, and it was a giant in size. He had also seen it on another part of the estate. There was certainly nothing sinister about the estate by daylight. I am not a stranger to this place, but this was the first time I had heard the tale of ghosts, although I must admit I was woken up once to find my bed being shaken. It was like the famous earthquake in 1938, which I had experienced in Kurunegala. There my bed was certainly shaken, and there was an accompanying roar. This time I would have heard only the rattling of the bed, if, indeed, I heard a noise at all.

To get back to the ghost; it was was clad in white, and according to the second version, had come out of one gate, passing, presumably a watcher who had just gone in and, according to both versions,

had turned in at another gate, the way leading to the house where the man lived. He had followed him in, and then he had spoken to the man clad in white, who turned out to be a ghost or a devil. The man taken possession of had become very obstreperous, and the family had to summon help. The symptoms of possession, or rather superhuman activity, came in spasms, and this went on for two or three days. They then decided to have the devil-casting-out ceremony, which in the south would have, I presume, have taken the form of a devil-dance, or that was what we used to call it when I was a child.

Everybody attended the ceremony, which went on all night, dragging on a little even after daylight. A hat had been passed round, I gathered, and Rs. 75/- collected to pay the doctor, as I would call the man. I do not know how many others he had with him. People of the estate, the young who felt fit enough, stayed there all night, and slept on sacks under the stars, when they felt tired, earning, at least one, a sore throat.

They let me speak to the man who was said to be possessed. His reactions were slow, and when the next morning, I spoke to him, restored to his wits, he said he did not remember my coming, or recall my presence. Roman Catholic priests are all said to have the power of exorcism. The superintendent of this estate, a strong Christian of another faith, tried to do a little exorcism himself on the man, at moments which seemed critical, and he had met with partial success, for the little good he did, each time, did not endure. I was sorry the priest had not been called in, but, as the superintendent said, there was a question, of different religions. Many non-Christians, I would say, however, seem to use, Kudagama, but I am not sure of this. Let us get on to other, more pleasant topics.

SOYA BEANS had, I noticed, been harvested, and the harvesting was still going on. Someone, I understand, is thinking of canning it as a milk, nutritive as it is, and with the shortage of cow's milk, tinned or fresh, that there is said to be in the island. Just as cow's milk is sold in paper cartons in some places, I suppose you could also do so

with soya bean. The word soya does not appear in the Concise Oxford Dictionary reprinted in 1938, but sorghum does.

Some time ago, the price of nuts had gone very high, and people who bought during this period, have had difficulty removing the nuts, and so these nuts have all germinated in the heaps. Nuts were over Rs. 400/- per thousand then; the price now is about Rs. 250/-. The price of nuts does vary throughout the year, as some crops are heavier than others; and as the happens on a nation-wide scale, the price varies accordingly. Sometimes, I hear, a crop may change hands several times before it is finally removed.

Someone was caught removing nuts, and he did not deny it. A passer-by identified the man and said he was a nit-wit, and so the man was let off scot-free. I thought he was rather lucky. Some time ago, *Syembela* was ready. It can be eaten raw in small quantities, but the usual way is to dry it and season curries. An estate watcher had lost his torch during the ceremonies the night before. That this torch was returned the next morning may be attributed to a number of reasons, but I would like to put it down to a change of feeling in these coconut areas. There has it seems, been so much robbery of one kind and another, of the Alexander-pirate contrast, recently, that I think people have had a surfeit of it and realised that, if this goes on, even the so called poor man's belongings will not be safe, and that it is, consequently, time that a halt was called somewhere by people themselves.

Rain there has been, but still, not as much as in other years. Rain is unusual around here in March, I would say. Next month is the time for April showers. The minor tanks have filled elsewhere, but not everywhere. At a place called Kala Oya, there were four inches of rain, altogether in two spells of it, in much less than twenty-four hours. This is enough of tittle-tattle.

Soya bean was sown on an acre, and it yielded a return of four times the amount sown. It was done on a block that had been interplanted with young palms, and it had already been fenced off. The

whole of this five-acre block will be sown with soya bean with the next rains in April. Hare attacked the bean and rope traps were set for them. The soya bean was sown in long strips between the trees. Hazards were falling nuts during the picks, and falling coconut branches. Watering was done with hose pipes from wells.

Three-quarters of another inter-planted five-acre block, also fenced off with barbed-wire, has been re-sown with grass, fodder grass for the cattle. A tractor was used to plough this block to get it ready for the grass. Plantain shoots are to be put down in groups between, in the middle of each set of four coconut trees in this same block, so that there will be both fodder grass and plantains. The cattle roam the estate outside these fenced-off interplanted blocks. There is another enclosed inter-planted block which is used for tethering the stud bulls in, and this also has fodder grass and plantains in parts of it.

The estate never grew paddy earlier but a few years ago, just a short time ago, a start was made with this in two small plots, paddy-field fashion. Paddy has been harvested, but some crops have also died for lack of enough rain. This happened with the last efforts at growing paddy. The fields were made where there was a paucity of trees or no trees at all. There are more places where this sort of effort can be extended, and it is a question of time, probably, before they are all utilized. The failure of the crops put back the programme of extension and, of course, one has to wait for the rains.

Solution

A survey made recently in the United States showed that stenographers made many mistakes because there was usually a lot of noise in the office. Some American businessmen have found an effective way of solving the problem. They are hiring deaf women.

BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—32

NATURE NOTES—2: ALL O' GOD'S CHILUN AIN'T GOT WINGS

By Herbert Keuneman

This article and the one preceding it were written just at the end of the old year. The new year brought with it some welcome showers of rain. The tanks have partly filled; the grass has greened anew; sparse bird-life has begun to reappear; and the farmers talk again: of crops of *Tala* and *Mung*; although a *Yala* rice-crop still remains in unattainable dream.

IT IS STRANGE, but it was barely two months ago that I described the visit of the first *polonga* (Russell's Viper: *tit-*, or *tic-*, i.e. Spotted, *polonga*) anyone had ever seen in this garden since it was first cleared out of jungle over twenty years ago. (This was the *polonga* that appeared while we stood round our dear dog Piggy, who had died; that crept without haste or aggression between the feet of the small crowd of us spectators, who stood petrified, in the front yard of the house: then, after Pinhamy had taken a fruitless swipe at it with a large pole hurriedly brought to him as the deadly loveliness began to vanish into the undergrowth beneath the hedge, crossed the tank's parching verge—still without precipitancy—passed within a couple of feet of a woman washing herself at the water's edge, entered the water, swam (with its head held well up) a bee-line across a narrows, and became lost amongst the lotuses of the opposite shore).

Only a night or two ago another appeared in almost precisely the same spot in the garden. This is too much, this Prevalence of *Polongas*!

Let me say straight off that as regards the village identification of a *tit-polonga*, if the creature be

clearly seen there need be no doubt whatever. The villager may call a Cat-snake a *le-polonga* or a Keelback a *diya polonga*; but when he calls a snake a *polonga* unqualified he means the Russell's Viper and nothing else, and the species is too familiar for him to mistake it. In this region it seems to be the commonest land snake of all: in my two-plus years in this house I have seen (though not all in this garden) one Whipsnake, one Cobra, two Buff-striped Keelbacks, only three Ratsnakes, and no less than five *polongas* only two of which were able to kill.

I cannot tell why the latest encounter should have agitated me as it has.

