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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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The Case Against the "Conservative" Party

The following valuable letter from an elector to a Member of Parliament has reached us and we publish it, while with-holding the names of the Member and his constituency, because it is so admirable a summary of the case which the Conservative Party has to answer:—

"Dear Sir,

"I have been trying to find some indication in your policy that the Conservative Party means to alter the financial dictatorship under which we serve and from which has sprung Socialism, and having read 'The Right Road for Britain,' I have come to the conclusion that you have no intention of doing this.

"As an anti-Socialist I very much regret I am unable to support the Conservative Party with its present Socialistic tendencies and I offer a few reasons:—

1. **EDUCATION ACT:** State control of education originated by the Conservative M.P. Mr. Butler. In his constituency the education authorities ordered the village school at Lindsell to be closed and the very small children transferred by bus some miles away to Stebbing. It is also noticed that when a deputy for the opposing parents asked about their rights he was told emphatically that they had no rights.
2. **MARKETING BOARDS:** State control of Agriculture. As a sample I still remember when a Conservative Coalition Government fined Farmers £5 per acre for growing too many potatoes.
3. **NATIONAL INSURANCE:** Compulsion, without allowing the individual the right to contract out. State control of the Medical Profession.
4. **LEGAL AID BILL:** State control of the Legal profession founded on the Labour booklet *Soviet Justice*. I understand the Conservative Party intends to support this Bill.
5. **NATIONAL DEFENCE:** Belief that the only way to secure peace is to prepare for war without attempting to remove the cause of war. The ulterior motive of National Defence is planning. It is remembered that in their journal "Planning" on October 4, 1938, the Council for Political and Economic Planning stated 'We have proceeded on the assumption that only in war or under threat of war will a British Government embark on large-scale planning.' Conservatives would do well to know their enemy.
6. **COMPULSORY VOTING:** During the debate on the Representation of the People Bill, Mr. Churchill was reported by the Daily Telegraph on June 24 to have expressed the personal opinion that electors who did not vote should be fined. This is an attack on the freedom of the individual and echoes Nazi and Communist dictatorships.

7. **MISUSE OF THE NAME 'TORY':** When the Bank of England was formed the two political parties were 'Tory' and 'Whig.' The Tory party was opposed to the Bank of England having the monopoly of creating money on the Nation's credit, but was defeated. Since this defeat all political parties have been 'Whig' in policy, and as a result, the Nation has suffered increasing debt and taxation. I still look forward to the day when Conservatives will be 'Tories.'

8. **THE SECRET BALLOT:** There is a general incorrect opinion that the Secret Ballot is the essence of Democracy and yet an open vote is always recorded in the House on the occasion of a Division.

Anything secret cannot be free. Freedom and Democracy is not possible unless the elector accepts responsibility for his free open and recorded vote, and in consequence bears the major cost of legislation passed by the successful party which he may have supported.

Treason can be secret where betrayers hide under a secret ballot—this was clearly portrayed in an editorial in *The Daily Graphic* on March 4 entitled 'The Secret Traitors.'

"Never in history has a political party had such an opportunity to save Britain and her Empire from a diabolical international power (of which Socialists and Communists are merely fighting forces) than the Conservative Party to-day and nothing would please me more than to give my utmost support to the Conservatives if they recognised their real enemy.

"Yours faithfully, _____"

Nehru's Visit to U.S.A.

The visit of Premier Nehru has inspired much amused interest among Capital observers. . . . it soon developed that Nehru was not here to court, but to be courted; that he would not plead for financial help, although he would not refuse it if proffered on his terms. His statements since arrival have hardly been those of a national leader terrorized by Communism and rushing for American assistance. He said that his Government would not take sides in the cold war and he loftily deplored the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nor were there any tributes to the achievements of the American free enterprise system; one international journalist sought to educate his colleagues by describing Nehru as a sort of Indian Harold Laski.

Future historians who will marvel at the spectacle of a great nation giving away its substance will undoubtedly be fascinated by the phenomenon of the Nehru visit. They will find it an interesting example of how the U.S. tries to "sell" a foreign leader on the necessity of receiving a generous fraction of that substance. The school of thought which advocates "give away" has had its eye on the sub-continent in Asia as a possible dumping place for American surplus goods. They have gazed lovingly at the enormous sterling balance to the Indian account, which has proved a drain on British economy.—F. C. Hanighen in *Not Merely Gossip*.

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: October 26, 1949.

Economic Situation (Government Proposals)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Cripps):
I beg to move,

"That this House approves the lines of action to deal with the present economic difficulties as outlined in the Prime Minister's statement made on 24th October." . . .

