

# THE SOCIAL CREDITER

## FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

Vol. 18. No. 12.

Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper  
Postage (home and abroad) 1d.

SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1947.

6d. Weekly.

### REALISTIC CONSTITUTIONALISM

*Notes for an Address by Major C. H. Douglas to the Constitutional Research Association at Brown's Hotel, Mayfair, May 8, 1947.*

My Lord President, my Lords, and Gentlemen,

Most of you will recall the proverb, said to originate in China, that when struck by a thunderbolt, it is superfluous to consult the Book of Dates in order to ascertain the exact meaning of the Omen.

But there are calamities no less tragic, if apparently less sudden, in respect of which we flatter ourselves that mitigation, or even salvation, is possible by taking thought; and although the events of the past half century, during which the affairs of the British Empire have been woefully mismanaged and insidiously as well as openly attacked, seem to cast some doubt upon that hope, I hold it myself, and, no doubt, so do you, or we should not be met here today in times which can well be described as critical.

The justification, if any, which I should advance for my temerity in addressing an audience of such wide and distinguished qualifications both in Statesmanship and Law, is that I am concerned with what appears to be a somewhat neglected point of view—objective reality. I do not think we realise the extent to which Absolute Idealism, to use its technical name, has tintured thinking on this subject—that nothing exists outside the mind of the beholder and that, for instance, totalitarian Government only requires mass propaganda to be just as good and much easier, than any other variety. Put quite shortly, my main thesis is that this is not true; that the rules of the Universe transcend human thinking, and cannot, in the ordinary sense of the words, be altered, and therefore must be ascertained and obeyed. In this sense Constitutionalism is an extension of the very comprehensive subject we call Social Credit.

Before passing to the more constructive aspect of my subject, it appears to be desirable to glance at the nature, the reality or otherwise, in short, the validity of the sanction we pretend to accept as dominant in our political affairs—an electoral majority for a Party Programme combined with a panel of Administrators.

It is impossible to deal comprehensively in the course of a short address with a matter into which so many complications have been introduced, but it is sufficient for my present purpose to emphasise the direct and intimate connection between a majority mandate, whether genuine or fictitious, and war, either civil or foreign. A mandate is a recruiting device, and its morality is neither greater nor less than that of war of any description. *Vox populi* is not only not *vox Dei*, but such empirical psychologists as Gustave le Bon have demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt that in itself it is far more likely to be *vox diaboli*.

Perhaps the most revealing statement from an important source which has been made in the last twenty years was that proceeding from the peculiar organisation known as P.E.P. in 1938—"Only in war, or under threat of war, will a British Government embark on large scale Planning." That means, of course, that a mandate obtained from a political majority can, more especially in wartime, be manipulated for purposes which, while not understood by the electorate, will be passively accepted if they can be put into a form of words suitable to a negro revivalist orgy.

With their blood brothers, the New Dealers, the Planners achieved their war, and we know what is happening to us and the British Empire, and who is collecting the stakes.

The holders of a centralised mandate, however it was obtained, always turn to war of some kind, if they are in danger of losing their centralised power, because centralisation is the essence of war.

The point I am attempting to make is that Constitutionalism must take the subject of war *in relation to stable policy* as its fundamental consideration. It must be the master not the servant. War is the ultimate earthly sanction, and there is no Law without a sanction. A Constitution which cannot make war is merely a framework for a mock parliament; but no Constitution ought to admit of war for un-Constitutional reasons. Please do not suppose that I am condoning war. It is *involuntary* war which is the factor with which a realistic Constitution must be able to deal, before it can deal with anything else. No nation, as such, desires war; but a nation which engages *involuntarily* in war, not merely endures the war but almost invariably loses it. We have only to recall the history of the Baldwin Administrations with their subordination of defence policy to electoral expediency to see that by 1936 we had lost the peace and the initiative.

Turning to what has become known as the climate of opinion in regard to the subject of Constitutionalism in general, there are two factors in the background which should be brought to more general attention. The first of these is a legacy of the French Revolution and the nineteenth century intellectuals brought up on its fallacies and the specialised Darwinism which appeared to confirm it—that, without being clear as to what you mean by progress, progress is inevitable and automatic. Curiously enough, this idea seems to carry with it something in the nature of a cosmic Statute of Limitations—history is episodic, the past is past, tradition doesn't matter, everything is of transient importance. Tomorrow is another day, and you are free to begin making all the same dreary mistakes, afresh, but

not to re-enthroned the principles which led to your past successes.

The second factor in contemporary, and superficial political thought is that political equity and political equality are the same thing—a subtle example of the fallacy known as *petitio principii*—“begging the question”. As a generalisation, there is no such thing as political equality. Politics in the ordinary acceptation of the term is subject to a special form of Gresham’s Law of Currency—“Bad money drives out good.” This factor is highly important, as I hope to suggest to you, in connection with the vital issue of Common, or “Natural” Law.

