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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

The problem of the Jew is always better considered in the light of what he says about himself and his interests than by that of the mass of conflicting statements which proceed from other sources. It would be difficult to find a better example of this than the retort of the Jewish spokesman to the request of the British Government to "other nations" to refrain from any action which would encourage or facilitate the illegal entry of Jews into Palestine pending the result of the enquiry by U.N.O. "The Jews are not entering illegally; the British are keeping them out illegally."

Apply that principle to every issue between the Jew and the European, and you have the situation in its starkest terms.

All the evidence which is afforded by the quickening march of events goes to suggest that the world is on the eve of a convulsion affecting every plane of existence, and we cannot for the life of us find any explanation which is sufficiently comprehensive other than "War between Christ and Satan" (there are many other vocabularies). We know, and have analysed in these pages, the bearing of defective mechanisms, notably money and credit, on the calamities which have befallen and which threaten us. But there is a rapturous, conquering evil abroad which transcends all this. It is aware of everything we know, and more, and defies its rectification. Perhaps, with certain easily identifiable exceptions, the present "British" Administration may—we should like to hope so—be composed of men and women actuated by principles and aspirations which bear some relation to the high-sounding language used to justify them. But the Administration is evil—it is of the Devil.

To take one aspect alone—the exaltation of "the worker" (not the man or the woman, but the most purely materialistic function which the human being exercises. Not the "good worker" or the "clever worker," or the worker making or doing some admirable thing) there is a subtle policy evident to detach all moral qualities from "work". This has now reached such a point that Mr. Shinwell's "tinker's cuss" valuation of the non-Trades Unionist, or the violent attacks on the British Housewives League on the grounds that they do not represent "the workers" are for the most part regarded as valid if true. This is not stupidity—there are plenty of people who understand quite well that industrial society ought to exist to reduce the number of "workers," not to increase the number of "labour" votes, or it has so many defects that it justifies the Luddites in the worst of their excesses. It is down-right Evil Incarnate, and we know of only one Church, that of St. Peter, which has a clear idea of what is happening, and of the fate which awaits the dupes of Messrs. Attlee, Shinwell, Dalton and Strachey. That is

the reason behind the venomous hatred by "Moscow" for the Roman Catholic Church, and the popularity in the same quarters of the Dean of Canterbury.

The British Isles have an area of approximately 95,000 sq. miles (including Northern Ireland). They are greatly overpopulated, and their range of natural products is not wide. The slogan dinned into us by every source of Government and concealed-Government propaganda is "Export or Die" (Don't bother about what you import, we'll take care of that, and its disposal).

The United States (Continental) including Alaska has an area of about 4,300,000 sq. miles, is greatly under-populated, and possesses a range of natural products which is almost complete except for rubber and tea and a few rare metals; together with immense "conversion" plant.

The *Saturday Evening Post* of May 17 carries an article by Mr. Averill Harriman (one of the Harrimans, you know, who did so nicely out of Bolshevik concessions), Secretary of Commerce, U.S.A., entitled "We must Import to Live." Now think that out carefully, and then laugh it off.

Of course we have no effective Constitution in this country and are at the mercy of any gang which seizes control; and the complaint of a writer to *The Scotsman* that the National Coal Board is publishing Socialist propaganda at public expense, is naive. Apparently the National Coal Board has thrown off any disguise, sneers at the monarchy, refers to an earl who "was brought to admit that there are spendthrifts amongst the rich as well as amongst the Poor" and so on. So what?

Limerick Doctors Oppose State Service

The Standard, (Dublin) reports a recent meeting of the medical profession of County Limerick for the purpose of discussing the Health Bill now before the Dail. One of the resolutions passed was—

"As the Bill appears to aim at conferring what amounts to dictatorial power upon the Minister for Health, the doctors of this county desire to place on record their determination not to accept the status of State-directed officials.

"The meeting held the view that the Bill should be amended so as to:—

"Preserve the traditional, moral, professional secrecy between doctor and patient.

"Protect the doctor from State direction in clinical matters and preserve his right to freedom of judgment and action in diagnosis and treatment of patients.

"Safeguard the doctor's right to private practice."

Other Weapons

"Shortly before the June (1946) elections to the Constituent Assembly in France, the successful conclusion of an American-French loan agreement, by the mission in Washington headed by M. Leon Blum, was announced.

"A supplementary agreement signed by M. Blum and Mr. Byrnes at the same time as the loan has set the French film industry by the ears. Characteristics of this agreement are: That it makes the position of the French film in France not only worse than it was before the war, but worse than it is even at the moment. That the much-reduced protection conceded is to be revised **DOWNWARD** if the French film does better than expected; and—That absolutely no reciprocity of any kind is undertaken for the French film in U.S.A. . .

