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## Birth of a 'Republic'

The announcement that the Czechoslovak *émigré* Government in London has recognised the 'Polish' Provisional government of Lublin and that the Polish *émigré* government in London has replied by breaking off relations with M. Benes and his colleagues (with whom the London Poles had entered into far-reaching agreements concerning the future of Poland and Czechoslovakia) has inspired the following survey of some of the events leading up to the birth, in 1918, of the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Those whose memories take them back to the first phase of the present war (1914-18) will recall the name of Francis-Joseph, the old Emperor of the vast, multi-national and largely self-supporting area, Austro-Hungary. They will recall the legend that it was the murder of his heir, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, at the hand of a Serbian 'nationalist' (we should now say 'patriot') later\* known to be an agent of Grand Orient Freemasonry, which started the first world war. Francis-Joseph's subjects were swung into battle on the losing side. Fortunately for himself, the old Emperor died peacefully in his beloved Vienna, the capital of a country which represented perhaps the flower of European culture, and was thus spared the end of the first round which sounded the death-knell of his Danubian Empire. It is significant that the new Emperor, Charles, lost no time in attempting to come to terms with the Allied Powers. He sent to England his brother-in-law, Prince Sixte of Bourbon-Parma, who was met on the pier of an English port by the then Prime Minister, Mr. David Lloyd George, a former solicitor to the Zionist organisation. Nothing came of the peace mission of the young prince. The Austrian Court, however, continued to work for a separate peace and a meeting was arranged between the Emperor's envoy, Count Mensdorff, and the South African lawyer-soldier, General Smuts, who had won his politico-military spurs as a guerilla-leader in the Boer War, according to Hilaire Belloc, "openly provoked by Jewish interests." "Mr. Lloyd George," M. Clemenceau is stated to have said, "is a fool, and doubly a fool for having sent General Smuts, who does not even know where Austria is." General Smuts, regarded as the father of the mandatory system which 'gave us' Palestine, met Count Mensdorff at Geneva, the Mecca of 'Internationalism.' Nothing came of their encounter. Colonel Repington (*After the War*, 1922, p. 135) writes:— "M. Mensdorff thought that Israel had won the war. They had made it, thrived on it, and profited by it. It was their supreme revenge on Christianity."

Austria, it appears, was under a cloud. "Il faut détruire l'Autriche" was the title of a book published in 1917 in

\*Vicomte de Poncins: *Secret Powers Behind Revolution*, Boswell, London, 1929, p. 81.

Paris by Dr. Benes, a 'Czech' lawyer and lecturer in sociology in the first year of the present war, who had conducted an 'underground' resistance movement in Bohemia against the Habsburg monarchy. He was the liaison-officer between the Bohemian 'patriots' and the 'Free' Czechs abroad led by his former teacher Masaryk, a Prague Professor of philosophy, who worked first from Geneva, and then from London. In 1915 M. Benes, embarrassed by the attentions of the Austrian police, left Austro-Hungary and arrived in Paris, and in the same year 'the Czech nation' declared war on the Habsburg Empire. The momentous events of the year 1917, *i.e.*, the collapse of Imperial Russia, the Balfour Declaration, the Communist Revolution,† and the entrance of the United States into the war, are apt to make the historian overlook some less spectacular happenings, the most important of which was perhaps the Congress of Allied and Neutral Masons held in Paris in June 1917.

The leading French authority on Judeo-Masonic matters, the Vicomte de Poncins, devotes a whole volume, *Société des Nations, Super-Etat-Maçonnique*, to the deliberations of the Congress and the minutes of the meetings held are published in an appendix. The Congress was mainly pre-occupied with the launching of the League of Nations but also found time to discuss territorial questions, the third item of which was 'Liberation of the nationalities contained in the Habsburg Empire.' It was recognised at the Congress that Prague was a key-city. Brother Lebrey declared that 'Prague sera, dans la nouvelle Europe, un centre de conciliation incomparable.'‡ He did not add that Prague contains one of the most renowned Jewries of Europe and was for a long period the pivotal point of the Holy Roman Empire. Like Brothers Benes and Masaryk, M. Lebrey found himself opposed to existing monarchies: "plus on étudie la situation, plus on se rend compte que l'abdication des Hohenzollern est le moyen d'aboutir à la Société des Nations."\*

Vicomte de Poncins maintains that French Grand Orient Freemasonry not only sympathised with the 'Czech' aims but actually financed the secret provisional Czech government in Paris, of which Dr. Benes was made the Foreign Minister and Professor Masaryk the President. At any rate, we read that "in 1917 the Quai d'Orsay told Dr. Benes that the liberation of the Czecho-slovaks [sic] was one of their war aims," and that in the same year "a Czech National army was formed." The author of these statements thinks that the credit for these two achievements

†*The Scotsman*, May 26, 1944. (Letter signed Catriona Murray on Dr. Benes.)

