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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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"Private View" for Industrialists

A decision which governs Magistrates and Judges is that embodied in the Judgment, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries v. Price: Viscount Caldecote, L.C.J.:—

"In this case, a case has been stated by the magistrates who have dismissed a charge of non-compliance with an order given by a War Agricultural Executive Committee under powers delegated to them by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Minister has power under the Defense (General) Regulation 1939, Regulation 62, to give directions by notice relating to the agricultural land specified therein served upon the person, or body of persons by whom the directions are to be complied with.

"Regulation 66 enables the Minister of Agriculture to delegate to any person or body of persons appointed or approved by him his functions under Regulation 62, and in accordance with these powers, a War Agricultural Executive Committee gave a direction, dated July 24, 1940, to the respondent requiring the cultivation of field No. 35 in a manner described in the directions, and directing also field No. 41 to be dealt with by having the docks cut, gathered, burnt or otherwise destroyed. By regulation 92, any person who fails to comply with any order made under any of these regulations is guilty of an offense under the regulations. In this case, the respondent failed to comply with the directions of the War Agricultural Executive Committee, and, that fact being found by the special case, the question arises as to whether an offense has been committed. The magistrates took the view that the directions were not the right directions. They based their decision to dismiss the case upon the opinion which they held, in that respect differing from those whom they called the experts, who were witnesses called by the committee to prove the notice, the service of it, and so on.

"In my Judgment, the only matter which the Magistrates ought to have considered was, not the correctness of the view held by the Agricultural Committee, but the facts as to the giving of the directions and the failure of the respondent to comply with the directions. The directions were proved, and the failure to comply with them was proved, and, in my opinion, an offense was committed. Therefore, the answer to the questions submitted should be, I think, that the offense was proved. The order which I think is the proper one is that the case should be remitted to the magistrates with an expression of the opinion of the court that an offense had been committed, and that is the order we propose to make."

A committee may give a farmer any order whatsoever. Annoyed, they may give an order to plough up highly productive food crops. They may give an order to grow a certain crop on land where the farmer knows that it will not

grow. They may order him to part with his cattle, and then later to buy cattle again. They may give him orders that cannot be fulfilled without new equipment such as tractors, etc., and then refuse him the permit to purchase such equipment. They may give him a spate of orders to be done within a short time knowing and expecting that he cannot carry out those orders without equipment and labour, which he will not get.

They can order him off his farm even with so little as 24 hours' notice. They may or may not also take his livestock, equipment and feeding stuffs. For this he has no compensation, and there is no compensation for all the years thus far off the farm. But if owner he still remains liable for rates, tithes, etc.

It is claimed that if and when he ever gets the farm back he will be required to repay the Committee all losses they have made in operating the farm. There is no indication that if and when he does get the farm back he will be in any way repaid for dilapidations such as is usual with tenants.

Alternatively, once he is put off the land it may be handed over to a committee man, relative or friend to operate. There have been such cases.

Or if ownership of the land is desired, the farmer may be given a host of impossible orders, and then quietly told that if he does not sell his farm within a certain short time, the Committee will take it over. In such cases he may expect an offer, usually through an agent, within a day or two, and at a price very much less than he could obtain if permitted time to sell in the usual way. There have been such cases.

If an evicted farmer declines to move, the Committee may call in the police to remove him. This has been done, and in one case in Hampshire the farmer was shot and killed.

In all this the farmer has no appeal to the Courts. The Courts may only confirm the orders of the Committee.

But the Committees also often wish to fine or imprison. Not having as yet anything equivalent to the old Ecclesiastical Courts and gaols, the Committee can hale the farmer before the usual Courts. The Courts take the view that they must follow the Committees' request to fine or imprison and do so.

While the farmer has no appeal to the Courts or protection of the police, the Courts and the police become agents of the Committee.

Having worked out the methods and system with the farmer, and found that most men are moral cowards, and that thus controls and even the worst forms of direction can be enforced, sometimes when linked with corruption, they are now ready to extend the same methods to all industry. It is announced that 80 per cent. of industries must soon be brought under equivalent controls.

When this is done it would be something equivalent to some orders given to farmers, if a steel mill were told to make cotton cloth; or, given an order for a large production within a certain date, were not permitted coal; or thrown out over night, to discover perhaps that one of the Committee men engaged in the same business had a relative who suddenly became in control of the mill; or having frightened the owners to sell at a loss, that a relative or friend of the Committeeman had become the owner.

Control always finds it necessary to control everything that the controlled must have. The War Agricultural Executive Committees control permits for tractors, nearly all farm equipment, fertilisers, *etc.*, and thus could favour some, while ruining others. We may assume that the same kind of thing will happen in any industry controlled. One man will get the plant and material, and another man will be kept short of plant and material. And the man who is kept short will be punished or evicted for being unable to carry out orders, orders often designed to put him in a hole.