"Currently the absorptive capacity of the French Screen is 150 films per year (from 1932 to 1939 the French film industry produced 110 to 120 films per year). The French film industry had asked for a screen quota of seven weeks out of every quarter . . . The new agreement provides a . . . screen quota of only four weeks out of every quarter. French technicians and producers calculate that this will afford protection to only 48 films annually . . . French producers have the resources to make more, but outside the protected sector of screen time, competition with freely admitted American films is impossible. Since 1939 the American cinema has produced anything up to 500 films per year. Of these only about 50 have been shown in France. The Americans therefore have waiting and ready some 3,000 to 4,000 films which have already entirely recouped their production cost, and which they have only to dub in order to compete in the unprotected screen-time sector with French films. (The new agreement—dated 28/5/46—permits free importation to all French territory of all films dubbed in French. The import quota system is entirely abolished.)

"Faced with such a situation, no bank will finance, no independent producer dare attempt, any production outside the protected limits.

"This means that . . . Production will tend more and more to be limited to the two big companies, Pathe and Gaumont, which will be able to minimise their risks through agreements signed recently with big foreign companies. This is particularly disadvantageous for the French cinema, because most of the characteristic films which earned high repute abroad were made by independents.

"Future improvement also, is ruled out by the agreement. This provided that: 'If during a period of two years French film production shall have occupied on French screens a place equal or superior to an average of five weeks per quarter, the quota shall be automatically reduced to three weeks per quarter.'

"It provides further that 'There shall be no restriction on the importation of American films into France and no limitations on their showing other than the screen quota above provided . . .' And the final clause runs: 'The U.S. Government notes with satisfaction that, in taking these new steps, the French Government has in mind the entire elimination of all protection when the French industry is again able to compete.'

"'Truly,' observes M. Daquin (General Secretary of the Film Technicians' Union), 'there are other arms than the atomic bomb.' He accuses the Americans of striving for film monopoly not merely because of the commercial advan-

tages . . . but because of the importance of the films as a means of influence . . . the agreement provides not an exchange on a plane of reciprocity and equality, but a form of colonial expansion . . .

"The whole episode contains the most important lessons and serious warnings for our industry in this country. The lesson resides in the fact that even a united film industry may be sold up the river . . . in the national interest, when a country is hard pressed . . . The same pressure will be exercised upon us.

"We have received the assurance, from the Board of Trade, that there are no similar strings to the Anglo-American loan agreement . . . but at the same time we were given a fairly broad hint that some of the protection we were asking for the industry was not in line with the Government's policy of reducing trade barriers—which it has conditionally undertaken to adopt in connection with the loan.

"Where the French film industry was crudely bludgeoned ours is doubtless scheduled for more subtle negotiations in the framework of the world trade conferences due next year. Anyway the French agreement is a signpost of the aspirations of our transatlantic cousins. We have been warned."—Ivor Montagu in *Penguin Film Review*, No. 2.

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: June 6, 1947.

Companies Bill [Lords]

Order for Second reading read.

The President of the Board of Trade (Sir Stafford Cripps): . . . This large and rather complicated-looking piece of legislation can, I think, quite fairly be considered as a non-contentious Bill, certainly from the party point of view. As the House knows, it had its origin in the Report of the Committee presided over by Lord Justice Cohen . . . It was in 1943 that the then Government considered it necessary that the whole matter of company law should be inquired into by a high-powered Committee with a view to introducing amendments of the law before we entered into the difficult period of postwar transition in which we now find ourselves. They were fortunate enough to obtain the services of Mr. Justice Cohen, as he then was, as chairman. Perhaps I might remind the House of the terms of reference of that Committee. They were:

"To consider and report what major Amendments are desirable in the Companies Act, 1929, and, in particular, to review the requirements prescribed in regard to the formation and affairs of companies and the safeguards afforded for investors and for the public interest."

The Committee presented a unanimous report in July, 1945 . . .

. . . This Bill has as its intention to incorporate the main recommendations of that Committee, and its two principal objects are, first, to restore or to strengthen the relationship between ownership and management; and, second, to bring fully within the ambit of the company law the modern system of holding and subsidiary companies. Those are the prime purposes of the Bill, though certain other topics which have been included, such as, for instance, the retiring age for directors and the problem of nominee shareholders, have tended to run away with the publicity as far as the Bill is concerned . . .

... I now come to the difficult subject of nominee shareholders. It has been the law ever since 1862 that every company has to keep a register of shareholders, and include a copy of that with its annual return to the Registrar, and the persons so registered are alone entitled to take any part in the proceedings of the company and vote at its meetings, but such a person may, of course, be a mere nominee for the real owner. Now the practice of placing shares in the name of nominees has grown very greatly of recent years; so much so, indeed, that at the present time the register of members of a great many companies cannot be regarded as disclosing the true ownership of the shares. Though there was no evidence before the Cohen Committee showing any widespread abuse of this system, or, indeed, urging its abolition, it is clear that it is easy to conceal by this means both the ultimate control of the company and the dealings of directors in the shares of the company. After very careful consideration, the Cohen Committee made recommendations for dealing with this matter which, on their own statement, they did not regard as entirely satisfactory. The difficulty lies in devising an effective check without at the same time imposing quite an undue burden upon the secretaries of the staffs of the company.

