

THE NEW TIMES

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SIXPENCE WEEKLY

Liberal Member's Attack on "Defence" Bill Professor Bland on Menace of Bureaucracy

Although we do not feel that Professor Bland's criticism of the totalitarian "Defence" Preparations Bill went far enough, we have much pleasure in printing the most important portions of his address given in the Federal Parliament on July 12. Unlike some of his Liberal Party colleagues who criticised the Bill in the Party room and then condoned it in the Parliament, Professor Bland had the courage publicly to draw attention to some (although not all) of the dangers in the Bill and to refuse to vote for it.

The delay in receiving "Hansard" reports of Parliamentary speeches has prevented us from making Professor Bland's important speech available to our readers before this. Professor Bland said: —

If honorable gentlemen opposite were really honest, they would vote for the bill and praise the Government for having introduced it. During the last ten years, the policy of the Labour party has been, as the honorable member for Bendigo (Mr. Clarey) indicated in his considered speech on this measure, to concentrate all substantive powers in Canberra in order to perpetuate the planned economy to which they give their allegiance . . .

The persistent demand for the reimposition of controls indicates the difficulties that the individual encounters in his search for liberty and freedom. . . Honorable gentlemen opposite have conditioned the individual to accept controls, and now he almost hugs the chains that bind him. Honorable members on this side of the House, if they believe in liberalism, will continue to insist that the individual shall be freed from unnecessary restraints and given the opportunity that he needs to work out his life in his own way. That is the great difference between our beliefs and those of honorable gentlemen opposite . . .

If I am estopped from making an inquiry into the reasons why the Government has come to the conclusion that these controls are necessary, I am not estopped from inquiring into the adequacy of the means that it proposes to adopt to do what it has decided must be done. Whether a thing shall be done is for the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to decide. It is a matter of policy. How it shall be done is a matter that concerns us as members of the Parliament. It is an important question to which we should give consideration.

The Prime Minister has made a state-

ment upon this matter that has been referred to during the course of this debate. It is as follows: —

"In this new Parliament we shall bring down a Defence Preparations Bill to institute such needed controls as may be thought to be within the limits of the Commonwealth Constitution. We do not propose to rush into controls. We have an instinctive dislike for them. We do not believe that Canberra can run things better than Brisbane or Perth."

I emphasise that last sentence. I believe that we should use it as a kind of motto. The right honorable gentleman continued:—
"These controls will be adopted only if the emergency renders them necessary for the protection of our people."

Even though that is a rather wide statement, it sets a limit upon the kind of things that the Government has in mind. We must accept the assurance of the Prime Minister that he has no love for controls and that only the minimum number necessary for the protection of the people will be introduced. I ask honorable gentlemen on both sides of the House to consider whether we shall be able to ensure that what the Prime Minister has promised will be done. Whatever is done, it will result in a new concentration of power in Canberra, and I believe that that will be regretted by all members of the Government parties.

The greater complexity of government, arising from a multiplicity of Ministers and a multiplication of their functions, has led to an increasing impotence on the part of the individual in all the contacts that he has with the Government or with the State. One of the great problems with which we

are faced is that of organising the conduct of the affairs of the State in a way that will ensure the preservation of the dignity of the individual. This measure confronts us with that dilemma in a very definite manner. We must approach the problem in a non-party spirit. Each of us must consider what we can do to preserve the dignity of the individual, which is all important in a democratic community. This bill reveals the necessity for reconsidering the distribution of governmental function between the Commonwealth and the States, with a view to ascertaining what powers the Government in Canberra can divest itself of so that some relief can be given to the

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OUR POLICY

1. The preservation of Australia's sovereignty as a part of the British Empire, and the exposure of all internal and external groups which attack that sovereignty.
2. The preservation and extension of genuine local government.
3. The preservation and strengthening of all Constitutional safeguards for the purpose of protecting fundamental individual rights.
4. The encouragement of all activities designed to bring Governments under more effective control by the electors.
5. The preservation and extension of genuine free, competitive enterprise and private ownership, and opposition to all Monopoly, whether it be "private" or State.
6. The support of a financial policy which will (a) permit free enterprise to make available to all individuals an increasing standard of living and greater leisure for cultural pursuits; (b) result in no further increase in the community's indebtedness and the sound business practice of gradually reducing existing debt.
7. Recognising that the basis of any sound economy is agriculture, the encouragement of agricultural policies which will ensure the preservation and building up of soil fertility by organic farming and gardening; and the prevention of soil erosion and the protection of forests and watersheds.

Now, when our land to ruin's brink is verging,
In God's name, let us speak while there is time!
Now, when the padlocks for our lips are forging,
Silence is crime.

