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From Week to Week

As Mr. Dillon, the Eire Minister for Agriculture, said in Paris on April 13, "the British are the only people in the world still acquainted with hunger." He was of course referring to the English and Scots, not the British and Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

For ourselves, we consider that the English and Scots deserve all they are getting, with more to come. If they had applied the toe of a number nine boot to the British, the Bevans and the Shinwells instead of listening to their half-baked nonsense, the native inhabitants of these islands would almost certainly have saved themselves, and perhaps the rest of the world, fifty years of greater or less misery.

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The Marquis of Reading (Mr. Isaacs, Jnr.) has joined the Conservative Party. Mr. Isaacs is the son-in-law of Moritz Mond, 1st Lord Melchett, whose conversion from Liberalism to Conservatism required about the same number of post-war years. As one might say, following in father-in-law's footsteps. We can deduce without difficulty the kind of Conservatism Mr. Isaacs will support.

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The choice of Mr. R. A. Butler (to whom the description of crypto-Commu-Socialist would doubtless appeal as a subtle compliment) to lead the "attack" on the Budget by the "Opposition" ought to dispose of any complaint by anti-Socialists that they have not been warned. Almost the only virtue that the *soi-disant* Conservative Party possesses which is conspicuously lacking in the group said to led by Mr. Attlee, is that it is less hypocritical. Short of congratulating Sir Stafford Cripps on the production of a Budget which gained his warm approval, Mr. Butler could hardly, in the time at his disposal, have travelled farther along the road which the citizens of the U.S. pithily describe as "Me-tooism."

The simple over-riding fact is that this country has no policy; its role in its own affairs is now purely tactical-administrative. From the first day of the second phase of the War, a quiet, unobtrusive group, mostly Jews, amongst whom Mr. Ben Cohen, Jnr., Schmucl Gilman (Sidney Hillman), Bernard Baruch, *etc.*, invaded this country to arrange the terms on which "Britain" was to be allowed to survive; terms which envisaged not merely the savage destruction of London and Coventry, and the loss of the British Empire, but organised the amazing combination of British "victory" with the transfer of British prestige to the sole enhancement of "American" supremacy. They were arranged *via* Mr. Churchill.

Anyone who supposes that the more vicious elements of "The Welfare State" (God save us!) will be allowed to die with the advent of a new set of administrators responsible to the same alien policy, no matter what may be the label under which their pay-cheques reach them, is a victim of mass-suggestion.

There is no surer indication of misdirection in the affairs of any country than a continuous rise in the cost of living which, it should be borne in mind, includes the involuntary losses of the individual in taxes, rates, and extortions, as well as his direct expenditure. The idea that high taxation prevents inflation is ignorance or worse.

It is nearly irrelevant whether this misdirection proceeds from incompetence, or Fifth Column treason. We are of the opinion that both are in evidence in the affairs of these islands, but we recall a feature of the latter half of the 1914-18 phase of the War, well known to anyone moving in the orbit of the New Ministries which sprang up almost daily—the preparation for MONOPOLY.

A certain well-known Jewish Civil Servant appeared to have a perfect genius for creating chaos in any position of authority to which he was appointed. When the confusion became intolerable, Mr. W—— was moved to another Ministry to repeat the performance at a higher salary.

Since observing this phenomenon at close quarters, we have always been sceptical of incompetence in high places; not as to the existence of it, but as to the accident of its occurrence.

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The essential difference between the civilisation of the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century is that service in the former was predominantly that of one human being to another, while that of the latter is service by an individual to an organisation. The idea has been subtly indoctrinated that there is something degrading about the former, and something elevating about the latter. *Demon est Deus inversus.*

"Even Britain Can Live Without Exports"

The following are some of a reviewer's quotations from a book by Jorian Jenks, *From the Ground Up*:—

"What in fact is happening is not the constitution of a new social order but a further development of the old industrial structure of society under the guidance of its technicians. These form the new ruling class . . . probably the last phase of the Mechanical Age."

The answer to the "discomfort and insecurity" of the export system is "a systematic build-up of home production to a point at which international exchange is again confined to true specialities and genuine surpluses." . . . "Even Britain can live in the sense of having enough to eat without imports and therefore without exports." . . . "We have within the United Kingdom all the primary resources required to provide the essentials of life for our existing population." Unemployment? "Obviously we cannot develop these resources without putting into them much more labour than we do at present, and this labour can come only from industry, commerce and administration."

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: April 3, 1950.

Olive Oil

Mr. Bell asked the Minister of Food why his Department, acting through the Olive Oil Association, is selling olive oil at 25s. 3d. a gallon to wholesale buyers in this country when those buyers could buy best quality olive oil at 15s. 8d. a gallon f.o.b. at Spanish ports; and whether in the circumstances he will free the importation of olive oil from control by his Department.