In agriculture the farmer could only sell most of his produce to or through certain people named—not where he wished to sell or could sell. If because of orders some surplus exists over market requirements (for instance, potatoes) he may have no market at all. This has happened. Or favoured men may be permitted to sell the potatoes in the autumn and save the expense of keeping, which involves loss as well, while others are ordered to keep until the next June, when apart from the expense, half of them may be rotten. This has happened. We may expect similar things in any controlled industry.

Farmers in a district have been told to buy in immediately dairy cows. At that very time the local Committee men have been selling all their cows, getting good prices on the market that they have created. This has happened. Something equivalent may well happen in other controlled industries.

In Agriculture many of the officials who were given vast powers had no knowledge whatsoever regarding farming. In one area one had been selling ladies' underwear, another was an ex-ship's officer, another a merchant, another a youngster taken from the Navy on the score of being essential to agriculture, who apparently had never seen a farm, and when later made Pests Officer quickly disclosed that he did not know a hare from a rabbit. Men have inspected farms, who quickly disclosed that they could not distinguish young grass from young grain. They have ordered wheat sown on lands always flooded in winter, where the wheat would be destroyed.

They have destroyed highly valuable mature productive orchards to grow wheat on soil unsuitable for wheat, and which they had to abandon. But the orchard was gone.

And it was obvious to many that a large part of the officials of Agricultural Committees were in age and health very suitable for the Army; but, of course, they could not go because of their great value to agriculture. But, curiously enough, more elderly men did not seem to have much chance of such jobs. If there ever was a hiding out place during the war, it was in these Committees.

Actually all members of Committees were not alike. But the tendency was for the Committees to be dominated by a

few self seekers, and for some of the members to be mere "dittos", and sometimes not aware of what was happening.

With the usual results of unrestrained power so evident, it is a relief to mention, that here and there, some local committee-man has shepherded the group of farmers under his charge, and protected them from suffering in consequence of the dictator complex of the committees' paid officials, and has procured for such men their share in equipment, without seeking preference for himself. Some of these men have been very annoyed by what they knew was happening, but did not see their way to withdraw from committee work, without risking that their own sub-district suffered in consequence.

Even to-day nearly all farmers who suffered are afraid to say a word. Even where off their farms and without a source of livelihood, they fear that in some way they could be followed up and punished if they spoke. They feel that all the other controls exerted by many departments could be used in some way against them. Perhaps they could be. They are afraid to associate with any man who in any way exposes the Committees. If they meet him they wish to do so in secret. Very few would dare to put on paper their story.

Of course the same thing will happen in all controlled industries. This in turn will permit the control method to prepare the country for the obvious result. People must first be taught to obey, be frightened to express an opinion, or even tell a fact. Then there can be no organised resistance later to anything.

And the Courts will not for ever escape from control. Control of Courts has always followed in such cases. In any case everything controlled will be taken out of the power of the Courts and the Courts only permitted to confirm the acts of the controllers. Parliament gives away its power to the regulators and in doing so at the same time takes power away from the Courts.

As yet they have forgotten to protect the controllers against libel. They have not protected them against corrupt practices. But in the latter they are really protected because, being criminal, the action must be taken by a (law) official and it is not taken. A common informer would not get far in these days.

Just at present the paper controllers say that they cannot issue permits for certain books without a recommendation from a high official authority. If a man were to write up the war committees, the high official power on which the paper controller would rely would be the Minister of Agriculture.

Some people think that these controls have grown up by accident and without design. They are stupid.

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ODLUM v. STRATTON JUDGMENT

(Royal Courts of Justice, July 29, 1946.)

Before:

Mr. JUSTICE ATKINSON.

(continued)

Let me refer, therefore, to the cross-examination of Mr. Odlum, Day 2, page 70, just above letter A:

"(Q) . . . After the war had been going on for a short while, I suppose, it became necessary to regard the production of grain and foodstuffs as the paramount consideration? (A) I had started on that in August and September before any orders, and before the Committee arranged anything.

(Q) What you did was that you foresaw the war? (A) I did.

(Q) And what you did was to endeavour to make your farm—that is to say, your cattle breeding farm—self-sufficient? (A) That was my intention.

(Q) And a perfectly proper one, too. The War Agricultural Executive Committee, when it came into existence, rightly or wrongly, took the view that cattle breeding should be subordinated to the production of grain?"

That is the question put upon instructions—

"(A) And that is why I objected.

(Q) What you said, in substance, was that you could do as you pleased? (A) I did not say that.

(Q) That was the attitude that you adopted, was it not? (A) No; I always said 'I will obey every order you give me.'

