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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

"I am hoping that some of these days Mrs. Chamberlain will allow me to tell the full story of what happened on the night her husband returned from Munich. It is a hidden chapter of history that clamours for the light."—So Mr. Beverley Baxter after doing his duty by the new C.H.s. But if it is important, why wait? The whole world knows there is a cesspool of iniquity which, if it were drained (never mind about distributing its contents on the heads of the iniquitous), would be the end of an age of corruption. It is not Mrs. Chamberlain's secret, any more than it is Mr. Beverley Baxter's. Why this incessant "If-only-I-were-to-tell-you"? Why not tell and be damned, Mr. Baxter? *Somebody* is going to be damned, anyhow: millions await the fruits of your self-sacrifice, and what is one weighed against so many—and one who *can*, eh?—or so you say.

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How fast times move! Fast upon the Two-penny Daily Worker, the Three-penny Daily Worker, and fast upon the Three-penny Daily Worker the Four-penny Daily Worker, and fast upon the Four-penny Daily Worker, "Haley's Comet." We owe the hot news to our esteemed contemporary, *Truth*.

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We note that "tribal subsistence agriculture" is the designation chosen by the national executive committee of the Labour Party to contrast with the kind of economy from which Dr. Malan is trying, however clumsily, to extricate white (and black) South Africa. White South Africa (and black) enjoys (or doesn't) the Mond-Turner economy for which (thanks to the late Sir Ben Turner and the outwitting of the Labour Party of his day) all good Labourists stand solidly behind I.C.I. whose products are essential to "modern agricultural technology" as well as to modern military technology and indeed the whole outfit of modern rule by function. There is nothing 'curious' in the fact that while the Labour Party was passing resolutions against "tribal subsistence agriculture" and against the policies of the Malan Government, the T.U.C. was also sitting and "speaking in the name of eight million members of the British trade union movement" against the "violation of the principles of freedom of association, social justice and human dignity" and against the policies of the Malan Government. No one can "speak for eight million people"; but it is fairly certain (unless the human race has indeed lost its senses) that, given the chance, any eight million people to be found anywhere in any sort of conjunction,

would prefer the life of thirteenth century England to life in the Napalm age: ("By their fruits ye shall know them").

The Governor-General of South Africa has given his assent to the High Court of Parliament Bill by which Dr. Malan has succeeded in establishing a rival judicature to the Supreme Court (a dangerous expedient), and Dr. Malan is stated to be contemplating a general election next May. There is not much doubt who decides general elections, in South Africa as elsewhere. There are plenty of signs *how* they will decide in South Africa, and Dr. Malan has short of eleven months to outwit them. There is only one way of doing that, and that is to choose a battle ground which is not theirs. Further, there is one, and only one battle ground which is not theirs—that from which this journal takes origin and continues to make its stand.

From an Australian Letter

14th April, 1952.

"... As for Butler's budget, it is only the mixture as before. The whole principle is wrong; and the result is as certain to be wrong as the answer to a sum worked out with faulty tables. The perpetual confusion between money, values expressed in monetary units, and *things*, is a guarantee that matters will go from bad to worse.

"It is evident that there is some big influence behind the Eisenhower-for-president campaign; they must be afraid of the wrong man getting in. . . . Sometimes I feel hopeful that the lid may blow off in U.S.A. I certainly would no longer hope for it to blow off in the U.K., or here. But then, if the threat of war is not enough, they can always have war, I suppose (unless there is enough danger at last to the promoters).

"Our butter shortage has become chronic, and the potato shortage recurrent, with smaller intervals. And prices continue to rise. The basic wage, already over £10, is due for revision shortly, and is expected to go up by another 9/-. This will again raise the price of the items on which the wage is based . . . and so, it appears, *ad infinitum*. This is evidently regarded by the economists, *etc.*, as a law of the universe.

"The Federal Minister of Health is trying to encourage an insurance system of hospital benefits, and has imposed fairly heavy charges for hospital attention in Canberra. Private rooms are now to be ten guineas a week, Intermediate eight; I've forgotten the figure for the public wards. But out of Social Service funds the Government will pay eight shillings a day towards this; but will increase this to 12/- to anyone who insures for hospital benefits with an outside

(Continued on page 4.)

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: May 22, 1952.

Fishing Dispute, Iceland (British Losses)

Major Anstruther-Gray asked the Minister of Agriculture if he will give an estimate of the annual loss to British fishing interests that will result from the Government of Iceland's proposals regarding Icelandic territorial waters.

