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Seven Thousand Against Tyranny

By C. G. DOBBS

(A Report on the Campaign for the Right to Contract out).*

That form of social discredit which is commonly called Socialism, by which I mean the growing and well-justified belief that no one will be allowed to achieve any action primarily useful to the individual efficiently, has already attained such dimensions that a small household repair not infrequently takes three months, and the task of finding, and moving into a new home twice in a year is such that it monopolises the entire energy of those unfortunate enough to have to undertake it.

Finding themselves in this predicament, the originators of the Petition for the Right to Contract Out of National Insurance and the 'Health' Scheme, have been unable to bring out the detailed report which they would have liked by now to have presented to those interested; and the results obtained have yet to be exploited to full advantage, as the pernicious effects of these schemes become evident in practice. However, while offering this explanation and apology, they take comfort in the fact that they are by no means alone, and that over seven thousand other people in signing the Petition also undertook to exert themselves to secure freedom to contract out and to press for the repeal of the legislation which infringes this freedom.

It should be understood therefore that the Petition has not been 'dropped,' it is merely not being pressed because the originators of it, under changed circumstances, cannot possibly carry it on, and though we all now live equally within the contracting prison walls of a totalitarian State, they feel sure that there must be some among the 7,000 who could contrive to keep it in being, ready for the time when the Acts are applied.

It will be remembered that the Petition was most unusual in form, being directed to all three Powers of the Constitution, the King, Lords, and Commons—a recognition of the fact that our triple or trinitarian Constitution of balanced Powers alone stands between us and the full horrors of the Monopoly State. It was, in fact, the first small counter-blow in the great Constitutional battle which confronts this country. The wording was deliberately detailed in content and emphatic in its conclusions, the object being to mobilise people of considered and firmly held opinion, and some courage, capable of initiative and decentralised action, rather than to collect a meaningless bag of signatures. The issue chosen, contracting out, which has since come into prominence in connection with the 'closed shop', is of the

essence of the whole conflict, and the particular instances, Insurance and 'Health' Schemes, were those most directly affecting the individual; also they were the first, out of the long list of impositions which have been made upon us, and having been plotted during the war and agreed upon by all parties, they demonstrate, as nothing since has done, that it is not the Socialist Government alone, but *Parliament itself*, which must be curbed, as the Absolute Monarchy was once curbed, if we are to continue to call our souls our own.

For these reasons it has an importance greater than may be apparent, and those who supported it will lose a valuable weapon if they allow it to lapse completely.

Results

To turn now to the results of the active campaign during the passage of the Acts in question: the main achievement was that it brought up the issue of contracting out and kept it *continually* before the Ministers concerned, the Party Leaders in both Houses, the members of the Standing Committees, and a considerable number of other M.P.'s and Peers, as well as the general Public through a certain amount of Press publicity. At the same time, a demand on M.P.'s limited to the right to contract out of the Health Scheme, was being distributed by the Medical Policy Association. There can therefore be no suggestion that the issue went by default; it was raised persistently, and it could not entirely be ignored, as it would otherwise have been. That is something achieved which may be of value later, if it is kept in mind.

It should be noted, moreover, that the basis of contracting out was very slightly expanded by raising the income limit from £75 a year to £2 a week, and that this, the exclusion of the very poor from benefits alleged to provide "Freedom from Want for All" was the *only* point of detail mentioned in the Petition.

Mr. R. A. Butler, in a letter to a petitioner stated: "I am discussing the matter with my Committee dealing with the National Insurance Bill" (*i.e.* the Conservative Party's Committee). The Conservatives, in fact, did put forward an amendment of almost incredible feebleness on contracting out for pensioners. Speaking on this Mr. Butler gave tongue as follows (*Hansard*, May 24, 1946, 701-2):

"Those of us who have been taking a prominent part in the proceedings of this Bill have had a great deal of correspondence with persons in the country, asking us to give a right of option, that is to say, to contract out of the scheme in one way or another. I think the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly right, that attractive as contracting out schemes are, it is very difficult to concede them in an all-in insurance scheme. But the right hon. Gentleman must not underestimate the importance that many persons in the country attach to that option. I simply want to say to them, as they

*See *T.S.C.* p 4, February 16, 1946.

will be following these Debates, and to the House, that we are not able, unfortunately, to encourage the contracting out system in a Bill like this, because, if you encourage it, it is not fair to all the other contributors."

That, be it noted, is a Conservative *opposition* speech, and the spirit of it provides a complete explanation why the most vicious and unpopular Government in our history apparently cannot lose a by-election.