It was just on 11.0 p.m.—the other *polonga* visited us in the afternoon, about half past four—and I was listening to a radio turned down not particularly low, trying to pick out a clarinet quintet from amongst the hoots and ululations and whistles, squeaks, hums and rumbles that are CBC English Service accompaniments at least in this part of the country, when Tiger (a powerful brindled mongrel, but most lovable, who has been 'outside dog' in this place ever since the house began a-building, started to bark his characteristic deep persistent bark of warning.

P.B., who sleeps downstairs, and Sitale, one time a successor to Nesan, who was keeping P.B. company, went out with a hurricane lamp but found nothing. They called to Tiger but failed to quiet him; he kept on and on, gazing fixedly at something in the shadow of a circle of bricks made for our well and assembled to see whether they fitted. (They did!) P.B. came up for my flashlight. I remembered the battery was run down, replaced it, and handed the flashlight to him. Tiger must have been steadily barking, now, for over ten minutes.

P.B. went back down and shone the torch where Tiger pointed. Something lay there shaped (he thought) like a large cow-pat. Tiger, made bolder by the brighter light, advanced a few paces, then drew back and tensed. Sitale went down the steps, looked, and shouted: '*polonga!*'

And then came—above the euphonies of Mozart, piercing the

radio's competitive discordances and the babel from below—a drawn-out almost sweet sibilance, a long high-pitched hiss of indescribable menace. Menace, not malevolence; universal dehortation, not directed ill-will; here was evil so sure of itself as to be undisturbed by disturbance. When I had hurried down and someone had dropped the flashlight so that this time a spare bulb had to be fitted and I had shone it on the creature again, it still lay as apparently it had (in the shape that *haute cuisine* calls a 'turban') and did not even bother to hiss a second time; it had issued a sufficient warning.

THE HISS OF A COBRA is not nearly as frightening; in fact, unless longer drawn it has rather a comfortable sound: like a hot man settling down in a chair with a cold drink after exertion and blowing 'PH-ph-ph-ph-pht!' down his unbuttoned shirt, to cool himself!

I think it must have been that unperturbed self-confident promiscuous menace that so impressed itself upon me. This and its silent presence in the quiet gently moonlit familiar smooth-sweet yard.

I went out on the steps, for a better angle, and held the flashlight. Sitale seized an 8' length of 2" by 1" rafter, poised it above his head and brought it down in so tremendous a single sweep that the rafter shivered into three. But it must have broken the *polonga's* back into even more pieces; for it died without uncoiling itself; only its tail moved from side to side long after its head was crushed.

I remember a snake that behaved, and died, very differently. It was the local temple cobra. Everybody in the village knew it and respected rather than feared it. How old it was I do not know, but it had not been resident very long in the temple (where it had its habitation amongst the rocks on which the temple *bo*-Tree grows), a matter of eight or ten years, I am told; and it was never regularly fed, as some temple cobras are, and when it wanted water it crept down to the edge of the tank thirty to fifty yards below on which passage as well as in the temple court yard near the *bo*-Tree it was commonly seen. It remained unmolested and unmolested, a familiar personage. I myself, however, saw it only after it had died.

How it died no one knows. It had been seen in the courtyard the previous evening; and the next morning it lay dead, on the way to the tank not far from its drinking-place. There was no mark on the body; but when I saw it, about 8.0 a.m., it was already markedly swollen.

It was by far the biggest cobra I have ever beheld, nearer 7 than 6 feet I should think—but alas! I never thought to measure it—and post-mortem swelling could hardly have greatly affected its length? Its head was as large as that of a three-month-old Fox Terrier puppy.

It was impossible to imagine a creature of this cobra's nobility of appearance striking with the sheer fury with which I saw two newly-captive *polongas* strike in an Ahikuntakaya village, a 20-25 year old settlement, near Tambuttegama. There again and again I saw the *polongas*—particularly the longer one: about 3 1/2 feet—strike with terrifying savagery at a piece of white cloth with which their owner teased them. I noted that in order to strike the snake reared its body backward into a very deeply recurved S and struck from there with the kind of suddenly unlocked fling of a heron's neck... or the key-action of a Pleyel grand piano I used to know! The strike was made with such force (against a target held slightly above it) that each time, until the creature tired, the whole corpulent body left the ground. I—and companions with me—watched this repeatedly. But so far had the head been drawn back in preparation for the strike that I do not think the 'leap' (of which the villagers often speak) extended the striking range significantly if at all. The leap seemed to be vertical rather than forward.

GOODNESS! I must certainly have written *polongas* out of my system? Shall I write of birds? Yet, with the drought (and the return to their summering of the Northeast Monsoon migrants) the loveliest of the local birdlife is gone. The liveliest, too; for the full tank is ceaselessly aflutter with wings and loud with bird voices. (I will not say birdsong; for sad to tell there is hardly a waterbird with a cry pleasanter than a croak or a scream!)

Is it, though, only the summer exodus and the drought? What about all the undoubted 'residents' so common in every tank round the village during our first Ehetuwewa stay and now, as regards species after species, rare even on the larger tanks and even when these are full to spilling? I am thinking at the moment of the commonest birds such as the Shags and Little Cormorants and Whistling Teal. I remember lying out on the great slope of rock in front of the bungalow at Vakaneri (near the east coast) twenty years ago and a flock of teal wing-tip to tip longer and wider than the whole rocky slab passed over us so low that our ear-drums throbbed with the alternating pressure underneath their pinions; ever since I have lived here, with a tank at my doorstep, the largest flight I have seen—and that was after the tank had considerably shrunken—numbered 23. There were two teal in the tank yesterday.

Where are the Pelicans? When my wife and I left Ehetuwewa there were still the three or four pairs that used to patrol the tank regularly all the four years we spent; I have not seen one pelican in any tank nearby since I returned. In a single evening's drive we could nearly always show a visitor White Ibises, Spoonbills, Great White Herons, Little Grebes, half-a-dozen Quackyducks. Where are they all? There are two of the last now, late in their breeding season, on Galkadawala. Where are the cormorants? In Ehetuwewa as we knew it of old they were always chief of the Mixed Fishing Parties every morning, be the tank as low as we ever saw it; now the very birds seem to have lost the art of useful co-operation! Where are even the Lapwings, the cataclysmical Did-he-do-its, that used to pullulate round Galkadawala's water's edge? I doubt, if I should walk round the tank, I should flush as many as a dozen today though their time for mating is almost on them.

A NOTE WORTHY THING occurred about the middle of last year. Our tanks normally fill with such a sudden rush of rain at the proper season that the grasses that have overgrown the shallower portions of their beds are drowned; even the lotuses with their floating

leaves take time to struggle to the surface. Last year, after Galkadawela had been drained (as I have earlier related) by a bride seeker's malice, the grass grew so high and strong and sporadic rain filled it so slowly that—far from dying—the grass grew more vigorously than ever and stood high above the water's surface. Into this habitat gradually migrated an enormous colony of Purple Coot.

I believe strongly that there were a few Indian Waterhen, as well; for, my eyes being now dim, my spectacles inadequate, my binoculars given away and my telescope fungussed! I had to rely on question-and-answer identification through agents I chose from amongst the village children. But (I have called attention to the village lack of interest in accurate observation) I was given such conflicting reports and there was so much well-intentioned anxiety to agree with any suggestion I made however tentatively and interrogatively put! that I was led much astray. It was insistence on the part of many of my scouts that the new birds were 'like slightly bigger koravakku, but black with a greenish tinge' that made me suspect there might be Indian Waterhens amongst the visitors. But when—led by the much larger size if the new birds, which was all that I could make out for myself—I thought they might be Koras (for the environment was ideal) and asked my young proxies whether they had finger-shaped red horns upon their foreheads, the little politicians all agreed Yes. And it was only after the number of the colony had so increased that there was no mistaking the coot noises, especially at night, that I realized what they were. The red shields on their upper bills had been exaggerated, to please me, into the finger-shaped extensions I had seemed to desire.