Neither of these ideas is indigenous to these islands—they are importations from the Continent and the Middle East, but it is not unlikely that they play a considerable part in producing that state of mind to which Mr. W. L. Burn refers in the *XIX Century* writing of “Contemporary Conservatism”: “Political thinking is at too low an ebb in this country to be fit for the task of writing a new Constitution.” As I hope to suggest to you, the conception of writing a new Constitution for this country is inherently misleading, if anyone entertains it; we *grew* a Constitution, and our business is to free it from the weeds which are choking it, and to restore its power and effectiveness.

There are many evidences that for some rather obscure reason, the British people are the object of an attack not merely of a military and economic nature, but directed even more against their culture, which is to be broken down and obliterated by cross-breeding with inferior stock, as well as by subversive propaganda. Professor Karl Pearson’s assistant, Miss Elderton, in “The relative strength of Nature and Nurture”, states “Heredity is four times as potent as environment.” It is an established fact that the general level of intelligence in this country is declining, and is lowest in those strata of society which produce large families, have probably the largest admixture of alien stock, and have predominant voting power under present conditions. Yet the claims of heredity were never so derided, whether under the cloak of “racism” or class privilege, and we have Professor Laski as authority for the statement that the supremacy of Parliament (by which he means the House of Commons elected by a majority of declining intelligences) is the core of the British Constitution. Professor Laski joins his opinions of the British Constitution to statements that Christianity has failed and that Russia is the hope of the world, and I think we ought to be grateful to him, because his statements confirm what in a most practical sense I believe to be true; that the crisis through which we are passing is a war against practical Christianity, which has a real bearing on Constitutionalism. A Constitution is either an organism or an organisation. All organisation is what used to be called magic, and a good deal of it is black magic—the manipulation of metaphysical forces for questionable materialistic purposes. We all know what happens if you put copper wires into a wrong relationship with a powerful electric current, and there is ample evidence to show that our ignorance or disdain of everything but materialism is causing a spiritual “short-circuit.” The real British Constitution—not Professor Laski’s—is an organism. The Russian Constitution—attributed to the Fabian Society and Mr. Sydney Webb—is an organisation.

I want to put to you that this obsession with pure materialism—a special kind of monotheism—can be identified

with both Professor Laski’s idea of the British Constitution, as a mon-archy, a unitary sovereignty, the drive towards industrial and financial monopoly, and the World State propaganda. It is tempting to digress at this point upon the economic frustration which confronts us at a time when the apparent mastery of man over nature has reached the highest point in modern history, but to keep my subject within bounds, I should like merely to emphasise that Constitutionalism and economics are, or ought to be, only related in the same way that the coal under the boiler is related to the policy of the factory which is driven by the coal. When the coal becomes a dominant issue, instead of a mere incident to the policy of the factory and what the factory makes, there is something wrong besides lack of coal.

Whatever may be the case at the moment, in the centuries of greatness and prosperity associated with our history, these islands never were a mon-archy. In some form or other, sovereignty in the British Isles for the last two thousand years has been trinitarian.

Whether we look on this trinitarianism under the names of King, Lords and Commons or as Policy, Sanctions and Administration, the Trinity-in-Unity has existed, and our national success has been greatest when the balance (never perfect) has been approached.

The present Administration of this country is of course purely mon-archic and monotheistic, and as a natural consequence, “Common” or “Natural” Law has lost both its meaning and its sanctions, since the House of Commons, with its Cabinet which is the unitary locus of Sovereignty, has become a rubber stamp for administrative works orders masquerading under the name of Laws—a function for which it was never designed and for which it is grotesquely unfitted. It is not without interest and bearing on this aspect of the problem that one of the ablest commentators on “Origins of the American Revolution”, John C. Miller, observes: “In rejecting natural law, Englishmen also denied the colonist’s contention that there were metes and bounds to the authority of Parliament. The authority of Parliament was, in their opinion, unlimited: the supremacy of Parliament had come to mean to Englishmen an uncontrolled and uncontrollable authority. Indeed the divine right of kings had been succeeded by the divine right of Parliament . . . It was the refusal of Americans to bow before the new divinity which precipitated the American Revolution.”

Speaking, not of course as a lawyer, but as a student of history and organisation, it is my opinion that the restoration of the supremacy of Common Law, the removal of encroachments upon it, and the establishment of the principle that legislation by the House of Commons impinging upon it is *ultra vires*, is an urgent necessity. The locus of sovereignty over Common Law is not in the electorate, because Common Law did not derive from the electorate and indeed ante-dated any electorate in the modern sense. In the main, it derived from the Mediaeval Church, perhaps not directly, but from the climate of opinion which the Church disseminated.