The recommendations of the Committee were threefold: first, that every shareholder should be required to state whether he is himself the beneficial holder of the shares or holds them as a nominee; second, that every person who is directly or indirectly the beneficial owner of 1 per cent. or more of the issued capital of the company, or of the issued shares of any class, should be required to make a declaration of that fact to the company, and a register of such beneficial ownership should be maintained; and, third, that the Board of Trade should have power to investigate the ownership of shares in any company where they consider it necessary to do so in the public interest.

Of these three recommendations the first was not included in the Bill as introduced in another place, because Lord Justice Cohen and some of his colleagues, who had considered the matter, advised me that the recommendation was likely to be of such small practical value, and to cause so much inconvenience to business, that it ought not to be proceeded with. Consequently, it was dropped. I may say that I agreed with him entirely that it had little, if any, practical value. The second recommendation was embodied in the Bill as introduced, but it met with very severe criticism on the ground that it would cause a great deal of trouble to very many innocent persons, but would not catch the persons at whom the Clause was aimed. In fact it could easily have been evaded, and those who evaded it would have been the very ones one desired to know about. After most careful reconsideration of the whole matter with my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, I came to the conclusion that it was not possible to devise any watertight system which could not easily be defeated by evasion, and yet any such system that was devised would be bound to entail a great volume of work which would, in the end, be rendered ineffective by the evasion. I, therefore, came to the conclusion that reliance must be placed—as, indeed, in any method it would have to be placed—in the last resort upon the third of the Committee's recommendations, and that alone, therefore, survives in the Bill.

The Bill, however, goes much farther on investigation by the Board of Trade than the Committee contemplated. In particular, the Board of Trade are given power to

investigate nominee ownership not merely, as suggested by the Committee, where it appears necessary in the public interest, but whenever it seems to them—the Board of Trade—that there is good reason so to do. That is in Clause 44. They also have wide powers given of requiring information without inspection by Clause 45; and Clause 46 gives the Board drastic powers to deal with any obstruction. They may direct that particular shares shall be subject to any of the following restrictions: prohibition of transfer, prohibition of exercising of voting rights, prohibition of the issue of further shares in right of the shares in question, prohibition of the payment of dividend. I believe that these sanctions, which are additional to those in Clause 45, should be effective. Those in Clause 45 render a person who fails to give the information liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding £500, or to both. I am convinced, therefore, after careful investigation of this question, that we have adopted in the Bill what will prove to be the most effective method of dealing with this problem of nominee shareholders. If, however, in the light of experience gained under this system of investigation, it is found that further powers are required, we shall have no hesitation in coming to the House to ask it to give us those powers...

Major Bruce (Portsmouth, North): I listened with great interest to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bournemouth (Mr. Bracken). Here is a Bill of 119 Clauses which is literally bristling with restrictions and controls, and, in the normal way, on the basis of the propaganda that emanates from the party opposite, one would have expected indignant expostulations at the great body of restrictions comprised in the legislation we are now considering. Of course, the reason why hon. Members of the Opposition support this Bill is contained in the words used by the hon. Member for Bury (Mr. W. Fletcher) when he said that this Bill was primarily concerned with shareholders. I trust that the party opposite will become rather more broadminded on the subject of controls which affect large numbers of the community and particularly those not in the fortunate position of being able to invest money, and that these other necessary controls will command their wider support in future.

Mr. Bracken: May I remind the hon. and gallant Gentleman that I was a Member of the Government which appointed this Committee, and, in more than 20 years, friends of mine and myself have been most anxious to see a Bill like this?

Major Bruce: I willingly concede that remark. The only point I was making was that it shows a very admirable extension of breadth of mind that a Bill of this kind should have been given such generous support, as also, incidentally, were the measures contained in the Bill for the extension of information in accounts and for the wider circulation of accounts. This attitude on the part of the Opposition is very creditable indeed, and one hopes that, in years to come, favourable consideration will be given by the party opposite to the publication and wider circulation of the accounts of the Conservative Party and subsidiaries of that party, such as the British Housewives' League...

... What is the effect of this Bill on the working population of the country? By that I mean the vast portion of our population who are engaged in productive enterprise in the various companies affected by this Bill. For many

(continued on page 6.)

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Saturday, June 21, 1947.

Byword

Not many men have become bywords—'objects of common derision'—by process of incorporation of their surnames in the language to epitomise some habitual absurdity or to stigmatise some flaming indiscretion. But we foresee that Sir Hartley Shawcross may easily add himself to their number if he maintains his present rate of progress—and, indeed, it may even have happened. The mob has been crossed and double-crossed so much that we should prefer that they might be spared the humiliation of being shawcrossed either now or in days to come; but if we ever hear that St. Helen's has been shawcrossed we shall know what is meant and groan, reserving only the depths of our sympathy in consideration that a truly saintly electorate would not have made him its unrepresentative 'representative'.

