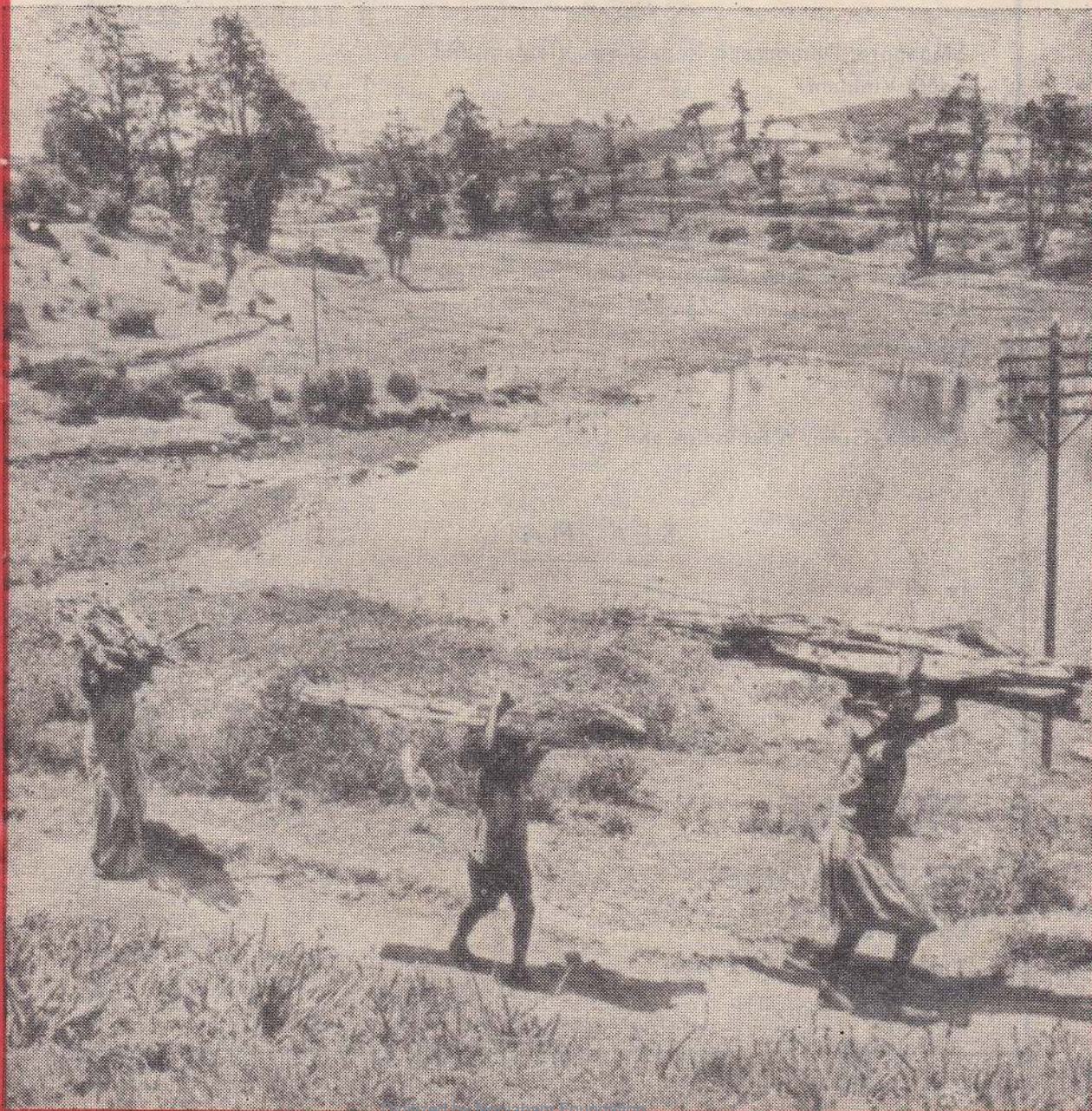


Vol. 22 No. 2 — July 2, 1977 — RUPEE ONE

TRIBUNE

CEYLON NEWS REVIEW



SUBSCRIPTION RATES

FOREIGN

AIR MAIL

Bangladesh, India, Maldives Island and Pakistan	1 Year	Rs.	140-00
	6 Months	"	72-50
	3 Months	"	37-50

Singapore, Democratic Republic of Vietnam and South Vietnam

1 Year	Rs.	160 00
6 Months	"	82-50
3 Months	"	42-50

Australia, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, G.D.R., West Germany, U.K. Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philipines, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Zambia and All African Countries

1 Year	Rs.	190.00
6 Months	"	97-50
3 Months	"	50-00

Canada, Cuba, West Indies and U.S.A.

1 Year	Rs.	225 00
6 Months	"	115 00
3 Months	"	57-50

SEA MAIL

To All Countries

1 Year	Rs.	100.00
6 Months	"	52-50
3 Months	"	27-50

LOCAL

3 Years	Rs.	120 00
1 Year	Rs.	50 00
6 Months	"	27-50
3 Months	"	15-00

TRIBUNE,

43, Dawson Street,

Colombo-2.

Telephone: 3 3 1 7 2

Letter From The Editor

OF ALL THE ELECTORATES, where the election campaign has begun to hot up, the most talked of at the moment is the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya seat. It is a three-member constituency where registered citizens of recent Indian origin have been given an opportunity of electing one of the three MPs. But, more than this, this constituency has hit the headlines because the Prime Minister's son, Anura Bandaranaike, is one of the candidates. On the cover this week we have a tell-tale picture of a scene by the lake in Nuwara Eliya, (or what was left, a few months ago, of the fast disappearing lake.) To those who know (and knew) Nuwara Eliya, the picture is a scene of desolation. The once well-wooded lake area is now denuded of its biggest trees. Much of the lake has been drained and the land parcelled out in small fragments to political favourites and hangers-on allegedly for potato cultivation. The big trees round the lake, some of them hundreds of years old, have all been cut down for firewood. Trees in the jungles of the Nuwara Eliya district have similarly been cut down, not merely for firewood but also for timber. Even the high montane catchment area where all our rivers rise has not been spared. The picture shows women and children carrying bundles to be sold as firewood. The rape of the forests in the Nuwara Eliya region is now very nearly complete. Only late in the day, after most of the damage had been done, that the Prime Minister raised a hue and cry about the obliteration of these primeval forests, and a new programme of re-forestation was launched. It will be many decades before the new plantations can provide adequate forest cover for the catchment area. For many years now, discerning environmentalists and papers like the *Tribune* had pointed out the disastrous consequences of this insane felling of trees, much of it for export under the new craze to export non-traditional items to earn filthy CRA lucre. The Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya area is not, from the environmentalists point of view, what it was a few years ago. The worst damage was done in the last seven years during the reign of the United Front Government, especially under the aegis of local SLFP chieftains who regarded the district as their private fiefdom. Though the question of the denudation of the forest cover and the consequent escalation of soil erosion has not been made one of the major issues in this election, there is no doubt that these considerations will vastly influence the voting of discerning people in the electorate. But, even more than this, the inglorious attempt to fragment some of the best tea lands to further the chances of Anura Bandaranaike has begun to recoil on those who sought to perpetrate such alienation exclusively to Sinhala voters of the constituency. Unexpected resistance had surfaced among workers who have lived and worked in these plantations for several generations. To break such resistance, intimidation, killing, looting and racial strife were used by those who wanted to rush through the alienation in a hurry. The illegal use of force, arson, murder and robbery aroused widespread indignation in the entire plantation area and for the first time all senior planters and their assistants staged a protest march in Colombo. Also all trade unions threatened to go on an indefinite strike. The authorities and the new plantation czars and zamindars beat a retreat and "suspended" land alienation in the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya area (for all time, we hope), but this abortive attempt to destroy the best tea plantations in the country for sectarian political considerations and selfish personal electoral ambitions has generated bitter feelings of anger and hostility not only among all persons and voters of recent Indian origin but also among all thinking sections of the community. This is not all. Furthermore for the first time in the history of our Police Force, all police officers (without exception), in every police station in this electorate, thought it essential to resort to direct action which was a camouflaged "strike". It was a unanimous "sick note" protest against politico-bureaucratic interference (combined with discriminatory victimisation of particular officers) in the maintenance of law and order. It is difficult for thinking persons not to have apprehensions about the future of the Police Force because such "sick note" strategy of direct action may become infectious and may erupt every time policemen have a grievance. Many politicians and political aspirants of the ruling party have, in recent times, tended to treat the Police Force as nothing more than a private army of the ruling party and its MPs. Such an attitude has already eroded the democratic parliamentary system and push the police and even the army into direct political involvement.

TRIBUNE

Founded in 1954

**A Journal of Ceylon and
World Affairs**

Editor S. P. Amarasingam

Every Saturday

July 2, 1977

Vol. 22 No. 2

TRIBUNE

**43, DAWSON STREET,
COLOMBO-2.**

Telephone: 33172

CONTENTS

EDITORS NOTEBOOK

—Strikes, JVP, ULF p. 2

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

—June 10 - June 13 p. 7

S.W.R.D. AND FEDERALISM

—Only Solution p. 9

TAMILS AND SRI LANKA

—UNP Solution p. 12

WEEDING OUT CORRUPTION

—Lesson From India p. 13

INDIAN ASSEMBLY ELECTION

—Janata And Congress p. 14

IN A TEA ESTATE-28

—The Proprietor p. 16

SHORT STORY

—The Vote p. 18

INANIA

—Vehement Christion p. 19

LETTER

—Christion Cremation? p. 19

CONFIDENTIALLY

—Police, Textiles p. 20

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

On Strikes And
The Future

Colombo, June 27,

These notes are being written a few days before the usual deadline because of the Poya holiday in the middle of the week: the paper must be ready if we are to distribute it before the next weekend. But with the electricity shut-downs and "failures" it is not certain when this issue of *Tribune* will be on the newstands.

Tribune does not like to tread on anybody's religious susceptibilities, but we have said this before and we will continue to say it until matters are put right: that the scandalous surfeit of public holidays—whereby the working year in Sri Lanka is only a little more than 200 days—is undoubtedly one of the major causes for the low (and continuously decreasing) production and productivity. Without a rapid increase in production, inflation, high prices and the black-market cannot be checked.

Judging from present trends, it does not seem likely that any Party or Coalition that may emerge victorious at the next elections will have the guts to reduce the number of holidays (and this cannot be done effectively without ending the five-day week and the poya day holidays which usually breaks the working week in the most disastrous manner); and the country will, therefore, continue to wallow in the morass of economic stagnation for many more years to come. The new Government, all political parties and everyone else interested in the future of the island, should launch a sustained island-wide campaign to persuade the people that the number of holidays must be reduced drastically for sheer survival, leave alone for greater prosperity and better standards of living.

It is not the excess of holidays alone that has brought the country to the brink of economic disaster: the number of man days and man hours lost by strikes, go-slows, work-to-rule campaigns, stoppages, sit-ins and the like have all contributed to the present deplorable state of our economy. And, in the period after the breakup of the

United Front coalition, strikes and work stoppages, in the public sector in particular, increased by leaps and bounds, and today there is a near-total paralysis of the administration and the economy.

Those who had calculated on obtaining massive dozes of foreign capital to bring economic prosperity by throwing out the LSSP and the Left had never probably bargained for what has happened, but which anyone familiar with the intricacies of local politics could have predicted without any difficulty. The exit of the LSSP in September 1965 culminated in the Railway strike of December 1976 (and January 1977). Two anaemic Felixian budgets together with the over-printing of currency notes pushed inflation rate sky-high and economic distress increased immeasurably. The Communist Party walked out of the Government and the United Front in February 1977 and the SLFP has ruled the roost since then in solitary glory amidst a rising crescendo of strikes, go-slows, lockouts and what not.

Even if the December Railway Strike was politically-motivated and was triggered by the LSSP (in retrospect, this does not seem to be the whole truth), there is no doubt that the worsening economic situation is fertile ground for economic strike by workers and wage-earners making a desperate effort to make means meet in their family budget. It must be also mentioned that a large number (practically all) of the strikes that preceded and followed the December 1976 Railway strike were not caused by political intrigue or conspiracy. And, it is also a fact that the LSSP condemned the "trade union action" of the doctors.

But it is not easy to pin-point reasons why this uncontrollable epidemic of strikes had stoppages occurred and continue to take place after the LSSP and CP quit the Government and more especially after the Prorogation and Dissolution of the NSA. The causes are many, complex, intriguing and sometimes baffling. But many SLFP pundits try to fool the public, through over-simplifications, stating that the strikes were "politically inspired by the Left," meaning

the LSSP, the CP, and other anti-SLFP elements. But, in truth, this is not so, and certainly not at this juncture.