Mr. Frank Byers (Dorset, Northern): . . . I turn now to Defence. In 1947, I warned the Government, as did my colleagues, that they must put our Defence Forces on an efficient footing. We have waited until 1949 to do it. At the time the first Act ran out, the Government were saved by the Conservative Party. There was a conspiracy between the two Front Benches. [*Interruption.*] The hon. Gentleman must not rush to the support of the Conservative Party like that.

Mr. Alpass: We should like a nicer word.

Mr. Byers: There was a conspiracy between the two Front Benches, and there is a conspiracy today. . . .

I say that we are forced into a position where we have to discuss Defence not on a basis of efficiency but in an economic Debate, and it is quite wrong that discussions on Defence should take place in this atmosphere of economy, because our fate and that of our allies in Western Union and elsewhere will be extremely difficult indeed. The reason is, they do not understand that in this country there can be a desire to have an efficient Army on the basis of something different from conscription. The French are wedded to conscription, and it may be right to France.

I want to see the whole question of our future Defence force discussed on the basis of efficiency and not of economy. Once it is discussed on the basis of efficiency it will be found that the saving is automatic, and extremely large indeed. [*HON. MEMBERS: "How?"*]. If the test is efficiency a great deal of the money spent on the Army today is being wasted. There are 400,000 men in the Army, more than half of them under 21, yet we cannot put into the field more than three efficient fighting divisions. We could put more than that into the field in 1938-39. Is that efficiency? Can anybody say that we are getting value for money? The reason for the ineffectiveness of our Forces is that more than one-third of our Regular Army is fully employed acting as nursemaids to over half the Army—to the conscripts.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr. James Callaghan): Shame!

Mr. Byers: It is a shame. It is a growing shame. It is a scandal. Over half the Army is either training or being trained.

Mr. Callaghan: Nonsense.

Mr. Byers: . . . What is the purpose of all this? The purpose of all this is to build up a fully trained reserve, yet over three million fully trained men have left the Army in the last four years. That is a bigger reserve than could be handled in the first 12 months of a war; they could not be dealt with. What is now wanted is a Regular volunteer force of 300,000. These men could be got if the pay and allowances were increased and if a proper status were given to Regular officers and men. That reduction of 100,000 men would not reduce the fighting strength of the force: it would

increase it, because at the moment 65,000 men are acting as trainers, instructors and administrators for the conscripts.

Mr. Callaghan: They are not nursemaids.

Mr. Byers: I am trying to put forward the principle of the thing. If that is the mentality of the hon. Gentleman, he has no right to have a Ministerial appointment. In fact, I am not sure whether he has.

This decrease in the Regular forces required for training would release those men to be effective fighting units in an efficient armed force. I believe that 30,000 men should be provided by our partners in the Commonwealth and the Dominions to help us with our overseas and Imperial garrisons. Why not? There would be an immediate increase in the fighting efficiency of the Armed Forces, and at the same time we could get rid of conscription. It cannot be done overnight, but at least the plans could now be made for moving out the conscripts and for building up the Regular Army from the present 184,000 to 300,000.

The cost of a National Service man is anything between £500 and £800 a year. There would thus be an immediate saving of £50-£80 million by cutting out the 100,000 National Service men. Some people, including those very high up in the Army, put the net saving of getting rid of conscription in the Army at £100-£110 million. That is in addition to the £30 million cut that has already been announced. A saving of £50-£80 million, with increased fighting strength—that is the point—seems to me to be a policy which the Government must adopt. From this figure must be deducted £20-£30 million for increased pay and allowances for the Regular element of the Armed Forces, giving 20-30 per cent. increase in pay—quite a lot—and the net saving might well be £50-£60 million. There is both efficiency and economy.

At the present time there are 400,000 men in the Army, more than half of them under 21 years of age. They are going through every 18 months, so that the Regular soldiers cannot get on with their own job of making themselves efficient for war. I believe that it is a scandal, and that the right hon. Member for Woodford must take his responsibility for the ineffectiveness of our Armed Forces at the present time. One healthy growl from the Front Opposition Bench at any time from 1947 onwards would have given us our Armed Forces on an efficient basis. It has not been forthcoming. I am sorry that a great man, who was so right from 1935 to 1939, should have become misinformed on this—because that is what I believe he is.

Let me now turn from Defence to increased production.

Mr. Daines (East Ham, North): Before leaving conscription, would the hon. Gentleman deal with this? He has mentioned Europe. Would he address himself to the question of what would be the effect on other nations of Western Union if this country were to abolish conscription recognising his own argument that they have conscription in those countries?

