

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES IN GOVERNMENT REGULATING THE MEAT TRADE AND ENDING MALPRACTICES AND CRUELTY IN CATTLE SLAUGHTER

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The latter half of his career was in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs from its inception in 1966 until its lead ministry position was eroded during 1977-78 when planned economic development ceased to be of importance. He retired early in 1979 to work overseas. Besides his substantive duties as an Agricultural Economist in the Ministry of Planning, one of several sub-sectors of the economy he had overview charge was the 'Livestock and Dairying Sub-Sectors'.

1.0 Introduction: The Butchers Ordinance:

THE Butchers Ordinance No.9¹ was enacted by the British Colonial Government in 1893. Its basic objective was consumer protection. Its perspectives and fundamental content has remained inviolate for a 100 years, but for the revision in 1956 published in the Legislative Enactments Vol. X (1960) and forms the basis on which Municipal By-Laws and By-Laws of all Local Authorities have been framed in order to operate and supervise slaughter houses and the act of slaughter of animals for meat and to have animals inspected for good health prior to slaughter by veterinary officers of

the Local Authorities. After slaughter the carcasses are inspected again and certified wholesome and free of disease by affixing the stamp of the Local Authorities before the carcasses are sent to the meat stalls. The by-laws provide for the renting and operation of meat stalls in public market places. The Public Health Inspectors supervise the hygienic conditions and sale of meat properly inspected and stamped.

2.0 The Animals act of 1958²⁰

The latter half of the 1950's was an agrarian revolution to uplift the poor rural farming communities. Whereas the Butchers Ordinance was to protect consumers, the Animals

Act No. 29 of 1958 was enacted to protect farmers and livestock owners and has objectives of development perspectives. "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1958 was enacted to enforce compassion for animals in keeping with Sri Lanka's cultural and Buddhist heritage.

The supply of animals for slaughter governed by the Animals Act and the Regulations in the Government Gazette Extra-ordinary No. 13268 of 20.08.1962 which remains in force but for the amendment of one word in 1964. While this Act seeks to ensure that healthy and disease free animals are supplied for meat, it was framed by the Government with much more profound objectives. That is, the Act seeks to eradicate malpractices in the trade and even more importantly to prevent the slaughter of female calves and heifers, pregnant animals and cows in milk, valuable breeding stock such as stud bulls of good breeds, and specifically buffaloes, with the objective of saving productive animals vital for the rural economy, farm communities, paddy cultivation and milk production.

The Act has extensive provisions for castration of animals unfit for breeding, operating Stud Centres and Artificial Insemination Centres. These functions were the responsibility of the Veterinary Surgeons.

This study seeks to bring to the notice of the concerned authorities and the public the remedial measures in the Statute Book enacted many years ago but seemingly swept under the carpet, which will resolve not only the vexed issue of 'inhuman and cruel' method of cattle slaughter being debated in the press for the last 10 months or so, but also remedies for the connected aspects of widespread cruelty in the transport, handling and holding of animals for slaughter, the killing of calves by dairymen to increase profits, from sale of milk and the slaughter of pregnant animals. The act of slaughter itself is only the tip of the iceberg. Coterminous with this act is illicit slaughter and sale of beef which exceeds recorded licenced slaughter and a danger to public health. Transgressing the law is one thing. But private gain thereby by concerned authorities is a bigger issue to be remedied. The socio economic imperatives transcend beyond the meat market across the length and breadth of the country impacting on two million or so owning about 03 million cattle and buffaloes of which the rural farmers and peasantry well below the national poverty line derive small additions to incomes from sale of milk, draft and animals, several hundreds of thousands of skilled and labour grades derive a livelihood engaged in the dairy industry and the processing and sale of milk products and meat products in the livestock feed industries and in the export of hides and skins.

Although the debate in the press started with addressing the issue of cruel and brutal method of cattle slaughter in unhygienic and dilapidated slaughter sheds under license of Local Authorities and the killing of pregnant cows and widespread illicit slaughter, it strayed into considerable acrimony, bigotry and hypocrisy by rabid extremists of various persuasions treading on religious and ethnic sensitivities. The protagonists for the cause kept on calling on the Government to take action to clean up this mess. The former Minister of Cultural Affairs and Information banned meat products advertising on TV. The ban was scrapped by the Govt. three months later. The laws and regulations framed from time to time such as the Butchers Ordinance Revision of 1956 and the Cruelty to Animals Act Revision of 1958 and other relevant laws have been identified and examined.

Finally, the hypocrisy in the debate of cruelty and brutality in slaughtering other livestock such as hundreds of thousands of goats, sheep, pigs, million of chicken and multi-million tons of fish and the barbarism in cutting up live turtle, dolphin and dugong are placed in correct perspective. Remedial measures to end this mess and terminate this debate are recommended.

Besides, the Veterinary Surgeon is responsible for issuing certificates for male animals fit for breeding and such animals cannot be sold for slaughter until the Veterinary Surgeon issues a fresh certificate cancelling the previous when an animal ceases to be fit for breeding.

The Act also devolved specific responsibilities on Veterinary Surgeons, former Divisional Revenue Officers (now Divisional Secretaries) and on Grama Sevaka Niladharis. For example, animals purchased for slaughter cannot be transported unless certified by the Veterinary Surgeon of the area to the effect that,

the animals are not within any of the above mentioned categories prohibited from slaughter and are disease free and also from an area where no contagious diseases are prevalent at the time, reference Part II of the Act Section (2), (3) and Part I (20) to (32). And upon production of such certificate the D. R. O. will issue a permit after verifying ownership from Brand Marks' to enable the animal to be moved across divisional boundaries. That is, the permit to transport the animal. And only upon production of this permit, should Railway Authorities provide waggons for transport and lorries undertake transport.

The Animals Act also devolved responsibility on the Government Agent to ensure that the D.R.O. and GSN carried out branding of animals to identify ownership and maintain records of numbers. And only on ownership being established could vouchers for transport be issued. This was to prevent theft and illicit transport of animals to curb illicit slaughter. It is no secret that this elaborate system of branding and cattle registers could not be achieved because Grama Sevakas are from outside their areas of work, have multifarious duties and are least concerned with animal movements and livestock. The corollary to this Act was the "Meat Board" proposed in the Agricultural Development Proposals of 1958^(M) and draft legislation was prepared in 1960, which was intended to implement effectively the Animals Act.

The Agricultural Development Proposals of 1958 of the Ministry of Agriculture was the first document to deal comprehensively with the subject, record illicit slaughter and abuses in the trade and recommend a Statutory Board and Regional Slaughter Houses as remedial measures. But the Board was not established.

3.0 The National Livestock Development Board

Ten years later the need for a 'Meat Board' surfaced again. Government appointed a joint expert committee of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food resulting in proposals to set up a livestock board in a report titled "Meat Production and Marketing in Ceylon" (1969)^(M). The Writer was the Ministry of Planning Member on this committee and its convener. The Committee recommended the establishment of the Meat Board but titled Animal Husbandry Board. Three years later, the next Government

implemented the proposals and established the National Livestock Development Board (NLDB),^(M)(1973). The incorporated functions are set out ahead.

The Board was gazetted on 4th May 1973 under the State Agricultural Corporations Act No. 11 of 1972.

The Cabinet of Minister's approved on 3rd April 1974 by Cabinet Paper No. 345/71 an authorised capital of Rs. 88 million including a foreign exchange component of Rs. 27 million which the Danish Government (DANIDA) picked up for the Abattoir Project. DANIDA appointed M. E. Wernberg A/S Consultants of Copenhagen to prepare the Abattoir Project in terms of the Country's total meat requirements and also support the livestock and dairy development programmes implement and operate within the Government's laws and regulations such as the Animals Act of 1958, the Cruelty to Animals Act, Butcher's Ordinance and Municipal By-Laws, and fit into the rural socio-economic culture and ethnic and religious sensitivities. All the hot topics of the ongoing debate were dealt - with the cruel method of slaughter, cruelty in transport and handling, unhygienic conditions, slaughter of prohibited categories such as pregnant animals, cows in milk, calves and illicit slaughter and illicit beef in stalls. The Wholesale Butchers fraternity which control the trade, after consultation with their religious hierarchy agreed to undertake Halal slaughter under controlled modern technological conditions by which all animals will be stunned before slaughter out of sight of other animals etc.

The NLDB was specifically empowered to implement effectively the "Animals Act No. 29 of 1958 specifically to save productive female and breeding animals to promote dairy development and rural livestock development and the 'Cruelty to Animals Act' in the sale, trans-

port and holding of animals for slaughter.

By the end of 1975 designs were ready for three(3) major modern abattoirs in high meat consumption areas and three (3) medium ones in provinces and contracts signed with the Foreign Consultants to program the construction program and commence the procurement and fabrication of plant, machinery, railway trucks, refrigerated meat trucks etc.

4.0 The Abattoir Project of NLDB

In keeping with the incorporated functions of the NLDB gazetted on 4th May 1973 its 'Investment and Development Programme' of 1st August 1973^(M) approved by the Cabinet of Ministers comprised (3) major modern abattoirs for the high meat consumption Western Zone and (3) medium modern abattoirs for the North and East supported by 50 Purchasing Centres and 18, 200 acres of Holding Grounds. N.E. Wernberg A/S Consultants, Copenhagen, provided an Expert under the DANIDA line of aid for 1973-74 to prepare the programmes. The estimated capital cost was Rs. 48.81 million local cost and Rs. 23.42 million foreign cost.

The chief objectives were:

To be the sole authority for the slaughter of beef and mutton animals in the country and thereby ensure:-

(a) use of human methods of slaughter notwithstanding employing Lebbes for Halal slaughter:

(b) eliminate the slaughter of prohibited categories of animals in the Animals Act of 1958 and therefore save productive animals and stem the decline in the national herds of cattle, buffalo and goats and sheep and help in generating dairy development and the mutton industry:

(c) eliminate the malpractices and abuses in the sale and purchase of animals for beef and the abuses and cruelty in the transport of animals: and

(d) provide wholesome and clean meat carrying health certificates to licenced market stalls of Local Authorities and packeted most to other frozen food retailers.