‡Leon de Poncins: *Société des Nations: Super-état Maçonnique* p. 24.

\**Ibid.* p. 21.

must go to Dr. Benes, but that is hardly fair to Professor Masaryk, his political 'chief' who also laboured hard and travelled widely to achieve 'one of the war-aims of the Quai d'Orsay.' From London he had gone to Russia on a forged passport and succeeded in extricating, in the midst of the 'Bolshevik' revolution, the 'Czech' troops from Russia, and, continuing eastwards, had arrived in the United States in 1917.

"In America, as elsewhere," says Masaryk,† "the Jews stood by me. . . As early as 1917 New York Jews had given me a gigantic reception. Now I had many personal meetings with representatives of Orthodox Jewry, as well as with Zionists. Among the latter, I must mention Mr. Brandeis, a Judge of the Supreme Court, who came originally from Bohemia and enjoyed President Wilson's confidence. In New York Mr. Mack was the leading Zionist and I met Naham Sokoloff, the influential Zionist leader. In America, as in Europe, Jewish influence is strong in the Press, and it was good that it was not against us. . . Especially did I make a point of cultivating the pacifists and the pro-Germans. In their camp were some of my former acquaintances. . . an important matter, because pacifism was widespread and inadvertently supported the Germans, in America as elsewhere. . . And last, not least, I sought out the men I knew in financial circles, not so much in the official world where President Wilson's son-in-law Mr. McAdoo was Secretary of the Treasury, as among bankers, and in the Bankers' Club of New York. . . When Lord Reading came to Washington he gave us generous support. Sir William Wiseman whom I had known in England, was also helpful in many matters as head of the British Intelligence Service."

Mr. Victor Cohen in his biography of Masaryk‡ informs us further that the Professor, like all politicians of note who passed through New York, visited the famous Colonel House and that he formed a 'helpful and honoured friendship' with Professor Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University, *alma mater* of the top-drawer International Conciliators. Thus, supported by every brand of world-plotter from pan-German pacifists to Zionist multi-millionaires the Czech Professor was carried along on the strong tide of a nationally self-determined Republicanism.

It is hardly surprising that the new Czechoslovak state first saw the light of day at Pittsburg, U.S.A. Mr. Victor Cohen writes:

In the New World a Convention of Czech and Slovak representatives met at Pittsburg on June 30th and agreed upon the establishment of the Czechoslovak state. . . In the land of Independence, on October 14, 1918, in Independence Hall. . . he (Masaryk) formally issued his Declaration of Independence. . . The Allied Powers now officially received accredited diplomats from the new state of Czechoslovakia, at last come into being.

By one of those remarkable coincidences which punctuate

†*Thomas Masaryk: The Making of a State*, p. 222. It is interesting to note that the last named of Masaryk's supporters, Sir William Wiseman had moved into a flat in New York above that of Col. House, President Wilson's 'other self.' Sir William enjoyed 'quasi-ambassadorial status' because of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's illness and 'temperamental inability to get along with American Officials,' (A Howden-Smith *Mr. House*), and Sir William was promoted, after the war, to directorship of Kuhn, Loeb & Co.

‡Victor Cohen, *The Life and Times of Masaryk*, p. 257.

our progress towards the Age of Universal Conciliation guaranteed by an International Police Force, it was on the very day of the Declaration of Czechoslovakian Independence that President Wilson declared, over the heads of his Allies, that he refused point blank to negotiate with monarchical governments thus turning down a final peace offer made by the Court of Vienna; and, by another coincidence, the same fundamental idea is expressed in the statement made by Mr. Jacob H. Schiff when he was asked to comment on President Wilson's reply to the third German note on the terms of the armistice:

If the German people who are perfectly ripe and qualified for self-government, would only, at this crucial moment have the courage to establish a republican form of government. . . the road to Calgary now lying before them, would become much easier. . .

It will be recalled that at Versailles Bismarck succeeded, with the assistance of the Bleichroeders—'German' finance—and the Rothschilds—'French' finance—to have his blood-and-iron-cemented Second Reich ratified. It will also be remembered that also at Versailles all the right gentlemen of the 'Left' who received M. Benes and Masaryk in Paris, London and Washington, combined their efforts to prevent the Second Reich from being 'dismembered' while concentrating with the same zeal on carving up the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In this task the multi-millionaires of the Left were assisted by the 'progressive' intelligentsia of all countries. Mr. Harold Nicolson who has gravitated from the Diplomatic Service and the League of Nations *via* 'National Labour' to the rarified atmosphere of the Ministry of Information and the Board Room of the 'B.'B.C., has described in his *Peacemaking*, 1919 (1933) (p. 32), how his generation of geo-political experts journeyed to Paris "not only to liquidate the war, but to create a new order in Europe." It was not the existing countries that interested them. "It was the thought of the new Serbia, the new Greece, the new Bohemia, the new Poland which made our hearts sing hymns at heaven's gate" (p. 33). But imagine the blow to his *amour-propre* when he who for ten years had specialised on the problems of the Balkans, found himself appointed to the committee on Czechoslovak frontiers, "a subject for which I was totally ill-equipped" which should have been left, he thinks, in "the more scientific hands of Mr. Arnold Toynbee."