The King

Very early in the campaign, after the first thousand signatures had been received, the Petition was sent to H.M. the King, to whom in the first place it is addressed. This was done early so that there should be ample time to insert clauses in the Bill if the Government wished. An acknowledgement, dated April 12, 1946, was received from His Majesty's Private Secretary, who stated, "I am transmitting it to the Minister of National Insurance, who is the recognised authority through which such petitions are submitted to The King."

Later, the following letter was received from the Ministry of National Insurance:

Sir,

I am requested by the Minister of National Insurance to inform you that your petition of the 9th April last, was referred by The King to him. He has, by His Majesty's command, given it his careful consideration but regrets that he feels himself unable to advise The King that provision should be made in the National Insurance Scheme for the right to contract out other than in the circumstances already provided for.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

L. HILTON,

Private Secretary.

These letters show that the right of appeal to the Highest Power in the land against the actions of the Executive has in fact come down to an appeal to the Executive to act as judges in their own cause; but at least it ensured that the Minister had his attention drawn to the matter in a way which could not be ignored or treated with contempt. The Petition therefore could not be passed over; it had to be definitely rejected.

The fact that The King no longer has effective power to protect us from the Government in specific cases should not be allowed to undermine our loyalty in any way; on the contrary it demonstrates the greater need for it. Loyalty to the Crown remains the one great force which stands in the path of naked dictatorship, using a single chamber 'Reichstag' to rubber-stamp its decrees. And well "They" know it! The insidious attack on the Crown goes on all the time. One of the objects is to reduce The King to powerlessness, and then get people to say "What's the use of him!", to publicise alleged 'luxury' appointments *e.g.* of the aeroplanes on the South African Visit, and then get simple people to repeat "It's a shame, with everything so short!" Agitators on the streets are already going further, into outright attacks on the 'parasite' in Buckingham Palace. In that connection the outrageous behaviour of the Ministry of Works should be noted. As widely reported in the Press, they first forced

the Palace to change from coal to oil fuel (obviously with the intention later of exploiting the fact that The King uses scarce dollar resources) then, having got 40 workmen on the spot making the foundations for the new boilers, they refused the necessary supply of concrete, ensured a Press scandal about the idle workmen, and actually publicised the statement that "The King must take his turn like any other householder." The King is not "any other householder" though they would like him to be; he is OUR KING: and all these attacks show that there is a very formidable Power there which they are afraid, and with justice, to tackle outright. The collateral attack on the Duke of Gloucester in Australia, and the impudent appointment of a party politician to succeed The King's brother as Governor-General, and to destroy the impartiality of the Crown's Representative, should also be noted as evidence. At all costs we must defend what "They" are attacking so relentlessly.

The Ministries

To return to the active Campaign, the Ministries both of National Insurance and Health received considerable correspondence from Petitioners, which resulted in the amusing discovery that they had developed a standard 'line' which was handed out with the most fatuous irrelevance to the points at issue. A long correspondence with Mr. G. S. Lindgren, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of National Insurance might be not unfairly caricatured as follows:

Petitioner: our chief point is that it is the *poor* who will suffer most from compulsory inclusion.

Mr. Lindgren: No one should be able to claim exemption because he is wealthier than others.

Petitioner: This is not the point; the point is that it is the *poor* who will suffer!

Mr. Lindgren: I would emphasize that no one should be able to claim exemption because he is wealthier than others.

Petitioner: Considered as a reply to the serious points raised in the petition, I thought your letter displayed a talent for light-hearted irrelevancy which is worthy of a wide reading public and should cause joy and merriment among the otherwise increasingly dejected populace.

This last caused such a stir at the Ministry that is actually leaked out to the Press, or so the sympathetic 'reporter' said who subsequently called on the petitioner in question, curiously enough, at his place of employment which, after a specific promise not to mention it, was given the most prominent place in the news item which duly appeared in a National Daily. (The sub-editor was blamed!) It would be amusing to know what the 'reporter' reported. In any case this little attempt at intimidation showed quite clearly that the Petition was 'getting home.'

The argument that exemption is impracticable in an all-in scheme was, of course, fully exploded by reference to the fact that it was to be allowed (in fact enforced by their poverty) to those with less than 30/- (later £2) a week. It was the persistent exposure of the slimy hypocrisy involved in this together with the "freedom from Want for all" propaganda, which hurt most, and which was completely unanswerable except by drowning it with a gramophone record of assertions that all opponents of the scheme are selfish well-to-do people trying to escape their obligations to the poor. You will see the same technique now in use against the House-

wives. It always shows you are on the right line, and have only to persist to succeed. Incidentally, the suggestion that, if there must be an income limit for exemption it should be the £1000 a year which the M.P.'s had just then voted themselves out of our pockets, was not received with any noticeable enthusiasm! This point (the exclusion of the poor) and the pernicious effect of the retirement condition are obviously coming to the fore again when the scheme is put into practice. It is significant that the sole small retreat (raising the limit to £2) occurred on this front.