SHAWCROSS, shaw-kros, *v.t.* to re-present popular ignorance and prejudice in terms of pompous rhetoric, dishonestly to confirm ignorance from political or base motives. (From the celebrated *Sir. H. Shawcross*, born 1902, a politician.)

That after generations of scientific improvement of process there should be any argument concerning the material results, if not wantonly sabotaged, of improvement of process is symptomatic of present troubles. The only 'facts' are fictions required to construct political theories; the only 'tenable' theories are those popularised to manoeuvre blocks of votes. One of the non-material results of improved process is 'shawcrossism', the dethronement of any standard which does not give, not the 'right' but the 'left' answer. History is not confined "between the two wars". One begins to wonder whether the sinister Party does not embody a conscious repudiation of right altogether. A common verdict of recent hysterias on labour platforms is that the party leaders are losing or have lost their heads. We dissent. The theory is too facile by far. All the policies, like that of selling whisky for 4/9 F.O.B. and buying coal at £8 a ton, for dollars, are on the face of it, insane, and these people who are hamstringing us are very far from being insane from their point of view. Monetary corruption leaps to the eye, and since the agents, both here and in America, are known, *both here and in America*, the surface triviality of the issue is irrelevant. The Housewives mustn't be shawcrossed. Derision has had its effect when it has relieved their feelings. There is no need to go on deriding a Minister who has done all a trained Counsel can do to invite (and focus) derision. Sir Hartley Shawcross believes in 'education', and may even be willing for the housewives to educate him, just as Mr. Callaghan (of Cardiff) might secretly hope for a painstaking resolution of his perplexities concerning the nature of calories. Any man or woman over

thirty-five who does not *know* that our standard of living 'has collapsed' is an unteachable danger to the safety of the realm, let alone his own safety. Any person active in politics who doesn't see through the boosting of canteens (where, by the bye, there seems to be an abundance of fine York hams, all odourously boiled, cutting like butter and encrusted with toasted bread crumbs!) ought to send his butter ration to Sir Hartley ('to give to the baby'). "There are more people in *our* schools, technical colleges and universities than ever before." There are; but that does not mean that they won't learn something—outside, possibly in the British Housewives' League. They must be making some progress, for a 'break-away' movement has begun—in Manchester! Such incidents should be investigated and the inspiration tracked to its *source*—and made public. It is not, however, on the points chosen by Sir Hartley Shawcross that attention should be focussed. The essence of 'shawcrossism' is to maintain argument about matters which, to anyone in his senses, are not arguable. Within a generation, the domestic equipment, furnishings, the foods, amusements, joys of the overwhelming majority of Englishmen have become museum exhibits: the cups, saucers, spoons, cutlery, carpets, pies and delicacies which most knew as common objects and possessed are not here: our standard of living has collapsed. But the forces which have brought that collapse about will not be routed by demonstrating the obvious.

West Indians

"So loving, so tractable, so peaceable are these people, that I swear to your majesties, there is not in the world a better nation, nor a better land. They love their neighbours as themselves; and their discourse is ever sweet and gentle, and accompanied with a smile; and though it is true they are naked, yet their manners are decorous and praiseworthy."—*Columbus, to the King and Queen of Castile.*

"For All Classes"

The East Suffolk Education Committee on June 11, granted the application of a retired Civil servant for a grant towards sending his twin children to public schools in different parts of the country.

He was allowed £35 a year towards the cost of tuition of his son in Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, says the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and the same for his daughter in St. Felix's School, Southwold.

Members of the Education Committee who opposed the grant on the grounds that the parents were able to pay for their children's education were told by the chairman (the Earl of Cranbrook) that the Education Act provided for free education for all classes.

"I wish I had thought of applying for this grant for my own boy," Lord Cranbrook added.

National Health Service

Mr. Henry Willink, K.C., Conservative M.P. for North Croydon and Minister of Health in the last Coalition Government, has announced that he does not intend to seek re-election at the next General Election.

He has been appointed Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

An Introduction to Social Credit*

By BRYAN W. MONAHAN.

Part IV.—METAPHYSICS

(1)

Zeno brought to his problem two concepts, those of time and distance, cutting those concepts into unimaginably small pieces, 'proved' that motion was impossible. He might, in the same way, have applied to the measurement of length a wooden yard-stick, and then, by shaving the stick with a knife into splinters, so 'proved' that length is impossible.

There is no essential difference in the way by which the official economist 'refutes' the analysis demonstrating how the gap between purchasing-power and prices arises. Zeno in his argument omitted the one significant feature—motion—from his premisses, and consequently it was absent from his conclusion. The economist subdivides a flow into static stages: he omits the *rate*. He assumes that a payment made to a worker remains in the workers' hands until the item part of whose cost it represents is ready for sale.