Mr. S. N. Evans: My Department does not now buy or sell olive oil. The first step towards the decontrol of the olive oil trade was made in 1947, when the Ministry's stocks were taken over by the Olive Oil Importer's Association. So as to make the changeover to full private trading as smooth as possible, an undertaking was given to this Association that they should be the sole importers until stocks had been substantially reduced. This arrangement will terminate not later than the autumn of this year.

Mr. Bell: Does the Minister's answer mean that until the autumn of this year home consumers of olive oil will have to pay 8s. a gallon above the world price?

Mr. Evans: It is quite true that, at the moment, oil can be bought cheaper than at the Association's price, but insurance, freight charges, and duty have to be added to the figure mentioned in the Question and, of course, the importers' profits. There is, here, a very real problem. Nobody could calculate with mathematical precision when the market would change from a seller's to a buyer's market, and I do not think it would be right to throw members of this Association to the wolves.

Mr. Harrison: Does this mean that the Department themselves are very much concerned about this obvious difference in price to the purchaser of olive oil abroad and in this country? Will my hon. Friend's Department tackle seriously this obvious anomaly?

Sir David Robertson: Does the hon. Gentleman's reply mean that his Department, in bulk buying, paid too high a price, that they saddled importers with the stock and that they are now protecting themselves and importers at the expense of the public?

Mr. Evans: No, I did not mean anything of the kind. We entered into an arrangement with this Association as far back as 1947. There was a very good yield of olive oil last year. That, of course, has changed the market and, in the circumstances, I cannot agree that it would be right to throw members of the Association to the wolves.

Flour

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food how much of the flour used for human consumption is bleached by means of nitrogen trichloride or other agents.

Mr. S. N. Evans: Over 90 per cent, is treated with nitrogen trichloride; of the remainder, some is untreated and the balance is treated with any of several lesser known flour improvers.

Dr. Stross: Is my hon. Friend aware that for some considerable time we have known that animals are very seriously affected when they eat flour treated in this way, and that this treatment is illegal in many countries, including America? Will he give an assurance that his Department will consider making representations with a view to stopping

this practice altogether?

Mr. Evans: The information I have is that there is nothing detrimental at all to human health in the present method of treating flour. So far as any harm to animals is concerned, as that has been raised I will go into the matter.

Dr. Stross: Will my hon. Friend ask his experts to reconsider the matter, in view of recent evidence and publications?

Mr. Evans: If my hon. Friend has any evidence I shall be very happy to consider it.

Mr. D. Marshall asked the Minister of Food by how much the agene process has been increased per sack of flour since 1939; and to what extent the agene process is to be continued.

Mr. S. N. Evans: I regret that the information asked for in the first part of the Question is not available. As to the second part, a change in technique which affects over 90 per cent. of the flour used in this country is being introduced, but this will take some time to effect, especially as the necessary plant, and supplies of the new improver (chlorine dioxide) have to be secured from the United States. However, the millers in co-operation with the Ministry are doing all they can to speed the change. I am sending the hon. Member a copy of an announcement made by the Ministry of Health and my Department on 27th January, which explains the position.

Mr. Vane: The hon. Gentleman mentioned "improver." Can he say what improvement is being sought?

Mr. Evans: Possibly in palatability, for one thing.

Dried Egg

Mr. De la Bère asked the Minister of Food whether, in connection with the dried egg which has been, or is about to be purchased from the United States of America, he will give the approximate date of the manufacture of this dried egg and an assurance that no part of the quantities purchased have been manufactured for more than three years.

Mr. S. N. Evans: It was all made in 1949.

Mr. De la Bère: May we be quite sure that the Government will not lend themselves to the purchase of dried egg which is over two years old, in view of the large quantities which exist in many parts of the world? May I have that assurance?

Mr. Evans: The hon. Gentleman may have that assurance. We have the word of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that this sale is from 1949 production.

Apples

Mr. David Renton asked the Minister of Food how many tons of apples were imported by his Department during 1949; what were the respective amounts of foreign currencies used to buy those apples; what was the sterling equivalent of the total sum; what total sum of money was received by his Department from the sale of the apples in the United Kingdom; and what percentage of the apples so imported were wasted.

Mr. S. N. Evans: Approximately 88,000 tons of apples, valued in sterling at about £3½ million c.i.f., were imported by my Department in 1949. The only non-sterling currency included in this figure was approximately 700,000 dollars for Canadian apples. The amount realised on sale, after meeting distribution costs in this country, was about £5¼ million. The wastage was about 3 per cent.

Mr. Renton: Could the hon. Gentleman say what

amount of dollars was represented by that wastage?

Mr. Evans: No, Sir; not without notice.

Earl Winterton: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the very large sums of money invested in scientific apple culture in this country in the last few years, the large amount of employment given and the value of the trade? Will he have regard to those facts in any future negotiations for the purchase of foreign apples?