There is, of course, nothing very novel in what I am saying; much of it is in Magna Charta, which is not so widely read as it should be, and I am not sure that it cannot be found in an older document, the Athanasian Creed—a far more profound political document than is commonly realised. Some of you may remember the interest aroused 25 years ago, more especially on the Continent, by Dr. Rudolf Steiner’s

"Threefold Commonwealth." For my own part, Dr. Steiner did not appear to contribute anything very helpful to the practical solution of the problem, while recognising its nature, and his followers seem to have little to add to what he said. With some of his conclusions, if I understand them rightly, I should disagree. The main point to be observed is that to be successful, Constitutionalism must be organic; it must have a relation to the nature of the Universe. That is my understanding of "Thy Kingdom come on Earth, as it is in Heaven." When England had a genuine trinitarian Constitution, with three inter-related and inter-acting loci of sovereignty, the King, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons, these ideas were instinctive, and those were the days of Merrie England. Since the Whig Revolutions of 1644 and 1688, and the foundation of the Bank of England under characteristically false auspices in 1694, the Constitution has been insidiously sapped by the Dark Forces which knew its strength, and the obstacle which it offered to treachery. We now have only the mere shell of the Constitution, Single Chamber Government dominated by Cartels and Trades Unions, (Mond-Turnerism), based on unitary sovereignty, to which the next step is the secular materialistic totalitarian State, the final embodiment of power without responsibility.

To an audience of this character, I do not need to enter into a discussion of the merits or otherwise of democracy, because whatever else it may be, Great Britain is not, and never has been, an effective democracy, and was never less so than at present. Nevertheless, short of a *coup d'état*, I do not think that the idea of democracy, which is of course very nebulous, can be abruptly abandoned. It has been too much propagandised, and means too many things to too many men. But whether by the strengthening and elevation of Common Law, and its repository in the care of an effective Second, non-elective, Chamber, or by some other method, clearly defined limits must be placed on the power of a House of Commons elected on a majority principle. It ought to be clear to any unprejudiced individual that a majority is *always* wrong in its *reasons* for a given situation, and cannot, therefore, possibly be right in its remedies, although a homogeneous, native-born majority is often instinctively right in its judgement of the *nature* of a situation.

But, admitting this, the individual voter must be made individually responsible, not collectively taxable, for his vote. The merry game of voting yourself benefits at the expense of your neighbour must stop, whether by Members of Parliament who double their salaries as the first-fruits of an electoral victory or by so-called Co-operative Societies which acquire immense properties with the aid of Bank of England created money. There is a clear method by which to approach this end—the substitution of the open ballot for the secret franchise, and allocation of taxation according to the recorded voting for a programme which incurs a nett loss. This would also imply a large measure of freedom to contract out of legislation of a functional character, with a consequent discouragement of the spate of so-called Laws which are little more than Works Orders.

This may be a convenient point at which to notice that the economic, as distinct from the political, system had a marvellous voting system, continuous and flexible, until the same influences which have perverted the Constitution were brought to bear upon it. I refer of course to the money

and price system, which continuously registered the opinion of the consumer, who is the natural locus of sovereignty of the economic system, as to the respective merits of the articles submitted to his choice. But of course all the well-known tricks of the subversive Forces have come into play—price rings, monopolistic practices in both labour and material, standardised products, chain-store distribution, *etc.*, so that the very considerable amount of economic democracy which we enjoyed forty years ago has almost entirely disappeared. The consumer now gets what the distributor cares to let him have, the producer makes anything which the various bureaucracies, Governmental, Trades Union, or Industrial Association will sanction, and then passes it on to the distributor on take-it-or-leave-it principles, and the bureaucrat sanctions whatever will give him the least trouble and please his political backers. There is a great deal to be learnt in regard to a desirable political democracy by considering the calamities which have befallen economic democracy.

To summarise, so far as it is possible with so wide a subject, the ideas I have endeavoured to present to you, it is firstly necessary to recognise that we have allowed ourselves to accept a false theory of sovereignty, false not merely politically but structurally; a theory which is a departure from our own Constitution. To a very considerable extent, we must retrace our steps, in the face of many false guides, to the fork in the road somewhere about the time of the so-called Reformation.

It is necessary to provide individuals, as *individuals*, not collectively, with much more opportunity to judge political matters by results, and to be able to reject, individually and not collectively, policies they do not like, which involves a large measure of power to contract-out. - Common Law is something which, if it changes at all, ought to change very slowly indeed, and the greatest difficulty should be placed in the path of an attack upon it, both by insisting on its supremacy over House of Commons enactment, and by making it subject only to something at least as arduous as an Amendment to the United States Constitution. It appears to me that a properly empowered and constituted House of Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, is the natural guardian of Common Law, as the Barons demonstrated at Runnymede.

The essential soul of a nation is in its character, its culture and tradition. The King is the natural embodiment of Honours and Sanctions—of Culture and Tradition and, as such, is naturally the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. So that our problem seems to resolve itself into a real understanding and restoration of the functions we have allowed to decay.

I should be most sorry if anything I may have said produces an effect either of spurious romanticism or abstract Scheme-building. Close attention to the evidence has convinced me of degeneracy from a marvellous Constitution in the last three hundred years, accompanied by the atrophy of a sense of continuity—the idea that history is disconnected episode, instead of being, as it is, crystallised policy. The main agency through which that degeneracy has operated has been the Bank of England and its credit system, the Ways and Means Account, the National Debt, and the usurpation of the taxation power.

All these matters have gone to magnify the powers of bribery and corruption, and these in turn have logically been

directed against the strength of the pre-Cromwellian Constitution.

