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## The Beveridge-Hopkinson Debate

*The following is the text, by permission of both the speakers, of the debate between Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P., and Sir William Beveridge, M.P., on February 2 last in the London Home Service of the B.B.C.:—*

*Chairman:* Sir ARTHUR SALTER, M.P.

*Speakers:* SIR WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, M.P.  
Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON, M.P.

SALTER: Planning: planned economy. I wonder if that isn't a bit abstract for a close discussion. Couldn't we make it a little more specific and concrete. Supposing we took an example of a planned economy. Supposing we asked a question—let us say: Can full employment be maintained in a free society? Would that suit you, Beveridge?

BEVERIDGE: I'd much prefer it.

SALTER: How would that be?

HOPKINSON: It suits me entirely.

SALTER: Well, if it suits you, I think we'll discuss that. Supposing you start, Beveridge, by saying just what you mean by 'full employment.'

BEVERIDGE: What I mean by full employment is more jobs—that means more *paid* jobs than men and women looking for jobs. Full employment doesn't mean to me that nobody ever changes his job; it doesn't mean turning everybody in the country into Civil Servants or University Professors, or Judges—people with life jobs. It means merely that if you do change your job, there's another job waiting, wanting to be done. It means you have the opportunity of finding a job. That's what I mean by full employment. I hope you'll agree.

HOPKINSON: Well, I think that is a reasonable definition of what we both mean.

SALTER: Well, perhaps you can go on to the other part of the question then. You both agree what "Full Employment" means for the purposes of this discussion. What do you mean by a "Free Society"?

BEVERIDGE: Well, I define a Free Society by naming what I regard as the essential British liberties which must be preserved at all costs. They are the personal liberties of worship: of speaking—shooting one's mouth out in any way one likes: writing: teaching: study: the liberty of choice in occupation: the liberty of spending a personal income (at least as much as the Income Tax man leaves one). And, in addition to those personal liberties, there are the essential political liberties (the right of assembly, the right of association, industrially and politically) which are necessary in order to make certain that

the personal liberties are not destroyed. Now that's my list of essential British liberties, and I say that if a society has all those liberties, it is a free society.

HOPKINSON: But you'd agree, wouldn't you, Sir William, that most of those liberties are there and we're not likely to lose them in any way? We've had them for a long time now. Take the liberty of worship or speaking or thought and so on: that is there already. So that really, I think, the practical difficulties that concern us in this particular case of unemployment are the liberty to change one's employment, and the liberty to spend one's income as one thinks fit. Would you agree?

BEVERIDGE: Yes... well... yes. I wouldn't regard it as a free society if we had in it Conscriptio, Direction of Labour, or the Essential Works Order. Those too must be preserved.

HOPKINSON: Well there, I think, your announcement will give a deal of pleasure to your listeners, because those things have been the subject of very great bitterness and distress.

But let us get down to the points which seem to me to be the most important to our people at the present time. Under what you propose to do in order to maintain full employment; are you going to infringe upon the liberty to choose at what work one shall be employed; where one shall be employed; how one shall spend one's wages; and under whose direction one shall be employed? Because it seems to me that, from the point of view of the ordinary wage-earner, those are the liberties which concern him more than any others.

BEVERIDGE: Well, I'm not going to direct anyone to work and punish him if he doesn't go to work. I'm going to see that every man has a choice of occupation. But, of course, you can't have an unlimited choice of occupation—as I put it, you can't choose to be Archbishop of Canterbury if that job is already filled. You must choose between available occupations. Now, under full employment there will be many more occupations available than there are under *unemployment*; there'll be jobs available. They won't necessarily be the same as at present. And they won't necessarily be determined in the same way—as at present, by an individual profit-making employer.

HOPKINSON: Well, now, I'm not quite clear yet... forgive me if I'm rather slow. D'you see. But I want to get it quite clear in my own mind—exactly what we are beginning with. May I take a concrete example and then we can debate on that? Let us take the case of a coal miner in Blaenavon. I know those coalmines very well—I have known them for many years. Now, his position is this: that the possibility of the employment that he likes and that he's been used to, is no

longer present; the pits have shut down; and *unless* he can get some work from time to time (either by going down the Valley to the pits that are still open; or by taking up odd jobs of one sort or another) he's condemned to live practically upon his unemployment insurance payments.

Now does your scheme provide that that man can continue to live at Blaenavon? That is really the point.

BEVERIDGE: On the unemployment payment?

HOPKINSON: Yes.

BEVERIDGE: No, I don't contemplate that a man should be entitled to live for ever on an unemployment payment, if there is a job available which, in the opinion of an impartial tribunal, he ought to take and which he can take.

HOPKINSON: Now, isn't that what you mean by 'the direction of labour?'