Mr. Evans: We always have full regard for the interests of home producers.

Mr. Bossom: Is the Minister aware that a good many Kentish growers of apples last year did not sell all they grew? Is it not very unfortunate that we should be importing apples when we have very good apples of our own which we are not able to sell?

Hon. Members: Bring the price down.

Mr. Evans: Foreigners often pack and market apples more attractively than we do.

Mr. Mellish: If my hon. Friend knows of any of these good apples which Kentish farmers are unable to sell will he send them to Bermondsey? We have none there.

Captain Crookshank: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Government refused to allow home growers to have the packings for which they asked?

Earl Winterton: In view of the serious charge which he has just made will the hon. Gentleman remember that his colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, has said on more than one occasion that the best apple packing in this country is better than that of anywhere else in the world? Will he withdraw his statement, which was a serious reflection on the industry?

Mr. Evans: I do not want to be offensive to anybody, but I say that foreigners often grade and pack their commodities rather more attractively than some of our people do at home.

Mr. Paton: Is it not the case that, in spite of great developments in home growing during the last few years, it is still almost impossible to buy decent eating apples in many places in this country?

Sugar Supplies (Commonwealth)

Mr. Frank McLeavy asked the Minister of Food if he has any statement to make about the progress of the Commonwealth sugar negotiation.

Mr. S. N. Evans: I will, with permission, make a statement at the end of Questions.

At the end of Questions—

Mr. Evans: On 16th January, 1950, my Department issued a full statement dealing with the offer which the Government had made to Commonwealth sugar producers and I will arrange for a copy of this statement to be circulated in the OFFICIAL REPORT. Briefly, it said that we should continue to find a market for all Commonwealth sugar available for export up to and including 1952. We had asked Commonwealth producers for the time being not to plan to increase their exports during the five years beginning in 1953 beyond the figure of 2,350,000 tons, of which the share of the Colonies was 1,550,000 tons. We had offered to buy 1,100,000 tons of Colonial sugar a year during the five years in question at reasonably remunerative prices to be negotiated annually.

Provisional agreement has been reached on these proposals with all Commonwealth sugar-exporting countries ex-

cept the West Indies. Our offer to the West Indies was to buy 640,000 tons each year at the negotiated prices, out of total exports planned provisionally at not more than 900,000 tons. A conference of representatives of West Indian legislatures and of producers and workers in the sugar industry met in Grenada in February, 1950, and requested His Majesty's Government to receive a delegation of members of legislatures and representatives of labour to press for an increase of the figure of 640,000 tons to 725,000 tons.

His Majesty's Government have considered this request most carefully. They appreciate the importance of the sugar industry in the economy of the British West Indies, but the offer already made, after prolonged discussions, took account of this and of the many other considerations which bear on this subject and is final. If after consideration of this statement it is still desired that a delegation should come to the United Kingdom His Majesty's Government will be willing to receive it, but they regret that they can hold out no prospect whatever of amending their offer.

His Majesty's Government have given further consideration to the position of British Honduras as a potential exporter of sugar. Great importance attaches to the development of British Honduras not only in the interests of the people of that colony, but in the hope that it will provide some outlet for surplus populations in the island Colonies of the British West Indies.

The Evans Commission laid great emphasis on the value for this purpose of establishing a sugar industry in British Honduras. His Majesty's Government therefore agree that the aggregate amount of Commonwealth sugar exports planned for the five years beginning in 1953 shall be increased to 2,375,000 tons, and that British Honduras shall be entitled to export 25,000 tons of sugar annually, of which His Majesty's Government will undertake to buy 18,000 tons a year at reasonably remunerative prices to be negotiated annually.

Mr. McLeavy: While thanking my hon. Friend for this very important statement, may I ask how the figures of 640,000 tons and 900,000 tons to which he referred compare with the pre-war and present exports from the West Indies to the United Kingdom, and what are the total exports from the West Indies?

Mr. Evans: The total exports before the war were 549,000 tons, of which 247,000 tons came to the United Kingdom. The total exports for 1949 were 690,000 tons of which 363,000 tons came to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Oliver Stanley: Whatever the final decision of the Government may be on this subject, would it not have been wiser and more courteous, in view of the very representative character of the delegation who wished to come here, to have allowed them to come and discuss it, rather than to have said, "You can only come on the condition that the Government's mind is already made up"; and is not the natural feeling which they would have about that likely to be increased by the statement which the hon. Gentleman has just made about British Honduras which appears to show that there is some pool of non-Commonwealth sugar from which additional allocations can still be made?

Mr. Evans: If the suggestion of the right hon Gentleman is that the West Indies are now faced with a *fait accompli*, that would be quite wrong. There have been prolonged negotiations on this matter. Of course, other Commonwealth sugar producers are concerned to the extent of very large tonnages. For example, Australia, 600,000

(Continued on page 7.)

