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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

BRITISH COLUMBIA: In view of the present elections it should not be necessary to state again that the Social Credit Secretariat endorses neither the 'platform' nor the methods of the 'Social Credit Party' of British Columbia.

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Whatever its imperfections, the general scheme of systematics favoured by botanists and zoologists has at least the advantage to recommend it that its use favours ready identification of specimens by reference not primarily to the dogmas which inspired its elaboration but rather to essential and constant features of the specimens themselves. But the dogmas are never too far away to be quickly revived in the mind of the practitioner, and (if he is any good) identified as well.

It seems to us a pity that there is no comparable system of ideological systematics and that we cannot thus match *Paphiopedilum x Minos Westfield* var., with *Homo catholicus* or *Homo gnosticus* var. We should not waste too much time on "var." "Var," we recognise, we have always with us; but, however high in the ascendancy "var" might rise, in keeping with modern "trends," we should concentrate on the specific. But we should know what to do about quite a lot of people, and we should be facilitated in our efforts to let others know too.

Mr. Frank Chodorov, for example. Mr. Chodorov writes for *Human Events*. We have at times quoted him. He addressed the Gold Standard League Convention in Washington on May 6, undeterred by his own youthful experience (which he recounted) that the more he read—and talked—about money, the more confused he got. We doubt whether his audience, if it was what we picture it as being, was greatly disturbed on that account, or would have been had he given it any ground for suspecting that he had recovered from his confusion. Of the two, the latter would probably have caused the greater resentment, not to say hostility.

If there is anything which a convention which contains even a minority of persons whom money does not confuse does like to hear it is that money (in this case 'convertibility') should be unhampered in the restraint which 'it' is able to impose on the power of governments. "We must, above all, recognise," said Mr. Chodorov, "that the State is ever the enemy of Society."—You see how innocently Society and the manipulators of people's credit are made to appear synonymous expressions (by someone who, in his youth "got confused about money"). The State's reign is "tyranny": the reign of the Monopoly of Credit is

—"Freedom." "There is nothing wrong with money that freedom will not cure." True! True!—but, who is "Freedom"?

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An article in the *Jewish Chronicle* for May 2, entitled "South Africa's Constitutional Crisis" is from the Johannesburg correspondent of the newspaper and is marked "Copyright," which means that we should transgress if we quoted more than a sixth of it. Very well, we won't. Uncovered by the reminder was a telegram from the same source, published in the *Jewish Chronicle* for March 28, claiming that a pamphlet by Professor Denis Victor Cohen, 35-year-old Jewish Professor of Commercial and Industrial Law at Cape Town, on "Parliamentary Sovereignty and the Entrenched Sections of the South Africa Act," "formed the basis of the Supreme Court's judgment."

Mr. Malan and the Constitution

The Editor, *The Social Crediter*,

Dear Sir,

May I briefly refer to your friendly reference to my *Truth* article, "South Africa By Torchlight"? The campaign which I referred to as being conducted in the interests of World Jewry was that which is directed against "racial discrimination" in the world at large and not specifically in South Africa. It is true that I found a nexus between that campaign and the South African agitation, but in as far as the *genuine* loyalists in the Torch Commando are *genuinely* agitating against Dr. Malan's tampering with the Constitution they are acting in an honourable cause. I did not seek to discredit the opposition movement in its totality, but rather to point out that some very dubious elements were taking part in it. What I do seek to discredit in its entirety is the larger campaign against "racial discrimination," believing it to have no purpose other than to break down the pride of race and the sense of nationhood of Gentile people and thus remove all possible impediment to world rule by Jewish financial power.

Yours, etc.,

A. K. Chesterton

We thoroughly appreciate Mr. Chesterton's position, and also what we are inclined to call his dilemma, which is our own. In the fore-front of our mind is that restatement of Gresham's law which may be expressed as "Bad policies drive out good."—Editor, *T.S.C.*

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: April 21, 1952.

Empire Settlement Bill

(Debate continued: Mr. Donald Chapman is speaking):—

... This is the question, therefore, I want to pose. What kind of migration do we need to help the sterling area to preserve its immunity from the movements in world trade, of which the United States will be the main source? That is the problem, and that is the only real reason for altering the present balance of population inside the Commonwealth. We need to know whether our policy will help us to meet our trading problems with the rest of the world. When that is analysed, it comes down to the problem of the American impact on the rest of the world and how we can adjust ourselves to it.

