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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THE BUDGETARY STYLE OF THIS GOVERNMENT seems to have a mystique all its own. Various reasons have been given as to why each budget became a non-Budget—cyclones, drought, oil hikes, world recession and global inflation. Except for the cyclone and the drought, all the causes could easily have been anticipated. Instead, the government indulged in a spending spree and everybody was happy for a while. The Minister of Finance now complains of “financial indiscipline” which had manifested itself, he says, in “supplementary estimates”. In the last budget, he cut off Rs. 750 and Rs. 500 million from the votes of Mahaweli and Housing respectively. There were also other cuts. This, he said, was to impose “financial discipline” which the IMF was said to be insisting upon. But now housing seems to have been assured of getting what was cut from some other source, and newspaper reports show that the Rs. 750 million has been restored to Mahaweli. This money was required to proceed with the work on Kotmale. If this cut had been insisted upon, Kotmale would have to be shelved with half the work done. Whatever one’s views on priorities and strategies are it is stupid to stop a constructive undertaking half way. What has been started must be completed with whatever corrective improvements that can be carried out on the basis of constructive criticism. Kotmale is an integral part of the Accelerated Mahaweli Plan and it is also a key link for increased power generation. The President has therefore decided wisely to restore the cut of Rs. 750 million to ensure that the work on Kotmale goes on. It will mean a supplementary estimate, and nobody should bother about IMF’s blah blah about “financial discipline” — when it is extending credit in billions to countries where “discipline” is unknown in financial or any other matter and where the money is also wasted in an arms buying spree with millions of people grovelling in poverty. Mahaweli may soon get the money to continue the work on Kotmale, but there is much the Ministry, the Authority and the Board can do to eliminate (or for a start, cut down) waste and thievery that stem from corruption, negligence, inefficiency or just plain indifference. In the hurry and flurry of setting up the Mahaweli complex, inadequate attention was paid to items of expenditure that could easily have been avoided. Further, security checks to minimise waste and theft were insufficient. In the process, thousands of gallons of fuel were siphoned into the black market, apart from the unnecessary running around by officials who were content if they were permanently on the road. Building material stolen from Mahaweli were available for sale at different parts of the island. That unless waste and corruption is stopped the Mahaweli image will stink.

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Referendum

-Before R/R.

Has the Government changed Sri Lanka's traditional policies to allow foreign warships to enter Trincomalee harbour? Has the Government forgotten its non-alignment to permit Rest and Recreation (R/R) facilities to the American Navy now in the Indian Ocean?

Reports have appeared in the media abroad that compel us to ask these questions. A **Tribune** reader in Colombo has sent us a note that the BBC in its Bengali programme "Probaha" on March 13 had stated that: "The Sri Lanka government has permitted two warships of Bangladesh Navy to anchor at Trincomalee seaport. This is the first instance after a long gap that the warships of other countries were allowed to enter Trincomalee. The BBC also said that when President Reagan moves for extending more military aid for the friendly countries of America, this decision of Sri Lanka government is now being widely talked about. "BBC's correspondent from Colombo had added that Trincomalee is situated in a Tamil speaking northern province of Sri Lanka. So, on this issue, questions were raised in the Parliament mainly by MPs belonging to the Tamil United Front. The members of the Parliament strongly protested the proposed facilities in Sri Lanka for the US naval personnel coming from Diego Garcia. The questions were also raised in the Indian Parliament. It was also declared that in return for the facilities, the US government would spend 500 million dollars for the development of the seaports of Egypt, Somalia, Kenya and Oman. This US declaration has further alarmed the opposition political parties. They apprehend that the Sri Lanka government might be influenced to make such an accord with the United States and the recent permission to Bangladeshi warships is a step towards a new strategic policy. The opposition circles of Sri Lanka also consider it as a step for understanding with the US government. "Quoting diplomats in Colombo, the BBC reported that, Sri Lanka had pressed for dropping the Diego Garcia issue from the draft resolution of India at the recent meeting of the foreign ministers of the non-aligned countries. It may be mentioned that Sri Lanka is the chairman of

the United Nations Ad-hoc Committee for Indian Ocean. It is presumed that, like the economic Policy, the foreign policy of Sri Lanka is also moving towards ASEAN" This BBC broadcast was reported in papers in Calcutta and Dacca.

BBC's reference to US aid and Sri Lanka was borne out in a report that appeared in the **Sun** on March 25. Under the headline **REAGAN PLEDGES \$ 51 MILLION TO SRI LANKA**, the report by the **Sun** Diplomatic Correspondent stated: "President Ronald Reagan has proposed that the United States government grant fifty one million dollars as development assistance to Sri Lanka during the fiscal year 1982. This proposal was presented to the US Congress on Monday in Washington by Ms. Jame Coon, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and the Near East. In outlining the aid proposals before a House Foreign Affairs sub-committee, the Reagan administration had underlined Sri Lanka's commitment to democratic ideals and also that it considers Lanka as a model for other developing countries. Here are excerpts from an official document released in Washington on Reagan's aid proposals: 'Sri Lanka is an important and moderate member of the non-aligned community and we have excellent relations. We appreciate the recent agreement it negotiated with us permitting the expansion of VOA facilities.....' "...**We welcome its willingness to receive foreign naval vessels in its ports.** Sri Lanka's commitment to the democratic process and to a burgeoning foreign investment sector—serves as a useful model for other developing nations. We propose to maintain our assistance at levels roughly comparable to actual outlays in 1981. In providing it we help assure that Sri Lanka is able to perpetuate its cherished democratic traditions in an atmosphere of political and economic stability'..."

"The aid programme that will commence in the Fiscal Year commencing October 1, 1980, will have the following break down: 27.2 million dollars for PL 480 projects, 26 million dollars for public housing investment guarantees and 100,000 dollars for IMET (International Military Education and Training). The Development assistance is concentrated on the Mahaweli irrigation project, with smaller sums going for education and environmental programmes. The aid commitments to Lanka as announced in Washington at a time when the US administration is reportedly cutting down

on aid in general is considered to be rather significant. According to an official statement the aid proposals for S. Asian nations made to the Congress by the Reagan administration reflected a mix of political developmental and humanitarian objectives. It added: "The invasion of Afghanistan, turmoil in Iran, and the increased Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean have had profound implications for our relations with the countries of South Asia. These developments have greatly enhanced the importance we attach to the area. We recognise it as the eastern flank of a region in which vital interests of the United States are stake..."

The key sentence is no doubt: "We welcome its willingness to receive foreign naval vessels in its port". It is one thing to receive naval vessels (which do carry nuclear arms), but it is a totally different thing to afford R/R facilities to naval personnel. If the BBC report is correct, then US navy personnel will be given R R facilities. **But, will the government give similar facilities to Russian, French, Australian and other naval personnel in keeping with our policy of nonalignment.**

Sri Lanka is the Chairman of the UN Ad Hoc Committee for the implementation of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace but Indian papers have expressed fears and apprehensions about the Sri Lanka Government's role. The New Delhi weekly **Mainstream** of March 14, discussing the problem of the Indian Ocean stated: "...More pointedly, the US has gone in and set up a Rapid Deployment Force for the specific purpose of capturing and holding down any country which in Washington's view constitutes a threat to its self-defined national interest and this includes the self-proclaimed right to get oil out of any of the countries of the region. The latest reports from Washington make it clear that the Rapid Deployment Force will be under a separate military command based in the Indian Ocean, and there are reports from West Asia that the first contingent of such a force has already arrived in Oman... "The dangerous implications of all these developments worried most of the participants of the recent New Delhi Conference of the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers. This is clear from the Declaration of the New Delhi Conference which stressed the urgency of convening the UN Conference on Indian Ocean Due to be held in Sri Lanka later

this year. On this question the US Administration has kept a posture of supreme indifference, while in practice it has been trying to dodge, if not scuttle it. More than two years ago, the US-SOVIET talks on limiting big power presence in the Indian Ocean reached a deadlock with Washington openly breaking them off.

"This time at the New Delhi Nonaligned Foreign Ministers' meet, Sri Lanka tried hard to get any reference to Diego Gracia deleted from the Declaration on the ground that any pointed reference to this American base might put off the USA from attending the proposed UN Conference on Indian Ocean of which Sri Lanka is the host. This was indeed a fatuous plea because indications so far have been that Colombo itself has been taking up half-heartedly, to say the least, the question of holding the proposed conference. For one thing, the present Sri Lanka Government has been quite unmistakably tilting towards Washington - following what looks like a variant of the Janata's "genuine" non-alignment. Although it has denied having given naval base facilities to the US at the old British base at Trincomalee, the Sri Lanka Government appears to be ready to provide R and R (Rest and Recreation) facilities to the US armed personnel at this place. One has only to recall the situation at Bangkok and Hongkong during the Vietnam war to realise the implications of such R and R facilities for the US forces at Trincomalee. More over, there are reports that a giant oil refinery is planned by American oil companies at Trincomalee - ostensibly a commercial deal but one that will help the US navy and air force spread all over the region: obviously the crude for the proposed refinery would come from countries in the neighbourhood like Saudi Arabia, to grab whose oil fields in case of the collapse of its tottering regime would naturally be the priority job of the Rapid Deployment Force..."

The paper strongly urges that India should take firm initiatives even if Sri Lanka should vacillate: "...With this rather frightening scenario in the Indian Ocean region, it is the urgent task for New Delhi to take the initiative in mobilising world opinion for making the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. It matters little if Colombo is the official host of the proposed UN Conference

on Indian Ocean. As the most important power in the region, India has the right and responsibility in helping in its convening even if Colombo vacillates. With the prestige earned in conducting the recent Nonaligned Foreign Minister's Conference, New Delhi today is in a far better position to take the initiative on the issue of peace and freedom in Indian Ocean. "Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has certainly done the right thing in warning the nation about the danger to our security coming from the high seas. The latest Indian discovery of the valuable polymetallic module in the seabed in this region - regarded as the 'most significant technological achievement' after Pokhran and Rohini - adds a new dimension to safeguarding the Indian Ocean against marauding from outside. This can be furthered only by making the Indian Ocean the top priority issue in our foreign policy projection today". Whilst these are the sentiments that seem to prevail in New Delhi, there are rumours afloat in political and political and diplomatic circles in Colombo that units of the Seventh Fleet now in the Indian Ocean will call in a Sri Lanka port on May 4 (partly under cover of helping to air-lift a five-ton generator for the TV installation to the top of Pidurutalagala) for a longer stay than usual. Rumours also persist that the US has asked the Government to extend some kind of "rest and recreation" facilities for the 2500 sailors who will be in town. The rumours do not specify whether these ships will call in Colombo or Trincomalee.

We are not able to obtain confirmation whether these rumours are founded on fact, or mischief, or intelligent anticipation, or wishful thinking. But entrepreneurs in the entertainment business are hopping to make a packet by lining up 2000 odd prostitutes to cope with the problems such an R/R invasion will entail.

Nor have we also not been able to obtain any information whether any application has been formally made to the government for R/R Facilities or whether there have only been attempts to do a little "sounding" in the right places. There is a hush-hush about the matter in places which have so far not been slow to deny any such concessions to the Americans.

Why? Is something brewing? Will 2,500 US marines get R/R hospitality whilst a

Seventh Fleet helicopter hovers over Pidurutalagala in a make-belief attempt to land a massive generator at the top - an exercise which everybody in the know privately admit cannot be done (especially because the TV tower and the building for the generator have already been put up leaving no space for a helicopter to land or even airdrop any heavy equipment).

The SLFP and the Left circles are certain that Sri Lanka has no option but to succumb to US pressures. The SLFP weekly **The Nation** 3/4/81 had two articles on the first page about (a) Sri Lanka's financial difficulties and (b) Trinco.

On the matter of the IMF's refusal to grant Extended Fund Facilities (EFF) the **Nation** stated: "Dr. Tilakeratna, the Secretary to the Treasury who is now in Washington talking to the IMF has run into a great deal of hostility from the top echelon in Washington. They are laying down very very tough conditions for resuming the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) which has not been in operation since August last year. The tough condition includes, more cuts in the Capital budget, a drastic devaluation of the rupee and severe curbs on both local and foreign borrowing. The fund has also expressed grave concern that Air Lanka has gone on a mad buying spree of worthless second hand Tri Star planes from Japan.

"For this purpose, Air Lanka has further indulged in an equally reckless borrowing spree in the international market. The latest borrowing by Air Lanka is for dollars 74 million on top of the borrowing it made last year of dollars 40 million. This reckless spending and borrowing soured the EFF negotiation in Washington. The IMF feels that the Finance Ministry can no longer be trusted to curb spending and borrowing, which is according to Washington all that the Treasury has been doing for the last four years.

"What is more serious is that Air Lanka has apparently tried to take the IMF for a ride by giving the mandate to chance? Manhattan Bank, hours before the Fund Mission landed at Katunayake Airport. So, Dr. Tilakeratna who went to Washington for three days had to extend his stay for

two weeks, trying to persuade the IMF that the Treasury will behave better in the future. But so far the fund has not relented and are insisting on their pound of flesh. For this Air Lanka's directors must take the full responsibility. In fairness to the Finance Minister, it must be said that he did his utmost to stop Air Lanka from behaving recklessly and irresponsibly. But, his two-page memo to the highest authority went straight into the waste paper basket. This has convinced the IMF that he is on the way out. So the EEF will come with the new Finance Minister according to the Air Lanka big noise who returned from Washington last week."