The fact is that the former partners of the United Front, the LSSP and CP, had little or nothing to do with these strikes. In fact, the LSSP and CP (like the UNP) do not want these strikes because they entertain apprehension that the Government might make these strikes an excuse to delay or postpone the elections, and thereby enable the SLFP to remain in power. Speeches by certain SLFP spokesmen have also tended to accentuate these fears. The *Dawasa*, for instance, of June 22 had reported that Anura-Bandaranaike, speaking at a meeting in the Hakmana electorate in support of the SLFP candidate Bulegods had stated that, if disturbances and the like continued, the Government would postpone the elections, may be even for all time. Up to the time of writing Anura Bandaranaike has not denied this report.

As we had hinted in these notes sometime ago, the stoppage of work in the Ratmalana Workshop around the time of the Sinhala New Year was engineered by a small minority of militants (who expertly combined ultra radical sloganising with an overdoze of thugery) and who among other things, wanted to dislodge the old established LSSP leadership in the Railway Workshop. At first the LSSP leadership had tried to curb the adventurism of these militants, but when they failed they were compelled to tail behind them reluctantly and grudgingly.

The militants resorted to what appeared to be novel methods of trade union action, but which were in fact only embryonic insurrectionary techniques of "taking over" by force. One of the ways adopted by the Ratmalana militants was to compel everybody to clock-in and clock-out but do no work in the work place: they also "took over" and blockaded all stores and godowns knowing that this would bring the train service to a halt. What the Ratmalana work stoppage really amounted to was that a group of militants took over one of the most important, vital and strategic links in the Railway to paralyse the entire system.

One need not be a political expert to know that such type of

action was one of the strategic techniques of the JVP insurrection of 1971. And it is also known that a number of JVP militants who have not, like other JVP elements, forsworn, insurrectionary extra-parliamentary techniques, have found their way into the Ratmalana Workshop (and other workplaces like the Central Electricity Board, Petroleum Corporation, etc., etc.) because of the indiscriminate way in which the "rehabilitated" participants of the 1971 insurrection were placed in jobs. And for this the country must thank a few youthful SLFP enthusiasts in the Establishment and the Palace caucus and also older SLFP parliamentarians who, in their desperate anxiety to woo and win the "revolutionary youth" who "formally" rejected revolution to secure jobs in key strategic departments and sectors.

And, today, the country has begun to move away from the kind of trade unionism and "trade union action" of the Anglo-Saxon model (learnt in the London School of Economics). From the forties and the fifties the LSSP, CP, CWC, DWC, the UNP, the SLFP and others had used only techniques of "trade union action", regarded in the capitalist West as acceptable and even respectable. A strike is a withholding of work followed by conciliation, arbitration if necessary, and a collective (or other) agreement to keep the wheels of industry moving on compromises that did not hurt the employer or the employee.

The trade union leaders who came to prominence and power on this kind of unionism have tasted political and governmental power from 1956 and they all seem to have gone the way these leaders had alleged the earliest trade union leader, A. E. Goonesinghe, gone—into bourgeois respectability. Many of the present day once "revolutionary" LSSP and CP leaders do not seem to realise that they are separated from ordinary workers by deep and widening chasms. Comrade, NM, Comrade Leslie, Comrade Colvin and Comrade Pieter, after 1970, became "Honourable, the Minister...." When a comrade telephoned of a morning, one of the many secretaries (all former comrades) would say "the Hon. the Minister is in the bath, the Hon. the Minister has gone for a walk, or the Hon.

the Minister is busy..." Men who were once accessible comrades became distant and inaccessible parliamentary politicians with new CRA friends and hobnobbing only with those on the diplomatic cocktail circuit. One of these leaders, now seeking election, had stopped his car, and hailed a former comrade (and effective election worker) but the latter had walked away as if he had seen nothing and heard nothing. The "leader" had rushed and grabbed his old "friend" by his hand and asked him "...Well, comrade, did you not see me?..." and pat came the reply in the most clingly icy manner, "I couldn't see make you out in the big air-conditioned 6 Sri car..."

The former comrades of these trade union "leaders" today are not inclined to go out electioneering with any enthusiasm and the new CRA friends of these "leaders" cannot canvas votes. And, what is worse is that the old "comrades" have lost their standing and credibility friends in the trade unions because their "leaders" had moved away from the ordinary man carried away by the flood of parliamentary power with many perks including pensions handed over to them overnight after a 5-year term (when hundreds of those who have toiled for twenty five to thirty five years in the public service have to wait for many many years to get their pensions).

In these circumstances, is it any wonder that the JVP militants, Vasudeva radicals, true blue 4th International MRP slogan-shouters and the like have gained influence in many sectors of the trade union movement and have begun to dislodge the old established trade union leaders.

The trade union action in Ratmalana Workshop from April this year is the first major practical demonstration of the new kind of "trade unionism" that has erupted into our body politic.

Of all the observers of the local scene, only the correspondent of the *Asiaweek* has spotlighted this with an unerring touch. Though the piece in the *Asiaweek* of June 24 has a built-in slant, it is a despatch which merits citation *in extenso* for the record:

"As Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government continued its desperate battle to defuse Sri Lanka's pre-election tensions, far-sighted political obser-

vers could detect some disquieting new developments. The talks this week centred around some of the discreet activities being conducted by the nation's violence-prone radical left and as the build-up to the July 21 national polls continued, even leaders of the traditional parties were beginning to fear that the polling itself might be sabotaged by those who have openly denounced the democratic process. The key to some of the ominous new rumblings, analysts say, can be found in behind-the-scenes manoeuvres surrounding the eight week-long railway workers' strike, which has already dealt the country's ailing economy a crippling blow (*Asiaweek*, June 17). Though the stop-work tactic was nothing new, the intransigence of the railmen was puzzling. Officials of Mrs. Bandaranaike's caretaker government told the strikers that it simply lacked the authority to dish out the US \$ 137 m. needed to meet their demands for higher wages—an explanation that satisfied many. Moreover, the authorities had already granted a US \$ 12.40 concessionary allowance as well as other holiday, overtime and pension benefits.

"Compounding the puzzle was the fact that right-wing unions affiliated with the opposition United National Party had appealed to their members to avoid strike action altogether; so confident is the UNP of victory that party leader J. R. Jayewardene had assured them: "Let us solve these problems after forming a new government." Sources close to Jayewardene note that the last thing he wanted now was to contribute to anything that might lead to a postponement of the long-awaited elections. And the United Left Front—comprising the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party—is reported to feel likewise, as it expects to poll reasonably well.

"The problem, though, is that only an insignificant minority of the workers in the striking sectors belong to UNP unions. And while most strikers are ULF syndicate members, even their veteran leaders admit that control of the organisations has gradually slipped out of their hands into those of a militant minority. The alleged affiliation of the rabble-rousers: none other than the radical

youth movement the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna or People's Liberation Front (Asiaweek, May 20). The JVP, ULF union chiefs point out, is the only group that has the organising ability to infiltrate the established unions and is committed to discrediting traditional political institutions.

"The radical leadership has conceded as much. With JVP chief Rohana Wijeweera serving a 20-year jail sentence for his part in the 1971 post-election uprisings, party acting secretary-general Upatissa Gamanayaka declared that his men have indeed penetrated a good number of unions and would continue to do so. 'That's how we're going to build up working class unity,' he told *Asiaweek's* Walter Jayawardhana. 'Though we aren't responsible for all the strikes, some of them are our doing'. If any doubts lingered. JVP union boss Somavansa Amarasinghe dispelled them defiantly: 'We tell the old and discredited left leaders who have betrayed the workers and the peasants to save their trade unions from us if they can.' Nor is the youth movement the sole source of shock waves from the left. The hierarchy of the LSSP may yet come to regret a recent decision to drop rebel ex-Member of Parliament Vasudeva Nanayakkara from their ranks for organising an independent trade union. The bearded maverick has since set up his own extremist group, the Vama Sama-Semajists, and is said to be a major inspirational force behind the strikes that culminated last week in the total shutdown of the national Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

"Though he will be contesting the elections as a ULF candidate, Nanayakkara's platform is uncompromisingly militant: no parliamentary systems, and a revolutionary path to development. He says the traditional leftist coalition has provided no real alternative to the 'reactionary policies' of the ruling SLFP or the 'capitalist' UNP. The controversial politician wants to reform the socialist groups and forge a more broadly-based radical front in which "all the Marxist forces of the country are united."

"Meanwhile, the nationwide unrest has continued to escalate, with the Colombo Central Bank

closure only the most glaring symptom. In that case, the government crackdown came in the wake of a sit-in protest by the bank staff: for six hours, more than 1,300 workers formed a human barricade which effectively imprisoned the bank's senior executives in the top floors of the 14-storey complex. After being freed by police, Central Bank acting Governor W. M. Tilakaratne told *Asiaweek* that the shutdown would disrupt the institution's clearing services as well as hamper the activities of commercial banks. In another development, Colombo port authorities reported a go-slow action among one section of its employees. With fourteen cargo ships laid up outside the capital's harbour the nation's consumers are being deprived of much-needed rice, flour, sugar, fertiliser and other commodities. Even if the port workers relent, delays in unloading would still be inevitable because the paralysed rail network has prevented speedy distribution of stockpiles in the port warehouses.

"With even the government clerical unions threatening to unit and strike, Premier Bandaranaike could well be praying for someone to deliver her from her agony. Ironically, strong-armed nephew Felix—the one man whom many believe could do it—is away in London for eye surgery. But should emerging far Left, consolidate its resources and substitutes terror for subversion, the entire country could be in for an upheaval even more traumatic than the nightmares of 1971. On the other hand, there are those who fear that such a trend would provide the Prime Minister with precisely the pretext she needs to stall the elections or, worse, ring down emergency rule and stay on in power."

After this despatch was written, similar kind of trade union action erupted in the Central Electricity Board (CEB) and the country was plunged into darkness from about 8 pm on Saturday, June 25. The naive and amateurish manner in which insurgency-minded radicals, who did not believe in parliamentary power, were "rehabilitated" in key government departments after a doze of Buddhist indoctrination and the extraction of a promise to follow "Bandaranaike policies." Rehabilitated insurgents should have placed on the and land not been given, in

the first instance places in key government departments or corporations.

The correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, B. H. S. Jayawardene, has also been keeping a close tab on these developments. In the issue of *FEER* of June 10, he had written: "while ... opposition parties have stepped up the tempo of their election campaigns, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's ruling Sri Lanka freedom Party (SLFP) has still to get off the mark. She is plagued by a wave of trade union unrest and complications within her own camp over nominations for the July 21 poll. The railways have been paralysed for a second time this year by unions demanding shoes for workers an oil-workers' go-slow plunged villages into darkness with a breakdown in kerosene supplies and brought vehicles to a standstill; banking has been affected because of a walk-out by central bank employees demanding parallel pay scales with commercial bank workers; paramedical staff working to rule in support of demands for better terms of employment have disorganised hospital routines. Most serious of all, a plantations workers strike in protest against land alienation in the constituency contested by the Premier's son Anura has resulted in thuggery and a breakdown in production. For the first time ever, the planters themselves stormed into Colombo and demanded assurances of immediate protection and police action, particularly against interference by Government politicians, on whom they blamed the chaos. Mrs. Bandaranaike's mouthpiece, the *Lake House* newspaper group, ceased publication for a day when workers demanded that equal space be given to opposition news as well as to reports of government activities. Publication resumed with the management conceding the request. To placate workers, Mrs. Bandaranaike has been revising pay scales indiscriminately and providing employment in the public sector. This has caused further problems as workers in all sectors are now demanding salary revisions, and the Attorney General has ruled that the additional expenditure incurred in providing indiscriminate employment cannot be met from the consolidated fund...."