Let me give a few background facts before I say what effect this has upon our migration policy. The size of the United States can be judged by comparing its gross national product—its national income—with that of other countries. In 1938, for example, in comparison with the whole of Western Europe plus Canada—I do not have the figures for the sterling area—the size of the United States was about double. By 1951, it is three times as great. The gross national income of the United States is now 330 billion dollars, and that of Western Europe 104 billion dollars. By compound interest and at the present rates of expansion, the United States will soon have advanced to four times the size of Western Europe and Canada, and in the 1960s to five times, and even six times as great.

We have seen by our own unfortunate experiences the impact that the United States movements can have on the whole of the rest of the world. Take an American recession like the one which occurred in 1931. The result of that recession was that American imports from the sterling area dropped to 20 per cent. of their former level. The result of the 1938 recession in the United States was a fall to something like 50 per cent. of their imports from the sterling area. Even a minor recession like that of 1949, when there was a falling off in purchasing by the United States, meant a drop of 20 per cent. in purchases from the sterling area. That is the kind of impact that American movements can have upon us.

In 1950 and 1951, exactly the same thing happened. In 1950 we had a boom in the sterling area. Our products were selling at high prices as the result of post-Korean re-armament. We were reaping the advantages of devaluation and we cut our dollar imports. It was a boom year for sterling's trading position. But in 1951 the reverse happened. The situation was reversed with the cessation of American stockpiling and the consequent slump in prices of sterling raw materials; then in addition we had a carry-over from 1950—a hangover, it might be called—of too high a volume of purchasing by the Australian Government, and by ourselves, also, from the rest of the world. But the same lesson is present: that if there is a movement mainly in the American economy, we suffer very greatly indeed. In 1951, we lost £600 million worth of gold and we had to make the panic cuts in our imports.

In these circumstances, what is the temptation that faces

us? Is it to say that what we have to do through migration policy in the British Commonwealth is to make it into a self-sufficient bloc in the rest of the world in order to isolate ourselves, to immunise ourselves, from American recession; that the whole essence of our migration policy should be to get ourselves into a full employment bloc as the sterling area, as the British Commonwealth, so that we are then quite immunised from these movements in the American economy. That would be the only justification we can see for the kind of migration that is talked about sentimentally on both sides of the House.

When hon. Members say that a high population in this country is too precarious, what is meant is that, at bottom, the problem facing us is to get ourselves protection against movements in world trade that inflict themselves on this country from time to time with disastrous consequences. To take the argument to its next stage, I repeat that it means that we then have to envisage trying to make the sterling area immune from these movements.

That temptation is very strong indeed. It might mean that we have to start de-populating this country in such a way that we develop in the Commonwealth resources which will help to feed this country and to supply it with raw materials now bought outside the Commonwealth. On the other hand, we should be de-populating the country of industries which are mainly dependent on sales to the dollar area and areas where the fluctuations in trade would start.

What the sentimentalists are trying to tell us is that in effect we ought to cut the numbers of textile workers here and send them to grow food in Australia, which would be the way of immunising the sterling area from movements in world trade; or that we should send highly productive workers of various kinds to Australia, Canada and New Zealand to produce basic raw materials—primary products—which we need and which the sterling area needs to develop for itself so that its economy can be complementary and less reliant upon outside countries.

To break down the problem in this way exposes how shallow are some of the thoughts which we hear expressed, because we really cannot envisage the kind of movements in population that are involved. It does not help to take a whole industry to Australia. It would only help us in our trading relationships in the world if we develop the kind of things which would make us independent of the dollar area.

In view of this, can we in fact, apart from the difficulties even of transferring the right sort of labour to do the right sort of production, try to make the British Commonwealth into a self-sufficient area, and is that a good thing to do? I do not think it is. I think that what we need at this stage of history is not what has been suggested this evening, an Empire conference on the problem, or an Empire economic conference which would embrace also the problem of migration and the best dispersal of population, but a Western conference on the whole subject. I am not enamoured of conferences generally; and perhaps the time is not yet ripe for such a particular conference.

The essential problem is to get American investors, privately or through their Government, sufficiently interested in coming into the sterling area so that we can develop the whole area together. Then it will be in the interests of American capital and the American nation as a whole to

prevent slump situations hitting the sterling area at every stage. If we could have intergration between the sterling area and the dollar area the United States would be keen to prevent the kind of recession which in 1949—a very minor one—hit us to the extent of a fall of 20 per cent. in purchases by the United States from the overseas sterling area.