Shortly before Christmas an observer of a different turn of mind turned up from some town area to visit relatives in Ehetuwewa village. Not for him the laborious slow method. He was 'insurgent' material! Borrowing his host's unlicensed gun and a cartridge worth at that time I think still about Rs. 3/00, he took the short cut to his goal: he shot one of the birds 'in order to look at it'!

The Galkadawala birds had not heard a gunshot at close quarters in four gears, and the panic though short-lived was pitiable.

I will not swear that this was the reason—it is true 'the sedge is wither'd from the lake' and was withering then—but from that time the coot began to leave. Today there is not one on the tank, though Pinhamy tells me that twenty years ago they were not uncommon not only on Galkadawala but on a few other tanks in the neighbourhood.

Shortly after the murder of the coot an Alutwewa boy killed a Purple Heron with a club. Finding himself within catapult range he loosed at it a stone which stunned it, 'to see if it was fit to eat'. Then he beat it to death because it pecked at him when he went to pick it up!

Sir Samuel Baker used to 'take revenge' on elephants that charged him when he shot at them. And even on those whose crime was merely in getting safely away.

One feels sometimes that—like so many a favourite son—man has proved the most profitless of God's children.

INDIA'S EXPERIENCE IS A GREEN REVOLUTION IN RICE POSSIBLE?

This is the text of an interview with Dr. S. Y. Padmanabhan, Director, Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack, on the various aspects of paddy cultivation in India. Dr. Padmanabhan suggests useful remedies to different problems, such as the vagaries of the monsoon, susceptibility of paddy crops to various pests and diseases and mechanisation of paddy cultivation.

It is said that green revolution has come in wheat but not in paddy. Is it true? If so what are the reasons?

Green revolution has come in rice in certain parts of India; in other

States, this is coming. For instance in Punjab and Tamil Nadu, the green revolution is in full swing. The average yield of rice per hectare has gone above 2,000 kg. in both these States as against the all India average of about 1000 kg. per hectare. We also see the green revolution in rice when crop is grown under irrigated conditions in the non-monsoon season in most parts of India including Orissa. The average yields of rice is from 3 to 5 tonnes per hectare in this season.

In States depending upon the monsoon entirely in the Kharif like eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh the yield per hectare is below the all India average except in West Bengal where it is about 1200 kg/ha. The reasons for the differential advance in green revolution of rice are many. Besides, the intensive transfer of technology which has taken place in some States more than in other States, there are also the limitations imposed by the monsoon and its vagaries. The new high yielding dwarf varieties give optimum yields under controlled irrigation and when there is continuous sunlight or when the sunlight hours are sufficient for optimum production. These conditions do not obtain under monsoon culture.

Secondly, the varieties are semi-dwarf, about 90 to 100 cm. in height and monsoon creates conditions under which vast areas (nearly, 60 per cent) of the land have more than 90 cm. of water during the growing period of the crop. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, the relative susceptibility of the new varieties to pests and diseases. Since plant protection has not advanced sufficiently in the country the cultivators are reluctant to grow varieties which require constant protection. Therefore, we might say that the green revolution has come in some States in India and is coming slowly in other States. The progress can be seen from figures of production of the period before 1965 and the period after 1966 since the introduction of these varieties.

Quite a number of high yielding varieties of paddy strains have been developed in the country. But have they made any impact on the overall production of paddy in the country?

High yielding varieties have definitely made an impact on overall production in the country. The total production in 1965-66 just before the introduction of high yielding varieties and the national average yield were 32 million tonnes and 863 kg/ha. respectively. There has not been much increase in area since then. The total production in 1971-72 was 42 million tonnes and the national average increased to 1151 kg/ha.

Do you think that paddy cultivation can be freed from the vagaries of monsoon?

Out of 37.4 million hectares under paddy crop only 34 per cent is grown under irrigation. Even these irrigation projects are monsoon dependent, because the reservoirs of Peninsular India depend on monsoon rains. If the entire land can be brought under irrigation then rice production can be independent of the vagaries of the monsoon. This is a long term objective which cannot be achieved within a reasonable time. What then are the alternatives?

The vagaries of the monsoon are of definite types. They can be studied, classified, codified over a period of few years, with the meteorological data available. Crop planning can be based upon this predictability of the vagaries of the monsoon. For instance a study was undertaken by the Department of Agricultural Meteorology, Poona, at my instance to find out the extent of gaps in rainfall which occur in the areas under 700-1100 mm of rainfall where commonly rice is grown. This gap was 7-9 days in most of the years and in exceptional years the gap extended to 9-12 days or rarely more. So this is a specific datum on which the breeders can proceed and develop varieties which can stand a gap in rainfall of 10-12 days in rainy seasons. In fact we have now a few short duration varieties suitable for upland region which can be suitably grown under these conditions.

The second vagary is the time of onset of monsoon. In eastern India monsoon sets in any day from the last week of May to the last week of June. The monsoon intensifies, in July or August and tapers off in September; we may

have a few showers throughout September, October and even in November. Having known this distribution, a series of measures can be taken to meet the situation. Direct seeding can be started after the receipt of sufficient monsoon showers to support germination.

There are large numbers of high yielding varieties, which have a duration of 95 to 120 days. Depending upon the onset of the monsoon very early or early varieties can be sown in any region. With proper planning of varieties for each location and season it may be possible partially to overcome the distribution vagaries of the monsoon.

There are techniques like mixed cropping where rice is cultivated with other crops which can be adopted in areas where these vagaries are common especially in the marginal zone of 700-1100 mm. Mixed cropping will help in utilisation of either normal rainfall by rice, and by other alternative crop, when the rainfall is low. All these require careful study of the area, planning, collection of proper seeds and availability of seeds of different kinds in these parts of the country.

The main setback to rice production, which comes from late onset of monsoon arises from late sowing and late transplantation which brings down productivity for several reasons—agro-climatic, biological and interaction between the two like build up of insects, pests etc. If timely planting can be assured in the monsoon area, half the battle against the monsoon could be won.

For this purpose it is necessary to have seed beds on community basis near the source of water during the first week of June. Where there are no sources of water they have to be created through ground water exploitation, or by proper storage structures of water for community seed bed. If this could be done extensively then transplanting could take place after the receipt of good shower necessary for puddling or preparation of land etc. The seedlings may be transplanted when they are 25, 30, 35, 45 days old and in case of some varieties, even later. When we wait for seed bed raising for the monsoon and the onset is late, a setback in yield occurs.

Another constraint which is operating under monsoon cultivation in eastern India is the lack of sufficient implements to get the land ready in proper time. From the time of the first showers and optimum time of transplanting, the available bullock power is not enough to get the land ready for transplanting especially in seasons when the monsoon sets in a little later than usual. This is one of the principal reasons for the low impact of high yielding varieties and consequent low productivity. Introduction of modern implements like iron plough disc harrow, comb harrow etc. will improve the situation to great extent.

The medium duration varieties of 130-135 days can be cultivated to avoid scarcity of water towards the end of the season in October and November. I believe these are the principal means of getting over the vagaries of the monsoon for rice production.

