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Decline of Rome: Fratricide and Fall

By H. SWABEY.

In the tenth century, the Empire enjoyed a breathing space between the inroads of the Saracens and those of the Turks and Normans. About half the Empire was intact, and it was divided into twenty nine *themes*, or military commands, twelve in Europe and seventeen in Asia. Constantinople commanded the Mediterranean, and held a vast hoard of treasure. To some extent, of course, Gibbon's criticism may be allowed, that, "Such accumulation of treasure is rejected by the theory and practice of modern policy; and we are more apt to compute the national riches by the use and abuse of the public credit." Yet there are signs that the Progressive Conservative party of Canada might be used as an instrument, under pressure from the gold mines, for restoring a gold standard in the future. And in the Empire the treasure commanded the services of barbarian mercenaries, a term of contempt. The difference is that today nations, instead of tribes, perform the service. Although the Romans were an indiscriminate mixture by this time, the Emperor was expected to marry within the empire, and the examples of Mark Antony and Titus are recalled. Antony was despised for his alliance with the Egyptian Cleopatra, and Titus was forced to part with the Jewish Berenice. ("Racine has most discreetly suppressed both her age and her country.")

It was easier to draw a contrast with the tenth century in the eighteenth than in the twentieth century. "In the system of modern Europe, the power of the sword is possessed, at least in fact, by five or six mighty potentates; their operations are conducted on a distant frontier . . . the rest of the country and community enjoys, in the midst of war, the tranquillity of peace, and is only made sensible of the change by the aggravation or decrease of the public taxes. In the disorders of the tenth and eleventh centuries, every peasant was a soldier, and every village a fortification. . ." (We are targets in the present phase, even ranges.) Culturally, as well as militarily, the totalitarian experiment has failed before: Gibbon describes the decay of taste, adding that, "the emulation of states and individuals is the most powerful spring of the efforts and improvements of mankind. The cities of ancient Greece were cast in the happy mixture of union and independence, which is repeated on a larger scale, but in a looser form, by the nations of modern Europe . . . Alone in the universe, the self-satisfied pride of the Greeks (*i.e.*, of Constantinople) was not disturbed by the comparison of foreign merit . . . they had neither competitors to urge their speed, nor judges to crown their victory."

The Paulician heretics, or the mishandling of the problem, suggest how Christian rivalries may be manipulated: "in their hostile inroads, the disciples of St. Paul were

joined with those of Mahomet." Indeed, it is not long since I heard a secretary announce that he would not be sorry if the Russians *licked the pants off* a certain European communion. Innocent III dealt with the Albigeois, descendants of the Paulicians, with matchless cruelty, ("more adapted to confirm, than to refute, the belief of an evil principle.") But Gibbon saw too that, "The patriot reformers were ambitious of succeeding the tyrants whom they had dethroned . . . the zeal of Calvin seems to have been envenomed by personal malice . . . Calvin violated the golden rule of doing as he would be done by . . . which I read in a moral treatise of Isocrates, four hundred years before the publication of the gospel." (The Greek which is quoted gives the rule in a *negative* form: cf. Confucius.)

The Empire was distracted by the raids of Bulgarians, who killed an emperor in battle. It is alleged that their name, in a modified form, was applied by the French during a manly period to the sins of usury and unnatural vice. The Hungarians allied themselves with several tribes of the Chazars, and the khan of the Chazars "confirmed the engagement of the prince and people" when the Hungarians chose a monarch. The Russians attacked Constantinople, but along with some Chazars were diverted against the Bulgarians. "But the admission of the Barbarians into the pale of civil and ecclesiastical society delivered Europe from the depredations, by sea and land, of the Normans, the Hungarians, and the Russians, who learned to spare their brethren and cultivate their possessions.

The Normans had appeared while the Franks or Latins, the Greeks and the Saracens were wrangling in and around Italy. Some political skill is attributed to them: "their cautious policy observed the balance of power, lest the preponderance of any rival State should render their aid less important." But an alliance of the pope with the emperors of East and West against them failed. The Normans became "the faithful champions of the Holy See," and conquered Sicily. (11th century.) Then they attacked the Greeks, but the Eastern emperor used Turks, Paulicians and possibly English to repel them. Later, Venice helped the Greeks, being "liberally paid by the license or monopoly of trade . . . and a tribute to St. Mark, the more acceptable as it was the produce of a tax on their rivals of Amalphi." Later, some Venetian merchants were arrested, and there was war between the allies. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Christian powers (East and West Emperors, Pope and Normans) made every possible combination against each other in the quest for power. But it was the Western Emperor who finally ruined the Normans, in 1204. "The political balance of Italy was destroyed by his success." Falcandus, a monk known as the Tacitus of Sicily, urged the unity of the Sicilians and described the downfall of the island. "The last hope of Falcandus was defeated by the discord of the Christians

and Mahometans."