You will notice that I have confined myself rigidly to the Constitutional aspect of the problem with which we are faced, together with some slight suggestions as to possible methods of approach. That does not, of course, imply that a mere rectification of the Constitution is all that is required—far from it. But conditions have developed in this century, beginning in their modern phase after the South African War and the Parliament Act, but taking more sinister form in 1931, which make it imperative that we put the frame-work of our house in order to enable us to rectify both our housekeeping and our external business. Our present situation is not adventitious—it is the outcome of a venomous hatred and envy of our indigenous qualities. If anyone is foolish enough to suppose that the prestige of this country and the Empire, and with them, the welfare of the population, can be restored by an appeal to an anonymous, irresponsible, and misinstructed ballot-box democracy, I can assure them that, if their opinion should prevail and our destinies be submitted to decision by that process, the outcome is a mathematical certainty—our final eclipse.

(Major Douglas's address is in process of reproduction in pamphlet form. The purchase price will be sixpence a copy.)

## PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: May 5, 1947.

### U.S.S.R. Russian-born British Wives

*Mr. Pickthorn* asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he proposes to instruct His Majesty's representative in Moscow to draw the attention of the Government there to the unprecedented nature of any general prohibition or effective frustration of marriages between the nationals of two friendly States.

*Mr. McNeil*: I am not clear what the hon. Member has in mind. If he is referring to the recent Soviet enactment prohibiting marriages between Soviet citizens and other nationals, His Majesty's Government have not considered it proper or necessary to make any representations to the Soviet Government on this subject.

*Mr. Pickthorn*: With apologies to the right hon. Gentleman for not being clear—although I might say that I put down the Question as nearly as I could in the terms which he himself indicated on a previous occasion—may I ask him whether His Majesty's Government do not consider that they ought to draw to the attention of a foreign Government that it is unprecedented, as between two friendly States, that marriages between the nationals of the two should be made either legally impossible or practically ineffectual?

*Mr. McNeil*: If the hon. Gentleman says that it is unprecedented, I am very unwilling to quarrel with him, because I know his reputation, but I must say I have not completely satisfied myself upon that point. Until there is some point concerned with the nationals of our own country, I cannot see that it would be proper for us to make representations.

*Mr. Hector Hughes*: Can my right hon. Friend say what is being done to reunite these families?

*Mr. McNeil*: That is why I was very careful in saying

that I was not clear what the hon. Gentleman opposite had in mind. His Majesty's Government will continue to bring pressure to bear on behalf of those British subjects who have been affected by the provisions of the enactment which has been referred to.

### Neasden Power Station (Oil Fuel)

*Mr. Hobson* asked the Minister of Transport the number of boilers converted to oil fuel at Neasden L.P.T.B. Power Station; and the time taken for conversion and cost.

*Mr. Barnes*: The scheme for the conversion to oil fuel covers six boilers at Neasden Power Station, one of which was brought into operation in January last. The remaining five will be converted during the next 12 months as supply of the necessary materials allows. The total cost is estimated to be £45,000.

House of Commons: May 6, 1947.

### Fuel Restrictions (Relaxations)

*Lieut.-Colonel Elliot (by Private Notice)* asked the Minister of Fuel and Power whether he can now make a statement regarding the relaxation of the Control of Fuel (Restriction of Heating) Order, 1947.

*The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power (Mr. Gaitskell)*: Yes, Sir. After further consultation with representatives of the women's organisations and with my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Fuel and Power has issued a licence permitting the use of a gas or electricity for heating residential premises in so far as it is necessary for the health of children under the age of three and old persons over the age of 70. I would also remind the House that gas and electricity may be used for heating when a certificate is given by a registered medical practitioner that it is necessary in the interests of health of any person. The licence which my right hon. Friend has issued also permits the use of gas or electric heating for the drying of wearing apparel and household linen and for drying premises affected by floods. I am satisfied that in this way we are providing for the reasonable needs of all.

*Lieut.-Colonel Elliot*: I think these licences are issued under Section 6 of the Order. Can the Minister say in what form this licence has been issued, and whether it would require any further action by those benefiting from it?

*Mr. Gaitskell*: No, Sir; no further action.

### University Grants Committee

*Sir E. Graham-Little* asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will name the present members of the University Grants Committee and the universities with which they are, or have been, connected; and the members of the Medical Advisory Committee which the University Grants Committee consults in dealing with grants specifically made for medical education in the universities.

*Mr. Dalton*: The members of the University Grants Committee, and the Universities, if any, with which they are, or have been, connected as teachers, are:

*Chairman*—Sir Walter Moberly, K.C.B., D.S.O., Litt.D., Birmingham and Manchester.  
*Deputy-Chairman*—Dr. A. E. Trueman, F.R.S., F.G.S., Wales, Glasgow and Bristol.