On the Trinco story, the **Nation** said: "Government Press had announced that Sri Lanka's foreign exchange is sufficient to finance imports of a mere three-week period. Wastage, corruption, trade malpractices, have exhausted all foreign loans and the national income. As it is unlikely that the Govt. would get any substantial aid from abroad, the foreign assets of Sri Lanka have dwindled to a mere three weeks' worth. Meanwhile, certain Govt. quarters are pressing that immediate negotiations should be started to lease Trincomalee harbour, to America and get a rental to tide our budget difficulties. "LET ASEAN be converted to a SEATO, with atomic teeth from the Seventh Fleet' is the slogan of pro-Singaporean ASEAN tycoons. "Sri Lanka is the best unsinkable air craft-carrier in Asia and the economic difficulties of the Govt. could be exploited to get base facilities from the most pro-Western Govt. within South Asia. The militarised Govt. of America run by the ex-CIA chief Bush and General Haig, has revived the Foster Dullesian brinkmanship in international politics. To such a set of power-seekers, strategy dictates that Sri Lanka should be an elder brother to Diego Garcia. The UNP budget gap is likely to be bridged by pontoon bridges of the Pentagon! So, Trincomalee is on sale, whatever New Delhi think of it."

These two stories may savour of tendentious logic and anti-government phrase-mongering, but there is a sub-stratum of truth and half truths in these stories which the government cannot afford to dismiss lightly. There may be no immediate protests or mass

demonstrations if RIR facilities are extended to the US Navy, but the government should not fool itself into thinking that the people of Sri Lanka will willingly accept such actions. Unlike in some other countries, in Sri Lanka protests do not come or erupt immediately or spontaneously. Nor can protests be organised in a sustained manner -- the ethos of Sri Lankans is different, but when a government acts against the dignity, self-respect and best interests of the nation indignation will gather momentum under the surface and like a time-bomb it will explode at general election or on some other occasion when a government least expects it.

With so many rumours floating around, that tend to undermine its credibility, the government should take the people into confidence and tell them whether there is a move to give the US navy special facilities. If no such step is contemplated, the government cannot do better than make a pronouncement that will end the suspicions and rumours.

If such a far-reaching step is in the offing, the government should hold a Referendum on this question whether (a) RIR facilities shall be accorded to American sailors or (b) Trincomalee be leased to the US Navy.

Granting special privileges, or base facilities, or even RIR facilities to the US navy or any other Navy (or country) will make Sri Lanka a crucial military target in any regional or global war that may erupt.

Current geopolitics make it clear that India and the US are on a collision course in the Indian Ocean. There is even the bigger compensation between the two super powers, the USA and the USSR. Must our government make this "emerald" isle a battleground? Must our ports be bombed? Must the people suffer the ravages of modern war, of nuclear missiles? Not all the blessings of IMF largesse or US aid can compensate for the devastation of just one nuclear bomb dropped on this little island.

There are a few bureaucrats and others who seek to make clever distinctions between RIR and base and plead that RIR facilities will bring no harm but only much-needed dollars. They do not seem to know what RIR facilities has done to many countries? It is the first step to subservient

dependence and the granting of base facilities. What would these gentlemen feel when their daughters, sisters and wives become prostitutes for a few paltry dollars? This is not rhetoric but the experience of several countries in Asia.

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COVER

With Hope

Owing to the Sinhala and Tamil New Year holidays on the 13th and 14th of April and the Good Friday and Poya holidays on the 17th and 18th April, there will be no issue of the **Tribune** next week, i.e. the issue dated Saturday April 18. The next issue of **Tribune** will be on Saturday April 25, 1981.

Tribune takes this opportunity to offer its apologies to its subscribers and readers for the delay in the getting the paper ready each week. In spite of all our efforts to beat the power cut by going to press earlier, we have not been able to keep our schedules. The cutting of power usually starts a chain reaction of other dislocations over which we also have no control. There have been technical breakdowns and printing difficulties which we did not foresee.

However, we look forward with hope to the future and that is why we have chosen a smiling face, without a single furrow of despondency, for our Cover this week. There is a great deal to bemoan and bewail about the state of Sri Lanka today, but **Tribune** has always tried to look at the brighter side.

In spite of all the difficulties faced by the overwhelming majority of the ordinary people, there are hopeful signs that things can improve overnight if the government and the people get down to real hard work to increase production, especially in agriculture. The young live in hope, as our picture signifies, and the Government must make it possible for their hopes to come true.

TRIBUTE

Rev. Fr. X. S. Thaninayagam

The death of Rev. Fr. X. S. Thaninayagam has created a great void in the world of Tamilology. He was a great Tamil scholar of international fame. At the same time, he was a devout priest, impartial researcher and remarkable humanist. It is rarely one comes across such men who combine deep scholarship, humanism and patriotism. He worked for a better understanding of Tamil studies at an international level.

He was born at Delft in the northern part of Sri Lanka in 1913. After a distinguished educational career at St. Anthony's College, Kayts and St. Patrick's College, Jaffna he proceeded to Rome to complete his Theological studies leading to the B. D. degree. He made use of this period to familiarise himself with the knowledge of European languages and their valuable literature. Yet, his love for the Tamil language was unrivalled.

On his return, he went to South India and had a deeper study of the Tamil language and Literature of the Annamalai University under distinguished Tamil scholars like the late Prof. T. P. Meenakshi Sundaram. He worked on the Study of *Nature in Sangam Classics* for M. Litt degree at this Institution. After some years of service in South India as a priest and teacher, he returned to Sri Lanka and joined the staff of the then University of Ceylon as a Lecturer in Education. From there he proceeded to the University of London and worked for the Ph. D. degree on *Educational Thought in Ancient Tamil Literature*.

By this time his fame had spread far and wide as emissary and interpreter of Tamil culture. He adorned the chair of Indian Studies at the University of Malaysia as the first Professor. He guided a number of research students to do their post-Graduate Degrees.

Though he was a devout Catholic priest, his understanding and appreciation of other religions was no less significant. He had special fascination for the Thevarams and especially Tiruvacakam. He cherished the

dictum of Saiva Saint Siddar Tirumular that the God had created him to glorify Him in the Tamil language. He did not swerve from this ideal till he breathed his last.

He knew about a dozen languages including some ancient classical languages like Latin and Sanskrit and modern international languages like English, French and Spanish. He used to say that Spanish was noted for sweetness, Latin for wisdom, Italian for love, English for commerce and Tamil for devotion (to God) Such was his love for the Tamil language,

He endeavoured to the best of his knowledge and ability to carve out a prominent niche for Tamil language in the comity of languages of the world. With this end in view, he published books and articles in English and Tamil about the greatness and the richness of the Tamil languages and literature. In the days of your Tamil Kings organised and held Sangams (darbar of Tamil scholars). In later days princes of Tamil Nadu had similar organisations to foster Tamil. But these followed the classical pattern. But Fr. Thaninayagam organised associations for the study of Tamil at local and international level. He was a self-appointed Ambassador of Tamil. He carried the message of Tamil, its greatness and uniqueness to all parts of the world. The International Association of Tamil Research, popularly known as the IATR was his brainchild. To date, four international conferences of Tamil Scholars organised by the IATR were held in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Paris (France), Madras (Tamil Nadu), Jaffna and in Mathurai (Tamil Nadu) early this year. The voluminous publications brought out by the IATR speak for themselves the importance attached to the Study of Tamil by foreign scholars. His book on *Tamil Studies Abroad* briefly shows the interest evinced by foreign scholars in the Tamilology. His article on *Tamil Manuscripts in European Libraries* (T. C. Vol. vii. No. 2) directs scholars to the availability of source materials. Another outstanding contribution of his was the journal *Tamil Culture* started by him in 1952. This journal was acclaimed as one of the leading academic journals that helped to provide a forum of discussion on Tamil Studies. It carried articles of leading scholars on History, grammar, education and subjects

that are relevant to the furtherance of Tamil studies. Nowadays, the word Tamilology is used at research and popular levels and Fr. Thaninayagam's efforts and contributions to make this popular is no less significant.

As a true and selfless nationalist, he shared with the aspirations of the Tamil community all over the world. At the same time he treated all human beings alike. He used to pride on the famous dictum of the Sangam poet Poothanthevanar that "every country is my country and every man is my kinsman". He did not cling to any narrow and parochial nationalism or sectarian bias. His scholarly lecture on the "Tamil Culture in Ceylon-Its past present and future" delivered under the auspices of the Tamil Sangam in Colombo is notable, (also see Tamil Culture Vol. IV No 4, 1955). Today, Tamil Studies are fostered in many Universities of the world and Fr. Thaninayagam's contributions in this regard cannot be ignored.

Among the valuable contributions in English, the following articles that appeared in the **Tamil Culture** are very useful for those who wish to acquaint themselves with the essence of Tamil philosophy and culture "The Philosophic Stage of Development in Sangam literature", (T.C. Vol. VII No.1), "The Thrukkural and Greek Ethical Thought" (Dr. R.P. Sethupillai Silver Jubilee Commemoration volume) "The Ethical Interpretation of nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry" (T.C. Vol. Nos. 2 and 4), *The Tamils said it with flowers* (T.C. Vol. li No.2), *Reginal Nationalism in Twentieth Century Tamil literature* (T.C. Vol. x. No.1).

He lived a full sixty seven years in the service of God and Tamil and one may say with the author of a medieval Tamil classic "Oh Excellent Tamil Goddess I lived so long because of you and will not accept even the heavenly ambrosia (which will give immortality)

V. Sivasamy, M.A. (Cey).
Head of the Department of Sanskrit,
University of Jaffna.

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URGENT

“More Health For Less Money”

by Dr. Florence Aluwihare.

DO WE NEED and can we afford to run and maintain a new 1001 - bed hospital? Over the radio (Channel 1 - *Behind The News*, SLBC March 16th) we were informed by Dr. Ranjith Atapattu that the Government spends large sums on “health” and that it costs Rs. 250 per day to maintain a patient in the General Hospital and Rs. 2,000 daily for a case in the Cardiac Unit. There are local specialists, a few politicians and very many WHO experts who oppose the construction of “centres of excellence” (Dr. V. T. H. Gunaratne) and the “provision of sophisticated institutionalised care” (Dr. R. Atapattu at the Medical Manpower Planning Methodology Workshop - BMICH December 29, 1980). In February 1980, a WHO Committee stated that “WHO had dark thoughts about charities that gave advanced modern health complexes to developing countries so that the capital city has a well equipped huge hospital expensive to run etc. etc., whilst doctors in isolated areas are short of syringes and basic drugs.”

It is a common occurrence in Sri Lanka today to find a depressing lack of equipment and very basic amenities and drugs in hospitals all over the island. Take a general hospital like the Nuwara Eliya hospital, a hospital which serves a widespread population. This hospital is at times short of basic drugs, but worse, still, it is reported to lack mattresses, sheets, pillows and blankets in the children's ward, so that the children are cold as well as sick. (vide *Weekend*, 18.1.1981) Provincial hospitals, as important as Kandy General Hospital, at times lack drugs such as penicillin and chloromycetin and even drip sets. Some weeks ago, there was a complaint from Negombo hospital about the water supply. Water was being carried in buckets to a first floor laboratory. It appears that a Water pump had been stolen two years ago, but the Health Authorities had turned deaf ear. (vide *Sun* 26-1-1981). Can you believe that a welfare group had been asked to supply the Akkaraipattu Hospital with such homely equipment as “buckets, dustbins, sheet, pillows

and electric kettles”?(*Sun*, 18.11.80.) It is therefore not surprising that Dr. K. H. Notaney (who representative in Sri Lanka) was reported to have said that Health Service Research was essential for arriving at decisions relating to the country's health problems, that were getting more complex day by day. He felt that the present health care model in Sri Lanka was more clinical - oriented (clinical suggests “bed side” care and treatment and was not of much benefit to the great mass of the rural population (*Daily News*, Feb 28, 1981).

We must bear in mind that 75% of the island's population live in the rural areas. In what way will the magnificent and generous gift of a large hospital in Kotte, promote the health status of these rural peoples? How many millions of rupees will be required annually to run and maintain such a large hospital? Will it not amount to 10 million rupees at least? Did you not read that as much as 26,7 million rupees (a gift from Japan) is needed for the detailed design by architects from Japan?

AT THE WORKSHOP on Medical Manpower Planning Methodology, which opened at the BMICH on December 29, Dr. Atapattu, Colombo Hospital and family Health Minister, made an equipment and timely speech. He was followed by Dr. V. T. H. Guneratne, at that time, Regional Director for WHO South East Asian Region. They both emphasised the fact that Sri Lanka is short of trained manpower and funds and maximum use must be made of the limited resources, especially for rural Sri Lanka. They made it quite clear that the policy of WHO was unequivocally concerned with the prevention of ill health and against the construction of “centres of excellence” or “disease, places” (Prof. David Morley, Hospital For Tropical Diseases, London) for housing the sick. Do you know that the Department of Health spends 90 million rupees annually treating preventable “bowel” diseases (World Bank)?