BEVERIDGE: No, I don't. I mean by 'the direction of labour,' ordering a man to go somewhere and sending him to prison if he doesn't. But I do not believe that it is an essential part of a free society that a man should be entitled to do no work at all although there is work within his power that he can do.

HOPKINSON: What I want to get down to is: have you considered the point of view of the *man himself*? We know that in actual fact, that for years past, at the heads of the South Wales mining valleys have been a large number of people who for one reason or another, whether we agree with it or not, have been prepared to put up with the misery of living on the dole rather than be uprooted from among their own people and seek work in what, to them, is a foreign country.

BEVERIDGE: No. I know the position has been, to those people, that there was no other job available... there was no other job available. It's astonishing how many people, in fact, moved to jobs and did move to jobs. I may say that under my full employment plan there would be far less of that movement and uprooting than there has been in the past.

HOPKINSON: How would you, for instance, on that point—how would you get the Blaenavon pits going again?

BEVERIDGE: I would, among other things, control the location of industry. I don't know whether the Blaenavon pits would have—ought to go on again or not. It may not be useful to employ the people as miners in that. But instead of letting all the employers in the country put their factories exactly where they like (and 4/5th of them put them round London), I would in fact, have taken effective steps to see that there were industries brought to the people instead of making all the people move to the jobs.

HOPKINSON: But doesn't that imply, Sir William, that you know better than the man who's got to conduct that industry where it ought to be located?

BEVERIDGE: Yes, I do know better. Because I take into account things which that man does not take into account. As a matter of fact, if you really were to ask most businessmen why they put their factories in a particular place you would get the most amazing unsatisfactory answers, and most trifling reasons!

INTERRUPTION: HOPKINSON: I beg your pardon...

BEVERIDGE: ... They all disregard what is important: where the men are. And that is what we had between the war—all the new factories going to London, Birmingham and all the rest of it; and the great communities in Wales and Northumberland being destroyed because, to move all these people destroys the community. Now, I want—this is a very good illustration of what I mean when I say that I want—I think that, in order to get full employment and increase *real* liberty, you have to *destroy*, you have to *regulate*, some of the *minor* liberties—namely, the liberty of the businessman to put his factory just where he likes.

HOPKINSON: Well, you do agree, don't you, that I was right in suggesting that you say you were in a position to know better than the man himself where his factory should go?

BEVERIDGE: Of course. I'm in a position to know better because I take into account all the human elements and he doesn't! I do know *much* better!

HOPKINSON: But surely, Sir William, he...

BEVERIDGE: ... the businessman?

HOPKINSON: Yes—living among them and having to deal with them daily, is in a better position than yourself to get some sort of idea as to what they want?

BEVERIDGE: You're not understanding me. I don't mean a man who is living among them. I mean the man who wants to start a new factory for some light industry, and he stuck it down in London instead of taking it anywhere else. And I would—firstly, I would have *encouraged* him; and if I can't get it done by voluntary encouragement for him to go where the labour is, then I would do it by direct State action.

HOPKINSON: Now then, may I take a case in point—my own case? More than forty years ago I decided to set up a new business—a certain branch of engineering, and I put down my works in a certain position. Now, if I may do so without boring you, Sir William, I'll tell you the reasons why I did. In the first place, it was my native country; I knew the sort of habit of thought of the people there. The second thing was that my family was known there and, therefore, as I had no money and I wanted to borrow money from the Bank, the Bank thought they could very safely lend me some money to start me. The third point was that the whole of the products of this works were going to the collieries. So I picked a spot—fortunately it happened to coincide with the spot I had already wanted to have—which was the centre of gravity of all the coalfields and where two main line railways crossed. So that the transit was good, the people were my people—my own folk, so I understood them and I was fond of them; that I was known, that my family were known to be decent people. And, incidentally, it was on a coalfield with a colliery within a few hundred yards at which one could do experiments. There was excellent electricity, there was gas, there was a great supply of the skilled labour that I wanted, and of the type I wanted it. Now, who are you, Sir William, that you should come to me and say, "You shall *not* put your factory there. You shall put it where I think it's right!?" What earthly experience or ground have you for suggesting that you know better than I where to put my factory?

BEVERIDGE: Well, I might say, "If you put your factory

there, you will produce squalor and congested living conditions for lots of people." I don't know if that would happen in *your* case, but it *does* happen in other cases. If you put your factory there (say, round London) you will increase the danger of the country in war—the things that *you* aren't thinking about! But I'm thinking about it. Of course the Government knows better; because it takes a broader view—it's bound to know better. In many cases... I don't mean that... they might agree with you!

HOPKINSON: In that, Sir William, now you show me exactly what your political views are. What you want is a Totalitarian State—where the Government knows better than the people what they want.