With all due respect for Professor Toynbee's diplomatic gifts (which no Social Crediter is likely to underrate) one doubts if the employment of his scientific hands would have modified the final and peculiar shape of the new hyphenated Republic. Mr. Nicolson, however, was compensated for his professional disappointment by making the acquaintance of Dr. Benes, whom he describes as "altogether an intelligent, young, plausible little man with broad views." He finds Dr. Benes much more interested in the construction of a 'Mittel-europa' than in assisting the births of nationally-determined states. "Benes taught me that balance of Power was not necessarily a shameful, but possibly a scientific, thing. He showed me that only upon the firm basis of such a balance could the fluids of European amity pass and re-pass without interruption." (*Peacemaking*, 1919: p. 210). This was written in 1933 when it was becoming obvious what the 'fluids of European amity' had done to the peoples

§Cyrus Adler: *Jacob H. Schiff, Life and Letters*, p. 206.

governed from Prague. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who was correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in Central Europe after the war, writes in his highly instructive work, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*:

The influence of Masaryk and Benes reigned supreme at Paris and these two eminent statesmen... were able to obtain enormous stretches of territory from Hungary and to found a Republic which contains no less than seven different races, thus re-producing all the worst features of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire... its policy hovers on the brink of Communism. Private property is no longer safe, corruption is rampant.

In the very year of the Peace Conference the Prague Government confiscated all the large estates and, by 1924, 400,000 peasants were stated to have been put on holdings. But ten years later Lord Winterton stated in the House of Commons (May 11, 1934) "The whole land of Czechoslovakia belongs to Jewish moneylenders and not to the peasants who are occupying it."

Under the guidance of M. Benes, a number of foreign loans were raised, which necessitated fiscal reforms and an extraordinary levy on capital.

In 1935 Dr. Benes was made President of the Czechoslovak Republic. He had been five times President of the Council of the League of Nations. Vicomte de Poncins writes (op.cit. p. 24): 'Brother Benes is the brain directing the Little Entente... he it was who prepared the entrance of the Soviets into the League of Nations, where he received their representative, the Jew Litvinoff, with great pomp.' To this may be added the description of M. G. Batault in *Israel Contre les Nations* (p. 9) "M. Benes, Grand-Master of Freemasonry, was the most intelligent, the best informed, and the cleverest of the Geneva diplomats. The role he played was decisive. It was he who financed and directed from behind the scenes *Le Journal des Nations*, the official organ of the League of Nations."

After 'Munich,' Dr. Benes resigned from his high office, left Europe for the inevitable lecturing tour of the U.S.A. and returned to Great Britain in 1939 just in time for the outbreak of World-War II. The following year the Czechoslovak émigré government was recognised by the British government and M. Benes found himself for the second time in his life the leading figure of an extra-territorial Czechoslovak Cabinet. While he, during the first phase of the war, had been Foreign Minister in a government headed by Professor Masaryk, his own Foreign Minister is none other than M. Ian Masaryk, son of the Founder of the Czechoslovak Republic. During his exile M. Ian Masaryk has paid several visits to Washington, and in London he has taken a prominent part in Jewish charitable activities.

In conclusion, one might mention that the liaison-officer between Mr. Churchill's and M. Benes's governments has been Sir Bruce Lockhart. Sir Bruce served at the British Consulate-General at Moscow during the last war and was thus uniquely placed for ascertaining the truth of the famous warning sent by the Netherlands Minister, M. Oudendyk, that Bolshevism constituted a mortal danger to the rest of Europe (and are not the countries of Europe paying at this very moment dearly for not having heeded his warning?) We note his scrupulously 'official' (i.e. Left) attitude to the shattering events of October 1917 in *Memoirs of a British Agent* (p. 171), where he says: "What is important to realise is that from the first the revolution was a

revolution of the people." Sir Bruce Lockhart will therefore be particularly well fitted to accompany the departing Czech Prime Minister now that the latter has intimated his desire to go 'home' via Moscow, capital of the People's Revolutionary Fatherland. — B. J.

### LIBERALS AND BEVERIDGE

[Under this heading the following appeared in the correspondence columns of TRUTH on March 2. We gratefully acknowledge "Excalibur's" witty contribution on the same subject.]

Sir,—We all derive so much pleasure from Sir Ernest Benn's verbal fireworks that it seems almost ungracious to offer any comment which might cramp his style. But I feel that his unconquerable elasticity will not be permanently diminished if I plead for a little gravity amidst the feast of fun and games. He quotes Sir William Beveridge as writing: "The State in matters of finance is in a different position from any private citizen or association of private citizens; it is able to control money, in place of being controlled by money," and comments: "If this is not Socialism, as Sir William claims, it is Social Credit."