Of course, we received a good deal of plain vulgar abuse. Major Donald Bruce, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Health, quite let himself go about the Petition and its originator, and the result may be seen in full in *The Weekly Review* (June 6, 1946); and a Mr. Braddock, M.P. produced a clause by clause 'refutation' of the Medical Policy Association's version, so fatuous, doctrinaire and irrelevant, that it was difficult to grasp the fact that he thought it was an unanswerable counterblast, and was distributing cyclostyled copies of it to all petitioners who wrote to him. Behind this comic relief, however, lies the sobering fact that we are now being governed by people whose education has robbed them of the power of rational thought.

The Lords

The House of Lords, on the other hand, had the knowledge, but lacked the courage. Several Peers wrote sympathetic letters, two of them signed the Petition unasked, but not one of them mentioned it in the House. There is no denying, of course, the difficult position in which they find themselves, and there are signs that they are beginning cautiously to assert themselves in the face of blatant threats of abolition, or swamping of the House. If Crown and Lords could be assured of sufficient loyalty and public support, together they could save us yet.

The most sickening and shocking disappointment, however, was caused by the complete failure of any Archbishop, Bishop, or prominent Leader of any Christian Church to realise that an issue involving the very core of the Christian Faith is involved in the right to contract out. Because the issue is a moral issue particular attention was paid to them, and they were begged, frequently and with humility, to raise the moral aspect of the matter in the House of Lords, or in public. Apart from acknowledgements from hard-worked chaplains, only one had the courtesy to reply. Here it is, from the Bishop of Gloucester:

Many thanks for your letter and enclosure. Little as I like compulsion I am afraid that the whole structure of the Insurance Scheme must rest upon everyone coming into it. It would, for the most part, be the feckless and improvident who would contract out if they were allowed to do so.

It is no accident that our Constitution has a place in Parliament for the Lords Spiritual, to whom we directly appealed in our Petition. Those liberties which we are fast losing are based upon the Christian Faith; you cannot, in a Society, have the one without the other. These men were entrusted with political as well as spiritual authority in order to ensure that that Faith shall be applied to the actions of the Government. They are not doing their duty. It is a spiritual war, and theirs is the place of honour in the front rank of Christendom; instead of that they are all either running

away or, some of them, actually fighting on the wrong side. Yet each one of them has the power, if he would only turn and face the rush of events, to form such a rallying point for Christians that it might save us, and the Church.

The Press

Since the Press was the sole means available of informing other people, in any number, of the existence of the Petition, a determined, persistent effort was made to secure whatever publicity the Press was willing to give to a matter which was of particular, and topical, public interest. It will be remembered that almost the entire Press was, at the time, asserting that the public were unanimously in favour of a comprehensive and compulsory insurance scheme; and that therefore a definite and emphatic assertion to the contrary, supported by a growing number of people, was undoubtedly 'news,' and inescapably 'a matter of public interest' to an honest editor, though not, of course to a dishonest propagandist or agent of the forces which were imposing the compulsion.

At the outset, therefore, the entire National Daily Press received copies of the Petition and letters drawing attention to the campaign, not *one* of which they published. (Except that we did not bother to write to those incongruous fellow-travellers, *The Times*, and *The Daily Worker*, publicity in which, though improbable, would have been a very doubtful honour). A wide selection of weekly and other periodicals was written to at the same time.

The total result of this very great effort was that two weekly papers, *The Weekly Review*, and *The Social Crediter* printed the Petition in full, and allowed us reprints, without which the campaign would have gone no further. Later two monthlies, *Tomorrow* and *Health and Life* and, *Sovereignty*, then a quarterly, also printed the text in full. It is interesting to note that it was the *periodical press* (which uses least power) which the Government later attempted illegally to suppress on a plea of fuel shortage.

The pressure was kept up and letters on the campaign were printed fairly early in *The Catholic Herald*, and *The Patriot*. *The Catholic Times* printed a very lukewarm editorial note on it, and the weekly *Views* gave it full approval and support. Rather late in the day *Truth* published a useful letter, and a good many local papers all over the country printed letters from petitioners. Not *one* Church of England, or Nonconformist journal would so much as print a letter mentioning the Petition.

The introduction of the 'Health' Bill, which restored topicality to the subject, was made the occasion of a really desperate, all-out effort to find out whether the boycott by the National Press was absolute and deliberate or not. The *Daily Telegraph* ignored six letters from us alone (and many others from other petitioners), the *Daily Mail* five, the *Daily Express* four, and so on. The *Sunday Times*, which shortly afterwards came out with a great 'Freedom' campaign, was kept fully informed but suppressed all mention of the campaign.

