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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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The Realistic Position of the Church of England

By C. H. DOUGLAS

(II)

It should be fairly clear from the argument of the preceding paragraphs that the question which I believe is technically known as "the validity of Anglican Orders" has a highly practical aspect for the ordinary man. The basis of the claim to a particular kind of sovereignty by the Christian Church must, beyond dispute, depend upon its origin and its allegiance; to say that a church which is established by statute, can be disestablished by statute, and has its higher officials, archbishops, bishops and principal deans, appointed by the secular government of the day, is the same thing as a Church which assists in forcing a king to sign a document declaring it to be free and inviolable from himself or any secular authority, and appoints its officials from outside and without reference to his jurisdiction, is infantile.

With some hesitation, I suggest that the question arising out of the Christian Church, is not the same, either in nature or degree, as that involved in the acceptance of what is vaguely called Christianity which for the most part is merely Liberal Judaism. It is the Doctrine of the Incarnation. At bottom, what we have to make up our minds upon is whether human political action is subject to the same kind, or some kind, of compulsion to be "right" as we accept in doing a multiplication sum, and if so, whether the Christian Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is the living incarnation of that "right"-ness. Magna Carta remains as a witness that this conception was inherent in English life seven hundred years ago.

Tempora mutantur, mutantur nos in illis. In 1917, Lord Sumner in the House of Lords said "My Lords, with all respect to the great names of the lawyers who have used the phrase 'Christianity is part of the law of England' it is really not law, it is rhetoric." And in the same connection, Professor Holdsworth "But, like many other parts of the law and Constitution of England, these are survivals of an older order, from which all real meaning has departed with the abandonment of that mediaeval theory of the relationship of Church to State, to which they owed their origin" (Holdsworth, vol. 8, p. 403).

And so we arrive at Professor Laski "The core of the British Constitution is the supremacy of Parliament." King, Church and Commons have all gone, although their ghosts remain, and we have monocratic government by what Mr. Laski quite incorrectly calls "a Committee of the Legislature."

The nature and gravity of the situation with which we are confronted will be almost wholly missed if we do not give full recognition to the essential falsity of our current institutions. The average U.S. citizen cannot be persuaded

that England is not a mediaeval feudalism because we still retain the titles of King, Lords and Commons, and the Horse Guards, to his great delight, still wear armour. If he could understand it, he would be astounded to learn that it is exactly because this country ceased to be a feudalism more than four hundred years ago that the American Colonists revolted against the British Parliament. For convenience, perhaps I may repeat here the quotation from "Origins of the American Revolution" John C. Miller, p. 216: "In rejecting natural law, Englishmen" (*i.e.*, the post-Reformation Englishman) "also denied the colonists' contention that there were metes and bounds to the authority of Parliament. The authority of Parliament was, in their opinion, unlimited; the supremacy of Parliament had come to mean to Englishmen an uncontrolled and uncontrollable authority. Indeed the Divine right of Kings had been succeeded by the Divine Right of Parliament . . ." This unlimited and undivided supremacy is expressly excluded from the United States Constitution.

The Colonists were in fact contending for one of the fundamentals of feudalism, which, as Professor Holdsworth points out, "has departed with the abandonment of that mediaeval theory of the relationship of Church and State to which they owed their origin."

If there is one thing more than another which history teaches, it is that Governmental systems do not change human nature, but they can, and do foster various aspects of it. Mediaeval systems may not have eliminated robbery and oppression; but it is certain that they did not legalise it. Had a fourteenth century English King seized land as our contemporary Government seizes land through Agricultural Committees, and otherwise, on any flimsy pretext, or extorted taxes without representation (our contemporary Parliament is neither representative nor possessed of authority), the country would have been aflame with revolution in much less time than the American Colonists required to organise their resistance.

Now, it is obvious that while the authority of "Parliament" (really, the Cabinet) may in one sense, as the mid-Victorian Liberal, Lord Courtney of Penwith, proclaimed it to be, "absolutely unqualified, embodying the supreme will of the State" to which "every partial authority must yield" (*Working Constitution of the United Kingdom*, 1901), it should be recognised just what that means. For all practical purposes, a man has "unqualified supremacy" to jump off Beachy Head; but he cannot avoid the consequences. A Cabinet can pass laws confiscating, under the name of taxation, the work of that man's lifetime or the land his family has dignified for centuries; but it cannot avoid the consequences. The crucial issue is, what will those consequences be? Or to put the matter slightly otherwise, is there a moral "law" connecting political transgression with national punishment? Contemporary Governments clearly think that there is not; that they are free to legislate in a moral vacuum.

Can anyone point to a pronouncement of the Church of England, as such, which contests that idea? Assuming that so-called nationalisation of this or that has any virtues, which is far from self-evident, has the Church ever criticised the methods by which it has been achieved?

(To be continued).

PARLIAMENT

House of Lords: Tuesday, October 21, 1947.