Neither Sir Ernest nor myself would wish to waste time in discussing the abstraction called the State. *L'état, c'est moi!* as Sir William kindly explained when assuring Mr. Austin Hopkinson that the State knows best. Permit me, therefore, to economise your valuable space while bringing down a bird with each barrel. It is Socialism, and it is not Social Credit. Sir Ernest may have been more fortunate, but I have never been able to identify any concrete embodiment of Socialism which, in a fog of fine words, did not resolve itself into centralised control of policy. Sir William Beveridge postulates centralised control of money creation, taxation, and investment. That is Economic Despotism, popularly called Socialism.

Social Credit, in so far as it is concerned with money, postulates the antithesis of central control. The original essay on what has come to be known as Social Credit is entitled "Economic Democracy." Three-quarters of this book is devoted to an examination of the fatal effects of central control of policy, and the essential and urgent necessity of restoring control of initiative (policy) to the individual. With Sir Ernest, I regard the ideas of which Sir William Beveridge is one local protagonist, and Professor Laski another, as a deadly menace, first to this country and its people, and then to civilisation, and I think that the present devastation is directly and consciously connected with the propagation of those ideas. Temperamentally, I am a non-party Tory, not a Liberal, but my chief objection to Liberalism with a capital letter is that while many of its expressed sentiments were admirable, most of its major policies were abominable. Quite in the modern technique, in fact. What is Sir Ernest going to do about it?

C. H. DOUGLAS (Major).

### EAR TO THE GROUND

Having heard that monetary reform, so far from its being Social Credit is a deadly menace to it, the *Evening Standard* for February 26 refers to the "Social Credit Party (monetary reformists)" in "Western Canada."

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### From Week to Week

We have evidence which suggests that either "the Government" or financial institutions have "stooge" owner-farmers dotted about the country who write letters to metropolitan newspapers on the present agricultural situation, with a view to eliciting correspondence.

It then transpires that present land taxation is very fair and reasonable; that Government policy is well liked on the whole and the Ministry of Agriculture is so popular that present conditions might desirably be made permanent. Oh, yeah?

• • •

That the bureaucratic control from which we are suffering is the primary object of the war, and that it is "German" in origin, and was quite probably arranged in collaboration between the German National Socialists and our Planners before the war, is obvious from the particulars which are coming to light of the arrangements made in Belgium, Holland and France by the invaders. Chiefly from American sources, it is possible to recognise the almost complete identity of principle and very large similarity in detail, of the agricultural control, rationing, coupons and other delights to which we have *not* become accustomed, with those imposed upon the conquered. The significant words of Mr. Anthony Eden, which he now very probably regrets, "It appears that our New Order must come through war, but it will come, just the same," should not be forgotten. No doubt it is proposed to present us with the usual electoral dilemma:—"Would you rather go half way to Moscow with Eden or all the way with Shinwell?" The answer is, "We will tell you where *we* are going, and where *you* are going, if you don't think fast."

• • •

General Dittmar, the German radio commentator, says that National Socialism is merely militarism carried into daily life. Or as Sir William Beveridge puts it, "Of course I know what is best for you," and you had better do it—or else...!

• • •

"So much for the theory sponsored in Left Wing circles" (and High Financial agencies.—Ed.), "in Britain particularly, that the small countries are the source of Europe's calamities... A Europe made up of little nations would be infinitely more peaceable than one with large nations; the former have every interest in preserving the balance of power, the latter are everlastingly bent on overthrowing it, and their resources enable them to make the attempt." *Continental Stakes*, by Odette Keun, p.36-7.

There are two factors in the tradition of Poland—a country and people whose destiny is obviously symbolic—which deserve far more contemplation and understanding than they appear generally to have received. The first of these is the principle of unanimity in Parliamentary decisions known as "liberum veto" by which a deputy could refer back a legislative measure; and the second the Constitutional Law of "nihil novi."

All thoughtful persons must realise that the principle of majority decision is a diabolically clever trick for despoiling minorities with the aid of mass ignorance. The components of the mass change continuously and are by no means drawn from one class or party; but the ignorance is immutable. Now, the principle of unanimity, which survives in the English Jury system, does not deprive a majority of any (if any) rights it may possess but it gives time and play to the circumstance that wisdom is in a minority if it is anywhere, and spreads, if ever, from that minority to a majority. And the Polish Constitutional Law of "nihil novi" which provided that the king could not establish "anything new" without the joint agreement of the senate and the regional deputies, strikes at the very root of legislative trickery.