In the *FEER* of June 17, Jayawardene pointed out that "widespread strikes here have cast doubts

Electricity Strike

on whether Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike will go ahead with the general elections on July 21, or be compelled to declare an emergency to bring the situation under control and postpone the election. One major source of trouble, the railway workers' strike, has dislocated rail services and caused an acute breakdown in supplies to the provinces. The workers ignore the Government's ultimatum to return to work and even stopped the skeletal service the Government was able to establish for two days. Consequently, the prices of commodities rocketed, in some cases by as much as 300%. With Mrs. Bandaranaike's trouble-shooter nephew and Finance Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike in Britain undergoing eye surgery, the Government simply issued a statement that it had acted with restraint so far, but warned that even in its caretaker role it would not hesitate to use its authority to prevent a breakdown in law and order, essential supplies and administration. But the impression is that it has already hesitated too long. Members of the Medical Specialists' Association and the Government Medical Officers' Association reported sick for two days putting the hospitals out of action. They returned to work threatening to report sick again within three days unless the Government implemented pledges made in February when they called off their work-to-rule. At the universities, the dons have relinquished all their administrative positions, also against broken pledges. A central bank employees strike continues and clerks at commercial banks have announced their intention to strike later this month. Policemen in 20 stations in the Nuwara Eliya district, where serious trouble persists on tea plantations, have also reported sick following the transfer of their superintendent for not taking action on a complaint made by supporters of Mrs. Bandaranaike's son Anura (who is contesting Nuwara Eliya in the coming poll). The trouble on the estates follows the Government's announcement of its intention to distribute 7,000 acres of prime tea estate to landless Kandyan peasantry, who are also voters in Nuwara Eliya—a move seen by some as an attempt to bribe the electorate. And the disruption is causing untold damage to tea production, the mainstay of the

economy. While constitutional snags stand in the way of a postponement of the poll, possibilities remain for those (including Mrs. Bandaranaike's ministers) who want a postponement to prevail upon her to take such a step. On the one hand, sympathy could build up to the Government's credit because of the strikes, but it could also backfire because of spiralling prices. The most perturbed about the situation is the United National Party (UNP) leading contender against the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). It has kept its trade unions away from the strikes, which it has condemned, and dearly wants the poll because it believes it can win. The UNP's leader, Junius Richard Jayewardene, so sure of victory, has even protested to Soviet leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Alexis Kosygin over recent Colombo Soviet Embassy releases which have been critical of him.

Though the greater part of Jayawardene's despatch has set out the facts with fair objectivity, he has tripped up over J. R. Jayawardene's protest because of "recent Colombo Soviet Embassy releases..." The fact is that JR and the UNP Journal had objected to certain articles in the *Daily News* which they alleged were written under a pseudonym by persons said to be employees or ex-employees of the Information Department of the Soviet Embassy. Where B. H. S. Jayawardene got the "Soviet Embassy releases" is hard to say, but this does not detract from his overall reporting of the current situation.

To come, now, to the electricity strike, it is clear that it was sabotage (it could be nothing else) that caused a total shut-down of electricity supply to the whole island. What was specially disconcerting was that the chieftains of the CEB and the Army Commander who had boasted that there would be no interruption or disruption of the supply (together with the Army Commander's bravado talk that if the supply was tampered with his men would put matters right with a few minutes) had led many people to be complacent.

The whole island was plunged into total (electric) darkness from about 8 pm on Saturday, June 25. Part of the supply to Colombo was restored by about 7 pm on Sunday, June 26, nearly 24 hours later—and at the time of writing

many places in Colombo (including the area where the Tribune office is situated) have not received their supply. A Ministerial communique has assured the public that the workers had been persuaded to withdraw the strike and that they had accepted the "explanation" as to why the Chairman of the CEB had been so suddenly removed last week (and which had triggered the sit-in strike at the Head Office and which had escalated with the Minister taking a stiff and what to many appeared an intransigent attitude). The official communique in regard to the removal of Chairman explained that there were "differences on policy matters" between the Minister and the Chairman and this had compelled the Government to remove him. But this official "explanation" is not very convincing and nobody seems willing to accept it as the real reason for the removal although people were willing to concede that there might have been differences in regard to the way contracts were awarded.

The workers, however, had utilised the removal of the Chairman as an excuse to strike, but it must be remembered that for over four weeks before there were persistent rumours of a "strike" or "trade union action" in the CEB. The town is today full of stories which claim to provide the true inside story which led to the removal of the Chairman of the CEB, but it would be idle to retail them until really reliable information is available.

The latest Electricity Strike, the longest deliberate shut-down from Laxapana ever (the previous longest all-island stoppage from Laxapana was for 6 hours in 1963/64) is only a further indication of the instability and fluidity that is characteristic of socio-political-economic situation in Sri Lanka today.

In spite of allegedly massive imports and tall stories of Mahaweli production, everything (except wheat flour and rice) is in short supply. Fish averages Rs. 8 to 10 a lb. dried fish Rs. 5 to Rs. 8, eggs are nearer 70 cents than 65 cents beef is available at Rs. 7 a lb on some days. These are the prices in Colombo. In the outstations, these "essentials" are generally not available. But the hardships of the ordinary man are great—with a box of matches had to get even at 75 cents each.

Although SLFP spokesmen have taken UNP's Premadasa to task for stating that men were picking food out of dustbins, the fact is that Premadasa spoke the truth of conditions in Colombo. Down Dawson Street, where the *Tribune* office is situated, there are no dustbins: all rubbish, waste and dirt are heaped on the roadside and they are removed by the Fowzie Municipality about twice a week (only once in the last six weeks it was thrice). The heaps of rubbish and dirt are turned over every day by creatures that were once men and women looking for scraps of food.

This has become a regular sight and there is nothing one can do about it. This hunting for food in dustbins has not been witnessed before in Colombo. (The writer saw such scenes in Calcutta in 1943 during the Great Famine in which many millions perished). Such scenes are not confined to Dawson Street, alone, but can be witnessed in a large number of streets in the city. In the more affluent parts of the city, where the dustbins contain more delicacies, the hunting and searching is even more. The problem cannot be solved by carrying away dust-bin seekers for food to special camps in the way beggars were removed during the Nonaligned Summit—all to no purpose.

The task before any Government formed after the Elections is immense. Working people have to be persuaded to work through adequate incentives—not through threatening ideological slogans or feather-bedding of special categories—to increase production and productivity. Purposeful, meaningful and profitable work alone will bring discipline and stability. But it is well to remember that before stability and productive sufficiency is reached, the over-rated currency which has now been thrust upon this country must be devalued to realistic levels. The two-tier (really three-tier) system of exchange parities (FEECs, CRAs etc) must be discarded and currency values must be fixed appropriate to a free market economy which continues to prevail in this country.

With all the election rhetoric in our newspapers and all the tub-

thumping at election meetings, even thinking people do not seem to realise that Sri Lanka is on the verge of economic chaos. Even a war could not devastated the economy so much that men and women have to look for food in dustbins.

No party seems to have a solution to meet these problems. Nothing concrete, practical or convincing has been put forward. The UNP indulges in pompous big talk that it would be able to deliver the goods—and there are dark hints that foreign capital will do the trick. (Such pundits should examine the present state of countries like Brazil and Mexico which sought to develop on foreign capital under the aegis of the IMF and IBRD). UNP bombast does so far give any clue as to how the problems can be solved. The SLFP is still only concerned with its "great" achievements in the last 7 years. It has no solutions—it does not even pose the problems. All that the SLFP says that the people should trust the party to the job because they had done good work in the past. The ULF is still buried in a utopian day-dreams: it feels that the slogan of "socialism" will be a magic "Open sesame" to win votes. The UNP and the ULF refer to some of the problems confronting the country, but neither has stated as to how it proposes to make people work in order to produce more, or how they propose to regulate the currency to rehabilitate internal and external trade and prices.

The perspectives and prospects are gloomy.

STOP PRSS

Colombo, June 28,

Reports now reaching *Tribune* from different parts of the island seem to indicate that ULF candidates seem to be gaining ground at the expense of both the SLFP and the UNP. There seems to be good grounds to think, as the campaign gathers momentum, that the "protest vote" is now swinging behind the ULF candidates. On Nomination Day all observers believed that the overwhelming bulk of the protest vote would go to the UNP and that it would score a landslide victory. Today the protest vote has begun to switch over to the ULF in a decisive way, at least that the firm view of many

observers who have been going round the country keeping in touch with opinion at a grass roots level. JVP activists, who had fought shy of supporting ULF candidates because of the policies followed by the LSSP and CP leadership during the 1971 insurgency, have now begun to campaign for ULF candidates. If this trend develops more strongly in the next two weeks, all earlier calculations about the outcome of the elections will be upset.

ULF enthusiasts have told *Tribune* that at present the LSSP, CP and the PDP (and its supporters not fighting the elections) had held very near 30 seats in the old NSA. They concede that seven of these seats will be lost, i.e. Homagama, Borella, Dehiwela, Moratuwa, Deniyaya, Tissa and Kolonne. It is their contention that all the other "sitting" MPs now in the ULF will retain their seats; they assert that even Pieter Keuneman who had started weakly was now forging ahead on the protest SLFP vote and that there was a fighting chance that he might end up in the second place. In addition to these 20 odd ULF candidates retaining their seats, ULF candidates are said to be reaching a winning position in a number of new seats: the seats mentioned are: Habaraduwa, Kesbewa, Karadeniya, Matugama and Bulathsingha. The MEP candidate is said to have gained ground in Avisawella and the "suspended" CP (running as Independent) candidate in Kaduwela is a prime favourite. The ULF is also said to be showing great progress in Beruwela, Kotte, Maharagama, Weligama, Tangalle, Galle, and Anuradhapura West. In Horowapota, the ULF supported JVP candidate was in prison, but if he was out he had a good chance of coming out on top.

If these calculations are anywhere near the mark, or prove to be correct, there will be a drastic change in the overall pattern of the final outcome. We had indicated in our notes last week, that of the 168 seats 20 to 25 seats might be annexed by the TULF and its allies. Even if the TULF gets only 18 seats, the balance will be about 140 to 145. We had thought that the ULF might win about 15 seats and that the SLFP and the UNP would share the balance 130 odd seats. But if the ULF pushes up its score to 20 to 25 (or even 30 as some ULF enthusiasts claim)

the residuary balance for the SLFP and UNP would be in the region of 110 to 120 seats. Of this number, ULF forecasters say that the UNP, as matters stand today, will be able to win more than the SLFP, but no one is willing to hazard a guess about UNP's lead.

Much of the ULF calculations (and expectations) is probably wishful thinking. But, three weeks ago ULF sources had not been so optimistic about the outcome. At all times, *Tribune* had stated that the final outcome of the elections would depend on the "protest" vote. In India, the protest vote against the Congress and the DMK had gone to the Janata, the AIMDK

and the CPM in the Lok Sabha elections. In the Assembly elections, the voting had followed a similar trend.

In Sri Lanka it was thought that the "protest" vote would go to the UNP, but present indications are that the UNP has not been able to retain the initial advantage it had enjoyed. In some areas it was thought that the "protest" vote against the LSSP and CP for having been partners of the United Front establishment would go to the UNP, or some Independents. But opinion seems to be swinging round in favour of the ULF. One observer who has been going round to all meetings, told the *Tribune* that it

was correct that the 18-24 youth still flock to the UNP meetings while the 25-35 group were at ULF meetings: that MEP, JVP, MVP and Left Independent candidates (like Indika Gunawardena) attract all youth, from 18 to 35.

There are still three weeks to go, and the two major parties, the SLFP and the UNP have ample opportunities to make people line up behind their policies and promises. The fight is still, as from the beginning, between the SLFP and the UNP as to which Party will have the distinction of being the largest single party and also whether winning party will have even a working majority.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

June 10 — June 13

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

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dinamina;
LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JD—Janadina;
DP—Dinapathi; SU—Sun; DW—Dawasa; CM—Chinthamani;
WK—Weekend; RR—Rivirasa; EN—Eelanadu;