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"The End of God and Nature"

The following are passages from an article contributed by F. A. Voigt to *The Month* (April, 1950), by request of that journal's editor, on "A Decade in Retrospect." Mr. Voigt is Editor of the *Nineteenth Century and After*.

If Social Crediters were unfamiliar with the ideas the article contains, we should think we had not been doing our work—we say so without any trace of interest in claims to priority, whether of thought or reference to the present crisis. What does interest us is the evidence provided of a reassertion of coherency of thought in England. We have cut short the last extract from Mr. Voigt's article at a point which makes it convenient to record that he is himself a member of the Church of England. We commend the article to the attention of our readers who can obtain copies:—

It seems to me that the question: "Will civilisation perish or be saved?" is of little more than speculative interest. We err when we suppose that civilisation is the *ne plus ultra*. It does not transcend good and evil, and concern for its future may be a sign of unconcern for weightier matters. Civilised man is no "better" than primitive man—he is only more civilised. The splendour of even the highest civilisation is deeply and indelibly stained with evil. The most urgent question today is not "What is to become of civilisation?" but "What is to become of man." And by man, I do not mean "humanity" or "the common man" (who is the object of so much flattery nowadays), or even the uncommon man. Least of all do I mean "collective man." I mean man, created in God's image.

Satan is a formless spirit and nothing can be created in his image. Nevertheless, it is his eternal purpose to transform God's image into his own. But as his image is formless, he can only transform form into formlessness. He is the *Diabolos*, a word which defies exact translation into English. The *Diabolos*, is he who throws into confusion (German affords a precise rendering—*der Durcheinanderwerfer*). The menace to civilisation is incidental and, ultimately, perhaps of small account. The menace is to man. The ten years were not years of clear purpose, they were years of the utmost perplexity and confusion. Men were able to make war, but they were unable to make peace. It is easy to make war because war can be organised. Peace cannot be organised because it is organic. Man was never so helpless as he was in those Ten Years, not even in "primitive" times. Those years must make us doubt whether primitive man was as helpless as he is said to be. The open confusion of those years was preceded by confusion of the mind. Outward confusions begin in the mind and Babylon is but the work of the Babylonian heart.

Had Nietzsche, with all the integrity of his audacious intellect pursued his Nihilist thought to its ultimate conclusion, he would not only have declared that the death of God is the greatest event of the modern age, he would have declared the death of Nature an event no less great.

So immeasurable is the freedom of man's will that he can even be as though God were not, and as though Nature were an enemy to be "conquered." Never before did he boast of his "conquest of Nature" as he boasts in our own time!

Having, through the freedom of his will, arrived at the end of God and Nature, where does man stand? Where will he go next? There will be nowhere to go! He will be wholly free at last. But from what? From everything and for nothing! His will will remain free but there will be nothing left for it to will. His freedom will have lost its meaning, for everything will have lost its meaning.

The prelude to that state, towards which we are moving, is the chaos of the mind. It is one of the greatest achievements of the *Diabolos*, that with the free will of man to work upon (he has nothing else to work upon or to work with), he has organised disorder and has persuaded man that ever-growing chaos is cosmos.

The ultimate character of every age is determined not by its art or science, not by its philosophy, not by its social or political order, not by its "civilisation." All these, and the character of the age itself, are determined by its religion. Beliefs are decisive. Beliefs made the Ten Years what they were. Catastrophic beliefs engendered catastrophe.

What are those beliefs in the present, the eleventh year, 1950?

These are the articles of the contemporary creed:—

Religion without God; Christianity without Christ; Christ without Antichrist; Heaven without Hell; works without faith; a God of Love but not of Wrath; a Church that can bless but cannot curse.

We believe that God, almighty and incarnate, is but a benevolent spirit; that Satan does not exist; that Christ was the author of an ethical code, but not the Godhead crucified. We profess to believe that He existed, for agnosticism is no longer the fashion.

We believe that the Gospels must conform with our time and not our time with the Gospels.

We believe that man is by nature good and can, by his own efforts, attain perfection, although what "perfection" is we do not know and hardly even care. We believe—if "believe" is not too strong a word for fashionable opinions—that there can be crime without sin and no sin without crime.

We believe in order without heirarchy, in progress without direction, in freedom as an end and not a means, in justice as a means and not an end. We believe that justice can be qualified, that there is political justice, social justice, economic justice, or historical justice, or any justice other than justice.

All articles of our creed can be summed up in one phrase: "the Christian ethic."

The "Christian ethic" is the Antichrist of the Western World. It is the most insidious and formidable corruption that ever afflicted that world. And England and her Church are its principal strongholds.