The general impression is that cultivation of high-yielding varieties of paddy is too sophisticated and cost heavy and beyond the capacity of the poor farmer. Is it correct?

It is true that the cultivation of high yielding varieties calls for inputs—technological, managerial and monetary. With proper management yields can be pushed much further from the present level, even with traditional varieties.

Technology transfer is of two kinds:

(1) In which decision is to be taken by the individual cultivators e.g. the changeover to the new varieties. This is more or less easily accomplished if the seeds which are of good productivity can be brought to the door of the cultivators.

(2) There is the second type of technology like water management, pest control etc. where group decision of the entire community is involved. It is found that transfer of technology in this respect has been poor. If the cultivators are properly motivated and extension is effective these difficulties can be overcome.

The management aspects of cultivation like levelling, timely planting, water management, time of application of fertilizer and amount and

type of fertilizer to be given for correction of soil deficiencies etc. can be transferred practically by demonstrations which are within the grasp of Indian cultivators. Plant protection is a new technology which has not caught on due to various difficulties. This could also be integrated through training and propaganda.

Technology transfer and management are two aspects which do not require high monetary inputs. However, in practicing the same as for example in fertilizer application, in plant protection, some credit input may be necessary. There are various agencies operating like lead banks, co-operative societies, agro-services societies, MFAL etc. which can look after the credit aspects. So with the training and with the arrangement of proper inputs in time and with the necessary credit facilities the high yielding varieties programme can be pushed up. Even if the cultivators use traditional varieties the same amount of technological input will make a difference in yield.

High yielding varieties of paddy, compared to the traditional ones, it is said, are more prone to diseases and pests. Is the notion correct? If so, how can the situation be remedied?

Most of the high yielding varieties of paddy owe their high yielding ability and associated physiological traits to the single parent *degee-woogen* a mutant from China. This high yielding ability apparently also goes with some degrees of susceptibility to various pests and diseases. In fact after the introduction of high yielding varieties several pests and diseases which were minor have become important and assumed major roles.

Besides inherent susceptibility of the varieties, improved technology of production including inputs like fertilisers render the crop more susceptible to incidence of pests and diseases.

How can the situation be remedied?

1. Various control measures using insecticides have been recommended. The tendency is now to reduce the amount of application of insecticides and limit them to the application at the most effective time which can be forecast with the help of surveillance and fore-

casting techniques. Forecasting techniques are available for number of diseases and pests which can give a fair warning to the cultivators at the initial stage before the pest/disease builds up. Surveillance will also help in the identification of pockets of incipient outbreak and if control measures are taken in time then the outbreak can be nipped in the bud.

2. Besides chemical control, we have developed what is known as integrated pest control measures in which several factors like removal of the source of infestation such as old stubbles or alternate hosts of pests and diseases i.e. grasses and other weeds, field sanitary measures treatment and seedling dip treatment, exploitation of hosts resistance i.e. cultivation of varieties which are tolerant to pests, encouragement of predators and parasites etc. There seems to be a good hope of effective control of insects and diseases through a multipronged attack.

3. Of all the items listed in the integrated pest control measures, host resistance has been exploited recently in research programmes. Through screening of genetic stocks of rice, donors for resistance to major pests and diseases have been identified. Many crosses have been made with high yielding varieties and several cultures have been developed which are resistant to these pests and diseases. Some of these include cultures which are multiple tolerant being resistant to a group of pests and diseases which occur in a region in a season. Cultivation of these varieties especially in areas endemic to pests will not only go a long way in keeping down the damage caused by the pests, but will also discourage the growth and multiplication of pests.

The CRRI has released a variety resistant to Gallmidge called 'Sakthi'. Gallmidge is endemic to Orissa and adjoining districts in M.P., West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University has released a variety "Kakatiya" for their areas. During the last two years several good cultures have been developed with resistance to gallmidge and leaf hopper and Tungro virus which is transmitted by leaf hopper. These are under large scale testing and show great promise for the future

These new varieties which are resistant to pests are being multiplied for introduction.

The common impression is that the success achieved in our laboratories does not get adequately reflected in the farms. What exactly is the difficulty?

We do not have institutionalised contact between research institutes and extension agencies. They work more or less in isolation except when individuals seek out each other and learn. There is therefore urgent need for making this contact more formal and purposive than it is at present.

The transfer of information from the research centres to extension can be elected with proper training programmes. These are not operating to the extent necessary. The effort of the CRRI in this direction has not met with adequate encouragement. During the last six years we have been trying to carry out several types of training-programmes and we have seen visible effects of the training programmes in productivity especially when the interest of the trainees has been aroused in this direction. There is need for carrying out these training programmes for all levels of extension workers. A couple of day's training programmes for those who make policy decisions, like Directors and Joint Directors and Secretaries to the Department of Agriculture, and 7-10 day's training in the field for others who actually implement the programmes like Deputy Directors of agriculture D. A. Os., and Project Directors etc. would be necessary. There are centres where farmers are trained in new production technology. The Principal and Instructors of these training centres should receive intensive training in production technology lasting 3 to 4 months from seed production to harvest. They in turn should go back with confidence, that given the necessary input, they could also produce 10-12 tonnes of paddy per hectare. These three levels of training programme should be organised in each State or region with the co-operation of the Agricultural University and State Department of Agriculture. Unless this is done transfer of technology will be slow and halting and the technical content

of the extension programmes is bound to lack scientific value.

Once the technology is known it would be necessary to take up one or two crucial items of this knowledge in specific areas on a campaign basis. The entire lot of cultivators may be contacted and all necessary help given to them whether such help takes the form of improved seeds, implements, pest control etc. For instance we may take the question of change over from wooden ploughs to iron ploughs. In Orissa we may require about 90 lakh iron ploughs. This could be carried out on a campaign basis during the next three years beginning from allotment of necessary steel and organisation of manpower for production and/or distribution through credits etc. The yield could be improved if improved implements can be introduced—i.e. with increase in energy input, as the engineers would say.

Similarly for seed programme About 28 per cent of rice in cultivated areas in Orissa is under uplands. The upland receives adequate rainfall in normal years to sustain short duration high yielding varieties maturing within 120 days. On a campaign basis the seed programme could be organised and distributed so that within the next two or three years the entire upland rice area is covered with appropriate high yielding varieties. This will result in doubling and trebling of production in these areas which normally produce 700-800 kg. per hectare.

What stands in the way of this advancement?

I believe what stands in the way of advancement are various administrative bottlenecks, weaknesses in the links of decision-making process from the village level workers upto the Minister concerned.

Do you advocate mechanisation of paddy cultivation as is being practised in Japan and other developed countries? Will it be advisable in view of the vast idle manpower available in India?

We may not be able to introduce mechanization to the extent practised in advanced countries. But a study of the power and energy requirements of rice cultivation shows that there is a wide gap bet-

ween power availability and the need for it in almost all parts of India.

Supply of pump sets and tube wells is often the beginning of mechanisation in India. The tube well will make water available throughout the season and intensive cultivation of crops round the year becomes possible. Such intensive crop production requires land preparation in time. Often quick land preparation between one crop and another will determine the success of the succeeding crop. The power requirement of harvests, threshing, drying, etc., also will increase. The present bullock power and the implements used and the manpower available will not meet the requirement of such intensive cropping. So mechanisation to the extent of supplementing the existing bullock and manpower to meet the needs of intensive cultivation made possible through irrigation is desirable.