The first 'big' newspaper to notice the petition was the *London Evening Standard*, which gave us fair enough notices on April 12, 1946, and again on May 14. The response, from their large circulation, was negligible.

On the eve of the Second Reading of the Health Bill all the big London Dailies' News Rooms were telephoned. The

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Saturday, August 23, 1947.

From Week to Week

The Washington Post is the property of Mr. Eugene Meyer, credited with bringing about, as head of the Federal Reserve Board, the 1929 "financial blizzard," and it is edited by his son. The publication by that journal of an article suggesting that the . . . States should take over "Britain" as mandated territory, and use American (*sic*) police to keep order—"it goes without saying that dissident elements would not be tolerated, and would be immediately suppressed by vigorous measures"—does not therefore depend for any importance it may have upon its alleged author, but upon its inclusion in a metropolitan newspaper.

Properly considered, we think this piece of insolence is encouraging. The Jew does not become offensive in print unless he is being thwarted, and if the Meyers, *père et fils*, are reduced to the emission of political bilgewater, their plans are not going too well, all superficial evidence to the contrary.

A correspondent in California has been kind enough to send us a dollar bill, which shows, as stated in these pages, various masonic symbols, the truncated pyramid with the suspended capstone bearing the All-seeing-Eye (the Gestapo-Ogpu?) and the motto *novus ordo seclorum*—A New Order of the Ages.

Our correspondent points out, however, that this is the obverse of the Great Seal of the Revolutionary States, and dates from 1776. The effect of this is merely to link up the events of that period with occult Freemasonry, which, it is becoming evident, is at the core of world unrest, although certainly not its unique agency. It enhances, if anything, the significance of the symbolism on the currency in 1935.

LIVING ON OUR EXPORTS. On the authority of the *Scottish Daily Express* of August 12, we learn that British manufacturers have just exported 3,000 domestic baths at £8 0s. 0d. each to France, and the Ministry of Health has imported 4,000 similar baths from France at £12 0s. 0d. each.

We suggest that particular attention be paid to the statement of Mr. Herbert Morrison on the occasion of the Summons to the Bar of the House of Commons of two recalcitrant witnesses in the Walkden contempt incident. Mr. Morrison prefaced the proceedings by a lecture to Members, enjoining judicial conduct "in view of the fact that they were sitting as the High Court of Parliament."

We are of the opinion that the incident was staged partly to enable this assertion to be made. In the first place, it

is patently incorrect—Parliament consists of two Houses, Lords and Commons, and the High Court of Parliament is a single entity comprehending both. But precedent being of the essence of the current perversion of the Constitution, the fact that it does not appear to have been challenged might carry weight at some future time.

And secondly, the whole procedure adopted implies competence in one institution to make the law, frame the charge, and impose the sentence. If this is the kind of organisation we live under, we ought to be told so plainly.

The card vote by virtue of which a trades union delegate announces that two million "workers" in the engineering and shipbuilding industries will support the Administration in anything it cares to do, is perhaps the simplest example of the idiocy to which Trade Unionism has descended. Broadly speaking, such a statement is an expression of opinion by one man—the Trades Union delegate. He, and the Ministers to whom it is made, rely on his technique as an agitator, by which he has generally achieved success in Trades Unionism, just as the Socialist Ministers have come to power and high remuneration as politicians, "to get away with murder"—to convince any dissident "worker" that whatever a Cabinet Minister bearing a Labour label does, is in the interests of the organised worker, and as we know the rest don't matter a tinker's dam. We refer to this well-known and obvious fact, because it is a principle which has transformed the Parliamentary system through the Whips' Office, and it is probable that the two examples derive from the same source.

The Catholic Church and Freemasonry

The *Catholic Herald* of August 8, reports that a statement issued from Vatican City and quoted on Vatican Radio, denied the report in a Swiss paper that negotiations are in progress to effect a change in the Church's attitude towards some masonic lodges in Scotland.

"The term 'negotiations' does not describe the position," the statement said. "Certain individuals interested in a change of attitude towards some particular masonic jurisdiction have on more than one occasion made a request to this effect, but this does not imply that there have been 'negotiations' such as the Swiss paper mentioned.

"It is pointed out that the attitude of the Holy See has not undergone any change in either the doctrinal or practical sphere with regard to freemasonry."

The Rod in Pickle

"... planning as practised by the present Government is now clearly bankrupt," says *The Economist*. "It is true that Ministers and their advisers are busy working out a new set of estimates, targets and programmes. But these are about as pointless as the plan of the General Staff in an army where the troops no longer obey their officers."

The newspaper goes on to set out what orders the Planners (*alias* 'Government', 'General Staff', 'officers') must give: (1) Export coal at the cost of domestic consumption, (2) Import raw materials for 'essential' industry at the cost of food cuts, (3) postpone housing in favour of 'productive capital projects', and (4) finance these projects from current savings.