WHITTIER

TO THE POINT

Mr. Menzies and Communism

Speaking in the Federal Parliament on July 5, the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, said that, "the whole danger to peace in the world today springs from the policies, plans, underground activities and promoted local wars of the Communists, whose imperialism is not different in character, although it is more extensive and subtle in form from the imperialism of the Czars."

If Mr. Menzies really means what he said, it is certain that he has little understanding of the real Communist menace, and is therefore incompetent to oppose it effectively. To suggest that the Communists are merely "imperialist aggressors," completely ignores the fact that Communism is primarily a conspiracy, which seeks to overthrow the existing social order by revolutionary methods. This conspiracy can only succeed while politicians like Mr. Menzies refuse to correct financial rules, which prevent the free enterprise system from functioning as it could.

No General War Likely

Even Sir Keith Murdoch has been forced to admit, after his recent tour of Europe, "There is an increasing and somewhat firm opinion that the Russian Communists could not sustain and do not plan a general war now." (Melbourne "Herald," August 11.)

We have always been sceptical of the suggestion that the Communist leaders could successfully fight a major military war against the Western Powers. Even while fighting the British Empire and holding down conquered Europe, the Germans very nearly defeated the Russians within a few months. Russian material and human losses were appallingly high during the last war. The Russians have had one of the worst droughts in history since the war. And unrest amongst all peoples behind the Iron Curtain is growing. "The threat of war" is, of course, being deliberately used to impose totalitarianism upon the non-Communist countries.

Inflation in U.S.A.

Mr. Thomas Dewey, Governor of New York, pointed out while in Australia (vide Melbourne "Age," August 13), "The problem of inflation in Australia was not as bad as in the U.S.A." We trust that Mr. Menzies and his certified economists noted this statement, because it is further evidence of what we have persistently pointed out: that increased production, however desirable, cannot and does not, reduce prices while present financial rules are maintained.

* * * *

Monopoly

There has been considerable opposition to the proposal of the major oil companies to "tie" garages to one brand of petrol. But, according to Mr. Dawnay-Mould, Liberal Member in the Victorian Parliament, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Com-

merce is not qualified to oppose monopolistic practices by other groups when it has the power to say which garages shall receive petrol supplies. Mr. Dawnay-Mould claims that he can produce a list of 68 service stations closed since 1941 by the Automobile Chamber of Commerce. "The vicious system operated by the Chamber means that no one can open a garage without first being favoured by that body."

"Luxury" Production

Businessmen back from trips to the U.S. and U.K. see no check there to manufacture of many luxury lines likely to be strangled in Australia, and several have commented that the U.S. alone has industrial potential so enormous that she could mop up Australia's rich luxury goods market overnight while still selling the Western world armaments to ensure employment for her workers. Plainly, Australia's political leaders have a first duty to consider the interests of local manufacturers before throwing them to the international wolves. Remember that we have Japan on our doorstep waiting to swamp us with slave rate brummagem which will smash our working standards.

CORRESPONDENTS, PLEASE NOTE

The recent increase in postage charges has immediately increased considerably the growing burden of costs, which "The New Times" has been struggling with for a long time. We therefore ask all correspondents to help lighten the burden by providing a stamped and addressed envelope when they write requesting any information or advice.

"Social Credit and Catholicism"

By George-Henri Levesque, OP. Professor of Economics, Laval and Montreal Universities, Dominican House of Studies, Ottawa.

Because of the rapid progress of Social Credit ideas in the French-Canadian Province of Quebec which Major Douglas has described as having "probably the most genuine Catholic culture under the British flag," this booklet is particularly important. Mr. Eric Butler has written an excellent introduction. There is also an Appendix outlining the structure and methods of the non-Party Union of Electors in Quebec.

The author of *Social Credit and Catholicism* finishes his booklet with the following: "... if you want neither Socialism nor Communism, bring Social Credit in array against them. It will be in your hands a powerful weapon with which to fight these enemies."

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(Illustrated.) **By H. J. Massingham.**

LIBERAL MEMBERS ATTACK DEFENCE BILL

(Continued from page 1)

individual from the remote pressure that is being applied to him. Perhaps it is not sufficient to say that the pressure is remote, but it is often uninformed because those who apply it are too far from the scene of the action to know what ought to be done. The problem of whether Canberra could do things better than Brisbane, or Perth, keeps coming to the surface all the time. It is a matter of administration, to which we have so far paid too little attention.

This new development will disturb still further the balance of Commonwealth and State relationships and make it more difficult to adjust that balance . . .