Sir T. Dugdale: It is not possible to give a close estimate, but the quantity of fish taken by British vessels in the waters off Iceland which have now been closed to them was probably about 25,000 tons per annum, or possibly rather more. Some of this loss will be made up by vessels fishing outside the new line or in other waters.

Major Anstruther-Gray: In view of the fact that these are very considerable figures, can my right hon. and gallant Friend give the House an assurance that the last word in this matter has not been spoken between us and the Icelandic Government?

Sir T. Dugdale: Certainly, Sir. The Icelandic Government's reply to the British Government's Note is at present under consideration, and further comment must be deferred until there has been time to study it. I cannot today go further than the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State to the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Hoy) on 19h May.

Mr. G. R. Howard: Would my right hon. and gallant Friend consider some form of sanction against the Icelandic Government if we should not get a satisfactory reply, such as a limit to their vessels fishing off our coasts?

Sir T. Dugdale: I cannot go further than what I have said today.

Mr. Hoy: May I ask the Minister what he meant when he said that this loss might be compensated for by fishing in other grounds? What other fishing grounds will recoup this loss, in view of the fact that all fishing grounds are being over-fished at the present time?

Sir T. Dugdale: As the hon. Member realises, new grounds for fishing are being found every day, and, in addition to this, of course, by closing certain waters round Iceland, it is probable that, just outside the territorial waters, the fishing will be better than it was in the past; but I cannot over-estimate the seriousness which we attach to the position.

World Federation of Scientific Workers

Mr. Field asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds he refused to extend to foreign scientists facilities to attend a meeting of the World Federation of Scientific Workers which was to have been held at Cambridge on 22nd to 23rd March.

Mr. Awbrey asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the foreign members of the Executive Committee of the World Federation of Scientific Workers were not permitted to enter this country to attend a meeting of their committee at Cambridge on 22nd March.

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: I decided that it would not be in the public interest to allow foreigners to come to this

country to attend the proposed meeting of the Executive Council of World Federation of Scientific Workers, which is one of the Communist-dominated international organisations whose primary object is to organise support, under various disguises, for Soviet policy.

Mr. Field: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that there are points of view other than Communist represented on this World Federation, that in course of time those holding those views hope to gain the ascendancy and that his action does not help to that end? Did he see the agenda of the proposed meeting before he banned it?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: The line that I have taken is, I think, well-known to the House. I am prepared to consider the admission of Communists to any *bona fide* British body that wants their attendance. I am not prepared to admit them to a body artificially constituted to make itself a vehicle of Soviet propaganda.

Mr. S. Silverman: Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say when it became part of the Home Secretary's duty, in exercising the discretion which is vested in him in these matters, to consider what he is pleased to call questions of public policy? Was it not always his duty not to put an "iron curtain" round our shores except in cases where the public safety was actually or primarily involved? Was it not always the case that questions of public policy are not to be determined by the Home Secretary of the day, and is not the greatest public interest of this country the preservation of its democratic tradition?

Mr. Field: Did the Home Secretary see the agenda of the proposed meeting before he banned it?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: I did not see the whole agenda, but I was given a synopsis of it and I took that into account.

Mr. Bevan: In view of the fact that it is now universally held that when the Red army came so far to the West it discovered a state of affairs far better than Soviet propaganda gave reason to suppose, would it not be rather better to allow Communists to come here and see the more urbane standards which we enjoy as against the propaganda they get?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: I think I am right in considering the purpose for which these persons are coming. Persons who are coming with the purpose which I have mentioned are not likely to be affected by the considerations stated by the right hon. Gentleman. They do not come in that state of mind; they come in a state of mind to assist Soviet propaganda.

Major Beamish: Was not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) a leading member of the Government who refused to allow foreign Communists to attend the Sheffield Peace Conference?

Mr. S. Silverman: Owing to the extremely unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I give notice that I will raise this matter at an early opportunity on the Adjournment.

Criminal Appeal Court (New Trials)

Lieut-Colonel Lipton asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will introduce legislation to grant the Court of Criminal Appeal the power to order new trial.

Lieut.-Colonel Bromley-Davenport asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider amending the Criminal Justice Act of 1948 to give the Court of Criminal Appeal power, in a proper case, to order a new trial.