BEVERIDGE: No, no, no! (Interruption of voices) No, no, no; I'm sorry, but that is absolute nonsense. A Totalitarian State is one in which the Government directs all the individuals. Now, I do quite definitely think that one has to regulate private business in certain things in which it has not been regulated in the past; because only by regulating the quite limited number of businessmen in those things, can you increase the essential liberties of the millions of work people; by saving them from slums, by saving them from unemployment, by saving them from the danger of war we've had in this war through the growth of London. That's what I mean: I do believe that you have to regulate *some* of the activities of businessmen. And may I just go on? I want—another one which is very important, and that is, the regulation of the process of investment. And by investment I mean not buying stocks and shares.

HOPKINSON: May I interrupt one moment here? I don't think we've finished with the other thing yet.

BEVERIDGE: All right... certainly...

SALTER: I don't know how long we're going on. Will you answer about the location of industry? We'll come back to investment (BACKGROUND OF VOICES)

HOPKINSON: The point we're getting to is a very important one to my mind because our whole political structure depends on it. Hitherto, we've gone on a basis—well, certainly during the 19th century—that Government is an unfortunate necessity, rather than a virtue in itself. And I think you'll find that the vast bulk of the people of this country really believe that. The less Government, the better.

(Background of voices... BEVERIDGE: I'm sure they don't believe that).

HOPKINSON: ... there's grown up on the Continent a new theory altogether; and that is, that the State knows better than the individual what the individual wants, and that the function of the State is to tell the individual and force him to have what the State thinks is good for him rather than what he thinks is good for himself. Now, that is the point where we're at issue.

BEVERIDGE: No, I'm sorry. You're misrepresenting me absolutely and completely. I had never said that I think the State knows what every individual wants better than he does, because I have assumed certain essential liberties. What I have said is that the State can know better than the private businessman where in the common interest a factory should be placed; which is only that one particular thing; it is not totali-

tarian, it is not interfering with any essential liberties, it is that one particular thing.

SALTER: I think we'd better bring this part of the discussion though to an end.

HOPKINSON: I agree with Sir Arthur Salter on that; because we can never agree. I maintain that I know better than you do, Sir William, where my industry ought to be placed and where the maximum happiness and prosperity for the people I employ can be obtained. But you deny it, you say *you* know better. Well we can't really settle that, can we, Sir Arthur? I think we've got about as far as we can on that point.

SALTER: Well, Sir William has said that he wants to control the location of new industries. You said... (confusion of voices) ... Well, he said why he thinks that necessary, but I think we've more or less exhausted that point as far as we can. I think we ought now to come on to the other ways in which Beveridge's plan for full employment means some kind of interference with personal liberty. I think he was about to say that he wanted to control investments too.

BEVERIDGE: I'm awfully sorry, I must just say one more thing. It's this continual harping on the fact that if you interfere with the business man you interfere with all liberties. I reject that argument altogether. Liberty is not indivisible and by sacrificing one liberty we increase all the other liberties.

HOPKINSON: I thoroughly agree (?)

BEVERIDGE: Well, now, I come to the same thing about investment—which means the buying not by stocks and shares, but getting a house built, getting a factory built, ordering machinery, ordering ships. Well in the past, businessmen have simply fluctuated wildly in their demand for these things; they've ordered a million tons of shipping one year, and five hundred thousand another year. They've arranged to build a hundred thousand houses one year, and twenty-five thousand another year. Now so long as they go on doing that, that fluctuation of investment, unemployment is inevitable—mass unemployment is inevitable. And unemployment destroys liberty far more than any regulation that any State ever made. Now I say that if you're going to allow business men to go on doing that, you're sacrificing real liberty to a sham liberty. Somehow or other you've got to stop it.

HOPKINSON: Have you ever thought, Sir William, as to why we much maligned employers of labour, and merchants as well—why they do these dreadful things that you say?

BEVERIDGE: I spend my time studying just that...

HOPKINSON: I make things because people want those things, and if they want a lot of those things I make a lot of them; and if they want a few, I only make a few.

BEVERIDGE: Now, are you seriously going to suggest that the people of this country wanted a hundred thousand houses one year, and only twenty-five thousand the next? Of course they didn't. In the years they built a hundred thousand every year, there was glut of houses; and then when they thought they'd overbuilt the houses, they stopped building—twenty five thousand. You see, the growth of the demand, the demand for

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### From Week to Week

It would be difficult to find a more repellent type than the Prussian Junker, and the Great German General Staff, as well as the higher ranks of the Civil Service derive their character from a class of which Bismarck was an outstanding representative. Nevertheless, we think that the greatest caution is required in respect of the evident attempt to isolate them—an attempt having the same intention as that which placed the blame of the First World War on the Kaiser. War as a national industry is very vocal in Junkerdom, but it was not principally the Junkers who profited by either the Franco-Prussian, or the 1914-18 War. It was the international, and pre-dominantly ex-German-Jew bankers, and the big industrial cartelists who benefited. The Junkers did the fighting. As Mr. Bernard Baruch said, "Yes, probably I did have more power than anyone else in the war." Mr. James Byrnes, who is said to represent Mr. Baruch in this war, is not exactly insignificant.