FRIDAY, JUNE 10: The government has decided to increase the wage supplement of tea workers to a maximum of Rs. 1 from the present maximum rate of 30 cents; the wage supplement operates on the average market price for mid-grown teas for the previous month on a gradual scale. The Monetary Board has decided to admit at its discretion non staff employees in batches to the bank today provided to an undertaking that they are willing to do their normal work. The police have begun investigations into the burning down of the SLFP election offices in the Tangalle electorate and the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya electorate. Mr. W. M. Raja Dharmapala, SLFP candidate for Yapahuwa, whose nominations were rejected by the returning officer on Nomination Day at the Kurunegala Kachcheri, yesterday filed papers before the Supreme Court challenging the decision of the Returning Officer. Train services are fast returning to normal, with the calling off of the work-to-rule by the guards, as lie this week; the railway announced yesterday that normal mail traffic service will resume from Saturday June 11. Mr. I. A. Cader, former Deputy Speaker has been appointed Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt in succession to Mr. H. O. Wijeyagoonewardene—CDN. The government has earmarked Rs. 20 million for importing one thousand second hand cars for the use of judges and doctors. The police have filed plaint in the Avisawella High Court against Upatissa Gamanayake, Acting Secretary of the JVP and W. Dharmasena for the attempted murder of Sergeant Kumara at Yatiyantota, unlawful assembly and attempted robbery. Mr. R. E. Jayatilake, the Independent candidate for the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya

electorate has called upon all independent candidates seeking elections in the forthcoming General Elections to band together to form an independent group. The University Teacher's Federation which met briefly yesterday decided to meet again next week to map out its future strategy after the Amunugama Committee's recommendations are known. Contesting the forthcoming elections from a remand cell is Mr. Loku Banda Ekanayake, the United Front Left candidate for Horowapotana—CDM. The government Medical Practitioners and Registered and Assistant Medical practitioners in the Colombo District will walk out today in support of some of their outstanding demands. All state employees drawing less than Rs. 800 a month are likely to receive a pay increase of Rs. 25 from next month. Three deputy ministers have decided not to continue in office; this is in response to the advice given by the PM to do so in order to avoid controversy. All state employees drawing less than Rs. 800 a month are likely to receive a pay increase of Rs. 25 from next month. The channelled consultation practice scheme for State medical officers will begin on June 15 with the takeover by government of the Central Hospital Ltd. to be run as a co-operative venture. Allegations of bribery against ex-MP's will from now on be investigated and acted upon promptly—SU. The rights of operating the duty free concession at the BIA has been awarded to the government owned business undertaking of the BCC at a rental of Rs. 183,500 a month or Rs. 2.2 million annually—CO. Because of the fuel shortage, over 200 acres which have been planted with chillies have been ruined and the youth who had spent much time, money and effort are highly perturbed—EN. Mail trains will begin operating from next Monday according to the Railway Department—DW.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11: The first phase of the channelled consultation scheme for medical specialists and consultants begins on June 20; the other two stages of the scheme will start probably from July 1, the Minister of Health disclosed at a press briefing yesterday. Trade union leaders in the Railway yesterday refused at the last minute to sign an agreement regarding their dispute at the Ministry of Transport on the ground that the agreement contained no clause that the government would not take disciplinary action against employees. About 600 non-staff employees at the Central Bank clocked in for work yesterday morning in response to the appeal of the Monetary Board: in the banking

section work was normal, a bank spokesman said yesterday. 2500 small schools, mainly in remote villages and other under privileged schools in the towns are to be developed under a special programme introduced by the Ministry of Education. Sri Lanka and Costa Rica, have decided to establish diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level, says a press release from the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs. Arrest warrants were issued in New Delhi against Sanjay Gandhi, son of the former Indian PM and six other people, Samachar news agency reported—CDN. One of the pledges embodied in the manifesto of the SLFP is employment at least for the head of a family with a minimum salary of Rs. 200 per month. Central Bank employees' trade union said that only 175 employees out of 1,400 who were locked out had gone back to work yesterday in response to the call to return to work—CDM. The government has drawn up plans to ensure there is no disruption in the supply of food and fuel in the provinces from now on to the general elections. There will be a bank clearance on June 13, the Central Bank announced yesterday. The supreme Court refused yesterday to the application made by the SLFP candidate for Yapahuwa, seeking a declaration of court that the rejection of the nomination papers was unlawful. Mr. V. Ponnambalam, one of the key organisers of the CP in the Jaffna area and Mr. Indika Gunewardene were yesterday suspended from the Party membership. The suspects in the Delta Estate incident who were produced before the District Judge, Gampola yesterday were allowed bail for the sum of Rs. 2,000 each—SU. The shortage of condensed milk and Lakspray will soon come to an end because tins from Hong Kong and Singapore are on the way, according to the Chairman of the Milk Board—DP. On election day the use of loudspeakers is prohibited and a ban has been placed on the use of vehicles for election campaigning—VK. The C.T.B. has incurred a loss of one lakh 67,750/- in the granting of a tender for the sale of old tyres because one official had favoured one tenderer who quoted a low sum while there were much higher tenders—DW.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12: The Sri Lanka Shipping Corporation expects to obtain easy payment terms to meet the entire cost of building five new ships for which tenders are now being received. The Price of cloves in the local market is likely to come down following the liberalisation of its import in India. The Inland Revenue Department and the police have made clarifications with reference to a story in the Sunday Observer last week which referred to certain tax paying residents here who had assets in India and not to repatriates—SO. The Bribery Commissioner's Department will not investigate the allegations of bribery made against those former members of the NSA in respect of whom the Speaker had not granted permission for further investigation. The PM has filed an action in the District Court of Colombo claiming Rs. 300,000 from Mr. P. M. H. Fonseka of Varuna Printers, Colombo for publishing a booklet, which she alleges is defamatory to her. While 50% of the arts graduates are unemployed, only 18% of those with no formal education at all are jobless; these figures are revealed in statistics compiled by the Ministry of Education and the University of Sri Lanka—ST. The Sri Lanka Administrative Service Association has told the PM that its entire membership is restive over the question of career prospects in the service. Five members of the District organisation of

the SLFP in Nuwara Eliya have resigned from the Party and joined forces with the independent candidate. The Milk Board is to distribute 2 million pounds of Lakspray from this month, according to Milk Board sources. During the last week of this month, 6,667,585 poll cards will be despatched for distribution among voters—WK.

MONDAY, JUNE 13: Recruitment of personnel to the state sector has been suspended from Nomination Day till after the general elections; examinations for eligibility for higher appointments in the state sector has also been suspended. University dons who resigned from administrative posts such as deans, heads of departments and student councillors, in protest against their salary scales, yesterday decided to suspend their action with effect from today. The channeled consultation scheme for medical specialists and consultants announced by the Minister of Health last Friday, was unacceptable to the GMOA and the AMS, the presidents of the two associations disclosed yesterday. The Internal Security Unit is investigating statements made by four youths who were arrested at Havelock Town at 3 a.m. yesterday; according to the police, the youths had in their possession a large volume of literature suspected to be subversive in nature—CDN. The Food Department has big buffer stocks of rice, flour and sugar to last till December; according to Food Dept. sources this is the first time that such a large buffer stocks has been maintained; food items that are on their way from abroad will also strengthen the buffer stocks. The Shipping Lines Ltd. has continued to maintain the upward trend in the way of income and has made a working profit of Rs. 1,160,930 as against Rs. 1,034,126 in the previous year states the report of the Chairman—CDM. About 8,000 teachers and principals, belonging to seven teacher's unions will launch a work-to-rule campaign throughout Sri Lanka from today; they have 10 demands put forward jointly. Today is the 46th anniversary of the first ever general election held in Sri Lanka; of the members elected at that general election the only one left in the political arena and who is contesting a seat at the coming general election is the CP boss, Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe—SU. The Commissioner of election scolded a warning to all voters to safeguard themselves against malpractices on election day for the consequences are serious for those found guilty. A government of the UNP will not change the Land Reform Law but only the system of administration of nationalised land where government party MP's and their kith and kin were carrying on the administration today; the UNP had plans to make the villagers and workers benefit from the exercise; this was said by the UNP leader at a propaganda rally. The prevailing soap shortage will end in a week's time; leading manufacturers of toilet and washing soaps said yesterday that they had stepped up the manufacture of soap with the arrival of tallow from abroad—SO. Though the prices of everything had gone up very much in recent years, only house rents have not gone up, and this was because of the Rent Control he had put into operation which did not allow house owners to have their own way; so said Mr. Pieter Keuneman in a meeting in the Colombo Central area—ATH.

IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

"Federal Government Is The Only Solution...."

by James T. Rutnam

Who said so?

S. W. R. Dias Bandaranaike.

Where?

In Jaffna.

When?

In July 1926.

How do you know?

It is fully reported in the **Ceylon Morning Leader** of Saturday 17 July 1926.

Bandaranaike's direct words were, "A thousand and one objections could be raised against the system, but when the objections are dissipated, I am convinced that some form of Federal Government will be the **only** solution." The title of his talk was "Federation as the only solution to our Political Problems".

Bandaranaike returned to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1925 after a brilliant career in the Oxford Union as a political speaker. He missed the Presidentship, but he was Junior Treasurer of the Union, the stepping stone to the higher office. Politics was his special study. He was an ambitious man. He shed his loyalties to the feudal society into which he was born. His father was a servant of the Crown in the Imperial Court of the Governor. His grandfather S. C. Obeyesekere despised the aspirations of the common man. He had called them "nobodies trying to become somebodies." But as young Bandaranaike stepped into the island, he became the rising hope of the radical youth of the country. For his fame (at the Oxford Union) had travelled before him. At once he offered himself to be a leader to emancipate Sri Lanka. He founded in 1926 the Progressive Nationalist Party of which I too was a member. The whole country was then getting ready for the agitation for substantial Constitutional Reforms, on the eve of the arrival of the Donoughmore Commissioners.

Bandaranaike had realised, in the same way as Ponnambalam Arunachalam did when he inaugurated the Ceylon National Congress, that communal Consensus was a *sine qua non* for the achievement

of national peace and prosperity, the essential objectives of all good governments. Arunachalam roped in the Tamils with the famous, and now notorious, letter of James Peiris and E. J. Samarawickrama, respective Presidents of the Ceylon National Association and the Ceylon Reform League. This letter is a dead letter. So had become Bandaranaike's cure-all of a Federal Constitution.

Today the cry of the Tamils is for Separation. It is born out of frustration. This cry is proclaimed throughout the Northern and Eastern Provinces by every group or party of any substance. These Provinces have been recognised in the present Constitution, as well as in numerous government declarations and pronouncements, as Tamil-speaking areas as distinct from Sinhalese-speaking areas, although a subtle form of colonisation in some places is threatening the linguistic identity.

The TULF is making the present Elections a plebiscite for its demand for Separation. No doubt, as things are at present, the TULF will succeed in getting a resounding response. This is bound to create problems both national and international. You cannot close your eyes to it. The future of peace and prosperity in Sri Lanka may hang on this issue. It could become a festering sore as it had been in Ireland (since the Plantation of Ulster) and in many other countries. The move for national or regional autonomy in all parts of the world had gained momentum since Bandaranaike proposed a Federal System for Sri Lanka fifty-one years ago. Very soon, after many years of bloodshed the Basques and Catalans will gain national autonomy in Spain. So would the Greeks and Turks in Cyprus. Who had expected the devolution of the United Kingdom into England, Scotland and Wales? But this too is in the offing. It is a modern trend. Wise men who want peace and prosperity will realise that this is, paradoxically, a move towards integration rather than towards disintegration.

At a meeting of the Progressive Nationalist Party held on 21 June 1926 at 119 Hultsdorf in the spacious chambers of the late Valentine S. Perera, with Bandaranaike as Chairman, a scheme of Reforms for a Federal Constitution with a restricted male franchise was passed by the large assembly of members present with only one solitary dissension. That dissension came from my own humble self. I was for a Uni-

tary Constitution and also for manhood suffrage and a restricted women suffrage then. I had earlier in 1924 written in favour of this in the press, having been influenced by men like Arunachalam, Victor Corea, Goonasingha and E. T. de Silva. I also joined issue with Bandaranaike in the **Ceylon Morning Leader** over Federation after the meeting, in July 1926.

The **Ceylon Morning Leader** of 22 June 1926 duly reported on its first page my dissent as follows: "Mr. James Rutnam dissented from the recommendation of the Report. As his dissent was opposed to the Constitution of the Party, it was ruled by the Chairman (Bandaranaike) as out of order."

Out of order indeed! I alone stood up for a Unitary Constitution against Bandaranaike. What an irony of fate! The Chairman brooked no opposition. He was a hot-gospeller for Federation.

I believed then, in my idealistic youth, in a United Ceylon with no communal differences. This occurred fiftyone years ago. We were then fighting the British Raj. We did not consider ourselves separately as Sinhalese or Tamils in this struggle. Now I am a disillusioned man. Communal differences continue to divide us into racial groups, and also it must be realised, into caste groups. I think Bandaranaike had been politically very wise to have proposed Federation. He found support for this idea from the Kandyana National Assembly led by A. Godamune and also I believe from C. E. Corea, that doughty Ceylonese patriot. It is evident now that under the present set-up no one from the caste groups among the Sinhalese in the maritime provinces, such as the Karawas, Salagamas or Duravas, not to speak of those considered unmentionable, will ever be able to become a Prime Minister or a President of Sri Lanka.

As far as the Tamils are concerned it is not fully realised how strong a language could be to bind a nation or state or community. Morarji Desai himself had admitted that even Asoka could not prevail over the Dravidians of South India. This had found an echo, over two thousand years later, in the recent Lok Sabha and National Assembly Elections. The Tamil Nadu cry for Separation was effectively silenced without bloodshed by the Nehru declaration that Hindi would not be imposed even

as a link language. I think the Biafra cry for Separation was checked by the grant of Federal status in Nigeria, of course after a good deal of bloodshed.

In the interest of all concerned I believe the first duty of the New Parliament should be to formulate a Federal Constitution for three States, and not for nine states as Bandaranaike had proposed, one for the Kandyan composed of the Central, North-Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, one for the Low-Country Sinhalese composed of the North-Western, Western and Southern Provinces and one for the Tamils of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The boundaries could be modified or adjusted by consensus.