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: The general question is at present under consideration in the light of the comments recently made in a debate in another place. In any event, I am not in a position, in view of the congested state of the legislative programme, to hold out any hope of legislation either now or in the near future.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: When the right hon. and learned Gentleman says that the matter is under consideration, can he tell the House exactly what he means, in view of the important issues involved and in view of what sounded like a vague benediction by the Lord Chancellor in another place? Would he arrange for the whole matter to be investigated by an authoritative body so that the House could be told whether there is any reason or need for the suggested reform?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: When I said that the matter was under consideration I had in mind the fact that I listened to—and took part in—the debate on this question in the House, and I happen to know that hon. Gentlemen who took one view when it was discussed are now disturbed as to whether that view was right. I think it is a subject which we should all consider very carefully before we go further in the direction of legislation

Comic Papers

Mr. W. T. Williams asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the disturbing increase in the number of comics offered for sale which depict cruelty, crime and obscenity, what action he proposes to take to make illegal the sale of such literature, so harmful to children.

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: I share the dislike of the hon. Member for this type of vulgar publication, but I have no evidence that delinquency or increased susceptibility to delinquency results from the circulation of this matter. I am, however, considering, in consultation with my right hon. Friends the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Education, whether any and, if so, what, action is called for on our part.

Mr. J. Crowder: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that in various courts it has been suggested that these comic strips do a tremendous amount of harm? I have had many letters from my constituents and I hope that the Home Secretary will do something to stop their publication and, in conjunction with the President of the Board of Trade, their importation. The position has become very serious and people are very worried about it.

Mr. Williams: Is the Minister aware that, in addition to a spate of the most vicious comics from the United States, it is the growing practice of English publishers to publish comics of this kind? Large numbers have come on to the market in the last few months. Is the Minister also aware that the National Union of Teachers are desperately concerned about this matter and that the Canadian Government have been so concerned about it as to introduce a one-Clause Bill to make the sale of these comics illegal? In

view of all this evidence will he consider doing the same thing here, because these things are very damaging?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: The matter is under consideration between the Departments I have mentioned. I will certainly take into account what the hon. Member has said.

Colonel Gomme-Duncan: Can my right hon. and learned Friend say at what stage either crime or obscenity becomes comic?

Mr. Ede: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman circulate chief officers of police, drawing their attention to their existing powers for dealing with this matter?

Sir D. Maxwell Fyfe: I will certainly consider that point.

Durham County Council (Teachers' Complaint)

Miss Ward asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the threatened breakdown in public services in Durham County, he will make a statement on the action which the Government proposes to take to prevent this.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Winston Churchill): My right hon. Friend the Minister of Education has already asked for the comments, at the earliest possible moment, of the Durham local education authority upon a formal complaint lodged by the National Union of Teachers under Section 68 of the Education Act, 1944. My right hon. Friend is awaiting their reply. She will not hesitate, if necessary, to use the powers of direction to the local education authority conferred upon her by the Act.

Miss Ward: Can my right hon. Friend say how long a time it is proposed should elapse while the answer is being awaited, and when we might hope to know what is to be the final result?

The Prime Minister: I think I have given a rather important answer on this matter, and I certainly do not think we should be pressed at this moment upon a detail like the actual time that should be allowed.

Mr. Shinwell: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will exercise great care before taking any repressive action in this matter? While not expressing any opinion on the merits of the general situation in this particular regard, the council would appear to be justified because of an agreement reached a considerable time ago with the organisations concerned, and it would, perhaps, be better to be a little cautious before taking action.

The Prime Minister: In the main, we are only proceeding on the same lines as were adopted by the late Government. A somewhat new version of the dispute has come up, but nevertheless, the legal powers at the disposal of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Education, and the duties devolving upon her are unchanged.

Mr. Shinwell: Yes, but is it not precisely because this is a quite new version of the situation that care should be exercised before taking any grave action? Is it not desirable to use every possible means of effecting a compromise rather than to precipitate a situation which may cause great damage to everybody concerned?

Mr. Murray: While agreeing with the Prime Minister
(continued on page 6.)

THE SOCIAL CREDITER

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Saturday, June 21, 1952.

The Wobbling Pivot

The Confucian notion of the Canon was embodied in an ideogram which has been translated, "The Unwobbling Pivot." The antithesis is The Wobbling Pivot, which draws all things into wider and wider sweeps away from reality and life and into the vortex of unreality and death, away from anything truly central. Being of its nature eccentric, it imposes eccentricity upon everything else.