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## THE SOCIAL CREDITER

This journal expresses and supports the policy of the Social Credit Secretariat, which is a non-party, non-class organisation neither connected with nor supporting any political party, Social Credit or otherwise.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Home and abroad, post free:  
 One year 30/-; Six months 15/-; Three months 7s. 6d.  
 Offices: (Business) 7, VICTORIA STREET, LIVERPOOL, 2, Telephone: Central 8509; (Editorial) 49, PRINCE ALFRED ROAD, LIVERPOOL, 15, Telephone: Sefton Park 435.

Vol. 18. No. 12.

Saturday, May 24, 1947.

### From Week to Week

Many Social Crediters must have pondered on the amazing magnitude of the frauds which have been imposed on the population of these islands by the Credit system as operated by the Bank of England, and particularly on the success with which the process has been defended from exposure. One, if not the major, explanation of these phenomena can, however, be seen in full operation at the present time, and is perhaps most easily grasped by recalling the story of the eminent politician holding high office some forty years ago, who not merely looked upon the wine when it was red, but chose that opportunity to impart state secrets to anyone who would listen. After remonstrance had failed to remedy the danger, one of his colleagues said in desperation, "—if you must talk, talk all the time, and then people won't know what to believe."

At the present moment, the air is thick with money schemes, many of them even madder than the pre-war banking system, but generally united in one aim—to take purchasing power away from someone, whether anyone else gets it or not. The incredible folly of the agitation for nationalising the Bank of England, which has placed the Power of the State openly behind financial policy without changing it, was followed by the immediate reduction of the only National Dividend to a paper  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  subject to tax, in fact a minus quantity, by reason of designed inflation and the consequent filching of purchasing-power.

The latest contestant for the delirium stakes is a presentation of the views of the late Dr. Rudolf Steiner on money. Dr. Steiner was a remarkable man, and there is little doubt that many of his opinions deserve attention. But he has suffered by bad reporting, and the most charitable explanation of much of what is attributed to him in the field of political economy is that it is mistranslated and in any case requires more background than is available before it has much practical value even as theory. As an instance of the kind of statement attributed to him by his exponents we quote: "The basis of price, he declared, was not the cost of the article offered (because in fact, those costs had been met) but the cost of producing the next article."

Now if that means anything at all, which we doubt, it means that if John Citizen spends the whole of 1947 in building himself a house, and New Year's Day, 1948 in making a coal-scuttle, the real basis of the price for the house is the cost of making the coal-scuttle.

We know quite well what is at the bottom of this—it is exactly what Dr. Steiner himself disclaims, lack of realism. Notice the use of the word "article". No one makes articles, they make boots and shoes, clothes, motor cars, etc. Half the clotted nonsense which passes as economics arises from

collectivism—the use of words such as "production" as though they represented an amorphous, homogeneous mass, only valued by volume.

We mention the matter afresh, because we are confident that the very greatest caution is necessary in airing theories of this nature. The really wicked Powers use half-baked money proposals—just as they used the agitation for the nationalisation of the Bank of England—still further to enslave the individual. "Full employment", you know.

What Dr. Steiner probably meant was antecedently and correctly stated by Major Douglas in a reply to Mr. J. A. Hobson, published in the "Socialist Review."

*Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat.* Whether the objective of the "Conservative" manifesto, "The Industrial Charter" published on May 12 is, as may easily be the case, a manoeuvre to keep the present Administration in power, or whether it is an assurance that P.E.P. can rely on Mr. R. A. Butler & Co., with Lord Woolton benevolently assisting, to carry on the good work begun by Messrs. Dalton, Strachey, Shinwell and Bevan, is not of great consequence. The insistence, not the less unmistakable because implicit, on the Totalitarian form of Government (as Professor Laski would say, the Omnipotence of Parliament), the expressed determination to subordinate everything and everyone to "the worker" and "industry" and to continue the conversion of these islands into an industrial ghetto, is an assurance that the quarrel of Mr. Churchill and his cohorts, if any, with the present incumbents is simply that of the Whigs through the ages—a prescriptive claim to the loaves and fishes.

The Socialist weekly, *The New Statesman*, which also represents The New Culture, is highly contemptuous of Anthony Trollope. We are lead to infer that the London School of Economics and Chatham House are so superior to Barchester Towers and Framley Parsonage that it is not in the Pooblic Hinterest that the Pooblic should read of the effete Victorians. Most Socialists of the Bloomsbury vintage are such crashing bores that it is difficult to estimate the value to the Fabian Society of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who, as a Socialist and social economist, was *pour rive*, but is certainly not a bore, if you would permit him the exclusive possession of the limelight. To the real powers behind Socialism, Mr. Shaw was nearly indispensable.

The materialistic interpretation of history has been so skilfully inoculated that any explanation of current events which diverges from it exposes the heterodox to all the various labels of "crank," "anti-Semite," "Fascist beast" and even "Tory". Without comment, therefore, we present to our readers, in order that they may fit it into any suitable theory, the following incident, with its background, which to us, is highly significant:—

The Toronto *Saturday Night* is a highly respectable, very well produced, weekly illustrated magazine, corresponding roughly to a combination of the pre-war *Sphere* and the *Spectator* of thirty years ago, so far as it has any English equivalent. It is generally considered to be representative of High Finance and Big Business in Toronto and therefore in Canada.