Thus the butchers retail trade business and the income of Local Authorities were to remain inviolate.

5.0 Abattoir Project Abandoned and by-laws Set Aside

In 1977 the govt. cancelled the "Abattoir Project" and set aside the incorporated functions of the National Livestock Development Board and made it into a mini JEDB type of estate management agency with livestock raising as a side line. Progressively the 'Animals Act of 1956' and the 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1958' fell into disuse. In 1981 a dispensation was given to the Colombo^(M) Municipal Veterinary Department to over-ride Chapter XII Rule (36) of the CMC By-Laws which forbids sale of meat within Colombo City limits the meat of animals slaughtered outside Colombo M.C. limits. Thus beef carcasses brought in from anywhere to the CMC slaughter house at Dematagoda was stamped (supposedly after Veterinary inspection) at a cost of Rs. 0.12cts per kg. and permitted to be sold in the city meat stalls.

This was of course a time of massive changes. liberalising and opening the economy and bestowing 'Lead Sector Status on the Private Sector'. With the transfer of total power from the legislature to Executive Presidency, powerful positions lower down were emasculated such as the established order of public sector accountability. 'F.R.' and 'P.R.' were defanged, 'PSC' and 'JSC' were rigor mortised, and scores of enactments on the

statute books were cast aside. The incorporated functions of the National Livestock Development Board were one of those casualties. Now with hind sight it is seen that one ostensible purpose was to give the private sector meat trade the freedom of the 'Wild Ass'. Then later came the above mentioned dispensation to the CMC Veterinary Department to over-ride the By-Laws. There were two vested interests against the NLDB's incorporated functions in respect of the meat trade, for two entirely different reasons. One the pro-government butchers lobby which was very powerful at the time. The other the Animal Production and Health Department which from the inception of the NLDB opposed its functions related to the meat trade claiming exclusive privilege ie. veterinary private practice.

The result is evident today. The public outcry for nearly a year against the cruel and brutal handling of cattle before and at slaughter, the rampant illicit meat trade, the slaughter of pregnant females and other classes of cattle and buffaloes prohibited in the Animals Act and the various malpractices even endangering public health. Less evident are the even more serious repercussions. While the powerful private sector companies in the meat processing trade are amassing wealth, the rural farming communities and the hundreds of thousands of small dairy farmers are losing progressively the long established cattle and buffaloes integrated crops and means of livelihood. The decline of dairying in the country is disastrous. Once again it is only the powerful private sector companies which are benefitting. They are amassing massive multi-million profits from the ever increasing milk and milk product imports. For example in the Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics 1991-1992 produced by the office of the Minister for Livestock Development & Milk Production, Peradeniya, (Table 2.4) shows that all milk collection in 1992

dropped to 56.8 million litres ie. 23% from the previous years 73 million litres. In fact milk production from the small farmers sector is reflected in (Table 2.9) collection by Cooperative Societies & Dairy Producer Associations. Collection which was 25.7 million litres in 1988 dropped 41% to 15.2 million litres by 1992.

6.0 Indication of Illicit Slaughter by Private Sector

According to the 'Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics 1991/92' of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and

Socio-Economic Survey of 1986-87^(a) beef consumption was estimated at 24.12 billion kg. The Census & Statistics Department^(a) estimated beef consumption at 27.54 million kg. Since illicit and unrecorded slaughter is well established as **more than double recorded slaughter** beef consumption in these statistics are conceivably grossly underestimated. More importantly the extent of illicit slaughter which is obvious which provides opportunity for all the abuses and malpractices in the trade. This is what the debate in the press for the last 10 months is all about.

Table 1

YEAR	TOTAL ADMITTED (Av. number)	ANNUAL SLAUGHTER FEMALES			ANNUAL REJECTIONS	
		Total females	of which European Pure Breeds	of which European Cross Breeds	Helpers	Pregnant
1973 (7 mths)	?	8869	524	1006	2284	597
1974	163 per day	11377	223	434	1164	672
1975	195 per day	10597	32	154	963	861

Table 2

	Cattle		Goats		Sheep		Pigs	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
Alawwa	500	420	500	420	75	60		
Katugastota	250	200	200	180	-	-		
Katukurunda	50	40	50	40	-	-		
Total/day Nos	800	670	750	640	75	60		
Total meat/day (kg)	54,000	45,000	6750	5760	3375	2700		
Animals/year (350) days	280,000	234,000	262,500	224,000	26,250	210,000		

NOTE: Maximum is abattoir capacity.
Minimum required for factory efficiency

Research (December 1992)^(a) beef consumption on the basis of records of cattle slaughtered in public slaughter houses of Local Authorities dropped sharply from 13.64 million kg in the mid 1980s to 10.52 million kg by 1989 and 1990. In this period no buffalo slaughter is recorded. In contrast on the basis of the 'Central Bank's Consumer Finances and

Cruel method of slaughtering cattle, cruelty in transport of cattle, illicit slaughter and illicit meat in city meat stalls, **no veterinary supervision** of slaughter houses and slaughter and slaughter of illegal categories of animals such as pregnant animals and calves.

7.0 Gal Gava Mithuro

The disastrous results of this laissez faire policy of the Government has been highlighted by several writers in the press in the last 10 months. Gal Gava Mithuro writing in 'The Island' on 4.12.92 and 28.12.92 ^(xii) observes as follows:

- (1) In the Colombo Municipal Abattoir about 50-60 cattle are slaughtered a day (ie. about 4000-5000 kg), but the city beef stalls sell 15,000 to 20,000 kg. per day indicating the extent of illicit beef being sold. (figures in parenthesis by the Writer. He also verified the above slaughter figures from the CMC Chief V.S. and found the figures were correct).
- (2) 'It is a well known fact that consideration of monetary gain is the prime cause for the cruel and inhumane, indiscriminate slaughter of a large number of animals, among them milch cows, calves, pregnant heifers, cart bulls, buffaloes, etc. Corporate bodies that flood the market with processed packeted meat obtain their meat requirements from untrained, unscrupulous butchers. Also the meat requirements for hotels from 1 star to 5 star that cater to foreign businessmen and tourists who in the majority are from developed countries, are also obtained from the same cruel sources'.
- (3) "The indiscriminate large scale slaughter has resulted in the decimation of the much valued agriculturally useful buffaloes and cattle population. Unlike in other countries, here animals are not bred for slaughter and those slaughtered are domesticated animals brought to abattoirs in towns and suburbs from the countryside and villages and constitute the backbone of our agro-economic culture and traditions and source of rural income; thereby

affecting agriculture and the economy of the country".

- (4) "The Director of Dairy Production and Health (Department) was reported in the Island last year to have said that unauthorised beef was being brought from the outstations and sold with the seal of the Municipal Health Unit".
- (5) "The carcasses of animals that invariably end up dead during transport are mixed with the meat of animals slaughtered in filthy, nauseating, unhygienic government approved slaughter houses and polluted paddy fields, streams and rivers in the vicinity by the residual discards, which are a grave health hazard".
- (6) "Slaughter is not supervised regularly by the Local Authorities. There is no regular inspection of animals before slaughter. It is only after animals are slaughtered that the flesh is given the stamp of the local authority. Therefore it is possible at any time meat supplied to the local markets could be from diseased animals".

8.0 Contaminated Beef

At the time of writing (July 1993), Gal Gava Mithuro's warning seems to be vindicated. In the Island of 14th July 1993 a news item from the MRI warned of some beef in city stall found to have pathogens harmful for consumption. The Colombo Municipal Veterinary Department issued a statement to the effect that no beef through its Dematagoda abattoir inspected and stamped was unwholesome, **but consumers were alerted not to buy illicit beef from stalls in the city which had no certificate.**

9.0 Debate on the Cruelty in the Slaughter of Cattle

In about November last year, Dr. C. Godamune of Kandy in a letter to

the press raised the issue of the cruel method adopted in the slaughter of cattle in the Kandy slaughter house, the unhygienic conditions and related issues. He had several letters in the press thereafter. Obviously it was in good faith and no axe to grind against religion nor race nor meat consumers. Being a devout Buddhist and a deeply compassionate person his plea has been to save animals from the slaughter house and gain merit by putting them to pasture on vacant properties to eventually die of old age. It is axiomatic that the good doctor's proposal is only possible on a small scale. but impractical on any large scale considering the national development issues involved and the fact that about 500,000 cattle and buffaloes are slaughtered each year from a population of about three million animals multiplying at a similar rate in a small country constrained by land for the needs of an increasing population. Cattle, buffalo, goats, sheep, wild elephants and wild buffalo compete for land in a developing small country in a big way.

10.0 Acrimonious Debate

Dr. D. P. Athukorale ^(xiii) and Gal Gava Mithuro ^(xiv) took up the case and in long articles in the press in November and December 1992, launched their crusade demanding that the Government step in and stop the 'cruel and inhuman method of cattle slaughter practised by Muslim Butchers' and make it mandatory in slaughter houses to stun the animal senseless by using a "percussion belt or belt pistol" as practised around the world, before severing the blood vessels in the neck, in order that bleeding the animal accomplished in this "Halal" method which is mandatory in Islam. Unfortunately this entirely laudable cause was swallowed up in the long drawn out acrimonious public debate for the last ten (10) months which has become an ethnic and religious confrontation sparing neither religious sensitivities nor others unconnected

with the issue such as Buddhist priests, Christians and Jews. The chief protagonists Dr. Athukorale and Gal Gava Mithuro have kept the pot boiling as it were by periodic mis-sives in the press, generating rousing responses from dozens of antagonists followed by those supporting the protagonists, followed by rejoinders from antagonists and so on. For those who want a ring side seat to a brutal description of gruesome slaughter with sound effects of groaning animals garnished with blood, urine, bull shit and even tears of animals, read the description of the chief protagonists during November and December 1992 which created all the unnecessary hiatus.