Address in reply to

His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech

The King's Speech reported by the Lord Chancellor.

Lord Dukeston: My Lords, I beg to move . . . We are little more than two years beyond the end of the war. We have talked a great deal about planning. The impression created on my mind has been that planning at the highest possible level has been considered and proceeded with but does not appear to have percolated down to the levels working it out in practice where alone that planning can become effective. I believe what is needed in this country at the present moment is that everyone should play his part in arousing the nation to a greater effort and the will to expand production. I find it a little difficult to believe that it is impossible to bridge that gap by methods of production and that we must resort, as I have heard suggested in certain quarters, to the imposition of further restraints and economies in our already low standard of life by withdrawing subsidies in some such way. I believe that is a profound mistake. I cannot accept the view that it is impossible to secure the 8 to 10 *per cent.* overall increase of production to bridge the adverse balance, which is the greatest task before the country at the present moment.

We have heard a lot about rising spirals, wages chasing prices, and so on. My fear is lest we should get into a descending spiral and should apply economies in a way that would tend to destroy the will to greater effort in the field of production. I care not how well the plans may be drawn at the top, but if we go into this matter half-heartedly we shall not succeed. Everyone engaged in industry must face this crisis with a realization that, just as in the war we fought to protect life and poverty, to-day we are fighting to restore the economy of our country and to retain our place in the world as one of the leading industrial nations. That, to me, is the problem of statesmanship; it is the problem of leadership, and particularly of leadership in industry. No matter how cleverly we may draft our measures, Acts of Parliament do not dig coal or puddle iron or build houses. The will has got to be created at the lowest possible level, otherwise I fear that in the obligation which now confronts us there will be a tendency to effect the balance of our overseas payments by making inroads in directions which are likely to prove a deterrent to greater productivity.

I have heard it said that in this attempt to increase exports, we might have to consider even the export of capital plant and equipment. I hope that will be approached with the greatest possible caution. We may get through this crisis, this monetary crisis, or dollar crisis, by all kinds of economies, and we may under the great pressure now placed upon us to accomplish that objective so affect our capital plant and equipment that when we do emerge we may find ourselves in a competitive world where we are very seriously handicapped in the fight to maintain our status as a great industrial

nation. Therefore I place the greatest possible emphasis upon securing these plans by placing squarely on the shoulders of industry the obligation to give effect to them and by creating the opinion throughout industry that these plans are not to be taken merely as orders, merely as something to be fulfilled and then to await further instructions. Industry cannot be run that way. Let us tell industry what we expect and then seek to establish that form of co-operation, leaving industry to exercise its initiative and will. Providing industry conforms to overall planning, the less interference there is from outside the better the possibility of results.

[Neither Lord Dukeston nor Lord Quibell, who seconded, mentioned the proposal to amend the Parliament Act—Editor, T.S.C.]

The Marquess of Salisbury: . . . I hope noble Lords will forgive me if I detain them for rather longer than I usually do. But the canvas is a rather large one and there is a great deal to be said, especially on this particular occasion. . . . It is now just over two years since the present Government came into power. At that time, your Lordships will remember—and it is not unnatural—a note of great optimism was sounded by the spokesmen of the Labour Party. Not only was the war over, but, for the first time in British history, a Socialist Government had been returned to power by a great majority. Things had been said at the General Election which must, I am afraid, make rather painful reading to noble Lords opposite, if they can steel their courage to face the past.

I would like to give one or two quotations, because we are bound to forget these things. There was a speech by Mr. Greenwood, whom we had hoped to see in this House: unfortunately, that has been postponed, although I hope we shall one day see him with us. He said at that time:

"You want a home. Tories are making promises. Labour will do the job. It did it in the past."

Then there is Sir Stafford Cripps, who now occupies almost the most important position in the Government. He said:

"Nationalization after the war will ensure that goods are available at 'decent prices' for everybody."

He also said on another occasion:

"The Labour Party does not propose to infringe on liberties for which we have been fighting for the last fifty years."

The mover and the seconder of the Address were discreetly silent on all these questions: but, in fact, where are those homes, and where are those goods and where are those liberties? . . .

I know that we shall be told by Government spokesmen that this is not all their fault, that it is the result of world conditions; and of course there is a very great measure of truth in this. The world is undoubtedly out of joint. The elaborate machinery for the exchange of goods has been thrown completely out of gear by the shocks of war. I do not want to argue unfairly in that respect. Any Government that had been in power during this period, I do not care of what Party, would have had a difficult and delicate task in redressing the balance. But surely that is all the more reason for not causing further dislocation by gratuitous experiments in the domestic field. No one could have expected this Government to abandon their Socialist principles. No one expected it or desired them to do so if they sincerely held those principles. But surely the only wise course would have been to exercise some discretion in applying them. That, as your Lordships know, was the course that was adopted by the

Socialist Government in Belgium; and Belgium to-day, after four years of enemy occupation, is in a far happier situation now and is—at least this is what people who have been there tell me—rapidly approaching normal. That was the course adopted by Holland and other Western European countries. Any visitor to those countries, certainly any visitor to Holland and Belgium—that is anyone that can get permission to visit them and the means to do so, which is not quite so easy at the present time—will tell you that the spirit in those countries is entirely different from what it is in this country. . . .