Such wider and wider sweeps away from anything truly pivotal have been the experience of everyone now living, and the wobbling pivot of a false financial axiom—an axiom which belies itself, which wobbles—has tirelessly used the pains which are incidental to the process as a scourge to drive everyone to a new and wider sweep.

Of this nature is the hectoring tone of that unconstitutional supra-national body, the Bank of International Settlements. "Individual countries *must* be willing to submit to the adjustments which adherence to an international monetary standard and participation in a *free* economic system require." So runs an edict contained in the Bank's annual report published at Basle on June 10. The emphasis is ours. This time, the admonition is directed explicitly to the United States of America, which, "as the world's foremost creditor nation," is reminded of her "responsibility." The countries have indulged in "an artificial redirection of trade," for which the only cure is an artificial redirection of the means of trading (money). Such "advantages" as the nations have derived from "the removal of trade and

payment restrictions" have shown themselves to be "anything but permanent." They have wobbled. These "advantages" will be permanent when the nations of the world assent to the centralisation of power in the Bank of International Settlements. Then the whole world will wobble with the wobbling pivot, and "no balances will be left over to seek transfer" in unauthorised ways. There will be no "multiplicity of rates," but only one rate, the Bank's. The *durability* of such an international monetary system as the Bank desires (not its practicability) "will inevitably depend upon a number of factors, several of which are inevitably bound up with the attitude adopted by the United States." Once-great Britain is counted out. We have not much expectation that the United States will not be counted out too. The responsibility for the results, if the Banks wins, will rest with the statesmen who enter into this conspiracy against the public good. "Every American is at heart an inflationist" is not synonymous with "every American is at heart a conscious resistance to financial domination." And what is the good of being an inflationist, anyway?

FROM AN AUSTRALIAN LETTER

(continued from page 1).

organisation. It will thus be possible for people to cover themselves for at least the major portion of hospital fees for 3d. a week. This, however, does not suit the Socialists at all, and a great agitation is being worked up about it. They have a good case, though. Before the war, residents of the Commonwealth Territory paid only Federal Income tax, which was quite trivial, plus a special hospital tax for which they received hospital accommodation for a very small charge, and services such as X-ray were free. With the introduction of Uniform Taxation, Commonwealth Territory residents had to pay the equivalent of State taxation; and because of this, the special Hospital Tax was abolished, and the Government undertook to finance the hospital out of Consolidated Revenue.

"But in any case, since the new scheme is still cast within the framework of orthodox finance, the economics of it are of little importance. Whether it will make people more independently minded I doubt; the rot has gone so deep now. Inflation is progressively demoralising; and inflation is automatic until a radical change is made. So everything really turns on the possibility of a radical change, which means the overthrow of the plotters. I suppose that the best that can be said for Page's scheme is that it delays progress towards socialisation, and leaves more time for an awakening. And as the doctors here have had a lesson and become to quite a significant extent policy conscious, this may be important. . .

"We have had a warm, dry summer, with a splendid crop of fruit. Since, there has been a good deal of rain (badly needed by the farmers and graziers). . . We had extensive grass fires around . . .; but the rain has come in time to bring the grass up before winter, and, in fact, the burnt out areas are green again. . ."

SOCIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT:

(London Meeting).

Supporters of the Social Credit Secretariat and regular readers of *The Social Crediter* are invited to apply for tickets of admission, price 2/6 each, to a Meeting to be held in London on July 12 (6-30 p.m.). Dr. Tudor Jones will address the Meeting.

"Letters from England"

By ROBERT SOUTHEY

Originally entitled *Letters from England* by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, and "Translated from the Spanish," though written by Southey. *Letters from England* was first published in 1807 by Longman's. The following extracts are quoted from the 1951 Edition issued by Cresset Press. An Introduction by Jack Simmons, the Editor, says: "At the beginning of 1793 Southey went up to Balliol College, Oxford, a vehement republican filled with enthusiasm for the French Revolution and with scorn and hatred for the government under which he was living. But Balliol was not then as sympathetic to left-wing ideas as it has since become, and Southey was ill at ease there. . . . He went to visit a well-to-do uncle who was chaplain to the British community at Lisbon, and he stayed in the Peninsula six months. . . . Southey's admiration for France, like Wordsworth's, cooled as the Revolution progressed. . . . [The *Letters*] 'contain, perhaps, a more accurate picture of English ways in the very beginning of the nineteenth century than exists anywhere else.' (Cambridge *History of English Literature*, XI, 163) . . . But [the book] is known only to those who have access to large libraries, for it has become unaccountably rare: there is no copy of the first edition even in the Bodleian. The *Letters* do not appeal only to the student. They make a book that any one may enjoy: a vivid and moving picture of England at one of the greatest moments in her history. For this is the England of Wordsworth and Pitt, of Wilberforce and Constable and Nelson."