So far, however, the location of the current revolution which will provide the post-war boom equivalent to the exploitation of Russia, does not appear. Of course the British people are being exploited without a revolution.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, who takes the Chair at the T.U.C. when Professor Laski doesn't want it, says we shall just be able to scrape a modest living after the war, if we are all controlled.

There is no doubt that this passion for control is the mainspring of Socialism. It is becoming so obvious that Mr. Attlee, the Socialist Deputy Prime Minister, has been constrained to deny it. In saying this, we do not suggest that the will to power is the attribute either of one political party, or one economic or social class. It is more or less universal.

But the distinctive feature of Socialism is the pursuit of power divorced either from experience or responsibility. Just as Mr. H. G. Wells failed to run a collar and tie shop but felt competent to plan the Universe, so, we have little doubt, Miss Wilkinson would paralyse any one of the many activities she would like to control, if she was actually and personally forced to manage it, instead of saying how it should be managed. Under the disappearing system of free enterprise, the march to Carey Street of the man who sat in his office and played at remote control of his business was punctuated by the departure of his employees as well as his money. But when that happens in Socialism, it's just too bad. It's not the Socialist's money, and the employees haven't anywhere else to go to. So let's all be Socialists and controllers.

One of the theories—no doubt partly correct—which is put forward to "explain" Germany is that The Holy Vehme (indicated by the V-sign) which was a secret society of the Masonic type, running parallel to the Knights Templars, and accustomed to try, and to execute, persons who incurred its displeasure, has never ceased to function and is still active. Readers of Sir Walter Scott will remember the trial by the *Vehmegericht* in *Anne of Geierstein*.

The Knights of the Vehme claimed to hold their jurisdiction from Charlemagne on condition that it was exercised by tribunals held on "Red Earth" (*die rote Erde*), which was explained as meaning Westphalia. In fact, the Vehme operated all over Germany. An influential National Socialist newspaper was called *Die Rote Erde*.

There were 354 political assassinations in Germany between 1919 and 1922, only two of which were punished, and those only trivially.

It is instructive to note that the Vehme cultivated the same technique as modern Socialism and Communism, posing as the protector of the poor. In order to do this in the fifteenth century it also had to masquerade as a Christian Order. It was in fact, Satanistic, and like Socialism and Communism, atavistic, reactionary, and anti-Christian, having the single object of keeping the general population enslaved.

A good deal of information on matters of this character is appearing from various quarters at the present time. The general principle to be borne in mind is, "When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own."

In October 1927, Marshall von Hindenburg was presented with the title deeds to his ancestral estate of Neudeck by "secret adviser" (Geheimrat) Duisberg, head of *I. G. Farben*. In the previous year Alfred Moritz Mond formed I.C.I. and held the Mond-Turner Conference. Hindenburg backed Hitler and National Socialism.

"The introduction of control of exchange on July 13, 1931, represented complete seizure by the (German) State—and by groups hiding behind the State—of all export and import business. All foreign currencies accruing from export must now be yielded to the State. All importing not deemed useful to the interests of the State was forbidden. Officials whose decisions were not subject to Parliamentary control ran everything, and behind them was still the same influential crowd. Import of products useful to the public at large was slowed up."

— PAUL WINKLER. *Thousand-Year Conspiracy*, p. 133.

Now observe, Clarence. In 1931, Mr. Moses Israel Sieff circulated the document "Freedom and Planning" amongst a few chosen individuals. The New Dealers were organised in preparation for the Presidential Election. The New Fabian Research Bureau was set up with Mr. Attlee, the present Deputy-Prime Minister, as Chairman. Mr. Benjamin Turner of the Mond-Turner Conference was made a Knight. The Gold-Exchange Standard was abolished and control of currency established by Neville Chamberlain, and interlocked with the big German-affiliated Cartels, which in turn had been interlocked with the Chase National Bank, (U.S.A.), and the Midland Bank.

An odd year, 1931. Hitler must think of it with reverence.

## PARLIAMENT

*House of Lords: March 6, 1945.*

### CONTROLS AND REGULATIONS

The Marquess of Reading had given Notice that he would move to resolve, That such controls and regulations which affect the lives and businesses of persons in this country, instituted since September, 1939, for the purpose of assisting the prosecution of the war, be generally terminated as soon as military necessity no longer justifies the maintenance of any of them; and that such controls as are thereafter required for the re-establishment and stabilisation of our post-war existence be enacted so as to provide for proper remedies at law to protect persons affected in their lives and businesses against arbitrary or obscure orders by executive departments or offices.