In the Operational Research which CRRI has undertaken, this is being studied i.e. needs of power-input of each area are being studied and to the extent desirable mechanization is introduced.

Orissa has embarked on fixation of land ceiling and consolidation of holdings. As a specialist do you feel that it would help step up agricultural production in the State? What other measures do you feel are essential to make the two measures stated above meaningful and productive?

Consolidation of holdings is very desirable and from a discussion with the villagers it is obvious that they are agreeable for consolidation of holdings. It is a matter for local leadership to arrange the exchange of fragmented land to effect this consolidation. It is, however, possible with increased inputs and modern use of technology for cultivators to get a good return from 10-12 acres of land.

—By Courtesy, YOJANA.

FOR THE RECORD

AUSTRALIAN PM ON VIETNAM

Following is text of statement on Indo-China by the Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, in the House of Representatives on 8 April:

THIRTY YEARS AGO France attempted to re-establish her fallen empire in Indo-China. A war for independence became a war of massive foreign intervention. It engulfed a region. It challenged the might and will of the greatest power on earth. It made a wilderness of some of the fairest portion of the globe. The most tranquil city in Asia—Phnom Penh—has been made, in the words of the member for Kopoong, a mire of human misery. Centres of old civilisations have been made cities of death. The war unleashed on a peasant people the heaviest bombing in history and the greatest fire power used in history. Not less than two million have been killed. Countless more have been maimed. Yet the war continues.

It is ten years this month since Sir Robert Menzies announced the commitment of the First Australian Battalion to Vietnam. Since then it has been the duty of successive Prime Ministers to report to Parliament and people on Australian activities, on Australian actions, including activity by the armed services, in Indo-China. I am now the fifth Australian Prime Minister to have to fulfill that duty—but with this difference: for the first time an Australian Prime Minister need report only on our humanitarian involvement, including the use of the armed services, and our endeavours to end the war rather than escalate the war.

After all these years, after all the blunders and bloodshed of thirty years, what tolerable or feasible objective can any foreign government set for itself except the ending of the war, except the ending of the killing as soon as possible. We outsiders never had the right to intervene. But even if there were such a right or even if it was right to intervene, would anyone now suggest that any foreign

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government should resume that intervention? If we have learnt nothing else in the last thirty years we have surely learnt this much, at a heavy cost to ourselves but at a terrible one to the people we claimed to be helping.

FOR A GENERATION and more, Australia shared with her Pacific partners a great delusion about our rights, our interests, our obligations. Those who acted for Australia as a government mistook entirely the nature of Australia interests and obligations and her rights. They shared and encouraged the Australian people to accept a delusion about the nature of the conflict in Indo-China. All of us are still paying the price for those mistakes—in economic cost, in loss of confidence in western civilisation itself. We can repair the losses, other than the lives destroyed. But to do so it is necessary not to repeat the mistakes of the past—not just the mistakes in action but the mistakes of attitude. It was a mistaken attitude after the revolution in China that led step by step to the mistaken view of Australian interests and American interests and mistaken actions in Indo-China. Surely we have learnt our lesson at last.

For twenty years there has been a kind of tragic inevitability about the events now taking place. The great chance, the great opportunity for a political settlement, for peace throughout Indo-China was given in 1954 by the Geneva Agreements. The chance was lost, the opportunity was thrown away. The Geneva Agreements provided the two basic ingredients for a political settlement—re-unification after free elections. If such elections had been held, they would almost certainly have resulted in the power over a unified Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh. Rather than face this prospect the regime in Saigon, urged on by the then United States administration, refused to hold elections. The result has been that an outcome which might have been achieved by political means twenty years ago, an outcome certainly foreseen by the parties to the Geneva Agreements, whether they welcomed it or not, now seems

likely to be achieved only after these twenty more years of bloodshed.

The next great effort to achieve a political solution resulted in the Paris Agreements of January, 1973. Once again those Agreements envisaged a government of one Vietnam with participation of all parties, not just the governments of Saigon and Hanoi but the Provisional Revolutionary Government—the Vietcong so called. Neither the Geneva Agreements nor the Paris Agreements ever allowed the idea that North and South Vietnam were two separate countries. As Article 15 of the Paris Agreements states: "The military demarcation line between the two zones at the seventeenth parallel is only provisional and not a political or territorial boundary, as provided for in paragraph 6 of the final declaration the 1954 Geneva Conference."

In other words, from 1954 to the present day, from the fall of Dien Bien Phu 21 years ago to the fall of Hue two weeks ago. The war in Vietnam has retained its essential character. It is a civil war. The real character of the war has never changed. What has changed is the nature of the fighting and the level of violence. *That change, with all the additional suffering and killing it has caused, is overwhelmingly, due to one factor—foreign intervention.*

The real result of foreign intervention, principally the United States on the side of Saigon and Russia on the side of Hanoi, has been to raise the level of violence, to raise the capacity for mutual destruction on both sides. That is, if the two sides insisted on a solution by military means, then foreign intervention made it certain that the end—whatever the outcome—would be as bloody as possible. *What outsiders, including Australia, have done is to create two of the world's largest armies. That is our real legacy to Vietnam. That is almost the sole military result of years of intervention.* Let those who year after year encouraged a military solution, those who decried as weakness or even treason the calls for negotiations and the calls for political settlement, now, and at last, recognise the real consequences of their work. These strongmen, these realists, the men on horseback, insisted upon a military solu-

tion. So a military solution it is now to be.

IT SHOULD also be emphasised that both the Geneva Agreements and the Paris Agreements envisaged that all contending parties would share political responsibility in a re-united Vietnam. The Geneva Agreements envisaged free elections. The Paris Agreements provided for a National Reconciliation Council, to arrange for general elections in South Vietnam. Article 12 stated:

"Immediately after the cease-fire, the South Vietnamese parties shall hold consultations in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, mutual respect, and mutual non-elimination to set up a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord of three equal segments. After the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord has assumed its functions, the two South Vietnamese parties will consult about the formation of councils at lower levels. The two South Vietnamese parties shall sign an agreement on the internal matters of South Vietnam as soon as possible and do their utmost to accomplish this within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect."

This was the crucial political article of the Paris Agreements. The Saigon Government has refused to act to implement this central provision. It has not been prepared to join with the Provisional Revolutionary Government. This breach is the key to the justification for military retaliation claimed by the opponents of the Saigon government.

Because the political opportunities have been for a second time lost, a military solution became inevitable in the broader sense. This does not mean, however, that the actual and specific event of the past three weeks were themselves inevitable. The over-running of so much of South Vietnam is by no means a classic example of a blitzkrieg. In very large measure the North Vietnamese forces have been moving into a military vacuum. The United States Defence Secretary Mr. Schlessinger, said on 31 March that it was Saigon's withdrawals rather than a communist general offensive which was the

primary cause of the Government of Vietnam's present difficulties. President Ford said on 3 April: "A unilateral decision to withdraw created the chaotic situation that exists now. It was a unilateral decision by President Thieu."

To state these facts is not to condone breaches of the Paris Agreements by North Vietnam. There have been gross breaches repeatedly by both sides. It is just a plain statement of fact that the immediate chaotic situation north of Saigon is due to the unilateral decision by President Thieu. In the words of the Australian journalist Denis Warner—close as he is to military council in Saigon—"The shattering loss of central Vietnam which has swung the balance of forces entirely in Hanoi's favour, was not caused by enemy action but by hideous blunders in Saigon." The decision to withdraw and perhaps even importantly, the way it was made, with no explanation, no consultation, no communication, had two immediate results. It destroyed the morale of the army of the Republic of Vietnam and it spread panic to the population.