Whatever we do, the best guide of what we must avoid will be found in the experience of the past. I do not suppose that there is one honorable member who, today, is not obliged to eat some of the words that he has uttered during the last ten years. Honorable members opposite who complain that the Government is seeking too great a power under this measure sought to gain similar powers for Labour governments from 1942 onwards. They were very much annoyed because they were defeated in their desire to get more power. Some of my colleagues on this side of the chamber have expressed abhorrence at the thought of how many of these powers may be administered. Yet, today, they are confronted with the necessity for retracing their steps. We must realise that we must now do things that we would rather avoid doing. The whole proposal reminds members of how a small stream breaks into a large river. I have seen how measures like this bill and the National Security Act 1939 have operated. On this point, I shall quote remarks that were made by Professor Bailey, who, before he was appointed Solicitor-General, was Professor of Law and Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne. In 1941, he said:—

"A month ago when I made a count, I found that there were included in the Law Book Co.'s War Legislation Service 27 Acts of Parliament, five of them pre-war; 359 Statutory Rules, the children of these Acts; and no less than 974 Proclamations, Orders, Declarations and the like, the grandchildren so to say. And the Law Book Company's

Service does not contain by any means all the amendments made in the Australian Military Rules and Orders. Could even 27 rabbits have produced a more numerous progeny in the time?"

That is the kind of thing that torments supporters of the Government, despite the confidence that some of my colleagues have expressed in regard to this measure. They seem to be satisfied that there is no danger that this legislation will spawn regulations like the National Security Act 1939 spawned them. A leopard cannot change his skin or a secret drinker his "spots," any more than a regulation maker can change his habits. The regulations that will be produced under this measure may, perhaps, be as numerous as the progeny of the rabbits to which Professor Bailey referred. Despite all the difficulties that the honorable member for Watson is worried about, the Prime Minister has tried to reassure us that, in his judgment, it will not be necessary to make a large number of regulations. I hope that that will prove to be the case; but I do not think that anybody is in a position to indicate just how many regulations will have to be made in order to give effect to this measure.

My view of the drafting of this bill is that it has too slavishly copied the National Security Act 1939. I should like to refer to the differences between those two measures. In 1939 we were at war, despite the fact that it was one of those phoney wars; and we were picking our way along the totalitarian road. Today, we know the dangers that beset us on that road. It may be true that we are not now actually at war, although our soldiers are at this moment fighting in Korea. However, we view the situation, we are in a position in which the Prime Minister demands that action shall be taken by the Government as is provided for in clause 4 of the bill. That clause illustrates one of the differences between this measure and the National Security Act 1939. In 1939 Cabinet consisted of fewer than a dozen Ministers and they were unfamiliar with the political and technical things that had to be done. For that reason, they readily became pliant instruments of socialist officials who sought to give effect to their own political philosophy whether it emanated from recruits from my own university or some other university, or from the people. In those circumstances, those officials had a golden opportunity to give effect to their doctrine, and that was one of the reasons why at that time regulations were spawned at such a pace and spate. Clause 4, as various honorable members have indicated, is too wide. It is evidence of the difficulty that the Prime Minister indicated, of trying to deal with this problem by regulation or substantive measure. I believe that in respect of many of the matters that arise under this measure the people should have the protection of an Act of Parliament and that the Government should not rely upon making regulations. I could wish that several of the things that the Prime Minister has indicated that he wants to be done by means of clause 4 would be done by legislation. The right honorable gentleman has indicated some of the difficulties involved in doing all of these

things by legislation. For instance, the legislative procedure would give premature warning to interests concerned of action that the Government intended to take. The regulation method is flexible and enables the Government to act quickly. It is a means of getting at the difficulties promptly. Nevertheless, the price that the people pay for regulations is very great. It is the substitution of bureaucracy for the Parliament. That is the price that we have to pay and it will be heavy unless all honorable members are careful to watch what is done and are prepared to ensure that the power granted under this measure shall not be abused.

My apprehensions are increased when I peruse clause 5, sub-clause (3.) of which removes a whole series of protections that were provided under the Acts Interpretation Act. It is true that an attempt has been made to minimise the number of restraints to be eliminated, but in that respect the Government has been unsuccessful. The provisions of the Acts Interpretation Act that are to be rendered inoperative in respect of this measure were inserted in that Act by the Prime Minister himself in 1937, and all the reasons that he gave for providing for those protections apply with even greater force today. We have learned how difficult it is to protect the people so far as the making of regulations is concerned. For that reason, if I thought that I should thereby serve any useful purpose I should like to move in committee that sub-clause (3.) of clause 5 be omitted. However, I should then be confronted with another problem that arises in respect of clause 6, which restores some of the matters that I would remove from clause 5. The point that I make with respect to the removal of protections provided for under the Acts Interpretation Act is that those protections include the rules that prevent the imposition of obligations with retrospective application. That class of regulation represents one of the real tyrannies to which people in a democratic community are subject every now and again. No democracy should tolerate regulations of that kind that retrospectively impose liabilities or curtail rights. If we really want to do that, let us take such action by Act of Parliament. There should be no place at all for that sort of thing under the regulation making power.