Say what you like, this problem of the Tamils is bound to reach alarming proportions, if wise counsel does not soon prevail on both sides. We are the defenders of the oppressed, and supporters of liberation movements throughout the world. The SLFP Manifesto specially stresses it. Jimmy Carter has declared that Human Rights are not the concern of the respective individual States only. Already we hear of demonstrations on behalf of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, both plantation workers and others, in the capitals and cities of the world. We could ourselves solve this problem with reason and without hate if only we recall the image and follow the direction of the youthful Bandaranaike of the twenties. I give below his speech which is not found among his Collected Speeches and which he himself in the course of time chose to side-step with a political pact, purely because of the insatiable appetite of racial chauvinists and the opposition of political opportunists. This speech was the foundation stone of the Bandaranaike Policy over which a generation which knows not him is raving today.

FROM THE CEYLON MORNING LEADER, Saturday July 17, 1926.

"FEDERATION AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR POLITICAL PROBLEMS"

BY

S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE

Under the auspices of the Students' Congress Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, B.A. (Oxon), Barrister-at-law, delivered a very interesting lecture on "Federation as the only Solution to our Political Problems". Dr. Isaac Thambyah presided.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that it was necessary in the first place to realise the importance of the present time. A revision of the constitution was due in 1928. A satisfactory measure of self-government was expected. It was therefore necessary to think very clearly and realise in its entirety the whole political question. A false step taken, a false proposal made now would be very difficult to retrieve in the future. They all wanted self-government. The question remained what was the measure of self-government they were aiming at.

There were briefly two forms of Government met with in Ceylon. One form was the "Nindagama" system of land tenure, the other was the Headmen system of provincial administration.

The Nindagama system was a feudal form of Government. As long as the feudal dues were paid (they were always paid in hand) no notice was taken of anything else. In the Headmen system, the village was considered as the unit. The King had his various Disawas, Rate Mahatmayas, etc. The various provinces were divided and subdivided till one came to the Gansabawa. The Gansabawas was composed of the head of each family of all those in the village irrespective of wealth. The litigants had the right to appeal to the King himself but the Gansabawas' decision was rarely upset. All that meant that the whole land was a loose federation bound by one common oath to the King. When the British came to the island they introduced a centralised form of Government. That centralised form of Government as introduced had a semblance of a free institution. Even to the present day it was nothing else but a bureaucratic form of Government.

The lecturer then referred to the course of political agitation for larger measure of reforms. It did not start till 1915 when the riots took place. The lecturer then referred to the great part played by Sir P. Ramanathan then the Educated Ceylonese Member. Sir P. Arunachalam started the National Congress. It was he who fathered the movement for agitation for reform. When the Congress was started the articles to which all the members subscribed themselves was that their aim and goal should be self Government within

the Empire. Beyond the securing of a few more seats in the Legislative Council nothing else was done. Those who agitated for reform concentrated their whole energies on arguing in two directions on fallacious bases. The system was not questioned as to its suitability, secondly they aimed at copying the type of Government as existing in England. The result was that the Legislative Council at present was a most mongrel assembly. It was an assembly of the people in theory but in reality it was utterly useless. Various compromises were made. They were Government Members who were not responsible to any body of voters. The territorial principle was acknowledged, the communal principle acquiesced and when all was said and done the assembly had no real power. The Legislative Council had a certain measure of control over the finances, but that did not amount to much. The Executive Council was divorced from the Legislative Council which looked like a School Boys Debating Society. That was the nett result of the agitation of the last few years. The price paid for it was the Sinhalese-Tamil Split and the Low Country and the Kandyan Sinhalese split. The minorities, looked with mistrust one at the other. It was wrong to think that the differences were not fundamental. There were men who thought that the differences were created by a few ambitious persons and when those persons died the differences would disappear. A hundred years ago there were no such differences. They did not appear because the Englishman sat on the heads of the Tamil, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese.

The moment they began to speak of taking the Government in their hands, then the differences that were lying dormant smouldered forth. If they considered past history they would see that the three communities, the Tamils, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese had lived for over a thousand years in Ceylon and had not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their language, their customs, their religion. He would be a very rash man who would pin his faith on the gradual disappearance of those differences.

The lecturer then proceeded to outline the difficulties that would

Provincial Autonomy

crop up. The Legislative Council would under the anticipated reformed Government, elect their Prime Minister and the various Ministers. Now there was a certain proportion of members to represent the various communities. If that proportion was maintained, in the ministry too the communities would demand a certain proportion.

A centralised form of Government assumed a homogenous whole. He knew no part of the world where a Government was carried on under such conflicting circumstances as would be experienced in Ceylon.

Those would be the troubles if a centralised form of Government was introduced into countries with large communal differences.

In a Federal Government, each federal unit had complete power over themselves. Yet they united and had one or two assemblies to discuss matters affecting the whole country. That was the form of Government in the United States of America. All the self-Governing dominions, Australia, South Africa, Canada had the same system. Switzerland afforded a better example for Ceylon. It was a small country, but three races lived there. French, Germans and Italians. Yet Switzerland was a country where the federal form of Government was very successful. Each canton managed its own affairs. But questions of foreign affairs, commerce, defence etc., matters about which differences and controversies would be at a minimum were dealt with by the Federal Assembly. In Ceylon each Province should have complete autonomy. There should be one or two assemblies to deal with the special revenue of the island. A thousand and one objections could be raised against the system but when the objections were dissipated, he was convinced that some form of federal Government would be the only solution. He had not dealt with the smaller communities. For such communities temporary arrangements could be made for special representation. Those temporary arrangements would exist till the fear existed about one community trying to overlord the other. He would suggest the same for the Colombo Tamil seat. The three main divisions in the island were the Kandyan Sinhalese,

the Low country Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was difficult to find a system that would completely satisfy everyone. That was in brief the Federal system. He would be amply satisfied if it was recognised that the problem did exist. If there were a better form of plan he hoped someone would think about it and place it before the people. (Several speakers then made comments and asked questions).

Mr. Bandaranaike in reply said that the question of religion was hardly a matter to be dealt with by legislation. The question of financial inequality was a serious objection, so also was the question of education. The common fund could be shared among provinces that required help. The subject was full of controversy. The last speaker had hit the nail on the head. Why not remain under the British? Why all that worry and discussion? No nation deserved the name of a nation if it did not want a measure

of self-Government. It deserved to be wiped out of the surface of the earth.

Dr. Isaac Thambyah said that the lecture was powerfully delivered and reasonably thought out. He hoped that a great deal of interest would be created. The British Malaya was the only place he knew where Federation was working and working well too. He suggested that their leaders of thought in Jaffna and Colombo should pay a visit to Malaya and come back and tell them what they thought of Federation. In conclusion Dr. Thambyah congratulated the Students' Congress for its choice of lectures. Sometime ago a gentleman spoke of the ideals of education. That night Mr. Bandaranaike had spoken of the ideals of Government. He moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The vote was carried with acclamation—Jaffna Cor..



IS IT NOT A FACT that that the results of the postgraduate Teachers' Diploma course have been withheld for sixteen months (so far) because of a squabble whether media-wise standardisation should be applied to decide on the class, grades and passes of the examinees? That the fare of 1100 teachers has been in the balance for 16 months whilst the University authorities are not able to make up their minds as to what they should do? That of these 1100, about 600 are internal students and 500 are external students (or it may be the other way round 500 internal and 600 external)? That a small ginger group wants media-wise standardisation even at the postgraduate level? That others (saner elements) have pointed out that such standardisation was naked racial discrimination? That the small ginger group, however, has effective pull in high quarters and the majority has been helpless to do anything? That whilst some kind of case may be made out for subject-wise standardisation any attempt to impose media-wise standardisation would vitiate the concept of university education? That whilst the University authorities continue, like Nero, to fiddle away, the teacher-examinees in question are in a permanent quandry? That a great deal depends on the results? That promotions, increments and a whole lot of matters depend on these results? That Governmental authorities should realise that media-wise standardisation and district quotas have made a farce and mockery (based on racial discrimination) of the university entrance examination? That if media-wise standardisation is introduced at the postgraduate level then the demand for a separate state for Tamils becomes even more valid and justified than under the present racial discrimination and imbalances that has given rise to the emotional demand for a separate state for the Tamils? That unless the majority in the majority community realise, soon enough that a minority caucus within the majority is driving the Tamils to ask for a separate state and do something to stop this suicidal racist thrust, the country will be plunged into the most disastrous and divisive conflict?

POINT OF VIEW

UNP And The Tamils

—a Comment On a Public Statement Of Principle by J. R. Jayawardene—
by R. Kahawita

I do not know how many people—both Sinhala and Tamil speaking—have reacted to a statement, reported to have been made by "JR" at a political meeting that his objective is to be the Prime Minister for the whole country and not for only a section of the people. His premiership will be North to South and East to West.

Obviously his ambition is to be the premier of a United country. "One country one people" is the basis of his ambitions. We can believe that this will be his goal, because even in the Party commitment of 25th May he has pledged to solve the Language and other problems of the Minorities at an all party conference, thus elevating the conference above politics while getting all their views at the same time work out a workable and permanent solution to the problems so that all national communities can march ahead in harmony, perfect understanding and trust in each other, with one common objective of building a united democratic nation.

Conferences and discussions are well and good but what is resolved at these conferences must be written into a document to guarantee the inalienability of these resolutions. That document should be the Constitution. Here again, "JR" has committed his party to give a clear, workable, democratic Constitution so that all national communities can develop their aspirations, cultural, economic and traditional, in keeping with their respective societies. Therefore, the former, "the round-table conference" must precede constitution drafting.

We can trust his intents, because already he has put into motion a fact-finding committee to sort out the genuine grievances and short comings. To take his intentions to the grass roots he has matched 14 candidates at the forthcoming general elections to contest the traditional Tamil speaking constituencies. His nominees may

not be successful at the hustings but the exercise will serve a very useful purpose of gauging the mood of the Tamil speaking people and what numbers of them are with his policy.

This strategy Will involve almost seven lakhs of Tamil speaking voters. This can be considered almost a referendum to what the Party has committed itself in their manifesto regards the language and other issues of the Tamil speaking community. The results of the elections in those areas should form the background and the spring-board for the proposed "all party conference."

For the first time, since independence, we have a Political leader who has come out with a definite programme and a determination to solve our "inter-community problems."

What are his instruments with which he is going to mould a united people?

They are: Going out to the Tamil speaking areas in numbers to find out democratically the mood of the people involved, a non-party conference to hammer out difference and then write the

solutions into a constitution. A leader is of no value without a following. Every leader expects a following to endorse what his objectives are: So it is up to the various communities, social and religious groups and intellectuals etc. to give this leader that support and be guided by him. Let us then prepare the way now, if he is called upon to form a Government, that he will have the backing to implement what he has planned to do "to settle the minority issues."

We have specifically picked up the leader of the United National Party, because he is the only leader who has, so far, chalked out a plan to wipe out inter community differences. If others too come forward, the same co-operation must be there; for the ultimate end is not to separate the communities but to weld them together to form one people one country, this shall be the common denominator to all parties or groups who seek a solution.

Then as one leader has stated clearly what his plans are to bring all communities together, let all other leaders, in spite of their political differences join hands to find a solution to a problem that has befuddled us since 1940.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have published a piece by James T. Rutnam, who makes his welcome appearance in our columns after a long time, about an important argument in the early 1920s (when young S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was on the threshold of his political career) on the question of a Constitution for the country. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had, at that time, very forcefully advocated a federal structure for Ceylon. What he said then seems to have even greater validity now. There is no doubt that the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was an attempt to have an embryonic, but partial, federal system for two of three component parts he had envisaged. The early twenties of the century saw the beginning of the end of over-centralised Bismarckian or Napoleonic nation-states: and the world begun reaching out to the federal unions such as the one that emerged in the USSR and other countries. Today, federalism, or "devolution" as it is called in Great Britain, has become practical politics in many countries of the world. Ceylon needs a new Constitution. The 1972 Constitution has already done the country a great deal of harm and has federalists to turn separatists. Even the JVP has conceded that the national minorities should enjoy the right to self-determination, (but whether they would exercise it to effect separation would naturally depend on the way the majority community deal with the minorities). The Communist Party will find it difficult not to go back to the programme on which the Party was formed (and which has not been changed by any subsequent Congress) that the minorities should be allowed regional autonomy in their "traditional homelands". The SLFP has the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact as a model to follow. Only the UNP and the LSSP still seem to believe in the now anachronistic concept of nation states (one nation, one country, etc) but the UNP and the LSSP cannot withstand for much longer the worldwide trend for greater and "devolution" which can find practical expression only in federalism of different kinds.—Editor.

A LESSON FOR CEYLON
FROM INDIA

Weeding Out Corruption

Modhumita Mojumdar

One readily sympathises with Morarji Desai for many reasons.