It is in this situation of unparalleled chaos and unexpected rapidity of events—unexpected in Hanoi itself—that the Australian government has tried to apply its resources to save lives, to relieve suffering. It must be emphasised that the suddenness of the collapse in South Vietnam limited the scope and effectiveness of any aid given by the Australian government or by any other government....

The actions of the government in the immediate emergency are part of the longstanding program and policy we have adopted since achieving office. Our immediate objective has been to do what we can to stop the fighting, to bring the war to an end. Our long-term objective has been to help rebuild a devastated Vietnam and help rehabilitate its people. We have consistently pursued both objectives since December 1972. The most important step open to Australia to reduce the level of violence was always to stop contributing militarily to that violence. Within a week of taking office we ordered the end of Australia's military involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia.

THE SECOND CONTRIBUTION open to Australia was to use dip-

lomatic influence to end the fighting. In particular the Australian government has tried to promote adherence to the Paris Agreements. We have lost no opportunity to encourage the Vietnamese parties to implement the Agreements to the full, and to deplore the breaches of the Agreements by both sides. And, of course, we have been able to do this only because we are diplomatically represented in both Saigon and Hanoi. These attitudes have consistently been expressed over the past 15 months by me and by the Foreign Minister at the highest level, and by personal contact between Vietnamese Ministers and officials and some of my colleagues, including the Deputy Minister and the Minister for Defence.

As recently as 13 March I wrote to both President Thieu and the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister stressing Australia's support for the implementation of the Agreements, our concern at the continued of the progress, the continued fighting and the continuing breaches of the Agreements by both sides. The fact is that the Australian government has been foremost among nations in seeking to end the war and relieve the suffering it has caused. In this immediate emergency, no government has been more active, more concerned and, reflecting the wishes of the Australian people, more generous. And it is worth noting the real reason why the Australian people expect their government so to act. Why does Vietnam invoke a very special kind of emotion and concern and compassion in Australia? It's not just the scale and extent of the suffering, which is not, unhappily, unique, not even unusual in this troubled world. The refugee, the homeless, the starving, the innocent victims of war number million upon millions across three continents. But Vietnam has a power over the Australian conscience for one particular reason. The Australian people have accepted the truth, the bitter truth, that the intervention into which they were led was disasterously wrong, that it only increased and lengthened the agony of Vietnam. The Australian people have acknowledged the truth in the same way that the American people and the American Congress have acknowledged it. But is the truth of the disaster ack-

nnowledged by its authors and their abettors?

ONE OF THE MOST DEPRESSING aspects of this whole tragic episode has been the lamentable performance of the Opposition in the past two weeks. I've listened with increasing dismay and contempt to the statements by spokesmen for the Opposition. I pass over the humbug and hypocrisy—par for the course—but the truly depressing thing has been the mounting evidence that with the Opposition nothing has changed. Ten years of destruction have changed nothing. The present Leader of the Opposition has even revived the Domino theory, smartly dismissed by the Prime Minister of Singapore as "old hash". The one great constant in the attitude of the parties opposite to the war in Vietnam, throughout the period of Australia's involvement, was their determination to squeeze every drop of political advantage out of it. And even in the final throes, they're at it again. One could hear all the echoes from the past, right from that unforgettable night ten years ago, 28 April 1965, when from this side of the House they brayed and with a delight they didn't bother to conceal as Sir Robert Menzies announced the first instalment of Australia's military commitment. It was their finest hour.

They laughed as they lied their way into this war, but throughout the subsequent years, in any debate which had to deal with any American initiatives to disengage or de-escalate the war, they were notable for their sullen silence. The only occasion their spirits revived was when, five years ago, President Nixon unleashed the South Vietnamese army upon Cambodia, escalating the war to its most ferocious level and transforming a haven of fragile peace into a war-ravaged wilderness.

In the orchestrated outpourings of the past week there has been just one new note—muted as yet, but clearly designed to become a grand new theme, and that is that the United States is an untrustworthy ally. The irony of it. We are witnessing the beginning of a new effort to sow the seeds of fear and suspicion and division in Australia. What else is the purpose of this attempt to blame the United

States Congress and the American people for the debacle in which the government of South Vietnam now finds itself. There could be only one other motive—to shame the United States back into Indo-China. Is this the wish of the Opposition? Is this their proposal for either the United States or Australia—to get back into the war?—to prolong it for yet another decade? If that is not their proposal then what criticism of substance can they have against my governments attitudes or actions with regard to Indo-China, now or at any time in the past two years and four months?

In the heady days when Vietnam was a popular war, when it was a political goldmine, before the people of Australia came to see its implications and consequences for Indo-China, for Australia, for the United States, the constant challenge made in this House, not least from the present Leader of the Opposition, was, "stand up and be counted." Indeed, the first time this challenge was raised in this House was against me—by the then Minister for External Affairs, now Lord Casey—21 years ago. **It was in 1954 that in this House I first warned against Australian or American military involvement in Indo-China. Let the members of the Opposition now stand up and be counted and say that they believe it was wrong that we should have got completely out of the war or believe that the United States or Australia should go back into the war.**

As to the United States, she has fulfilled any obligations she assumed to the government of Saigon. Neither the honour nor the interests of a great people can be confined to any particular foreign regime. But the United States' honour and interests do lie in helping rebuild a unified Vietnam, the unification of which misguided policies, mistaken policies of the past so long delayed, the United States' honour and interest lie in helping to rebuild an Indo-China to the devastation of which those policies so greatly contributed. **That is the way for the United States to regain her real place of leadership in our region. To helping in such a task, the Australian government is already committed, indeed, already contribut-**

ing. And in that task Australia, as far as this government is concerned, will be a good partner with the United States.

We will have no truck with those who put out the line that the United States should resume her intervention in the war. We will have no truck with any suggestion that America's honour or reputation requires resumed intervention. We will have no truck with those who seek to build a new philosophy of fear upon the unwarranted assertion of American dishonour in refusing to intervene with force on behalf of the Saigon government. While the security of Australia has never rested solely upon the American alliance, that alliance remains a key element in it. And whatever the outcome of the events now unfolding in Vietnam, the basic elements of Australia's security remain untouched.

Who rules in Saigon is not, and never has been, an ingredient in Australia's security. Our strength, our security, rest on factors and relationships ultimately unchanged by these events.

The really important factors and relations are those which have been developed by the Australian government since December 1972—our relations with our closest and largest neighbour Indonesia, our relations with our greatest trading partner Japan, our relations with China, our active support for development of co-operation between ASEAN members, our efforts to ensure that the Indian Ocean does not become the next area of confrontation between the super-powers as Indo-China became, in a sense, the first.

Above all, Australia's security, as with the peace of the world, rests ultimately upon making the detente between the United States and the Soviet Union a success and with associating China in a wider detente. These are the great relationships and the great factors which determine the security of Australia. This government has been unremitting in its efforts to strengthen those relationships. Those efforts have been rewarded with remarkable success.

It is not possible that the nightmare of Vietnam will ever pass from the memory or the conscience of

any man or woman of our time. Nor should it. But the work we are now doing to build good constructive relations with peoples and nations throughout the world will outlive even that bitter memory, will outlast even the bad and destructive things inflicted on the people of Vietnam during the past thirty years.