PARLIAMENT*

House of Lords, August 13, 1947.

The Recess : Adjournment until September 9.

Lord Ammon: My Lords, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 14. I may explain to your Lordships that the reason for this date of October 14, is that that is the date of the normal judicial sitting of the House.

Moved, That this House do adjourn until October 14.
—(*Lord Ammon*).

The Marquess of Salisbury: My Lords, I beg to move as an Amendment to the Motion, to leave out the words "Tuesday, October 14" and insert "Tuesday, September 9." In moving this Amendment I can assure the Government, if they need such an assurance, that we, on this side of the House, are not acting in any Party spirit or with the mere object of causing any embarrassment to the Government. We have, I think it will be agreed in all parts of the House, taken a moderate and, I hope, a statesmanlike attitude towards the Supplies and Services (Extended Purposes) Act. Although we have protested against the extent of the powers which are given to the Government, especially under Section 1 (1) (c), we have been at pains not to give any legitimate grounds for any charge that we have made it impossible for the Government to use what means they feel desirable to tackle this crisis with which the country is faced.

But there is no doubt that the introduction of this legislation, with the very wide powers which it confers, and at a time when Parliament is separating for the Summer Recess for over two months, has exposed what I may perhaps describe as rather a serious defect in the constitutional machinery of this country, which I think it is for Parliament as far as they can to try to remedy. In the old days, of course, practically all legislation was by Act of Parliament, and Parliament went through every word of every clause of that legislation. In such circumstances there was fully effective protection for the community. But within recent years (and I am not referring merely to the period during which the present Government have been in power) there has been a new development—namely, the growth of delegated legislation. As your Lordships know very well, blanket powers are given to Ministers to make Orders within the limitations of the main Acts and as soon as they are made those Orders come into active operation. It is quite true that under the Constitution they must be laid before Parliament, and, as your Lordships know, either House can pray against them.

That is, of course, some protection when Parliament is sitting, but if Parliament is not sitting Orders may become operative weeks, or even months, before Parliament can consider them. I should think that it would be generally agreed by noble Lords in every part of the House, whatever they may feel about this measure which we have so lately been considering, that that is not an entirely satisfactory situation. Indeed, it is a very unsatisfactory situation. It is to meet this new difficulty that we are proposing that, if necessary, this House, at any rate, should meet at convenient intervals during the Recess to examine such Orders.

No doubt the noble and learned Viscount, the Lord

Chancellor would point out, if I did not, that in these circumstances this House cannot pray against Orders, because Orders have to be laid before Parliament; and if only one House happens to be in Session they clearly cannot be so laid. In those conditions all the House can do is to examine and discuss them when they come out. That would be, or it might be, a useful function for us to perform. An earlier meeting of this kind, under the existing rather anxious conditions, might have this additional advantage: It might well give opportunity, if such were required, for general discussion of developments in the economic situation since the House last sat; that is, since to-day.

I would not for a moment suggest that we should have a sort of general session of this House, in which every kind and sort of question might be raised—in which there might be debates on foreign affairs, debates on this, or debates on that. That, I think, would be entirely inappropriate. The general development in the economic situation would be very closely allied to this Act which has been lately under discussion, and a general discussion of that kind might be quite proper. That is the reason why I am moving this Amendment to the Motion for the Adjournment. It has seemed to us—that is, to those noble Lords whom I represent—that September 9 would be a suitable date for the next meeting of the House. For one thing, it will give almost a month for noble Lords and for the officers of the House to get that rest and refreshment which they obviously need after the labours of the summer. It will also give time for the Government to initiate such steps as they may think proper to deal with the situation which has been developing.

We on this side of the House fully recognize that owing to important public duties abroad it will not be possible for the Lord Chancellor himself and for the noble Viscount the Leader of the House to be present on September 9. We entirely understand the reasons. No doubt, there will be some other members of the Government Front Bench who will be able to officiate in their absence. I believe that the proposal which I am putting will be generally welcomed, both in this House and also outside, as evidence that your Lordships are willing to give what assistance you can to the alleviation of our present troubles, and also as evidence that we are prepared and determined to play our full part in maintaining the authority of Parliament. I beg to move the Amendment.

Amendment moved—

Leave out ("October 14") and insert ("September 9").—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*.)