(Q) I know you have said over and over again they were a little party of Hitlers up there, ordering you to act as capriciously and arbitrarily as they chose to instruct you to do. (A) They could.

(Q) But you made no mistake about it that you strongly resented all the interferences? (A) Certain of them—not many of them.

(Q) Well, I have not given the one yet that you did not object to. Was there one to which you did not object? (A) There were many orders I complied with. You will see a whole heap of ploughing and planting orders.

(Q) There were many you complied with, but you complied with them under protest? (A) No, I was perfectly prepared to plough up more. In fact, in 1941 I wanted to plough up more than Mr. Nicholls would agree to.

(Q) What I put to you is that the attitude you were adopting throughout was this: "This is my cattle-breeding farm. I take the view that the production of milk and what-not—butter and so on—is just as important as the production of grain?" (A) Yes.

(Q) 'And I strongly resent any order from your Committee which will have the effect of turning this step by step from a breeding farm into a grain farm?' (A) I was nearly three years ahead of them; they adopted that same policy in 1943."

But the interesting thing to observe is that it was being put to Mr. Odlum that the policy of the Committee was grain first, and that that was the reason why he was objecting,

because it meant getting rid of his herd—and yet here is Mr. Price saying that the dispersal of the herd was a direct obstruction to the policy of the Committee. It was then put to Mr. Price whether there was not a change of policy in 1943 in regard to milk; he denied it, and we have the instructions from the Ministry of Agriculture to which I have already referred. It was put to Mr. Price, Day 5, page 49, between D and E:—

"(Q) You say that right from the beginning, I suppose perhaps primarily, they put the ploughing up of this pasture land to grow more wheat? (A) Yes.

(Q) But at the same time they were leaving enough pasture land to enable them to increase the number of cattle? (A) Yes, that is right, and to use some of the ploughed up grassland to grow fodder for the cattle."

Well, that is directly contrary to the truth, that they were allowing him the use of ploughed up grassland to produce fodder; it just was not the fact. Then he refers again to the system adopted being definitely contrary to the policy of the Committee; he keeps coming back to that. At letter B, on page 51, Mr. Price says:

"What I mean is this: Persuasion and reliance on good farming policy had failed. Secondly, directions and these orders were coming in, and the third stage would have been, unless there had been any improvement, the Committee would have been compelled to take possession of the farm."

That despite the fact that there is no evidence whatsoever of a single direction not being acceded to, except the silage one. I could go on almost indefinitely citing passages from Mr. Price's evidence which show how little regard he had for accuracy or truth. But there is an interesting passage on page 57 in this volume when he is being asked about a letter at page 31 in the correspondence; this was another letter in praise of what Mr. Odlum was doing. This is Mr. Price's own letter of 28 August, 1940, addressed to this man who was deliberately, according to him, refusing to carry out the policy of the War Agricultural Executive Committee:—

"With reference to your letter of the 25th instant, subsidies are only paid in respect of lime and basic slag. The question of applying the subsidies to other fertilisers, such as ground mineral phosphate, super-phosphate and potash has been put forward from time to time, but the Government always turned it down," and so on. "In any case, even without the subsidy, I think you have acted wisely by ordering ground phosphate, as all supplies of phosphatic fertilisers, particularly basic slag and ground mineral phosphates, will be very short indeed. I, too, should be very glad to get back to normal times; but normal times, as we understand them, are, I am afraid, a thing of the past. However, after the war, even if times are difficult, it does not mean to say that eventually they will not be an improvement on the pre-war period. I am very glad that you have completed your harvest before anyone else. The only reward I can suggest is one of personal satisfaction and a well-satisfied conscience."

That is Mr. Price in August, 1940. Naturally enough, Mr. Gilbert Paull wanted to ask him about 1940 and about this letter, and this is what Mr. Price says at letter D on page 57.

"May I perhaps save everybody's time a little, if it is in order, if I say that anything applying to 1940 and 1941 can we take as read, as far as I am concerned, and could we

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Saturday, January 4, 1947.

Votes Gained in Quebec

Leader Injured in Election Violence

Major Douglas has received the following, dated December 26, from Canada:—

LIBERALS SCORED VICTORY
RICHELIEU-VERCHERES. UNION DES
ELECTEURS INCREASED, OTHER CANDIDATES
REDUCED VOTE OVER
PREVIOUS ELECTION.

M. LOUIS EVEN ASSAULTED WITH
IRON BAR AND IN HOSPITAL.

M. MERCIER, PROVINCIAL ORGANISER,
KIDNAPPED ON ELECTION DAY.
INDICATES TACTICS ADOPTED.

(Signed) A. V. BOURCIER,

Chairman, Social Credit Board,
Legislative Buildings, Edmonton.