(Letter XVI, p. 92.)

. . . The whole system of England, from highest to lowest, is, and has been, one series of antagonisms; struggle—struggle—in every thing. Check and countercheck is the principle of their constitution, which is the result of centuries of contention between the Crown and the People. The struggle between the Clergy and the lawyers unfettered their lands from feudal tenures. Their Church is a half-and-half mixture of Catholicism and Puritanism. These contests being over, it is now a trial between the Government and the Subject, how the one can lay on taxes, and how the other can elude them.

This spirit of contradiction is the character of the nation. . . . They hate the French and ape all their fashions, ridicule their neologisms and then naturalize them, laugh at their inventions and then adopt them, cry out against their political measures and then imitate them; the levy in mass, the telegraph, and the income tax are all from France. . . .

(Letter XXII) p. 121 . . . There was no paper in circulation of less than five pounds value till the stoppage of the Bank during the late war. (This refers to the suspension of cash payments in 1797, when the Bank of England notes were made legal tender to any amount and the Bank was authorised to refuse to issue gold or silver in transactions of more than £1.) Bills of one and two pounds were then issued, and these have almost superseded guineas. Upon the policy or impolicy of continuing this paper money after the immediate urgency has ceased, volumes and volumes have been written. On the one side it is asserted, that the

great increase of the circulating medium, by lessening the value of money, raises the price of the provisions, and thus virtually operates as a heavy tax upon all persons who do not immediately profit by the banking trade. On the other hand, the conveniences were detailed more speciously than truly, and one advocate even went so far as to entitle his pamphlet "Guineas an Incumbrance." Setting the political advantages or disadvantages aside, as a subject upon which I am not qualified to offer an opinion, I can plainly see that every person dislikes these small notes; they are less convenient than guineas in the purse, and more liable to accidents. You are also always in danger of receiving forged ones; and if you do the loss lies at your own door, for the Bank refuses to indemnify the holder. This injustice the directors can safely commit: they know their own strength with Government, and care little for the people; but the country bankers, whose credit depends on fair dealing, pay their forged notes, and therefore provincial bills are always preferred in the country to those of the Bank of England. [Note. Writing to John Rickman from Bristol on 27th July, 1803, Southey remarked: "Our market folk this day unanimously refuse to take the small Bank of England Bills. Bristol paper they receive without hesitation." *Selections from the Letters*, i, 225.] The inconvenience in travelling is excessive: you receive nothing but these bills; and if you carry them a stage beyond the sphere of circulation they become useless.

. . . A Doctor of Divinity was executed for [forgery] in the early part of the present reign. The famous Dr. Johnson, of whom the English boast as the great ornament of his age, and as one of the best and wisest men whom their country has ever produced, and of whose piety it will be sufficient praise to say that he was almost a Catholic,—he strenuously exerted himself to procure the pardon of this unfortunate man, on the ground that the punishment exceeded the measure of the offence, and that the life of the offender might usefully be passed in retirement and penitence. Thousands . . . petitioned that mercy might be shown him, and the Queen herself interceded, but in vain. . . .

More merciless than Draco, or than those inquisitors who are never mentioned in this country without an abhorrent expression of real or affected humanity, the commercial legislators of England are satisfied with nothing but the life of the offender who sins against the Bank, which is their Holy of Holies. Surely it is the duty of the Bank Directors to render the commission of forgery as difficult as possible. As it now is, the engraving is such as may be copied by the clumsiest apprentice to the trade. The additional expense which this plan would cost the Bank would be considerably less than what it now expends in hanging men for an offence, which could not be so frequent if it was not so easy. The Bank Directors say the Pater-noster in their own language, but they seem to forget one of the petitions which He who best knew the heart of man enjoined us to make, that we may not be led into temptation.