The main cause has been lost by the acrimony which could have been avoided if one of the newspapers in the island which has consistency for the last ten months provided space for this debate had been more circumspect and impartial in supporting the cause, and not permitted space for racial and anti-religious bigotry at a time, when every one should be striving for racial, ethnic and religious tolerance and harmony.

11.0 Hypocrisy of Cattle Slaughter Syndrome

Anything can be taken out of context and made into a crusade by self-righteous bigots. The cattle slaughter protagonists have surrounded the issue with hypocrisy by failing to recognise the larger issues and ignoring the equally cruel method of slaughtering buffaloes, sheep and pig sticking. Cruelty in the act of slaughter is only the tip of the iceberg. That is cruelty from the seller all the way to slaughter. The gruesome descriptions by the chief protagonists failed to describe the worse fate of buffaloes which are entirely slaughtered illicitly and not only by Muslim butchers, because of the ban on buffalo slaughter. The chief protagonists ignored the larger eyed terror in the eyes of goats and sheep on

the block and squealing of terrified pigs in agony when the sharp metal rod is plunged to the heart. Millions of chicken have their necks pulled and throats slit. Isn't this a multi-racial activity? What about the barbarism in this country of cutting up live dolphin, dugong and turtle? Is there anything more cruel than cutting up live dolphin, dugong and turtle? All the writers crying out loud against the cruelty in the slaughter of cattle by Muslim butchers have been totally unconcerned and silent about the cruelty in the slaughter of all these other animals and birds largely by non-Muslims. In fact the majority of buffaloes and cattle illicitly slaughtered within about 50 miles radius from Colombo are not only by Muslim butchers. Which community owns and sells the largest number of cattle and buffaloes for slaughter. Surely the majority community by virtue of the larger proportional representation.

A first step is to prevent the sale of pregnant cows and calves. Who sells these animals? Largely rural farmers and mudalalis in the provinces who own cattle and dairy farmers in the Coconut Triangle and Hill Country, the majority being Sinhalese/Buddhists and some estate Tamils (Hindus & Christians). The large free roaming cattle herds in the dry zones NWP, NCP, Eastern Province and Southern Province are owned by all communities, the Eastern herds being largely owned by Muslims. Buffalo ownership is predominantly by Sinhalese Buddhists. Those who have been involved in dairy development have faced the serious economic problems of many dairy farmers starving to death valueless because religion prohibits their killing. Cattle raising is business. In 1975, it was reported that 10,000 calves of valuable European Dairy Breeds (off previous imported cows) were thus lost every year in the Hill Country alone⁴⁰.

Here is an apt comment from The

Island' Editorial of 17th December 1992:

"It echoed the views of several writers that the best way to reduce the number slaughtered is to give up eating meat. It says: "There is no way one can change the world. There is no way one can change other peoples tastes and eating habits. But one can change one's own. It does not help if one says that one does not kill but only eats meat that has already been killed. One contributes to the killing as long as one eats meat. The truly compassionate and virtuous are those who refrain from all harmful action. Not those who preach virtue to others."

Mr. Dharmadasa Wijemanne of Colombo 8, did also echo similar sentiments and recently on 21.08.93 in 'The Island' he follows up a recommendation by Dr. B. S. N. Senanayake of Colombo 7 that the Buddhist-Hindu Maha Sabha promote "say no to beef". I would take this recommendation one step further by suggesting that the Buddha Sasana Ministry, silent up to now, set out to stop Buddhists consuming every kind of flesh, meat, fish and fowl. And monks must use bana preaching sessions to do likewise. After all a large proportion of the population which consume beef, chicken and fish in this country are Sinhalese Buddhist. As an example the Hindus by conviction and religion don't touch beef in as much as the Muslims don't touch pork. So why not Buddhists?

Then again Gal Gava Mithuro in 'The Island' of 4th December 1992 says,

"Animals slaughtered for food in Sri Lanka have become the victims of religious chauvinism and hypocrisy. Not only the hypocrisy of the Muslims but of the Buddhists as well. The hypocrisy of Buddhists who make utterances about compassion to animals but whose greatest concession

so far towards liberating animals from cruelty is the ban on slaughter on Poya days, while not minding the cruelty the day before or after".

12.0 Religious Bigotry

Some bigotted racialsists have had a field day. Islam was slandered and allegations levelled at the Muslim community and not restricted to the butchers. They have had to rise to defend their faith. Even the history of the Christian Bible has been desecrated in the Island of the 3rd August 1993 under title "Slaughter in Christianity". In as much as Biblical history and precepts in the quran were debated, Buddhist priests eating meats, fish and indeed beef was discussed by several writers, Sinhala Buddhists included.

According to M.J. Fernando and M. Tilak both of Colombo 3, writing in the Island of 28.5.93, it seems that the Buddha did not ban meat eating even by Devadattas.

During this long acrimonious debate demanding the Government to step in and stop the cruel method of slaughter neither policy maker, line Ministry bureaucrat, local authority, private sector meat industrialist, enactments administrators and veterinary surgeon's department from where animals are sourced for slaughter nor the Colombo Municipal Veterinary Department which has been highlighted, has chosen to say no word.

The incorporated functions of the National Livestock Development Board were swept under the carpet and it was converted to a sort of mini JEDB has been mentioned before in Sections 3.0 to 5.0 when at the same time in 1978 the Animal Production and Health Divisions of the Department of Agriculture was vested with independent status as a separate department. There were vested interests in the AP & H Department which did not want the NLDB tres-

"We live in a much more brutal society than we ever did & there are types of behaviour which people consider wholly unacceptable. Cruelty to animals is one aspect of that bigger problem. If you don't treat people with respect then you are unlikely to treat animals with respect.....

..... Owning a pet is a right that people have but with it comes a responsibility to behave properly to look after it. I would have thought that there was a fairly compelling case that where as owner of pet has been found guilty of cruelty or neglect that they should not be entitled to own one again.....

..... Education is important in the family, in the school and in the broader society. Bringing kids up to like pets & to have a regard for them is good for them generally. It teaches them the right type of value"

TONY BLAIR - (Laboce shadow Home Secretary)
(Courtesy: Animal life - Autumn 1993)

passing on what it claimed was its exclusive privileged functions such as managing State Livestock Farms (10 in number) and Veterinary practice. However the NLDB itself was vested with over 18,057 acres of prime coconut estates during 1973 and 1974 for its abattoir program and Livestock projects and imported cattle from India, Pakistan, and Holland. In January 1993 the (8) major farms of the AP & H Department was transferred to the NLDB with all its imported and farm bred dairy cattle. The excuse given was that the department could not manage the farms efficiently. But not long after, the NLDB not only advertised prime cattle for sale but also called for private sector participation to privatise some of its major livestock farms.

A quote from the Island editorial of 16.2.93^(a) will place these shady deals in proper perspective.

"The NLDB has advertised for sale culled cattle in eight farms, as many 250 animals in one farm, 200 in another and lesser number in the others. All culled cattle. With so many culled animals it would seem that these farms have been rearing mostly for the butcher; the Livestock Development Board has apparently not been doing much livestock development. There has been no advertise-

ments announcing the sale of breedable cattle, which is what the NLDB should have been doing to live up to its name.

If the NLDB has not deliberately been rearing for the butcher, it could only mean that the rearing has been so neglectful that the animals are not fit for breeding and are fit only for slaughter. The NLDB should have been breeding and developing good breedable cattle to improve the stock with the dairy farmers so that the nation would eventually have been self-sufficient in milk. But perhaps we are wrong. That has evidently not been the intention. There are always the transnational corporations waiting to supply our needs".

13.0 Government Role

Government has a Ministry to promote Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development supported by several Provincial Council subject Ministries, several departments engaged in research and providing veterinary and other services to promote livestock development, statutory authorities and Government farms breeding and multiplying livestock for issue to farmers, thousands of staff are trained in these subjects in our Universities and foreign Universities for employment in

the Ministries and departments, and every year Government allocate several hundreds of millions of rupees through the annual budget and negotiated foreign aid to further develop livestock production in Sri Lanka because animal protein and milk are accepted as vital for the health of the nation, apart from employment and livelihood sustained by millions. Moreover about 150 Authorities derive income from the meat trade, from renting meet stalls and licensing the slaughter and sale of meat. Part of Government revenue is obtained from taxes on individuals and businesses raising livestock and from the meat trade and inter-related processing industries and agriculture and land-use, and also from inter-connected import and export duties.

The main focus of this massive investment and livestock promotion programme are the rural farm communities, their livelihood and basic needs. 15,000 village development and Janasaviya were also targeted groups. Some months back 12,000 cows were to be imported for the 15,000 villages projects at a cost exceeding half a billion rupees. From colonial times good breeds of livestock have been imported periodically to improve local breeds of livestock. In the end even for those animals largely on government farms the butcher is the last stop.

Government has promoted dairy development for 50 years, but in the last decade, national milk production has progressively decreased and imports have correspondingly increased and so also the profitability of the multi-nationals and their local agents importing milk and milk products. The erosion of national dairying can thus be attributed to Government policy to encourage the private sector and foreign capitalists. Some end-products of dairying are beef balls, beef sausage and a multi-million export trade in tanned hides and the leather industry including

shoes, slippers, belts, bags etc. Export strategy and foreign capital investment are leading Government policies.

14.0 Government Financed & Sponsored Projects

As an example of the Government hand in the promotion and development of livestock in the country from which the animals and birds eventually end up in the meat market, let me give you ongoing programmes and projects.

Quote from the present Public Investment Programme page 33 ^(xv)

"Sri Lanka imports 70% of its milk requirements. Over the next 10 years the domestic dairy industry will receive the necessary tariff and financial support to correct the present trade imbalance. The industry is to be developed using mainly village based producer co-operatives. Half of the revenues generated by the new tariff policy is to be channelled to field level programmes to assist the dairy farmer through a restructured Dairy Development Foundation. A major breed improvement programme is to be promoted through National Livestock Development Board managed farms and Village level based stock improvement programmes".