The *Times* of December 27 gives the figures for this important Quebec by-election to the Federal Parliament, following the great victory for Social Credit at Pontiac in September, as follows:—

| | |
|---|--------|
| COURNOYER (Liberal) | 11,749 |
| ROLAND CORBEIL (Union des Electeurs) | 5,948 |
| ETIENNE DUHAMEL (Progressive Conservative) | 1,873 |

The newspaper states that the "near eclipse" of the "Conservatives" in a traditional Liberal stronghold and the strength of the "Social Credit Party" are "a surprising trend."

From Week to Week

A steady stream of well-written books, produced and bound to a standard which is only a memory in "Britain", is pouring from American presses, the *leit motif* of which is always the same. We read them with attention, and we quote from one of the most recent, *America and Russia in the World Community* by Harold H. Fisher of Stanford University. (Most of these books are issued under the *aegis* of some University, as most of the Russian Fifth Column in

the Canadian Spy trials seemed to have a connection with McGill University).

After mentioning Earl Russell, who, so far as our knowledge serves us, has never yet been right on any major political or social issue, as saying "I doubt whether most Americans have yet realised the extent to which Great Britain has sunk to the position of dependency on Washington," Mr. Fisher adds some kindly words of patronage, concluding: "We can still do honour to our British Allies, and yet recognise that the conditions which produced Britain's [*sic*] world dominance and the *Pax Britannica* have changed." That is as polite a way to put it as we have noticed, but in the context, the meaning is clear: the old dog is done, and we know what is the kindest course with outworn old dogs:

There are many rather odd features about this theory which ought to warn us against that facile acceptance of its truth which is evidently regarded as becoming to us, and is in fact, the general keynote of our local Fifth Columnists. It might be asked, for instance, why in two world wars the old dog has been enthusiastically elected to fight the world's greatest military nation in the first onrush of its strength, and has been left to that dubious and expensive honour until it became clear that the fruits of victory could be garnered by the late-comers with a minimum of loss and a maximum of profit; why, even in the final blow at Germany, the so-called Second Front, British and Canadian troops were given the almost impregnable left wing of the landing near Caen, on nearly open beaches, while the Americans had the sheltered elbow of the Cherbourg peninsula and the spectacular but far easier flanking operation?

But, for the moment, we should like to emphasise the similarity of the strategy to that song of our youth, "The ten little nigger boys". Can it be that the reduction of World Powers to a successively smaller number is the Big Idea—Nonopoly? If so, the fascinating problem arises as to which little nigger boy will fill the role of "then there was one" and the still more intriguing question as to what will happen to that one little nigger boy so that "then there was none."?

But of course it might happen that there was still a nigger in the woodpile.

An overseas despatch informs us that a mass meeting of *students* in Cairo passed a resolution demanding that the British be driven into the sea and that "this policy has the support of the United States and France."

"The boy guessed right the very first time, the very first time, the very first time,

"He guessed right away it was not a Teddy Bear,
"Now I wonder how he came to think of that?"

The fact that War is the end term of a series leading up to it obscures the fact that it is the series, and not the end term, which is the major problem of the world. Anyone who will devote a little attention to history and fact can ascertain for himself where this series begins. It is at the point at which it is, or is judged to be, more profitable to get a living by taking it off someone else by force or fraud than by making your own. The next link in the series is to organise your neighbours to join you in banditry. The remedy

(continued on page 8)

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: December 12, 1946.

Windpower

Sir W. Darling asked the Minister of Fuel and Power if he is aware that under S.R. & O., 1942, No. 2510, Control of Fuel Order, the use of a wind-driven lighting set for house or shop has been forbidden by his Department in Edinburgh; and if he will reconsider the utilisation of the considerable windpower of Great Britain for the production of light for domestic and business purposes.

Mr. Shinwell: The order referred to prohibits the consumption of fuel, which includes electricity for lighting or other fittings or appliances used for business advertisement purposes. I regret the necessity for this prohibition, but I regard it as important for indirect as well as direct fuel-saving purposes, and it would not be fair to traders generally to allow exceptions. The answer to the second part of the Question is that my Department, in consultation with other Departments concerned, is already looking into the matter.

India (Constitution)

Mr. Hollis (Devizes): ... What I was disturbed about was that, having truly listed these four classes [Sikhs, Scheduled Classes, Christians and Anglo-Indians] of minorities and having spoken at some length upon the first two, the President of the Board of Trade said not a word about the third and fourth but passed on to other topics altogether. I think these two classes, the Christians and the Anglo-Indians, are classes which have peculiar demands upon our concern, and who are in a peculiarly difficult position. The Christians in India are a small minority, but a minority with a profoundly romantic history, tracing their religion, as they believe, back to St. Thomas the Apostle. In the Travancore State of India, where they are most numerous, they are at present suffering a regime of very considerable hardship. The Prime Minister there, Sir Ramaswami Aiyar, has definitely said that he will not abate that policy whatever an Indian Government or any British Government may say. On the 1st June, 1946, he said:

"Any approach to the Paramount Power of Indian leaders will be absolutely ineffective as against him" and that

"Travancore would cease to be a Hindu State if Christians were allowed to have a free hand."