But there is a deeper resemblance, which is merely exemplified in the official economist. It lies in the notion that because you can, within the limits of your imagination, do anything you like with concepts, you can, *thereby*, do anything you like with Reality. You can, and it has been done, imagine all kinds of "possible worlds"; but so far as we are concerned, only one of those worlds has found expression, and forms one aspect of what we know as Reality. Zeno with his eyes open and for the sake of argument took a 'possible' world as real—a world in which time and distance were significantly infinitely divisible. In that sort of world Achilles never would overtake the tortoise. And similarly, in the economists' conceptual world, Utopia would be actualised.

The scientific method is properly the technique of "restoring or cultivating a just and legitimate familiarity between the mind [concepts] and things", in Bacon's words. It is the setting of Achilles to race against the tortoise. It is the genuine proof of the concepts employed. Now, probably the greatest fallacy of our times is the notion that Reason in itself provides a proof; that because an argument is logical, its conclusion has any concrete embodiment. It is not necessarily, or even probably, so; "The Reason, like a slide-rule, is incapable of furnishing anything more than the logical sum of the data provided. It is pure instrument, and can prove nothing." (Douglas.)

Reason is specially active in the construction of Utopias; and the most devastating demonstration of its nature lies in the fact that every Utopia we hear of differs from each of the others in significant particulars. Ely Culbertson adapts the game of Contract Bridge to produce a statistically invincible Police Force; H. G. Wells solves all by Science; and the 'British' Socialists find now that a Super-Planner is required to reconcile the ambitions of varied segments of the governing bureaucracy each to further its own plan.

As Zeno left motion out of the data, so the Planners ignore the organic: Life, the Living, and in particular,

Human Nature—the thing-in-itself that produces the diversity in plans. The proof that this is so is not verbal; it is the experience we suffer of Planning. Planning assumes—it must assume—that the number of factors involved is sufficiently small to allow the Intellect to cope with them, or else that it can select sufficient factors for its purpose. The only possible proof of this hypothesis is the pragmatic test, the experiment. In every case so far, the hypothesis has failed by the pragmatic test; and the cost of the failure has been the sacrifice of literally millions of human lives, through famine and concentration camp, without reckoning with the culmination in war.

Major Douglas has specifically described Social Credit as "the policy of a philosophy." Since then he has emphasised time and time again that any and every policy is the outcome of some particular philosophy. In particular, Socialism—Socialism as we know it from the practice of Soviet Russia, the Corporate State of Italy under Mussolini, the National Socialism of Germany particularly under Hitler, and the developing Socialism in Great Britain particularly under the Attlee Administration—is a policy, the outcome of a philosophy. The philosophy in question has innumerable particular expressions, but in principle they all derive from the idea that the Intellect, or Reason is not only the supreme Power in the universe, but that it is supreme as manifested in Man.

This view of things received a great strengthening from the successes of the modern scientific method—for a time. But the scientific method is only a tool; it is only a method of dealing with concepts; it is only, in fact, a refinement of Zeno's argument. In the last few years this disconcerting truth has emerged very plainly. The pursuit of Zeno's problem leads to the most beautiful development of mathematical theory; but it is found in the end that the elaboration is an elaboration of the relations between concepts—"pure" mathematics. And so it is with science. The enormous discoveries tail out into entirely abstract concepts. Matter quite literally disappears, and God re-appears as a super-mathematician with the world as his equations. What science has really discovered is the necessary consequences of the concepts employed.

It is necessary here to guard against misunderstanding. The scientific method leads to an enormous increase in knowledge about Reality. The point is this: the knowledge comes *from Reality*, and not from science as such. Science discovers, it does not create. So long as we seek information about the properties and behaviour of matter, it supplies the answers—if the right questions are asked. But exclude matter from the enquiry, and it returns the answer "nothing there", just as, by excluding motion, Zeno proved that motion was impossible. And since science excludes the concept of creative activity, creative activity is absent from the logical sum of its conclusions.

It is, of course, impossible to explore the vast field referred to here; the object is merely to identify it, to name it as the philosophy behind Socialism. Its name, indeed, is legion, and it has many aspects. But what we refer to is that common body of belief underlying what we variously call Materialism, Collectivism, Pantheism, according to the manifestation.

And so we return to the original question, what is Social Credit?

(To be concluded).

*Now appearing in *The Australian Social Crediter*. The commencement of Dr. Monahan's essay, publication of which has been interrupted, appeared in *The Social Crediter* on January 25.

PARLIAMENT

(continued from page 3)

years now the trade unions of the country have been battling to obtain more information on which to base wages claims, or for that matter to moderate wages claims which they have suspicions for thinking may not be justified anyway. This battling has centred round two points, first of all, round the real ownership and control of the companies, in which the general public is also interested; and, secondly, the determining of what profits have, in fact, been made in the companies in which the workers are employed. This brings me to the question of the nominee shareholders, which has already been discussed here. On page 714 of the Minutes of Evidence before the Cohen Committee, there is a most specific recommendation by the T.U.C. representatives, who included the present Minister of Labour and it reads as follows—

"It is, therefore, recommended that it should be made compulsory for any ordinary, preference or deferred shareholder, to file with the company within a reasonable time a statutory declaration of the full names, addresses, nationality and description of the true beneficial owner on a certain specified day."