Viscount Samuel: My Lords, noble Lords on these Benches will desire to support the Amendment which has been proposed by the noble Marquess, the Leader of the Opposition. The reasons for this Amendment have been so fully and so ably stated by the noble Marquess that it is unnecessary for me to do more than say that we agree with them and regard them as conclusive. I hope that it is to be made quite clear that, if this House is summoned to meet again on September 9, it will only be for anything more than a formal sitting if some business of urgent importance has arisen meanwhile. The noble Marquess, I am sure, does not intend, and the House does not wish, that we should meet again in order to engage in the discussion of more or less normal business which may happen to have accrued meanwhile. We have had a very long and very arduous session with a great deal of massive legislation, and I think that

*In view of the Constitutional issue raised we defer publication of extracts from the Report of the House of Commons after August 4 to give this report *in extenso*.

members of your Lordship's House, as well as officials, are entitled to a sufficient rest.

Public spirit is a great virtue, and a high sense of Parliamentary duty is greatly to be praised. But like other virtues, that ought not to be carried to extravagant excess. So we may hope that on September 9 it may be necessary only to summon here a quorum of the House, which is, as we know, three members. Three self-sacrificing members of your Lordship's House, preferably those who are accustomed to be in receipt of salaries, should be willing to attend in order to constitute a sitting of the Chamber.

I do not know what attitude the noble and learned Viscount, the Lord Chancellor, will take on this Amendment. I can well understand that the Government would be in some difficulty in either proposing such an Amendment themselves or in formally agreeing to it if similar action is not being taken by the other House. Therefore, it may be that the noble and learned Viscount will view this Amendment without enthusiasm, but I hope the Government, if they do not agree, will at all events acquiesce.

The Lord Chancellor: My Lords, your Lordships on these Benches are really becoming very revolutionary. I and my Party are old-fashioned Constitutionalists in this matter and I am bound to point out that, so far as I know, this has never been done before. Quite frankly, being an old Constitutionalist, as we all are, I distrust this innovation. I doubt its wisdom. Your Lordships are very anxious to maintain the dignity and prestige of your Lordship's House. Your Lordships must ask yourselves whether the question before the House is likely to achieve that end. If the answer to that question, which you must have formulated yourselves, is in the affirmative, well then, so be it. The noble Viscount who spoke last, the Leader of the Liberal Party, anticipated that though I could not accede, I should acquiesce.

The constitutional position is quite plain. It is for each House (I am reading from Erskine May) to exercise its right to adjourn itself independently of the Crown (which means the Government of the day) and of the other House. That is the constitutional position which I have to advise your Lordships exists. I would, however, like to point out that on August 10, 1914, which was just after the outbreak of the First World War, this House resolved that

"whenever during the present session of Parliament the House stands adjourned for more than two days and it appears to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor that the public interest requires that the House should meet at any earlier time during such adjournment, the Lord Chancellor may give notice to the Peers that he is so satisfied and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such Notice and transact business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time."

Since that date alterations have been made in that Motion. The Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords is now frequently included, together with the Lord Chancellor, and since 1931 the Motion has been so made that the Lord Chancellor or the Chairman of Committees cannot act save after consultation with the Government. In its more modern form, in practice I understand it means that this is done with the approval of the Government. But I would point out that under the 1914 resolution it was left to the Lord Chancellor to act independently and call your Lordships back if, and only if, in his or their opinion there was some case for so doing.

Frankly, I do not agree with the noble Marquess that the modern tendency of delegated legislation is any justifi-

fication. When I have read books about "The New Despotism," I have thought that in the interest of historical accuracy it should be stated that that despotism is very old indeed and reached its height in the time of the Tudors. It is quite inaccurate to refer to it as the new despotism—despotism, if you will, but not new. And our ancestors, who did not adopt this course, were fully alive to the danger which the noble Marquess seeks to guard against. While it is of course for this House to decide to what date it will adjourn—and, I should not dream of standing in the way; your Lordships' wishes must be supreme in this matter—it is for the Government to decide what they will do when the House does meet. I am exceedingly sorry that the Leader of the House, Viscount Addison, is away. I am sure the wishes of all the members of this House go with him on his voyage, and I think at his age it shows great pluck and enterprise to undertake the very arduous and difficult task he has undertaken. The noble Lord, Lord Ammon, is going, as your Lordships know, as a Parliamentary delegate to China and he also will not be present. And I, my Lords, am in a difficult position in that I have been asked both by the American and Canadian Bar Associations to go to America. It entails making a very large number of speeches and travelling pretty well over the Continent. Though I have considered in my own mind whether I ought to abandon that project, my own colleagues and those of your Lordships opposite who have been good enough to discuss this with me take the view that I ought to adhere to my decision and to go as the guest of the American and Canadian Bar Associations. I only mention these matters in order to apologise that I and my noble friends will not be able to be here. I have no doubt we shall do all we can to facilitate matters. I hope that your Lordships will understand that so far as the servants of this House are concerned it would be desirable to interfere as little as possible with their holidays, and if we find when the day comes that we are understaffed I am sure your Lordships will forgive it and realize the reason.