We do not concede the slightest virtue to the prevalent idea that easy law-making is a sign of an intelligent community. On the contrary, it is a symptom of political degeneration. And it is most significant that these two principles, to which we have just referred, were abrogated by the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791 under the influence of the French Revolution and the Secret Societies, the ascendancy of which no doubt contributed to the abnormal Jewish influx.

• • •

Whether the general population can be brought to realise it or not, the plain fact is that unless organisation for power politics can be eliminated (to talk of controlling it is simply a contradiction in terms) the human race has no future. General von Bernhardt was entirely right when he said "Christian morality is personal and social, and can never become a political reality." (*Germany and the Next War*.) To which the answer is that what he meant by political reality (the power State) has got to go. It can be done; it can even be done without violence. But what it does demand, and what seems so difficult to obtain, is a recognition of the fact that Left wing politics and International Big Business are consciously working for the Universal Power State, and only conscious [*i.e.*, "with knowledge"] action, can defeat them. "Hamstring your Governments."

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### DOUGLAS SOCIAL CREDIT MOVEMENT BELFAST GROUP

#### Public Address

in GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL

on THURSDAY, MARCH 15, at 7-30 p.m.

Subject: Post-War Reconstruction.

Questions and Discussion.

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## PARLIAMENT

*House of Commons: February 23, 1945.*

### MINISTRY OF FUEL AND POWER BILL

*The Minister of Fuel and Power (Major Lloyd George):* I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time." . . .

The Bill does not provide for the continuance of any of the powers over industry and over consumers given by war-time Regulations, after the period of the emergency is over. . .

. . . The Government is now examining the future organisation of the electrical industry as regards both generation and distribution. A Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Heyworth, has now been sitting for some time conducting an inquiry into the organisation of the gas industry. The panel of experts which was appointed to re-examine the Severn Barrage proposals has already reported, and I hope that the Report will be published next Monday. The Committee on hydro-carbon oil duties, under the chairmanship of Sir Amos Ayre, appointed jointly by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and myself, has also reported, and its Report is being studied at the moment. The Fuel and Power Advisory Council, under the chairmanship of Sir Ernest Simon, is looking into the problem of domestic heating. Finally, in regard to coal, regional surveys of our coal resources in all the coal-producing regions have now been completed, except, I think, in one instance, and they will be published as soon as possible. The first is actually at the printers at the moment, and the Report of the Committee of Mining Engineers, to which I have already referred, which is inquiring into the technical steps needed to increase the efficiency of the coal mining industry, will be in my hands fairly soon. . .

*Mr. David Grenfell (Gower):* . . . What is the use of coming here to-day with window-dressing, asking for legal confirmation of a programme which, ostensibly, commenced three years ago, but has led to no result at all? . . .

It is no use throwing across the Floor of the House cheap and shabby gibes at the miners—yes, and sometimes at the coalowners, too. I know how little the responsibility falls on both sets of people, if conditions are fundamentally bad. If conditions are bad, no coalowners or miners can solve the problem. . .

*Wing-Commander James (Wellingborough):* . . . Judged by the results I pray heaven it will not be allowed to exist in the post-war period. The Minister said that it ought not again to become a mere Department, but the hon. Member for Gower convinced me that it was highly desirable that it should, that nothing else was justified.

I have made the statement that the Ministry has fallen down completely on this job. Let me justify that statement. I have taken the trouble to get out the official references for each figure which I shall give. The picture is a most gloomy one. In 1943 10,000 more men produced 12,000,000 tons of coal less than in 1941. If we carry the comparison on the 1944, then comparing 1944 with 1943 we find that a further 2,500 more men were employed and that 9,000,000 tons less was produced. The decline has been continuous. Comparing 1944 with 1941 we find that with 12,500 more men nearly 21,000,000 tons less coal has been produced.

*Mr. Austin Hopkinson (Mossley):* Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman give the House the corresponding figures

for the last period of coal control in the last war? Exactly the same results were obtained: The longer control went on and the more men we employed the less coal is raised. Exactly the same thing has happened again. Therefore, it is unfair to condemn the Minister for carrying out a policy which was a Government policy and had already been proved to be rotten.

*Wing-Commander James:* I am referring to the system and not to the Minister. I beg the hon. Member not to try to lead me into making a longer speech than I wish to.

*Mr. Shinwell:* Is not the hon. and gallant Member just being polite and no more?

*Wing-Commander James:* Not at all. It is the vicious system of Government control which is to blame and not the unfortunate Minister who has to try to administer an unworkable system.

*Mr. Shinwell:* This is a matter of high principle. I am not making any attack upon the hon. and gallant Member. The Minister must accept responsibility or divest himself of it. If he is dissatisfied with the control measures to which the hon. Member for Mossley (Mr. A. Hopkinson) has referred he must say: "I cannot accept this position and I resign." Surely, that is the right course.

*Mr. Erskine-Hill:* Is the hon. Member saying that he approves of the figures that have been given and the results that have been obtained?