There are obvious reasons for this. The practice has grown up during the last few years among people desirous of concealing their ownership of any shares in certain undertakings. In 1895, Sir Francis Palmer, speaking of this, said:

"This is in many cases a matter of great importance, and especially in the case of syndicates, for it commonly happens that leading financiers, Members of Parliament, and commercial men, whilst willing to subscribe to a syndicate, make it a condition that their names shall not appear."

That tendency has become a matter of serious concern over the last 20 or 30 years. The Cohen Committee commented on it in paragraph 79 which I have not the time to read, and as a result Clauses 57-63 of the original Bill were inserted in which the responsibilities in regard to that matter were embodied. After Debate in another place, these Clauses were eliminated on the grounds of the impossibility of enforcement.

I appreciate the point that it is difficult to enforce a law of the type proposed in the Bill originally, but what have we in exchange? We have Clauses 44, 45, and 46 in the present Bill which give the Board of Trade powers of investigation into the ownership of companies. The T.U.C., however, were not concerned with giving the Board of Trade such powers; what they were concerned with was that the public should have information as to the ownership of shares in companies. All the existing Clauses do is to give the Board of Trade these powers, and I ask the Solicitor-General: is his right hon. and learned Friend prepared to consider inserting in the Bill a provision which will empower the President of the Board of Trade to make public the results of the investigations which he thinks ought to be undertaken?

The second point which has always exercised the Trade Union Movement in this country in the negotiation of wage claims is the disclosure of accounts. Under Section 26 of the 1929 Act a private company was defined as a company restricting the right to transfer its shares and limiting its members, subject to minor qualifications, to 50, and prohibiting any invitation by the company to subscribe for shares or debentures, and it was exempt from the obligation to file its accounts annually. Expert evidence was given by the T.U.C. on this matter—and I believe evidence was given by the present Minister of Labour. The arguments adduced by the representatives of the T.U.C. in evidence were very wide and I have no doubt they received full consideration in the Cohen Committee's Report. Indeed, paragraph 51

on page 27 of the Report makes some mention of this, and the Cohen Committee conceded the principle that all limited companies should make their accounts public by filing them with the annual returns. At the same time, fears were expressed that this would place these companies in an adverse position in relation to other larger companies which could stand the publication of their accounts much better. The Cohen Committee comments succinctly on this point as follows:

"While recognising that these fears are sincerely expressed, we do not believe that publication would have so completely one-sided consequences. In any event, in the public interest, stimulation or elimination of the inefficient, whether small or large, is desirable."

In those circumstances, I cannot understand how it is that the exempt company has come into existence. The scope of the exempt company is very wide indeed. The restrictions have already been given by the President of the Board of Trade. So long as another limited company or body corporate does not hold shares in it, so long as the members are limited to 50—and there are certain other quite minor requirements to be complied with—the company need not file its accounts. I think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman should look at this matter again...

The Solicitor-General (Sir Frank Soskice): ... That brings me to a point made by the hon. Member for North Portsmouth (Major Bruce). He said, "You have gone very far in doing that but, after all, what is to happen when the Board of Trade has made its investigation," and he asked if my right hon. Friend would be prepared to accept an Amendment providing that the Board of Trade would have power to publish its report. In reply, I would say that there is already that power in the Bill...

Postal Services

Mr. Keeling (Twickenham): We pass from the Companies Bill to the deterioration of the postal services. Every Member of Parliament knows, and I am sure the Government will not deny, that the service given by the Post Office since the war is far inferior to what it was before the war, and even, in some respects, to what it was during the war. This week there has been a further big deterioration with the complete withdrawal of afternoon deliveries all over the country, except a delivery at 3 p.m. in Inner London.

In the last few days, I have had a great deal of evidence of public dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. Before the war, our postal service was the best in the world. As I want to be brief, I will take only Inner London as an example. Before the war, one could post letters in Inner London up to 5-30 p.m. for delivery the same evening in any part of London, up to 7-30 p.m. for delivery by the first post next morning everywhere in England and Wales, and up to midnight for delivery by the first post in Greater London, in a large part of the home counties, and even as far away as Taunton and Cheltenham. All this was a spur to business and a boon to the public.

Today, both collections and deliveries cease about six hours earlier. The last delivery—again, I take Inner London—is 3 p.m. and the last collection 6-30 p.m., which is too late for most people who want to do their correspondence after business hours, including a number of small business men. The result is that no letter posted in London at, say, 7 o'clock in the evening is delivered even in Greater London for 38 hours, or, if it is posted on Friday, for 62 hours.

The depth to which the internal postal service in this country has sunk is shown by the fact that many letters posted in London take longer to be delivered in a London suburb than in New York or Johannesburg. What makes the situation still worse is the later hour of the first morning delivery. Most people leave their homes before the post has arrived.