On January 16th this year Dr. Neville Fernando, M. P. Panadura made a most valuable contribution in a feature that was published in *Ceylon Daily News*. He also stressed the need for preventive health work particularly in rural Sri Lanka and he praised the unsung efforts of community health workers, whether doctors, public health nurses, midwives or Public health

TRIBUNE, April 11, 1981

inspectors. He and many of us also commend the Cabinet for appointing a Family Health Minister, Dr. Ranjith Atapattu, and he stated that Dr. Atapattu could render a great service to community health, if he was given the authority and most important, the finance.

We have entered the decade for safe drinking water and sanitation and so did Cholera! Why and how? It is not only in Mannar that human excreta is found on the surface of the ground. This same objectionable state of affairs is found in Colombo 5 in a residential area. Would not our most generous and gracious Japanese donors find happiness and satisfaction in utilising a part of this sum of Rs. 1000 or 1500 million that would be required for a 1000 bed hospital in a multipurpose manner, so to speak, and in this way fulfil one WHO objective of "More Health for less Money" (Observer, 27. 2. 80).

What do we really need by way of hospitals? We urgently need a teaching hospital for the Medical Faculty of the Ruhuna University College. Would a teaching hospital on the same lines of the Peradeniya Hospital (even if just 300 beds or so) call for the expenditure of Rs. 26.7 million for plans and designs or not? The enthusiastic Dean, Prof. T. W. Wickremanayake has pointed out the limitations of the Karapitiya Hospital, when he was interviewed by Carol Aloysius of the Ceylon Daily News' sister paper the Sunday Observer in November (30. 11. 80). The Dean, the students and the people of the Southern Province await the construction of a teaching hospital.

WE ALL VERY MUCH APPRECIATE the Japan - Sri Lanka Organisation's plan to construct a Hospital in Medagama (Bibile). We are most grateful to the Japanese people for this generous gesture. Rural people in UVA deserve and need a modern hospital. What else is needed on the Health front? The Cancer Institute at Maharagama is so over-crowded that elderly cases cannot gain admission. The elderly must not be forgotten by a Dharmista society and so a 300 bed Cancer hospital and if possible, Research Institute at Kotte, would be a great boon to those suffering from this dread source. There should be provision for chemotherapy (this is lacking at Maharagama) and otherwise the hospital could be

equipped in consultation with Sri Lankan Cancer experts.

All our provincial hospitals need up-grad-ing, apart from needing routine maintenance such as colour-washing and paint. The M. P., Panadura has stated that all medical wards in our larger hospitals must be equipped with a debrillator and a cardiac monitor. Many hospitals need Neurosurgical units, and accident units. Why should patients travel long distances to be admitted to the General hospital N. S. U? Why is the General Hospital overcrowded? Is it not due to two main reasons -- the sorry state of hospitals outside the capital and the fact that need for safe water and sanitation has never been a top priority during the last 33 years. The whole nation would be eternally grateful to a donor Government who would be willing or find it possible to spread its generosity for the benefit of more of her people. In view of the WHO policy on the subject of large luxury standard hospitals, would not our wise President J. R. Jayewardene with his characteristic vision and foresight find ways of approaching his very good friends in the Japanese Government? What has the Director General of WHO Dr. Halfdan Mahler to say on this subject? Addressing delegates from the South Pacific region (including delegates from Japan) in Manila he stated: "Political, social and economic reforms may be needed by countries to achieve the goal of health for all by the year 2000. A more equitable distribution of resources for health care can be the first of a series of such reforms".

Can I appeal to readers to ponder the views expressed by Dr. N. Amarasekera, Visiting Physician, Kandy Hospital? He sent in a contribution to the Daily News, 23. 9. 80, under the caption: "Big Expensive Hospitals -- How Necessary Are They? Dr. Amarasekera also emphasises the need for community health care and the urgent need for safe drinking water and sanitary latrines. He would like to see the hospitals that we already have given a face lift instead of very generously donated resources being used for what we do not even require. He would like to see an up-to-date Burns Unit in one or more district hospitals to serve bottle lamp burn victims and so on. We must all speak on behalf of our Family Health Minister, Dr. Atapattu.

Give him the tools, that is the trained manpower and the money to pay them adequately and he will carry out the programme of Primary Health Care -- which includes immunisation of all children during the first year of life against tuberculosis, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria and poliomyelitis, material and child care, nutrition and family planning. But most important the corner stone of this programme is the provision of safe drinking water and the sanitary disposal of human waste. If this is achieved there will never be another outbreak of cholera, the killer of the last century.

But at a recent meeting of the Ministry of Colombo Hospitals and Family Health there was some depressing talk about a lack of funds for the immunisation programme. Can it really be true that cuts in the preventive health budget may spell disaster for this programme? Can we afford to allow children to die from Polio and other preventable diseases or live as post polio paralytic victims? It is imperative that the needs of children (the children who will be tomorrow's citizens) must take precedence over prestigious building complexes, tamashas of all kinds and celebrations, even if there has been adult franchise for fifty years.

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BOWATENNE

More Power

A power plant at Bowatenne was part of the Master Plan for the development of Mahaweli River Basis, on irrigation-hydro power complex utilising irrigation water released down Amban Ganga. The feasibility report was prepared by the Mahaweli Development Board on which the Ceylon Electricity Board obtained a loan of 8 million US dollars from the Asian Development Bank to meet the foreign component of the construction cost. The Ceylon Electricity Board commenced work on the main civil works in 1976. The project consists of the construction of an intake and a $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet diameter 4,500 ft. long concrete lined pressure tunnel to carry 3500 cusecs of

water. A power house located close to Amban Ganga will have an installed capacity of 40 MW and will generate 108 million units of energy per year for the National Grid. Bowatenne was designed to meet the daily peak load demands. The water will come mainly from the Mahaweli waters diverted at Polgolla and the local catchment of the Amban Ganga. Water used after generating power will be redirected to Amban Ganga for irrigation works down stream.

The construction of the project was carried out under 6 main contracts. The access road, approach canal and the intake was carried out by the State Development Construction Corporation. The Ceylon Development Engineering Co. Ltd., carried out the main civil works consisting of the tunnel, surge chamber and the power house. The Intake Gates and stoplogs were supplied and installed by Newton Chambers of England in collaboration with Walker Sons & Co. Ltd. The turbine, generator and the Electro Mechanical equipment of the power house was supplied and installed by Sumitomo of Japan and the steel pipe lining by Trivent Structural of India. The high voltage transmission line from Bowatenne to Ukuwela was constructed directly by Ceylon Electricity Board. The total cost of the project is estimated to be Rs.320 million, and the cost of generation of energy will be 30 cents a unit.

This is the first hydropower project of Sri Lanka where Engineering Consultancy work and supervision was carried out by local Engineering Institutions. The initial consultancy work was carried out by Mahaweli Development Board and was later taken over by the newly formed Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau. Sir William Halcrow and Partners of London acted as advisory consultants to the project. Except for the major electromechanical equipment all Civil Engineering work, fabrication and installation of the equipment were carried out by local Engineering firms and Corporations.

The construction of this project was delayed because of the communal disturbances in 1977 and the cyclone in November 1978. Cyclonic floods in the Amban Ganga completely destroyed the coffer dams and

flooded the tunnel and the power house and more than 6 months had to be spent in clearing up, repairing the damages and reorganising the works. The construction and installation work of the project is now coming to an end and the commissioning tests will be possible by latter part of April. In spite of the setbacks and the additional expenditure required to overcome them and the high inflation rates during the last few years, the cost of generation of power by Bowatenne is only 30 cents per unit made possible by the careful control of the design and the construction costs. The Ceylon Electricity Board will be relieved of generating costly thermal power (at Rs. 2.50 a unit) by the commissioning of the Bowatenne Hydro Power unit utilising Mahaweli waters.



MOSCOW VIEW

REAGAN'S "CHALLENGE"

by Gennady Gerasimov

"For now, soft words are in style in Russia," the magazine **US News and World Report** wrote on March 9. And then triumphantly added: "The Kremlin is not ready to take on a pugnacious American President." I will leave the description of the president's disposition to the discretion of the magazine editor: The quote which is rather typical of the American press in general discourages one by the tendency to measure everything by their own cowboy yardstick, and the refusal to try and fathom the principles of Soviet foreign policy. This "measuring by their yardstick" means in this case the equating of Soviet-American relations to a card game, usually to Poker with its bluffing and lack of trust. Senate Republican majority leader Howard Baker stated in this same cock-fighting tone that the Russians were in the habit of testing each new president by tossing him a "challenge" to see what makes him tick, to use the words of John G. Tower, chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate.

If we accept the "challenge" theory, it has to be said that it was the US Administration which began by throwing its hat into the ring, and charging the USSR with

all the deadly sins, right down to not believing in an afterworld. Speaking in the abstract, the USSR could accept the war of words challenge (Russian abounds in picturesque oaths) and charge the United States with not loving life enough in this world, perhaps because it believes in the next world. But a sense of responsibility for the future of peace prevailed over possible feelings of ire and regret, and a fundamentally different "challenge" — an invitation to a dialogue — was presented from the rostrum of the 26th CPSU Congress. And the American magazine mentioned at the outset as well as certain other papers plus Senator Baker, see this suddenly as the first Soviet concession to the get-tough outlook of the new president. But Soviet policy is a policy of principle and not a policy of running scared. If Washington were to take the trouble to closely investigate Soviet policy-making documents, it would see that the 26th Congress projected for the 1980s the Peace Programme adopted by the 25th and continued at the 26th CPSU Congress.

Senator Baker's assessment of the Soviet initiative being the first dividend for the Reagan administration's foreign policy was in laughable contrast to that of Senator Henry Jackson and White House Press Secretary James Brady who both called it "a ploy". The hardest job of all is to try and find in Washington someone who makes the simplest assumption that the Soviet intentions are in fact sincere. When Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev presented his proposal for a dialogue, he pointed out two reasons for it — the current state of relations between the two leading nuclear powers and the acuteness of the international problems requiring solution.

The United States, West European allies have rejected the cowboy yardstick and are advocating dialogue. FRG Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said that he would advise Ronald Reagan to meet with Leonid Brezhnev. Unfortunately, more often than not, recognition of the need for dialogue is followed by the stipulation of "certain conditions" for the creation of a "suitable climate", etc. There are so many stipulations that one begins to suspect a desire to throw the baby out with the bath water. And in Washington itself following the initial con-

fusion caused by the "bolt from the blue" (Brady's words) talk has surfaced about the need to study the Soviet proposal and to consult allies. This is a step forward (maybe forced by the Soviet peace "challenge") compared to the prior position of Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who said that several problems that were looming large should be clarified before a constructive summit dialogue would be justified. Since problems always seem to loom large, would it not be better to try and clarify them together?

By the way Zbigniew Brzezinski, the eminence guise of the White House during the Carter presidency, who diligently went about undermining Soviet American relations, believes that the Carter administration made a mistake in having only one summit with the Soviet leader in its four years. And, true enough, what is so frightening about summits with the USSR? The only thing is that by furnishing a positive impact, the meeting would upset the administration's plans to rapidly beef up its military "muscle" and achieve its aims of "world leadership". So not having the political opportunity to outrightly reject the Soviet proposal, official Washington is trying to bring it to naught by posing unacceptable preliminary conditions, fully realizing that they are unacceptable. So the President's opinion which he expressed in an interview given to the *Daily News* of New York -- is that before a summit can be held, the Soviet side will have to make a "change in attitudes and activities". But in that case, the summit will go on with any other country but the USSR. The USSR does not pose any preliminary conditions.

And the President added that the "talks" could be more productive if the United States first beefs up its armed forces". In other words, the United States will be prepared for a dialogue if and when it attains a "position of strength". This is despite the fact that all, or nearly all, former American ambassadors to the USSR testify that the Soviet Union will never consent to talks in these conditions. The talks are possible only on the basis of equality. Still, the idea of the dialogue is strong and viable because it reflects the demands of the time. It is what might be called a challenge thrown by time. Let us hope that in the course of political seif-

education, official Washington will also come to recognize the total lack of promise, and the danger, in confrontation politics. -- APN-

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LETTERS

PM's Proposed Visit To Batticaloa

Sir,

It has been reliably rumoured that the village-building Premier of Sri Lanka, Mr. R. Premadasa intends making his debut in the Batticaloa District sometime in the third week of May this year. In this connection it would have to be made known to him that the people of Batticaloa will be only too glad to receive him with open arms, to honour him right royally during his visit and will truly be privileged to have him in their midst.

As regards such visits it will have to be said that they are, more often than not, made blandly and strictly formal, official and brief; so brief that the people of the area, the citizens that do matter in the growth and development of a region, are seldom or never provided with the opportunity to see their country's leaders face to face and to set forth their problems: their sufferings and their sorrows: the slings and arrows of human life. And the most pertinent question is why shouldn't the Premier blaim for himself the privilege of allaying the people's corroding fears, and wiping their guttering tears?