Mr. Byers: Let me put this to the hon. Gentleman. If he knew that our own system was totally inefficient and would prevent us from carrying out our obligations to our partners in Western Union, would he go on with it?

Mr. Daines: I do not accept that our present system is inefficient. I repeat: what would be the effect upon the other nations of Western Union, recognising that they are nations with conscription?

Mr. Byers: The hon. Gentleman has evaded my point. The French, the Belgians and others must be told that we

are overhauling our Armed Forces in order to get increased efficiency—the only thing that matters. What they want to see today is an efficient Army. If the French are prepared to argue on this, I say that I would rather have an Army based on voluntary recruitment—as ours was in 1939—than the conscript Army the French put into the field, and which disappeared, in 1940.

Mr. Eden: Ours was very small.

Mr. Byers: Ours was a very small Army, but we had more divisions in 1939 than we can put in the field today.

Mr. Eden: What about our overseas commitments?

Mr. Byers: The question of garrisons overseas is wholly irrelevant. More than half the Army today is in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Eden: We have large overseas commitments.

Mr. Byers: It is no use saying that our commitments overseas are for 400,000 men. They are not. I think the right hon. Gentleman appreciates my point. We have overseas commitments which we have to carry out, and they can be carried out more efficiently by a voluntary armed force than by tying up our Regulars in this country and in Germany training conscripts who are coming in and going out every 18 months.

Now let me turn to production. . . . There are in existence at the moment plenty of price maintenance schemes which are keeping up prices. It is no good the Chancellor just exhorting people to reduce prices. We are up against this system, and Government action must be taken to break those price maintenance systems. I think all of us would be prepared to help any Government to do it, if only they showed that they were anxious to do it.

But it means more than that. The Government must get away from this Socialist Alice-in-Wonderland complex; they must recognise human nature for what it is. Most people need incentives. It is all very well for Socialists to say "But they should not": the point is they do. People work for gain; they work for profit; and we must face it. Socialists may say that it is wrong, but people do work for gain and for profit. In my view, at a time like this it is the duty of the Government to see that the self-interest of the individual coincides with the national interest; but at the present time they are not doing so.

I have no objection to profits made under conditions of free competition, but I object, and so do my colleagues, to profits made under monopolistic conditions, or where competition has been restricted which makes it easy for people to earn more profits. The thing to do is to get rid of monopoly and restore competition. The truth of the matter is that the Government have made profits easy to earn but have made it terribly difficult to retain them, which means there is no incentive. Where there is a real incentive is where profits are difficult to make but can be kept once they have been made. That is the key to the situation. It is a far better system than theoretical and academic Socialism which does not understand what it is about.

Let me give one example—the psychological approach of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with his increased Profits Tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer comes to the House and makes a long speech about America moving west and how we must go into the dollar markets, but then says that the Government are going to increase the Profits Tax. In other words, what he is saying to those who respond to his

exhortations is that he is increasing the taxation on the efforts they make to help us. I do not mind about the £13 million; it is the psychological effect. It is using the Profits Tax as a sort of class discriminatory weapon. We can all see how it works. The Chancellor of the Exchequer sees the T.U.C. the night before he makes his statement. He tells them the Government are going to ask them to keep wages down, and immediately he is told that he must put more tax on profits. What an entirely different psychological approach it would have been if the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the T.U.C. had said, "Go out and make your profits, and we shall see that you share them with your workers. You are all on the job together. You will make the profits together, and you will share them."

Mr. Leslie Hale (Oldham): Can the hon. Member tell us precisely how the Chancellor of the Exchequer can make private enterprise share its profits?

Mr. Byers: It could be done by taxation relief. It could be done by saying that the profits will not be taxed if an agreed percentage goes to the workers. The percentage could be agreed upon by the representatives of organised labour. I would be willing to see profits being made if a certain percentage were made available to the workers. What I am trying to say is that we should get partnership in industry in the spirit of "Let us make the profits together and share them," instead of going on with the present system whereby the Government say to management that if it makes profits they will see that it does not keep them, but at the same time they will not allow the workers to increase their wage demands.

Another point I want to make—and here again the Chancellor of the Exchequer can do something in the matter—is in connection with the marginal rate of Income Tax on overtime. Are we really to expect people to go on working longer hours when the more they earn the higher the marginal rate of tax they have to pay? This is the sort of thing which is happening, and workers are asking themselves why they should go on doing the work. We have put forward a fairly complicated programme for the revision of the taxation system, which includes a flat-rate taxation proposal for overtime work. If the Government will not work our scheme, then let them work out one for themselves. The Chancellor should at least overhaul the whole system, because unless we can give incentives to the workers we shall not get the overtime and longer hours we require.