His task is by no means enviable. And this is not simply because our economy is in bad shape and providing jobs for everyone within the next ten years, or even removing destitution within this brief span of time, will be a formidable task; but also because he has taken on the onerous responsibility of restructuring the entire constitutional framework so that the institutions of democracy may function with a degree of efficacy. An equally gigantic task, though not half as spectacular, will be to introduce a modicum of administrative efficiency in a system of government that has become effete and thoroughly corrupt in the thirty years since Independence.

The advice of Jayaprakash Narayan for the setting up of *Lokpals* and *Lok Ayuktas* is important in this context. J. B. Kripalani, too, has stressed the need for a concerted drive to cleanse the administrative machinery of layers upon accumulated layers of grime that has clogged it almost completely. The rule that the Janata MPs will have to declare their assets, was also intended to project a clean and upright image of the Janata Party and its Government.

Lokpals and *Lok Ayuktas* modelled on the Swedish system of Ombudsmen will certainly be an important and much-needed step towards administrative reforms. But the task of running a clean and efficient government will only begin and not end with them. For, a system so notoriously corrupt as to have reduced the Vigilance Commission to a mockery will always find ways and means to render ineffective even the most independent and powerful institutions devised to keep a check on its functioning.

The only fool-proof method will be for the men in authority to set an example by observing the most impeccable norms of public

conduct and private behaviour. This is a tall order—not because the members of the new Cabinet are dishonest or insincere, but because the pulls and pressures exerted on them will be so great that it will take superhuman will-power to resist them.

It will be too simplistic to assume that corruption, especially in high places, would always be so blatant as to be easily discernible. Its ways are insidious and even the most honest and upright person may fall a victim to graft unless he watches out sharply. Bribe often takes the form of loving gifts that cannot be refused without appearing to be brusque, if not downright rude. Bonds of kinship are lasting and are difficult to brush aside, especially in our cultural milieu where a person's primary loyalty is to the family or the clan.

Friendship also has its own demands of reciprocity. And the line dividing justice and nepotism is admittedly a very fine one. What, for instance, does a minister, or any other influential man, do when a friend's son seeks a letter of recommendation for a job? To refuse would be unthinkable and could well result in ruining a career. Acquiescing, on the other hand, could snuff out the hopes of half a dozen young people who are better qualified but do not have the necessary contacts.

Habits grow. Precedents, once set, are difficult to reject. Little acts of what may appear to be kindness or generosity accumulate to confront the man of influence with a dossier full of nepotism, high-handed interference in routine matters and worse. The moral authority of insisting that subordinates should conform to the rule book is lost for ever. Willy-nilly, the big boss is eventually compelled to turn a blind eye to the ten-rupee note passed under the table to make the file of pending work move.

It is precisely this realisation that has made J. B. Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan resolve not to recommend anybody's case, no matter how just. But they have the advantage of not being involved in the Government. What of our Ministers? It is not for the wielders of power to wash their hands of all responsibility.

The Sanjay phenomenon has made people, even ordinary people critical overnight of the way power is delegated to the wives, sons and hangers-on of politicians in power. Why should a minister exert his influence to make his son an MP or an MLA? Why should the wife of a Chief Minister or the husband of a former Chief Minister, for that matter, be given a party ticket for contesting the election in preference to other, and possibly more deserving candidates?

Why should the sons of powerful men and women be groomed as heirs to power in the youth wings of this or that party, or act as Government emissaries even when they have no official status? Why, in short, should political power be the monopoly of the Shuklas or the Mishras?

A simple answer to this would be that politics happens to run in certain families, just as a doctor's son often becomes a doctor and a lawyer's son a junior to his father. This, however, would overlook the fact that in politics Indian style, more than in any other sphere, power is shamelessly wielded in order to give a leg up to aspirant sons, daughters and even daughters-in-law as in no other country in the world. If the new Janata Party Government is to project a clean image, individual members of the Government will not only have to be above reproach but appear to be so in the eyes of the people.

It is nobody's case that the legitimate political aspirations of those who are closely related to a minister should be sacrificed. But budding politicians should have to work their way up without being foisted on the masses from above just to satisfy the private dreams of a single person, no matter how powerful and influential he or she may be. Unless this is done, at considerable sacrifice of the traditional sense of "responsibility" for one's own family, the Janata image will soon tarnish and become indistinguishable from that of the Congress coterie which have wielded power uptil now.

The Janata label has obviously put a great onus on our present rulers who are bending themselves backward to prove that they are, indeed, accessible to the common man. In Delhi, daily durbars are

held at the houses of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister apart from the weekly audiences at the home of Lt. Governor D. R. Kohli. While this may be good public relations (and not even that, if reports of Mr. Desai's impatience with the crowds are to be believed) it is a practice that smacks of a feudal system of government and should be dispensed with as soon as possible.

Before that, however, the administrative machinery will have to be geared up so that it is possible for the ordinary citizen to get justice through the normal channels. Officials whose indifference and callousness send people to the doors of ministers should be considered inefficient and appropriate entries made in their personal records. If work gets done quickly and efficiently in a routine manner, there will be no need for the personal touch that so frequently sought to be misused for private ends by the admiring crowds which gather around ministers and their retinue.

—Mainstream

INDIA

Janata, Congress And The Assembly Elections

New Delhi, June 19,

The Indian electorate has once again proved its maturity—not only by rejecting everywhere Independent candidates including the Janata rebels and those backed by the Sangharsh Samitis; these Independents would have been a source of instability. The voter has also given evidence of his sense of responsibility by giving the Janata an overwhelming majority in precisely those states in which no viable alternative was available and there was a danger of instability. The electorate, however, has not been indiscriminate. It has shown preference for a more forward looking alternative wherever it seemed to be available. The performance of the CPM-led united front in West Bengal, the Congress-CPI alliance in Bihar and the All India Anna D.M.K. in Tamilnadu is evidence of the preference

of the voters. This is confirmed by the performance of the C.P.M. and the CPI in Punjab where the two did not clash with each other although the C.P.M. had the advantage of an alliance with the Akali-Janata Conglomerate.

The election results from the ten States and two Union Territories have also shown that the voter is still unwilling to trust the Congress, nor is the Congress in a position to take advantage of the situation created by the internal squabbles within the Janata and the revolt of those who failed to get the ticket. Bihar shows that the Congress can retrieve its position, but only if the party follows the example there. The Bihar Congress dissociated itself from Sitaram Kesari, the agent of the Caucus; if in other states also the congress wants to woo the voter it will have to part company with Indira Gandhi and the Caucus. Rajasthan results however show that the kind of leadership provided by Mohanlal Sukhadia can have only a marginal impact.

The performance of different parties in Bihar also reflects the popular attitude towards total revolution. People voted not for the best candidates, for, it was in Bihar that the Janata had fielded some of the worst candidates; one Janata candidate had a criminal record and lives by bullying and exploiting the common man and the Sangharsh Samiti boys campaigned against him. The people voted for parties of their choice. Indeed, the behaviour of the Bihar electorate has shown how wrong was Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan when the described Indian democracy as immature while commencing on the clamour for Janata tickets and the revolt within the party. The race for party tickets and consequent innerparty squabbles were the sharpest in Bihar. The Congress could have done better in Bihar had it overcome demoralisation in its ranks. The large scale violence in the State showed the acuteness of political awareness among the electorate—the people were unwilling to allow practices like booth capturing or bogus voting witnessed during the Lok Sabha poll in the State; they were even prepared to resist gangsterism by laying down their lives. Whatever unity was achieved by Congressmen after casting off Caucus agents inspired confidence but the un-

derstanding reached between the Congress and the CPI helped even more in mobilising the electorate. But the electorate was not yet willing to give up the Janata altogether; it was only interested in showing the new party its place so that it does not become too big for its boots.

Nowhere was the hold of the Caucus over the Congress stronger than in UP, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, and in all these States the party's performance could not have been poorer. The success of Bansilal's son, Surendra Singh, as an Independent in a constituency in which the Congress had not set up any candidate does not mean that the Caucus is favoured by the people. It only shows the capacity of the Caucus to cause damage to the Congress—which is how those who had taken the lid off Bansilal crimes, former chief Minister Banarsi Das Gupta and PCC chief Rao Nihal Singh were defeated. Incidentally the election of Hardwari Lal by a big margin shows that the Charan Singh backed Jat leadership of the Janata cannot take the people of the state for granted.

Although in West Bengal the Janata has been cut to size and the people have clearly indicated their preference for left-oriented politics, the Janata can no more complain anywhere that the Congress is trying to put obstructions in its way. It is precisely to deprive the Janata of any opportunity to suffer such excuses that the people have given it such huge majorities in most States and in the Delhi Metropolitan Council and Municipal Corporation. The Party has not been given a vote of confidence; the Party has been put on trial and its future will depend on how it conducts itself. But the result from Tamilnadu and Pondichery have shown that it has to go a long way to win over the southern states.

The near total rout of Janata in Tamilnadu reflects the apprehension of voters about the obscurantist views of some segment of the conglomerate. The Congress, without any cadres worth the name could do better, comparatively speaking, because it attracted all those who are opposed to loud regionalism.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
—New Wave

Despair In Congress ?

New Delhi, June 19,

The Assembly election results have proved wrong our expectations which seem to have been based on a subjective assessment of popular disenchantment with the Janata party. Last week we expressed the hope that the Congress and its allies would be able to wrest at least one third of the seats contested. This has not happened. Why?

The disenchantment with the Janata is no doubt a growing reality. The process will gather momentum in the coming months, not necessarily evenly all over the country, because of the legacy of the anti-people policies of the government and the Janata's incapacity to reverse the anti-growth processes set in motion by Indira Gandhi at the dictates of the credit agencies like the IMF and the World Bank.

Our assessment of the built-in inadequacies of the Janata party to reverse the anti-growth policies may offend some of the Janata party members who, during pre- and post-split periods had fought for the restoration of correct socio-economic perspectives and who constitute at the moment a marginally significant segment of the ruling party. They might argue that they would continue to fight for the policies they had championed, though unsuccessfully, while in the Congress. Such an argument might appear plausible to the gullible but not to any intelligent observer who has a perception of the forces that influence and manipulate economic policies.

The Janata party's victory was determined both by objective and subjective factors. Firstly, the Assembly elections were held too near in time to the Lok Sabha elections held barely three months ago. No high pressure campaign was needed to convince the people why the Congress should be defeated. The memory of the emergency coupled with Indira Gandhi's machinations to retain her control over the Congress as exhibited in the election of the Congress president, was too fresh to be erased by Congressmen's offer of apology to the people. Secondly, there was a widespread feeling, notwithstanding critical remarks being made in trains, buses and coffee houses, that "we have tried the Congress for thirty years, why not give Janata at least five

years to redeem its pledges?" The Congress and its allies, whose performance seldom matched their professions, could not effectively counter the peasantry's fatalistic out look because of the credibility gap. So the anti-Indira Gandhi and anti-emergency sentiment helped the Janata party to garner maximum votes.

The Congress and its allies could not take advantage of the people's misgivings about the Janata because they could not present an alternative programme to the people as they have not yet realised how they were bluffed into accepting anti-national policies as the only correct policy package that have led to stagnation, inflation and widening of economic disparities. They also failed to sharply criticise and repudiate Indira Gandhi and her mafia that sought to impose on the people a set of policies which served the IMF-World Bank interests. Even in the selection of candidates no effort was made to give a new image to the party. It is obvious from the results that the Congress and its allies were able to articulate popular disenchantment with the Janata into anti-Janata votes to the extent they were able to demarcate themselves from Indira Gandhi and her caucus.

The failure of the Congress to come up to its own minimum expectations is going to reflect in two opposite processes. A section of Congress legislators in the states where elections have not been held and also in the Rajya Sabha may tend to cross the floor. Already those having past links with the PSP or Socialist party have begun to show a vulnerability to Janata president Chandra Shekhar's appeal to join the ruling party and strengthen his hands. Some Congress right-wingers also are weighing the pros and cons of switching over to the Janata party with which they have much in common than the radical urges of the left-of-centre forces in the Congress.

The Congress defeat in the Assembly elections is likely to give strength to those elements in the party who desire to initiate a principled debate on Congress ideology and programme evolved during the Nehru era and reorganise the party from top to bottom with a view to making it an effective opposition party in Parlia-

ment and State assemblies and use it as an instrument of the long delayed urge for social transformation. If the centrists and left-centre elements fail to effectively intervene they will only accelerate the process of disintegration of the Congress.

The most vulnerable states are Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Assam. On the whole, the Congress rank and file are thoroughly demoralised which poses the danger of a further vertical split in the Congress.

For Congressmen who are disillusioned with the leadership and also have no hope that the party can be revived by a new set of leadership, a split seems to be the only way out. For those who cannot join either the Congress or the Janata, there is no alternative nucleus around which they could rally. The short-lived (CFD) had created hopes among Congressmen and non-party progressive political activists. They are in search of an alternative which may unite all the democratic and left forces.