The Premier should, therefore, see to it that the proposed visit, brimful of sympathy and love, does not become a mere formal, humdrum official function attended with the usual, hackneyed, meaningless "tamashas" and fanfares, hollow hums and haws. It shall be an occasion for a genuine heart-warming meeting of a people and their Premier; for he has by sheer effort not only qualified himself to be one who goes to the root of the several social and economic problems that beset any region today, but also to the grass-roots, seeking out the kinks and knots, nodules and nodi that have proliferated today as the outcome of so many hitches, some purely parochial, others of a global significance.

Be that as it may, it is always a healthy sign when a Premier, in all sincerity, condescends to go the people, sans all security measures, sans all flourish of trumpets, to meet

them and have a heart and soul talk with them. This will ease many a hitch and many a deadlock that might have assumed the surface gloss of irresolvability, and had become knotty. It is also a welcome sign, and a heartening one at that; when a Premier proposes to go first to the citizens: the menders of roads, the hewers of wood, the drawers of water, the tillers of the soil, the fishers, hawkers and vendors of goods; and stay for a while, breathe a free atmosphere—free of bureaucratic rigidity and regimen—and have an intimate “chew” and a hearty chat. For this purpose he will have to have the time to “stand and to share” and sit and hold a familiar dialogue, and not be burdened with the obsession of what is customarily considered to be an “official flying visit” or a conventional “hearty welcome blare”.

Thus things will have to be gone through, tackled and resolved in an atmosphere surcharged with a rare charm and serenity and familiarity. What a people can offer to the Premier by way of a bouquet is peaceful, serene and characteristically calm ethos: by which is meant a simple dialogue—promoting, thought—provoking and heart—bonding atmosphere in which the citizens shall be in the envious position to put their often hastily—planned and dotty thoughts across to their Premier. Shouldn't they meet? The thoughtful, compassionate, understanding mind of a leader of men, that intends to bring peace and harmony, goodwill and confidence, and the somewhat frayed and frustrated mind of a people teeming with pushes and pulls, chimeras and delusions and lurking imaginary fears and truly craking pains?

Whatever it be, like a calm after a storm, the Premier is bound to bring peace and solace and succour and a ray of hope to a people who have all through been hungering after a good peaceful, just and benign government. Once bitten twice shy, runs the proverb. These people of the Eastern seaboard much more than of any other region, have been bitten by nature's forces in the shape of floods and cyclones and epidemic diseases and by man's muddled thinking and crooked ways; and hence they have to be doubly wary of hidden mishaps and claptraps and of being misled. And it is, therefore, prudent for them to meet their Premier face to face, in a congenial atmosphere, to have their several demands—at least the

most pressing ones: the rebuilding of a cyclone devastated township and villages, the Valayiravu Bridge; a dream that has almost come true, a cancer ward in the Batticaloa General Hospital to serve the entire East-coast and Bintenne region, a building to house the Nurses Training School—met, and their petty problems resolved. It should necessarily be no other than a hand in glove confrontation.

It would therefore be considered indiscreet on the part of the great leader that the Premier is, if he would plan his proposed visit a mere flash in the pan function. Why should he confine his visit to the age-old, rampart-hedged Kachcheri and Governments Departments only? Let him not be merely content seeing the fleeting smiles that come and go on the faces of the present efficient administrative machinery only. Let him see for himself the wrinkles and furrows, as much as the dimpled care, that sit on the faces of the people.

52, Angle Road,
Batticaloa.
20.3.81.

K. Kanapathipillai

Insecticides

Sir,

I am a school girl of this area and I write this with great pain of mind. Today we lost a very dear neighbour, a mother of three children, the youngest of whom is only four months old. It was another case of insecticide poisoning. I say “another case” because two weeks ago, a nineteen-year-old girl became the victim of insecticide poisoning, about ten miles away down our Kataragama road.

All like the eagerness and urgency with which the agricultural programme is going on, but what can we give in exchange for the life of a young girl and a young peasant mother, for they are the backbone of the country? I cannot say why these deaths occurred: it could be family worries, financial worries or whatever be the cause. But, these deaths could have been avoided, I think. It was only two months ago I was shown your esteemed journal in our translation group: “Adequate safeguards and adequate directions must be given concerning the manner in which the product is to be used; adequate warning and cautionary statements including symptoms of poisoning, safety, health and first-

aid treatment measures, with labels in Sinhala, Tamil and English" (Tribune, Agro-Chemicals, 35, page 22-23).

If the Agricultural Instructors, and the people marketing these products would think of the lives of people, they would not be so careless and negligent. **Tamaron was the killer in both cases, and Tamaron is a dangerous insecticide.**

How many more deaths have we to suffer before it is too late? I hope those who see the anguish of these peasant homes will surely see this piece of bad news for them and do what we think is needed at this very hour, for, in these areas, as a certain teacher said, "it looks like the twentyfifth hour",

We hope Chandralata's death is the last one from Insecticide.

Miss. PADMA PARANAGAMA

Galpotuwa Road,
Waguruwela,
Buttala.
24.3.81.

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PM's Visit To Jaffna

Sir,

Mr. M. Varatharajan should be congratulated on his excellent summing up of P. M's. recent tour of Jaffna (Tribune, 14/3/81) but he has missed out one or two significant points. Politics is the art of the possible but in politics there is a subtle healing art--an art which closes wounds, which unites what has been divided, which subdues antagonisms and which brings people together. P. M's. visit achieved this objective. His greatness lay in doing what everybody could do but do'nt.

On the negative side, the public rallies were not much of a success as the P.M. opted to speak in Sinhala whereas Mrs. B on her recent visit to Jaffna addressed the gathering in English, thereby attracting better crowds. No speaker at this rally emphasized that Tamils are part and parcel of the indivisible unity which is Sri Lankan nationality. Tamils are indispensable to this noble edifice and without them this splendid structure is incomplete. Everything in Sri Lanka should bear the stamp of common endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of our life which has escaped this stamp. It is true that our languages are different but Tamil has

been given notional status in the Constitution but nobody explained from the platform why there is inordinate delay in implementing it. It is for this reason that the TULF leadership is standing firm on the demand for the creation of a separate Tamil state of Eelam.

It was an unwise move to have dropped Mr. C. Rajadurai, Minister of Regional Development from the P. M's. entourage as the crowds would have been anxious to listen to him more so after his triumph in Madurai recently where he upstaged Mr. A. Amirthalingam in oratorical prowess. It was also jarring to hear all announcements in Sinhala at the inauguration of the model village in the Udupidy constituency--a progressive electorate having the unique distinction of returning in the late fifties a communist M.P. Mr. P. Kandiah from the North to Parliament.

Another question that is on the tip of the tongue of everybody here is "Why was Mr. Lionel Fernando, former Government Agent, the architect of this scheme not seen on the platform at the model village?" Was the invitation lost in the post?

Recent events in the North are fearsome; what the future is anybody's guess; your guess is as good as mine,

17 March 1981. Mrs. Parvathy Dhanapalan
Crofton House,
Chundikuli,
Jaffna.



REAGAN-CRONKITE INTERVIEW-2 SOVIET UNION

In a one-hour interview on March 3 with Walter Cronkite, who retired last month as the long-time anchorman for CBS television news, President Reagan set out his views on current problems. From the transcript of the interview furnished by USICA, we publish excerpts on important subjects of international significance; This week's instalment deals mainly with the Soviet Union.

Mr. Cronkite: Moving on. Your hard line toward the Soviet Union is in keeping with your campaign statements, your promises. But

there are some who, while applauding that stance, feel that you might have overdone, the rhetoric a little bit in laying into the Soviet leadership as being liars and thieves, etc.?

The President: Well, now, let's recap. I am aware that what I said received a great deal of news attention; and I can't criticize the news media for that. I said it. But the thing that seems to have been ignored, well, two things, one, I did not volunteer that statement. This was not a statement that I went in and called a press conference and said, there, I want to say the following. I was asked a question. And the question was, what did I think were Soviet aims? Where did I think the Soviet Union was going? And I had made it clear to them, I said, "I don't have to offer my opinion. They have told us where they're going over and over again. They have told us that their goal is the Marxian philosophy of world revolution and a single one-world communist state and that they're dedicated to that. And then I said, we're naive if we don't recognize in their performance of that, they also have without our idea of morality--remember their ideology is without god, without our idea of morality in the religious sense. Their statement about morality is that nothing is immoral if it furthers their cause which means they can resort to lying or stealing or cheating or even murder if it further their cause and that is not immoral. Now, if we're going to deal with them then we have to keep that in mind when we deal with them. And I've noticed that with their own statements about me and their attacks on me since I answered that question that way--it is the only statement I have made--they have denied that truth of what I said.

Mr. Cronkite: You don't think that name--calling, if you could call it that, makes it more difficult when you do finally; whenever that is, sit down across--the--table from Mr. Brezhnev and his cohorts?

The President. No, I've been interested to see that he has suggested having a summit meeting since I said that.

Mr. Cronkite: Let me ask another question about being in touch with the Russians. When Ambassador Dobrynin of the Soviet Union

drove over to the State Department for the first time after the Administration came in, his car was turned away at the entrance to the basement garage which he had been using, told that he had to use the street door like all other diplomats had been doing. It was obviously tipped to the press that this was going to happen. What advantage is there in embarrassing the Soviet Ambassador like that? A phone call would have said, "Hey, you can't use that door any longer," was that just a macho thing for domestic consumption or .

The President: I have to tell you. I didn't know anything about it until I read it in the paper. saw it on television myself. I don't know actually how that came about or what the decision was, whether it was just one of those bureaucratic things in the...

Mr. Cronkite, You didn't ask Secretary Haig about it?

The President. No, and I just don't know...

Mr. Cronkite; Don't you think the Russians kind of think we are childish when we pull one like that?

The President; I don't know, I don't know, or may be they got a message.

Mr. Cronkite: What conditions do we have to be satisfied before you would agree to a summit meeting with Brezhnev?

The President: Well, I think it isn't a case of--well, there are some things that I think would help bring that about, the main thing is you don't just call up and say, "yes, let's get together and have much". A summit meeting of that kind takes a lot of preparation and the first preparation from our standpoint is the pledge we have made to our allies. that we will only--we won't take unilateral steps. We'll only do things after full consultation with them because they're involved also. And I have had an opportunity to talk a little bit about it just--it only came to light, his statement, a short time ago, with Prime Minister Thatcher when she was here. So we haven't had the opportunity for the consultations about that. That would be necessary.

I have said that I will sit and negotiate with them for a reduction in strategic nuclear weapons to lower the threshold of danger that exists in the world today. Well, one of the things--you say conditions--I think one of them would be some evidence on the part of the Soviet Union that they are willing to discuss

that. So far, previous presidents, including my predecessor, tried to bring negotiations to the point of actual reduction and the Soviet Union refused. They refused to discuss that. I think that we would have to do that they're willing to do that. I think it would help bring about such a meeting if the Soviet Union revealed that it is willing to moderate its imperialism, its aggression of Afghanistan would be an example. We could talk a lot better if there was some indication that they truly wanted to be a member of the peace-loving nations of the world, the free world.

Mr. Cronkite: Isn't that really what you have to negotiate? I mean, is it really conceivable that you're going to get such a change of heart, a change of statement, that you could believe on the part of the Soviet Union before you ever sit down to talk with President Brezhnev?

The President: Is that subject a negotiation? If you sit at a table and say, "we want you to get out of Afghanistan," and they're going to say, "No", what do you do? Offer them -- let them go in some place else if they'll get out of there? I remember when Hitler was arming and had built himself up -- no one has created quite the military power that the Soviet Union, has, but comparatively he was in that way, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a speech in Chicago at the dedication of a bridge over the Chicago river. And in that speech he called on the free world to guarantee Nazi Germany, to stop all communication, all trade, all relations, with them until they gave up that militaristic course and agreed to join with the free nations of the world in a search for peace.

Mr. Cronkite: That did a whole of a lot of good.

The President: Oh, but the funny thing was he was attacked so here in our own country for having said such a thing. Can we honestly look back now and say that war have taken place if we had done what he wanted us to do back in 1938? I think there's a very good chance it wouldn't have taken place. But again, as I say, some evidence from the Soviet Union, I think, would be very helpful in bringing about a meeting.

Mr. Cronkite: It sounds as if, Sir, you're saying that there isn't going to to any summit meeting with Brezhnev.

The President: No, I haven't put that as a hard and fast condition. I'm just saying that in discussing with our allies, it would make it a lot easier if we were able to say, "Well, now look, they've shown some signs of moderating their real imperialistic Course. You know, when we look at where they are and with their surrogates, Qadafhi in Chad, Cuba in Angola, Cuba and East Germans in Ethiopia, in South Yemen, and of course, now the attempt here in our own western hemisphere.

Mr. Cronkite: We, I hate to belabor this, but since the whole world is looking forward, I think, to eventually some negotiations to stop the arms race, to get off the danger point. It is an important thing, and I gather that the Soviet Union has to make a unilateral move--to their point, it would be backwards, They'd have to, let's say, get out of Afghanistan. Do they have to get out of Afghanistan before you'd meet?

The President: No, I haven't said that, and Walter, I can't really say a specific answer to any of these things unless and until I have met with and discussed this whole problem with allies, who, you know, are only a bus ride away from Russia.