I agree with collective bargaining, but let us look at what is happening. The Labour Party have been put into power by the trade unions who believe in collective bargaining, but having got into power they say that they must resist all mass demands for wage increases because of inflation. I agree with that, because mass increases give a good worker the same amount of money as the slacker, which is something I do not want to see. Look at the position the Government have got into with this collective bargaining system. They have a mass wage demand and they then say that there are to be no more increases in personal incomes, which is sitting on a safety valve. What they must do is to show the workers the alternative. In this connection, I want to see the trade union workers demanding payments by results and demanding that efficiency be rewarded. I do not say that collective bargaining is wrong, but that it is not having the right effect at the present time. Mass wage increases give the same amount to the inefficient as to the efficient, such as when we

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Saturday, November 12, 1949.

From Week to Week

We are constantly in receipt of requests for a statement of Social Credit ("the funny money which failed in Alberta") in a nutshell, varied by the demands of those deep thinkers who would prefer it to be stated on a postcard, and for the benefit of this cross-section of the community we append a description of current finance which appeared in the Dundee Courier of October 29, which may serve as a model.

"A correspondent to-night hits off the situation in current politics.

"He says one gathered from the Prime Minister's recent broadcast that His Majesty's Government is continuing its policy of expediting the export of everything we have and curtailing the import of everything we need in order to buy dollars we cannot use because they are only legal tender in a land we may not visit, because we are not allowed to spend the dollars we buy because they have disappeared in the process of devaluation."

Of course this is only the fringe of the subject.

From every quarter of the world, including those remnants of what, only four years ago, was the greatest and most successful Empire the world has ever known, is arising the question, "Why are things so bad in Great Britain?"

So far as the materialistic and economic situation is concerned, the answer is easy but is never given. It is the "Full Employment" policy and the ancillary Export Drive-cum-austerity, with the surplus of paper wages paid for the production of articles which cannot be bought when they are produced which has driven the pound down from \$4.03 to \$2.80. But the rot is much deeper than that.

If we had to indicate the canker in two words, we should say "moral cowardice," and one aspect of this is the convention that, however desperate the result of "Socialism," "Socialist Ministers" mean well. We are inclined to attribute this to skilful play on the obsolete code of the cricket field, or if you prefer it, the "not done" of a more civilised era.

If you consider the case of a man such as the Victorian Marquis of Salisbury, possessed of great wealth, absolute security of social position, and long tradition, it is easy to see that all common sense suggests that while he may be stupid and mistaken, he is most unlikely to be corrupt.

But where you have to deal with a group of men whose very position of affluence and power depends almost from day to day on corruption—on bribing a majority with the spoils, or part of them, robbed from a minority, for the benefit of a Cabal—it is insult added to injury to say that they

are "sincere." The only point on which they are sincere is that Socialism must be a good system, because under no other conceivable condition could they have risen to affluence, power and notoriety.

There are, however, many signs that what, under an entirely different set of conditions, might be regarded as the decencies of debate, are now recognised as soft-headedness or pusillanimity. Lord Bruce, the Cambridge-educated Australian ex-Prime Minister has not hesitated to tell the Socialists that their finance is dishonest; a courageous Anglican Vicar, the Reverend S. B. Priston, has refused to preach in favour of savings so long as they represent a barely concealed theft by continuous devaluation of currency.

We notice with interest, but without surprise, that Mr. Thomas Johnston, whilom Secretary for Scotland, and subsequently Chairman of this and that, views with alarm Lord Bruce's departure from the convention of the high-minded patriots battling against outrageous fortune or overwhelming odds and mutters "treason." Socialism has been a complete success—for Mr. Johnston and other Cabinet Ministers past and present—and he is quite capable of distinguishing the red light from the Red Flag. The point Lord Bruce is making contains enough dynamite to torpedo Finance-Socialism sky-high, and with it all the Boards of this and that. There are rumblings about them from many quarters.

The higher the percentage of our production which is exported, the higher will rise our internal price level and the lower will fall the exchange rate of the pound and the value of "savings."

If, as Professor Burn puts it, "Political thinking is at too low an ebb in this country to be fit for the task of writing a new Constitution," it ought perhaps not to be a matter for wonder that the truly amazing spectacle presented by the "Labour" Government in modifying the powers of the House of Lords in order to secure the passage of the Iron and Steel Nationalisation Bill on a technicality, causes hardly a ripple.

Before the Board of Directors of a limited company can change its objectives (it cannot change its constitution, which is fixed by the provisions of the Companies Acts) it has to conform to an elaborate procedure, including the calling of a shareholders' meeting for that purpose and that purpose only, and distinguishing between the various classes of shareholders.