. . . in many ways—with one rather startling exception, to which I intend to advert in a few minutes—I do not think that the gracious Speech this year is nearly so harmful as its predecessors during the two previous years. For one thing, there is not the same tumultuous spate of legislation and the legislation mentioned is not quite so far-reaching. For instance, I notice that the iron and steel industry is not to be nationalized this year, as had been foreshadowed in some quarters. I do not want to sound a pæan of triumph over this. I recognize that praise by the Opposition is not an unmixed blessing for any Government and if, for once, they have done the right thing I do not want unnecessarily to embarrass them. Moreover I quite appreciate that if they have decided to postpone this—we have it on the authority of the Minister of Health that it is only postponed—it is not because they are weakening in their enthusiasm for Socialism. I wish I could believe that. It is only because iron and steel is the most delicate of all industries. . . .

Finally, I come to the most interesting and in many ways the most surprising item in the gracious Speech—the proposal to amend the Parliament Act of 1911. That rather cryptic phrase presumably relates to the powers of your Lordships' House, not to the membership of your Lordships' House, for it is with powers that the Parliament Act was alone concerned. It may, of course, mean that the Government have decided to increase the powers of your Lordships. But that, I fear is improbable. We must therefore assume that it is the aim of the Government further to reduce them. It will be difficult for the ordinary man, now known as the common man, to understand why this proposal is being put forward exactly at this juncture. Our country, as we all know, is on the brink of an acute economic crisis which must involve, if means are not found of meeting it, a catastrophic fall in the standard of living of every man and woman in it. One would have thought that any responsible Government would devote the whole time of Parliament to measures for meeting that perilous situation. As I have tried to explain earlier, the main charge against them already is that they have diverted the attention of Parliament from the immediate needs of the country to ideological experiments in State ownership which could not possibly ameliorate the position and might easily make the general economic situation worse. But, at any rate, now that the crisis is definitely on us, it might have been expected that extraneous matters would have been excluded from the programme.

To choose this moment to introduce an extremely contentious measure, with no possible bearing on our present necessities, is surely the counsel of madness. It is not as if your Lordships' House by obstructive action has opposed, or even delayed, any measure which the Government have thought fit to bring in. We have passed all those on which the Government obtained a mandate at the General Election, although often we disliked them very much. It is true that we have found it necessary in a number of cases to introduce

Amendments, to improve Bills and to make them more workable. But, after all, that is our function; that is our constitutional duty; and, if I may say so without blowing our own trumpet too much, I think we have performed it with skill and moderation. We have, at any rate, received the thanks of the Ministers concerned. When only a few weeks ago, just before Parliament rose for the Summer Recess, the Government asked for new and very far-reaching powers to deal with the economic position, your Lordships will remember that this House gave them those powers without Amendment and without limitation.

What then is the reason (I would ask this of the noble and learned Viscount, the Lord Chancellor, and any other spokesman who is going to reply for the Government) for suddenly coming forward with these proposals, which are quite unnecessary, and which are liable to lead to a bitter constitutional struggle at the very moment when the Government themselves say national unity was never more necessary? I am going to hazard a guess. The only conclusion that I can come to is that it is the result of a rather shabby, shady, political deal. It is an open secret that there have been differences in the Cabinet on the question of the nationalization of iron and steel between some older and more statesmanlike members of the Government and a group of rather younger and more irresponsible Ministers. It seems that on this particular issue the older and more statesmanlike gained the day. But they had to give their pound of flesh, and the pound of flesh which the irresponsibles demanded was a further reduction in the powers of the Second Chamber. I believe that is the explanation, and it is for that reason that the present proposal is put forward. It is, if I may say so, a pretty disreputable procedure. That the whole of the proud and ancient fabric of this House should be cut about to consummate a dingy political deal is not something of which any member of the Labour Party can be very proud.

The excuse which has apparently been put forward in the Socialist Press (which I read on Sunday to my usual advantage) was that a mandate was given by the Preamble of the Parliament Act of 1911. I have looked at the Preamble which, curiously enough, is numbered thirteen in the Public General Acts of that year. I find it reads as follows:

"And whereas it is intended to substitute for the House of Lords as it at present exists a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of hereditary basis, but such substitution cannot be immediately brought into operation:

And whereas provision will require hereafter to be made by Parliament, in a measure effecting such substitution for limiting and defining the powers of the new Second Chamber, but it is expedient to make such provision as in this Act appears for restricting the existing powers of the House of Lords:"

and so on. Your Lordships and the country will note that the purpose at that time (and this can be confirmed, I think, by the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, who was then a member of the Government, or by the noble Viscount, Lord Simon, who was his colleague at that time) was to create a Chamber on a popular and not a hereditary basis, and any provision to alter the powers of the Second Chamber was linked to that proposal and dependent on it.