I am sure that is the right way of going about it. If we can get the sort of economic study which will show how the Commonwealth is to be developed with American capital and partly with British capital, we can get an interest in the totality of the problem involved and match the effort to that kind of development. But to talk sentimentally in the meantime will not do any good at all. I do not think it would be any good to try to make the sterling area into a full employment bloc cutting off its trading relationship with the rest of the world, because that inevitably will involve us in cutting highly productive labour in industry in this country and sending it to produce, at a lower productive level, raw materials and food in order to make the whole area self-sufficient. In a sense, it would be suicidal and not helping our standard of living to increase at the rate at which it would increase if we could keep the benefits of specialisation we have built up in the British Isles. . .

House of Commons: April 28, 1952.

Transport Fare Increases

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir David Maxwell Fyfe): I beg to move,

That this House approves the action taken by the Minister of Transport to suspend the introduction outside the London area of new railway charges which would have increased disproportionately the cost of season tickets, workmen's fares and concessionary rates for special classes of passenger; upholds the decision that these disproportionate increases should not be applied to railway charges outside the London area; and agrees that means should be sought of applying the same principle, so far as practicable, to the rail and omnibus fares already introduced within the London area.

This Motion, which it falls to me to move in place of my hon. Friend the Minister of Transport, whose illness we all regret so much, invites the House to approve of three main propositions: first, the temporary suspension outside the London area of all increases in railway charges which would otherwise take place under the recently confirmed charges scheme, and which would include disproportionate increases in the cost of season tickets, workmen's fares and concessionary rates for special classes of passenger; secondly, that the decision on these disproportionate increases outside the London area should not be put into force; and thirdly, that means should be sought of applying the same principle, as far as practicable, to the rail and omnibus fares already introduced within the London area.

The principle upon which the Government are acting is that, while the public generally can rightly be called upon to pay the cost of providing them with reasonable transport services, it is unfair to call upon particular classes of passengers to pay increases which are out of all proportion to those applicable to the public generally and which cause an unexpected upset in their daily lives. To give a single example: it is a severe hardship upon a man who has taken his season ticket rate into account in choosing his place of residence to have such an increase as 42 per cent. suddenly added to a figure which may already bulk very large in his

domestic budget. In the Government's view, such increases illustrate the perhaps inevitable tendency of the vast organisations created by the Socialist Government to regard the public as a mere disposable economic unit.

. . . The Government took the view that the fares which the Commission were already charging in London and would charge in the rest of the Country from 1st May were, as I will explain, likely to cause great and undue hardship to a large section of our fellow citizens.

A glance at the provisions of the scheme outside London shows how fully justified was that view. Right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite will have some time today to declare whether they believe that that view was not justified or whether it was justified. We await with interest to hear these declarations, individual or collective. [*Laughter.*] I gather from the laughter that we may wait in vain.

It is essential to remember that, although single and ordinary return fares exist, most people use monthly return tickets. On 1st January, 1952, the Commission had increased the monthly return fares by 10 per cent. When the draft Passenger Charges Scheme was before the Tribunal, the Commission had intimated their intention to make this increase. The Commission were, however, able to make the increase under the authority of their existing powers without waiting for the confirmation of the draft scheme.

Therefore, although the present basis of 2.44d. per mile for third-class ordinary fares is to be reduced to 1.75d. per mile—with liability to increase to 2d. per mile from the beginning of 1953—this will not have the effect which might be supposed because the great bulk of ordinary passengers take monthly return tickets at 1.79d. per mile. In future, there will be no monthly return tickets and the ordinary return fare will be 1.75d. per mile, virtually the same as the old monthly return including the 10 per cent. increase made in January, 1952.

So much for the ordinary fares. The scheme, however, affects season tickets and workmen's fares in two ways. First of all, it permits the alteration of the basic scales by amounts varying from 3 per cent. to 9 per cent. for season tickets and from 6 per cent. to 35 per cent. for workmen's fares, according to the distance travelled. But secondly—this is in addition—it allows the Commission discretion to raise sub-standard fares to standard provided that this, taken in conjunction with the increase in the basic scale which I have just mentioned, does not exceed a limit of 42 per cent. It is in these classes of case that some of the most acute hardships arise.

The scheme also leaves the Commission free to abolish all concession fares, subject again to a maximum increase of 42 per cent. In a number of cases increases of this order would actually occur. These include anglers, commercial travellers, members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, members of the Mercantile Marine—[*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen may laugh, but this is a rather serious thing for the members of the Mercantile Marine. . . This includes members of the Mercantile Marine travelling on leave, shipwrecked mariners, daily return tickets for entertainers and music hall artists, return tickets for workers on the land—I do not know if they have any interest for hon. Gentlemen opposite—and visitors to children at ap-

(continued on page 6.)