We understand that its editor is Mr. B. K. Sandwell, who, broadcasting some time ago, announced that it was necessary to detach Canadians from their loyalty to their

Empire affiliations. Mr. Norman Jaques, M.P., protested in the House of Commons both against the whole tone of the broadcast, and the general attitude of the "Canadian" Broadcasting Corporation to the subjects on which Mr. Sandwell spoke. The result of this appears to have been to ensure the appointment of Mr. Sandwell as a Director of the "C". B.C., a proceeding on all fours with, shall we say, the appointment of the editor of *The Financial News* as Director of the "B".B.C.

On April 19, *Saturday Night* published a subtly objectionable photograph of H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, with a kind of Nelson's Column topped by the Imperial Crown, in the background. The column is rickety and the stones are displaced, while, with a superb disregard for the uses of tools, the column is being sawn through at the base by a hammer and sickle. The nearly-full-page picture surmounts a title explaining that the Princess "becomes 21 years of age on Monday next."

This example of Mr. Sandwell's editing was evidently too much for many of *Saturday Night's* readers, and on April 26 a short paragraph was inserted to the effect that this "symbolic" portrait did not mean anything, did not convey the idea that anyone but a congenital idiot would draw from it, and "any reader knowing anything of the past [our emphasis] policies and beliefs of this paper can[not] have been misled into believing that those policies and beliefs have changed".

The pundits of party politics profess to be puzzled by the consistent success of an unpopular Government in bye-elections. To whatever extent this perplexity does exist, it merely confirms the low opinion held by Mr. W. L. Burn on the state of political thinking in this country to which we made reference a few weeks ago. Anyone in touch with general opinion knows that every section of the community is pandered to practically in proportion to its votes, and at the expense of minorities; that the Government in power before the war is widely, almost universally, believed to have been a Conservative Government (it was a Whig-Internationalist Government) and there is practically only one opinion held in common by the population, and that is that it was so bad a Government that it is not worth turning this one out to put in one like it. We do not believe that it is humanly possible to remedy the present situation without fundamental constitutional reform; and the sooner Right Wing politicians realise it, the better for everyone.

## PARLIAMENT

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Professor W. E. Collinson, Ph.D., Liverpool.  
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 G. F. Gibberd, Esq., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G.  
 H. F. Humphreys, Esq., O.B.E., M.C., T.D., M.D., Ch.B.,  
 M.D.S.  
 Professor Dorothy Russell, M.D., Sc.D., M.R.C.P.  
 Sir John Stopford, M.B.E., F.R.S., M.D., F.R.C.P.

At present there is one vacancy on this committee for  
 an expert on surgery; it is hoped to fill this at an early date.

## Whisky (Exports to U.S.A.)

Sir W. Smithers asked the President of the Board of  
 Trade what is the price paid by the U.S.A., f.o.b., in any  
 convenient unit for whisky exported from Britain.

Mr. Belcher: The average value of whisky exported to  
 the United States during the first quarter of 1947 was  
 £2 0s. 7d. per proof gallon; no information about prices per  
 liquid gallon or per bottle is available.

House of Commons: May 7, 1947.

## National Service Bill Considered in Committee

Colonel Wigg: I beg to move, in page 7, line 2, to leave  
 out, "so far as may be practicable," and to insert:

"as may be determined in consultation with the Minister of Educa-  
 tion and in association with national organisations interested in  
 adult education."

I am not the author of this Amendment. It has its  
 origin in the report that was presented to Lord Addison,  
 when he was Minister of Reconstruction at the end of the  
 1914-18 war. The committee that submitted that report  
 was a very distinguished one. It included among its mem-  
 bers the present Foreign Secretary and one of its joint  
 secretaries was my right hon. Friend the Member for Wake-  
 field (Mr. Arthur Greenwood)...

Mr. Bellinger: I am in considerable sympathy, and  
 indeed almost in complete harmony, with my hon. and gallant  
 Friend the Member for Dudley (Colonel Wigg), who moved  
 the Amendment. I regret to say that I shall not be able  
 to accept the Amendment, and I hope he will agree with the  
 reasons which I shall give him. I agree with what he said  
 about the purpose he had in mind... under the Education  
 Act continued education ceases to be compulsory after the  
 last term in which the individual reaches the age of 18.  
 Nevertheless, the Army and, indeed, the other two Services,  
 are to institute—we have already instituted—a certain amount  
 of compulsory education for different types of individuals  
 needing it in the Services. We shall be presented with the  
 Regular soldier and the National Service man, for whom we  
 are legislating in this Bill. The two types will be somewhat  
 different and will require different treatment in the educa-  
 tional instruction which they get. I think it is quite fair  
 for the Services to lay down, at any rate in the time that they  
 pay for, that men shall undergo a certain amount of com-  
 pulsory education. Particularly does that apply in the case

of the illiterates—and there are a certain number coming into the Services—and the semi-illiterates. As I outlined in my speech on the Army Estimates a few weeks ago, we have a rather ambitious plan in the Army which, as my hon. and gallant Friend knows, it will be difficult for us to implement fully. We have to get specialist instructors. As I said in my Army Estimates speech, we are now busily engaged in recruiting—

*Lord John Hope (Midlothian and Peebles, Northern):* Could the Minister say at this point whether this education will be permeated by Socialist propaganda as it was during the war?