Notes on World Soil Erosion

By C. M. MANNOCK

On the matter of soil erosion and the loss of soil-fertility throughout the world, which is said to be the second limiting factor in the production of sufficient food for the world's population, a serious view must be taken. Here there is a definite problem with no fundamental bluff about it. This wide-spread trouble started thousands of years ago, but has been given prominence lately through its sudden appearance in the United States of America, where vast stretches of agricultural land, robbed, by sheer exploitation, of its vitality, have turned to desert. It is stated authoritatively that in the last fifty years, in that country, well over 113,000,000 acres of rich virgin land have been transformed into arid waste; that another 170,000,000 acres have lost three-quarters of their top-soil and some sub-soil, and are on the verge of complete destruction; and that nearly 800,000,000 acres have lost from a quarter to three-quarters of their top-soil. Losses of such magnitude produced fantastic results in many directions. Between 1930 and 1940, for example, close on a million refugees—mostly farmers and farm-workers, divorced from the land, entered California and the North-Western Territories in search of work. The stories of the Dust-Bowls are too real to be doubted; the consequences too grave to be lightly put on one side. Even after twenty years the prime tragedy continues, and the *Daily Telegraph* of March 27 of this year, recorded the following:

DUSTSTORM SWEEPS KANSAS.

Blinding dust storm swept Kansas to-day, causing at least four deaths in road accidents and extensive damage to crops and land.—A.P.

The reasons for these disasters are at bottom mainly usurious. Between the money-lender and the refugee lay, and still lies, machine-cultivation, mono-culture, chemical manures, deforestation to provide more land for exploitation, and, always, the overriding spur of debt. Mixed farming disappeared. No farmer was able by his labours to produce even the food needed for his family and workers; such things had to be bought in the markets. Everywhere he was in the hands of the money-lender. His capital was provided by the banks in conjunction with the machine makers, on the "Never-Never." Then his debts and the, to him, high world prices for wheat compelled him to grow wheat and nothing but wheat, and this had to be sold in a market controlled by his creditors. He ceased farming, became a share-cropper, sweating the land, and sinking, ultimately, under unpayable debts, to the status of refugee. The market price with which he competed was the figure of similar produce grown on land that was properly cultivated. This included the cost of cultivation, and the maintenance of the soil's fertility. He did no cultivation, and was able to undercut everywhere; but he gave away the fertility of his soil. Everything was taken from the land, and nothing put back. In the end, nature removed the soil by wind and water, leaving him desert to contemplate as his last reward.

The introduction of modern machinery had a marked effect in this tragedy. The fact that in 1935 over 70 per cent. of the farms in California reported that they employed no paid labour is an indication of the magnitude of the social disease from which American agriculture was then, and still is, suffering. The work on these farms was done entirely by seasonal migratory labour, provided in the main under contract by finance institutions who owned the soil,

provided the machinery, paid the labour, marketed the produce, and deducted the interest due from the farmer before paying him his dues. The magnitude of these institutions is stupendous. Carey Williams, in *Ill Fares the Land*, quotes evidence that one Corporation, the subsidiary of a bank, owned, and worked, 600,000 acres!

The Bureau of Internal Revenue reported as early as 1926 that there were nine-thousand corporation farms in operation; and the United States Chamber of Commerce in a later report, and after careful analysis of these farms, showed that the average acreage of this group was nearly 12,000, with one farm of 3,000,000 acres! Ligutti and Rawe, writing from the Catholic angle, stated in 1940 that in the previous twenty years 600,000 farm owners had lost their holding of land.

The immediate effect upon ordinary labour is shown by the figures relating to the introduction of the Combine-Harvester in the wheat districts. In 1926, the first year of its widespread use, it displaced 33,000 hands; by 1928 it had displaced 50,000; and by 1930 about 100,000, and by 1933 over 150,000.

Farms owned and controlled, with produce marketed, by financial institutions and their subsidiaries is not, of course, a system confined to wheat. It covers every agricultural product in America and included ancillary activities such as canning, packing-case making, wine-making, and so on. The success, or failure, of these institutions is measured entirely by money results.

The thoughtful Briton cannot help being startled by facts such as these, especially when he can see the same thing taking place in his own country, and when he reflects that what is happening here is the result of policy. That cannot be doubted. Even our Education system in rural areas, it is authoritatively stated, is based upon the disappearance of the village. Everywhere one hears the story of the drift to the towns. Fields grow larger, ditches are filled in, hedges are rooted-up, trees are felled, and labour is replaced by, among other things, the combine-harvester whose seasonal activities can be traced across the countryside by the charred fields left in its wake. It doesn't pay the machine makers to learn from social results already achieved: sales must go on. America's devastation might never have been, for all the interest shown by the money-lenders. Howard, MacCarrison, Wrench, and all their schools have so far been without influence among the usurers or the politicians. Even when, in some 60,000 acres of the rich low-lands of Cambridgeshire, thousands of acres "blow" year by year, nothing but a dull wonder seems to stir in the farming world, and among the rest it is a bare paragraph of news sandwiched in between other small items. Whole columns are given to the stories of murder and violence, but the barest mention is sufficient for the worst of all crimes—the destruction of the earth.