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Saturday, May 17, 1952.

"The Tablet" and "The Times"

We trust that, in its present mood of inexpressible contrition, *The Tablet* will not suspect us of an ulterior motive in our quoting from its issue of May 10 a passage intended, obviously, to refer only to the past history of another newspaper, *The Times*. It is as follows, signed "D.W.":

"There is a great moral for the future in the brief editorship of Barrington Ward: that newspaper staffs ought not to be collected to be the instruments of a particular editor and policy. The business of a newspaper is with the truth; Delane defined it in words quoted at the end of this *History*, 'To seek out truth above all things, and to present to the readers not such things as statecraft would wish them to know, but the truth as near as he can ascertain it.' The best that can be said of only too many of *The Times'* foreign leaders under Barrington Ward, even after the war dangers, which always justify a certain economy of truth, were past, is that they were what statecraft wished the public to know. They show the same approach, in a succession of different countries and contexts; always the Communists are described in euphonious and misleading terms as something less than communists, and their victims are enjoined to trust them and work with them towards free elections. As country after country was brought under Communist rule, *The Times* of those years played the part of anæsthetist to the mind and conscience of Britain. The rise of Marxism is as much a dominant feature of the first half of the twentieth century as the German question; and the record of *The Times* is that it was always exceedingly well informed and clear-sighted, down to the time when it mattered most to see clearly. When the Marxist danger became really great, *The Times* became confused. *The Times'* readers came out of the war predisposed to underrate alike the malignancy of Communist hostility and the importance of Christian anti-Communist parties. . . .

"*The Times* was the voice of cultured and educated Britain, and twice a year, at Easter and Christmas, it continued to give its first leader to proclaiming the fundamental truth and importance of the Christian religion; but neither the educated nor the Christians in Central Europe were supported against their antihumanist and antichristian adversaries. . . ."

Without Comment

Mr. Cyril Osborne, elected as a Conservative to represent the Louth Division at the General election last year, was a member of the two preceding Parliaments. He is a

stockbroker and company director interested in textiles and grocery. The following letter to *The Times* appeared in its issue of May 7:—

"Sir,—The International Materials Conference report, issued last week, has received so little attention either in the Press or in Parliament that its importance is not appreciated by the general public. The conference was called in February, 1951, to stop the mad scramble for scarce raw materials which resulted from the Korean war. Its task was to allocate these scarce commodities and to check rising prices in a rearming world. Thanks largely to Anglo-American co-operation, it has been fairly successful. The problem now facing the free world is exactly reversed. By the end of 1953 the American rearmament programme will have been completed and the free world's defence will then be on a maintenance basis. The urgent demand for raw materials will, therefore, no longer exist. In these circumstances, how are we to deal with the resulting surpluses and the falling prices? That is a task that should now be put before the conference.

"Peace in Korea could bring absolute chaos to the economy of the western world, and it is of the utmost urgency that thought should be given to the grave problems that peace would bring. But even without a Korean peace the mere threat of a slackening in rearmament could bring disaster to world markets, because the difference between slump and boom is only the marginal 10 per cent., as was proved in 1948. In that year there was a slight setback in the American economy, but it resulted in a drop from 180 to 120 in the commodity price level. The mere completing of the rearmament drive, therefore, could produce such a setback in commodity prices that widespread unemployment both here and in America might easily result. Because of that threat and the social evils that it would bring, the most urgent and immediate thought should be given at the highest levels. The recent fall in some commodity prices from the crazy heights of 1951 has made us forget the immensely greater falls that are still possible, as the following examples indicated:—

Commodity	1938	To-day
Wool	21d.	116d.
Cotton	5d.	41d.
Rubber	7d.	32d.
Lead	£15	£163
Copper	£45	£231
Zinc	£15	£190
Steel	£8	£25
Sulphur	£4	£15

"Even after allowing for the fact that sterling has depreciated to one-third of its pre-war value, it is obvious from these figures that an awful slump involving millions of unemployed could develop. Surely there should be international planning for the orderly and organized disposal of surplus strategic stockpiles and the International Materials Conference would seem to be the ideal body for this work, and, therefore, its terms of reference should be broadened for that purpose. The risks of economic collapse are so great that this problem should be receiving the constant attention of the Prime Minister and his colleagues in the Cabinet economic committee."

Decline at Rome: It is Captured

By H. SWABEY.