Therefore, it is not unnatural that Christians should view with alarm the position in which they will be left when British paramountcy ceases to run in that country. It is not unnatural, too, that the Anglo-Indians should view with a certain amount of alarm the situation in which they will be left.

According to the previous proposals the right hon. Gentleman said that the treatment of minorities was to be a matter of treaty. Now that has been changed by the action of the late Cabinet Mission and instead

"a satisfactory provision for protection is to be inserted in the Constitution."

I cannot feel at all happy as to whether that change, which the right hon. Gentleman has defended, is really a change for the better. I can see how it may be possible to have some clause inserted in the Constitution about religious freedom, but I find it very difficult to see how we can persuade the

Christians in India and, indeed, the Scheduled Classes, to feel secure under the verbal assurance of such a clause in the Constitution. It seems to me not a step forward, but a step back that these things should be guaranteed merely in the Constitution rather than by international treaty.

After all, we are continually saying that narrow nationalism is to be transcended. We are continually paying lip service to such institutions as U.N.O., but when we come to ask for practical decisions it is apparently thought more progressive that there must be no international control of these delicate matters other than to say there must be international control. It can hardly be interpreted as being unfriendly to the Indians if we say that the rights of the minority should be subject, if they cannot be subject to the Paramount Power, to the judgment of U.N.O., because the Indians were the first people to invoke that principle against the South Africans. Therefore, if they wish to be safeguarded by U.N.O. where they are in a minority in South Africa, there is nothing unfriendly at all in seeing that the minorities that are in India should seek that protection, too. . . .

Brigadier Rayner (Totnes): As one rather old chap who was in India during the Montagu-Chelmsford conversations, and as one who attended the first meeting of the Indian Legislative Assembly, I am glad to be able to say a few words tonight. . . .

. . . Some 200 years ago we took over India for purposes of our own. It certainly suited us to take it over, but at the same time, in an India which was suffering from the devastating chaos of the breakup of Mogul rule, we brought those priceless gifts of law and order.

Mr. Piratin (Mile End): If the hon. and gallant gentleman will allow me; surely, he will recall from reading the trial of Warren Hastings, which took place within the Palace of Westminster, what was revealed as to what was given to the Indian people compared with what was taken out of the country? Did we give them law and order, or did we give them starvation?

Brigadier Rayner: I repeat that we most certainly gave them immediate law and order, and I would disagree with the suggestion that we took a great deal out of the country even in those days. It will be remembered that Warren Hastings was acquitted on all the charges, and the hon. Gentleman cannot have a better answer than that. I would say to him that our record in India is something of which to be proud, and, if they only admitted it, the majority of Members in all quarters of the House are very proud of that record.

Mr. Piratin: Surely, the question is not whether the majority—

Earl Winterton: We do not want the views of foreign Communists.

Mr. Sorensen: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, is it in Order for the noble Lord to insinuate that anybody is a foreign Communist?

Hon. Members: Withdraw!

Earl Winterton: I shall withdraw nothing of the sort. I said the hon. Gentleman was a Communist, and, if he likes, I will substitute "of foreign descent."

Mr. Piratin: On a point of Order. May I ask whether it is not in accordance with the custom of this House that the

noble Lord, who made a slight upon me and on my descent, should withdraw that remark, and may I ask if you propose to order him to do so?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Major Milner): I do not think that sort of remark ought to be made and certainly not unless the noble Lord has proof of his statement.

Earl Winterton: I have proof of my statement. I say that the hon. Gentleman is a Communist and that he is of foreign descent.

Mr. Sorensen: Is that not also a reference to our own monarchy?

Mr. Piratin: May I ask if you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, propose to take any steps in this matter? Otherwise, I shall have to consult Mr. Speaker to see what redress I can get in the matter. I will make my position quite clear. I am British born. My father came here 50 years ago, running away from the pogroms in Russia which were supported by people like the noble Lord. My father was a Russian. I am British born. I am a Member of this Parliament, duly elected, and I have as much right to be here as the noble Lord. He has no right to make such a remark about me.

Earl Winterton: That was exactly what I said. I withdraw it, if the hon. Gentleman does not like it. I used the term "foreign Communist." I repeat, he is a Communist of foreign descent, and he has now admitted it. What is there to withdraw?