* *

ANTI — FASCIST

West German Chancellor's Statement

—thirty years after—

In a Cabinet statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the end of World War 2, Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany said:

TO US GERMANS the 8th of May, 1945, is a date which brings back memories of indescribable misery, of untold destruction and deep suffering. That date also bring back memories of the acts of violence against other nations committed by the Hitler dictatorship in the name of the Germans. Jews, Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, Poles, Czechs, French, British, Americans—millions of people of many nations—and our own people have had to pay dearly for the fact that Germany fell into the hands of a criminal political leader. The 8th of May brought us liberation from the National Socialist tyranny.

On the 8th of May 1945 we were given a new chance to make a new democratic beginning. That is why today's anniversary, which the victorious powers can rightly celebrate, is to us Germans, but not to the Germans alone, an occasion to ask ourselves the critical question: Have we in the past three decades learned the lesson of the German catastrophe? Speaking for the Federal Republic of Germany, I can say today that we have in the meantime built, on the foundations of the most liberal constitution Ger-

many has ever had, a strong peace-sustaining democracy.

From their own judgement the citizens of this state have turned their back on any form of totalitarianism. We have grown immune to the temptation, of totalitarian ideas and ideologies. Radicalism, whether from the Left or from the Right, stands no chance. All of us have learned the lessons of the past. We have not tried to erase that part of our history. We have acted accordingly with regard to our internal system. We have built a democratic and social state on the foundation of the rule of law, a state which guarantees the individual more freedom, given him more rights, more social security, and more social harmony than ever before in German history. We have integrated many millions of refugees and thus prevented the growth of a source of unrest at the heart of Europe.

What we have achieved so far is not yet permanently guaranteed by the Basic Law alone. The Weimar constitution was a good one, but it did not prevent Hitler's dictatorship, nor could the will to resist of thousands of German democrats prevent the emergence of or remove that dictatorship. For this you have to have the firm will and determination the whole nation to strengthen, protect and defend the Constitution. Consequently, the electorate in the Federal Republic of Germany have in free elections over the past 25 years always given clear preference to the democratic parties over any temptations of political extremism. That is a convincing manifestation of the fundamental attitude adopted by the people of this country in the three decades since 1945.

We have also acted accordingly in our external relations. Our reconciliation and alliances with the West under Konrad Adenauer have been complemented by fruitful developments towards the peaceful harmonisation of relations with Eastern Europe under Willy Brandt.

We realise that the capitulation of 1945 has not yet ensured lasting peace but that peace has to be constantly safeguarded anew. That is why we uphold the principles of non-use of force and collective security.

In our country there is no argument as to the need to continue this policy for peace.

We have no thoughts of correcting by force the loss of territory and the partition of our country which were also the results of the 8th of May. We regret this idea from the depth of our heart, because we know this would be the wrong way. Yet we do cherish the hope of our nation one day being able to live together in peace under one roof. But we shall continue with the utmost consistency and sincerity to make non-use of force the guiding principle of our policy.

In 1945 we could surely not have hoped to be offered so much help, readiness for reconciliation, good-neighbourliness and partnership so soon. And here I mean not only our closer neighbours but explicitly include the United States and the Soviet Union. There is no greater aim in the world than peace. We Germans, taking a realistic view of the means at our disposal, have assumed our share of responsibility in pursuit of that goal. We wish today, in memory of the 8th of May 1945 and of the millions who died in the fighting or as victims of the SS-regime in Germany and in many other parts of Europe, to emphasise that element which today forms the bond between us and the former enemies of National Socialist Germany: The policy for peace, which is based on the knowledge that war as a continuation of political intercourse with the admixture of different means is an improper, inhuman instrument.

Inania of this, that and the other

Dignity And All That!

BY INNA

The UN Talks about the dignity of Man. The Declaration of human Rights does not simplify things with its capital letters in regard to the dignity of Man. The churches speak very highly of this, otherwise rather unthought-of, two-legged creature called man. But go down to some places in Colombo or in the rural

areas and you'll see that the dignity of this MAN is going a-begging.

Go to the counters at the Immigration-Emigration Office where not a few (somewhat understandably, they reason out) stand for passports, and what do you find? Anyone coming to ask for his/her passport has to bend his/her torso in four or sometimes six to be able to catch the eye of the sly little Miss or the important-looking official otherwise hidden behind. If you lower your head you'll catch their eye; if you raise it, you miss them and attention. The people inside are seated on the normal chair level and feel quite happy. It is the "mahajanaya"—who unfortunately has to go out of Sri Lanka for a while—that suffers in inelegant twists and turns.

Take the Bank-counters in some places, for example the HNB in B'wela which I saw recently. It is quite a different story: the clerks behind the counters sit on high stools, still-like ones, so that they may keep on to the elbow-level of the customer. A small, insignificant thing, you might say. Well, may be. But quite important in a world racing towards full equality, upholding the Rights of Man, undated with Chardin, and a country enjoying the benefits of the Era of the Common Man thanks to that most uncommon of recent men, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who would have been horrified to have seen a man crumpled into six, because he is not a dwarf, merely because he has to get his passport on a certain day. Better put the clerk on a pedestal of a chair than get a man to crane his neck, twist it and peer through a not very-interesting piece of Immigration-Emigration furniture, the people's counter.

Then again, take the renewal of life in a Sinhala-Tamil, Hindu-Buddhist New Year. I've seen some of the best "years" of our lives spent at bus-stands in rural, Kandyan peasantry areas on the 13-14 of April. Buses brazenly bump off Boards and put on whatever nearer station appeals to the eager driver.

Who cares?

Feeding infants, old women and children, pregnant mothers, all remain huddled waiting "from dawn to dewy eve" and no bus comes. No renewal of life. Life goes on still the same inside the bus-queue

shed. Sometimes the queue stays long enough for one to make a "sociological" size-up, as I did, passing-through one day:

At a Provincial capital bus-stand: (analysis of five bus-queues)

From one town to another: few people, many buses;
From one town to another small town: many people, less buses;
From one town to a long distance town: few people, no buses;
From one town to a village: few people, no buses (a wait from 8-12.35);

From one town to an estate: many people, no buses (8-11-They walked away at 11).

Walk out, my dear CTB men, walk out of your sanctums and see how some drunken Bus-stand office-men harass the public in some remote areas, hell-bent on bringing discredit to the present government, saboteurs of the best-laid plans, kow-towing and swearing they are of this party, until once enmeshed, they think of every party including a few night parties. As a mark of respect to the dignity of the bus-traveller, put away your cars and walk with bowed head.. you'll see what I'm driving at, and they're not driving to.

POINT OF VIEW

On Colonialism

By Bryan de Kretzer

Many words have become jargon in our contemporary world. One of these words is Colonialism. Colonialism to succeed requires two elements, those who desire to colonize and those who consciously or unconsciously want to be colonized. One cannot succeed without the other. Indeed they are two parts of a single whole. If there were nobody of people desirous of being colonized, there would be no colonialism. But let us be specific.

Today in Sri Lanka we still talk critically of colonialism, and by this we generally mean to condemn the British or Dutch or American peoples for their colonialism either past or present. We do not intend

in any way to include in the range of our condemnation our own behaviour patterns which receive, encourage, and make colonialism possible.

What do we mean?