Moreover, I think it is clear that the Preamble conferred of itself no mandate further to reduce the powers of the Second Chamber. The words used are "limit and define", which is an entirely different thing. It is evident that the power of any new Chamber could not be limitless or un-

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Saturday, November 1, 1947.

From Week to Week

A correspondent has sent us the *Washington Times-Herald* which is humourously described by itself as "Washington's *Independent Newspaper*." (Emphasis is the *Times-Herald's*).

Its independence is strikingly exemplified by the issue's leading article which is propaganda for Gold Finance. "The only thing wrong with gold is not to have it. We have it. Let's hold what we have, work for more, and try better to appreciate [*sic*] gold's value to us all."

But the bit we like best is: "Citizens, your old Uncle has been plenty stupid at times, but not about gold. Not yet, anyhow. That buried gold won World War II."

How true that is. If you lost a son in the war, or your house was destroyed by bombs, and you see little ahead of you beyond austerity and Shinwell's tinker's cusses, you may have imagined that you made some small contribution. But you are wrong, and it's easy to prove it. The Land of Buried Gold, whose chief inhabitants just murmured "tck, tch, Britain sure is taking a whale of a licking" while they sorted over our assets, won not merely the war, but the peace, because the two main objects of the war were to destroy the British Empire and to re-establish Gold and shift the centre of world Finance permanently to New York. All the present evidence goes to prove the complete attainment of both these objectives. The *Times-Herald* is too modest. There have been four great wars in this century, so far; and Gold has won them all.

One of the first steps which ought to be taken by the Conservative Party is to repudiate the statement constantly made by such people as the Communist M.P., Mr. Gallagher, that the Government of the 1930's was a "Tory" Government. Apart from the fact that it was a so-called National Government, the Cabinet, the effective governing body, was as blatantly controlled by P.E.P. and the New Fabians as is the present Cabal. While, as might be expected, Mr. Gallagher's gibe at the Constitutional Crisis which marked the culmination of Mr. Baldwin's tragic tenure of Office was, as pointed out by Mr. McGovern, in the worst possible taste, it was not inapposite.

If the institution of Royalty, like the House of Lords, is to be the plaything of the Cabinet, with or without what the real rulers are pleased to call a mandate, it clearly becomes a façade for a "constitution" which is something quite other than that which the public thinks it is. Concealed power, and particularly political power, is power without responsibility and is *always* corrupt. To pass this justified attack to the

"Tories" is just that peculiar negation of truth—that abandonment, and even dislike of a consistent relationship between words and things—which seems to be inherent in Communism.

But it is the business of the "Tories" to expose it. If, for instance, they are willing to accept the ideas of Mr. Harold Macmillan as Toryism, they cannot complain that their tremendous potential backing is sullenly inactive.

• • •

The set of ideas which became the movement known as Social Credit, began with an examination of the problem of the relationship of the individual to the group, and the financial proposals which emerged were consciously, and in all their developments, designed to free the individual from group domination. It is evident that the essential nature of the problem, not merely has not changed, but has become more sharply defined.

It was, early in the elaboration of the ideas, recognised that the group is essentially atavistic; it is something from which the individual has emerged, and his return to it is in the nature of spiritual death. Without, in this place, elaborating the connection between the anti-religious aspect of Communism, the soullessness of mass production, and the incompatibility of cartelism and Trades Unionism with peace, it may be emphasised that there is a connection between all of them, and it is epitomised in that amazing reply: "Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and unto God that which is God's." Cæsar is, of course, functionalism, and if functionalism can be made paramount, if the Will can be paralysed by the Arm, if the Good which I Will I do not can be made uniform by the omnipotence of the atavistic Group over the emergent individual, then indeed the Devil is triumphant.

History

"History is the record of Man's choices." —*The Very Rev. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., Forwood Lecturer, 1947, in the Philosophy of Religion, University of Liverpool.*

Why not compromise on H₂O and be matey?

A correspondent sends us, from a forgotten source:—
 "He brought them a map representing the sea,
 "Without the least vestige of land;
 "And the crew were all glad when they found it to be
 "A map they could all understand.
 "What's the use of Mercators, North Pole and
 Equators,
 "Tropics, zones and meridian lines?"
 "So the captain would cry and the men would reply,
 "They are only conventional signs."

"Towards the Second Expulsion"

Our correspondent, W. L. Richardson, desires to draw attention to the omission of the words "every month" from his paragraph beginning "In the first Palestine Debate" (page 3, *T.S.C.*, October 18). The sense is: "informed the House . . . that 1,500 Jews had entered Palestine *every month* since the matter had been under consideration by U.N.O."