Clause 11 also offends my sense of what is reasonable in terms of legislation that should be passed by the Liberal Party. That clause empowers Ministers to delegate their powers under regulations, and it is so wide as to allow anything to be done. Ministers may delegate power to do anything at all that they want to be done. I have the greatest apprehension that the sort of thing that was done under the National Security Act 1939 will be re-adopted and continued under this measure. Under the National Security Act, Ministers were able to divest themselves of all responsibility. During the period from January 1942, to September in the same year, which was just after Japan entered the recent war, over 5,500 regulations and orders were issued. That fact indicates what we may expect. A spate of regulations of that kind becomes

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Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi

"Men and women who desire to escape from dependence upon the present industrial system and who have no desire to substitute for it dependence upon a state-controlled system are beginning to experiment with a way of life which is neither city life nor farm life, but which is an effort to combine the advantages and to escape the disadvantages of both."

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The Greater Melbourne Scheme

The Victorian Country Party Government's attempt, by its Greater Melbourne scheme, to destroy local Councils in and around Melbourne, is a classic example of politicians who verbally oppose Communism and Socialism, not only supporting a totalitarian objective, but of using totalitarian methods to achieve that objective. It has been often pointed out that no people in the world have, in free elections, voted Communist Government to power. We have no hesitation in claiming that a Referendum on the Greater Melbourne scheme would result in an overwhelming defeat of the Government.

At the very time the Victorian Government was preparing to introduce its scheme to centralise control of Melbourne Councils, sections of the ratepayers in - the Heidelberg municipality voted overwhelmingly in favour of secession from control by the Heidelberg Council.

But the Victorian Government, which cannot even claim to have any type of a mandate to impose its totalitarian policy, refuses to take any notice of the views of Councils or ratepayers. It refuses a Referendum, no doubt realising that it would be defeated. In other words, it is attempting to destroy the ratepayers' institutions without seeking any permission from those most vitally concerned. This is exactly what the Communists and Socialists propose. They seek to forcibly deprive the individual of his assets and his rights. No doubt Mr. McDonald and his colleagues would reject with indignation the charge that they are adopting Communist methods. But what is the essential difference between depriving the individual of his rights at the point of a gun and a Government destroying the same rights because it happens to have a majority in Parliament? Mr. McDonald's Government cannot even claim that it has a majority in the Victorian Parliament.

If the Greater Melbourne scheme is imposed, there is no doubt that it will not be long before an attack will be made upon the remaining municipalities throughout Victoria. The dishonest argument will be used that greater efficiency will result from more centralised control, that a smaller number of authorities will be able to undertake activities which present municipalities cannot or will not. But already it is clear that the Greater Melbourne scheme is going to increase substantially the rates of ratepayers. It is true that the proposed Greater Melbourne Council will be able to indulge in an orgy of centralised planning which existing Councils have so far resisted. Any essential activities, which these Councils have not undertaken, would have been attended to if adequate finance had been available. Mr. McDonald rightly claims that the Commonwealth's control of financial policy is destroying the independence of the States. How, then, can he honestly criticise the alleged failures of local Councils when they also have little financial independence?

The Greater Melbourne scheme is, of course, merely one aspect of the general drive towards centralisation taking place in every sphere today. But if the individual can resist effectively the centralisers' attempts to destroy his local institutions, he has done something really worthwhile to defend his independence. And, in doing so, he gains confidence that he can also resist centralist policies in other spheres. Centralism should always be resisted, no matter under what guise it is attempted.

PHONEY OPPOSITION

The proper conception (of a Greater Melbourne scheme), which has long been advocated in Victoria, is very different. It postulates the retention of local government for domestic municipal affairs, and establishment of a central body representing all, and responsible for carrying out functions common to the whole metropolitan area. Among these are planned development, slum reclamation, arterial roads and bridges, traffic control, local health administration, including supervision of milk supplies, provision of metropolitan parks and playing areas protection of bayside foreshores, and functions of importance to all parts of the metropolis.

—From Melbourne "Age" of August 29.

"The Age" neglected to say what functions would be left for the local Councils, which it says should be retained, to perform after the central planners obtained control over the matters suggested.

MR. MENZIES IN 1944

The following is from the Federal "Hansard" of February 23, 1944 (page 450):

Mr. Menzies: The High Court has not abdicated its responsibility in this matter (protecting the constitution in wartime).

Mr. Curtin: Is not Parliament the proper body to determine what is necessary to prosecute the war?