(Letter XXVI, P. 147.) . . . The best conceivable state for man is that wherein he has the full enjoyment of all his powers, bodily and intellectually. This is the lot of the higher classes in Europe; the poor enjoys neither—the savage only the former. If, therefore, religion were out of the question, it has been happier for the poor man to have been born among savages, than in a civilized country, where he is in fact the victim of civilization. . . .

(Letter XXXVIII.) How England can remedy this evil [of the manufacturing system], for there are not wanting in England those who perceive and confess it to be an evil, it is not easy to discover, nor is it my business to inquire. To us it is of more consequence to know how other countries may avoid it, as it is the prevailing system to encourage manufacturers everywhere, to inquire how we may reap as much good and as little evil as possible. The best methods appear to be by extending to the utmost the use of machinery, and leaving the price of labour to find its own level: the higher it is the better. The introduction of machinery in an old manufacturing country always produces distress by throwing workmen out of employ, and is seldom effected without riots and executions. Where new fabrics are to be erected it is obvious that this difficulty does not exist, and equally obvious that, when hard labour can be performed by iron and wood, it is desirable to spare flesh and blood. High wages are a general benefit, because money thus distributed is employed to the greatest general advantage. The labourer lifted up one step in society, acquires the pride and the wants, the habits and the feelings, of the class now next above him. [Southey's note. This argument has been placed in a more forcible light in the first volume of the *Annual Review*, in an article upon the Reports of the Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor, attributed to a gentleman of Norwich. It is one of the ablest chapters upon this branch of political economy that has ever been written. (It was the work of William Taylor of Norwich: J. W. Robberds, *Life and Writings of William Taylor*, 1843), ii, 44.] Forethought, which the miserably poor necessarily and instinctively shun, is, to him who earns a comfortable competence, new pleasure; he educates his children, in the hope that they may rise higher than himself, and that he is fitting them for better fortunes. Prosperity is said to be more dangerous than adversity to human virtue; both are wholesome when sparingly distributed, both in the excess perilous always, and often deadly: but if prosperity be thus dangerous, it is a danger which falls to the lot of few; and it is sufficiently proved by the vices of those unhappy wretches who exist in slavery, under whatever forms or in whatever disguise, that hope is essential to prudence, and to virtue, as to happiness. [For Southey's later views on the manufacturing system, which were a development of those expressed here, see his *Essays, Moral and Political*, I. 75-155: *Journal of a Tour in Scotland in 1819* (1929), 255-65; *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1829), i, 148-99.]

(Letter XL.) Liverpool has become a place of great maritime trade, against every natural disadvantage. Fortunes are made here with a rapidity unexampled in any other part of England. . . . There is too a princely liberality in its merchants, which even in London is not rivalled. Let any thing be proposed for the advantage and ornament, or honour to the town, however little akin it may be to their own pursuits, habits, and feelings, they are ready with subscriptions to any amount. . . .

(To be continued).

PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3.)

that this is a very serious matter, would it not be better to ask for a deputation to come down and talk this matter out rather than fight it out?

The Prime Minister: This is supposed to be a reasonable country, and if people want to come on deputations, and so on, to parley with Ministers and to discuss matters, that is not a matter which should be turned down at all. But, on the other hand, there are certain principles which have to be upheld.

Miss Ward: Can my right hon. Friend give us any information about the health services and what line is to be pursued in that respect?

The Prime Minister: There are various powers possessed in different degrees by the Ministries who may be concerned, but the Minister of Education has most clear and definite powers, and uses them.

Mr. G. Thomas: Is the Prime Minister satisfied that it will be possible to prevent a breakdown in the education services of the County of Durham in view of the time factor involved?

The Prime Minister: I think that is a matter which ought to be considered by all parties.

Mr. Chetwynd: Is it not a fact that the dispute at present is centred on one question, that of extended sick pay, and would the right hon. Gentleman take care that no action of the Government embitters this situation, and that the interests of the children should prevail at all time?

The Prime Minister: It happens that the sick pay is the only matter on which, in view of the previous agreement, it was open to the Durham County Council to act, but they are raising exactly the same issues on the only point left open to them after, as I understand it, the agreement made with the late Government.

Foreign Workers

Mr. Osborne asked the Minister of Labour how many Italians have been brought into this country to work in the mines; and what has been the total cost of recruitment and transport.

Sir W. Monckton: The total number of Italians brought to this country for underground coalmining is 2,400. The cost of transport from Italy, which was borne in the Vote of my Department, was about £23,000. Other expenses connected with their recruitment were borne by the Italian Government and the National Coal Board.