*Mr. Bellinger:* I think that is an unjustified question to put to me. The Committee knows my views about the manner in which educational knowledge should be imparted. All I can say, if the noble Lord really wants an answer to that question, is that we shall endeavour to give the broadest, widest and soundest education—

*Mr. Pickthorn:* In 12 months.

*Mr. Bellinger:*—academic and practical, that we can possibly do with the instructors who will be available to us. We shall look for very high educational qualifications in those administering the scheme, and officers will have to have very high educational qualifications before they can hold a Commission in the Army Education Corps. . . .

I think that my hon. and gallant Friend will recognise that it is unnecessary for his Amendment to be incorporated in this Clause when I tell him the reason. It is undesirable to include these words because it is unnecessary to provide by legislation for the consultation by one Minister of the Crown with another because it is inconsistent with the doctrine of Cabinet responsibility. I do not know if that is entirely understood, but the more realistic and practical objections to the inclusion of this Amendment are that we shall not be able fully to carry this out overseas, and for some time these national service men will be training overseas. . . .

*Mr. Pickthorn:* I am so anxious for breakfast that I do not feel I can deal with this subject as it deserves, because it is an immensely large subject. . . . The Secretary of State for War opened the constitutional question and the whole question of compulsory education. There are so many hon. Members of this Committee, of whom apparently the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Bing) is one—as there are many people outside—who are always willing to put their names to the bottom of any bit of paper so long as it contains one of certain words at the top. "Youth" is one of those words; "peace" used to be one, but has rather gone out of fashion now; and "education" has always been one of those words. There are people who are always prepared as long as anything contains the word "education," to think it must be a jolly good thing, and that they had better have their name on the bottom of it. There really is a great new principle involved here, and I am not at all sure which side I am on—[*Interruption*]*]*—and I am sure hon. Members opposite are not sure which side they are on in this matter, because I am sure most of them have not yet perceived it. When I point it out to them I hope they will tell me on which side they are, because that will help me to make up my mind.

*Mr. Bing rose*—

*Mr. Pickthorn:* No, I am going to finish this paragraph. Under the law at present, education is compulsory by Statute up to the age of 15, and continued up to the age of 18.

Beyond that, presumably, people are free from compulsory education, but they become subject to compulsory military service. Now, under this Clause, they will get compulsory education under that compulsory military service. It may be that that is a good thing, but it is an extension of compulsory education, which has not, I think, been previously considered. I will be quite honest with hon. Members opposite. If I, myself, were back at the age of 21 or 22, when I went into the Army I should resent far more than I resent other things that happen to me, compulsory education—. . . A point which has not previously come to the attention of the public or of this Committee is that apparently by a side wind in this Bill there is to be compulsory education at a higher age level than before.

*Mr. Harold Davies:* It is there now.

*Colonel Wigg:* It always has been.

*Mr. Pickthorn:* There has not been compulsory military service before the war.

*Mr. Callaghan:* Of course there has.

*Mr. Pickthorn:* No, there has not. This is the beginning of systematic conscription in this country which we are now discussing, so the thing is new. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] It does not really matter how much noise hon. Members opposite make, the facts and arguments remain the same. For the first time we are having compulsory military service in this country in time of peace and on a semi-permanent basis; and by a side wind there is to be compulsory education at a higher age level than it has ever been before. I think that is a very important decision, and I am surprised we have not had it discussed more fully and at greater length.

The right hon. Gentleman said the organisations were mentioned in the Bill. It does not mention organisations at all. It only indicates the sort of organisation which is required to be consulted. I, myself, find that very dangerous. It was suggested that the T.U.C. ought to be one.

*Mr. Harold Davies:* They were consulted all through the war.

*Mr. Pickthorn:* I did not say they had not been. I am not sure that was a very good thing; nor am I sure it was a very bad thing. I have not said it is a good or a bad thing. Ought the Communist Party to be consulted? Ought the Primrose League to be consulted? Ought the Church of England Education Society to be consulted? . . . No, I cannot give way again; it is breakfast time. If the Amendment were that the Ministry of Education ought to be consulted I should think that they ought to be consulted. On this point of consulting the Ministry of Education, I should like to give a word of advice to the Secretary of State for War. I think there is a small circulating library in superior constitutional arguments, which must be a kind of club among upper civil servants or Ministerial private secretaries. The theory that there is something unconstitutional because, contrary to the doctrine of Cabinet homogeneity, or joint responsibility, there has been consultation between two Ministers, at the direction of the King and Parliament, has been pointed out before. I think that is absolutely nonsense. It has been used by various Ministers, who have read it out, rather suprisingly, as the right hon. Gentleman did, from their briefs. Ministers should "vet" arguments that are put to them, and the circulating library might be told that it might be allowed to go out of use.