Mr. Menzies: The answer to that is: "Certainly not." Every Honourable Member knows what a comfortable majority in Parliament may decide . . . We cannot dispose of constitutional limitations by saying that Parliament has to be trusted. If that were the answer, we could tear up the Constitution and forget it. We can broadly say that the defence power has proved itself the most flexible and most extensive power ever written into this or any other Constitution.

"NEW TIMES" ANNUAL DINNER

We draw our readers' attention to the fact that the "New Times" Annual Dinner for this year will be held on Friday, September 21, at the Victoria Palace, Little Collins Street, Melbourne. As the Dinner is being held during Show Week, we anticipate that our country friends who are down for the Show will avail themselves of the opportunity of meeting one another and their Melbourne colleagues. Last year's Dinner was an outstanding success, with "New Times" supporters from nearly all States present. We anticipate that this year's Dinner will be even better.

In order that catering and other important arrangements can be made well in advance, all those desirous of attending the Dinner are urged to communicate with Mr. R. H. Weller, c/o Box 1226L., immediately. Please help us to make this important event a success by booking a seat early. If any supporters desire to sit together as a party at the Dinner, appropriate arrangements can be made.

Is Owning a Home Now a Luxury?

By J. T. Lang

The brain-trusters who have now taken charge of the Menzies Government have declared a kind of holy war on everything they regard as luxury. To that end they have devised an elaborate scheme of credit control, materials control, labor control, and other controls still to come. The new system is to be geared to the banking system.

The first step came with the directive imposing further restrictions on credit. Overdrafts had to be reduced. Money was to be no longer available except to a special preferential list of undertakings. Then with the Budget there is to be added what has already been referred to as a new system of selective taxation." On top of all that, interest rates are to be increased all round, not only to new borrowers but for those who have already taken up commitments.

Those who will be hit hardest will be those who are paying off a home that is already built, or those who are either in the process of building a home or about to commence. They have become the first targets for the planners. They will suffer the most in the earliest stages.

In times of increasing costs, it is essential that the banking system should treat home building loans on a basis of elasticity. Advances should be related to actual costs of building. That should be the responsibility of the central bank.

But the small homebuilder has been almost completely thwarted by recent trends. Those who have already started building, and who are faced with increased costs owing to rise and fall clauses in their contracts or because they are building on a cost plus fixed fee contract, are, in many instances, faced with the complete loss of their investment.

One of the first steps taken under the new financial policy was to withdraw loans to the Co-operative Home Building Societies. They have been the means of thousands of working people and those with moderate means of acquiring their own homes. The policy initiated by the Government of this State was for the Government to guarantee the loans. Advances up to 90 percent of the cost were made with repayment of capital and interest over periods extending up to 30 years.

Now these loans have dried up. The Commonwealth policy is to refuse any further advances. That means that the principal means by which people were able to build their own homes has now disappeared. But that is not all.

For those in the process of building, the projected cost has been skyrocketed by the latest wage increases and by increases in costs of material. In addition, costs have been loaded through waiting time while builders have been waiting for deliveries of such scarce materials as cement. As valuations have been rising at the same time, it would have been thought that the Government would have given a lead by calling upon the central bank to provide additional accommodation. Instead the banks have been called upon to adopt a tough policy. They are to say, "No," irrespective of the consequences to the hapless homebuilder.

Now those paying off their homes are to have further burdens imposed on them.

Interest rates are to go up. That will mean heavier weekly payments. The home that cost £1,200 to build in 1941 now costs £4,000 to build. The borrower, who had to find 35/- a week in 1941 to meet his bank charges, now has to find at least £4 a week. An increase of 1 percent in interest rates can mean another £1 a week out of the family purse. That comes at a time when his local council rates are going up with new valuations on the unimproved capital value, and when water and sewerage rates are also being increased.

What chance has the homebuilder of meeting such conditions? He is to be soaked in the Horror Budget, promised by Menzies. Then he is to be further soaked for his bank accommodation. The result will be that many will be forced to give up the ghost and realise whatever they can by selling the home.

There will be a total cessation of independent home building by people in the lower income groups. What chance will the average young couple just starting off in life have of acquiring their own home under such conditions? There will be only two kinds of building soon. One will be by the black marketeers, the higher income brackets and those independent of banking loans. They will be the people with the ready cash to put down five or six thousand pounds, as a minimum. They are more likely, in fact, to be those who want homes costing closer to the £10,000 mark.

The only other class of building, while it continues, will be the Government-built homes from loan money. They are in the lottery class.

Those wanting shelter will have to take their chances in the Government homes ballot. If the planners stop that, then it will be a case of back to tents and Happy Valley. It is strange that a Government that asserts its belief in free enterprise would be so intent on the socialisation of home building. Is it that, like a well-known politician, they have started to think of the home purchaser as being in the "little capitalist" class.