The proposed Government Investment for the next five years is Rs. 320.7 millions and the major projects are the following:

- (i) Small farmer integrated livestock project.
- (ii) Heifer calf rearing scheme.
- (iii) Artificial breeding scheme.
- (iv) National Livestock Development Board.
- (v) ADBs 2nd Livestock Development Project.
- (vi) MILCO dairy development programme
- (vii) Control of contagious diseases.

(viii) Fowl Cholera vaccine production.

The Daily News of 6.2.93 reported a news release from the Minister of Agricultural Development & Research that the ADB had made available rupees one billion credit for livestock farms rehabilitation in the districts of Amparai, Puttalam, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

Some of the foreign aided projects are:

- i. Asian Development Bank Second Livestock Development Project, 1993 to 1991, Ref: 606 SRI (SF) Rs. 325,128,000 (loan).
- ii. World Bank Second Dairy Development Project 1985 to 31.12.91. Ref. 2576 CE. Rs. 29,788,525.
- iii. Southern Province Rural Development 1991 to 1999 comprises livestock component. Ref: No. 1128 SRI (SF) Rs. 1643,955,470 in XDR Terms.
- iv. Government of Federal Republic of Germany 1987
 - (a) Goats Development Project Rs. 46,320,250 (grant)
 - (b) Animal Husbandry & Milk Production Rs. 31,945,000 (grant).
- v. Swedish International Development Assistance, Matara I R D P with large component for rural livestock development, I R D P Phase III, 1988 Rs. 104,678,500 (grant).

Imports and gifts of costly heifers of exotic breeds of cattle and buffaloes for the State Livestock Farms of the National Livestock Development Board and Department of Animal Production and Health processed through the External Resources Division of the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs during 1965 to

1978 for breeding and multiplication for issue to dairy farmers from New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Holland, India and Pakistan.

Jersey Heifers 2509; Ayrshire 325; Freisian 846; Shorthorn 132; Hariyana 205; Sahiwal 350; and Murrah Buffalo cows and heifers 2291.

15.0 Private Sector

Leading companies which are in the feed business have supported the Government's liberalised open market and private sector led growth.

From 1977 the policy and strategy of giving the 'lead sector role' to the private sector with liberalising and opening the economy with tax and import relief, led many of the largest private sector companies to diversify and enter the food business. Meat products processing and retailing is only one activity. The biggest marketing firms and advertising firms are all involved and it is a multi-million rupee big business. Besides in support of the Government the big companies have attracted foreign investors and have

"(Some claim that) our own species must come first... But why should we accept this claim? Only 200 years ago, it might have seemed just as 'contrary to human nature' for us to take great care for the interests of other races... When I see myself as one among others, the relevant point of the comparison is that others also have feelings, others can also suffer or be happy. Any being capable of feeling anything, whether pain or pleasure or any kind of positive or negative state of consciousness, must therefore count."

Peter Singér
Epilogue to In Defence of Animals.

incorporated into diverse business ventures, other agricultural exports, textile factories, tourism and hotels, infrastructure complexes, export industries, and building up the stock market etc.

A major component of the food industry is meat processing, Massive programmes of advertising are part of the whole business. Livestock raising, livestock food production, agriculture and manufacture; veterinary drugs import and manufacture; infrastructure & equipment; processing, packaging, printing, cold storage and refrigeration; transport; part of import - export trade; Government revenue through company tax and BTT and personal tax and hundreds of thousands employed are all part of the livestock sector.

16.0 Remedy

Slaughtering is only one activity. Cruel methods of slaughter is a different issue. It is sensitive to Buddhism and its our culture. Social enlightenment through education and media of the general malaise of cruelty to animals in this Country such as treatment of cart bulls and stray dogs is one remedy. **The other remedy is to reactivate Government legislation which is on the statute book but have been swept under the carpet from about 1978.**

17.0 Government Legislation

Government has enacted legislation to control and regulate the slaughter and marketing of livestock especially cattle and buffaloes. The most important of these are:-

- * Animals Act No. 29 of 1958.
- * The Cruelty to Animals Act of 1958.
- * The Butchers Ordinance Revision 1956 Legislative Enactments Vol: X (1960).

- * Municipal by - laws Revision of 1958, Chapter XII, 'Slaughter Houses' and Chapter XIII 'Licensing of Market Stalls'.
- * The National Livestock Development Board (NLDB) established under the State Agricultural Corporations Act No. 11 of 1972 and gazetted in Government Gazette No. 58 of 4.5.73 Part I: Section I page 347.
- * Contagious Diseases (Animals) Ordinance 1957 Amendment 1961.
- * Ban on slaughter of Buffaloes gazetted on 20.08.1962.
- * Food and Drugs Act and Consumer Protection Laws.

18.0 Government Agencies

The Government Agencies predominantly responsible to implement one or more of these regulations are:-

- * Local Authorities especially MCs and UCs to frame and implement by-laws under the Burchers Ordinance.
1. Licence slaughter houses and see to the facilities, maintenance and hygienic conditions.
 2. Ensure Municipal and Government Veterinary Surgeons and or Public Health Inspectors supervise slaughter and slaughter only permissible categories of animals carrying appropriate permits from Veterinary Surgeons and District Secretariats at source of origin in terms of the Animals Act. That is for instance, pregnant and in-milk females, calves and productive buffaloes should not be slaughtered.
 3. Stamp the carcasses before being moved to market stalls to indicate health inspection having been

done and ensure that the meat is wholesome and fit for consumption.

4. License and rent meat stalls in public markets and cause PHI to inspect for hygienic conditions and that stamped wholesome meat is being sold.

*The Animal Production and Health Department is responsible for the implementation of the Animals Act by its Veterinary Surgeons to ensure that only permissible categories of animals carry certificates and that the animals are not from any area where diseases are prevalent and are fit for the meat trade.

*The National Livestock Development Board (NLDB) was established in 1973 to construct and operate in the whole country a network of six modern abattoirs to serve the high meat consumption areas and to replace most of the 137 dilapidated unhygienic slaughter sheds, to introduce humane methods of slaughter by stunning animals prior to the 'Halal' system being applied, and to be the only supplier of certified wholesome meat to all licensed meat stalls in public market places and to meat processors and refrigerated retailers. The NLDB was specifically empowered to implement effectively the "Animals Act 29 of 1956" and save productive female and breeding animals to promote dairy development and rural livestock development vital to sustain the well established crops and livestock integrated livelihood patterns. The NLDB was also empowered to implement the 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1958' and stop the wanton cruelty in the slaughter of cattle, in the sale, transport and before slaughter.

19.0 Other Important Issues: Malpractices & Abuses

Although the Animals Act of 1958 is a well intended enactment to suc-

cess and develop the contribution livestock make to the rural economy and promote dairy development, the absence of a single implementing authority and disaggregated responsibilities to several officials make implementation difficult in practice. Besides, as in all permit systems, abuse of the system become rampant after 1977 on account of the administration being politicised and corruption being made endemic. Cattle slaughter and meat trade have become a source of private income to many officials. Quoting from Chapter (I) page (II) of the "Future for Beef Production in Ceylon" (1968) Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.^(xvii)

"There are a whole series of authorities to be satisfied or circumvented as the case may be starting with the Grama Sevaka of the area where the animals are legitimately purchased or are expropriated by other means and the Police, D.R.Os, Railway Authorities and Veterinary Surgeons. At the other end animals

THE THREE R's

The "3R" approach to animal issues: Replace, Reduce and Refine:

REPLACE means to do away with the source of the abuse. It suggests eating beans instead of chickens or using in-vitro tests instead of animals in the lab.

REDUCE signifies eating fewer chickens and more beans or reducing the number of animals used in lab tests.

REFINE suggests that if you can't change the number of animals affected, at least recognize that they are living creatures with feelings and do whatever is possible to minimize their pain.

Henry Spira

must be moved out from the railway yard and subsequently the Municipality decides which animals will be moved to the Abattoir. Thereafter Public Health Inspectors exert their authority at retail points. Therefore butchers and their agents must get through this complicated chain of checks and authorities expeditiously because within 48 hours of loading for transport after purchase from distant places, the animals must be moved from the cattle pound to the abattoir. Otherwise animals may lose as much as 10% in weight due to starvation and dehydration and other aggravated causes in transit and some animals may even die".

The Permit System and several regulations to be implemented by different Authorities breeds bribery and corruption. It is a well known fact and a much hackneyed theme that after 1977 corruption in one form or another has reached unimaginable dimensions and has spread from top to the bottom layers of Sri Lanka's polity. The meat trade is no exception. For example the transport of animals for slaughter is a lucrative source of income for many officials responsible for permits. The only difference is, 20 years ago the corrupt practices were much less because the administration was independent of the political executive and the cost of corrupt practices was in much smaller figures.

20.0 Cruelty in Transporting Cattle

Many writers in the debate raised this issue, seeking the 'Cruelty to Animals Act' implemented effectively. Actually rail transport is preferred, because once the animals are loaded into waggons at some distant point, these reach Colombo by morning, unless sidelined at Polgahawela Junction for instance. Then water and feed can be given. But cattle trucks are now hardly available.

every way. The succinct description by the Wholesale Butchers Association before the Ministry of Planning and Agriculture Committee on "Meat Production and Marketing in Ceylon" (1969) ^(iv) went like this:-

"The Police on the beat can smell a lorry load of animals even before they see it on the horizon. They always find a few animals of prohibited categories notwithstanding valid certificates and permits. If everything is in order the "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (of 1907 revision enactment 1958) is invoked. ^(v) It is easily subjective to interpretation. There is no escape. Cough up and leave. And this could happen several times before a lorry load of animals from a distant place reaches Colombo".

On recent inquiries it is understood that present costs of this nature are between Rs. 5000, - 7000, a lorry.

In a letter to the Island on 4.9.93. Dr. S. Athulathmudali of Colombo, when he went to have a cow released from a slaughter house talked to a lorry driver who had brought a lorry load of cattle from Anuradhapura. The driver had asserted that he had to pay Rs. 25,000/- at the several check points to bring the lorry load to Colombo. No wonder beef prices are at Rs. 80/- a kg. This explains how tens of thousands of illicit animals roach the Colombo market. If even 50% of cattle lorries are intercepted and taken in, there will be not only a beef shortage in Colombo but the meat processing companies will also be short of supplies.