We are permitting a body of directors representing, on their own showing, only one class of shareholder (if in fact they represent any class other than a junta), to gerrymander every aspect of the national structure for purposes which are neither disclosed nor understood. And we couldn't care less.

We have little doubt that the Australian General Elections on December 10 will have an importance in this country at least equal to that in which they take place.

The World Plotters have been using Australia for many years as a laboratory for the Slave State *via* the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; Roosevelt supposed that the charms of the American soldier would be irresistible, and would facilitate a notable acquisition for the U.S. Empire, in which he was somewhat more than mistaken; and the *Daily Mirror* group (Israel Moses Sieff?) in paying a fantastic sum for the

(Continued at foot of col. 1, page 5)

Sheep

It appeared to a reader some months ago, when the meat situation became even worse than usual, that it would be a good thing to keep a sheep or two, feeding them on the roadside verge—just as they do on the continent, and as they did before the war in the West, and other parts of England,—and killing and eating them within one's own family circle. The idea seemed to be one that would be welcomed by any Government having the well-being of the country at heart, for not only would it provide as many families whose members adopted it with fresh meat, with all its health-giving qualities, but it would release meat now consumed by them to swell the nation's larder, thus providing extra meat for the city dwellers. Moreover, there is an enormous amount of waste land all over the country where hundreds of thousands of sheep could be grazed in this way, adding greatly to the national resources; and there are any number of the older generations in the country districts who would rejoice at the chance to augment their food-supply.

From the Clerk of the Essex County Council it was learnt that in the County of Essex there are no bye-laws dealing with the grazing of animals on roadside verges. This must be so, too, in most, if not all, counties.

As the use of land was involved an enquiry was addressed to the Minister of Agriculture, who passed it on to the Minister of Food, with whose department correspondence was carried on for the next four months or so. This correspondence, while disclosing the Minister's powers through control of slaughtering,—licences to slaughter are issued by, and solely at the discretion of, the Minister of Food: that is, he can grant them to anyone if he wishes to,—produced nothing helpful. There was no refusal, but no permission: an unsatisfactory situation which called for reference to higher authority. So the matter was taken to the Prime Minister, and it was kept at that level until a definite refusal was obtained.

The correspondence from the point of reference to the Prime Minister is set out hereunder; letters to him and his Officers being as written, and those from his Officers in paraphrase owing to a request for permission to publish having been ignored.

April 2, 1949.

The Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I regret very much having to write to you, and adding to your burdens but, in an attempt to help the country's, and my own, fresh meat supply, I have been carrying on

FROM WEEK TO WEEK (continued from page 4)

Melbourne *Argus*, is clearly aware that the issues are worth big money.

We understand that a Gallup-type poll taken recently produced the surprising result of a 76 per cent. majority against Socialism.

It should not be overlooked that the same Dark Forces which are behind United Nations' frantic bid for supreme power, are at the same time working tooth and claw to disintegrate the British Empire and Commonwealth. The Canadian move to abolish appeals to the Privy Council is an emanation from Washington, *i.e.* Wall and Pine Streets.

what has been to me a most unsatisfactory correspondence with the Minister of Food, Regional Organisation Division, from whom I can get no definite replies to my queries and proposals. I must therefore, refer the matter to higher authority.

My proposal is that I should be given permission to rear, kill and eat sheep which I would feed on what are now waste lands, *e.g.* roadside verges, village greens, *etc.*, and on land where they would be valued by farmers for their dung. I ask if this is possible and, if not, why not?

I further ask, in the event of an affirmative answer, if I would be allowed to buy food for winter feeding, and how much?

Will you please consider this matter and let me have a definite ruling?

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK.

This was answered by Mr. Strachey's Department on April 30, as if the enquiry referred to keeping and killing PIGS. A protest was at once made to the Prime Minister.

May 2, 1949.

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister,
Downing Street,
Westminster.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I refer to the letter I wrote to you on the 2nd of April last, with regret for having again to trouble you, but I have this morning received from the Ministry of Food, to whom you referred it, a reply which has nothing to do with the subject of my letter, as you will see from the copies of the correspondence attached hereto. My letter referred to SHEEP whereas the reply deals with PIGS.

I must point out that this kind of thing has been going on since my first letter was written on December 22 last. I cannot get a reasonable reply to my queries, and the Departments concerned do not seem even to trouble to read the letters they receive.

It is an exceedingly unsatisfactory position, and I have a growing feeling that the production of food is deliberately obstructed, a hateful thought that gravely concerns me and the rest of the population. I cannot let the matter remain where it is and, therefore, must ask you once more to be good enough to deal with it yourself. Will you please do so?