The Free Expression of Opinion

What follows touches two separate but related issues, that of ballot-box democracy and the special application bound up with the resistance of the Medical profession to state control, which is finding not unexpected but belated favour in Australia; but it also touches these two issues in relation to the question, recently raised prominently in this paper, of the press. An article was submitted, in the form of an article, to the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, and printed therein on September 23 as a letter, certain excisions being made. The *Australian Social Crediter* has now reprinted (October 11) the whole, with the excised portions in italics, as follows:—

Democracy and the Half-wits

A correspondent, Mr. G. Grace, wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* recently and said: "The half-wits who comprise the majority of our population have not even an elementary knowledge of finance. To suggest that they be asked to vote on the issue is laughable."

This succinct statement epitomises the problem of contemporary democracy, and is well worth further examination.

It is probably not true that the majority of the population consists of half-wits. On the other hand, statistical and other investigations have established the fact that the general level of intelligence is declining, and that it is lowest in that part of the population with the largest birthrate, so that, if this trend continues, sooner or later Mr. Grace's suggestion will be true.

The great problem is, therefore, what is the foundation of the right, claimed under the name of "democracy," of a majority of declining intelligence to over-ride the claims of a minority?

But in point of fact, this claim is not made by "the majority"; it is made by another minority, the minority called "the government", which includes not only the elected politicians but also and increasingly the policy-making part of the bureaucracy.

It is important to understand the structure of this minority. The government is an organisation, in just the same sense as a business is an organisation and that organisation has a structure of which elected politicians form only a part.

All organisations as such have definite policies; and the larger the organisation the more fixed the policy, and the more difficult to change it.

The government-organisation may be likened to a train, except that it is a train which never stops. When an election is held, and the titular government is changed, it is like a number of people boarding the moving train—they are immediately carried along in the direction in which the train is travelling.

Now the direction in which the government-train is travelling—its inherent policy—is largely government—as such. The business of a government is to govern. The main pre-occupation of the officials is to facilitate that business, and that pre-occupation takes the form of endeavouring to get everything under their direct control. One of the things to be got under control is the majority of declining intelligence.

This concentration of control is the familiar business development of monopoly. It has proceeded over many years, irrespective of changes of government. And it is possible, of course, because it claims the sanction of the will of the majority.

Now it is undoubtedly true not only that the majority lacks a knowledge of the problems of finance, but that it is ignorant on practically all the technical problems with which the government has to deal. *It is also undoubtedly true that this fact is thoroughly appreciated by the government.*

The will of the majority is not only valueless, but essentially inexpressible on technical problems, financial or other.

What then, is the connection between the majority on the one hand and the government on the other? The idea of democracy requires that there should be some connection.

The best example of practical democracy is afforded by an efficient (probably competitive) firm, and its customers. Here, the firm corresponds to the government, and the customers to the people.

The business of the firm is to deliver to the customers the goods and services required by the customers—as decided by the customers, not by the firm.

The right, and the power, held by the majority, even if half-witted, is to put the firm out of business if it does not produce the goods and services required.

In terms of political democracy, this means that the majority, even if half-witted should have the right and the means to put the government out of business if it does not produce the results required—as decided by the majority, not by the government.

That is to say, democracy is concerned with results, not with technical problems.

The solution of the difficulties implied in this conception would probably be automatic if it were feasible to have at least two contemporary competitive governments. But, of course, it is not; so the ultimate problem of political democracy is to find an equivalent of a competitive system of government.

The Party System is a partial solution: in theory it is satisfactory, but in practice it is not, partly for the reasons examined previously, and partly because the majority does not possess a sufficiently flexible mechanism to enforce its will as to results.

Now the mechanism possessed by the customers of a business firm to impress their will on that firm is the provision of the money required for the firm's activities. The political equivalent of money is votes. The problem to be solved is to make votes as effective in their sphere as money in its sphere.

The first requirement is to attach responsibility to the use of the individual vote—just as the man who spends his pound on a worthless article loses his money. That means that the man who votes for a "dud" government should bear the loss incurred by its activity. *This of course means that the secret ballot must be replaced by an open, recorded, and published vote.*

Then, in place of a vague "platform" capable of bearing any interpretation subsequently, each Party should put forward an outline of actual legislative proposals, showing what they would cost, and the benefits to be expected from them, and the individuals and interests which would be effected by them.

Next, the cost of Legislation by the successful Party, together with the proved loss to any individual who did not vote for that Party, should be borne solely by those who had recorded votes for that Party; but any reduction of taxation

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PARLIAMENT—continued from page 3.

defined. But what are to be those limits? There is no word of this in the Preamble. In any case, how can the Government claim, as a mandate, the Preamble of a Bill which was passed thirty-six years ago by a Government and Parliament of an entirely different character and complexion, and under entirely different circumstances? Or if, as I see the *Daily Herald* said this morning, the Government claim that a mandate is to be found in their Election programme, that is equally untrue, so far as I can see, if they will allow me to say so. There is only one sentence in this Election manifesto *Let us Face the Future* which deals with the House of Lords at all. This is what it says:

"We give clear notice that we will not tolerate obstruction of the people's will by the House of Lords."