The Government, which is so worried about production, is deliberately stifling the greatest incentive that exists in any community to earn additional income. If the worker has no hope of owning his own home, or building his own home, what incentive is there for him to work any harder? Is it that the present Government has decided that home building and owning your own home is an unnecessary luxury? Is the next stage to be wholesale foreclosure because those in the process of buying their homes are unable to meet all the new burdens to be placed upon them? If it becomes a question of deciding between food, clothing and shelter, which will go first? Two demands will not be denied. One will be the Taxation Commissioner. The other will be the bank holding the mortgage.

Liberal Member's Attack on Defence Bill

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totally uncontrollable. It becomes a flood that no one can stem . . .

The Prime Minister said that he would insist upon ample protection being provided against the abuse of the regulation-making power. However, the protections that exist in the measure are not adequate. It is true that provision exists for the laying of regulations before the Parliament and that the Parliament may disallow any regulation. However, withdrawal of regulations could not be effected unless the Parliament were in session. But I point out that the very things, which, the Prime Minister has said, make it necessary to promulgate regulations, are the very reasons why there will not be any protection. Protection will be afforded if the Parliament is in session, but if it is in recess, there will be none. That is why we require protection of the kind that was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition when, as the Attorney-General, he introduced the Constitution Alteration (Post-war and Democratic Rights) Bill in 1944. He hoped that the people would grant to the Commonwealth the powers that were sought if he imposed some restraints upon the likelihood of the abuse of power by bureaucrats.

The greatest danger, in my opinion, is not so much in the making of regulations, as in the attitude of the officials who make them. The problem arises with the public servants upon whom the Government has to rely. It becomes impossible for a Minister to know everything that the staff of his department is doing. Departments have grown so large that Ministers cannot know precisely what their officers are doing. The difficulty arises with the public servants, and their attitude of mind, again because of the absence of any tradition of administration or of any adequate sense of the proper place of an official in a genuinely democratic community. It is for those reasons that I raise my voice against the power to issue regulations under this bill, in the hope that some kind of protection, which has been promised by the Prime Minister, will be evolved.

Another problem that arises is that which an Opposition member has referred to as the new despotism, which occurs when an official is placed in the position of adjudicating upon measures that he himself has framed. A positive protection is required . . .

. . . The most important thing is that I want a provision to be inserted in this bill, which will give an assurance that the people will be adequately protected from abuses that can occur in the administration of regulations that may be promulgated under this legislation. Unless the power to make orders is eliminated and the principle of delegation is curtailed, I shall not be able to vote for the bill.



Have You Tried Sawdust Gardening?

Quietly, without fanfare or controversy, the groundwork for an agricultural revolution is taking form here in the Pacific North-west. It is a revolt against the orthodox and conventional methods of gardening, against plowing and spading and cultivating and hoeing, against wearisome weeding, against the unceasing vigilance needed to combat plant pests.

To get first-hand information on this recent development, I went to Rupert Stephens, internationally known for his research in developing new strains of berry plants and bushes, in co-operation with the Departments of Agriculture of the United States and Canada. "I've been using sawdust mulch for fifteen years," he told me. Before he tried sawdust, Stephens had used other mulches — shavings, leaves, and bracken. He found bracken best, but the risk of a flash fire was too great, and, too, the supply couldn't keep pace with the demand on his intensively cultivated thirty-acre Mountain Valley berry farm near Duncan, Vancouver Island.

When he began experimenting with sawdust, Stephens used it on a trial plot. Early results were spotty. Some of the plants, particularly raspberry canes, showed sickly yellow foliage. This was proved to be entirely due to nitrogen deficiency, caused basically by the sawdust getting mixed with the topsoil. It is, of course, common knowledge that many forms of decaying or organic matter, incorporated into the soil, tie up available nitrogen, temporarily impoverishing the supply needed by growing plants; as soon as the active process of decomposition is over, the nitrogen drain stops.

Every sawdust mulcher agrees on the inviolability of one basic rule: don't mix sawdust and soil. Stephens learned this the hard way. Equally important is the requirement that the surface of the soil be smooth and even before the sawdust is spread, with a uniform depth of mulch covering the ground; to throw sawdust indiscriminately on large clods is a sure way to crop failure. Another relevant detail is the coarser the sawdust granules, the better the results. Fine powdery sawdust cakes and blankets the soil, shutting out air and blocking ventilation.