Brigadier Rayner: . . . I am proud even of the few years I spent, in very undistinguished service, in India. I was lucky enough to command Indians of several different races, and I grew to love and respect them. It delights me today when I get letters from them. But the most regular letters I receive are from my old servant, Asghar Ali, a villainous looking chap with one eye—he had his eye knocked out in a communal disturbance—but he is the salt of the earth. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read a letter which I received from him this summer. It is very short, because he has to pay a good many annas to the local babu for every line of such letters as he writes, and it is very much to the point:

"Honourable Sir, Me and Mohammed Nabi send our salaams, and long life and prosperity to you and the lady sahib. I look much to see you coming to India. Doings in Bareilly are bad, and evil is moving. If the British raj, which is our father and mother, will go, then we are uncut. Please send letters with respect, Asghar Ali."

The House may feel that is a very insignificant and silly letter to read. But I suggest that is just one example of the voice of those teeming millions who make up India, and for whom we are still responsible. For a very long time we have brought to them those priceless gifts of law, order and peace, and we cannot now lightly betray them. If we do we shall blot irretrievably some of the finest pages of our history.

I hope, therefore, that the keynote of Government policy will be found in those words used by the Minister without Portfolio the other day:

"I look forward to a strong and united India."

Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean (Lancaster): . . . I recently paid a short visit to India. I was there only a short time, but the visit did enable me to compare present conditions there with conditions as I knew them before the war; and I must say that I came away profoundly disturbed. The healthy and quite understandable growth of nationalism, which is not confined to India but is manifested all over

Asia, has not been accompanied by any corresponding increase in the ability of the Indians to fend for themselves. To take only one example, they do not possess the necessary leaders and organisers, either in the defensive services or the civil services. The hon. Member for Aston spoke of the remnant of British members of the Indian Civil Service floundering because of uncertainty about the future. That, it seems to me, is what a great many people are doing in India today. They simply do not know what the Government will do next. They stand in need of a lead which can only be given by this country. We have had examples in external affairs of how little able the Indians are to look after themselves, in what happened during the war, when a great many Indian Nationalists simply became the tools of the Japanese. The same thing happened in Burma.

There is no reason to suppose that, if we left India today, as some hon. Members opposite have advocated, that they would not find it necessary to turn to one of the other great powers for help. It seems to me to be most unlikely that they could ever stand by themselves. Apart from everything else, there is the overwhelming division which dominates the whole of Indian affairs, and which I found in September and October, when I was there, seemed to have been accentuated by recent events—the deep cleavage between Hindu on one side and Muslim on the other. There has been a tendency opposite to refer to that as simply a problem of a majority and a minority, but I do not think it can be sufficiently emphasised that it is really a problem of two entirely different races, entirely different political groups, and entirely different religions. There are in fact two peoples.

. . . They seemed to regard each other with increased bitterness; and, what is more, this bitterness and unrest is not by any means confined to India. The whole of Asia today is in a ferment. The nationalist and separatist tendencies of the peoples of Asia have by far outstripped their ability to manage their own affairs; indeed, the only parts of Asia where I found anything approaching stability and order were the parts which are today under either American or Soviet control. . . .

Mr. Geoffrey Nicholson (Farnham): . . . Hon. Members talk about evacuation as if it were a subject which must be decided at some future date. That is not the case. This question has to be answered now, today, in our own minds. At any moment British troops may have to be employed in putting down civil disturbance. At any moment British troops may be called upon by a government composed of one party to suppress another party. What is our attitude towards that? I will give my answers to those questions as I see the position. If British troops are brought into contact with civil disturbance, I say that no Briton can expect his fellow countrymen to stand idly by while subjects of the King Emperor or, for that matter, people in any part of the world, are massacred. We cannot do it. It is not a theoretical question that may have to be answered some time in the future. It is on our doorstep.

In answer to the second question, I say that British troops must never be employed at the behest of one party to suppress another. They must operate only at the command of the British Government acting, of course, through the Viceroy. As I have said, that question is there. It is like a wolf at our door, demanding to be reckoned with. If we do not reckon with it, millions of Indian lives may be lost. I do not believe that the people of this country realise what is meant by the words "one hundred per cent. evacuation." I

do not believe they will stand for it, neither do I believe this House will tolerate it. Our primary responsibility is for the protection of the lives of the Indian masses, and, whatever happens, we cannot evade or dissociate ourselves from that responsibility.

There is another responsibility of equal importance. That is our responsibility for the administration of India, and by "administration" I mean the administrative machine which is composed of all the various services, the great structure which runs throughout the length and breadth of the land. There is no comparable land of similar population or area in the world which depends so much for its very survival on the maintenance of the efficiency and incorruptibility of this machinery, involving matters such as the maintenance of law and order, taxation, impartial justice, and now food rationing is added. One hundred and fifty millions in India are rationed today, often in pitifully small rations, and they depend for their very lives upon the efficiency of the administrative machine. In all other countries in the world there are substitutes—imperfect substitutes, probably, but they are substitutes, all the same—for an efficient administration if that administration breaks down. Not so in India. And that administration is breaking down today.

