

Ready to talk with LTTE but with conditions. (1994, May 6). *The Island*.

No confidence motion debate

Ready to talk with LTTE but with conditions —Dr. Wimal

Dr. Wimal Wickremasinghe Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Environment said: Today he was wearing several hats but would not talk through his hat.

I totally reject the line of arguments adopted by Mr. Lakshman Jayakody. Mr. Jayakody said the opposition was for a negotiated settlement on the issue of the North-East. But the opposition has withdrawn from discussions initiated by the government to solve the issue.

Most of the issues raised by Mr. Lakshman Jayakody involved those already answered on the floor of the House specially by way of answers to Adjournment Questions.

Opposition has been brought in by the opposition as if they were born yesterday. Ever since the government came into power meaningful attempts were made to solve the problems.

The LTTE betrayed the government when it made an honest attempt to resolve the crisis. Government did everything possible to preserve law and order in the crisis areas. The North-Eastern Provincial Council had to be dissolved under such circumstances.

There is a massive disinformation campaign against the government. Government had taken steps militarily, to weaken the armed strength of the LTTE and politically to bring them to the negotiating table.

Government was ready to talk to LTTE subjects to four conditions. They included; LTTE must renounce use of arms completely; Prabhakaran must take part in such discussions.

Sales of state land has been done on the valuations made by the government valuer.

Mr. Jayakody: All such valuations should be table before the House. We will then be able to say where there is undervaluation.

Dr. Wickremasinghe: I am prepared to produce the valuations if they go into the Hanzard.

Speaker: The documents can be kept at the Library. I cannot compel the Minister to table the documents.

Dr. Wickremasinghe: The plantations required a monthly injection of Rs. 400 million. When they were run by the two corporations. The government borrowed at 12 per cent interest, in order to keep the plantations going.

Our policy with regard to privatisation and peoplistisation is embedded in the statement of British Minister who said, "Business of government is not government of business."

Employee ownership was another cap in the peoplistisation programme introduced by the government. Prior to this, employees had no form of ownership in the economic machinery.

When we transfer assets of the firms to the private

Leaders not people who are communal minded

Mr. K. Premachandran TULF-Jaffna district: Minister Wimal Wickremasinghe accepted that the North-East issue has to be resolved. However, the UNP has made no attempt over the last 17 years to solve the problem. After 1977 we have had communal riots.

The Minister said that the North-East war has contributed to poverty, I fully agree. Billions of rupees are spent on the war.

Several communalistic speeches have been made by the leaders of this country specially in the recent past. They have compared the Minorities to the creepers of tree. The speeches reflect that there is no commitment on the part of our leaders to solve this issue. It is the leaders who are communal minded not the Sinhala people.

The Tamil parties participated in several deliberations over the last six years both within Parliament and outside, but no solution has been found to the ethnic issue. Provincial Councils have been set up, but the centre has not properly devolved its power as set out in the Provincial Councils Act.

Prabhakaran has said that he is agreeable to a Federal System of Government. Federalism does not

investors we transfer the liabilities too. The Opposition has never spoken about this.

All the government institutions except 6 were transferred to the private sector, over the valuation of the Chief Valuer. The valuations of the Chief Valuers could only be challenged by a qualified valuer.

The labour factor was dealt with strictly according to the labour laws of the country.

Income tax and BTT returns rose sharply after the privatisation.

Airlanka is currently running with a outdated fleet and need immediate re-fleeting. Many international airlines have decided to refleet their own fleets.

Worldwide tenders were called in 1991 for the purchase of air buses from the Airbus Industries of France. The Airlanka wanted to buy five air buses. The first three valued US\$ 356 m and the last two US\$ 287 m.

Airbus Industries also agreed to exempt Airlanka from the need of making any pre-delivery payments. The modus of financing has not yet been finalised. Possibly the purchases will be on a lease basis.

The transactions are open.

Regarding the oppositions charge that the government has not provided any viable solution to the growing unemployment, he said this charge is baseless.

The SLFP's economic theory was unscientific. The party is obsessed by what is called an import substitution economy. These economic policies failed miserably. Adoption of the open economic policy itself is admission of the failure of their economic policies. The opposition now speaks with tongue in cheek.

Finding a viable solution to the unemployment problems is a complex exercise. Today's performance of the economy is highly appreciable.

The GDP and GNP rose in 1993 by 6.9 per cent and 7.6 per cent respectively according to the Central Bank report.

The Opposition can make distorted statements about the government's economic policy outside but they cannot do this within the Parliament.

Our policy in regard to unemployment is to keep the rate of unemployment to a socially acceptable level of 5 per cent. This is done by securing a 10 per cent development of the country's GDP.

Government has received applications from nearly 9000 unemployed graduates, for providing employment. They will be recruited as development trainees. During the first year they will receive an allowance of Rs. 3000 monthly.

The opposition's No Confidence Motion is a mere election gimmick.

—K. Premachandran

amount to a separation of the country. The Government should give serious consideration to this proposal.

Both the UNP and SLFP should reconsider the position taken up by them in the Parliamentary Select Committee on the ethnic issue that the North-East should be demerged.

Sincere and correct solutions should be found to the problem. One of the main issues aggravating the problem is the state sponsored Sinhala Colonisation, in the East, with a view to changing the demographic pattern of the East. We are not opposed to Sinhalese settling in the North-East but state sponsored colonisation must stop.

The economic ban on Jaffna commenced in 1990 and it continues. People in Vavuniya have to give bribes to the army also. There is no water and electricity in Jaffna and an acute shortage of essential food items exists.

People are being killed by aerial bombing. If the government cannot solve this problem it should resign.