Islam was also experiencing internal troubles. However, the Sultan Mahmud conquered in Hindostan, about the year 1000, and before the end of that century the Turks had taken over the whole of Asia Minor from the Empire, and captured Jerusalem. Here, "Amalphi promoted the interest of trade and religion." A caliph had caused trouble in Jerusalem, but the Europeans contented themselves with some acts of violence against the Jews, whom they alleged were "the secret advisers of the impious Barbarian." Some insults from the Turks, however, were a reason for the First Crusade, of which Peter the Hermit would today be called *the front*. ("Palestine could add nothing to the strength or safety of the Latins.") There was a suspicion that the Norman chieftain "had secretly directed the design of the pope, which he affected to second with astonishment and zeal." Jerusalem was taken, and Gibbon remarks that "the first crusade prevented the fall of the declining empire." (1099.)

But relations between East and West deteriorated. A schism and ex-communication took place in 1054, which "has precipitated the decline and fall of the Roman empire in the East," and which *still* disgraces Christendom. St. Bernard, ("the oracle of Europe"), was the agent provocateur of the second disastrous crusade: the first three were at intervals of about fifty, the last four of under twenty years: and the Latins found that "every engagement was violated by treachery and injustice," while the Greek emperors "maintained a strict, though secret, alliance with the Turks and Saracens." On the other hand, the Greek emperor's feelings are almost topical: "his subjects were insulted and plundered by the rude strangers of the West." Unfortunately, a riot was provoked, and "the Latins were slaughtered in their houses and in the streets . . . (1188). In unworthy hands, the remains of the Greek empire crumbled into dust."

The picturesque but expensive exploits of Richard I and Saladin in the third crusade are well known. But the fourth is a remarkable adventure, in that it was turned not against the Saracens but against Constantinople itself, where a French and Venetian alliance sailed in 1203. Gibbon notes the Venetian constitution of a doge, six sages, forty members of a Council of State and a legislative Assembly of four hundred and fifty, chosen annually. The Venetians were "mortified by the recent preference which had been given to Pisa, the rival of their trade." The city fell twice, in 1203 and 1204, not to the infidels but to the crusaders, who thereupon divided the Eastern empire into French and Venetian portions.

Innocent III was responsible for the fifth as well as the fourth crusade, and Louis IX made two expeditions which further depopulated Europe. As by-products of the crusades, we may disregard the foothold in Jerusalem and count the European chivalry, which is so hard to transplant from Europe. The terms *gentle* and *Gentile* have a radical affinity. And the unity of *part* of Christendom—not the unification—was in some measure achieved. The by-products of modern crusades are not so happy, and I see from a Toronto paper that Baruch is preaching, or *not letting us forget*, the third crusade of our century. The most barbarous of the early crusading adventurers would have been amused, if not suspicious.

The Greeks revolted, looked for help where they could find it, and captured two Latin emperors. The Latins resorted to a Turkish alliance and to "some usurious loans" from Italy, for which the emperor's heir was "pawned at Venice as the security." The Greeks, with the connivance of Genoa, recovered Constantinople in 1261. In Gibbon's view, the crusades "checked rather than forwarded the maturity of Europe," although a result of the loss incurred by the barons was that "their poverty extorted from their pride those charters of freedom which unlocked the fetters of the slave."

(To be concluded).

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: July 3, 1952.

(The debate continued).

Science Teachers and Technologists

Mr. Lee asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the number of science teachers and technologists at present engaged in teaching in Britain; how these figures compare with the 1939 figures; and what efforts he is making to increase the supply of such teachers.

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter: I would point out that this answer relates only to teachers in institutions other than schools. Questions regarding teachers in schools are for my right hon. Friend the Minister of Education.

Of the full-time graduates teaching in grant-aided establishments of further education in England and Wales in 1951, 1,444 had degrees in mathematics or natural science and 776 in engineering or technology. There were also 37,500 part-time teachers, many of them with degrees in these subjects.

In technical colleges in Scotland there are 158 full-time science teachers and 229 teachers of technology. No details are available about part-time teachers. In the universities of Great Britain there are approximately 3,100 teachers of science and technology.

I am advised that generally speaking the present arrangements for the supply of these teachers appears to be satisfactory.

Political Propaganda (Leaflets)

Mr. C. I. Orr-Ewing asked the Minister of Education, in view of the distribution to organised parties of schoolchildren of propaganda leaflets, samples of which have been sent to her, if she will issue a circular to local education authorities calling their attention to the desirability of preventing the dissemination of such leaflets to organised parties of schoolchildren under their care.