As I have explained earlier, there has in fact been no obstruction of the people's will by your Lordships' House. I challenge the Lord Chancellor to produce one single example of our having obstructed the policy of the Government.

This is borne out by a very generous remark made by the acting Leader of the House, the noble Viscount, Lord Hall, on September 9 last. In the speech which he made on that occasion the noble Viscount said:

"I freely and gladly acknowledge, not only on my own behalf, but on behalf of His Majesty's Government, that noble Lords opposite have hitherto used their majority here in a moderate and statesmanlike way, and in a manner which has given us on this side of the House no real or reasonable ground for complaint."

In reference to the word "hitherto", which no doubt the noble and learned Viscount, the Lord Chancellor, will take up, the noble Viscount, Lord Hall, went on to urge your Lordships not to press the Motion on the economic situation which had been put on the Paper. We did not press it; we withdrew it at once without any debate. That seems to demolish entirely the very specious argument which was put forward in the *Daily Herald*, and may be put forward in other quarters.

Let me quite unequivocally state that, in our view, the Government have no mandate for constitutional reform. It is clearly a matter for further reference to the electorate, and we are quite prepared to take the view of the electorate on it. If the proposition of the Government were merely that the membership of your Lordships' House should be reformed, I believe there to be very considerable sympathy with that view in the ranks of your Lordships. It is an illusion of supporters of the Government that Peers are hanging on desperately to their rights and privileges. There is no foundation at all for any such suggestion. The question of the reform of the membership of this House has been frequently discussed during the years before the war, and I can say—and I think the Lord Chancellor himself knows this—that such Conservative leaders as my father, who was a Leader of the House for many years, was always in favour of bringing new elements into this House and seeing a reform of the membership: and that, I think, would apply to the very great majority of the Conservative Peers on this side of the House. In any case, the position of present members of your Lordships' House is not an unmixed blessing; and this is a thing which should be said. They have to work very long hours, often at the expense of their own private duties. Moreover, we may proudly say that we are the only section of the community to-day who are not actuated by the profit motive. I should have thought that that ought to have

endeared us to the Government.

My Lords, a sensible, practical scheme of reform of the membership of this House would, I believe, be welcomed by noble Lords in all parts of the House. But a mere reduction of powers—that is quite a different thing. Were the period of the veto to be further reduced—I do not know if that is the proposal, but that is what it looks likely to be—that would mean in effect the introduction into this country of single-chamber government, with all the dangers involved. It is no good your Lordships or the country blinking this fact. It would remove the last protection of the British people against extreme action by a Government with a temporary majority. I am not throwing stones at the present Government. But we may have other Governments in the future, and that is the danger to which it lays the people of this country open. To single-chamber government I believe the vast majority of the British people are unalterably opposed. Yet no doubt that is exactly what men like the present Minister of Health want. He is quite ready—and I understand his point of view entirely—to postpone temporarily the nationalization of the iron and steel industry. If he can make the Second Chamber impotent, the way is open to nationalize iron or steel or take any more extreme measures he wants at any time he wants to take them. The next step of him and his friends will be to get rid of their present leaders and assume power themselves. I cannot understand why moderate men like those who occupy the Government Front Bench in your Lordships' House have agreed to this proposal. I should have thought they would have far sooner have resigned. It is not a question of the prestige or authority of your Lordships' House which is at stake; it is a question of the welfare of the whole of these islands.

And what about the noble Viscount, the Leader of the House? He has been absent through all these vital discussions. He is still away from this country, and yet he is vitally concerned. Has he been consulted and has he agreed to this very important amendment of the Constitution? We have not yet seen the Bill. When it reaches your Lordships' House we shall, as always, consider it objectively. We do not want to pre-judge the issue; we want to see in black and white what the Government intend. But we shall not be deterred from doing what we conceive to be our duty by any threats, however horrific, or by any soap-box sneers by the Minister of Health or anybody else. I can only say that I bitterly regret—as I think we all do on this side of the House—that the Government have introduced this new element of discord at this particular juncture. I believe that history will find it hard to forgive them. . . .

Viscount Samuel: . . . almost everyone agrees that the right of hereditary succession which now constitutes the title of the great majority of the Members of your Lordships' House to a seat in this Chamber is, in itself alone, very difficult to defend, and there would be a very general desire for a reform. Unfortunately, there has never been, and I think there is not now, any wide measure of agreement as to what shape that reform should take.