The Government have given various reasons or excuses for the inadequacy of the collections and deliveries, and the fact that the reasons have changed is evidence, to my mind, that the true reason has not always been given. In March last year, it was announced that, in the summer of last year, in London, the 7-30 and 9 p.m. pre-war collections would be resumed, and that there would be a 7 p.m. delivery, except on Saturdays. That improvement, which was announced for last summer, was subsequently postponed until January of this year. I want to know what happened in the meantime. What was the cause of the delay? Was the delay due to protests by postal workers? I ask the Assistant Postmaster-General—to whose courtesy in answering the many questions which I have put to him I would like to pay tribute—to answer that question. On 19th February, he admitted in this House that protests have been received.

The later collections and deliveries were introduced in January, but after a few weeks they were withdrawn. The fuel crisis was blamed for that. I suppose the absence of light in the streets was meant. Was that really the reason? If collections and deliveries could be made during the war when the streets were blacked out at night, why should they not be made in peacetime? I suggest that the Government clutched at the fuel crisis as an excuse. If the Press can be believed, great pressure was brought to bear on the Government against the new hours by the Union of Postal Workers. I ask the Assistant Postmaster-General whether he will confirm or deny that statement which appeared in the Press?

Today the streets are still unlit, but now we are told that the reason for maintaining the cuts, and this week for extending them, is not fuel but manpower. If that is so, what has happened to the manpower that has been saved? If it has been diverted elsewhere, could he tell us where? Has it been used to shorten the postal hours? I put that question to the Assistant Postmaster-General three weeks ago, and he could not give me a direct answer. He said, "Not necessarily." Is the surplus being so used or not? Or is it being used exclusively for the examination of Conservative slogans on letters? Apparently there is no gain in manpower yet, because the number of postmen, according to the latest figures that we have, has actually risen since the cuts were made. When the later collections and deliveries began, for their brief spell of life, in January, there were 85,178 postmen, and on 1st April, many weeks after the improvements had been withdrawn, there were 700 more postmen. I should like the Assistant Postmaster-General to explain that.

In conclusion, I am sure everyone in this House has the greatest admiration for the devotion and hard work of the individual postman. Everybody like Members of Parliament, who have a large correspondence are under a great debt to them. But if the public interest requires it they ought not to be exempt from evening work...

Mr. W. R. Williams (Heston and Isleworth): I am glad to have an opportunity of replying to the stuff spoken by the hon. Member for Twickenham (Mr. Keeling) on this

Adjournment... I want to make three points. First, I want to make it perfectly clear that no staff organisation connected with the Post Office has any desire at all to see a lower level of efficiency or a slower transaction of business so far as postal deliveries are concerned. As a matter of fact, all unite on a programme that there should be an efficient postal service, and in the past the history of the organisation is one of which we can be proud, because of the negotiations and discussions that have taken place in regard to the efficiency of the service. There were some of us, however, who thought that before the war the Post Office had been pandering to the whims of certain commercial interests, that mid-night collections and 9-30 deliveries were uneconomic, and certainly not the desire of the general public...

The Assistant Postmaster-General (Mr. Burke):... it is perfectly true that these restricted services are for one reason, and one reason only: because the Government, in reviewing the claims of the Civil Service—and hon. Members opposite have repeatedly called attention to the growth of the Civil Service—on the manpower of the country, asked various Government Departments, including the Post Office, to cut down their manpower, in favour of turning manpower over to production rather than the processes of distribution...

Post Office (Postmen)

Sir E. Graham-Little asked the Postmaster-General how many postal servants were engaged in the collection and delivery of postal packets in July, 1945, as compared with the number at present so employed.

Mr. Wilfred Paling: Figures relating solely to the collection and delivery of postal packets are not immediately available, but for collection, delivery and various allied operations, the number of postmen employed (each part-timer counted as one half) was:

1st July, 1945	...	...	...	...	67,157
1st May, 1947	...	...	...	...	82,125

House of Lords: June 9, 1947.

Transport Bill (Committee Stage)

Lord Balfour of Burleigh: My Lords, on the Motion to go into Committee on this Bill, I desire to call attention to a matter with regard to which I have given private notice to the noble Viscount, the Leader of the House. In a sentence, I want to enter a protest against what I, and I think some of your Lordships, consider the entirely insufficient reasons which were given to your Lordships for the presentation of this Bill, and against the completely unsatisfactory (as I thought) answers to the criticisms which were given. If the noble Viscount replies that the proper way for your Lordships to indicate your disapproval of a Bill, or your disapproval of the reasons which were given in support of it, is by voting against it on Second Reading, I must point out that, as I understand it, the reason your Lordships gave it a Second Reading was not on its merits, but because we considered the Bill which had come to us from another place, supported, to some extent, by a mandate from the country, was one to which it was our duty to give a Second Reading. I think this is a somewhat new point, and one which is worth calling to the attention of your Lordships.