21.0 Judgement in District Court

One interesting case on record was filed in the District Court of Colombo, Case No. 2367/Z by a Wholesale Butcher against the Attorney General, seeking relief for fines imposed on the then prevalent 'Price Orders'. Quote from the judgement of the learned District Judge, page (3) para (b), 15th January 1973-

"On an examination of the various items of expenditure referred to in detail by the plaintiff and his two witnesses, it appears to me that with the possible exemption of the items in regard to **payments to the Police**, all other items of expenditure can be accepted as being necessary and justified."

Then again the Foreign Consultants, 'Hoff & Overgaard' (Copenhagen, on the Review Mission of the NLDB Abattoir Programme from DANIDA on the request of the Sri Lanka Government, in their report dated 6th February 1976 reported inquiries made over a period of about 2 1/2 months over the whole range of slaughter and meat market activities. According to evidence gathered, it had cost at that time at least Rs. 1000/- for one lorry load of animals to get through Police checks from the outstation to Colombo, (Reference page 8 of report). It also identified that illicit slaughter was three times more than recorded slaughter.

22.0 Slaughter of Productive Animals

The Animals Act of 1958 sought to save productive categories of animals. But the continuing illicit slaughter of prohibited categories and the previously identified loss of about 10,000 calves annually of European breeds in the Hill Country, together with the absence of an adequate system of breeding and multiplication of dairy breeds are major factors in the slow, stagnant and in some periods negative growth of the dairying sub-sector in this country, notwithstanding the colossal amounts spent including foreign aid over 40 years or so on veterinary research and infrastructure, on forage research and development, on import of breeding stock and breeding and artificial insemination services, and on state farms. There are other major factors too. But this is not the place to discuss these.

The Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Colombo M.C. in a Board Paper to the NLDB dated 3rd. March 1976 provided the following statistics. (See Table 1)

IMPLICATIONS:

- (1) Obvious large number of females slaughtered elsewhere.
- (2) Rejects above would have been slaughtered outside the city and the meat brought into the city into CMC licenced beef stalls.
- (3) The Veterinary Surgeons and the DRO (now District Secretaries) in the areas of origin of these animals have no doubt certified and issued permits for many of these if not for all.

23.0 Prohibited Slaughter

Local Authorities, therefore, should not permit the slaughter of any prohibited categories of cattle and any buffalo without the certificate of the Veterinary Surgeon and permits of the D.R.O. in the area of purchase. Large numbers of prohibited categories of cattle and buffalo are slaughtered, which accounts for the illicit slaughter and the fact that actual numbers slaughtered far exceed recorded slaughter. It is an indictment on the Authorities and concerned Government Officials who have failed to carry out their responsibilities. Mr. Dharmadasa Wijemanne of Colombo 8, 'The Island' of 26/4/93 asked the question how pregnant animals were slaughtered when Veterinary Surgeons and Health Inspectors passed animals for slaughter.

24.0 Ban on Buffalo Slaughter

The Government Gazette Extraordinary No. 13268 of 20th. August, 1962, Part I specifically prohibits slaughter of buffaloes except certain categories certified by the Government Veterinary Surgeon, such as, animals maimed, blind and not fit for breeding or draft.

Since, however, the slaughter of buffaloes continued unchecked and the buffalo population decreased to an alarming low level, the Government found it necessary to evoke Emergency Regulations "to prevent the slaughter of buffaloes and the sale of buffalo meat" by order of the Cabinet Ministers No. 11/74 of 23rd. January, 1974, consequent to the Cabinet Meeting of 16th. January, 1974. This was an extremely effective piece of legislation as seen in Table 2.8 in "Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics 1991/92" of the ministry of Agricultural Development and Research. Official statistics of buffaloes slaughtered in slaughter houses of Local Authorities have rapidly declined from 1974 and no slaughter is recorded from 1979 when only (7) animals were slaughtered. Implied is that buffaloes will go on multiplying ad infinitum. But what about the unproductive animals, unfit for work and animals maimed etc.? Where are they? Why is the buffalo population declining as commonly claimed? Obviously, illicit slaughter is rampant.

25.0 Illicit Slaughter

Cruelty in the act of slaughter is only the tip of the iceberg. The Animals Act of 1958 and Cruelty to Animals Act were framed to remedy these aspects. Only a couple of writers in the last 10 months identified other problems. When cruelty and brutal treatment of animals is widespread in licensed slaughter houses

under supervision of Veterinary Surgeons, surely it must be far worse where animals are slaughtered illegally, specially stolen animals. Illicit slaughter is about double recorded statistics as shown ahead. At section 6.0 numerous problems were identified Gal Gava Mithuro in the Island of 4th. December, 1992. They drew attention to cruelty in the mode of transporting animals purchased for slaughter in over crowded lorries and cruel treatment before slaughter. Illicit slaughter breeds cruelty. And illicit slaughter is not restricted to Muslim butchers. Quite rightly Gal Gava Mithuro points out that all this is possible because the concerned officials who issue permits to transport animals for slaughter and those who supervise slaughter houses and beef stalls fail to do their job honestly. They also pointed out, in section 6.0 (4) that "The Director of Animal Production and Health (Department) was reported in the 'Island' on one occasion last year to have said unauthorised beef was brought from the outstations and sold with the seal of the Municipal Health Unit, in Colombo beef stalls." The slaughter is not supervised regularly by the local authorities. There is no regular inspection of the animals before slaughter. It is only after the animals are slaughtered that the flesh is given the stamp of the Local Authority. Therefore, it is possible that at any time the meat supplied to the local markets could be from "diseased animals". They point out that although about 40 cattle are recorded as slaughtered daily in the CMC abattoir, about 20,000 kgs. of beef are sold daily in the city beef stalls. That is, on average, about 260 animals a day only in Colombo.

It is incomprehensible how the Director, Department of Animal Production and Health could have made the allegation he is purported to have made, when under the Animals Act No. 29 of 1959 the Government Veterinary Surgeons in the outstations are responsible for issuing health

certificates for animals purchased for the meat market by Wholesale Butchers Agents and for ante mortem inspection at all public slaughter houses outside the Municipalities of Colombo and Kandy. In Colombo, the seal of the Municipality is placed on carcasses for delivery to stalls after inspection and under the authority of the Municipal Veterinary Surgeons. All are registered under the Ceylon Veterinary Council under the Veterinary Surgeons and Practitioners Act No. 46 of 1956. And, therefore, one would expect the Director, AP & H Department to act with more concern and responsibility for his professional colleagues.

Mr. Dharmadasa Wijemanne of Colombo 8, writing in 'The Island' of 26/4/93 points out that almost all slaughter houses under Local Authorities are old, unhygienic and dilapidated buildings or sheds. He asks the question how pregnant cows are slaughtered when Government and Semi-Government Veterinary Surgeons and Public Health Inspectors are expected to supervise maintenance of abattoirs, slaughtering and inspect the animals passed for slaughter.

26.0 Slaughter Statistics

These observations of Gal Gava Mithuro and Mr. Wijemanne are perfectly correct. In an all island survey undertaken in 1968 by an expert Committee on 'Meat Production and Marketing in Ceylon' appointed jointly by the Ministries of Planning and Agriculture pointed out that apart from unauthorised animals slaughtered in remote sheds without supervision by authorities, illicit animals are slaughtered even in registered slaughter houses. The writer was the Ministry of Planning representative and convener of the Committee. Obviously statistics do want in accuracy because illicit slaughter and sales even in licensed stalls of meat from many sources cannot be recorded. Therefore, to estimate

"Various philosophers and religious leaders tried to convince their disciples and followers that animals are nothing more than machines without a soul, without feelings. However, anyone who has lived with an animal - be it a dog, a bird or even a mouse - knows that this theory is a brazen lie, invented to justify cruelty."

Isaac Bashevis Singer (Writer)

slaughter the method adopted was statistical analysis of demand and consumption of beef based on Consumer Finances and Socio Economic Surveys of the Central Bank^(xxv) and Livestock Population Statistics of the Department of Census and Statistics^(xxvi) and other sources of published and recorded data over a (10) year period in an investigative report (1968) prepared also by the writer for the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs titled "The Future of Beef Production in Ceylon". It was established that the recorded estimate of all island slaughter for 1967 (Department of C & S reported even in FAO Statistics) was 217,588 cattle and 5,177 buffaloes. This was greatly under-estimated.

On averaging the Colombo Municipal recorded carcass weights^(xxvii) of cattle and buffaloes total beef consumption in 1967 was estimated to have been 18.9 million kgs. Whereas, according to the Consumer Finances Survey of the Central Bank, beef consumption in 1963 was 3.1 kgs. per capita. Using this as a constant figure for 1967 and projecting it on the 1967 population, total beef consumption was estimated at 34.96 million kgs. in 1967.

Then other factor indices were taken into account and to obtain 34.96 million kg. beef in 1967 about 496,666 cattle and 38,833 buffaloes had to be slaughtered all island, compared with the official figures of 217,588 cattle and 5,177 buffaloes by the Department of Census & Statistics. The extent of recorded and illicit slaughter are obvious. Moreover, unconfirmed figures of cured hides in the Leather Corporation and Pettah market was nearly double the official cattle slaughter figures and more than double buffalo slaughter figures. As mentioned before the fact that Emergency Regulations had to be invoked to ban slaughter of buffaloes illicitly shows the extent of illicit slaughter.

Recent statistics also reflect the same inaccuracies. For example according to the 'Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics 1991/92' of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research (December 1992) Table 2.8 beef production from animals slaughtered in licensed slaughter houses of Local Authorities was 13.2 million in 1986 and 12.5 million in 1987. In this period no buffalo slaughter is recorded. In contrast on the basis of the Central Bank's Consumer Finance & Socio-Economic Survey of 1986/87 beef consumption was estimated at 24.12 million kgs. and the Census & Statistics Department estimated beef consumption at 27.54 million kgs. The difference in the extent of unrecorded, or illicit slaughter. And although no buffalo slaughter is recorded, the buffalo population is seen to be declining from 1988 in Table 1.8. According to figures, beef consumption has rapidly declined between 1967 and 1987 despite population increase.