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK.

This was crossed in the Post by an apology from Mr. Strachey's department for their letter of April 30, substituting a corrected one which said that the Minister only grants licences to slaughter sheep for home consumption to producers who have kept the sheep, on premises owned or rented by them, for a period of not less than three months. As my proposals did not provide for maintaining the sheep on my own premises a licence to slaughter would not be granted.

This clearly showed that the Minister is not worried about the waste of good land, or about increasing the meat supply. It must be noted, too, that his discretion—which is absolute—is operating *in favour of those who own or rent property.* and *against those who don't*—a very interesting and exceedingly bad, case of class legislation.

This letter was answered and a copy sent to the Prime

Minister.

The Ministry of Food,
Rationing Division,
Portman Court,
Postman Square, W.1.
Ref. RR/M 938. 5.

May 3, 1949.

Dear Sirs,

I am obliged to you for your letter of the 2nd of May correcting the errors in your letter of 30th April, and enclosing a substitute copy. Of course, I accept your apologies with pleasure.

It is with sombre feelings, however, that I note the refusal to grant me a licence to kill and eat sheep under the conditions outlined in my letter. The implications of this bare refusal are that, as it prevents the use of what is now waste land, prevents the increase of the home-grown meat supply, and prevents a man from feeding himself, these are the results desired by the Minister. I know that the Minister has power to grant licences to whom he wishes. I must, therefore, ask you to be good enough to tell me why I am refused?

You will naturally understand that the matter cannot be left where it is now; but before I take action to try to correct what appears to be, among other things, a grave usurpation of individual rights—the right to feed oneself—I shall await your reply, for a few days.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK.

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
Westminster, S.W.1.

May 3, 1949.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I have received from the Ministry of Food, Rationing Division, an apology for the errors contained in their letter to me of 30th April, and I send, herewith, a copy of my reply thereto. I shall be most grateful to you if you will kindly consider the position revealed in the correspondence and make the necessary adjustments.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK.

May 16, 1949.

In reply, Private Secretary Flora Lepper, of the Ministry of Food, Montague House, Whitehall, wrote saying that they were asking an officer from the Divisional Food Office to visit me.

This was acknowledged to the Prime Minister as follows:—

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street, S.W.1.

May 19, 1949.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

In reply to my letter to you of the 3rd of May I have received one from the Private Secretary, Ministry of Food, dated the 16th May, which avoids the issue I raised by simply saying that as this correspondence has been going on for a long time it is being arranged for one of their Divisional Food Officers from Cambridge to visit me. I will, of course, as a matter of politeness, see the Food Officer when he comes, but why this proposal has been made I cannot understand. The situation is quite clear. The Minister has refused my application for a permit to kill, and eat within

my own family, sheep which have been kept on the roadside verges and waste lands hereabouts. I have asked you to reconsider this position because it seems to indicate that the Minister, following a policy, refuses to allow a Briton to exercise the elementary right of feeding himself and family by his own labours, and deliberately prevents the bringing of waste lands into use for the National well-being. The responsibility rests with the Minister of Food who, having the power to grant licences to slaughter, refuses in this case to do so. What is the policy he is pursuing? That is a matter, I submit, for you to deal with, and I again ask you, with every courtesy, to redress this egregious wrong.

I shall be glad to hear if I have your permission to publish the correspondence that I have had over the last five months with you and the various Government Departments concerned?

I regret that I must press for an answer as soon as possible for this matter cannot go on being shelved by being passed on as heretofore. Already one year has been lost; men are already scything down the verges, and lush feed is being wasted. Moreover, the men are being paid to waste it.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK.

The Divisional Food Officer's Representative came by appointment, and a fortnight later there arrived a letter dated June 3, 1949 from Mr. E. S. Cass, 10, Downing Street, written on behalf of the Prime Minister. After expressing understanding and sympathy with my wish to produce food wherever possible for myself and my household, the letter said that it would not be desirable at the present time to relax existing restrictions on the slaughter of sheep for home consumption; that it would not be practicable to permit people to grow a few sheep for themselves without granting the same privilege to larger producers of livestock and "this would seriously deplete the supplies of meat which are needed to maintain the meat ration"; and that the present concession which permits farmers who add to the nation's food supplies to kill an occasional sheep for home consumption is all that can be safely allowed.

This was acknowledged in the following terms:—

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
Westminster.

June 6, 1949.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd June and note that you confirm the refusal of the Ministry of Food to grant me a licence to kill and eat within my own family circle sheep that I would keep and feed on waste lands.