The great dust-storms in America, however,—which, on occasions have darkened the sky for thousands of miles from the Plains, over the Eastern Cities and right out into the Atlantic—awoke the imagination of people there and in other lands, and appreciation of growing danger resulted. In Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, erosion from deforestation, overcropping, overgrazing, and mono-culture was recognised, and the problem of dealing with it tackled. Naturally, it was the U.S.A. which first adopted systematic remedial measures, and their authorities have since become recognised throughout the world. Experiments of many

kinds to trace cause, and to tie it to the results before their eyes, brought promising results. Simple measures were found which are slowly being applied in many places; and though vast areas of desert land can be brought back to cultivation only with great difficulty, and at great cost—or, perhaps, not at all, in some cases—much can be dealt with successfully and more easily. Whole districts on the verge of ruin have been held, the disease stopped and repair started.

For these reasons it is not necessarily sinister to find that the American Government's Experts are the best known men in this field, and that they have been called in to advise in Africa and elsewhere. Neither is it necessarily sinister to find that in Australia some of the Banks have taken a hand, and have issued free literature on the subject, to interested parties. Well they may. It is in their line to lend money, and money must be borrowed in order that repair work shall be carried on. All the same, the association of loan-finance with every part of this business, in both cure and cause, must be noted.

In Africa the loss of fertile soil has, for many years, been proceeding at a tremendous pace. Lord Northbourne, before the war said:

In Africa the Sahara Desert is moving southwards at a mean rate of over half-a-mile a year, the Turkara Desert eastwards at 6 to 7 miles a year. But the whole continent is suffering from erosion in every known form. It is well known that Kenya is rapidly becoming infertile and beginning to suffer from locusts—.

Since this was written steps have been taken to try to correct the troubles, but the evil progresses unceasingly. R. St. Barbe in the *National Review* of April, 1949, records that north of the Gold Coast in French Equatorial Africa desert conditions are advancing very rapidly as a result of bad native agriculture. The population has shrunk from 20,000,000 in 1911 to 5,000,000 to-day, and there remains but little land to exploit. So bad is the position said to be that Chiefs have forbidden marriage, and women refuse to bear children, for they will not raise them for starvation. This state of affairs is said to be due to deforestation.

Further evidence was supplied by Mr. G. N. Mallison in a letter to the *Sunday Times* of February 27, 1949: "In Africa he (the Agricultural Expert) would see tracts of land scorched by bush-fires and exposed to the ravages of wind and rain every year. Forests are disappearing and rivers drying up. Tons of Africa's finest soil are pouring into the Atlantic and Indian Oceans every day. Literally, Africa is bleeding to death. Enlightened farmers are struggling valiantly to stop the rot, practicing strip-cultivation, replanting grasses and trees, planting on the contour, ridging and making drains. But there are still many who are destroying the soil for their own profit or for that of absentee landlords. In South Africa the Kalahari Desert is encroaching on the Karoo at an alarming rate. Central Africa is rapidly going the same way—."

Van Vuren in *Soil Fertility and Sewage* says that earthworms in South Africa are diminishing in numbers to an alarming extent. To what may be in some measure a natural decline must be added the influence of the increasing use of poison sprays, chemical manures, and the like, on the soil and its inhabitants. The vital importance of the earthworm to soil fertility is too well-known to need stressing; but it

is worth recording that in the U.S.A. they are now bred and sold to farmers owning derelict lands in all parts of the country, with astonishing results in restored fertility.

In this gloomy African scene there is one bright spot, arising out of the work of the late Sir Albert Howard. Van Vuren shows that in the last eight years out of 250 odd urban areas in the Union over 100 have undertaken the manufacture of humus from their town wastes, including night-soil, which is being sold to farmers. Under the guidance, too, of American Experts the farming of much land has been put in order by regulation ploughing so that the top-soil is conserved. In this small way the first steps towards the control of erosion and the re-establishment of fertility have been taken. But there is a long way to go, and the problem is still not appreciated by many farmers.

China is perhaps the most tragic part of the East. In the plains intensive cultivation is carried on with limitless attention paid to the fertility of the soil; but the continuous destruction of the hill forests for fuel is said to produce floods of so tremendous a nature that the river banks are frequently burst in the wet season, the low-lands are flooded and the fertile soil is carried to the sea. Much the same kind of thing happens—and for the same reasons—in the Mississippi area in the U.S.A.