*Mr. Shinwell:* Not at all. Far from that being the case it seems to me that the whole case rests on this: that if it is desired that the Department should continue the existence of the Department must be justified and it can only be judged by its results.

*Wing-Commander James:* I thank the hon. Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell) for giving way to me. I was aware that we were discussing a matter of high principle and that is why I dealt with principle and not with personalities, and I do not charge the Minister—

*Earl Winterton:* He ought to resign.

*Wing-Commander James:* If the Noble Lord will allow me I will make my own point in my own way.

*Earl Winterton:* Let us kiss him. [*Interruption.*]

*Wing-Commander James:* Did the Noble Lord call me a "wretched figure"?

*Earl Winterton:* I suggested that if my hon. Friend was so fond of the Minister and had such a regard for him he should spend the rest of his speech describing what a marvellous man he is.

*Wing-Commander James:* . . . The figures that I have given are all taken from official records and are a most terrible commentary on the efficiency of State control. Every assurance has been belied. Why, when this has happened, should we accept more control? Surely the whole development of the war has shown that State control is a failure and the sooner we abolish the Ministry, and revert to a Department of the Board of Trade and give a fair chance to the free play of natural forces, the better.

*Mr. Collindridge (Barnsley):* . . . This question of coal is not merely a war question. Speaking in my own constituency a few days ago I said that if Britain was to be successful after the war, we had primarily to deal with the question of coal. It is the basis of all we produce and unless we solve the problem, we shall be in great difficulties.

I expected some explanation of how the decline in output could be dealt with. We have had this brain-wave emanating from the Department that we should go on to a 12 day fortnight, go for the clearing of the coal-face daily and work one Sunday in four. If ever there was a case of the mountain having conceived and brought forth a mouse it is to be found in suggestions made to the country and to the mining industry in particular on this subject. By the sheer futility of these suggestions, the Ministry has come into more disrepute than any Government Department that I know of. I am sorry about it, because I want the Department to be a success. I am not asking for its discontinuance.

I have been a miner, and I know too well what the position was when the Home Office had the industry under its wing and then later when the Board of Trade dealt with it. I want a Ministry of Fuel and Power, but I want it to do its job...

*Mr. Lewis (Colchester)*: ... At the beginning of this war we had ample supplies of coal and ample supplies of labour. Giving up our export markets because of the war increased the amount of coal and labour available for home requirements, but so little foresight has been shown by the Government, that men have been taken away, or allowed to drift away from the mines, until we have reached a position in which we can no longer supply the coal requirements of industry, or those of our households during the war. That seems to me to be a very lamentable picture, a picture which reflects no credit at all on the Ministry which we are now asked to perpetuate.

*Major Lloyd George*: The hon. Gentleman was talking about the Ministry, but the points he is making with regard to the industry have reference to a period long before the Ministry came into power.

*Mr. Lewis*: It is true to say that much of the damage in the industry was done before the Ministry came into existence.

*Earl Winterton*: When the hon. Gentleman is talking about the Ministry, I hope he does not mean the permanent officials. Surely the Minister is responsible.

*Mr. Lewis*: The Ministry is responsible in this House through the Minister...

*Mr. Shinwell (Seaham)*: ... It is so highly important that we should, as soon as possible, effect a large measure of co-ordination, not split the Department up into several pieces. That is not progress, that is going back. I beg hon. Members opposite to understand that I say this with the best will in the world, and with as much desire to restore British industrial prestige as anybody on the other side. I beg of them to believe that there is no going back to 1939. Does anybody want evidence of that? I cannot discuss the Report published recently by Mr. Foot, but I mention it to illustrate my argument. The very fact that Mr. Foot and 95 per cent. of the mine owners in this country have accepted his Report, which is such an advance on the position of 1939, proves that there is no going back. Everybody recognises that we must go forward...

What about gas? Consider the almost unlimited possibilities of a gas grid on a huge scale... Obviously from the standpoint of the community, and in order to safeguard ourselves against the vices of monopolies, it is far better to leave these matters, in view of modern tendencies, in the hands of the State, providing you can guard against the

drawbacks of a bureaucracy...

But you get as much bureaucracy in monopolistic firms as in the State services. You have it in I.C.I., and other concerns. So do not let us talk too much about bureaucracy. The question is whether this Department should go on or not...

*Mr. Austin Hopkinson (Mossley)*: It is pure Fascism that is being suggested now. A solution is being advocated which depends on the supposition that the State knows best, and should direct what the citizen should have, and that he should not have what he happens to want—a system under which every wage-earner becomes a slave. For what is a slave? A slave is simply a person who has only one possible employer. The difference between a slave and a free labourer, is simply that the free labourer can have some degree of choice as to whose orders he shall obey, whereas in the Fascist National Socialist State he has only one employer and, if he offends that employer he is done for. I do not think that our people will ever put up with that. They have fought six years of bitter warfare to prevent that system being imposed on them by the Germans, and the alliance of the Labour Party with the National Socialists in Germany, who are their brothers in thought—

*Mr. Deputy-Speaker*: The hon. Member is now going very wide of the subject matter of the Bill.