I regret this as it is both an offence against common sense, and a violation of Natural Law, to prevent a man from feeding himself and his family by his own labours, and thus easing the strain on the national resources. Further, the perpetuation of the waste of good grazing land cannot be too strongly condemned. You will, I am sure, appreciate that such a position cannot be tolerated.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK

In this correspondence it was repeatedly said by the Ministry of Food that the correspondent could feed sheep on

the road-side verges and sell them to the Government, and this suggestion was repeated in Mr. Cass's letter. But, of course, the idea is quite stupid and unattractive. Nobody could cover the labour and risk attached to road-side grazing at Mr. Strachey's price, and nobody would.

The position revealed by this enquiry is clearly that the Government is not concerned at all with the production of meat, but is determined to prevent anyone from becoming independent of their schemes of food control. The food situation is, therefore, changed. There is no dollar shortage which prevents the purchase of meat, and there is no intention to prevent good land, and good fodder, from being wasted. This will be seen to fit in well with the present position of agriculture where the Government returns show that there is much less land under cultivation than in 1938, and much less cattle and many fewer sheep and pigs on the land.

In view of the attitude taken in respect of the application now under discussion, the whole of this appears to be deliberate, and the food shortage is a shortage through *Policy*.

These implications are grave and compelled an attempt to find out if the policy of deliberate under-nourishment is, also, that of the other big political party. A letter was, therefore, sent to Lord Woolton:

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Woolton,
The House of Lords,
Westminster.

June 6, 1949

My Lord,

I have been trying for the last five months or so to get permission from the Ministry of Food to kill and eat, within the limits of my own family circle, sheep that I would keep and feed on the road-side verges and other waste lands round here, thus providing fresh meat for my family, and utilizing waste grass. Naturally the labour would be heavy, the risk great and the cost of production high, so that it would not be possible to sell sheep so reared to the Ministry except at a loss, which I cannot do. The only gain from the proposal would be for me to have the fresh meat to eat in place of the shocking stuff we so often get.

My request for a licence to kill sheep raised in this way, and for my own use, has been refused even after it has been taken to the highest level—the Prime Minister. I shall be glad to hear if the Conservative Party, should it be returned to office at the next election, will rescind the regulations which prevent any man from feeding himself and his family in such a way? Meanwhile, the position is that common sense and the Natural Laws are being deliberately violated, and the utilisation of good fodder is being deliberately prevented.

I shall appreciate your reply, and any advice you may feel able to give me. There must be room for at least a quarter-of-a-million sheep so reared in England alone.

I am, My Lord,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) C. M. MANNOCK

This brought the following reply from the Personal Assistant to the Chairman:—

June 29, 1949.

Dear Mr. Mannock,

Thank you for your letter of the 6th June, which Lord Woolton has asked me to answer on his behalf.

Lord Woolton sympathises with you, but regrets that

no relaxation of the slaughtering regulations can be made in the present meat shortage without the risk of a substantial increase in Black Market activities. These regulations will therefore have to be maintained until the Government substantially increases the meat ration by obtaining more meat from abroad and by fostering greater production for general consumption at home.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) R. GREVILLE,

Personal Assistant to the Chairman.

Apart from the suggestion of collusion between the Parties, it is amazing to read such excuses for depriving us of our natural rights. The existing Self Suppliers of Pigs Scheme, which has resulted in a considerable increase of the pig population, and has augmented the food supply of the large number of people who use it and of the whole nation as well, has not increased dealings on the Black Market. Why should it? But even if it had wouldn't it still have been to the advantage of everyone? There is a very definite limit to the amount of meat that one person can eat, and for every privately grown pig killed a quantity of meat is released from the Ration for consumption elsewhere, and the nation is better off. So it would be if we could keep and eat sheep as proposed.

Any suggestion that it would not be fair to the town dweller who cannot keep sheep is not valid, or there, surely, would be no Self Suppliers of Pigs Scheme in operation. The town-dwellers' disability is one of the drawbacks of his life and must be looked upon as a set-off against the thousand advantages claimed for the town which are not to be found in the country.

In conclusion one may refer to the following words indicating high-policy in the Conservative Party:

"I suggest, therefore, that we should create not merely a milk, butter, and cheese distributive organisation, but a National Nutrition Board which would be able to concern itself with the whole range of commodities that might in future be brought within the scheme of Public Utility distribution. An additional reason for this will emerge when we come later to consider the methods by which the quantities ordered by each household might be regularised."

The appropriateness of this and the following quotation to conditions to-day will need no stressing.

"If the standard of life falls rapidly enough and low enough we shall regain our markets and the unemployed will be reabsorbed into employment. In fact, the nearer we get to a starvation level the more prosperous we shall be."