To what extent China is damaged by these outpourings of outraged Nature cannot be estimated. King describes the Chinese methods of farming, and their outstanding attention to soil fertility, in his book: *Farmers for Forty Centuries*. 4,000 years is a fair span of time and it may be reasonably assumed that the necessity to preserve fertility was understood 4,000 years ago, and correct methods were then evolved to achieve it. It is also interesting and significant that the methods used in the hilly regions of China and Japan to conserve their soil from erosion are precisely those now being advocated by the experts everywhere, namely field and gully terracing. This was the method used, too, in this country, among many, in days whose story is told only by the remains of the land works that have survived the ravages of time. Like usury, soil exploitation seems to have been well-known to the ancients, and they devised methods of overcoming both: they prohibited the one and prevented the other.

These very brief notes give only a hazy view of the situation with which we in this country are confronted. The following extract from Jacks and Whyte's *The Rape of the Earth*, however, brings it into better focus:

The soils of western Europe have not eroded, in spite of being subject to the most intensive cultivation in history, because the system of cultivation evolved in Europe in the course of centuries, under European conditions, enormously increased soil-fertility—to such an extent that to-day, the agricultural production even of such a small and industrial country as Britain, equals in value that of Canada . . . It would be correct to say that Europe owes its immunity to erosion to the adaptation of its agriculture to its climate. The countryside has been desecrated and scarred . . . but the one inviolable condition on which Man holds the lease of land from Nature—that soil fertility be preserved—has, in the main, been respected. . . .

The earliest stage of erosion is loss of fertility. Whatever the cause of the loss, the result is in-

variably a corresponding loss of stability; the soil is deprived not only of its productive power but, also, of its capacity for remaining in place. Fertility is a term that should be applied to the soil and vegetation together, for the soil derives its capacity for producing life from the vegetation as much as plants derive their capacity for growth from the soil. . . . The illusion that fertility can always be restored by applying some of huge stocks of artificial fertilisers now available, has been shattered by the recognition that fertility is not merely a matter of plant food supply (for even exhausted soils usually contain ample reserves of plant food), but is also closely connected with soil stability. An exhausted soil is an unstable soil. Nature has no further use for it and removes it bodily.

Mr. G. V. Jacks is of the Rothamsted (Herts) soil science bureau.

The published official figures of yields, in bushels per acre, for different countries give an interesting comparison of their relative fertilities, and still further sharpen the picture for us. Those for 1937 were as under:

	Wheat	Barley	Oats
Eire	41	45	56
United Kingdom	35	38	46
Germany	33	38	43
France	21	26	31
Italy	23	26	27
Poland	17	22	26
Spain	14	19	16
U.S.S.R.	13	14	23
Australia	12	16	11
U.S.A.	12	22	24
Argentina	12	16	20
Canada	11	21	24
S. Africa	11	16	15
India	11	16	—

These figures are, of course, no measure of the food supplies of the world. Millions of people never see or use these grains, and there is no means of knowing either the total amount, or the varieties, of food grown. What these records do show, however, is that these islands—the British Isles—have the most fertile soil in the world, and are most nearly approached in this respect by Germany. Germany, though, is no longer in control of her own country, and we stand alone. It is startling to reflect that out of the first six countries named above, Eire has left the Empire, Germany is in ruins, France hovers on the brink, Italy grows more and more communistic each day that passes, and Poland is occupied by Russia.

The position, then, is that these islands, with their fertile soil and ageing population, provide a most attractive bait for the possibly rising, and, to us, threatening, races of the world. Our problem is to defend ourselves and to prevent even the possibility, under any circumstances, of our people collapsing through shortage of food, a contingency which they have already had to face, and from which they have barely escaped, twice within the last thirty years. To effect this the first steps would appear to be to keep our soil as rich and fertile as possible, and to waste no land,

no labour and no time in growing the very maximum amount of food that our bountiful land will give. And time seems to be very important.

PARLIAMENT

(continued from page 3).

tons; South Africa, 200,000 tons; Mauritius, 475,000 tons; Fiji, 150,000 tons. If this tonnage is not agreed and if concessions are made to the West Indies, these other Commonwealth exporters will demand consideration on the same scale, and therefore—

Mr. De la Bère: Why not take all the sugar?

Mr Evans: —we feel that on the whole this is a very fair agreement, and that it is as far as we can go.

Mr. Stanley: Since the hon. Member has found it possible to make an extra allocation of sugar in the case of British Honduras without, presumably, having any ill effects on the other Colonies, why is it not possible to have an adequate allocation for the British West Indies?

Mr. Evans: This, of course, does raise very large issues, as the right hon. Gentleman will understand. Britain cannot be a high price consumer and a low cost producer. Therefore, this question has to be viewed in relation to our need to be able to export at competitive prices. . . .