Mr. Cronkite: They seem to be saying, as near as we can tell, in their press and elsewhere, that they're saying they are anxious for you to meet on Arms control. They're anxious to get arms control discussions going. They're terribly concerned about that. They're fearful that you're not going to want to negotiate until such time as you get your defense program and your economic program through Congress and feel that you're negotiating from strength, and they're fearful that that's going to be some time and too late.

The President: Too late for what is the question. No, I don't know, but I do believe this: That it is rather foolish to have unilaterally disarmed, you might say, as we did by letting our defensive, our margin of safety deteriorate and then you sit with the fellow who's got all the arms, what do you have to negotiate with? You're asking him to come down to where you are or you to build up to where he is, but you don't have anything to trade. So, maybe realistic negotiations could take place. When? We

can say, "well, all right. This thing that we're building we'll stop if you'll stop doing whatever it is you're really doing."

Mr. Cronkite: You campaigned on lifting the grain embargo to the Soviet Union. You delayed in doing that so far because you, I gather, feel it would send the Russians the wrong message, perhaps, if you did. Senator Helms has suggested that the grain embargo should be extended to a general boycott of all US trade with the Soviet Union. Is that an option that you're studying?

The President: Well, I don't think you rule out anything. Actually, my campaigning was more on my criticism that the embargo shouldn't have taken place the way it did in the first place—that if we were going to go that route, then it should have been a general embargo. We shouldn't have asked just one segment of our society and not even agriculture, just the grain farmers to bear the burden of this, when at the same time we know we could not enforce or persuade friendly nations to us who would be tempted to take over that market and many of them did start supplying the grain that we weren't supplying. So the question was were we hurting ourselves worse than we were hurting them? Certainly did didn't stop the invasion of Afghanistan. And I criticize this. At the same time, and we have made no decision now on it. I would like to lift the embargo. I think all of us would. But at the same time, now and with Poland added, the situation in Poland to Afghanistan and all, we have to think very hard as to whether this is—whether we can just go forward unilaterally and do this.

Mr. Cronkite: Because in effect it has been effective. They are having problems with grain supply there, aren't they?

The President: Well, I think they'll always have problems with supply because they insist on that collective farm business which never has worked and isn't going to work in the future. You, know, isn't this—this is something that I've never been able to understand about Russian leaders. Wouldn't you think some time they would take a look at their system and say, "we can't provide enough food to feed our people", to say nothing of other consumer items that are still rationed and scarce in supply under that system. And yet, we can look at these other

countries in the world, all the countries that choose this way, not only the United States, but South Korea, Taiwan, all the countries that choose the free marketplace, their standard of living goes up and up. And we have—our problem isn't one of not raising enough food, it's not finding enough places to sell it— USICA

To be concluded.....



IN BRITAIN

SECURITY FORCES and LABOUR

London, March 10: How many millions of pounds worth of free publicity has been accorded in the past few weeks to the advocates of a Social Democratic Party? The press and TV barons have also made sure that the Labour political opponents of the Gang of Three particularly the Marxist left, have been given no right to answer them or even to reply to their slanders. 'Militant', for instance, has been accused of "wanting to establish centralised democracy" (the implication being that we wish to see the formation of a one-party totalitarian regime in Britain). We have fully answered these distortions in the pages of 'Militant'. But when Shirley Williams on BBC's Panorama programme made a specific accusation against the Militant we were refused the right of reply. When the same scurrilous accusations from Denis Healey and Roy Hattersley on ITV were not allowed to reply because of the fear of what we would say both in the defence of our programme and also on the nature of the mass media which allows such poison to be daily uttered against the labour movement, and particularly against its socialist and Marxist left wing.

It is therefore ironical that these accusations have been made precisely at a time when definite proof has surfaced to show that it is precisely the very programmes, their producers and political masters who practice "centralised" or "guided" "democracy". The recent Panorama programmes on Britain's security services were cut, or "censored" by a total of 15 minutes because of the intervention of the BBC's Director General, Ian Trethowan. Indeed,

BBC journalists, not hitherto noted for extreme radicalism, were reported to have protested against this "censorship". One of the most sensitive issues eliminated from the programme was the allegation by former MI6 electronics expert Lee Tracey that possible "violent action to stop Tony Benn ever becoming a Labour Prime Minister was secretly discussed between MI6 employees and the late Airey Neave MP, just before the last election". These allegations are contained in an article in the 20 February issue of the **New Statesman**. Tracey alleges that Neave discussed his fears that Labour might be elected in the May 1979 General Election and that this could be followed by the premature retirement of James Callaghan, which could pave the way for Tony Benn to become prime minister. It is alleged that Tracey was asked to join a team of intelligence experts that would make sure "Benn was stopped". Tracey claims that it was quite clear that violent means were a possibility in this connection.

THIS SHOWS that the claim of the capitalists and their Tory puppets that they uphold "democracy" is sheer hypocrisy. The right hand man of Mrs. Thatcher was prepared to sanction violence merely to stop a Labour government which leaned to the left coming to power in Britain, because this is what the replacement of Callaghan by Tony Benn would have represented. It is unlikely in any case that Tony Benn would have replaced Callaghan due to the right-wing complexion of the Parliamentary Labour Party. But this incident shows that if the mere election of Tony Benn to the leadership of the Labour Party could lead to the ruling class contemplating such measures, what would be their reaction in the event of a Labour government seriously threatening to carry through the socialist transformation of society? They would not hesitate to resort to the most brutal methods, along the lines of Chile, in order to prevent such a development. This conclusion is given added force by a little item that was tucked away in **The Times** diary on the 26 February. Tory MP Eldon Griffiths was discussing with Senor Jaime Gusman, an adviser to the Chilean dictator Pinochet, when right-wing Tory MP Julian Amery,

the member for Brighton, breezed into the room. Gusman was expounding on the great advantage of the new dictatorial Chilean constitution. Imagining that he was in the presence of a "democratic" politician, he was endeavouring to justify the grounds of the purest "democratic principles".

HOWEVER, he was taken aback when Amery declared that "Britain had no democracy, and never had had." He declared that "parliament, the voice of the people, and Ministers were simply the liaison officers between parliament and the Queen, the armed forces and the civil service, who really run the country." He then went on to say: "A good minister can change policy 10%, most ministers 1%, some not at all." The bewildered Gusman is reported, to have said "It would be difficult to have that in Chile!" This incident shows the real nature of capitalist democracy. Behind Parliament are the real rulers of Britain, the big monopolies and their pliant tools at the top of the civil service, the armed forces, etc. Moreover, if their system should ever be endangered by the Labour Party, which seriously intended carry out Clause 4 of its Constitution, then the capitalists would not hesitate to resort to the most "extreme" measures, using the monarchy and the armed forces.

It gives added point to the labour movement for the complete abolition of the so-called "security services" and the Official Secrets Act. They are not used in the main against Russia, but in order to spy against and intimidate the active workers in the labour movement. The labour movement should also demand the abolition of all secret files and computer data assembled against labour movement activists. We should also press for the nationalisation of the press and TV facilities. Access and time in the press and TV, radio, etc. should be determined on the basis of votes at elections. Above all the labour movement must learn the lesson that in the long run unless the socialist transformation of society is carried through all their conquests, including democratic rights, are endangered.

★ Air Force ★ Railways
★ TV ★ Police

A QUIDNUNC, according to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, is "one who is constantly asking 'what now?' 'what news?' hence an inquisitive person, a gossip. The word comes from the Latin, **quid** (what) **nunc** (now) — **what now?** and is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "one who seeks to know all the latest gossip." Our own era, especially in Sri Lanka, is admittedly the **Quidnuncs'** golden age. Gossip is now a marketable commodity. The stories our **Quidnuncs** bring are based on substratum of truth and **Tribune** publishes them only if the fire from which the smoke has arisen has some kind of reality. Apart from a few kite-flying stories to provoke investigation, most stories in this column are enough for a daily paper to go to town with a banner headline.

A QUIDNUNC who reads **Tribune** regularly has asked us why we have not followed up our probe into the affairs of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) after a initial reconnaissance canter into the Commander's totally illegal and completely unwarranted action in hanging up the picture of a retired officer (whose nose he did not like) at all SLAF stations as a "persona non grata". In a letter our *Quidnunc* says that "discipline has been steadily dropping in the SLAF...that though things seem to be alright on the surface, personnel in the Air Force are quite sick with the way things have been going on for a long time and that morale in the organisation is very low...". He has also sent us a list of matters we should look into, and one of our Investigators has been put on the job. The matters for investigation range from the way sons and nephews are treated compared to others who are superior to them in every way. There is also the question why certain flying officers have been grounded when SLAF High Command says that the Force is short of flyers. If all that is alleged is correct (even partially) a searching inquiry and corrective action is called for without delay.

Until our Investigator comes up with his findings—on several matters—including some strange happenings in and around the Air Force

farm at Morawewa and also about cars that change number plates—our *Quidnunc* wants us to spotlight one question: whether the petitions of appeal of aggrieved (grounded) officers, in terms of the Air Force Act, to the President have been withheld—some for over a year and also whether the appeals of two or three other pilots, have been similarly withheld.

The proper authorities, our *Quidnunc* tells us, can easily find out if these appeals have been held back in contravention of the Air Force Act. Every officer has the right to appeal to the President as the Commander-in-Chief—and it is illegal to pigeon-hole appeals. Cannot something be done?

OUR DEMATAGODA QUIDNUNC wants to know whether, like flying officers in the SLAF, who have been grounded, there are four engineers in the CGR who have been rail-roaded—they have not allotted any work for over a year. They draw their salaries and they are not called upon to do any work. Why? Can anyone tell us?

A QUIDNUNC who sees more TV programmes than most readers of **Tribune** has written to say that whilst there has been steady improvement in the quality and scope of the ITN programmes, some items have been most disappointing. What is worse, says the *Quidnunc*, is that some programmes which should have stopped after one or two showings, were not only continued to the bitter end but that they have also been revived after a (welcome) lapse. He refers in particular to Arthur C. Clarke's "Mysterious World". He does not mince his words: "The series is a flop", he says, "it is a scissor and paste job which even an amateur school boy producer should be ashamed of...I am not qualified to evaluate Arthur Clarke's claim to greatness, or his prowess as a space scientist, but as a TV viewer I can tell you that his *Mysterious World* is a total and complete washout. It is not merely an anti-climax to Clarke's reputation, it is a fiasco...whom is he trying to bluff or fool?" He goes on in this strain, and declares that the ITN should not waste its money by contracting for such films for TV transmission.

Our TV *Quidnunc* is all praise for the ITN news magazine which had brought the Reagan's attempted assassination to the screen within 24 hours of its occurrence. Earlier it had shown the Soviet CPs 26th Congress, like the Moscow Olympics last year. This, he says, is a com-

mendable attempt to correct the heavy tilt ITN often had to news items with a strong pro-West slant. It is no doubt true that satellites mainly provide news with a pro-West bias—but the ITN should be more circumspect in its choice because some of the items shown are propaganda dead-ducks and not news.

Apart from this, our Quidnunc is all praise for films like Charles Darwin, Dickens of London, Kidnapped, Anna Karenina, and several others of some calibre. He says that he misses Sesame Street and Playboy—films for children, which adults enjoy—which have been cut out because of the power-cut between 6 and 7 p.m. More of Sesame Street, says our Quidnunc, but nothing of Arthur Clarke's "Mysterious World".

A QUIDNUNC FROM JAFFNA writes to say that last year **Tribune** had pointed out that excellent public-police relations had been built up, and that robberies and Tigers had virtually disappeared from the scene. Then unexpectedly, says the Quidnunc, top officials (including police officers) were transferred. "And today", he declares, "police-public relations have collapsed and are at a very low ebb...Naturally, big time robberies (among others pawnshop half a million and the People's bank 8.1 million) have erupted again..." Will the Police top brass ever learn? Will the Government ever learn? Isn't prevention better than cure?

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SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

March, 27 - April 4

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, SO—Sunday Observer, DM—Dinamina, LD—Lankadipa, VK—Virakesari, ATH—Aththa, SM—Silumina, SLDP—Sri Lanka dipa, JD—Janadina, SU—Sun, DV—Davasa, DP—Dinapathi, CM—Chinthamani, WK—Weekend RR—Riviresa, DK—Dinakara, EN—Eelanadu, IDPR—Information Dept. Press Release.