In the old days the charge was levelled against us—and I think it was a just charge—that we paid too great a proportion of our attention to the creation and to the maintenance of an efficient administrative machine, and neglected the political life of the people. In the old days we seemed to think that all a great country like India wanted—today it is a great modern country—was a good administration; we thought that political life was not a necessity. Today that charge is reversed. We are allowing the administrative machine to rust, to become ineffective, inefficient and corrupt, and we are concentrating all our attention upon the political life of the people. The administrative machine is breaking down, with a loss of confidence in the British and in the Indian personnel. Nobody knows where they stand; nobody knows who their next master will be; nobody knows whether they will be persecuted or rewarded for doing their duty. There has been a long failure to recruit; and people are overworked and overtaxed as a result of the war.

India is on the verge of an administrative collapse. People say that the recent disasters and disorders are the result of communal tension. Well, so they are. But there is another interpretation. They may well be interpreted as the consequence of the breakdown of the administration. If there is a boiler explosion it may certainly be because pressure in the boiler is higher than usual. But it may also be because the plates have been allowed to rust. That is what is happening in India today. If the good administration of India goes, all goes. Apart from that, let us bear in mind that we must hand over India in running order. This is where I do introduce a strong element of criticism against the Government. The result of this loss of administrative efficiency must in part be laid to the charge of past Governments, but it is particularly the responsibility of the present Government. They have done absolutely nothing about it. . . .

. . . I demand that immediate steps be taken to strengthen the administration. It can be done. It is becoming a byword all over the world that British administrations are breaking down. We have it in Germany, and we have it in India. . . .

. . . The Indian problem is not, even mainly, a question of politics. We have allowed these political issues, these fierce political polemics, and arguments, to roll and range over the great plains of India until we think that everything in India is politics. We have allowed ourselves to think that every Indian is a politician and that politics is the only thing that matters. But India is not a nation of politicians. The ordinary Indian is poor and usually hungry; he is a person of warm affections and deep emotions. Remember that India is fundamentally a feminine nation. Do not let us forget that an emotional, feminine nation, with all the failings and the virtues of the female sex, must be wooed. We shall get far greater dividends of loyalty and affection in India than we shall anywhere else if we give affection and interest and sympathy on our part. . . .

House of Commons: December 13, 1946.

Colonel Gomme-Duncan (Perth and Kinross, Perth): I wish to speak with the utmost sincerity and friendship towards India, where I have served for a considerable number of years. I think it is a great danger for people to talk lightheartedly about India unless they really know it and what is more, unless they really love it. I had the advantage of speaking the language reasonably well, and, therefore, of being able to talk not only to politicians, but to the humble folk who make up the vast majority of the population of India and for whom we are responsible. It is our responsibility to those humble people that I particularly want to emphasise. The only power that has stood between the hundreds of millions of working, toiling masses in India and those people who have fed upon them for thousands of years—the landlords, the moneylenders, and so on—has been the British power. The only people who have protected them in the last couple of hundred years have been the British; and the British are the only people to whom those Indians will turn, in real emergency, for help. I know that from experience. We have to realise that the Congress Party consists mainly of those moneylenders and those landlords, and all the rich people of India, who have trodden down those hundreds of millions for generations.

We are contemplating today handing over, what I maintain is a sacred trust, to the age-long enemies of the toiling masses of India. I am very sorry to have to say it, but I do not think the Congress Party today show any more likelihood of regarding their real responsibilities towards the poor peasants of India than they have ever done or than the class which they mainly represent has ever done. I beg the Government to realise that we, the people of Great Britain, and, particularly, those of us who have served in and loved India, feel, most deeply and sincerely, that we are handing over a sacred trust at this time to people who have no intention whatever of carrying on that trust for us. I beg the Government to let us hear that it is still not too late for something to be done to protect the masses of India, to whom the British man or woman is the ultimate hope of justice.

Social Credit Library: Change of Address

Members are asked to note the change of address of the Library:—

Croft House, Denmead, Portsmouth.

"Odlum v. Stratton"—(continued from page 3)
restrict it to 1942, which is the year I know something about, and what I am concerned with."

Mr. Gilbert Paul then puts this to him:

"(Q) . . . You have told my Lord that as a result of these obstructionist tactics by Mr. Odlum, he got poor crops. You must have meant then 1940 and 1941, must you not?"

(A) General obstructionist policy, yes—all right.

(Q) Now I want to see if that was really fair.

(A) I follow.

(Q) You follow the point?

(A) Yes.