Gibbon gives, quite often, more instruction about the eighteenth century than about the fourth. An assassin, instigated by the Romans, provokes him to say that, "the violation of the laws of humanity and justice betrayed their secret apprehension of the weakness of the declining empire." The word *humanity* since his day has unfortunately been restricted to members of a particular people, and is now a one way term. He compares a natural calamity, such as an earthquake, with a war, adding that wars "are now moderated by the prudence or humanity of the princes of Europe . . . The laws and manners of modern nations protect the safety and freedom of the vanquished soldier; and the peaceful citizen has seldom reason to complain that his life, or even his fortune, is exposed to the rage of war." He is disgusted at the pastoral nations for eating horse-flesh, "which in every age and country has been proscribed by the civilized nations of Europe and Asia." These civilized nations are the Greeks, Persians and Chinese, and their successors, Gibbon explains.

The barbarians pressed at the frontiers: "But the most experienced statesman of Europe has never been summoned to consider the propriety, or danger, of admitting, or rejecting, an innumerable multitude of barbarians, who are driven by despair or hunger to solicit a settlement on the territories of a civilized nation." The Goths were allowed over the Danube (375 A.D.), because "the slaves who were decorated with the titles of prefects and generals, dissembled or disregarded the terrors of this national emigration." But when they were admitted, everything was done to infuriate them ("they levied an ungenerous and oppressive tax on the wants of the hungry barbarians"). The Goths were joined by the discontented Thracian gold miners; a weak emperor was egged on to a foolish step: "The vain reproaches of an ignorant multitude hastened the downfall of the Roman empire; they provoked the desperate rashness of Valens." Still heavier pressure was exerted on Neville Chamberlain when he was trying to save the peace. In the end, the Goths "asserted, in the bosom of despotism, the freedom of their domestic Government."

Theodosius was able to protect the empire, during his lifetime, from the worst of its internal and foreign enemies. He suppressed two or three civil wars, and the authority of Ambrose kept a rein on the emperor's power. When Theodosius persecuted some heretics, Ambrose and Martin objected to his extreme measures, with "humane inconsistency." Gibbon notes that "the rude attempts of persecution have been refined and methodized in the holy office." The proud Basil and the poetical Gregory Nazienzenus tried to do for Constantinople what Athanasius had done for Alexandria. But Ambrose, of Milan, takes Gibbon's eye, and he gives his reply to a heretical emissary: "His life and fortune were in the hands of the emperor; but he would never betray the church of Christ, or degrade the dignity of the episcopal character. In such a cause, he was prepared to suffer . . ." When a band of Goths was sent to capture the church, Ambrose met them at the door and repelled them, "thundering against them a sentence of excommunication." We may contrast the advice of a modern bishop *not to twist the lion's tail too hard.*

Ambrose went too far for Gibbon when he intervened on behalf of a bishop who had burned down a synagogue; but is commended for imposing public penance on the emperor for the Thessalonian massacre. A result was the edict "which interposes a salutary interval of thirty days between the sentence and the execution." Ambrose later rejected a usurper's gifts, "with a manly freedom," and interceded for the people after the usurper's fall. Gibbon has probably found the cause of persecution, applied to pagans in this instance, when he says: "The laws of Moses, and the examples of Jewish history, were hastily, perhaps erroneously applied, by the clergy, to the mild and universal reign of Christianity." But he omits Ambrose's interest in economics.

The Army was declining rapidly, but the "secret and destructive poison" of court and city life will hardly account for it alone. Gibbon says, "their pusillanimous indolence may be considered as the immediate cause of the downfall of the empire." Military discipline was undermined, it may be noted, by the Nuremburg trials; and a famous general is reported to have said, *We had better win the next war or we shall be hanged.* Some might prefer the eighteenth century conception of justice which had then some mutuality about it.

Gibbon's religious statements are much cooler than those of his editor, who cannot see any difference between authority and ecclesiastical power. In persecuting, Gibbon remarks, "the Christian emperors . . . violated the precepts of humanity and of the gospel." A further reproach is mild enough: "the worship of saints and relics corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model."

But, in 395, "the genius of Rome expired with Theodosius." Avaricious local tyrants caused trouble in the East and in Africa. In short, "At a time when the only hope of delaying the ruin of the Roman name depended on the firm union, and reciprocal aid, of all the nations to whom it had been gradually communicated, the subjects [of the Eastern and Western emperors] were instructed, by their respective masters, to view each other in a foreign, and even hostile light; to rejoice in their mutual calamities, and to embrace, as their faithful allies, the barbarians, whom they excited to invade the territories of their countrymen." Some of the European follies of 1939-45 *etc.*, leap to mind. Alaric was soon in Greece and eventually (410) in Rome, and the narrative gives details of an empire falling to pieces, its more distant territories abandoned.