An atmosphere of despair continues to prevail inside the Congress the reasons for which are two-fold: the absence of a cohesive leadership at the top and Indira Gandhi's dogged struggle to retain her grip over the organisation. Talking to Congressmen one realises how attempts to reorganise the party are being thwarted by the caucus. Nevertheless, some efforts are being made by several groups to initiate moves to bring organisational and popular pressure on the former Prime Minister to keep her hands off the party for at least some time. Some other members are still indulging in the futile exercise to persuade Indira Gandhi to denounce the caucus and assume leadership.

The older generation of Congressmen look at the problem a bit differently. They would like to ignore or outmanoeuvre Indira Gandhi's machinations without openly denouncing her policies or methods to consolidate her personal power. This group is represented by the Congress president and men like Kamolapati Tripathi and Mohanlal Sukhadia. This does not mean that they want to bring her back to the centre of power. But it is quite exasperating for those who would like a

sharp break from the party's immediate past. The question raised by the protagonists of a quick change is: how is it that the Congress did not put up a candidate against Bansi Lal's son in Haryana? Similarly, in UP, Bihar, Orissa and Punjab notorious henchmen of the mafia have been selected as party nominees. To the extent the central election committee of the Congress did not act against mafia it is held guilty of not allowing the revival of democratic functioning in the party.

On the other hand, centrist elements in the leadership argue that but for the Assembly elections, they would have moved faster to free the party of the caucus influence. The existing state Congress committees are all nominated by Indira Gandhi and her close operators. Her grip over the Congress organisation cannot be weakened unless the composition of the state committees is changed and the right kind of people are placed in strategic positions. Again, there is no definite criterion to identify the "right kind of people" except, and to begin with, that any one who is not prepared to demarcate himself from Indira Gandhi cannot be trusted.

Secondly, a mere change in the state leadership may have some group advantage but cannot deliver the goods unless it premises its activities on a programme that may stir the people into action. Here comes the crucial role of men like Y. B. Chavan, former Foreign Minister and now leader of the opposition. Being a product of that phase of the national movement which was marked by action-oriented intellectual ferment in Maharashtra, Chavan undoubtedly has a correct perception of the political processes which derive strength from the interplay of socio-economic forces at a given moment. But, he suffers from subjective diffidence that he acquired from the bitter experience of the pre-1969 split in the Congress. This explains the visible gap between his understanding of the situation and actions. According to some observers Sardar Swaran Singh belongs to the same category.

From his election campaign speeches and the response they evoked one is persuaded to surmise that Chavan may shed his diffidence in organisational matters and play a more positive role in national

politics in the coming months. The role of men like Chavan and Swaran Singh cannot be underrated in dismantling Indira Gandhi's political and organisational structures without which the struggle for the restoration of Nehru's developmental strategy cannot succeed.

The left-of-centre elements, who challenged Indira Gandhi at the last AICC session, are reportedly preparing for the second round of the battle against the caucus. This may come into the open either in the form of a demand for a special session of the AICC, or in the organisational elections in the states. Of crucial significance, however, is the programme that the left-of-centre forces propose to work out to win back the various segments of the people who are bound to be affected by the deepening economic crisis in the coming months. The effectiveness of these forces will be determined by their capacity to actively involve the centrist elements like Chavan and Swaran Singh, on the one hand, and neutralise and win over those who might be acting in their own way to isolate the caucus structure in the party organisation, on the other.

So far the Congress president is concerned he has to outlive the stigma of being an Indira Gandhi nominee. This he can demonstratively do by having special invitees to the Congress working committee such leaders as are known to be anti-caucus. This will not only restore his image as a president acceptable to the large body of Congressmen but also help him emerge as an unifier of the party at this critical juncture in the history of the Indian National Congress.

G.S.

—New Wave

IN A TEA ESTATE—28

The Proprietor

by Ina Trimmer

In estate life small things assume large proportions. Little pleasures—even such as the post coming in—count much in the daily round, and in the little Bungalow especially where we were, cut off from all normal communications, we awaited the post with eagerness and impatience. It was our only life

line to the outside world. We had no telephone there except connection with the Big Bungalow, and that too was in the factory. Was it any wonder that I awaited the advent of the tappal cooly every day? The post master held one key to the tappal bag and my husband the other. Should my husband be out in the field or factory when the tappal cooly arrived, the canvas bag was left on his writing table, unopened, till he returned.

In the best circumstance the arrival of the post must surely bring a certain pleasure. It is one of the pleasant things in life. There's always the luck of the draw. Who knows what wonderful message or missive it could bring! Man is always a speculator at heart and even the severest orthodox mind finds an outlet in chances that lie in the post.

"Sunny", called my husband one day, "I have news for you".

I hurried to join him.

"Oh! Is it anything nice?"

"Depends on how you look at it, Here, read."

I glanced over the letter he gave me.

"Have you ever met him before?" I asked.

"No! I haven't met either of the brothers, nor the old man, their father, who first owned Brae. He died shortly before I took over, a very pedantic old man who brooked no interference and who, incidentally, was the cause of near ruin of this place."

"Well, anyway the son will soon be here, and you say it's his first visit."

"It's his first visit to Brae as far as I know, but they have vast interests out East, carpet factory in India, estates in Malaya, and trade interests even in China, I think. But more important is the fact that he'll be here about the middle of August. We've just over a month in which to get ready for him, and the Big Bungalow is far from complete. After all he's one of the co-proprietors. So I'm afraid, Sunny, we'll have to get going."

Immediately my spirits rose. Action ahead, movement, things to do, to scheme, to plan. I was sick of this desuetude, this recession from active life. How long can one read or write letters or sew!

Getting Ready

There was much to do during those days of settling in. My husband gave me a free hand in all matters of the house and home. Colour schemes, furniture, furnishings, were not his metier he said. They used to be attended to in the old days by lady friends who took a motherly interest in his bachelorhood.

"Go along and do as you like; only remember not to bankrupt me completely, and keep within the bungalow allowance for furniture and upkeep" he told me.

Happily I took my place as a house decorator and began devising colour schemes for the different rooms and deciding on the furnishings to suit each one. My efforts were as much to make our home comfortable and attractive as preparations for the visit of the proprietor. He had only happened to come into the picture just at the time when we were busy with our own concerns and trying to get order out of the chaos or rebuilding and remodelling.

Tins and packets of distemper filled the store room and I spent my days superintending the mixing of colours, and even teaching the workmen how to apply the stuff on the walls. I hovered over them, with unlimited patience, urging them on satisfied with nothing but the best effects, however tedious the process, and however many times the distemper was applied.

I began with the sitting room, a large sell-proportioned square with a half-octagonal bay. But it was dark within. The only light came from the eight long windows of the bay.

I had the walls scraped down practically to the masonry and replastered. What colours were exposed as each coat was removed! A bright emerald green, a 'shocking' pink, Venetian red but I decided that deep cream like old ivory would suit the old room best. The beautiful carved old-time ceiling that had grown sooty with the years was cleaned and painted cream to reflect light and it looked exactly like those white embossed ceilings one sees sometimes in old English houses.

The dining room which had been completely rebuilt was distempered in a pale shade of sunshine yellow, almost a delicate lemon, and my Gossip Room the sunniest of them all was done a bluish grey.

Queen Victoria's bed chamber another dark room was given walls and ceiling of cream and so was the passage between the bed-chamber and the sitting room. The Visitors' Room glowed with the warmth of a soft shade of peach.

But I really let myself go in our own bedroom. It was large, more or less square except for the enormous straight bay right across the room, with windows along the full length which flood the room with light. These sixteen feet of windows were my delight. They opened on our little strip of garden that was always gay with flowers and sweet scented with roses, buddlia and Madonna lilies. But beyond and close the mountains that encircled Brae towered to the skies and the unceasing gaze looked on us night and day. The steep slopes green with heavy forest rose like the sides of a cub and we who were at the bottom could not see beyond those heights. No human feet had ever climbed them. The lower part where cardomons grew under the giant trees and on the bank, belonged to the estate. The cardomon pods were gathered and dried by the Ensaa Baas (Cardamon chief) and sold in Kandy for spices were much in demand.

The mountain and the forest seemed to belong to our room. They dominated the scene and our outlook. I never tired of that view of primeval grandeur. Every morning I would stand at a window and watch the sun touch the sombre darkness of those forest slopes and awaken the sleeping trees with his beams of silver light.

Mohini, the Goddess of the Woods, and of the Wild must surely have often mistaken our dwelling as part of her abode. I was impelled to carry out Nature's own colour scheme, and so I chose green, a soft green with a slight tinge of grey in it for the great expanse of asbestos ceiling in our bedroom. This colour was extended to the wide frieze where a dark wood picture rail separated it from the deep cream walls.

I looked round after my labours were over and found everything good.

"What about it Sunny?", asked my husband one morning, "Aren't you going to Colombo to get all the stuff we want. Sir John will soon be here and you'll still be distempering."

I awoke with a start to the fact that my husband was right. Sir John would indeed be here in less than a month.

My husband had never met Sir John Barlow whose first visit this was to Brae. We only knew that he was the elder of the two brothers who now owned the estate and that he lived in the Manor House of his country seat an estate of several hundred acres in Sand-back on the borders of Cheshire. We had also been told that his wife was a Lady in her own right and that both of them went hunting and rode to hounds and he in spite of his many business activities, was essentially a country squire.

I looked round at the unfinished state of the bungalow the buckets of distemper still lying about the uncurtained windows, the floors that need several coconut husk polishings. Heavens! and the beds had to be ordered curtains bought and sewn, a hundred and one things to be done before we could be ready for the proprietor. I was in danger of being caught not on the wrong foot but with both off the ground. These thoughts flashed across my mind and I panicked!

"I'll go today," I said impulsively. "That's impossible" my husband said, well used to my impetuosity. He was the brake to my Hundred Horse Power energy and enthusiasm. "You haven't even packed!"

"I'll pack now, and I can get away this afternoon. I should not have left it this long I'll begin to pack at once."

"As you like. But don't leave too late. You know I don't like your going all that way alone. I wish we had the Fat Boy. He was a trustworthy driver. We know nothing of Cruz. He has been with us only two weeks and for all his wonderful certificates I prefer to give him my own once over."

The Fat Boy had been my husband's Muslim Chauffeur for several years, but had left owing to ill health. Cruz we knew nothing about. He had recently been engaged on the strength of his certificates only.

I began to pack immediately; but with one thing and another to occupy me I didn't step into the chair till long after the evening horn had called the colliers home.



SHORT STORY

The Vote

Punchirala lifted the mammy onto his shoulder and started walking towards the paddy field. It was not yet dawn and hardly any one was about, only a few other farmers like himself who were on their way to the fields. Though in this bad light, they were hardly discernible, the sight of the fresh young sprouts never failed to fill him with delight.

"To think that the grain that I sowed with my own hand, sprouts like this, then grows to maturity and yields grains in its own turn. What wonder there is in this soil that year in year out goes on producing for us!" Punchirala was a philosopher in his own right and often when he worked in the fields he would be lost in thought. He tended the field like he would his own son, for had it not come down to him for many generations now? No doubt, the size of the fields had gradually decreased with each successive generation, and what was left to him was a very small plot, but he was so proud of it, a true farmer in every sense of the word.

"Your land means more to you than even your family," his wife was often known to complain, for he used to spend almost all his waking hours in the fields and his family had great difficulty in persuading him to leave it for a while to attend some village happening or to visit town. For, when it was too dark to work in the fields, he liked to sit down at home, imbibe something potent and sometimes chat to his friends.

On this particular morning he was ruminating on the vagaries of life, and specially on his son, who had turned out to be a great disappointment to him, and with whom he had had a bitter exchange of words just the previous night. His son's words were like knife-thrusts in his heart. For the young man did not share his father's love for the land. He considered it beneath his dignity to soil his hands working in the fields, for had he not an education, which would enable him to secure a job in an office. This was a continual bone of contention between father and son, the latter preferring to idle

away his time until such time a job was secured, and it was not as though he made very much effort to obtain one! Punchirala blamed his wife for the attitudes the boy had adopted. From his childhood his mother did not want her son to become a farmer and so she discouraged him as much as possible from going to the fields or learning his father's occupation. And so there emerged this finished product called Gamini, who was neither a farmer nor an office worker, with a schooling which left much to be desired and a mental outlook which was unreal, to say the least. He and his companions swelled the ranks of the unemployed who were daily increasing in large numbers.

"No doubt an education is important, but not when it imparts the wrong values to our youngsters. For what are they fit for now? Neither to follow their traditional occupations, nor to work in towns, if they do get a chance! I wish I had insisted on my son working with me since he was a child, then this problem would not have arisen. Besides, who is going to look after the land, when I am no more?"