The noble Marquess said: My Lords, you may recollect that this Motion is only my adopted child, the father having shamelessly denied paternity within a few days of its birth. Nevertheless it has fallen among friends, for although I do not seek to affix responsibility on those who sit about me for such personal views as I may express, at the same time I do claim that it is appropriate that this particular waif should have been taken in and given a kind home on these Benches; for it will at least not be denied that Liberals have behind them a long history of struggle for the greatest measure of liberty for the individual consistent with the safety and welfare of the State. Indeed, the reproach is sometimes cast upon us, though always unjustly, that we are still worshipping at the derelict shrines of 19th century ideals, that we are still so to speak being ground between the upper and the nether John Stuart Millstones; but we take courage and confidence from the knowledge that other Victorian objects of art and virtue are returning to fashion, and we are not yet converts to the doctrine that merely because a principle has been long established therefore it is out of date.

Not that we set ourselves up as the sole guardians of individual liberty. Indeed, we rejoice to know that the agenda for the forthcoming Conservative Party conference is aglow with resolutions not dissimilar in content from the present Motion. I am sure that those noble Lords who represent the Labour Party in this House will have realised that the terms of this Motion do not seek to rule out such planned organisation of the life of the country as Parliament may in the future approve, but only to lift from the public the incubus of present emergency legislation, of which I believe it to be most heartily tired, and to make a fresh start in the altered atmosphere of peace. . .

There is therefore, I suggest, no reason why even the more passionate as well as the more platonic planners should not give their support to this Motion. It is certainly one which might commend itself, I hope and trust, to His Majesty's Government itself. Much has been heard of the Atlantic Charter, with its several freedoms, but what is also wanted is a pacific charter containing one single freedom: the freedom of the peaceable citizen to live in peace.

I do not propose to deal with those controls which operate at the dizzy heights of big business and high finance; I propose to leave those to others who have more personal experience than I of day-to-day life upon Olympus. I am concerned chiefly with those which affect, which harass and embitter the life of the ordinary man and woman. . . I am

told that in an early stage of the war there was published a manual of emergency legislation which laid down the few rights and many duties of the citizens in war-time and which, even at that early stage, accounted for no less than 825 pages. By now it is presumably one of a series of volumes, vying in size and weight with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* itself.

Let me take one instance out of far too many. One legacy of the last war was the passport. Is one legacy of this war to be the identity card? I am prepared to concede that the dislike of the identity card is perhaps more psychological than logical. . . I have selected, as my example, this question of identity cards, although they may not be controls in the strictest of senses, because it seems to me to wear the authentic badge of bureaucracy, with its passion for registering, filing, docketing and generally tidying-up men and women as if they were so many cards in a card index. . .

The prime purpose of this Resolution is to urge upon the Government that so soon as the war situation permits, the existing controls shall be lifted; and if it is found necessary at a subsequent stage to introduce controls, they shall be new controls imposed after fresh consideration, and not the old war-time controls furtively carried over into peace; that they shall be incorporated in public Acts of Parliament and not in hole-and-corner regulations, and that they shall be introduced not by the back room boys of Whitehall but by the Front Bench fraternity of Westminster.

The great majority of these regulations which at present afflict us are not contained in any Act of Parliament and have never received the consideration of Parliament. They are the product of a number of orders and regulations issued by various Departments by virtue of powers conferred upon Ministers by the steadily increasing number of Statutes, not all of which, by any means, lay down that such regulations as are made under those Statutes shall ever be laid before Parliament itself. Inevitably, the pressure of war-time conditions has given a violent impulse to this departmental usurpage of the legislative powers of Parliament. In 1943 there were 1,792 orders and regulations issued; in 1944 the figure had fallen to 1,479, though it is impossible to say whether the decline was due to belated repentance or the exhaustion of all available subjects of control. I have the list of those issued in 1944, the mere enumeration of which absorbs seventy-three printed pages and the subject matter of which ranges nimbly from Aden to the Windward Islands and from Regional Commissioners to fish cakes. But by an answer given in another place on the 6th of last month, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury made it clear that of those 1,479 regulations not more than 238—about one-sixth of the total—had ever found their way into Parliament at all. . .

No discussion of this aspect of the matter can proceed far without reference to the late Lord Hewart's book *The New Despotism*. . .

As was only to be expected so vigorous and authoritative an attack made a considerable breach in the opposing lines which could not immediately be sealed off and, therefore, recourse was had to a counter-offensive and a Committee to inquire into Ministerial powers was appointed in October of 1929. After a not ungenerous period of gestation it produced a Report in 1932. The attention of that Committee had been directed at the commencement of its labours to three points of criticism. The first was the statutory powers conferred on Ministers to make regulations, rules, or orders

which, when made, might be held to have been placed outside the purview of the Courts by reason of a provision in the Enabling Act supposed to have that effect. Secondly, that statutory powers so conferred to amend existing Acts of Parliament or even the Enabling Act itself in order to remove difficulties or to bring the provisions of the Act into operation. The third was the statutory powers of judicial or quasi-judicial decision against which there is no appeal. That the Committee did not find that these criticisms were without foundation is to be seen by a reference to one of the passages in which they say:

"We doubt whether Parliament itself has fully realised how extensive the practice of delegation has become, or the extent to which it has surrendered its own functions in the process, or how easily the practice might be abused."