Mr. Asquith said, in 1911, that this question of substituting for the House of Lords as it was a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of a hereditary basis was a matter that brooked no delay. Thirty-six years have gone by since then and there has been a good deal of "brooking" but there is still no agreement. From indications that have been given from quarters which have proved in this matter to

be accurate so far, we may be allowed to suppose that it is not the constitution of this House (about which there is general agreement that reform should be undertaken at some time that is suitable and expedient) that is engaging the attention of the Government, but rather, Section 2 of the Parliament Act. . . . The principle of the Bill had been the subject of two General Elections specifically fought upon that issue, each of them returning a majority to the House of Commons of over 100 in favour of the policy in the Bill—the passage of which would have been assured, if necessary, as your Lordships know, by the creation of Peers sufficient in number to ensure a majority here if this House had rejected it. The assent of the Crown to such creation was only given, of course, after the nation had expressed its clear opinion on those two occasions. Any attempt to amend that section could not be expected to be accepted without some similar authority to that on which the original section was based, unless it were of such a completely unobjectionable character that it would not cause serious constitutional difficulty.

The noble Marquess, Lord Salisbury, has given a reason which may perhaps have animated the Cabinet in inserting this paragraph in the King's Speech. I suggest that the postponement of the iron and steel nationalization Bill is to be countered by the advancing of the question of the House of Lords in order to satisfy at the same time two groups in the Cabinet holding different views. Maybe that is so; I have no notion whether that may be the reason or not. But for my own part—also without any foundation or any private information—I seem to detect the first faint whiff of the atmosphere of the next General Election. . . .

Mr. Winston Churchill in a recent speech referred to the swollen majority of the Government in the House of Commons which was installed in office on an electoral system which to-day (these are his words) "is largely obsolete." If the Conservative Party regard this system as largely obsolete, then what measures are they proposing to take to bring it up to date? . . .

Viscount Simon: . . . This Bill—we know nothing more about it at present and I hope the Lord Chancellor may lift a little of the curtain in his speech which follows mine—has nothing to do with the composition of the House of Lords at all. It has to do with its powers. I take the view myself—and I think it is a view taken by many people interested in constitutional development—that the people of this country respect an institution because of the way in which that institution serves it. They do not qualify their respect because it may contain elements which in a theoretical sense are out of the spirit of the times. . . .

House of Commons: Tuesday, October 21, 1947.

Debate on the Address

The Prime Minister [Mr. Attlee]: . . . The other Bill to which he referred was the Parliament Bill. I think a great deal of time has passed since the Parliament Act of 1911 and it is quite well worth while looking again at that Bill. It would be improper for me to state the exact proposals we intend to bring forward, but the intention is to reduce from two years to one year the period of delay which the other place can now impose. I freely admit . . . that up to the present the leadership in the other House has been both wise and statesmanlike. Legislation has been passed which un-

doubtedly has been distasteful to the majority of that House, but I am bound to have it in mind that under the Parliament Act the first three years of a Parliament's life operate so that Bills can be put through if rejected under the Parliament Act, but after the Government's life has run for a certain time, then that axe begins to hang over the head of any Government. I think it is wise to deal with this matter in time, and before any serious matter has arisen, in order to lessen the danger which might arise should leadership in the other place pass into less responsible hands. We must remember that there is always that great number of noble Lords who do not attend, but they might attend. The right hon. Gentleman said, "Why do it now? You have no quarrel." But it is much better to avoid a quarrel. Why wait to get a fire extinguisher until a fire has actually broken out? It is better to provide yourself with a fire extinguisher at once. . . .

I will quote from an admirable speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) on the First Reading of the Parliament Act of 1911—

Mr. Churchill (Woodford): The Parliament Bill.

The Prime Minister: He was speaking on the Bill at the time:

"We believe that Governments are the guides as well as the servants of the nation. We believe that the people should choose their representatives, that they should come to a decision between men, party and policy, judging their character and judging the circumstances of the hour; that they should choose their representatives and then trust them and give them a fair chance within the limits of their commission for a period which should not be unreasonably prolonged; then these representatives should be summoned before their constituents, who should judge them in relation to all the circumstances proper to be considered, and in relation as well to the general effects of their policy, and should either confirm them in their places as representatives or choose other men to take their place.—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 22nd February, 1911; Vol. 21, c. 2035.]

These principles are, of course, applicable today. The right hon. Gentleman says that the people's representatives should be given a fair chance within the limits of their commission for a period which should not be unduly prolonged, and the Parliament Act defined five years as that reasonable period. But I could never see why a Conservative Government should be given five years, and a Liberal, or Labour, Government only three years. The Parliament Act of 1911 was a very moderate measure. Here again, I would quote the right hon. Gentleman, this time from the Third Reading of the Parliament Bill:

"And when we remember that these powers, so far as this Bill is concerned, will remain and be exercised by hereditary Lords

Glasgow (Southern) D.S.C. Society.