*Mr. S. Silverman:* I would like to express my astonishment at the speech that the Committee has just heard from

a representative of one of our leading educational institutions. It was not worth sitting up all night to hear that speech. So far as I followed him, the hon. Member said, correctly—at any rate, in the end—that we were now having compulsory military service for the first time in peacetime on a semi-permanent basis. Then he said, as though it was an additional evil—

*Mr. Pickthorn rose—*

*Mr. S. Silverman:* No, I will not give way. I heard what the hon. Member said, and I am entitled to draw my inferences from it. If I draw the wrong ones perhaps he will have the chance to correct me during another all night Sitting, if he wishes to do so. The hon. Member said, "First of all, you do one unpleasant thing by compelling people to have military training." The rest of us regard the education which would follow on compulsory enlistment as one of the alleviations of the dreadful necessity under which most Members of the Committee seem to find themselves at the moment, but the hon. Member regarded it as an additional evil, to be approached with great suspicion. He said that it was quite wrong that there should come in on a side-wind, as he described it, an extension of the principle of compulsory education. I should have thought he would have been wholly in favour of extending education either by side wind, front wind, back wind, or any other wind where it could be done. Most other people would have been, and I think it is most astonishing and alarming that Cambridge University, with its long traditions of culture and civilisation and general development of human culture should send in these days as a representative to the House of Commons, one who has such a reactionary, antediluvian view of education as that.

*Mr. H. Strauss:* I do not think that hon. Gentlemen are likely to advance education by insulting the universities or by making rather foolish zoo noises...

[After further discussion.]

*Mr. Bellinger:* ... I am going to ask my hon. and gallant Friend to relieve me of my predicament by withdrawing his Amendment, on the undertaking that, between now and the Report stage, I will look into the matter very closely...

*Colonel Wigg:* ... I gladly agree to withdraw this Amendment...

Clause, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

CLAUSE II.—(Information to be furnished by education authorities.)

*Mr. Pickthorn:* I beg to move, in page 7, line 14, after "about," to insert:

"the educational attainments of."

... I have heard it suggested—although this would not have occurred to me—that there might be a political danger here, that people might be asked to disclose their political background, opinions or prejudices. That might have unfortunate effects. I notice that during the war practically all my Communist pupils got high situations in M.I. If I were to be forced to disclose the Communist tendencies of any ex-pupils of mine, it might be that M.I. would be populated entirely by Communists, and I should have thought that was carrying the thing a bit too far. However that may be, I ask the Minister to consider whether he really wants to be able to put compulsion upon us to give him, not only what

we know without doubt about the educational attainments of our pupils, but also anything we know or can find out in any other connection at all. If so much as that is needed, it ought to be explained to us why.

*Mr. Isaacs:* I can give the hon. Member the information for which he asks in both respects. First, he asked if this was common form. This Clause is reproduced from an identical provision in Section 10 of the Military Training Act. Therefore, the Clause as it stands is in use, and so far as I am aware, there have been no complaints about its restrictions... The two things we specially want to have power to ask are these. We want to check up on the registration particulars of the individual...

*Mr. Harold Macmillan (Bromley):* I am sure the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary are seeking to meet the Committee in every way, and I only intervene because this is a matter which, in various forms, has caused a good deal of general interest—the general increase in the desire of Governments to get information about young people for various purposes. As a parallel example I would quote the Innes Report on Juvenile Education, which has caused a good deal of interest in many quarters, where similar provisions are made for information to be given about boys without an opportunity for the parents to be present and without the boy being given knowledge of it. Obviously, so long as the information is used in the right way, there is no danger. Incidentally, the picture drawn by the Parliamentary Secretary of the Chancellors of the Universities meeting the Minister to give information about their pupils was, I thought, rather fanciful. Imagine Lord Baldwin, Lord Halifax or Sir John Orr doing that. I think myself that a boy's school record is a thing which would be much better left to die when he leaves school, instead of letting it pursue him as a kind of bad dossier all through his life because some schoolmaster has written it. What is the purpose of a school report? It is not a report to the authorities, it is a report to the parents. The only object of a school report is to tell the parent what the child is doing in order that they may bring their influence to bear. I think the Parliamentary Secretary might look at this before the Report Stage.

*Mr. Ness Edwards indicated assent.*

*Mr. Macmillan:* We are necessarily becoming a highly-organised and planned State and we understand the need for conscription and so on, but I hope we shall try to maintain the principle that when anything is said about anybody, he knows what is said, whether he is a young man or an old man. The second principle is that in the case of anyone who has not grown up, the people who have the responsibility for him—the parents—should have full knowledge of what is said, and nobody else. If we maintain those two principles in the regulations, we shall be able to work this system without injury, but I fear that if we create a feeling that under State discipline dossiers are built up which follow people through their lives, there will be much resentment and a danger of people feeling that they are being treated too much as pieces of furniture to be moved about, and not enough as living human beings...

*Mr. Isaacs:* I very readily give that undertaking. I entirely agree that we do not want private dossiers about anybody knocking about. I will certainly look into the matter.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.