Large numbers of us, and especially those who belong to the elitist ruling class continues to cherish and nourish a colonial mentality. Take a simple example from the world of sport. It will serve splendidly to illustrate our contention some of the most vociferous critics of colonialism again and again on public platforms inform the world at large that Cricket is the King of sports. Only those who have been brain-washed by British colonialism would ever conceive such a thing. It is divorced so far from the true state of affairs as to be obvious to the ordinary uncolonialised mortal that a game which has never been adopted outside of lands directly controlled by England may not lay claims to such a title. Cricket is not played, not appreciated not known, beyond the narrow confines of the English-speaking world!

What is the true nature of the so-called brain-drain? Is it not a fact that our ruling class long to educate their children in English, desire for themselves all things English, fondly embrace even the discarded foreign imported chamber pot, because still in this land of ours, the colonial mentality endures much more among ourselves than it does, bless them, among our former rulers, the British themselves.

Years back, in the nineteenth century, a group of our peoples used to dress up wearing trousers which just happened to peep out from under their tweed sarongs. Today their grand children in some of the five star hotels sport some batik sarong, but ensure that their longs descend some considerable length beyond the length of the sarong lest anyone should cease to remember they are gentlemen. We alas, are still a people who want to wear both sarong and trouser simultaneously. In either one or the other, we may perform well, but wearing both at the same time hinders our march. And that is precisely what we are trying to do as a nation. We are psychologically confused even as we are sartorially confused. We have not left our colonial mentality behind.

It is the same colonial mentality which makes our leaders trot out to one conference after another to plead with the more advanced nations for better terms of trade, more equitable distribution of wealth etc. Are they so naive to believe that any of these pleas can be taken seriously? Do any of them purchase a bottle of arrack for ten rupees, if they can get the same quality of the identical amount for five rupees? Do those who inveigh against the haves ever ask themselves whether in their own lands they would voluntarily surrender any of their creature comforts for the sake of their own less fortunate fellow native brothers? Are there not in our own lands the same vast distinctions between the haves and the have-nots which they so enthusiastically condemn when abroad and at international conferences conducted in airconditioned comfort?

It is part of the strategy of colonial rulers to offer carrots to the leaders of the developing world to keep them tame and submissive. When our leaders accept the carrots—Mercedes cars to run in etc—they themselves actively consent to the continuing colonialism which they condemn on public platforms. Just before the collapse of Saigon, the BBC said that one contrast between Saigon and Hanoi was that in the former the leaders travelled around in Mercedes cars and were heavily guarded, whilst in Hanoi the leaders went to buy food stuff from the city market on bicycles. Let those who have waxed eloquent and enthusiastic at the way things have gone in Vietnam ask themselves if in their own lands their own lives are patterned on the Hanoi or Saigon Life Style? The latter is the native part of colonialism, the former, a guide line into the future. Do we still want to continue to be colonial people, or shall we become men?

WITH THE NEXT ISSUE

TRIBUNE ENTERS ITS TWENTY-FIRST YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

TRIBUNE, May 17, 1975

IS IT TRUE?

Sherlock Holmes

PASSION FRUIT JUICE AND HIGH LIVING



IS IT NOT INTERESTING that the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade has been good enough to relax the rule about entertaining more than 150 guests at receptions? That the original statement had stated that the 150-guest rule had been relaxed so far as passion fruit juice was concerned? That as there was some confusion about this matter a further statement was released in which the Ministry had emphasised (vide *Daily News*, 10-5-75) that only passion fruit drinks could be served at parties where the number exceeded 150? That "the relaxation of the ban to this extent has been prompted by the ready availability today at the Marketing Department of passion fruit juice, and the availability of sugar off ration the Ministry explained." That it is clear that the relaxation applied strictly to passion fruit juice alone? That it is also clear that short eats, lunches and dinners were not permitted still for parties exceeding 150? (That people get around the ban by receptions on different days of 100 to 125 people to make a grand total of a thousand or two thousand?) That while estables are not allowed for parties of over 150 people, at one and the same place, the question has arisen whether other kinds of drinks cannot be served? That, with sugar freely available off the ration, would there be any objections to serving of other kinds of fruit and sweet drinks? That aerated plain soda did not need sugar? That there is even more speculation whether locally manufactured arrack, gin, beer and the like are taboo? That of all local alcoholic spirits, arrack with undiluted passion fruit juice, makes one of the best drinks on our cocktail and reception circuit? That many people have still not discovered the virtues of passion fruit juice as a chaser for arrack? That many wonder whether the relaxation was

only for passion fruit juice alone or whether a dash of arrack in each glass would be permissible? That at receptions one can now have two rooms in the same hotel at the same time where in one room less than 150 people are served short eats and delicacies or even meals? That in another room there would be a thousand people or more drinking passion fruit juice (with arrack if the authorities ruled that arrack or other alcoholic beverages could be served to more than 150 persons?) That the relaxation of the rule will lead to a whole lot of other equations of the most far-reaching character? That at one time it was thought that the ban on receptions for over 150 people had been imposed primarily to discourage ostentatious consumer expenditure? That the need to conserve food was an additional reason but food shortages are not perennial? That with the availability of flour there was no difficulty in making cakes or other short eats? That the purpose of the 150-person rule was to enforce more austere consumer expenditure by an affluent class or a class which had pretences to affluence? That in Sri Lanka, in the era of the United Front and socialism, there are still vast number of people who would waste a fortune for a Hotel Intercontinental reception and thereafter be pauperised for a decade or more? That far too many people are happy to throw 10,000 to 20,000 rupees on a "do" at the Intercontinental, or Oberoi, or the Mt. Lavinia, the Taprobane or the Galle Face than conserve this money to swell funds of national saving or even make it a small capital nucleus for a small undertaking?

That many discerning observers have noted that ostentatious consumer expenditure has today reached new heights unknown in Sri Lanka ever before with the gem

capitalists and the CRAs setting a new affluent jet pace in consumer expenditure? That it is now considered to be "disgraceful" to have anything but 5 Sri or 6 Sri cars in a wedding procession? That gem capitalists, CRAs, chairmen of Corporation, top bureaucrats, Ministers all now go about in 5 Sri (already looked down) and 6 Sri limousines? That lesser men feel their self-respect hurt if they are not able to beg or borrow such cars by hook or by crook for a wedding procession or the like? That the new ostentation in vehicles and new affluence in living shown by CRAs and the top brass of the government, apart from their much-spoken about expenditure in five-star hotels, has begun to fire young aspirants entering public sector employment with ambitions of reading high-sounding heights of affluence as quickly as possible? That frustration in not being able to become affluent in this way within a short-time drives youth to frustration? That some of them end up in that jungle with a stolen gun? That others vent their spleen in ragging students and teacher-trainees who come within their purview in a way that has begun to revolt human conscience? That the newspaper reports of the evidence recorded before the Commission inquiring into the ragging at Vidyalkara has already begun to make many wonder whether the kind of university education this country has financed and encouraged has not created multitude of little frankensteins? That false standards will continue to be set up as long as Ministers, bureaucrats and public sector hierarchy use luxury cars instead of push bikes? That the present level of the GNP in the country cannot permit top government officials to move about in anything but public transport or push bikes? That even in affluent socialist countries the kind of luxury cars permitted to our bureaucrats and ministers is not allowed? That the story is very different in poor socialist countries? That in developing countries and newly developing socialist countries top Ministers, top bureaucrats and others have to set the example by simple living without inflaming the rest of the population to aspire to grandiose schemes of high living? That relaxation of the passion fruit juice rule is only an indication of the pressure for official okays for ostentatious consumer expenditure?