Once these were learned, progress was sure and satisfactory. The little experimental plot enlarged until it took in almost the whole farm. And, for the past few years, no plow or harrow or cultivator has

disturbed the soil, except for levelling and dragging roots out of newly cleared land. He also uses manual rather than mechanical means to spread his sawdust mulch, averaging 35-40 cubic yards of sawdust to the acre annually. As the wheels of a heavy spreader would impact the soil, the mulch is distributed from an aluminium box secured to a rubber-tyred wheelbarrow. Installation of a blower system using flexible tubing, similar to that used for commercial delivery of bulk sawdust to city fuel bins, is under consideration.

This prosperous berry farmer makes no claim that sawdust mulching is a universal panacea for agriculture. "I think you realise," he told me, "that the crops we grow, such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, rhubarb and other small fruits, are perhaps better suited to our method of culture than some crops might be. We think, but haven't quite proven, that European grapes (*Viniferae*) are better grown without sawdust, yet American grapes of the Concord type thrive on it. Again, sweet or field corn, particularly in the early stages of growth, appear to get on better without it. Perhaps that is because the damp sawdust keeps the ground cold, and delays maturity."

He went on, "Actually, we cash in on this by growing late varieties of fruit in heavy sawdust mulch, getting good returns on out-of-season crops."

Finally, I brought up the subject of fertilising. "We start our rotation with soil well built up and manured," Stephens explained. "If more fertiliser is needed, it is applied on top of sawdust, which is usually half decomposed; if we think it necessary, we sometimes apply a light covering of sawdust on top of the manure. For fertilising, we use a great deal of seaweed — thirty tons to the acre — and find it very satisfactory."

To balance Rupert Stephens' experience as a commercial grower, I contacted William Newman, a home-use gardener, whose success with sawdust mulching received some publicity in the local newspaper, the "Cowichan Leader," of Duncan, B.C. As a result, Newman's colorful garden has been flooded with hundreds of visitors, including a Cabinet Minister, government horticulturists, commercial florists and seed-growers, and tourists.

With four years of sawdust culture behind him, Newman is one hundred percent sold on the method. At this year's Cowichan Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, his zinnias and asters won six first prizes, the

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HAVE YOU TRIED SAWDUST GARDENING?

(Continued from page 6)

asters also carrying off the award for the best flower in the show. His vegetables are prolific to the point of embarrassment. Onions weighing over two pounds apiece are common; carrots range up to nearly a foot long and two inches at the crown; dwarf Laxton's Progress peas shoot up like Tall Telephones, and, even more surprising, bear a second crop from new shoots after the old foliage has died down.

Outsize fruit and vegetables frequently lack flavour, but not so these. They are sweet and tasty. Green vegetables, such as lettuce, cabbage and peas, which normally grow bitter and coarse with age, retain the delicacy of the young plants when grown with sawdust mulch.

His technique is to spread a half-inch layer of wet sawdust over the seeds, wait until the shoots appear above this surface, and then gradually build up to desired depth, which he considers to be from four to six inches. While Stephens considers that sawdust tends to retard plant growth, Newman claims that his crops have an edge of three weeks to a month over those grown by the orthodox method.

Newman is an organic gardener, and his compost pile gets priority over all other garden duties; compost shares the credit with sawdust for the lush crops produced. In the fall, a layer of compost is spread over any soil considered to be depleted, sawdust to a depth of six ins. is built up on top, and it is left thus throughout the winter. In the spring planting of potatoes and onions, an additional dressing of compost is applied before they are covered with sawdust.

Sawdust gardening is simple, and its success is proven, but it is a precision technique demanding observance of a few straightforward rules. To ignore them is to court failure. At the same time, the process is so new that there is need for further experimentation, and there is no doubt but that additional uses and methods will be evolved. —"The Compost Society Magazine" (N.Z.).

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"... I believe that the future of British farming lies with the small farm and intensive farming. It is well known that, if the standards of production maintained on our best small farms were common throughout the industry, Britain could be self-supporting in food, except for citrus fruits and a few luxuries . . . There was a time when other countries looked to lead the way in farming; now it is our turn to learn from them. We pride ourselves on our standard of technical efficiency and output per man, the highest in Europe, but they were gained at the expense of output per acre, in which we were below all the principal continental countries . . .

"It is interesting to know that in Denmark, a country similar in many respects to our own, and which has had the same economic problems in the past as we have to face at the present time, the output per acre has been doubled during a period of time in which the average size of their farms has been reduced by half — and so successful has that policy been that before the war they were still creating a thousand new farms a year by splitting up larger holdings and estates as they came on the market. In Holland, where the average farm is less than half the size of our farming unit, output per acre was more than double that in England. Switzerland, with an average farm of 27 acres, had the highest output of all, in spite of many natural difficulties." —George Henderson in *Farmer's Progress*.