Accurate to agricultural statistics in Third World Countries are extremely difficult to record and most often near impossible in circumstances as in Sri Lanka in the latter half of the last decade in a polity and economy under seige in every conceivable manner. Therefore, accepted principles are to justify veracity on trends in time series, intercomplementary comparabilities adopting realistic parameters and by adopting statistical techniques to justify claims made on such statistics. Doubtful reliability reflects Animal Crop & Livestock Statistics compiled by the Department of Census and Statistics as reported by the Grama Sevaka Niladaries in conjunction with the Statistical Investigators of the department as a routine administrative function. In an earlier period the Village Headmen were men of the area who knew what was happening such as food crop yields, animal disease outbreaks, cattle thefts for slaughter etc.,

The Grama Sevaka Niladaries on the other hand are outsiders who keep regular office hours and in respect of livestock, routinely report statistics from which the Statistical Officers compile Form L2. It has been shown in the Committee Report on "Demand and Consumption of Meat in Ceylon" (1969) that these statistics need to be adjusted in various ways, such as standardising natural rates of increase of cattle for instance with deviation from standard forms of birth rates and death rates plus wastage say from reported external abnormalities such as disease outbreaks. Then again recorded slaughter must be compared with green hides records in the Leather Corporation and leading Pettah Businesses and justify estimated slaughter with national consumption (population) in terms of per capita consumption calculated from consumer Finance Survey and Socio-Economic Survey. The updated statistics needs also to be adjusted for age classes such as for calves, since there is overlap coterminus with heifers and young bulls and a rule of thumb to separate out cows from heifers in the "Other Cows" category.

In developed countries slaughter house statistics match hides and skins statistics. In Sri Lanka not much more than 50% hides enter the trade because of damage from unscrupulous branding and what is lost in illicit slaughter. Still there is a sizeable export market. According to the Sri Lanka Livestock statistics 1991/92 Table 3.6 over a million kilograms are exported annually from 1983, the highest being 1.85 million kg. in 1984. In 1991 export earnings were Rs. 71.59 million.

For these reasons grave doubts of veracity arise in respect of the livestock population and milch cows figures presented in Table 1.8 in the "Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics 1991-92".^(xxviii) A progressive 9% increase is shown between 1970 to 1976 and then a 7% drop by 1979 mainly

because of a sharp decline of "Other Cows". And again there is shown a 12% increase by 1989 and then a sharp drop of 21.24% in 1990. In 1989 the cattle population was 1,819,900. That means the population loss was 386,500 animals. Assuming a 10% wastage by death and other causes there is a balance of 204,510 animals. The natural rate of increase is 18.3% (10 year average)^(M) adopting a standard calves drop of 80%.^(M) That is, another 333,041 animals. Therefore, total population decrease is 719,541 animals of which assumed slaughter would have been 537,551 equivalent to 34.94 million kgs. beef at an average carcass weight of 65 kgs.

The buffalo population shows a similar trend of increase until 1987 when an all time high figure of 1,007,600 animals was reached, the first time a million was reached.

Perhaps this is the result of the "Ban on Slaughter under Emergency Regulations of 1974". But a progressive drop in population is seen to have commenced from 1988 and the population fell to 822,300 animals in 1990.^(M)

For empirical purposes let us take the same years in Table 1.8. 1989 buffalo population was 967,000 reduced by 144,300 to 822,700 animals in 1990. Assuming a 7.5% wastage through natural causes since buffaloes are hardier, there is a balance loss of 71,780 animals. The ten year average natural rate of increase for buffaloes is 15%. That is, 145,050 animals. The total off-take is, therefore, 216,830 animals. Obviously such a massive loss in one year is totally against the trend and has to be assumed to be improbable. Assuming, therefore, half this number being illicitly slaughtered, the beef off-take will be about 14.6 million kgs. at an average carcass weight of 135 kgs.

Therefore, total beef consumption in 1989 would have been 34.94

million kgs. cattle beef and 14.6 million kgs. buffalo beef which together results in a 2.9 kgs. per capita consumption. The Sri Lanka Livestock Statistics show a sharp declining trend of cattle and buffalo populations (Table 1.8).^(M) The above analysis supports this trend. Rising meat consumption is also the normal trend in an open economy with rising urbanisation, growth of economy and increase in consumption income, rise in population, meat processing industries and change in food habits. This is graphically demonstrated in Charts 9 and 10 in 1978/79 Consumer Finances and Socio-Economic Survey of the Central Bank.

27.0 Slaughter Houses in Sri Lanka

The 1968-69 Surveys undertaken by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs for the Export Committee on "Meat Production and Marketing"^(M) identified 1377 slaughter houses in the country licenced by Local Authorities. The majority were makeshift sheds some with cadjan roofs and invariably located near a water course. Only Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya had sheds of a permanent nature with water on tap and holding yards (cattle ponds). No improvements have been made for a very long time notwithstanding the income the Municipalities make on renting out Market stalls. In fact the Dematagoda slaughter house of the Colombo Municipality had facilities to prepare blood meal, bone meal and meat meal from inedible offal. The by products processing unit established in 1962 has ceased to function. Qualified Veterinary Surgeons man the Veterinary Division under which is vested the Colombo Slaughter house and its operations. **A facility which is an absolute necessity for a slaughter house within a crowded city but is not available is an incinerator to dispose off inedible offal and diseased and condemned carcasses.**

Mr. Dharmadasa Wijemanne of Colombo 8 one of the few writers on the cattle slaughter debate writing under the title "Slaughter of living beings", 24/6/93, "The Island" observed that almost all the slaughter houses under the Local Authorities were very old, unhygienic and dilapidated buildings. Reporting what he also said, "the real cruelty to animals is before they go for slaughter". Animals are tethered together in the open air without food or water for hours, seeing other animals being slaughtered. He also pointed out there are government or semi-government appointed Veterinary Surgeons and Health Inspectors to supervise maintenance of the abattoirs and slaughtering and inspect the health of the animals passed for slaughter. Therefore, he asks, "how are pregnant cows slaughtered?"

Mr. Wijemanne is perfectly correct. The Ministry of Planning survey in 1968 referred to above identified this precise situation. It is a shame for a country in which the Government regularly boasts of being a repository of pristine Buddhism and claiming to be on the threshold of becoming a NIC in about 7 years, to do nothing about the utterly primitive and unhygienic condition of slaughter houses and the extreme cruelty not only in the slaughter of cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs and poultry by the hundreds of thousands but also cutting up live dolphin, dugong and turtle, not forgetting the killing of wild elephants to make way for sugar plantations and "Gem Mining" by a VVIP's security men with AK 47s.

28.0 Other Aspects of Serious Concern

- (1) A basic problem is one of location. Many slaughter houses are located in or close to habitations and just off busy roads for easy access. Thus even children are spectators to the gruesome orgy.

(2) Located invariably near a stream, the blood, urine and dung contaminates the water used down stream by people to bathe and wash their clothes.

(3) It is not uncommon to see a host of stray dogs and crows feasting on thrown away inedible offal and sometimes turned carrion and foul smelling.

29.0 Private Slaughter and Special Licences

According to several writers to the press there appear to be misconceptions about private slaughter. By definition private slaughter is that which occurs outside a Government (i.e. Local Authority) slaughter house. There is no law against private slaughter except in the case of bo-

vine animals (i.e. cattle and buffaloes) where private slaughter is permitted for special purposes such as religious festivals and commercial business under licence issued by the Local Authority in the area, subject to Veterinary and Public Health Inspections. Any slaughter of bovine animals without such permit is illegal and is called illicit slaughter. Every licensed slaughter house is legal. Gal Gava Mithuro alleged that there were private licensed slaughter houses operating, illegally.⁽²⁴⁾ This is incorrect. There are no such slaughter houses.

There certainly are unlicensed, illegal slaughter sheds outside Colombo.

The Butchers Ordinance of 1893 Revision 1956 in Volume X of Legis-

lative Enactments (1960) Section 12 provides for temporary licences for festivals on a fee of Rs. 5/-. It is still Rs. 5/-. The Municipal By-Laws Revision 31.8.1958 Chapter XIII para (30) also provides for Special License for private slaughter at a cost Rs. 5/-

With the emergence of Supermarkets selling specialised meat products, special licences have been issued to these establishments at an annual fee of Rs. 25/= specified in the above Ordinance by Local Authorities of the area in which the factories are located. One of these have their own modern abattoir and animals are slaughtered under hygienic conditions and with due concern for the animal. The captive bolt or percussion stunner is used in the slaughter of cattle and electric shock on the side of the ears for pigs.

Others have registered suppliers who are expected to supply beef to the factories, slaughtered in slaughter houses of Local Authorities under Veterinary supervision and carrying the health inspection seal of the Veterinary Surgeon or Public Health Inspector. The seal is mandatory, but all meat is not from public slaughter houses. Quality beef is in short supply because Sri Lanka has no beef production industry. **That is why there is a demand for cow beef, heifers and calves (veal).** Increasingly, large quantities of beef are imported for the 'Star' class hotels, foreign customers and new rich business community by the Super Markets.

30.0 Immediate Remedial Measures

Notwithstanding that during the 10 month long debate the majority of perhaps two score contributors strayed off from the issue of the "cruel method of slaughter" and got lost in puerile acrimony and bigoted

A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

- * Try to understand the public's current thinking and where it could be encouraged to go tomorrow. Above all, keep in touch with reality.
- * Prioritize, set goals that are achievable, and bring about meaningful change one step at a time. Raising awareness is not enough.
- * Establish credible sources of information and documentation. Never assume anything. Check everything out at the source.
- * Never deceive the media or the public. Maintain credibility. Don't exaggerate. Don't hype the issue.
- * Select a target on the basis of vulnerabilities, the numbers of animals involved, the intensity of suffering and the opportunities for change.
- * Develop a campaign blueprint that is realistic, practical and doable.
- * Seek dialogue. Attempt to work together to solve problems. Position issues as problems with solutions, not as wars without prisoners. This approach is best achieved by presenting realistic alternatives.
- * Be ready for confrontation if your target remains unresponsive; if accepted channels don't work, place your adversary on the defensive by preparing an escalating public-awareness campaign.