FRIDAY MARCH 27: The Colombo Development Council (for the administrative district of Colombo) will have 16 elected members

according to a gazette notification published yesterday. The public of Jaffna yesterday collected and donated Rs. 5,000 to be given to the families of the two constables who were killed in the hold up and robbery at Neerveli on Wednesday. The Police yesterday offered a reward of Rs. 1 million for any information that would lead to the arrest of the armed gang of six which gunned down two police constables and got away with Rs. 7.9 million at Neerveli on Wednesday and to the recovery of the booty. Sri Lanka's international reserves have dwindled to around Rs. 6 billion from approximately Rs. 35 billion over the past four months leaving funds adequate for only three weeks of import requirements, Finance Ministry sources said yesterday—CDN. Combined Police, Army and Navy dragnet to arrest the gangsters in the biggest holdup in the history of crime in this country—the Neerveli Rs. 7.9 million bank robbery—started at 3 p.m. yesterday, the proceeds of the robbery earlier estimated at 6.8 million rupees is now stated to have been Rs. 7.9 million—CDM. Budgetary cut-backs will not lead to any unemployment in Departments and Corporations coming under the purview of Prime Minister R. Premadasa who yesterday directed his officials in these two sectors to immediately stop the retrenchment of casual labour; he also directed that all those retrenched in the past weeks be reinstated. The total number to be elected to the proposed Development Council was fixed at 156. Police recovered the A-40 car used by the gangsters in the Neerveli robbery and murder, while it was burning at Dutch Road in Uduvill; the four trunks containing the money that was robbed was also recovered empty—VK.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28: The police are now aware of the identity of the six member armed gang which gunned down two police constables and got away with Rs. 7.9 million at Neerveli on Wednesday; their photographs, names and addresses will soon be displayed in public places in every town and village, as wanted criminals. The Sri Lanka Light Infantry (SLLI) formerly known as the Ceylon Light Infantry (CLI) will celebrate its Centenary on Wednesday April 1, by trooping the President's Colour at the Police grounds. There will be about 7,500 polling booths for the Development Council elections due to be held before June, an authoritative source said yesterday; this is an increase of 1200 booths

over the number for the 1977 Parliamentary General election—CDN. The Defence Ministry yesterday ordered the immediate withdrawal of police escorts assigned to provide security when transporting cash from government departments and corporations it was pointed out yesterday that President J.R. Jayawardene had as far back as June 1980 directed state banks and other institutions should form their own security services; they were empowered to use arms, and police assistance was made available to them in the form of training facilities and personnel. A multi-million rupee tourist and shopping complex will replace the present Air Force headquarters at Sir Chittampalam Gardiner Mawatha in Colombo.—SU. A new turn has surfaced in the ten-minute surprise drama at Neervell in broad daylight; the police suspect that the bank officials had a hand in this and therefore inquiries have taken a fresh line—DP.

SUNDAY; MARCH 29: There was a flurry of excitement in Colombo last evening as news was received here that an Indonesian airliner hijacked on an internal flight between Jakarta and Medan wished to come here, as international news wires began humming and Sri Lanka's reaction to the Garuda DC-9 airliner coming here became a vital question, the hijackers had demanded that twenty political prisoners held in the islands of Java and Sumatra be released in Colombo within 48 hours—SO. President Jayawardene yesterday ordered that top priority should be given to the setting up of a special security unit for the transport of cash for government departments and semi-government institutions; the Defence Ministry will study the blueprint for the establishment of this security organisation which will function independently of the police. Elections to the District Development Councils will be held on June 4, the President Mr. J.R. Jayawardene said at a mass rally at Walasmulla Maha Vidyalaya ground yesterday—ST.

MONDAY, MARCH 30: The Police have so far questioned over 100 people in a bid to solve the biggest highway robbery when an armed gang got away with Rupees 7.9 million killing two police officers at Neerveli last Wednesday. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Col. C.A. Dharmapala said yesterday that the Government would provide banks

with maximum security in future in transporting cash with the help of both police and army personnel.—CDN. The Government is taking serious notice of how a large number of youths from the North had left the country taking their full quota of exchange of 500 pounds which amounts to Rs. 20,000 in Sri Lanka money plus their passage money; the police are probing whether the monies collected in some of the robberies committed in the North during the past three years involving nearly Rs. 150 lakhs had been utilised to finance these youths to be trained abroad in subversive activities—CDM. Jaffna, while reaching new heights in respect of violent hold-ups and robberies, also has a poor record as far as Police detections are concerned; although a number of Police officers and even members of the public have been killed as terrorist gangs staged executions and massive robberies, the murderers have not been brought to book nor any part of the loot recovered; the real problem is manpower shortage, one senior Police officer said; while Jaffna is once again considered as a punishment station, it had a strength of 130 men as against 250 two years ago—SU. Ten Police inspectors, ten sergeants and 100 constables arrived at Jaffna yesterday to assist detect those involved in the Neerveli hold up and murder. Many more are expected to arrive in due course—VK.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31: Prime Minister, R. Premadasa said on Sunday that the Government would hand over administrative power to the people in the villages with the setting up of District Development Councils in June; the DDC system would also curtail the power of the bureaucracy and establish the supremacy of the people, he said. The Foreign Minister of Thailand Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila arrived here last night on a five-day official visit. The SLFP politburo which met yesterday decided that the Opposition parties, which had sounded each other on contesting the forthcoming DDC elections as a common front should do so under one symbol—CDN. A major breakthrough is believed to have been made in the Rs. 7.9 million Neerveli bank robbery when the Borella police took into custody five Tamil youths in the early hours of last morning close to Borella junction; at the time of arrest the youths had a large sum in cash with them, it was stated—CDM. Nominations for the elections to Development Councils will be accepted at

the Kachcheries from April 20 to 27, it was officially announced yesterday. Herb doctor M. D. S. Abeyaratne, who says he has discovered a cure for cancer and other ailments from ancient ola leaf books in his possession, will be given a herbarium and a hospital by the state to develop his work—SU. As details and information regarding those who were involved in the Neerveli bank robbery and murder have been obtained by the police the inquiry into these will be held on the 15th of April before the Jaffna magistrate Mr. T. Yoganathan—EN.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1: A proposal to allow Government servants to retire at 45 years of age is now before the Government; the proposal if accepted will not, however, extend to personnel in technical or scientific employment in Government service. Chancellor of the Colombo University Prof. D. A. Ratnasinghe died last night at his residence in Colombo; he was 73—CDN. Another high ranking mission from the International Monetary Fund will arrive in Sri Lanka next month to review recent measures introduced by the government to curb public expenditure and introduce financial discipline. An outbreak of cholera in the eastern province has claimed the lives of seven people over the weekend. TULF MP for Kopay S Kathiravelupillai, passed away in Tamilnadu yesterday; he was 57; Mr. Kathiravelupillai had been undergoing medical treatment at the Wellington Nursing Home in Madras since March 24—SU.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2: An estimated, 150,000 families have been affected by the recent drought; they are to be given immediate government assistance. The Thai Foreign Minister Air Chief Marshal Siddai Savetsila cut short his official visit to Sri Lanka and left for home yesterday following the coup in his country. Major W. W. A. Phillips lover of Lanka's birds died recently at his home in Sussex. A large number of resthouses now run by the Ministry of Home Affairs will be handed to private management—CDN. The Government will launch a massive programme to train Sri Lankans in the most modern construction techniques; at yesterday's cabinet meeting it was decided to secure a loan amounting to SDR 10.9 million (Rs.243 million) to implement the training

programme—CIM. The city police have been placed on a full alert from today, in view of the abortive 1971 insurrection, Police sources said yesterday; the alert comes in the wake of plans by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) to hold week long celebrations in Colombo to commemorate the occasion. The body of the M. P. for Kopay, Mr. Kathiravelupillai who passed away in Madras will today be taken by the S.L.A.F. plane to Jaffna and will be cremated at the Combyan Manal cemetery; the Prime Minister Mr. R. Premadasa will pay his last respects to the remains today; for this purpose the Premier will be arriving at the Palaly airport along with eight other ministers by a special plane at 2 p.m. today—VK.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3: The Board of Directors of the People's Bank has resigned following a meeting of the Board on March 21; informed sources said yesterday the resignation followed the recent Rs.8.1 million robbery of People's Bank money and killing of two police constables at Neerveli, Jaffna; Mr. C. D Wickramatilleke, MP for Baddegama died at the Merchant's Ward of the Colombo General Hospital yesterday, after a brief illness—CDN. President J. R. Jayewardene has appointed eleven Cabinet Ministers and a Deputy Minister to overlook all development work in the eleven electorates in the Northern peninsula. As an official Police probe revealed laxities in security precautions at most banks; bank security in the North has been found to be grossly inadequate, particularly at the most vulnerable period, while cash is in transit. World Bank will provide a loan of nearly 20 million US dollars for the development of the country's electricity network; this will be the Bank's sixth loan for the country's power projects drawn up by the Ceylon Electricity Board—SU.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4. Sri Lanka's Independent Television Network (ITN) is perturbed by the lack of cooperation from Sinhala film producers, who have been reluctant to give their films for television screening, Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Secretary to the Ministry of State, said yesterday. Denmark was fully confident of the political stability in Sri Lanka, Mr. H. Hjerl, Leader of the Danish Investment Mission now in Sri Lanka said yesterday. Government yester-

day announced a price increase for super petrol from Rs. 42/50 to Rs. 45/50 a gallon; the new price will be uniform for the whole island unlike in January 1981 when outstation dealers were permitted to make a nominal charge to cover transport and handling of the petroleum products. Sri Lanka will receive Rs. 350 million aid from the Netherlands this year — CDN. Sri Lanka has its doors open for foreign oil companies who can refine oil in Sri Lanka soil exclusively for export said the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, Mr. Cyril Mathew; these refineries, the Minister explained, could import their requirements of crude oil, but export the entirety of its refined production; it was in this manner that Singapore had become a "petroleum centre". A group of SLFPers close to the leadership is reported to be preparing posters and leaflets calling up the public to boycott the forthcoming elections to Development District Councils — CDM. The United National Party's May Day celebrations this year will be confined to a cultural pageant at the Galle Face green as in the past, the party's Working Committee decided last night. The 750 million rupee cut on budgetary allocations for the Mahaweli development project will be restored; Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake is learnt to have briefed President Jayewardene on the repercussions the cutbacks would have. A marked drop in the number of vasectomies has been noted throughout the country with the reduction of the monetary incentive. The one major setback that the Danish industrialists would encounter if they opt to open up industrial ventures in Sri Lanka would be the supply of electricity to keep the industrial wheels moving; these observations were made by the Danish investment mission currently in Sri Lanka and conducting feasibility studies. The Government yesterday appointed a new directorate to the People's Bank with Dr. S. T. G. Fernando, Director, Economic Research of the Central Bank as its Chairman — SU. Due to heavy drought in twelve districts of the country about 13 lakhs of residents have been affected; the government has made an urgent appeal to the World Food Organisation for the grant of relief to those affected by the drought — DP.

SUNDAY, APRIL 5: The state-owned banks are actively considering buying security know-how from abroad in an effort to ensure that they are adequately protected against daring robberies of the scale of the recent strike on People's Bank cash at Neerveli; an authoritative government spokesman said yesterday that the managing director of a well known British firm of security consultants, Securicor, will be here this week for talks with the Finance Ministry and the banks. Ganga Addara, Sumitra Peries' film about a tortured young girl, was adjudged the Best Film for 1980 at the Sarasaviya film festival awards night held yesterday under the patronage of Prime Minister and Mrs. R. Premadasa — SO. The government has given the green light to a private organisation to set up a mini cement plant in collaboration with an Indian firm to meet the present critical shortage of cement required for major development schemes; the plant will be located at Nariakkuli, Kaithadi where it is claimed there is substantial deposit of limestone, which is the principal raw material required for cement manufacture — ST. The Government has decided to call for a probe into claims by former Prime Minister and SLFP leader, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, that the decision to continue the state of emergency from 1971 to 1977 was not made by her alone but was a collective decision of her Cabinet; the idea it is learnt is to ascertain whether any member of any legislative body was also responsible for this action — WK.

Official Exchange Rates of Commercial Banks to their customers for Telegraphic Transfers fixed on Tuesday this week were as follows:—

CURRENCY	PER 100 UNITS	
	Buying Rate	Selling Rate
U.S. Dollar	Rs. 1802.50	Rs. 1805.50
Sterling Pound	Rs. 4046.75	Rs. 4052.75
Deutsche Mark	Rs. 861.20	Rs. 862.80
French Franc	Rs. 364.65	Rs. 365.35
Japanese Yen	Rs. 8.5230	Rs. 8.5370
Indian Rupees	Rs. 318.80	Rs. 319.20

ELALA SOHONA AT
ANURADHAPURA

Was It Dutugemunu's TOMB ?

by Dr. James T. Rutnam
President, Jaffna Archaeological Society

Text of a lecture, delivered at the Seminar Room of the University of Jaffna on 24th March, 1981, under the auspices of the South Asian Studies Seminar of the University of Jaffna and the Jaffna Archaeological Society.

EVER SINCE the aged but valiant Elara, the Tamil king of Sri Lanka, was struck down and killed in single combat by the much younger Dutugemunu, the epic hero of the national chronicle *Mahavamsa*,¹ the place where Elara fell and where his body was later cremated had been revered at the express command of his chivalrous foe. This event as said to have taken place over two thousand years ago in 161 B.C. For forty four years the Cola prince had ruled this land) and had ruled (according to the *Mahavamsa* "with even justice towards friend and foe"² Nowhere else in the national chronicle do we find such singular and unstinted praise bestowed on a ruler. The *Mahavamsa* also says: "Avoiding the paths of desire, hatred, fear and delusion he ruled righteously incomparable.....clouds raining during the night, and there was no rainfall during the day"³ Even the elements, it would seem, had favoured this righteous king.