Gibbon occasionally raises the curtain behind the puppets. In Spain at this time, the revenue *could no longer purchase* military service. In Rome, "the senators, from the first age of the republic, increased their patrimony and multiplied their clients by the lucrative practise of usury; and the obsolete laws were eluded or violated . . . the plebians of Rome . . . had been oppressed, from the earliest times, by the weight of debt and usury; and the husbandman, during the term of his military service, was obliged to abandon the cultivation of his farm." As a result, land came into a very few hands, and in the age before the fall of the republic, "only two thousand citizens were possessed of an independent substance." Such was the real Rome which "had attracted the vices of the universe . . . : The intemperance of the Gauls, the cunning and levity of the Greeks, the savage obstinacy of the Egyptians and Jews, the servile temper of the Asiatics, and the dissolute, effeminate

prostitution of the Syrians." When the people were not diverted by the Circus, they were indulged in *licentious farce, effeminate music*.

We learn that in Spain (around 410 A.D.), free poverty was preferred to the cares of Roman tribute. Britain also revolted and enjoyed some forty years of freedom, and the Roman emperor was much too late in his constitutional reform of convening an annual assembly of seven provinces, which roughly corresponded with France.

In the East the equivalent of the modern thought-police was established ("*thoughts and actions* ought to be punished with equal severity"), while at Constantinople, "the tables of the bankers . . . were covered with gold and silver." John Chrysostom was driven from Constantinople, after a stormy period as archbishop (398-404). But a royal lady's administration gave the East forty years peace, which was only broken by a war with Persia "aggravated by commercial disputes." The Jews had an eastern law which exempted them from municipal offices, and some forty years later they produced it in Italy and the emperor had to invalidate it by a special edict. Meanwhile, Italy too was guided by female councils, and both empires neglected St. Paul's warning to the Philippians, *Beware of the concision*.

The Romans had unfortunately lost the art of dividing and dissipating the barbarians, and Genseric led the Vandals to Africa, where he was joined by the Donatists (puritans of the time). Augustine died during the siege of Hippo (430). Gibbon remarks, "The intolerant spirit, which disgraced the triumph of Christianity, contributed to the loss of the most important province of the West." Attila meanwhile was assembling the Huns.

Gibbon says that the laws of war ("that restrain the exercise of national rapine and murder") are founded on the hope of permanent benefits and the fear of retaliation. He adds that these considerations are almost unknown in the pastoral state of nations, and compares the Huns with the Moguls and Tartars. Tamurlane or Attila would equally deserve the epithet of The Scourge of God. Yet the modern exponents of war on women and children have emulated the devastation of Attila, who was occasionally thwarted of his prey.

Among the *vices of a declining empire*, Gibbon notes "the intolerable weight of taxes rendered still more oppressive by the intricate or arbitrary modes of collection; the obscurity of numerous and contradictory laws." Extensive territory and vast tribute were granted to the king of the Huns. Another of his conditions is contemporary enough: "that all the barbarians, who had deserted the standard of Attila, should be restored, without any promise or stipulation of pardon." (446 A.D.)

PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3.)

proved schools—surely one of the most poignant of all these classes. . .

. . . Today hon. Members have a simple duty before them. The choice is whether workmen's tickets, season tickets and useful concession fares should stay and, if they stay that the increase made to them should be, broadly, in accord with the increase to ordinary fares, or whether it should be so much greater as to cause undue hardship to those who use and rely upon them. A refusal to vote for the Motion—it matters not by what Parliamentary manoeuvre it is accompanied—is a vote for the continuance of that hardship. I dare hon. Gentlemen opposite to vote against the Motion.

Mr. Herbert Morrison (Lewisham, South): . . . Section 4 of the Transport Act, 1947, was framed for a specific purpose, namely, to enable the Minister, without interfering with the day to day activities of the Transport Commission, to give a direction on general matters when the overriding interests of the people required that it should be given. It was not an instrument to put in his hand to use for purely party purposes. To check party motives, the wording of the Section was carefully framed. The Minister was not to give such a direction in the first place unless he had previously consulted the Commission and, secondly, it was only to be a direction which he could give, if I may quote the words of the subsection again, "in relation to matters which appear to him to affect the national interest."

If he gives a general direction without prior consultation with the Commission, such a direction is plainly unlawful and beyond his powers—

. . . Equally, if the Minister gives a direction which is not actuated by a genuine belief that he is serving the general public interest as distinct from a purely partisan party interest, he is going outside the powers given to him by the Act and is doing something which is plainly unlawful.