Hearing an unusual amount of noise and activity Punchirala wondered what all the excitement was about. People were running around all over the place. He was just bending down to his work again when he heard his friend Ukku Banda calling out to him.

"Punchirala, you'd better come quickly. One of the Mahatmayas who is standing for election is distributing free shirts. If you don't hurry, you'll miss it for sure." What do I want a shirt for? Haven't I already got one that I wear when I go to town? Besides, what if I don't vote for him after getting the shirt?"

"Don't be a fool, Punchirala. Do you think every man who gets a shirt is going to vote for him? Leave all your silly scruples behind and come and get it like the rest of us. If you don't need it give it to your son, or even sell it. In any case you can listen to what the Mahatmaya has to say to us. He will probably promise us the very moon!"

So Punchirala allowed himself to be persuaded to go along with his friend to listen to the fiery speech of the politician and receive the bait he had to offer.

Perhaps a week later, Punchirala was once more called by his friend to attend another meeting. He went again to listen to what the previous man's rival had to say. As was expected, he promised them oh! so many things—to alleviate their lot at all costs, give them food in plenty, jobs for all, water for irrigation. There was no end to the list of promises. That evening, followers of the candidate visited all the homes and distributed money. Punchirala was loth to accept it but his family called him a fool and compelled him to take it. Gamini was especially pleased, because he was the proud possessor of two new nylon shirts in addition to extra cash to enable him to visit the local cinema.

From that day, upto election day a large number of canvassers from all sorts of groups, left, right and centre, visited Punchirala's home. People who from the last election to this had not thought of them, let alone thought of visiting them. Punchirala viewed them all with caution, for had he not witnessed six or seven elections in his lifetime and seen what they had achieved?

"Is this all they have to offer us?" he thought to himself. "These empty promises?"

Punchirala's vote was important. So was every other vote in the village. Thus, with dogged persistence, he, and many others like him were wooed by those seeking power.

The day of election dawned and Punchirala went to the polling booth with his usual calm and measured tread. He stood in a queue with the others. He could see the faces of those who had given him the shirt, those who had given him the money and those who had let the alcohol flow—faces full of expectation, suspense optimism and hope written all over them. Some full of confidence, others apprehensive. He looked at them all and laughed within himself. All these faces seemed to speak to him, asking him to remember what they had done and what they hoped to do. When his turn came, he went into the booth received his ballot paper and without any hesitation and to the surprise of all, he tore it into tiny fragments and let them float in the air. They reminded him of the chaff when he winnowed his paddy, but there was nothing

solid like the grain to fall down on the ground. The floating fragments represented the drifting away of all his dreams, hopes, ambitions and especially of his anticipation of the future.

Vinodini



Inania of this, that and the other

Deck Chairs On The Titanic

By INNA

I met my christian on the road. No deck-chairs for him. I mean, no deck-chair arranging on the Titanic. The Titanic, he said, went down with its people and its men. Arrange the deck-chairs left, right, or centre, it would have gone down all the same, he hissed. Even if you had put the chairs upside down or downside up, it would have been all the same. The iceberg would have downed it. Downed it, it did.

My vehement christian had had enough of those who still persisted in giving a wet, velvety icy-choc to shut the mouth of the liner-room baby that shouted for some food, real, good, nutritious food, enough and succulent as at the bungalow above. The icy-choc shut the mouth, but soon the others had to shut their ears, for the fellow howled again, legitimately and loudly.

These things you must do, but not let the others go undone, says the Gospelbook. Lunch packets must be given, but root-causes of why I can give 200 lunch packets between Head-office hours, when 200 can only be at the receiving end, must be probed. The dynamite of the Gospel is enough for such a probing operation. I saw a hand-cart loaded with *kehel-kola* lunch-packets on the day christians call holy Thursday. The same hand-cart with the same man pushing it, passed me at the same coastline town last Christmas day. It was entering a church-yard where the singing had been loud and long, the choir stall belching with song and psalm. Hundred packets this time. This was real, superb chris-

tianity, to feed the hungry. This was IT. My reflecting christian too was present, and he brought me down to earth with a swift: "how grand if each of those receiving a packet had had enough to give three others and feel happy". True. I too thought so. Others have thought so. If christianity centres around Food and Drink Shared, it is telling us loudly: "This is what the world must do and what the world is forgetting to do. Food means life, and beyond that, the quality of life." The Gospel is the constant blaring, insistent, cutting reminder (sword-like!) of this truth. One out of all Benedictine Contemplatives, (a monk closer to the truth than most monks I've known), reminds us: "When people lose a shared interpretation of the world they tend to retreat into their castles or their homes or their property and to seek security again in possessions". (Thomas Cullinan, OSB, Roots of Social Injustice p.8).

My christian let's call him Our christian, for he truly belonged to all when he showed me this, then pointed this out to me:

"Not alms but justice: The Church today vigorously demands not so much alms from what is superfluous on the table of the rich but a more just distribution of the earth's goods. Why should only a few people eat the choicest delicacies, while the great majority go to bed hungry?"

That, he said, was from the fearless Brazilian Bishops' Conference and its appeal to the People of God, Rio de Janeiro, oct. 25, 1976! I never knew, I said that there were fearful bishops and fearless bishops, to which he had no immediate answer, but the upshot of his rambling performance thereafter was this: there are bishops and bishops. Some stick to the Gospel and get killed in the process, get insulted, ridiculed, ostracized, marginalized and more "Christified" (I found his word most apposite), while others just hug the coast, and use the least upsetting of programmes, meaning, Peace at any price. Don't upset the show. Let it smoothly sail along, the barque of Peter with unruffled sail. But, if we are not used to the proper type of, and attitude to conflict, we are not doing Christ's work. Finding enemies is a by-product of the faith. We have taken the stallion

and "got hold of it and domesticated it into a sort of riding-school pony; but the Gospel really is a stallion that cannot be domesticated", says the same diamond-like monk of the OSB's, Cullinan, in the same brochure, quoted above. Christ's Gospel, our christian said: Just will not allow you to rearrange the deck-chairs on the Titanic, it surely will not.

* * *

LETTER

• Christian Cremation?

Sir,

There is an amount of uneasiness creeping into the minds of certain sections of the christian community over the ever increasing desire of "some christians" to have 'willed' or their kith and kin desiring the moral remains of their dear departed be "cremated". This has caused a fear, some perplexity and has "shaken" the very foundation of their "creed", which they have faithfully upheld by often repeating "the resurrection of the body and life ever lasting"; now they are tempted to ask— "where will the body be if on earth itself it is reduced to ashes!!!!

A few of us know that at the "spiritual resurrection" the body can be from any substance, but it is not so with the "orthodox christians". Will some one in authority and qualified to speak on this subject of "cremation" appease the troubled minds of those who are now on the verge of losing "faith".

A. S. C. Knight

Bandarawela.
12th June, 1977

NEXT WEEK

- POSTPONE ELECTIONS THREAT
- ELECTION ZIGZAGS
- UNP AND TAMILS
- IMPORTS SCANDALS

Confidentially

- Police Grievances
- Singapore Purchases

IS IT NOT A FACT that eyebrows in high places were raised when the entire police force in the Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya region staged a "sick-note" protest not so long ago? That this action, (virtually a strike) so unbecoming of a state security service, was no doubt the outcome of the "last straw" that broke the camel's back? That, after Nuwara Eliya, police officers have begun to talk more openly about their grievances? That the one major grievance every police officer repeats *ad nauseam* is that they have become the playthings of politicians? That they are called upon to do things they shouldn't do and also desist from doing things they should? That instance after instance of interference and worse are now being trotted out by police officers when they get a chance to air their grievances? That one of the most interesting of such a grievance comes from the top brackets of the service? That it would appear that twenty-six police officers were appointed as "temporary" S.Ps (Superintendents of Police) from July to September 1976 for duty at the time of the Nonaligned Conference? That after September, these officers had reverted to their earlier rank? That it is admitted that the 26 were selected by a Board which had scrutinised the claims of aspirants fairly and impartially? That no one had a grievance as to how the 26 were selected? That a grievance had developed when 5 of the 26 were made "permanent" S.Ps as from January 1977? That the grumble is that these five were picked out without a Board of Selection? That this had naturally caused a great deal of talk and heart-burning? That this grievance had begun to snowball? That to everybody's surprise, shortly after the Nuwara Eliya episodes, the 21 have been once again made "temporary" S.Ps till November this year? That this elevation to

the rank of "temporary" S.Ps has temporarily defused a difficult situation that was building in the top brackets of the Police Force? That what is stated here is based on "talk" among responsible police officers? That if we have missed anything or stated anything that needs to be corrected, Tribune will be happy to publish the same?

IS IT NOT A FACT that UNP's *The Journal* has turned over a new journalistic leaf in the last fortnight? That it has stopped its smear campaign to assassinate the character of particular individuals? That it has stopped flogging the dead horse that is Lake House? That it has also now developed the capability of criticising leading SLFP spokesmen without resorting to coldwar baiting and abuse? That *The Journal* had an excellent expose of some recent textile purchases by a government organisation? That *The Journal* of June 17 raised some specific questions about the "Rs 40 million purchase of textiles by a State organisation for distribution during the Sinhala and Tamil New year in April"? That the following were the questions raised: "were world wide tenders called for by the purchasing organisation prior to placing orders? was a Tender Board appointed for the purpose? is it not the usual practice to appoint a Tender Board to approve and scrutinise both local and foreign purchases? If these steps were not taken, as they should have been, why? is it true that two of the biggest contracts were awarded to two private firms in Singapore and that their prices were in no way competitive when compared with world market prices prevailing at that time? is it correct that the Soviet Union, which was prepared to supply any quantity of printed fabrics of 36" width at 0.36 US dollar per yard and received an order for only 530,000 yards? but that one of the private firms Bulsing Private Ltd of Singapore received a contract for some 3 million yards of fabric which was only 30" in width and the price paid was 0.40 US dollar per yard less $\frac{1}{4}$ percent? that this was the item of fabric which consumers complained about as it was both short in width and was of inferior quality? is it correct that the prices paid to Bulsing Private Ltd., Hongkong Dyeing and Weaving Mills, Singapore and other private firms from which purchases were made, are higher than the

prices to more popular and acceptable brands such as 'Jumping Fish' and 'Green Peony' Blue Line Poplin supplied by the People's Republic of China under the bi-lateral trade agreement? is it correct that the Bulsing Private Ltd. is only a collecting agency which exports stock-lots available at any given time in the Singapore market? is it correct that some of the consignments sent by Bulsing Private Ltd. still had the country of origin such as 'Made in Punjab', 'Made in USSR' etc still marked on the bales? is it correct that the State organisation has paid to Bulsing Private Ltd. 0.44 $\frac{1}{2}$ US dollar per yard for the same variety of printed fabric that had been offered at 0.36 US dollar per yard by EXPORTIJON, USSR? is it correct that if worldwide tenders had been called for this country could have imported the textiles directly from the manufacturers at cheaper prices than have now been paid to the middlemen, the two Singapore firms?."

IS IT NOT NECESSARY for the Government, or the State organisation concerned, to issue a statement either to deny the assertions made in *The Journal* or to answer the questions raised? That in any case an explanation is called for? That in this connection it will be pertinent to point out that Tribune has on many occasions pointed out that our officials and state organisations have an insatiable penchant for buying from the Singapore market, often without tenders? That Tribune has in recent years spotlighted the purchase of bottles for the Milk Board from Singapore? That more recently tins for Lakspray were also ordered from Singapore? That Australian wheat flour has been purchased in the Singapore market? That canned fish from Japan is bought from Singapore? That whilst no one can object to buying in Singapore which is one of the greatest centres in Asia (and even the world), it is essential that such purchases should be on the basis of tenders to obtain the cheapest prices for comparable goods? That it would be interesting to prepare a list of Sri Lankans and their friends who have visited Singapore in recent times? That it is known that some of the biggest deals have been put through by Sri Lankan private "gentlemen brokers" who are friends of officials in charge of purchases?



For All Your Requirements
Of Paper

Manufacturer's Of
Monitor's Exercise Books, Drawing Books, Account Books,
C. R. Books Etc., Etc.

Globe Industries

95, Peer Saibo Street,

Colombo-12.

Telephone: 3 2 9 9 2

Printed and Published by S. P. Amarasingam, for Tribune Publications at Tribune Printers
at 43, Dawson Street, Colombo-2. on July 2, 1977.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Retain Your
Original Documents
And Submit

**EXTRA COPIES
OF**

LETTERS
CERTIFICATES
DEEDS
INVOICES
PLANS
SURVEY DRAWINGS
BOOKS

**Rapid Service
with
Latest Photocopying Equipment**

STUDIO TIMES

TIMES BUILDING
COLOMBO-1.
TEL: 21331