Sir Peter Macdonald: Why should we still be tied to Cuba as a source of supply of sugar, when our own Colonies are restricted in their production and devaluation of the £ sterling has imposed very great hardship on some of our West Indian countries owing to the fact that they have to deal with dollar areas? Will the hon. Gentleman allow these facts to be taken into consideration, and ask this delegation to come to this country and consider the whole problem concerning the West Indies?

Mr. Evans: We should be very happy indeed to take very much more sugar than we are at present getting from Commonwealth suppliers. I do not want to appear discourteous to our West Indian friends. If they feel, in the light of all that has been said, that they still want to come, then, if they come, we shall be happy to receive them, but I hope they will not come at any rate, until the end of April.

Mr. Eden: May I ask either the Leader of the House or the Prime Minister, as I do not think any of us feel very happy about the proposition that representatives of the West Indies may come here but all has been settled before they arrive, whether, in view of the immense importance of this question to their economy and the admitted increased difficulties they have had to face since devaluation, the Government will not reconsider this question, invite them to come and reserve a final decision until after the discussions have taken place with the West Indian representatives?

The Lord President of the Council (Mr. Herbert Morrison): This matter was very carefully considered. We had to make a balance between the various Commonwealth countries with the greatest care. Obviously, we did not wish to deny the right of our friends in Jamaica to come and talk with us if they wished, but it would really be wrong to suspend the negotiations for the purposes of that delegation; otherwise we shall prejudice the balance with other Commonwealth countries, and the rights of these countries to argue their case. That was the difficulty we were in. On the other hand, when we finally had to consider whether, if they sent representatives, we should talk to them or not, we felt we had to say to them that we could not hold out hope that they would get additional orders.

Mr. Stanley: Is it not a fact that there is a very considerable pool not allocated to Commonwealth countries

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that could be allocated without interfering with anyone's share. Can the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that there is no secret undertaking given to Cuba as to the amount of sugar we are to purchase from her, which is the reason that prevents an extra allocation within the Commonwealth?

Mr. Morrison: I do not know anything about a secret undertaking to Cuba. There is a margin, it is true, but it is quite a limited margin. I venture to say that it is desirable, in the interests of the consumer, that there shall be some free play in the markets in order that we can check up on bulk purchase agreements. I would remind Members opposite that at the election they denounced the whole of this bulk purchasing business, but that they are now complaining there is not enough of it.

Mr. Gammans: Has the hon. Member taken the trouble to find out how strong have been the expressions of public opinion in the West Indies of the negotiations up to now? Does he realise what a very bad effect it will have on Imperial relations if the elected delegation of this Colony comes over to this country and the Government refuse to do anything except entertain them?

Mr. Evans: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Harrison: Will my hon. Friend say, in view of our urgent need for more sugar, how it comes about that he has put a ceiling of 640,000 tons on the West Indian production, whereas in 1948 we were importing no less than 790,000 tons? What is the reason for this considerable reduction in the amount permitted under this agreement from the West Indies?

Mr. Evans: I must point out that we shall not be getting from the Commonwealth, including the West Indies, the tonnage of sugar we should be very happy to take, not even at the end of 1952.

Mr. De la Bère: Why not take the lot?

Major Legge-Bourke: In view of the fact that we export quite a considerable amount of sugar from this country in the year, will the hon. Gentleman say whether the result of this new proposal will be that we shall be exporting or re-exporting more sugar than we were before, or shall we give more sugar to the consumers who really want it?

Mr. Evans: We shall certainly hope to export as much. It is very important that we should maintain our export market, but it has to be pointed out that included in this tonnage allowance is 300,000 tons for Canada. We guarantee it, but Canada does not guarantee us that she will take it. There is an element of risk even in the figures which are complained of.

Captain Crookshank: At the end of it all are the people of this country going to have their sugar ration increased? Is it going to remain the same or is it going to be decreased?

Mr. Evans: That is a different question.

Mr. Peter Smithers: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the very serious political consequences which might follow from the announcement he has made, and that in the eyes of many people in the West Indies, rightly or wrongly, the

good faith of the Government is involved in view of the statement made by the Minister at the end of the negotiations last summer? What action does he propose to take to make sure that our good faith is re-established in the eyes of the population of the West Indies?

Mr. Evans: All fair-minded persons who have any knowledge of this subject are bound to recognise that the Government's proposals are eminently fair.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House what the Government are doing to persuade the sugar importing Dominions—he mentioned one, Canada—to give an undertaking to give priority to Empire sugar to stop over-production in the period ahead?

Mr. Evans: As well as ourselves, Canada gives a very substantial preference.

Mr. Marlowe: Is not the truth of the whole matter that the Government are deliberately limiting the sugar ration, because an increase in it would involve an extra food subsidy and the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not allow it?

Mr. Evans: No, that is not true.

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