A PUBLIC MEETING

will be held in

**R.I. ROOMS, 200, BUCHANAN STREET, on
Wednesday, November 5, 1947, at 8-0 p.m.**

Speaker: CARL D. PLUMACHER, Esq.

Subject: Social Credit—The Policy, of a Philosophy.

ALL INTERESTED INVITED TO ATTEND.

who are responsible to no constituency, will be exercised by them, although they nearly all belong to the Conservative Party, will remain to be exercised by them after all the democratic victories of the last six years, I confess so far from feeling myself as participating in a revolution, I stand here not merely astonished at our moderation, but upon occasion I am almost aghast."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 15th May, 1911; Vol. 25, c. 1771].

After the victories we had, this is a very moderate curbing of the powers of another place. There was also a note of warning:

"The powers retained by the House of Lords under the Parliament Bill will not merely be effectual, but, as I think has been borne in upon us every day we have discussed this matter, they will be formidable and even menacing."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 15th May, 1911; Vol. 25, c. 1770.]

It so happened that for 34 years prior to the advent of this Government, except for two brief periods of minority Labour Governments, the Conservative Party have had effective power in both Houses; therefore, the issue never arose. But this is a wise precautionary measure—

Mr. Churchill: A deliberate act of social aggression.

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman must be in a reminiscent mood. He is thinking of the things said to him when he stood at this Box in 1911. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington pointed out that in fact the noble Lords in another place exercise their power with great wisdom and moderation. If, as I hope, the Members of another place are not inclined ever again to exercise those menacing powers in order to render nugatory the decisions of the elected Chamber, then our proposals will do them no harm, but we should be taking away a weapon they have no intention of using. If, on the other hand, they still have the intention to re-assert those powers, which of late have fallen into desuetude, then this Bill will be both effective and timely. At the General Election, we laid perfectly clearly before the electorate that we would not allow the will of the electorate to be thwarted by another place, and I think there is ample justification there for taking precautions and not waiting until the trouble has actually arisen, and not waiting in fact until the trouble might have passed out of hand through the effluxion of time. . . .

"The Free Expression of Opinion"—continued from page 5.

directly attributable to specific legislation to be shared as to 25 per cent. by recorded supporters of the unsuccessful Parties, and 75 per cent. by the supporters of the successful Party while it remained in power, but afterwards the gains to be equalised.

As a demonstration, let us take the proposal to nationalise the banks.

Under the modification of the electoral system proposed, the government would be obliged to put forward its case—just as the Directors of a Company proposing to undertake new development have to put forward their case—showing the estimated expenditure, and the return, in either money or something as acceptable to an electorate, to be expected. *It is, in fact, very much the equivalent of an increase in the capitalisation of a Company.*

But under the existing system, the government claims the sanction of the majority (of declining intelligence) to interpret its mandate to suit its largely secret policies; and if taxation increases, and services diminish, well that's just too

bad, and there is nothing even to force a succeeding government to repair the damage.

In short, the vote, which costs nothing, is worth nothing, and the real problem of political reform is to give the vote a cost and a value. Then the witless and the wise may have their say under proper safeguards against the despoiling of minorities by a mis-informed mob.

The only valid objection to such a system would appear to be that the half-witted majority is not to be trusted to know what it wants. In that case, of course, the intelligent minority must give the majority what the minority thinks is good for it. That is the thesis of the Chifley-Evatt-Coombes-Mills-etc. set up; but it is not democracy. And merely substituting Menzies and Fadden for Chifley and Evatt will make no more difference to the policy of the firm than changing the display in one of the windows of a department store.

BRYAN W. MONAHAN.

The letter which follows was submitted to *The Daily Telegraph*, and, except for the paragraphs given in italics, was published on September 26:

Canberra, 23 September, 1947.

The Editor,
The Daily Telegraph,
Sydney, N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

The material you published as a letter from me under the heading "Doctor's Plan," in your issue of September 23, omits what I regard as the most important aspect of it. This, however, can be stated shortly, and I would greatly appreciate it if you can find space to allow me to express it.

The problem with which I attempted to deal was that of ensuring that the electors voted on results required as distinct from technical problems, and that they possessed an effective mechanism to hold politicians to the results for which they voted.

The "plan" is that the individual voter should be held responsible for his individual vote, implying the substitution of an openly recorded vote for the anonymous and irresponsible vote; and that those who voted for a Party which did not fulfil its promises as to results as specified in its pre-election programme should bear the losses incurred in its failure.

To effect this, the profits won by the successful implementation of a programme would be distributed chiefly to supporters of the successful Party while it remained in power, but afterwards would be equalised.

In a leading article you remark: "T.A.A. has only to ask for another advance from the Treasury."

Under the plan I have put forward, the Party responsible for inaugurating T.A.A. would have to pass losses incurred in its operation directly on to those who voted for that Party.

I have no doubt that this would rectify either the loss, or the policy, at the next election—if not sooner.

Yours, etc.,

BRYAN W. MONAHAN.