IT IS QUALITY THAT COUNTS

In the course of a talk on the West of England Service last month on "Efficiency on the Farm," Mr. J. T. Beresford said, "we tend to think, and we are encouraged to think, that modern methods are efficient, and therefore we are good farmers." Later, he observed:

"It is one of my nightmares that, under dictation of acute national need, of the recurring ad hoc crises to which we are all subject, of centrally-contrived cropping programmes, production targets, the casual inhumanity of the machine figures — under dictation of these tyrants, the landsman may lose that stubborn sense and independence which makes him so solid and valuable a citizen, and such good stock to breed from. It is the recurring cry of the economist, the planner, the ideologist that we should all become more efficient — but the measure of efficiency is invariably quantitative. Quality you cannot measure. And it is quality that endures. It was the quality and style of nineteenth century farming that we inherited from our great-grandfathers. Can we be sure we shall hand on as proud a tradition to those who follow us?"

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Silting Problem at Newcastle

Reports from Newcastle, N.S.W., state that the steel industry is being threatened by the continued silting of the Hunter River. The silting is also hampering transport of coal. It is tragic to note the lack of understanding of the fundamental cause of this growing problem. The best that Senator McLeay, Minister for Shipping, can suggest is that dredging operations be speeded up. While this may be effective, and necessary as a short-term measure, it merely tries to deal with the growing effects of silting, not the cause. Experience over a number of years in every country in the world, including the U.S.A., has proved that there is no satisfactory mechanical method of dealing with the problem of siltation.

In recent years, flooding in river valleys has become more common. The reason is, of course, that watersheds have been cleared of their trees and vegetation, thus destroying Nature's method of ensuring that heavy rainfall and snow in the mountains is absorbed as if by a giant sponge, and then released gradually. The problem of silting cannot be genuinely solved until watersheds are restored by the growth of adequate vegetation. This solution may not appeal to those who think that every problem on the face of this planet can be solved by mechanical power. But we predict that, unless the watershed of the Hunter River is restored and protected, increasing work will be required in trying to deal with siltation at Newcastle. Perhaps this is one of the planners' ideas for providing "full employment"!

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A Summary of the Programme for the Defeat of Communism

Having realistically faced that fact that they are already under attack by the Communists, that they are in a war now, Western leaders must immediately: —

- (1) Suppress all Communist activities with in Western Countries. The enemy's agents cannot be allowed to operate unmolested.
- (2) Sever all diplomatic relations with Communist Governments, stating that they believe they are engaged in warfare against the West, and that they are not genuine representatives of the people they are oppressing behind the Iron Curtain.
- (3) Openly encourage the formation of Free Russian, Free Polish and other Free Governments, formed on a provisional basis from amongst refugees from all Communist-dominated countries. Nothing would lift the morale of the peoples behind the Iron Curtain more than a demonstration by the West that it did not accept their permanent enslavement as an established fact.
- (4) In the East all possible support to be given to Chiang Kai-shek and his anti-Communist Nationalist forces. (The first How-to-Defeat-Communism booklet, The Truth About the Chinese Communists, reveals why the Chinese Nationalist Government should be recognised and strongly supported by the West.)
- (5) The West to use every avenue at its disposal, particularly refugee groups, to open a psychological offensive against the Communist Governments behind the Iron Curtain. Refugee groups in touch with the anti-Communist Underground should be supplied with all the resources they require to undermine the Communist regimes. This might well include a supply of small arms which it is claimed can be smuggled behind the Iron Curtain to underground guerrilla forces.
- (6) The West to outline in a Charter of Freedom just what it stands for, and to apply the principles of this Charter in its own countries, thus making it impossible for the Communists to wage ideological warfare.
- (7) The West to make it clear that should it be forced to engage in military hostilities, it will remain true to its Christian traditions, and treat all civilians as non-combatants and as actual or potential allies.

This programme, which would cost much less than the negative policy of "containment," would take the initiative away from the Communists in every sphere. At the best, it could destroy the Communist menace without a major military clash, while at the worst it would ensure that any military clash was of short duration with a minimum of bloodshed, material destruction, and moral degradation. The only alternative to this positive programme is a continuation of the policies, which have led, and must continue to lead, towards the totalitarian abyss.

A major result of the First World War was the Communist victory in Russia. The main outcome of the Second World War was a vast extension of the Communist Empire and Communist influence. Surely it is obvious that a Third World War would poison the whole world with the Communist virus — even if it were not called Communism. The fate of the world depends upon the Western peoples taking immediate action along the lines suggested in this booklet, to ensure that another long and destructive world military struggle is made impossible. The Western peoples should start demanding that their leaders launch the psychological

offensive necessary for victory before it is too late.

—From "Communism Can Be Defeated Without A Third World War," by Eric D. Butler. Price, 1/3 post free, from the Vic. League of Rights, Box 1052 J., G.P.O., Melbourne.

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