Mr. Osborne asked the Minister of Labour, if, in view of the fact that for some months there has been increasing difficulty in placing Italians in the coal mines, owing to the unwillingness of miners' lodges to accept them, he will now stop the waste of public money involved in bringing them to this country.

Sir W. Monckton: The recruitment of Italians for underground coalmining employment in this country has already ceased.

Major Anstruther-Gray asked the Minister of Labour the number of foreign workers employed in agriculture in

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Scotland at the present time, giving figures of the different nationalities to which they belong.

Sir W. Monckton: I regret that the information is not available.

Durham County Council (Teachers' Complaint)

Sir W. Smithers asked the Minister of Education if her attention has been called to the ultimatum sent by the National Union of Teachers to the Durham County Council demanding that their closed shop policy should end by 30th May or resignations will be tendered; what action she is taking; and if she will make a statement.

Miss Horsbrugh: Yes, I have received a complaint from from the National Union of Teachers together with a copy of their letter addressed to the local education authority of Durham County. I have asked the authority to let me have their comments at the earliest possible moment.

Foodstuffs (Home Production)

Mr. Hurd asked the Minister of Food what proportions of the more important foods are now provided by home production, with comparable figures for 1939 and 1945.

Major Lloyd George: The following table shows the percentage by weight of the total supplies of the more important foods provided by home production in the years 1945 and 1951. As 1939 was an abnormal year for imports, the pre-war average figure, which is generally used for purposes of comparison, has been given.

	Pre-war average	Per cent. of total supplies provided by home production	
		1945	1951
Wheat and Flour (as wheat equivalent)	12	32	24
Oils and Fats (crude oil equivalent)	16	6	11
Sugar (refined value)	16	31	23
Carcass Meat and Offal	50	50	65
Bacon and Ham (including canned)...	34	34	43
Fish (including canned and shell fish)	85	64	84
Butter	9	8	5
Cheese	24	10	18
Condensed Milk	70	59	63
Dried Milk (whole and skimmed) ...	59	49	43
Shell Eggs	71	87	87
Milk for human consumption (as liquid)	100	100	100
Potatoes for human consumption ...	94	100	97

The pre-war average figures are for the years 1936-37 to 1938-39, with the exception of oils and fats and fish which are for the years 1934-38.

Power Stations

Mr. Nabarro asked the Minister of Fuel and Power the present aggregate annual rate of coal consumption at the power houses of the British Electricity Authority; the estimated amount by which consumption, during 1952, will exceed earlier years; and whether he will state the annual aggregate increase in coal consumption at the British Elec-

tricity Authority's power-houses during each year to 1960, in consonance with the planned expansion of electric power generation, set out in the schedule of such power-generation expansion recently submitted by him to the hon. Member for Kidderminster.

Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd: Coal consumption by the British Electricity Authority power stations amounted in 1951 to 34 million tons and this year is expected to amount to between 34 and 35 million tons. In view of the uncertainties regarding the future course both of demand and of power station construction I am not prepared to make forecasts of coal consumption for future years.

Pit-mound

Mr. Nabarro asked the Minister of Fuel and Power what research he has made into equipment capable of burning and utilising large accumulations of pit-mound with a view to finding employment for it in certain circumstances; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd: My Department has given advice on the design of a device to burn coal of very high ash content and has encouraged the private development of a combustion chamber for this purpose. The work is proceeding and, if it is successful, the possibility of the economic utilisation of material in existing pit-mounds can be examined. In addition I understand, that the results of research now being conducted by the National Coal Board may have a bearing on this problem.

House of Commons: May 30, 1952.

Consultative Councils (Consumer Representation)

Mr. I. J. Pitman (Bath): In dealing with this subject of consumer representation I want to make it clear that the matter of public ownership is not in question. There was a very good debate on 25th October, 1950, which was opened by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lewisham South (Mr. H. Morrison). We had he will remember, a most interesting and I think full debate on nationalisation, during which many hon. Members now opposite dealt with the question of consumer representation. The issue, therefore, is that of public ownership managed by a public corporation. . . .

. . . Consumer representation for public ownership with public management by the local authority or by Parliament has been effective and satisfactory, because it is a representation by persons who are independent of the management, who are critical of the management and are powerful, and

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who generally conduct their affairs in public. The public, moreover, are fully informed and are really satisfied with its representation.