*Mr. Hopkinson*: I thought that, as a certain amount of that sort of stuff had been allowed from previous speakers, a certain amount might be allowed in reply. The Bill, presumably, is to continue, at any rate for a time, certain powers of the Minister, and even to add to them. In order to try out the policy of the Government thoroughly, perhaps it is advisable that those powers should be given, but it does not follow that the fact that one thinks those powers should be given, and even extended, for a time so that the experiment may go on a little longer, involves acquiescence in the main policy of the Government.

I interrupted a previous speaker who had been giving some account of what has happened under State control of the industry, how as numbers had gone up production had gone down, and I reminded the House that that is exactly the experience that we had in the late war, until coal control was taken off, a year or two after the Armistice. One would have thought that after that experience the Government would have learnt something, instead of making the same mistake again, but Governments are like the Labour Party—they never learn anything, and they never forget anything. Look at their policy with regard to housing, where we are going to repeat the mistake that we made after the last war. There is to be a period of control, during which we shall have no houses. Eventually we shall drop State interference, and we shall get the houses. Sooner or later, control of the coal industry will have to be dropped, and possibly in the course of a few years we shall begin to get coal again.

However, let us try the experiment to the bitter end and give the Minister as much power as we can. It has been suggested that he ought to resign. I do not agree. He ought to hold on for a long time yet, but he ought to resign when he has proved conclusively that the Government policy is wrong and is based on a complete misconception of industry. When he has proved that, it will be time to resign, and not before. Nor do I think it likely that, in spite of what the "Express" newspapers say, the successor which they

advocate will be able to make a much better show. Let us get down to the actual facts. We are getting a continually decreasing production of coal. We are getting a continual increase in the discomfort and discontent of the mining population. I know something about the coal industry and working conditions underground. Perhaps, while I have not such long actual experience, I have a wider experience, inasmuch as I worked in the pits from one end of the country to the other for a long period of years and have seen the various districts from Fife to Somerset and the conditions under which miners work. I think my practical Friends above the Gangway will agree that we used to go down the pits for one reason only—not for pleasure but to earn some money and, if we could get the money without going down the pit, we did not go down. We were ordinary, rational, sensible human beings, and the miner to-day is exactly like us. He does not go to the pit for pleasure but to earn money. The unusual thing about the miner is that he knows when he has got enough and, when he has as much as he wants, he does not go down the pit—very naturally and rightly to my mind. If on a Thursday he looks out of the window and sees that it is a fine day, being a sensible fellow, if he has enough money to come at the end of the week, he takes the dog for a walk instead. He is a free man, and he appreciates the beauties of the country and the gifts which a beneficent Providence has bestowed on mankind.

*Mr. Glanville (Consett):* Where are the men who do that? I will start work with them to-morrow if the hon. Member will only tell me.

*Mr. Hopkinson:* Did the hon. Member go down for the pleasure of the thing, or for the reason that his hon. Friends and I went down?

*Mr. Glanville:* Where are these men who can earn so much money that, if they look out of the window and see sunshine, they will not go down the pit?

*Mr. Hopkinson:* Perhaps the hon. Member dropped out of active participation in the industry a bit too early. I believe that the Top Hand seam in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire the average with which the men manage to get away is £12 10s. 0d. in a full week. As far as I can make out from my experience, it is quite possible to live very comfortably on that sum, which is exactly equal to what a Member of Parliament gets for his work. If I were living in the country and my Parliamentary salary was dependent upon the number of shifts I put in in this House, I would be tempted occasionally to take a day or two off myself, and suffer the loss.

That is the real problem; how to induce men to work harder when they have got what they want already. I cannot see a solution. I talked it over the other day with a very experienced old miner in this House. Perhaps he will forgive me if I do not mention his name, for he rather agreed with me that the best way would be to set up a dog racing track adjoining every big colliery and then the miner would have all his money stolen from him as quickly as he earned it.

*Mr. Glanville:* On a point of Order. What is the hon. Member talking about? If he is allowed to ramble on like this shall I be allowed to answer him?

*Mr. Tinker:* It is a travesty of the facts. The hon. Member ought to have more regard for the standing of the miners and not treat them with such ridicule.

*Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Mr. Charles Williams):* The

hon. Member now addressing the House may be taking his illustrations a little too far. Perhaps I might suggest that he should now come back to the principle of the Bill.

*Mr. Hopkinson:* I am trying to give this one example of the problem which is facing the industry, and for which I know of no solution. [An HON. MEMBER: "Reduce the wages."] That would be one way. Whether it would be a satisfactory way is another matter.