Both these quotations come from "The Middle Way," by Mr. Harold Macmillan, Conservative M.P. for Bromley, published in 1938.

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PARLIAMENT (continued from page 3.)

have a 10s. claim put in for a group of workers.

Mr. Harrison (Nottingham, East): A demand for 10s. in an industry working on piece-rates does not mean that all get the increase—some may get 15s. and some may not even get 10s.

Mr. Byers: We must relate individual effort to individual gain, and when a man works harder he should be paid more, which is the direction towards which the trade union leaders should be working today. The trade union leaders should not be going in for mass wage demands, but should be checking up in factories to see that the right system is being employed. I only wish that the trade union leaders of today were of as high a standard as they were in previous days. I do not think they are accepting their responsibilities at the present time.

I want to turn now to exports to the dollar markets. There is no incentive today to get into the dollar markets, for the simple reason that by their bilateral trading policy the Government have made it easier for people to sell in the soft currency areas. Are we to have a guarantee that there will be no more canalisation of British exports into the soft currency areas? When the Government make an agreement with a country to sell them things they do not particularly want in return for things they want to get rid of, they are canalising trade and making it easier to sell to the soft currency areas, and it is no use their saying to British industry that they ought to sell only for dollars. Let a percentage of the dollar earnings be used by individual firms in the States for their own purposes, as is being done by France, Belgium and Holland. Let the workers see some direct result for their dollar earnings; I do not mind whether it is nylons in the works canteen or extra payment for what they have done in the dollar market. There is a great field of incentives in respect of which the Chancellor has a prime responsibility. I shall have no hesitation in voting against the Government and in condemning them.

Colonel Crosthwaite-Eyre (New Forest and Christchurch): . . . what were the two main things they had to do? The first was to make the pound valid abroad. It had to become an international currency. The Prime Minister in a speech which he made before convertibility collapsed, in August, 1947, made that very point.

. . . If I may return to my broad point, our criticism against the Government is that they have not dealt with the overall question of the dollar position. . . . Even if the Government were sincere, why have they not tackled the sterling balances? Why have they done nothing about them at all? The right hon. and learned Gentleman and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Economic Secretary have time and again stood at the Despatch Box and said, "We believe that we must scale these balances down. We believe that we must make a just apportionment so that there may be a fair distribution of the burden of wartime debts between ourselves and such countries as India or Egypt." But they have never done anything. . . . Today, as a result of our releases to India and Pakistan, the Indians and Pakistans have not only been able to get unrequited exports but they have been able to spend at a dollar rate of at least three times as much as they spent in 1938. We have cut our own dollar purchases down. But due to our policy of not scaling down these balances, others have increased their expenditure.

. . . What have these releases from sterling balances

done? I ask the Lord President to listen. He has challenged me about the position. Does he realise that, as a result of these releases from sterling balances, everyone engaged in the export industries is today working one day a week to provide free goods for other countries? There is something like £300 million a year of our exports going abroad for which we receive no return whatsoever. Surely to every hon. Member of this House that is a formidable matter. I think I am right in saying that our exports run now at a rate of about 1½ thousand millions and very nearly a fifth of those are not providing any single return by way of goods or services for this country.

This afternoon I heard the Chancellor say that we must allow, for humanitarian purposes or possibly for purposes of building up economically other countries and for supporting them defensively in their need—and many other things with which I totally agree—certain minor amounts of unrequited exports. But when one finds that the countries which have benefited, India and Pakistan, spending dollars at three times the pre-war rate . . . Another point is the bilateral agreements. We have so hedged round our economy that it is hardly possible for sterling and the currency of any foreign country with whom we trade to be passed on for the use of a third country. Not only have we crippled sterling as an international currency because of the way in which we have used what is almost a barter system, but we have gone still further. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer said this afternoon that he wished to see a great increase of engineering products go to America, had he thought of what has been the effect under the Russian Trade Agreement and the Andes Pact, by which we have traded the very cream of our products probably for five years hence against the meat and course grain that we have already consumed?

I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will bear this in mind. I hope hon. Members opposite when they come to the House and when they make speeches in the country, and say it is easy to shift our exports, will remember that they have already traded the most readily transferable of the exports of this country for raw materials which we have already received and consumed. We have still to pay for them.

That is the sombre picture. It is not a question that can be changed overnight. But the industries of this country have to bear the frightful burden of sending unrequited exports abroad against wartime sterling balances that in reality have never been earned by the countries concerned, and, at the same time, the frightful burden of meeting the demands of other countries who have supplied us with meat or course grain and can now make demands upon our productivity. That is the picture we must face. Can it be any wonder that sterling is not an international currency as a result?

(To be concluded)

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