Those are weighty words to which attention may well be directed to-day.

In their main findings the Committee said this:

"Parliamentary control over legislation is deficient in two respects:

(i) Legislative powers are freely delegated by Parliament without the Members of the two houses fully realising what is being done.

(ii) Although many of the regulations... are required to be laid before both Houses... there is no automatic machinery for their effective scrutiny on behalf of Parliament as a whole, and their quantity and complexity are such that it is no longer possible to rely for such scrutiny upon the vigilance of private Members acting as individuals."

The chief recommendation was to set up a Standing Committee in each House...

There is at the heart of this matter more than general dislike of bureaucracy. There is a real and insidious danger, if at present still a remote danger, to the whole system of Parliamentary government as we know it. What, after all, in essence is totalitarianism? It is an organism in which the individual citizen has no rights but only duties. The more controls you have the more duties are imposed upon the individual and the fewer rights remain to him. The more controls you have the greater the army of persons in the direct employ of the State and forming a privileged class whose business it is to see to the enforcement of these controls by prying and spying upon their fellows. It has been estimated that as early as 1937 no fewer than 500,000 Germans were so employed...

*Earl Stanhope:* My Lords, I rise to support the Resolution moved by the noble Marquess with so much eloquence and wit which I cannot hope to emulate. I could have wished that the Resolution had been drawn in wider terms, as indeed his speech deals with wider subjects than appear in his Resolution. For many years Governments have done their best to shorten the Bills which they bring before Parliament so as to shorten debates and get more of those Bills through. The result has been that they have endeavoured to leave a great deal of power in the hands of Ministers to do things by regulation and by order which are not done in those Bills. That has become more and more necessary because Governments, instead of dealing as in the past in general terms with the objects of the legislation which they bring forward and only legislating for what people are not to be allowed to do, have endeavoured in modern days to legislate for what people are to do. Now the world, and particularly this country, appears to be full of planners. They are people who make plans for everybody else. Mostly, though by no means always, they are people who have not the courage, the constructive capacity to take risks with their

own property—which perhaps is why they have been unable to acquire very much property of their own—but who are prepared to take those risks with other people's property. May I remind both Government and planners that of the six Commandments which deal with duty to our neighbour five are negative and only one lays down what shall be done?

Turning to the narrower Motion which is on the Order Paper, I must confess to some small surprise that it emanated from the Benches opposite. It is quite true that in the past the Liberal Party prided itself on what my noble friend described as being looked on now as archaic, but I understood that they had recently swallowed a Beveridge—perhaps not entirely with pleasure, but, to use the language of the clubs which we have been recently discussing, without heel-taps. Therefore the amount of control by order and by regulation and in other ways which they propose to impose on this country seems to me rather contrary to the terms of my noble friend's Resolution. But let that pass. I doubt whether this Government have any idea of the rising tide of indignation and annoyance which is steadily spreading through the country at the number of orders and regulations which people have to obey and the number of forms which they have to fill in. We are a very patient and extremely patriotic people and as long as the war continues we are quite prepared to put up with anything that may come our way, whether in the shape of presents from Hitler or regulations from the Government, but I am quite certain that as soon as the war is over the public will insist that these regulations, these orders and these returns shall cease...

When I first began to do it, I took an immense amount of trouble over my returns. I always got tied up as to the difference between a sack of wheat, a sack of barley and a sack of oats. But, as I say, I did spend a great deal of time striving to get these things right. Then I asked one of my neighbours how he did it. When he told me, I realised that his system was entirely different from mine, and took a much shorter time. I came to the conclusion that I had been wasting my time in trying to be so meticulously accurate. I also felt that he was right because when I looked at the returns and prophecies made by the Ministry of Agriculture, I saw how wide they were of the actual facts. I think that farmers, even when they make their returns carelessly, do not make such inaccurate answers as to produce totals so entirely different from the actual facts at the end of the season. I can only conclude that the Ministry of Agriculture is absolutely swamped by the mass of returns sent in, and, being unable to deal with them, simply puts them into pigeon-holes. The same, I think, is true of almost every other productive industry in this country. We are all flooded with returns, requests for further information, and so on. What chance is there of men showing that initiative, drive and capacity for production for which the Government are so earnestly asking, when they are inundated with these floods of returns, and orders, and regulations to which they have to attend?...