The next difficulty facing the Minister is that he is expected to control the coal industry, without having any control over the labour in it, which comes under a completely different Ministry. His predecessor undoubtedly realised that difficulty, which is immense. I do not see how the present system of coal control can be satisfactory as long as the control of the labour is in the hands of a different Minister. The Essential Work Order applied to coal mines makes it utterly impossible to run the industry properly, because discipline can then be maintained only by recourse to the criminal law. The ordinary sanction by which discipline could be maintained and the safety of the pit provided for, in the absence of the Essential Work Order, was the right ultimately of dismissal. That meant that a man who misbehaved himself had to go to the manager, and if it was a bad case the manager would dismiss him. The offender would go to another pit and get a job, and if he did not behave himself there, he would get dismissed again. That was considered by the industry, owners and men, to be the best way of preserving discipline in the pit. That cannot be done now. We have to prosecute.

The miners, quite rightly, extremely resent being prosecuted for such offences. If a man misbehaves in the pit the management have to apply the criminal law under the Essential Work Order and if the fellow is convicted, the rest of the pit frequently come out on strike in sympathy. I can quite understand it, because they resent it. They put up with the old system, whether they liked it or not, because it worked. Now it is found that nothing can be done except to go to the court. There cannot be proper working of the pit under those conditions, which are the conditions which will prevail if the system advocated by Labour Members is brought into force. If the mines are nationalised, every misconduct in the pit will be a criminal offence. It is an offence against the State and, therefore, it is a crime.

*Mr. Tom Brown rose—*

*Mr. Deputy-Speaker:* Before the interruption takes place, I should like to suggest that we keep off the subject of nationalisation.

*Mr. Brown:* You have taken the words out of my mouth, Sir.

*Mr. Hopkinson:* The hon. Member can count upon the present occupant of the Chair to keep us out of the realms of irrelevance.

*Mr. McNeil (Greenock):* I am puzzled by one remark of the hon. Member's, which was that if a man commits an offence, he has to be prosecuted under the Essential Work Order. Surely the man is still subject to dismissal, but has a right of appeal under the Essential Work Order?

*Mr. Hopkinson:* Subject to a right of appeal; appeal to whom? I have had some of that. I know the constitution of the appeal tribunals. But I must not get into a discussion of this matter or we shall be ruled out of Order.

*Mr. McNeil:* No.

*Mr. Deputy-Speaker:* Yes. I do not think we can go into all the details of control of the mining industry. We must not widen the scope of the Debate.

*Mr. McNeil:* It is a very convenient Ruling.

*Mr. Hopkinson:* I am perfectly willing to be as irrelevant as ever the Chair will allow me. I think I have already shown my good will in that matter. I was describing the situation in which the Minister finds himself. He has been set an utterly impossible task. Sooner or later, it will be for him to go to the Government and say: "You have set me an impossible task. Your policy will not work, any more than it worked after the last war, and, therefore, you must accept my resignation." That time has not come yet. I hope that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman will stick to his job until he has conclusively proved that the policy is at fault, and not so much the way that it is carried out.

An hon. Member put his faith in the blessed word "co-ordination." Surely the time has come when that word should be dropped. It has been bandied about for nearly a generation. Surely we should know in this House that co-ordination means nothing at all, except just messing about with things. He also said that under the way he would manage things the industry would not be run by a bureaucracy but by experts. Who would appoint the experts? The bureaucracy, presumably. Also, if there are to be experts, who are they going to be? If the industry is to be nationalised and run by experts I venture to suggest that it will be run by exactly the same people as run it to-day. The only difference will be that instead of the people having what they want, as they do under a democracy, they will have to have what the State, the Fascist State, tells them they ought to have.

*Major Lloyd (Renfrew, East):* ... Let the Ministry be continued then, but not indefinitely, as I gather the Bill proposes, but, as I hope will be insisted upon in the Committee stage, for a limited period of time, I would like to see the Ministry continue until June, 1948. I pick that date because it is the end of the agreement under which coalminers' wages are guaranteed, and it provides a suitable period in which we can face realities and get down to brass tacks, and sell coal at an economic price which will win markets in the world. With that caveat, I do not disapprove of the Bill...

If the Ministry comes to us and wants to have a testimonial for its past record with a view to getting a job from the country for the future, it is essential that we should look back at its record. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Its record is poor. I do not say that the Ministry has not done its best, and I am sure that the Minister has done his best, but the facts speak for themselves and they are not good...

There must be a limit to it. Its record is definitely bad. It has not been a success. It has not delivered the goods. It has not had the confidence of the country. On condition that the Bill is amended in Committee to limit its life, however, I am prepared to give it a Second Reading, but I do it with considerable reluctance.

*Mr. Glasville (Consett):* ... During the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Mossley (Mr. Hopkinson) I felt like saying to myself, "My dear friend, it will be just as well if you are alive when the socialist revolution takes place"—

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