"But I know nothing about the first two years—ask me something about the year I know something about"—and yet he has not hesitated to attribute this to Mr. Odlum. I can only say that Mr. Price has satisfied me that he was giving a lot of untrue evidence, and that he was acting in a most malicious manner as regards the plaintiff.

There are one or two other matters I should deal with, and the first is that letter of Mr. Hudson, which, of course, on the face of it seemed very much against the plaintiff. Personally I cannot very much doubt that that is why it was produced: it certainly could not have been used in evidence—but there it was in the bundle of correspondence, and its weight did rather seem adverse to Mr. Odlum. But Mr. Hudson, in his evidence, completely changed the inference one would draw from that letter. Mr. Hudson said: "My complaint about the farm was that there was not enough land ploughed and that there was an insufficient number of cattle; that was my complaint"; everything else, he said, was subsidiary.

On Day 6, page 28, after hearing his evidence, I said to Mr. Hudson:

"You were not thinking of implements or cottages?"

(A) No.

(Q) You told me two things you had in mind, the best use being made, from the point of view of the animals and production of the land? (A) Yes.

(Q) The ditches, wiring and similar things. . . . (A) Yes, purely subsidiary. The main thing I was concerned with was to see what additional production could be got out of the land."

Mr. Hudson made it clear that what he meant was that more land should have been ploughed, and there should be more cattle on the land; he went so far as to say at the top of page 16: "If the whole of the permanent grass had been ploughed up, it would have been possible to keep more cattle." Well, I know that, because I have seen it done in Canada; I went over a very big dairy farm there, and it was explained to us there—"You cannot let the cattle graze because there is so much bitter weed among the grass that you might get the whole of your milk spoilt," and therefore the cows are kept in the cowshed all the time and they are fed on fodder and the like—and, of course, that is the only way in which you can do what Mr. Hudson was describing. But, of course, it can only be done even without going to an extreme, if you are permitted to grow fodder; and I have already read the figures to show what his theory came to and the land being turned for arable purposes—as a matter of fact there were 54 fewer acres in 1945 than there had been in 1942 when Mr. Hudson purchased and took over the farm;

and, moreover, he had been allowed this larger quantity of land to produce forage. Furthermore, it came out that you cannot grow forage without permission.

Mr. Hudson's criticism was really not a criticism of Mr. Odlum at all. It was a criticism of the Committee—"You, the Committee, have not ordered enough of this land to be ploughed up. You, the Committee, ought to have seen that more cattle were there" which, of course, meant: "You, the Committee, ought to have permitted some of this land to be used for forage purposes"; and I am satisfied that it was because it was an attack on the Committee Mr. Price wrote that letter in reply, trying to turn the blame from the Committee to Mr. Odlum—"You must not blame the Committee. This is Mr. Odlum the obstructionist. He would not carry out our orders. He was an obstructionist from the beginning." Mr. Price was trying, as I say, to turn the blame from the Committee to Mr. Odlum.

Then we had Mr. Swanton, a member of the War Agricultural Executive Committee. He was at this farm for the first time in 1942. Mr. Swanton said two things which, I do not want to doubt his veracity, but at any rate test the value of his evidence. He said: "When I was over there I saw there were five wheat ricks. I think it was in field M, at the north side of the field M." There is a cart track which runs across the fields there, and Mr. Swanton said: "There were five ricks not threshed in March of 1942. I told Mr. Odlum what a disgrace that was."

Now, what is the truth about that? This was put to Mr. Stratton in cross-examination. Mr. Gilbert Paul read from the "National Farmers' Union Record": "The policy of the Government has been to encourage farmers to hold wheat in stack until required for flour milling," and then asked Mr. Stratton: "Do you agree with that? (A) To keep it in stack until when? (Q) Until required for flour milling? (A) Oh, yes. (Q) That means roughly speaking, to keep it until the following spring, very largely, does it not?—(A) That would be so, yes." Mr. Odlum explained that that was the policy which they were asked to carry out and said that is why these five ricks had not yet been threshed.

(To be continued)

"From Week to Week"—continued from page 4.

is not in more organisation but in less. One bandit amongst a busy, normally peace-loving, community, is no problem. The general community is peace-loving; it is the bandit-organisers, e.g., the Trades Unions, who force him to break the peace. A clean-up of the conscious and purposeful banditry would help; but the essential is to cripple their organising mechanisms, which have been tripled by our present Administration. Some of the members of it may be well-meaning coxcombs; some of them are bandits; but they are all deadly enemies of the decent citizen.

It may be remembered that "the United States", i.e., Pine Street, forced us to underwrite all the European Loans in the 1914-18 War. Are we once again being put in the position of debt-collector? If so, do the British who will die collecting "American" debts know it?

Our readers may have noticed that the Minister of Fuel and Power has begun tilting at windmills.