The chronicle had illustrated its tribute by identifying the king with the fabulous legends current at the time and had concluded: "Only because he had freed himself from the guilt of walking in the path of evil did this (monarch) (though he had not put aside false beliefs) gain such miraculous power"⁴

IT IS NOT SURPRISING therefore, that Dutugemunu, in the hour of his greatest victory, while grappling with his conscience as we shall discover later, had instantly proceeded to participate in the funeral rites of his noble enemy. The *Mahavamsa* records: "Near the south gate of the city the two kings fought: Elara hurled his dart, Gamini evaded it: he made his own elephant pierce

(Elara's) elephant with his tusks and he hurled his dart at Elara: and this (latter) fell there, with his elephant. When he had thus been victorious in battle and had united Lanka under one rule he marched, with chariots, troops and beasts for riders, into the capital. In the city he caused the drum to be beaten, and when he had summoned the people from a yojana around he celebrated the funeral rites for king Elara. On the spot where his body had fallen he burned it with the catafalque, and there did he build a monument and ordain worship. And even to this day the princes of Lanka, when they draw near to this place, are wont to silence their music because of this worship"⁵ A pillar inscription is said to have been set near this monument and it read as follows: Let no man, prince or peasant, in future pass this way riding in palanquin or litter with beating of drums"⁶

THE AUTHOR of the *Mahavamsa* has here testified to a unique honour being paid "even to this day" to a Tamil monarch, i. e., even after the lapse of over seven hundred years, for the *Mahavamsa* was written only in the sixth century. The original Pali version in the *Mahavamsa* reads as follows:

Puradakkhinadvaramhi ubho yu'jhimsu bhumipa tomaram khipi Elaro, Gamini tem avancayi. Vijjhapsci ca dantchi tam batthim sekabatthina tomaram khipi Elaram sabatthi tattha so pati.

Tato vijitasangamo sayoggabalavahane Lankam ekatapattakam katvana pavisi puram. Pure bherim carapetva samanta yojene jane Sannipatiya Karesi pujam Elararajino.

*Tamdehaattitathane kutagarena jhapahi cetiyam tattaha karesi pariharam adasi ca. Ajja pi Lankapatino tampadesasami paga ten' eva pariharena na vadapenti turiyam.*⁷

It will be noted that the encounter between the two kings took place "near the south gate of the city": *puradakkhinadvaramhi*.⁸ It was there that the body of Elara was cremated with the catafalque; and it was there that Dutugemunu had "built a monument"—but the Pali word in the text was *cetiya*—"and ordained worship". The commentary or *Tika* on the *Mahavamsa* known as the *Vamsatthappakasini* ascribed by its editor G. P. Malalasekera to the eight or ninth century and by Wilhem Geiger to a date between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, had pointed out that the place where the

kings fought, *puradakkhinadvaramhi*, was "the (place) east of the *Elarapatimaghara* and west of the potter's village in the southern part of Anuradhapura". The words in the *vamsatthappakasini* are as follows:

Puradakkhinadvaramhi
Anuradhapurassa dakkhinadisabbase
kumbhakaragamassa
pacchime Elarapatimagharassa puratthime
ti vuttam boti.⁹

The commentator, it will be observed, speaks of a place named *Elarapatimaghara*, as if this place was popularly known and familiar to that generation. What is *Elarapatimaghara*? It means *Elara image house*,¹⁰ and nothing else. This sanctuary, built no doubt much earlier, had stood there at the time the *Vamsatthappakasini* was written.

The commentator also describes, drawing obviously from his own personal knowledge, what was earlier proclaimed in the second century B. C. by Dutugemunu and what was testified to by the author of the *Mahavamsa* as an observance in the sixth century, that even in the time of the commentator the princes of Lanka when they drew near to this place were wont to silence their music, and also to circumambulate the sanctuary with garlands and perfumes, and worship the *cetiya* (*stupa*).¹¹ Senarat Paranavitana, our former Archaeological Commissioner, too agrees that up to the time of the commentator i. e., more than 1000 years after Elara's death, his "image received worship".¹²

Now that we know the extent of the posthumous sanctity that was attached to Elara for whom there has been both an image and an image house, the word 'monument' used by Geiger in translating *cetiyam* is not correct. The proper word should have been *stupa* or *dagaba*.¹³

IT IS STRANGE that Geiger had left the Pali words *cetiya* and *thupa* to remain respectively untranslated when describing the structures put up over the cremation sites of the Saints Mahinda and Sangamitta. In the case of the former he translates: *Cetiyam c'ettha karesi* 134, "and here did he build a *cetiya*", and in the case of the other he translates *thunam ca tattha karesi Uttiyo so Mahamati* 15 "the most wise Uttiya had a *thupa* built there". Geiger had frankly confessed elsewhere "I by no means am content with my translations of the *Mahavamsa*"^{15a}.

The respect, indeed the reverence, given by Dutugemunu to his fallen enemy, Elara the righteous ruler, is surely unique in the annals of the island's history. We can now understand why Dutugemunu was stricken by conscience on his death-bed.¹⁶ We can also understand the exceptional veneration Dutugemunu had paid to Elara from the moment he was slain. The *arahats* had consoled him saying that his "slaughter" of a great host numbering millions was equal only to "slaying one and a half human beings", the rest, they explained, were unbelievers (*micchiditthi*) and men of evil life (*dussila*) not more to be esteemed than beasts (*pasusama*).¹⁷

Of the exceptions, one, they said, had taken the "three refuges" and the other had pledged himself to observe the "five precepts". Elara, who was a pious Hindu according to E.W. Adikaram, was apparently one of the exceptions.¹⁸ Hence, we suppose the adoration, an adoration that had, as could be seen, continued for two millennia and been paid not so much as an act of duty in obedience to king's command, but as an act of worship towards an exalted being who had gained a niche in the national pantheon.

The *Saddharmalankaraya* of the fourteenth century expressly states that Dutugemunu had "caused a *Dagaba* named (after) Elara (to be built) at the place where he was burnt"^{18a}. The author confirms the continued observance of what had earlier been described in the *Mahavamsa* (and its *Tika*) of the sixth century. 'Even to this time', (i.e., in the fourteenth century), *Saddharmalankaraya* says "when princes came to this place drums etc., are not beaten"¹⁹. It is significant that this had taken place even after the Cola conquest of Anuradhapura. The *Elara Dagaba*²⁰ has thus withstood and survived the ravages of war.

During the time of the Portuguese and the Dutch, certain parts of this country were overtaken by the jungle. For instance, Polonnaruwa and its environs were enveloped and remained unknown for nearly half a millennium. But Anuradhapura had continued to be cherished in the memory of the people. We know that Kirthi Siri Rajasinghe, for one, made an effort to restore some of the monuments of the place.

IT IS AGREED that mistakes had been made in the identification of some of the ruins of Anuradhapura.²¹ But traditionally it

was wellknown that there was one spot over all others, where kings and commoners had been enjoined that they should not pass without paying due respect and veneration, It was a *continuing* injunction that had been handed down from mouth to mouth from generation to generation and the chance of making a mistake is impossible. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Pilima Talawa was fleeing from his enemies, he is reported to have insisted at Anurndhapura on observing this age-old rite and custom. Forbes in his *Eleven Years in Ceylon* published in 1940 says: "The ruined tomb of an infidel is now looked upon by many Buddhist pilgrims as the remnant of a sacred edifice, although twenty centuries have elapsed since the death of Elara. I do not believe that the injunction of his conqueror had ever been disregarded by a native. In 1818 Pilima Talawa, the head of the oldest Kandyan family, when attempting to escape, after the suppression of the rebellion in which he had been engaged, alighted from his litter, although weary and almost incapable of exertion; and not knowing the precise spot, walked on until assured that he had passed far beyond this ancient memorial"²².

During the whole of the nineteenth century, if not for a long time earlier, this ruined structure was well known as *Elala Sohona* and many a pilgrim to Anuradhapura had been dutifully paying it honour closely following ancient custom and practice. Emerson Tennent in his book *Ceylon* which ran into five editions in 1858 and 1860 had this to say in this connection in Volume I, Part 3, Chapter 5 headed *Singhalese Chivalry — Elala and Dutugemunu*: "The contest between the rival chiefs is the solitary tale of Ceylon chivalry, in which Elala is the Soladin and Dutugemunu the Coeur de Lion. So genuine was the admiration of Elala's bravery that his rival erected a monument in his honour on the spot where he fell: its ruins remain to the present day and the Singhalese still regard it with respect and veneration".²³ (emphasis added).

S. M. Burrows who had served as an archaeological surveyor of Sri Lanka from August 1884 to the end of February 1886 had published a book entitled *Buried Cities of Ceylon* in 1885. It ran into four editions. In this book Burrows says: "Satiated with

military successes and penitent for the bloodshed he had caused, he (Dutugemunu) determined to devote the rest of his life to expiatory acts. But his first care was to erect a generous and fitting monument to his rival Elala and to enact that the music of processions should cease, and kings alight from their palanquins as they pass the tomb. The site, is marked by a conical mound of earth, nor was the generous monument less lasting. for in 1816 (sic) Pilima Talawa, the head of the leading Kandyan clan was escaping through Anuradhapura after the unsuccessful attempt at insurrection, he alighted from his litter, weary as he was, and walked on until he was well past the venerable memorial".²⁴ Burrow's map of Anuradhapura appearing in his book marks the site as "Elala's tomb".²⁵

In 1896 Burrow's successor H.C.P. Bell, known to be a cautious explorer, began "the examination of the tree-covered hillock, anciently one of the larger *dagabas* of Anuradhapura but now popularly known as Elala's Tomb (*Ehala Sohona*)".²⁶ In a footnote Bell had correctly surmised at the time he began cutting the trenches, that this was "perhaps the *Thupa* built by Kanittha Tissa (A.D. 165-193) in the *Dakshinarama* (*Dipavamsa* XXIII: "26a. In the two paragraphs immediately following Bell had concluded: "Elara's body was cremated and his ashes deposited in a tomb at the spot where he fell 'near the southern gate of the city' (*Mahavamsa* CCV: 69-73). The site would therefore be in the neighbourhood of the *Dakshina Vihara* constructed by the warrior Uttiya half century later in the reign of Wattagamani Abhaya (*Mahavamsa* XXIII: 90) (*Dipavamsa* XIX: 18)".²⁷ Bell's reasons were confined to quotations from the two chronicles. He was satisfied that the *Elala Sohona* built 'near the southern gate of the city' was in fact in the 'neighbourhood of the *Dakshina Vihara*' where he surmised he was then digging.

THE EXAMINATION and digging of the precincts of the *Elala Sohona* continued from 1896 to 1900, when work was stopped as the "digging and removal of the spoil proved too expensive for a limited vote". In all his five Annual Reports, Bell had continued to name the site "Elala Sohona".²⁸ This was the position up to 1900.

Eight years later H. W. Cave wrote in this connection: "Then followed an act of chivalry on the part of Dutthagamani so remarkable that

ti, has been regarded with admiration for wenty centuries. He caused Elara to be cremated on the spot where he fell and there built a tomb. He further ordained that the tomb should receive honours, and that no one should pass it without some mark of reverence and even to this day these injunctions are to some extent respected and the tomb is still marked by a huge mound''²⁹. (emphasis added).

Be it noted--Dutugemunu had decreed that this reverence be paid in the second century B.C.; Mahanama, the reputed author of the *Mahavamsa*, bears witness to it being followed in the sixth century A.D.; the author of the *Vamsattappakasini* confirms its contemporary observance which would have been in the 8th or 9th century according to Malalasekera, or between the 11th and 13th century according to Geiger; the author of the *Saddharma lankaraya* testifies to it being followed in the fourteenth century; Forbes in the nineteenth century and Cave in the twentieth century.

Today this noble tradition (unbroken, as we shall see, until 1948) that had distinguished a nation and its people and had elevated them to a unique position in the annals of chivalry has, alas, disappeared. Even if we concede that the *Elala Sohona* is not the tomb of Elara, has any honest effort been made to look for it? The only clue we have is the gruesome remark of Paranavitana in his Annual Report of 1948. "It is not impossible that the Medical Officer of Anuradhapura sleeps over Elara's ashes".³⁰ How we respect and honour the boasted chivalry of Dutugemunu!

No one appears to have challenged the popular belief until 1948, when Paranavitana appeared on the scene and sought to suggest that the mound was the tomb of Dutugemunu. Soon afterwards on the orders of Paranavitana a board was displayed at the site that the mound was Dutugemunu's tomb.³¹ No one now alights from his carriage and walks past it with solemnity:

To be Continued.

Govt.



Notices

**The Land Acquisition Act (chapter 460)
As Amended by the Land Acquisition
(Amendment) Act No 28 of 1964 -
Notice under section 7**

Reference No. 25/4/232

It is intended to acquire the land described in the schedule below for a public purpose. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. No. 136 (part III) of 10.04.1981.

W.M.T.B. Menikdiwela
Assistant Government Agent
Kegalle District.

The Kachcheri,
Kegalle:
19 03 1981

SCHEDULE

Situation :- Situated in Hinguloya village, Medapattuwa, Mawanella D.R.O's Division in Kegalle District

Plan No. P. Plan 1672

Lot No. Name of land.