With that, I would point out that in any event it will not be possible to pray against any Order. You cannot do that. All you can do is to debate an Order, but the question of a Prayer cannot arise. It is therefore no sort of solution of the constitutional problem, if constitutional problem there be, as it is a fact that these Regulations come into force and have effect unless and until a Prayer is passed. A Prayer cannot be undertaken when your Lordships meet on September 9. I have pointed these facts out. Your Lordships have told me that you desire to meet again on September 9. It is your Lordships' undoubted right to decide to which date you will adjourn, and, conscious as I am that the large majority desire this date, I shall do nothing to try to oppose the proposal. I will acquiesce in the proposal which has been made and we shall learn by experience and see how it works.

Viscount Simon: My Lords, I would not have intervened had not the noble Viscount in the course of his speech thought fit to point out a matter of historical accuracy. It is no doubt quite true that in the time of Henry VIII a Statute of Proclamation attempted to provide that the King should be able to issue orders of the nature of laws without Parliamentary authority at all, a very bad precedent and one which we shall certainly not go back to. But it is just as well to remember that though that was true at the beginning of the Tudor period, it certainly was not possible at the end. I recall the answer of the schoolboy who was asked to illustrate

the increase in power of the House of Commons during the period of the Tudors. The schoolboy replied that at the end of that period, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the House of Commons petitioned the Queen to marry—a thing, he said, which the House of Commons would never have thought of doing in the reign of Henry VIII. The claim which was undoubtedly made in the period to which my noble and learned friend refers, and was made a little later, led to a very unfortunate incident in the time of Charles I, when he, in his turn, attempted to govern without Parliament.

Surely, the true position is this. I have never sought to state it too absolutely, or in too dogmatic a fashion. The truth is that it has been for a very long time past—in the lifetime of any of us, and going back beyond that—absolutely necessary to have in Statutes provisions that regulations should be made under the Statutes. You could not have an Education Bill, an Unemployment Insurance Bill, or a Factory Bill unless there were all sorts of regulations which were made under them—quite subordinate to them, but absolutely lawful, because the Statutes themselves provide for them. That is to say you give a certain discretion in matters of mere administration to the Department which is administrating the subjects. That is undoubtedly the case. I do not think Mr. Gladstone would have taken any objection to the provisions of the Education Act of 1870, which included provisions for regulations by the Board of Education. But that is quite a different thing—is it not?—from letting us slide into a situation in which more and more what is in effect legislation by regulation takes the place of what ought to be direct Parliamentary decision. It may be that it is inevitable that the cases should increase, because the complication of life increases, and even the most hard-working Parliament cannot manage to sit more than 365 days in a year—and possibly there are some who think that that would be an excessive time!

But there is a fundamental difference between the old idea that purely subordinate matters can be dealt with by regulations which are authorised by Parliament and the idea which is now unquestionably growing up. You may see it in its most emphatic form in some of the previous declarations of, let us say, Sir Stafford Cripps. To say that the moment a Socialist Government get a majority they ought on the first day to pass a Bill to confer on the Government powers to legislate on anything they like, and that after that Parliament should sit as little as possible, is a fundamentally different conception of what Parliament ought to do from the conception under which we have been brought up, and which most of us honestly desire to maintain. It is, therefore, not the case that we are dealing in this Act with cases where there may be just ordinary regulations, such as have been made for a long time past, and made of necessity by every great Department of State—the Home Office, the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour, and so on. That is not the case at all. It is recognised not to be the case, because it is admitted that there must be, at least, the possibility of Parliament negating the regulation at the end, which itself is an admission that such regulations or instruments go beyond the mere detail of provisions for administration.

I venture to think, therefore, that while my noble and learned friend is perfectly right when he says there was a danger of a despotism in the time of Henry VIII, it has been the earnest endeavour of our ancestors to get rid of that danger of despotism; to keep it in bounds, and to make quite

certain that it should not grow into something of the nature of a tyranny—government not by Parliament throughout the life of a Parliament, but government by the Executive once it has got its position for five years. That is the distinction. With that distinction in mind, I venture to think that the Amendment which has been put down by my noble friend the Marquess of Salisbury is one which will commend itself to your Lordships.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.
Motion, as amended, agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

RIGHT TO CONTRACT OUT (Continued from page 3.)

Daily Mail gave us a curt "No thanks!" and cut us off, the *Daily Telegraph* put us through to the 'phone room and took down all we said, but not a word appeared. The *Daily Express* said wearily: "What, another protest against the Health Bill! Sorry; can't take it! We've had nothing else all day. We only print hard news, not political propaganda," cut us off and then got peeved when we pointed out that their whole paper was full of propaganda in favour of the Bill. An interesting dialogue, that, in its revelation of the extent to which the *Daily Press* suppresses one side of every 'political' question.