*(Further passages from Lord Stanhope's speech and passages from Lord Geddes's speech in the debate will be given next week.)*

By MAJOR C. H. DOUGLAS

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## FARMERS' RIGHTS

A first public meeting of the Farmers' Rights Association (Chairman, *pro tem.* Captain Arthur Rogers, O.B.E.) was held in London on March 7, Sir Walter Blount in the chair. The Objects of the Association are:—

To defend the just rights of owner-occupier and tenant farmers, their employees and all other persons engaged in agriculture.

To procure reinstatement on their farms, or full compensation as an alternative, for those who have been dispossessed or evicted through the dictatorial or unjust actions of the Minister of Agriculture, War Agricultural Executive Committees, or other executive bodies or officials; and to ensure that full compensation be given for all or any losses suffered through dispossession, eviction or other actions of such officials or bodies.

To restore in full the constitutional right of the people of Great Britain to appeal to their sovereign through his Majesty's judges for justice and relief from oppression; and to restore the right of trial by jury.

To procure the abolition of all despotic powers now vested in executive bodies or officials; and to procure that the Courts be empowered to inflict punishment upon persons found guilty of abuse of such powers.

To oppose any policy which is detrimental to good husbandry; and to represent generally the best interests of those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits.

## DEBATE

(continued from page 3)

houses is absolutely steady, and growing steadily. It's just the fantastic business system which brings about that fluctuation. Now that is the answer, there is no other answer.

HOPKINSON: You accused me a little while ago, Sir William, of talking nonsense...

BEVERIDGE: No. No.

HOPKINSON: ... Now, with the utmost deference, I would say *you're* talking nonsense, and for this reason. That is, as I said, the only reason why any business man produces anything is that the demand for the thing is such, that he can sell it at a price that will pay the cost of doing it. Now then, if at any moment the cost of building houses is such that a hundred thousand people can buy houses, it's the business of the builder then to produce a hundred thousand houses and he can sell them. If circumstances are such that—if he can only sell fifty thousand houses, then only fifty thousand houses will be produced; and it's the people who *buy* the houses or *rent* the houses that decide how many are going to be produced in any year.

BEVERIDGE: No they don't poor dears. They *want* the houses, and they don't get them built. And you know, you're just confusing *demands* and *needs*. Human needs are steady. It's true that demands fluctuate, owing to various things that happen about money and credit and so on. It's that thing that's got to be put right somehow by State action.

HOPKINSON: I don't agree in the very least. You see I've always taken the liberal view, that is the view which underlay all the theories of the Liberal Party.

BEVERIDGE: Not *all*, by any manner of means!

HOPKINSON: ... Their idea was to interfere with the liberty of the people as little as they possibly could.

BEVERIDGE: So it is mine. So it is mine.

HOPKINSON: But *you* propose now to say that you are going to decide how many houses should be built in a year.

BEVERIDGE: I'm going to have a programme of meeting the human need for more houses on a steady system, instead of this absurd and meaningless fluctuation of the past.

HOPKINSON: How are you to find out whether a hundred thousand people are going to buy houses or only twenty thousand? The only thing is by trial, to see how many houses will be absorbed. And it's the business of us who direct industrial concerns to estimate beforehand, before we prepare our plans of production, how many we're going to sell.

BEVERIDGE: And between you, you estimate so absurdly badly that you're alternatively making far more than you can sell, and far fewer than are needed. That's what happens...

HOPKINSON: I venture to say...

BEVERIDGE: ... Houses, machinery, factories, everything... *that's* how you do it.  
(CONFUSION OF VOICES.)

HOPKINSON: I venture to say... I don't want... don't think I'm offensive in any way...

BEVERIDGE: No. No. I'm willing to be offensive.  
(LAUGHTER.)

HOPKINSON: Oh are you? Well that's—that's what I wanted.

SALTER: I think your first resolution was perhaps the best one (LAUGHTER).

HOPKINSON: No. No... What I mean is this. That after all, what do *you* know about it, Sir William? After all, *you're* not going to go bankrupt, if you make a mistake. I *am*. So is a builder. What sort of check is there on *you*?

BEVERIDGE: But nobody will go bankrupt if I have full employment, which means that the State does see that enough is spent every year to use all the labour in the country. What is not spent up to that need, up to that amount by private people—and most of the spending will still be private spending—will be spent by the State. So that as long as any human needs remain unsatisfied, there will be jobs waiting to be done to use people. Now I think one thing the State will certainly do will be to have an immense housing programme. A steady housing programme—not the absurd fluctuations of the past—which will see that there are always enough houses for people, and that there is a steady employment for the builders; therefore, more freedom for the builders than when they have to go to the dole or the unemployment benefit.

SALTER: But, Sir William Beveridge, I think we've got to bring this towards a close...