Sir H. Williams: If the right hon. Gentleman holds that view, would it not be quite simple for him to get some of his friends of approved status to get an injunction in the High Court?

Mr. Morrison: That is an extraordinary doctrine from the hon. Member, who likes to be a parliamentarian. Here I am raising a perfectly legitimate Parliamentary point, and he says keep quiet, do not raise it in the House of Commons, go into the courts of law.

Sir H. Williams rose—

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Member is seeking to deny the rights of Parliament, and to refer the matter to the courts.

Mr. Reader Harris (Heston and Isleworth): It is the courts that interpret the law.

Mr. Morrison: It is no use the hon. Member saying that the courts interpret the law. Of course they do. But if the Opposition have, in their opinion, reason to believe that the Government have acted *ultra vires* the law we not only have the right but the duty to challenge them in the House of Commons, and that is what we are doing this afternoon.

I wish to ask the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport this direct and pertinent question. Did the Minister, or did he not, consult,

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as the Section requires, the Transport Commission before he made his direction, and if he did when did he do so, and will he produce any correspondence between the Minister and the Commission that he did in fact consult it? [*Interruption.*] There will be an opportunity for the Parliamentary Secretary to reply. I am sure he will answer what is a perfectly straight and clear question with a straight and clear reply one way or the other.

To be frank, we find it difficult to believe that any such consultation did take place. We find it equally difficult to believe that if it took place the Transport Commission concurred with the Minister's proposal to give the general direction that we are discussing. I agree at once that merely because the Transport Commission disagrees does not prevent the Minister from giving directions, and ought not to do so. But the House and the general public are entitled to know the contents of any document containing the Transport Commission's views and what was said at any interview between the Minister of Transport and the Commission. . .

. . . The Government say that they are going to do something about London. We shall see; I do not see what they can do within the law. It may be that they will have to bring in a Bill about it, and, of course, we would have every sympathy with our provincial, Scottish and Welsh fellow citizens if they were unfairly treated in this way. Fares have a direct and noticeable effect on the cost of living, and we are much concerned, perhaps more concerned, than most people that the Transport Commission and the Transport Executives should be efficient and economical, because we want public ownership to be successful and for people to know that it is successful. But we do not want these things to be achieved at the expense of the workpeople employed who also have a right to be considered. . .

. . . Naturally, I wish the publicly-owned industries to pay their way and even to make a profit that can help them in the future, but the last and silliest thing to do with this great undertaking, which will prevent it paying its way, is to restore the cut-throat competition between road and rail through the de-nationalisation of road transport or road passenger traffic. That is madness from the public point of view.

Let me tell the Government that any such policy—and we recognise that what Parliament decides in the end must be accepted—will undoubtedly be bitterly resented by many workers in this great industry who, hitherto, have been the victims of this kind of thing. "Modern Transport," a non-party weekly trade paper, in its leader on 26th April, regretted that the Government are going backwards in this matter. Therefore, if the Government pursue that course, as they say they will, they are accentuating the difficulties of the British Transport Commission and the Executives.

But they have not waited for that. They have increased petrol taxation, which has added to the cost of the Commission. I gather that for the London Transport Executive the cost of fuel oil is now 4½d. a car mile against a 1¼d. in 1938-39 and that has got to be met. Governments are beginning to look at petrol as if it were whiskey or some other luxury. Its heavy taxation adds a great burden to our transport charges. Moreover, the Budget itself, by increases in prices consequent upon the new policy of food charges, is an incentive to the workers in this as in other industries to make claims for additional wages. Con-

sequently, the Government seem to be doing everything they can to make it more difficult for the Commission to pay its way. . . .

. . . But we are ready to consider changes which experience and the public interest show to be desirable. Any Socialist who contended that merely because a Socialist Government passed a Socialist Act it was perfect and always would be perfect would be unreasonable, and none of us should take that view. We are ready, of course, to consider modifications in the public interest; but I am bound to say that there is not much in what is indicated by the Government that would be of that order.

We believe that co-ordination and pooling of resources is right. We are inclined to think that, if anything, the Transport Act, 1947, ought to have gone further in the direction of co-ordinating road commercial transport. But we were reasonable people in that Government and we sometimes made concessions to opponents. We believe that this big comprehensive, co-ordinated transport system is the best way of securing an efficient transport, carrying anything or anybody to and from anywhere at the lowest possible price.

It is because of what we think of the action of the Government in this matter and the policy of the Government, indicated in political speeches and in the speech from the Throne, because we believe the Government have been jumping about before thinking and have been animated by partisan instead of social and national considerations that we are moving this Amendment and asking the House to give it their support.