But the fact that we gave the Bill a Second Reading does not diminish in any way the duty which lies upon your

Lordships' House to probe into the circumstances of the Bill, and to try to extract from the Government the most complete information about it and answers to any objections we have to put forward. The duty of your Lordships' House has always been that of a revising chamber, but I venture to say that, in the situation which is before us to-day, we have one, if not two, new duties put upon us. The first is the duty of elucidation, because nobody can say that this Bill was fully elucidated in another place. I am quite certain we shall have numerous questions to put to the Government about the Bill, questions which the guillotine rendered it impossible even to put in another place, still less to have answered. In addition to the duty of revising and of elucidating, there rests upon your Lordships more than ever the duty of education—the education of the country, and, I might perhaps venture to suggest, to some extent the education of noble Lords who sit behind the Government. I venture to say that this great Constitution of ours is developing before our very eyes. In the centuries that have gone by it has developed to meet the changing needs of circumstances, and I am quite confident it will continue so to develop in the future. . .

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Viscount Addison): My Lords, as an old Parliamentarian listening to these speeches I have been asking myself into what form of procedure it seems to fit and, quite frankly, I find it difficult in my own mind to frame any sort of answer. I am sorry that the noble Lord, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, is not satisfied with the reply he received to his speech, but I have often been in that position myself. . . I think that the noble Lord, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, seemed to be treading on rather a dangerous slope when he meditated upon the functions of this House with regard to the other. I am not pursuing that, but I should have said—and in this I am glad to find some reinforcement in what the noble Marquess, the Leader of the Opposition said—that if the representative Chamber, with a large majority, in fulfilment of longstanding engagements and in execution of an undoubted mandate, passed a Bill, that was a good reason and not an insufficient reason. . .

The Marquess of Salisbury: . . . There is also one thing I would like to say to the noble Lord, Lord Brabazon, who was a little critical just now. He said that we postponed everything to the Report stage. The truth is that we in this House do not like to divide against each other if it can possibly be avoided. Our method since the beginning of this Parliament always has been to try and get nearer and nearer; and if we do not get near enough on Committee stage, we try to get nearer to each other between it and the Report stage. I really think that is the most satisfactory way from the point of view of the House as a whole. I am obliged to say that, because the noble Lord's words might give the impression that the House of Lords was fudging the issues or was not doing its job properly. I think it is doing its job admirably.

House of Lords: June 10, 1947.

The Marquess of Salisbury: . . . I am bound to say something on the last words which were used by the noble Viscount the Leader of the House. He talked about our machine majority. Would he talk about the machine

majority in another place?

Viscount Addison: It was elected by the people.

The Marquess of Salisbury: The point is that in any House of Parliament there are certain members who are constitutionally empowered to take action according to their beliefs, and that applies both in the other place and in your Lordship's House. Nobody can say that during the last two years of this session this House has ever taken a Party view. Noble Lords have always tried to improve Bills upon their merits. That has been done with every Bill in the past and we shall continue to do it with Bills in the future. If we make Amendments in this Bill, it is purely for the purpose of making the Bill more worthy. The Bills are discussed here, they are amended here, and they go back to another place; and the other place have a perfect right and duty to take whatever action they think fit with regard to the Amendments which are passed in your Lordships' House. But to say that we are prohibited from taking any action which we believe to be our constitutional duty in regard to any results which may accrue is a form of blackmail to which no responsible person would ever submit, and I hope that no such argument will be pursued in this House again. This Amendment is designed for the improvement of the measure before us. It will be considered in another place, on its merits, no doubt. I am sure the noble Viscount the Leader of the House, when he thinks over the matter coolly, will not expect any Party in this House, or section of opinion in this House, not to take any action which they thought right merely because of possible consequences. That would be a very wrong thing and it would be a denial of all right under the Constitution.

Viscount Addison: The noble Marquess and I, I am sure, are united in our wish and in our endeavour, as we have been for a long time past, to make the working of the machinery of this House fully worthy of its reputation, and I think we have done something to enhance it. And I am quite sure of this; that the noble Marquess will be the last to accuse me of doing or saying anything which he or anybody else can interpret as "blackmail." That was the word which the noble Marquess used. I do not like it.

The Marquess of Salisbury: If the noble Viscount would prefer it, I will use the words "veiled menace."

Viscount Addison: . . . This Amendment is destructive of the machinery of the Bill. There is no doubt whatever about that—it is destructive of the machinery of the Bill. I say, with great earnestness, and I am sure I say it in the best interests of our Parliamentary institutions, that it is right that this non-representative Chamber should bear in mind that whilst it does its best to maintain its traditions—and we do effect great improvements in Bills and discuss them with great advantage—we should be prudent in our alterations to proposals that have received a very large majority of support in the representative Chamber. I will not put it any higher than that. I do not want to engage in any discussion of our constitutional arrangements. I am sure there is a score, or maybe more than that, of Amendments of this character which have been put down in respect of this Bill. If they are all put to a Division then, of course, we are completely helpless—I know we are. They will be carried, and they will smash up the Bill; that is all. And it is not right.