- Henry Spira -

hypocrisy, a few did make very sensible down to earth and eminently practical recommendations. For example, Mr. Haniff writing in "The Island" of 18th. December, 1992 pointed out that a first stop is for Muslim Theologians and the Ministry of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs together with the Veterinary Officers who supervise slaughter, to introduce a humane system which in fact is prescribed in the Quran, and is not been practised in Sri Lanka.

31.0 Recommendations and Resolutions

It is obvious that remedial measures to be effective must encompass all activities over the whole front of raising cattle and buffaloes, sale, transport, slaughter and delivery to the market. There is no need to impinge on the meat marketing function. It is adequately covered by Municipal By-Laws. Besides, Sri Lanka is now a much proclaimed open market economy. There are statutory enactments to regulate every other aspect. What is wanting is effective implementation. And to achieve this, **one authority is vital. And that is the National Livestock Development Board.** The time has come to revamp this Board, reconstitute its Board of Directors and Management, recruit necessary staff, commence its incorporated functions and obtain the necessary foreign aid and experience to establish the necessary regional and peripheral abattoirs and infrastructure once and for all. It is achievable. The country is small.

32.0 End the Malpractices and Abuses

All the malpractices and abuses identified, the cruelty in transport and at the slaughter houses and the slaughter of prohibited categories of animals are the responsibility of diverse officials. This ethos of corruption abuses stemming from positions of authority, blatant malprac-

tices without compunction and with disdain for regulations, have grown like the plague from about 1978. It engulfs departments, Local authorities, provincial councils, traffic police, mighty private sector companies, the powerful private sector, wholesale butchers and at the bottom level the lowly retail butchers fraternity.

Therefore, the only effective remedial measure is one authority, that is, the abattoir programme of the NLDB. Since the NLDB will be the sole operator of public abattoirs, it will be the only body purchasing animals for slaughter. It will employ Veterinary Surgeons to inspect and issue health certificates at purchase and to stamp the carcasses at the abattoirs. The purchasing officers of the NLDB will ensure that ownership is identified and only permitted animals will go to the abattoirs. The prohibited categories of animals which are purchased from cash needy owners will be saved in the NLDB holding farms for later reissue for projects and to other farmers. Thus the Animals Act and the Butchers Ordinance will be properly implemented from the point of purchase, transport, slaughter and up to the point of delivery of carcasses to the retail meat market.

Malpractices in retailing such as short weight can be checked. It is a function of Market Supervisors and Consumer Protection Organisation and the consumer public who under the open market system are free to exercise preferences. The NLDB can supply cleaned carcasses which will prevent the practice of adding inedible offal for short weight.

The other problem which then remains is the system of branding animals for identification of ownership and maintaining cattle registers at the level of the Grama Sevaka Niladaris and District Secretariats

"the beast looked at me; the tears welled from my own eyes, the suffering of a dearly-loved brother could hardly have moved me more profoundly than I was moved by my impotence in face of this mute agony.... The

THERE IS NO UNBRIDGEABLE GAP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS. LIKE US ANIMALS WANT TO GET A LITTLE PLEASURE OUT OF LIFE.

strange and terrible men - blow upon blow and blood running from gaping wounds..... I am with you in my pain, my weakness and my longing"

Rosa Luxemburg

(commenting on a team of buffaloes that had been unmercifully flogged by soldiers, in her 1917 letters from prison)

to comply with provisions in the Animals Act. This then becomes the responsibility of the Provincial Council Administration.

33.0 Historical

The first recommendations for a "Meat Board" was made in the Agricultural Development Proposals of 1958. In 1967 the Ministry of Agriculture & Food sought the assistance of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs to undertake a study of "Beef Production & Marketing" independent of Government officials and others engaged in this sub-sector. The result was the report "The Future of Beef Production in Ceylon" October 1968^(xxvii) highlighting dwindling livestock resources and slaughter statistics, abuses in the meat trade by officials and retail butchers and recommending a "Meat Board" as a remedial measure. Draft legislation prepared for the purpose in 1960 was presented. This was the

precedent to the Expert Committee appointed on a recommendation of the Cabinet Planning Sub-Committee on Food Production chaired by the Hon. Prime Minister (The Minister also for Planning & Economic Affairs). A joint committee of the Ministries of Planning & Economic Affairs & the Ministry of Agriculture & Food with members from certain other statutory bodies and the private sector was appointed in 1968. The report "Meat Production & Marketing in Ceylon", (1969)^M recommended the establishment of an "Animal Husbandry Board" with wider functions than the previous "Meat Board" and was the forerunner of the National Livestock Development Board.

An all island survey was conducted by fielding a well designed questionnaire addressed to Government Agents and all representative local authorities followed by an interview survey of Wholesale Butchers, their agents and retailers, private sector institutions in the meat trade, several Veterinary Surgeons involved in the market and Price Control Inspectors. The Report dated 23rd. March, 1969 made many far reaching recommendations.

Quote No. 5 :-

"This calls for the creation of a Central Authority to establish and control a series of Regional Abattoirs at which alone could animals be slaughtered. The authority will be responsible for the purchase and transport of animals to the Abattoirs and the transport and delivery of the dressed carcasses to the retail market stalls".

The Committee recommended establishing a statutory authority termed the "Animal Husbandry Board" which would be mainly regulatory but for direct engagement in the above functions in the meat market superseding all slaughter houses under local authorities but

not impinging on licensing and revenue of local bodies nor on those engaged for a livelihood in animal production and the meat market. Notwithstanding the change of Government, the National Livestock Development Board was established on 4th. May, 1973 to implement these recommendations with its first Chairman being the late Mr. R. H. de Mel and most of the members of the Expert Committee.

34.0 Indo-Sri Lanka Project

In 1974 the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands transferred ten of the largest and finest coconut estates in the country totalling 11,897 acres in order to support the Indo-Sri Lanka Co-operative Livestock Development Project which gifted valuable breeding stock of cattle, buffaloes and sheep to the NLDB.

The strategy was the proven intercultivation of good pasture under coconut in order to raise livestock for issue to farmers and the income from coconut set off some of the costs of the livestock development programme. The estates and other farms were also intended to serve as "Holding Grounds" for the abattoir programme and take in the good animals salvaged from slaughter for subsequent issue to farmers. The Board was vested with another 6160 acres in (3) units for development as holding farms. More estates were added later during 1977/78 when it was decided to prioritise to 'Estate Management'; three estates totalling 2245 acres. After all coconut is known as the lazy man's crop.

Historically, the coconut estate sector in the area known as the "Coconut Triangle" defined in the above mentioned report "The Future of Beef Production in Ceylon" (October 1968) covering the wet and intermediate zones was the foundation dairy cattle and buffaloes breeding grounds. Cattle raising under coconut has considerable

intercomplementary benefit. The best Indian dairy breeds of cattle and draft breeds were bred and multiplied and was the source of supply of animals to the many thousands of small dairy farmers and one or two cows for milk in a household and many thousands of cart bulls used for haulage every conceivable kind of goods. **The uneconomical off-take entered the beef market.**

35.0 Intercomplementary

The Land Reform of 1972 destroyed much of this valuable animal breeding asset except in the estates which were quickly transferred to the NLDB. The writer conceived the estates to be vested in the NLDB and organised the aforementioned Indo-Sri Lanka project as a vital adjunct to supply the lost breeding animals and obtain other assistance. It was never intended to abandon the fundamental incorporated functions. Indeed the estates and livestock programmes were planned as complementary to the abattoir programme. The estates would take in the valuable animals sold for slaughter and also serve as holding and transit points for animals going to market. The outlying farms which were established at Parasangahawewa, Oya-Maduwa, Welikanda and Kiriyankaliya were to serve as cattle collecting centres and holding grounds for the abattoir programme. ^(xxvi)

36.0 National Livestock Development Board

National Livestock Development Board was established by proclamation in the Government Gazette No. 58 of 4th. May, 1973 Part I: Sec: (1) 347, in terms of the State Agricultural Corporation Act No. 11 of 1972, Order under Section (2) Quote:

Para (5) "that the principal business of the Board shall be the processing and marketing of Livestock and Livestock products....."

37.0 Incorporated Functions of the NLDB

First Schedule

- (1) the establishing of livestock purchasing centres for the purchase of animals for meat from livestock raisers at fair prices;
- (2) the establishing of regional abattoirs for the supply of dressed carcasses;
- (3) the processing and marketing of meat and meat products;
- (4) the transport of animals from livestock purchasing centres to regional abattoirs and the transport of dressed carcasses stamped for identification from the abattoirs to authorised dealers;
- (5) the ensuring of optimum utilization of by-products;
- (6) the licensing and regulating of the processing and marketing of meat and meat products;
- (7) the preparing of quality meat in commercial cuts for sale by packeting and price marking, for distribution to authorised dealers;

The following paragraphs were added by Amendment Order after Cabinet Approval in the Government Gazette No. 151 of 14th February 1975 despite opposition from parochial interests in the Animal Production and Health Department to preserve as exclusive to Veterinary Surgeons the lucrative business of running State Livestock Farms and the parks in doing so, especially travel abroad to purchase cattle, and the even more richly lucrative private practice and dispensing of drugs. (The major livestock State farms were removed from this department and vested in the NLDB early this year).

- (8) the import and supply of livestock requisites such as breeding stock (including semen), drugs, food additives, machinery and implements;
- (9) the establishment and maintenance of animal husbandry farms,

which can in the opinion of the Directors of the Board, be advantageously carried on by the Board as ancillary to the general business of the Board.