Sir Herbert Williams (Croydon, East): I wish that when the Government of New Zealand were gracious enough to present the two Boxes which stand on the Table they had put a clock on each in order that right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Benches should realise what infernally long speeches they make. The time has come when occupants of the Front Benches might give a little more consideration to providing a greater opportunity for those who sit in other parts of the House. . . .

—When I raised with him [Mr. Herbert Morrison] the issue whether the action of the Government was legal or not, I suggested that the proper place to find that out was in a court of justice, but the right hon. Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. Morrison), slipped away from that issue. No resolution of this House determines what is the law. An Act of Parliament does. If it is the case that the right hon. Gentleman thinks the Government have acted improperly, the courts alone are the place to test the point. But the right hon. Gentleman turned away from that point because he knew that what he was raising was completely false.

The right hon. Gentleman is a distinguished Member of Parliament and a member of a great political party which declared that the nationalisation of the means of production distribution and exchange should be controlled democratically. But he is now saying that nationalisation must be without democracy and that it would be absolutely monstrous if Parliament decided these things. Who is to decide? This Commission has no annual meeting and no shareholders. The members of the Commission do not come up for annual election and they are under no control of any kind whatsoever. In other words, the Socialist Party have completely abandoned their concept of democracy in relation to economic matters. They stand for the nationalisation of

everything. And it will be no use to have a Parliament when everything is nationalised because Parliament will have nothing to do. That is exactly what has happened in Russia, and at the end of their street is the Russian system. . .

Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton (Inverness): . . . Nationalisation of transport is a phrase that is being conjured with quite a lot. The right hon. Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. H. Morrison) said that he wanted to see transport in this country efficient and economic, and that he wanted public transport to succeed, at reasonable rates. Does the right hon. Gentleman want public transport, or just transport to succeed? Is he prejudiced into thinking that it must be public transport? Our experience of public transport, certainly in the North of Scotland, is most unhappy. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has said, the public have been treated by this Transport Commission as a disposable economic unit.

Right hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to have created a kind of Frankenstein monster which has almost entirely destroyed the relationship between the public and the operators, except by way of consumers' councils and consultative councils, which are a kind of cow-catcher to get the public out of the road. The best access for the public is through their Members of Parliament. Lord Hurcombe knows how to work the machine and he is very courteous. He does everything he can, including the stopping of trains, like the 7-20 from Inverness, and the reporting of trains being snowed up for 28 hours. We have to get the information from Lord Hurcombe because it has been hitherto impossible to get it from the Minister of Transport.

I have had urgent letters sent to me recently by the Chamber of Commerce in Inverness, saying that the cost of transport to the North of Scotland is simply killing all industry in the north. The letters have been accompanied by other letters giving evidence from 24 firms in the North of Scotland saying exactly the same thing. I want to give one example of how this monopoly in transport is hitting small industries in the north.

A number of hon. Members have mentioned the old idea that we ought to limit the number of "C" licences. I have had a letter from a man who started a factory in Inverdale, in Wester Ross, and who says that he will be having his own transport because road haulage rates are prohibitive. He gives an example. When he wanted his factory built, he knew that the material was available in Glasgow, so he asked the British Road Services to bring it. They said that they were not in his area and suggested that some fish people could run it up. They actually had "C" licences but they were not allowed to convey those things, although they returned empty.

Eventually, the haulage contractors in Glasgow said that they would do the job if they could get permission. They applied to the Road Haulage Executive for the permission. This was turned down, and finally British Road Services said they would do it but must have 100 per cent. above the normal haulage rate. That is simply holding the customer in the north to ransom. Therefore, as hon. Members may imagine, we are not enamoured in the North of Scotland with a so-called integrated transport system.

I have quoted some examples of what it is like to travel from the North of Scotland to the south. It is bad enough

when one is alive, but when one is dead it is even worse. To transport by British Railways remains for burial from London to Portree a charge of £80 15s. has been levied. That seems to me quite prohibitive. It certainly does not pay for a Highlander to die in London. I agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite who called for a review of the financial basis of the transport provisions, but let us get a truer approach to the transport system of this country and judge it by the merits of efficiency and economy. That is what we really want, and none of us has any real reason to believe that the word "nationalisation" will bring it.

I have spoken of the North of Scotland. I believe we have great opportunities in that part of the world if we take the right steps, but at present transport is killing development. I do not want to speak from a parochial point of view. It is the best thing for Britain that Scotland should stand on its own feet and enjoy a flourishing economy, and on those words I will close.

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