The consumer representatives in the public corporations, which we are discussing today, are, on the other hand, subservient to and at the mercy of the management, they are powerless and they are, generally speaking, used by management to placate criticism by consumers rather than by consumers to criticise management. Their proceedings are generally conducted in secret and the public as a whole is dissatisfied.

The facts about the working in practice of these consumer representatives are very well stated in two publications. The first is "Consumer Representation in the Public Sector of Industry," by A. M. de Neumann, and the other, an article in the "Journal of Public Administration," on "The Consumer Councils for Gas and Electricity" by J. W. Grove. It is interesting to note, incidentally, how he uses the expression "consumer councils" for gas and electricity—which only shows how confusing has been our nomenclature in the different public corporations.

My first point is, then, that these councils are subservient to and not independent of the management whom they are appointed to criticise. Let us look at the facts. First of all, the chairman has either £1,000 or £750 a year, dependent on the industry and this sum is paid by the management. Secondly, the secretary of the consumers', or consultative council is seconded by the board in question, and vetoes have been put on the independent selection and appointment of its own secretary by the consultative council itself. Thirdly, the pay, pension, promotion and future career of the secretary are very much at the discretion of the board, and he looks to them for his future. Fourthly, very often the two bodies—the board, which is the management, and the consumer council or consultative council, which is the critic—are living and working cheek by jowl in the same town and the same office.

I then made the point that the council is at the mercy of the management. After all, knowledge is power. The technicalities of the subject make the expert dominant and while people coming along from the board are all experts those on the consultative council have rarely got sufficient knowledge to tackle the expert. Secondly, the information on which the council has to work in criticism of the management comes only from the management itself.

It is necessarily only a selection of the information which is sent out and it is the management which can select, and the timing of its circulation is often such that the consultative councillors have not really had time to prepare their case and deal with the information provided. Finally, the initiative is open to the management to use the council, much more than the initiative lies with the council to criticise the management and keep it on its toes to serve the consumer.

Then I made the third point that the council has no power to follow through. It can only recommend. It is true that it can appeal to the Minister, but in the field of prices the Minister is entirely powerless to deal with these area boards because the boards are under statutory duty to make two ends meet, taking three or four years with another. Therefore, it is open to the area chairman and his board

to say to the Minister, "I cannot carry out the general direction about prices which was given to me because in my and the board's opinion that will militate against my statutory duty." As we know, the Minister cannot give specific directions; he can give only general directions. So in the field of prices, at any rate, the Minister is, in effect, powerless to give any support to the consultative council, which is powerless anyway.

Then I made the point that the Councils are generally secret and that the Press is usually excluded. It is exceptional for the main business of the consultative council or consumers' council to be conducted in public with the Press admitted. For instance, in London, the Electricity Council uses a General Purposes Committee to conduct its deliberations in secret and holds only four short meetings in public a year, and during those meetings the chairman is ever reminding the councillors that "the gentlemen of the Press are present," and generally sees to it that the effective work of the Council and of the General Purposes Committee is carried on behind closed doors.

My fifth point was that the councils tend to placate criticism rather than to be critical, which is their function. As an instance of that I would give the Eastern Electricity Board, where, recently, the chairman sent out a general circular saying that the duty of the Board was to standardise prices. That is wrong. That is not in the Act at all. The duty of the Board is to simplify and standardise methods of charge; that is to say, for example, that while there may be a standard method of charge for fruit, say, per lb., there need not necessarily be the same charge per lb. for oranges as for strawberries. Here, in this instance, we find the consultative council making the same mistake in the interpretation of the Act. This is surely more than a coincidence and we may conclude that the council has been used to placate public opinion in advance of a radical change affecting many of these consumers adversely. Again, in the South-West, in regard to gas, the council is used generally to placate criticism and not to initiate it.

These are the five charges against the councils as they now are working in practice. Nobody could possibly say that these charges could be applied to this House or that. Members of this House are the "stooges" of the Postmaster-General in their duty of representing the consumer versus the management of the Post Office. Nobody, I think, could say, that the gas engineer of the local authorities gas undertaking was dominant over the council or city corporation. Yet that is precisely what is being said generally, that these consultative councils are acting as a stooge by which the management can have an effective and, be it noted, numerous and expensive public relations officer for gaining the acceptance by the public of what they have done, and gaining advance acceptance of, and commitment to, what they intend to do.

(To be continued).

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