The chief objectives were:

- (10) to be the sole authority for the slaughter of beef and mutton animals in the country and thereby ensure :-
 - (a) use of humane methods of slaughter notwithstanding employing Lebbes for Halal slaughter;
 - (b) eliminate the slaughter of prohibited categories of animals in the Animals Act of 1958 and therefore save productive animals and stem the decline in the national herds of cattle, buffalo and goats and sheep and help in generating dairy development and the mutton industry;
 - (c) eliminate the malpractices and abuses in the sale and purchase of animals for beef and the abuses and cruelty in the transport of animals; and
 - (d) provide wholesome and clean meat carrying health certificates to licensed market stalls of Local Authorities and packeted meat in other frozen food retailers.

Thus the butchers retail trade business and the income of Local Authorities were to remain inviolate.

38.0 Modern Abattoirs for Sri Lanka

The Cabinet of Ministers' approval on 3rd April 1974 by Cabinet Paper No. 345/71 an authorised Capital of Rs. 88 million including a foreign exchange component of Rs. 27 million which the Danish Government (DANIDA) picked up for the Abattoir Project. DANIDA appointed M. E. Wernberg A/S Consultants of Copenhagen to prepare the Abattoir Project in terms of the Country's total

"powerful social movement (is) driven by a simple moral position: animals are similar enough to humans to deserve serious moral consideration. They are sentient beings, entitled to dignified lives, and they should be treated as ends, not as means. Protestors ask how we can love our pets, yet experiment on identical animals in laboratories; how we can cuddle one animal yet eat another."

- Jasper Nelkan-
Animal Rights Crusade

meat requirements and also support the livestock and dairy development programme, implement and operate within the Government's laws and regulations such as the Animals Act of 1958, the Cruelty to Animals Act, Butchers Ordinance and Municipal By-laws, and fit into the rural socio-economic culture and ethnic and religious sensitivities. All the hot topics of the ongoing debate were taken care of - the cruel method of slaughter, cruelty in transport and handling, unhygienic conditions, slaughter of prohibited categories such as pregnant animals, cows in milk, calves and illicit slaughter and illicit beef in stalls. The Wholesale Butchers fraternity which control the trade, after consultation with their religious hierarchy agreed to undertake Halal slaughter under controlled modern technological conditions by which all animals will be stunned before slaughter out of sight of other animals etc. Accordingly abattoirs were designed during 1974-75 to introduce slaughter.

For instance, Veterinary inspection was to be mandatory before purchase and transport, proper care and feeding of animals was provided in transit as well as in holding yards; animals in single file were to move

into the abattoirs; the animal which enters the abattoir was thereafter unseen to the animals outside; the animal would be stunned senseless in the first room and immediately hoisted with its rear legs on to a moving overhead rail which takes it into the slaughter chamber where the Lebbe awaits for the ritual which takes not a minute, and the animal will then move into the next chamber. In as much as the animals outside do not see the animal being stunned in the first room, when the next animal enters, the previous one on the rail is completely out of sight.

In pursuance of the incorporated functions the NLDB was vested in two instalments with 18,057 acres prime coconut estates transferred by Land Reform for its livestock breeding programme tied to an Indo-Sri Lanka Co-operative Programme, and to serve as holding grounds for the Abattoir Project. By the end of 1975 and after review by another DANIDA appointed foreign team of consultants, 3 major modern abattoirs for high meat consumption areas and 3 minor ones were designed. And during the next two years the foreign consultants were contracted to prepare detailed time phased construction programmes, machinery and vehicles and railway trucks procurement and assembly programmes, and relevant tender documents etc. Foreign aid was being negotiated. **AND THEN BY 1978 ALL THIS HAD BEEN SWEEPED UNDER THE CARPET.**

39.0 Review

In the two years given to the identification of suitable sites with water, power, disposal of effluents, accessibility for transport of cattle by rail and yet distanced from habitations; adequate land with water and to develop forage for cattle holding grounds; obtain and equip purchasing centres, recruit and send out staff training etc. There was price escalation chiefly on the foreign com-

ponent. In the review the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs also identified a trend of decreasing livestock populations which decreased beef supply. These findings were set out in NLDB's Responsibilities in Livestock Development and the problem of Supplies for the Abattoirs (1st August 1975^(iv)) which was addressed to the NLDB as a Board Paper and to the Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore together with the DANIDA Consultants "Hoff & Overgaard Planning Consultants? Copenhagen" the Ministry of Planning together with the Ministry of Agriculture set out the following criteria for Phase I Programme and provided for more labour intensive methods and local fabrication of some of the plant and vehicles to reduce costs.

- 1 The objective was to supply the area of higher demand, but supply would be below demand for beef. Therefore with increase in price, some consumers could be expected to switch to chicken and pork which can satisfy demand in the short term and fish.
- 2 Supply being equated to the actual rate of cattle population increase, the declining trend would be arrested to the benefit of productive activities.
- 3 Abattoirs for the North and East were not considered urgent because supply was far in excess of demand and there was a preference for mutton. In Phase II a few small abattoirs in this region and at certain points within the high consumption area could have been considered if the need arose.
4. The estimated goats and sheep slaughter exceeded supply but being short-term, the Board expected to develop resources.
5. Pork sales from public markets is still quite small, much of it being in the private trade. No Licencing is required.

From the beginning, vested and parochical interest from the progenitor of the present Animal Production and Health Department and its officials within the Ministry of Agriculture sought to restrict the functions and activities of the Board, for reasons mentioned before. Nevertheless, concerted efforts by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs succeeded in vesting the Board with a wide canvass of authority covering all aspects linked and inter-related to its main purpose in incorporation viz:

"to operate hygienically, modern abattoirs and ensure a regular supply of wholesome meat to the consumer at reasonable prices; and to regulate the slaughter of animals and also to avoid the malpractices obtaining in meat distribution in Sri Lanka".

Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers approved on 3rd April, 1974, the Cabinet Paper No. 345/71 containing the following paragraphs in addition to the incorporated functions.

- (ii) for an authorised capital of Rs. 88 million which includes a foreign exchange component of Rs. 27 million for development and a further authorised working capital of Rs. 44 million to be obtained from commercial banks.
- (ii) to amend Butchers Ordinance No. 9 of 1893 and Amendments and Supplements thereto, the Animals Act No. 29 of 1958 and Regulations and Amendments thereto, and any other statutory Enactments which may interfere with the approved functions of the Board, in order that the Livestock Development Board may have exclusive control in all activities in the meat market in Sri Lanka including powers to produce and promote the production of livestock, transport, sell and export meat fresh, frozen and prepared, and regulate and licence the slaughter, sale, export

processing and pricing of all meat fresh, frozen and prepared, meat products and abattoir by-products and

(iv) for the establishment and operation of abattoirs, livestock purchasing centres, livestock holding grounds/farms and breeding and multiplication farms, and the promotion and development and production of livestock, pasture, fodder and other feeds in Sri Lanka, including all connected activities thereto, such as establishing animal health and meat hygiene services, stud centres and artificial insemination centres, the provision of production supports and importation and supply of livestock and any other requisites for these purposes, such as drugs, feed additives, machinery and implements etc. which are necessary for the Board to carry out its functions successfully.

BEEF

40.0 Supply Equates to Natural Rate of Increase

The important criteria determining PHASE I was that the number of animals to be slaughtered (1976) should not exceed the natural rate of cattle population increase. There were two implications. One, the decline in the cattle population will be arrested, but since supply will be about half of demand surplus and redundant buffaloes will provide some additional beef. And some illicit and unaccountable slaughter will take place.

Phase I : comprised one major abattoir at Alawwa; one medium at Katugastota and one small at Katukurunda covering an area from Chilaw through Kurunegala, Galewela, Matale, Kandy, Urugala, Uda Hewaheta, Nuwara-Eliya, Hatton, Talawakele, Ginigathena, Kegalle, Elpitiya up to Galle. That is, the area carrying about 60% of the

country population and consuming 75% of beef, 50% mutton and 100% pork, but drawing 75% of beef and mutton animals from the rest of the country.

41.0 Enormous Supporting Programme

Even for this much reduced PHASE I, the supporting programme was quite large. For example: to carry (3) days of buffer stocks on NLDB Holding Farms at 800 cattle and 750 goats throughout per day about 15,000 acres of developed land were required. At least 35 purchasing Centres were required, more than half in the North and East. The cost of this programme had risen to Rs. 17 million while the capital cost of the (3) abattoirs had risen to Rs. 105 million by 1976. The Alawwa abattoir alone would have required (3) special cattle trains daily. The supply route for the Alawwa abattoir by refrigerated trucks would have been (16) road side stalls enroute into Colombo, (113) stalls in the Colombo Municipality and markets from Chilaw, Kurunegala, Kegalle to Kalutara.

Cattle projects are long-term. It takes 6 to 7 years to produce a second productive generation of improved performance. Animal breeding is costly and long-term and cannot be undertaken without state support. Such support in this country is anathema under World Bank dictum. Whereas dairy and beef farming in Europe, Oceania and U.S. are supported in various ways and costs subsidised for export. The second constraint is land. Ruminated animals are land intensive. Land is under severe competition for infrastructure and other agriculture. Proven-der feed and producer milk prices do not reflect the open market policy of supply and demand. Directly or indirectly these are multinational controlled. And the farmers do not have the countervailing power in a capitalist system for institutionalised

support systems for adequate profitability and therefore sustainability. A few thousands of cows imported (recent Government proposal) will soon end up at the butchers shop.

42.0 Final analysis

In the final analysis it's a "Hobson's Choice". There are no options and no alternatives. The abattoir project is a sine qua non. A re-organised and restructured NLDB to undertake all its incorporated functions is the only remedy. Thereby it may, up to a point, stem the tide of declining cattle and buffalo populations and declining cattle and beef supply of immediate remedial measures are taken by the Government. A few more years delay will be non-reversible and there will soon be the need for a continuing linear increase in the quantum of beef and milk products imports year by year.

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