But the *pièce de résistance* was undoubtedly the *Daily Sketch* (now *Graphic*). This paper professed so much freedom stuff that it made a special objective. First a shoal of letters from petitioners who were also readers; then a special letter from a distinguished independent M.P. who signed the petition, and whom it would be awkward to ignore; and this was followed up by eight telephone calls. The poor, harassed, but quite decent journalists switched us about from 'News' to 'Features' and back again several times, but we were not to be shaken off. Finally a promise was given that either a feature, or if not, a letter, would appear, and on May 1, importunity had its reward, and a 90 word letter, giving our name and address duly appeared.

Even then, the order of the wording was inverted by the paper so as to make it appear that the petition was primarily against the Health Bill (then topical) which destroyed some of our credit with readers who were disappointed to find that it was primarily against the Insurance Bill, with which the Health Bill was cunningly tied up so that it could not be challenged alone. Needless to say, a letter protesting and setting it right was not printed.

The result was 300 letters asking for forms to sign during the following week, from this one small break-through into the *Daily Press*; which again shows what the *Daily Press* could do, in contrast to what it is doing. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the results, in terms of active workers and signatures obtained, from the *Daily Graphic*, with its enormous circulation, were less than those obtained from one small weekly, *The Social Crediter*, which was not even the first to print the petition.

To sum up, then, the results of the Press campaign; it showed what a narrow channel is left for the expression of any opinions against the dictated 'trend'; viz.: some of the local Press, and a few weekly papers which alone are worthy of support and expansion; but it also showed that something can be done even with the Dailies by persistent effort. It is not for nothing that there are *two* parables in the Gospels commending importunity.

The People

Our correspondence with people interested in the petition was enormous—far too great for two people with a living to earn to cope with adequately in their spare time. From it certain facts emerged. The first was the intensity of feeling, even of desperation, with which many people regarded the proposed impositions; and the second was the lack of any feeling of responsibility for taking action themselves on the part of all but a small minority. They were “so glad to see that someone at last was doing something.” They wished us success and asked for a form, often even leaving us to pay the postage. Then they failed to return it, or did so with only their own signatures on it. Others wrote us long letters, roundly condemning the Government, after which they seemed to feel they had done enough!

The bulk of the work, as always, was done by a small number of people in whom thought, feeling and action are not dissociated. They also paid most of the expenses, which were kept low. The majority of them were social crediters, but not all. The really valuable information came from those who were systematically collecting signatures, and who reported on the attitude of the many people with whom they came in contact.

It became clear from the evidence in our hands that those supporting the petition formed a fair cross-section of the community: two peers, an M.P., a couple of titled ladies, a well-known writer, several J.P.'s, a fair number of professional people, doctors, dentists, nurses especially, but the vast majority appeared to be elderly middle or working class people who simply could not afford to pay the additional levies and were at their wits end to know what to do. When one bears in mind the Fabian bureaucrats and politicians, drawing fat salaries at these people's expense, and cynically accusing them of ‘selfishness’ it makes the blood boil. A large proportion of them were not highly educated, and a number made a point of insisting that they were working class people. There were for instance 300 signatures collected by one man from a Scottish mining village.

There was also a batch of several hundred from an unorthodox health practitioner, just one! If the British Health Freedom Society (so-called) which appears to have been formed during the War for this very purpose, had not gone back on its repeated undertakings *not* to negotiate for inclusion of such practitioners in the Service, the number from that source could easily have been 15,000. The leaders of the Medical Profession were also kept very fully informed of the campaign; which could have given them just the public support they needed, but they were very careful never to mention it, nor would any medical journal print a word about it. Another group was the Homeopaths, who invited a petitioner to their conference, where they were bluntly told by the Socialist speaker that if they supported contracting out they would get no homeopathy in the Bill; a plain threat which scared them off, and ensured also that they were ignored in the Bill.

The most disturbing reports, however, came from South Wales and certain other industrial districts where, though the women would sometimes sign, the men, though approving of the petition, *dared* not, for fear of the Trades Union. The most tyrannous of employers can do no more than sack a man from his job, leaving him free to get another; the Trades Union can sack a man from his trade, and cut him off completely from getting a living with whatever skill he

has developed. That is the nature of the strangle-hold which is transforming our people into slaves, and has already turned the mining industry, in particular, into a little bit of Russia in this country. Again, the essence of the matter is the right to contract out.

In conclusion, events have shown very clearly that the correct ground was picked in the right to contract out, which is the same as Free Will, and in the Constitution of balanced Powers which alone can ensure it. The results obtained are far beyond the expectations of a few people who decided to write down what they thought and send it to the Press just to see what happened; but we are at the beginning of a long fight, not the end of a short one.

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