1 Ubbeddewatta.

**The Land Acquisition Act (Cap 460) as
amended by the Land Acquisition (Amend-
ment) Act No 28 of 1964
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 7**

Ref No; 3/62/588

J. 77 E. 329

It is intended to acquire the Land/Lands described in the Schedule below. For further particulars please see the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka No. 136 of 10.4.1981 (part III).

SCHEDULE

Name of Village Kahapathwala village in Gannawa Korale, Mawatagama D.R.O's Division, Kurunegala District-

Name of Land :- Gulamedigoda Watta

Plan and Lot No:- Lot No. 219 in Supplement No. 5 in F.V.P. 1526

H.M.W. Chandraratna
District Land Officer
Kurunegala District.

The Kachcheri,
Kurunegala,
09 March 1981

Arthur C. Clarke

Anyone who passes the Majestic Cinema these days has only to look up the Board at the entrance to discover that the distinguished space and science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke has received star billing in the film "Beddegama" in which he appears in two brief sequences, but adorning them all the same. At the OCIC Film Awards Ceremony held recently, where he was the chief guest, more than being a silent listener, he spoke rapturously on the future that awaits the cinematic media with cosmic references to two outstanding films of the decade, "Star Wars" and "The Empire Strikes Back", which were harbingers of things to unfold realistically in the centuries ahead. Thus from the galactic heights he had been familiar with in his literary contributions, he has also broken fresh ground relatively on the local film scene, which this column is certain, he will continue to enrich.

While writing about this personality in our midst, it would not be out of place to acquaint **Tribune** readers of the academic accolades and recognition that has come his way, specially so as he has moored himself to our soil as a permanent citizen, and also to actively participate in its cultural, scientific and mass media ventures. Sri Lanka, he has admitted, remains the land of his aesthetic ideals and in doing so has paid the country a handsome tribute. According to a brochure issued by the OCIC at its Festival, Arthur C. Clarke's many faceted bio-data are as follows: Born on 16th December 1917 at Minehead, England, he entered the Civil Service in 1936 after completing his education at a Grammar school in Tounton. His first assignment was as Auditor and Exchequer in the Audit Department. He later became a Radar Instructor in the Royal Air Force (1941-46) and a technical officer in Ground Control Approach system, when he originated the proposal for the use of satellites for communication. He was successful in the B.Sc. degree with 1st class Honours at King's College, London in 1948. He was subsequently appointed Assistant Editor, "Science Abstracts (1949-50)," which was to launch on a full time writing career. In 1954 he engaged himself in exploring the Great Barrier Reef off Australia (remember the film that was shown locally on this Reef) and the underwater coasts of Sri Lanka.

Then followed recognition for his scientific efforts—he was Patron, Sri Lanka Astronomical Association, Chairman, British Interplanetary Society, Member International Academy of Astronautics and World Academy of Arts and Sciences. His literary achievements won him a membership of the Association of British Science Writers, International Science Writers Association and a Council Member of the Society of Authors. He also remained in Fellowship with the American Astronomical Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The following are the awards to his credit:—International Fantasy Award 1952, Hugo, 1956, 1974, 1980, UNESCO Kalinga Prize 1961, Stuart Ballantine Gold Medal (Franklin Institute) 1963, Robert Bell Award of Aviation Space-Writers Association 1963, AAAS Westinghouse Science Writing Prize 1969, Oscar Nomination (with Stanley Kubrick) 1969, Playboy Editorial Award 1971, Hon. D.Sc. Beaver College, Penna 1971, Fellow of Franklin Institute 1971, S. F. Writers of America Nebula 1973, 1974, 1979, AIAA Aerospace Communications Award 1974, John W. Campbell Award 1974, Bradford Washburn Award, Boston Museum of Science 1977, Fellow of Kings College, London 1977 and Hon. D.Sc., University of Moratuwa, of which he is now the Vice Chancellor.

Arthur C. Clarke has made numerous Radio and TV appearances and lectured in many parts of the world. He has a musical ear for the classics too, as was evinced by his conducting an orchestra piece from the Choir at the OCICA awards Ceremony. Although a permanent resident in Colombo he shuttles often to take the scenic and scientific spots on the outskirts—both on terra firma, the beautiful tropical skylines and the aquatic riffs below.

BAMBA KATU HETI (Sinhalese): This column cannot quite recall at what point of Karunasena Jayatilekka's best seller "Golu Hadawatta", this film directed by Sunil Ariyaratna, takes off from, but even by itself, I thought this sequel to Hadawatta packed a tender story which criss-crossed with deep love even after she had deviated from it for a few moments for the allures of material gain. The story runs rather close to a remark by Oscar Wilde, in lighter vein perhaps that "those who are faithless experience the pleasures of love, but it is the faithful who know loves tragedies."

Straight as an arrow the story penetrates the core of a woman Dhammi's (Malini Fonseka) heart, who has strayed off her school day lover's heart (Dharmasiri Bandaranayake) for the security and the stethoscopic glamour of a doctor, Nihal (Ravindra Randeniya), remorsefully repents rather late, as the alcoholic bouts of the one she rejected, reaches her ears. A Tea and Sympathy mood takes hold of her cancerously, to spread a depressing shadow on those near and dear to her. She attempts to shackle the heart of Sugath all over again with a scorn and envy that has been rarely witnessed on the screen. It was the versatile Malini Fonseka all the way as she gets enmeshed deeper, weighted down by a conscience in conflict -- steering her closer to infidelity. Her understanding Doctor husband diagnoses the marital malady with understanding and for givenness, before administering timely cure. Ravindra Randeniya too lent that amount of class to a restrained role rather convincingly. Dharmasiri Bandaranayake, however, drifted a trifle inadequately, particularly when ranged against the histrionic brilliance of Malini. The late Rukmani Devi appeared nostalgically for a few moments, while Robin Fernando, Sumana Amerasinghe and Teannita Samarawira never placed a foot wrong in their brief appearances, adding credence to the sentimental course of the story. Director Sunil Abeyaratna was undoubtedly at his very best, synchronising the rapidly changing moods of the main characters with purpose -- two fine sequences worth mentioning being when Dhammi vents affectionately her pent-up emotions by tenderly stroking the steering wheel of Sugath's parked car, and also while depicting the latter staggering through the corridors of time and his old school where his love blossomed once, to sear and scar him grievously with maturity, by the whims of a wavering woman. K. D. Dayananda's camera work and close editing by Sumitra Peiris kept the film crispy, time saving and out of the ordinary. For mature audiences, this film is a must to study the meandering moods of women in love, which often makes mice of men.

THE CAR (English): Have you ever been terrified by the appearance of a stationary car? If not you are going to be, as you sit through this Universal Production, the

title of which could very well be a misnomer till you are jolted out of it. The story does not unreel merely a cops and robbers car chase, but one in which the devil incarnate himself cuts in revengefully into the lives of the lawmen, who sniff his hooped and tyred presence, after a series of mystery killings. The driverless and bullet proof black Benz, freewheels with fury in the wake of a ghastly gale, tossing innocent teenagers down precipices and bearing down on pickdickers, leaving a bloody trail on its grim and determined journey. The gruesome tally keeps multiplying as it continues to cross the wires of the Chief Sheriff's office. The law and order men decide to take the killer car by the horns, as these two become evident, as it continues to outwit and out manoeuvre them at every turn and tunnel, except on hallowed ground. The four wheeler weaves stealth with speed, behaving like a prowling monster on a demoniacal mission. The photography keeps pace with the gathering tension whenever the car is around, but tends to sag somewhat as the cops pow wow to meet the new challenge a trifle tardily in the take off, than the villain on wheels, who maintains an edge till the final showdown. Actor James Brolin as the Sheriff who resembles Burt (Pin up) Reynolds is a manly actor to watch, while Kathleen Lloyd as his wife sparkles, even in tense sequences. The film story cashes morbidly, on the success of films like the "Exorcist" and "Omen" series, but is more fiction bound, so freeze picturegoers to their seats. Even so, this 'satanic' difference will not deter you from taking in the absorbing fare all the same, but do leave the children behind at home. They need worry only about speed friends on our roads more than a devil on wheels.

VALAMPURI (CHANK) Sinhalese: Filmed in colour, this film is on a scissor and paste mission to spin a yarn around the turn of a Chank sea shell, exposed for veneration in a temple in Jaffna under the supervision of a devotee Nadarajah who is also the owner guardian of the relic. The long and short of the story compresses the spiriting away of the sacred shell and its final replacement. The interval between, is used up to bring in so many far fetched sequences that are unconvincing, there being an uneven flow from one to the other. Colour

too had been maximised in the temple ceremonies, the fishing Wadiyas where many youngsters, kidnapped from the towns are whipped to try their hands at the fishing nets and the salting of dry fish etc. with a meagre meal supply. The film then strays to capture the underwater life, probably around our Eastern Coast, where Rodney Jonklaas — who has scripted this story — displays his spear fishing prowess. Even these aquatic submersions are a trifle overdone to a point of boredom, burning so much of celluloid time, and veering away the main run of the story. The tale that hangs over a fair skinned boy in a dark skinned family is glossed upon rather irrelevantly to add to the drag, and so are the farcical sequences where the conservative Hindu Nadarajah family converse in Sinhala only — something that could have been portrayed better with a reasonable use of Tamil, midst the Nagasalam surroundings.

With a cast that boasts of Tony Ranasingha, Geetha Kumarasinghe, (as Rasamma), Vijaya Kumaranatunga (as Rasamma's lover) and Somi Ratnayaka, they are more square pegs in their roles and appear more like guest artistes to give the film a booster. The audience is of course in for a stumbling ride, which keeps floundering at every turn—but they have become winners at the box office, which is steadily weakening. This film is certainly a step back in the colour era—the colour being used mainly to cover up a multitude of misdirections.

FRAMED (English): That 'Walking Tall' man Joe Don Baker walks taller in this film, fighting a corrupt Police administration, to get even in the end. It is nice, watching this tall tough actor bull-doing his way through, as a cool one man army. This column missed this film first time out but caught up with it recently. Do not miss this film if down your way—you will like it.

JAMES N. BENEDICT.



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PLANTATION ?

IS IT NOT A FACT that **Tribune** has always shown a deep commitment to agriculture in general and the plantations in particular? That, in fact, the Editor had, sometime last year, made a sentimental journey to the plantations in Nuwara Eliya? That after several discussions with senior plantation managers and after making allowances for some of the allergic inhibitions of these planters -- all excellent professionals -- the Editor was able to discern that the real underlying malady afflicting the plantations was poor management? That the **Tribune** had thereafter carried a series of articles on the state of the plantations? That this paper was upto recently a lone crusader highlighting the canker that was eating into the vitals of our tea plantations? That it is a happy augury the widely read "Migara" of the **Sun** group has joined the crusade with a series of articles in his column "Men and Matters"? That there is not the slightest doubt that the state of our plantations should be a matter of concern to all interested in the future of Sri Lanka? That simple economics makes it clear that if the plantations fail, the country fails? IS IT NOT TRUE that the capital city is at the moment agog with speculation and rumour about changes in the plantation management system? That on the grapevine comes the story that business entrepreneurs who haven't the foggiest notion about two leaves and a bud are making a strong bid to manage the plantations? That it is also known that some interested parties are spreading stories that the old faithfuls in the (still) surviving Agency Houses were not interested in running the estates? That **Tribune** inquiries have revealed that this is not correct and that some of them are only waiting for a call to undertake the task of cleaning the Augean stables? That **Tribune** is aware that a leading Agency House has already sounded its old soldiers about lending a helping hand? That the President, who is no doubt aware of all their is happening, is apparently playing this close to his chest? That there cannot be the slightest doubt that he is well aware of the lobbying and pressure in

circles that are reported to be close to the palace ?

IS IT ALSO NOT A FACT that crops are declining and that tea is being robbed with gay abandon? That the SPC and JEDB, unfortunately, do not seem able even to identify the areas of theft, quite apart from stopping it? That it is no longer a rumour that about 10% to 15% of tea is being robbed from the plantations? That in fact there are said to be international traders in stolen tea who are in a position to supply selected estate marks at half the price? That whilst traditional buyers pay high prices and purchase through the auctions those robber barons buy the same estate tea at half the price? That many planters are in Colombo, building houses, managing hotels and generally making hay while only the sun is left to shine on the estates? That they know that nothing can happen to them? That President Jayewardene, the pragmatic realist, has permitted the operation of private buses? That the man on the street today does not give a damn as to who runs the buses? That what he wants is a reasonably cheap, comfortable service? That the handing over the plantations to private management agencies is said by some interested parties to be politically unwise? That politically it will be worse to let the plantations fail, our food will cost more -- of that we can be certain? That it is not necessary to find scapegoats or blame those who are now running the plantations? That merely changing persons or names will not help? That state management has proved a total failure? That it had been embarked on prematurely and without enough expertise? That whilst the plantations remain "nationalised" and state-owned, the management for a specified period could be in the hands of private managerial services? That if it is not to be a case of jumping from the frying pan into the fire, President Jayewardene should not rush into giving the plantations over to a few business adventurers with get-rich-quick ideas? That those who matter, even at this late stage, should advise the President on the best course of action? That the vast strides the UNP government has made on the development front will be completely negated -- if the plantations fail?