BEVERIDGE: Sorry...

SALTER: You've explained that, in order to get full employment in the way you think it can be got, you first

of all have to control the business man as to where he should set up new factories.

BEVERIDGE: That's a minor thing. It's a small thing.

SALTER: Secondly, you want to control investments; and you want to determine the scale upon which, at any time, business men should make ships or make houses or whatever it may be.

Now Hopkinson, as I understand it, thinks that if you do those two things, you will be destroying what to him is of the essence of a free society.

But I think at this stage we ought to ask you whether there are any other respects in which you want to control what the private person does.

BEVERIDGE: No very, very little indeed. I want to—steady private investment. I want to regulate industry, the location of industry. And I want to make certain that the total of spending, public and private, is up to—is enough to absorb the whole of the manpower. Now not one of those things touches any of the essential British liberties; because you cannot tell me that it's an essential British liberty to be allowed to employ other people. Most people in this country aren't able—have never had that liberty. Nothing that the employer does is an essential British liberty. I'm all in favour of liberties, even the employers' liberty. But it's not an essential liberty.

HOPKINSON: But you say, Sir William, you've just said—you're all in favour of liberty. You then say, "I mean to control this; I mean to control that; I mean to control the other."

BEVERIDGE: No, I said...

HOPKINSON: In Sir William Beveridge's opinion, the people like that better than the liberties which they now enjoy. Now what I want to know is, who are you Sir William, that you've to decide what they shall have?

BEVERIDGE: Because, by leaving business men to be free in these matters, I have subjected millions in the past to unemployment squalor, and all these other—

HOPKINSON: No, no you didn't. You said that "I have—"

BEVERIDGE: Well, we have... you have...

Society has done it. Society has done it. It means much more than freedom from arbitrary power. For the man who's starving, there's no freedom; for the man who's sick, those living in the congested homes, there's no freedom; and you can't give him that freedom without State action.

HOPKINSON: I completely deny that. You say, the man living in a congested home has no freedom. Well, Freedom, like all other things of real and absolute value, does not depend upon a material environment; it depends upon a man's inner consciousness. And it's just the same thing as if you were to say, "I, Sir William Beveridge, if only you give me the supreme power that I ask for"—and you're asking for it—"will guarantee that you shall be happy." And I absolutely deny it.

SALTER: All right. Well I think we're getting near the end of our time, and I think I'd better ask you, Beveridge, if there's anything you'd like to say, just in conclusion, in perhaps a minute.

BEVERIDGE: Well, what I would say is this:—that you can get full employment—meaning more paid jobs than men and women looking for jobs—by maintaining the total of spending so that there are jobs enough to take up all the man-power in the country. *That* the State can do, because the State has control of money; and can do it without interfering with any liberty whatever; can borrow, if it likes, for that purpose. You must in addition, by one step or another, cause business men to stabilise the process of investment. I think that can be done very largely by persuasion and encouragement—

HOPKINSON: Would you explain that? Because our listeners might not understand, you see.

BEVERIDGE: Well, 'stabilise' means to keep—to steady the process of building ships, factories and so on. And I think you must also control the location of industry. But none of those things mean directions of labour, conscription of labour, or rationing. And doing those things will increase the liberty for the mass of the people.

SALTER: Now, have you any last words to add?

HOPKINSON: I'm very much afraid, you know, Sir Arthur Salter, that we might go on for hours and hours, and never agree; because we look at this thing from completely different points of view. For the whole of my life, I've been living among these people that we're concerned with; I've worked with them in the pit; I've served with them in the ranks of the army; and they are my people; they're flesh of my flesh and blood of my blood; and I will not have them messed about by any theorist of any sort or kind—

BEVERIDGE: —By anyone except the employers!—

HOPKINSON: Their happiness is my concern—

BEVERIDGE: —I'm not a theorist—

HOPKINSON: My first duty is to see that they get the utmost possible security of employment, at reasonable wages and under conditions which they like. And the psychological conditions are the most important of all; that is, the right that every one of my men has to criticise his boss. And that's a liberty that they value more than any liberty on earth, God bless 'em!

SALTER: Well, this argument will continue. It'll continue between Beveridge and Hopkinson; it'll continue in Parliament; it'll continue in thousands of homes—those of our listeners now, and those who haven't listened now. But it can't continue now, because our time is up. It may be that a little later it will be resumed in a different form. Perhaps the country will decide to do what you want it to do, Beveridge. If so, perhaps we shall return in a few years' time and ask whether we've paid too big a price for what we've got; or whether we've got a prize that's well worth what we have paid, in any kind of interference with personal choice and liberty. But for the moment, our discussion is closed.

**GROCCERS and anyone connected with the GROCERY TRADE are requested to communicate with the Social Credit Secretariat, 49, Prince Alfred Road, Liverpool, 15.**