

In Parliament on Thursday

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Govt is incompetent and inhuman — Lakshman Jayakody

When Parliament met at 9.00 a.m. yesterday speaker M. H. Mohamed presided.

After the new TULF MP N. Sri Kantha was sworn in as MP to fill the vacancy of K. Sivaneswaran, the no-confidence motion against the government was moved by the Opposition.

"Whereas the United National Party Government has miserably failed to solve the burning national issues, acted in callous disregard of the critical financial position of the country indulging in wasteful expenditure of public funds and failed to provide relief to the long suffering masses and, whereas the said government has, inter alia:

(1) failed to bring about peace in the North East and the confusion which has arisen as a result of various conflicting statements on this issue expressed by the leaders of the government.

(2) Failed to find a solution to the problem of the cost of living which is escalating daily and driving it up further by raising the prices of essential consumer items such as milk foods, electricity and water;

(3) imposing unbearable hardships on the people by abolishing the subsidies enjoyed by the people for several decades specifically the subsidies on food, education, health, fertilizer and irrigation;

(4) sold state owned institutions and assets at low valuation to foreigners and those who are supporters of the government;

(5) provided the opportunity for certain individuals to earn fat commissions on the purchase of Air Buses by Air Lanka arising from a questionable deal involving a sum of US \$700 million or Rs. 34 billion for the purchase of the said Air Buses and making untrue statements about the said deal as well as refusing to answer related questions in Parliament;

(6) at a time when bribery, waste and corruption are rampant in the land, taken steps to safeguard corrupt individuals by such measures as the transfer of the Bribery Commissioner as well as failing to appoint a Special Presidential Commission to investigate the widespread waste and corruption in the country which has continued to flourish even under the present regime despite the government being repeatedly urged by the opposition to appoint such a Commission;

(7) failed to provide a viable solution to the problem of unemployment which continues to become more and more acute each day;

(8) caused irreparable harm to the norms of civilised political conduct as well as qualifying the people's mandate by resorting to such anti-democratic means as abducting a member of the Southern Provincial Council thus bringing about the dissolution of the Southern Provincial Council and incurring an enormous expenditure of public funds on holding a fresh election to the Southern Province;

(9) failed to take the necessary legal steps as well as illegally withdrawing cases already filed in courts against high ranking persons such as Premadasa Udugampola who is alleged to have been involved in killings and appointing them to high posts in the government;

(10) failed to take any action against such inhuman acts such as the assassinations, disappearances, violations of human rights which took place in recent years including the cruel and barbaric massacre of the school children at Embilipitiya;

(11) refused to appoint an impartial commission as urged by the Opposition to inquire into the assassination of Leaders of Political parties, Heads of Security Forces and persons such as Richard de Zoysa, Lakshman Perera and many others;

(12) over the past 17 years wilfully allowed the State Transport system set up in 1956 to provide a cheap and reliable service to the people to deteriorate to a point beyond correction through gross neglect, mis-

management, waste and corruption; ran up massive operational losses to justify the sale of many valuable assets belonging to the state such as buses, depots and work-shops including the extensive facilities at Werahera to their political henchmen at ridiculously low prices; in the guise of peoplistation handed over the balance assets to employees, organisations dominated and run by Sirikotha Mudalali; permitted the import of ramshackle buses and coaches which frequently break down while running and making public transport in general a nightmare and agony to commuters including school children, the sick, public and private sector employees who are jam packed and harassed and forced to spend endless hours at the expense of their work waiting for buses which turn up at all odd hours;

And, therefore, this Parliament expresses and resolves that this Parliament has no confidence in the government.

Opening the debate for the opposition Mr. Lakshman Jayakody (SLFP-National List) said: The worst curse that had befallen this nation was the North East war. The state had failed so far to solve it. The SLFP if elected to power will negotiate with all Tamil parties and will solve the issue. There's no public confidence in this government. It is an incompetent, and inhuman administration. It had failed to put forward its own solution or proposal. This problem has caused a terrible blow to the body politic of this country.

Land is sold for nothing to foreigners: *'The Island'* of April 21, states that 276 acres of coconut land is to be sold to foreigners to put up a race course. Sri Lanka faces a severe shortage of coconuts. An acre is to be sold at Rs. 47,000/- It is well known that politicians have a hand in this role. Land is undervalued. The Presidential Secretariat must take prompt action to stop this illegal sale. A race course and a golf course will pollute the culture and environment. I wish to table *'The Island'* editorial of April 25, which is very important and relevant today. Prime coconut land should not be devastated.

There is another move to destroy tea lands. The Plantation Restructuring Unit (PRU) should have proper control over estates. The plantation management companies are in debt to the banks and the Treasury. Let us know the parameters of the regional plantation companies. The government will stand trial at the next elections.

The parents of the 31 students disappeared at Embilipitiya had written 550 letters to the President. The UNP MMC Lakshman Perera disappeared. He was a supporter of the late Lalith Athulathmudali. He had no job. He produced a play depicting an eccentric doctor. The name of the players was 'Me Kauda, Mokada Karanne'. It has nothing to do with the UNP election slogan.

The Lalith Athulathmudali murder was not properly probed. You just put the blame on the LTTE. The state is protecting culprits. Many have disappeared but no action taken. We urge a Commission of Inquiry into these matters.

There should be open governance in this country. The administration must be transparent. There is rampant corruption in tenders and land sales. All these vital decisions must be taken openly.

Unemployment is a grave problem. There's no proper guidance and macro-thinking in the open economy. Education sector has come to a dead end. There's no strategy to absorb the influx of students into productive activity. Nothing concrete was done. Government encourages and tolerates evil. People are kept imprisoned without trial. Human rights are violated totally. Gambling is rampant. Water is polluted and forests are destroyed. The government has internal factional factions. The Thondaman-Sellasamy battle is fanned. Sirisena Cooray was removed as General Secretary. We doubt his ministerial portfolio will be there for long.