Miss Horsbrugh: I strongly disapprove of the distribution of political propaganda to organised parties of schoolchildren; but local education authorities are already well aware of my view that no part of the educational service should be used as a medium for the dissemination of political propaganda of any kind.

House of Commons: July 4, 1952.

Town and Country Planning (Development Charge)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—[Mr. Heath.]

Mr. Howard Johnson (Brighton, Kemptown): I wish to raise the question of the evils of development charges under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. The curious thing to me is that the former Minister of Town and Country Planning, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Dalton) and the present Minister of Housing and Local Government both seem to be agreed that development charges are a deterrent to building development.

In a debate in the House on 13th June, 1950, the right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland said that development charges were a deterrent to building development. He spoilt it by saying that at that time he did not mind deterrents to the building programme. The present Minister of Housing and Local Government said at Manchester, on 19th April, that the development charge was one of the major obstacles to real development today and that he hoped to have some proposals ready for the next Session of Parliament. That would mean more than a year's delay, and, meanwhile, we must press on undeterred and undismayed. It is on that point that I wish to have some guidance from the House.

How can persons anxious and willing to build their own homes on their own land get on with the job, undeterred and undismayed, if they have no money with which to pay a development charge? I do not know whether this is a problem which I feel in particular, or whether it is one which is met by all hon. Members in their correspondence each week. But the fact is that since my local daily and evening Press published the fact that I proposed to raise the subject on this Adjournment I have had 73 letters from persons living in the coastal belt of Sussex, particularly at Brighton and Hove, (who complain that they cannot build their own homes because they cannot afford to pay the development charge ranging between £250 and £375.

It may be that this is a problem peculiar to Brighton in that we have a particularly enterprising and energetic housing committee who are anxious to co-operate with the Minister to the fullest extent in granting, in all cases of need, licences for private building. I cannot think that it is, and that is why I feel it right to raise this matter today.

One can divide land into roughly three categories. There is what is known as Section 80 certificate land which may be developed free of development charge because by 1st July, 1948, the fortunate owner of that land had, either through foresight or luck, had his plans approved under the building byelaws and the town planning requirements. He is now able to build free of development charge. The result is that the price paid for that land which has the benefit of Section 80 certificate is absolutely sky high. There is a scarcity of land, and scarcity prices are charged for it.

That is another inherent evil, in that the district valuer is now able to assess development charges on adjoining land which does not have the Section 80 certificate by comparison with the prices obtained for land which has a certificate. There is a double evil for the person who wishes to build on that land because he has to pay a high price, and the person who wants to build on adjoining land has to pay a higher development charge by reason of the snowball effect of the scarcity value.

Then there is the near ripe land in connection with which the position is complicated. It really means that there

is a ration of land for the registered builder. The Minister, in his wisdom has made one concession—the single plot owner concession. A person who owns a single plot of land may develop it without paying a development charge. That is a very proper concession. But even in connection with that the most ridiculous fantasies arise.

I have had a case in Saltdean of two spinsters who 17 years ago purchased a plot of land on which to build a bungalow for themselves. Owing to financial considerations and the advent of war they were unable to build. Now their financial circumstances have improved and they are anxious to build on that single plot, but they cannot have the single plot owner concession. Instead, they have to pay a development charge because they are joint owners. That is an extravagance which cannot be permitted. It is an absurd fantasy that two elderly spinsters who own a plot of land jointly cannot build free of development charge because they are joint owners. That is typical of the anomalies which arise daily under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Another case in my constituency is in connection with the Tudor Close Hotel, Rottingdean, about which I have had a voluminous correspondence with the Parliamentary Secretary. The position was that the hotel had not been successful as an hotel for some years. The owners desired to convert it into flats containing 30 units of accommodation. I mention that, because some were to be flats and some maisonettes. The fact remains that conversion was envisaged to give accommodation to 30 families.

The owners met with tremendous co-operation from the county borough council of Brighton, and with equal co-operation from the Ministry of Works, in connection with the large items that were required in materials for this development, but, lo and behold, they were assessed to development charge of £10,000. After negotiations, the district valuer reduced it to £8,000, so that in order to alter the interior walls put in extra bathrooms, kitchen ovens and the like to make separate flat units, and before they could start knocking down a single wall they were expected to pay a development charge of £8,000.

Next month, in my constituency, another hotel, which is equally well-known—the Ocean Hotel, Saltdean—which was requisitioned and occupied by the National Fire Service for many years, comes up for sale by auction. I hesitate even to attempt to guess, having regard to its size, at what figure the development charge will be assessed if the new owners wish to convert it into a large number of separate flats. In point of fact, unless there is an increase of wisdom in the next few months, they will not be able to carry out the work, because the development charge will be absolutely penal in its incidence.

In Brighton, and I cite Brighton because I only have official figures from Brighton, the borough surveyor tells me that up to 30th June of this year, his authority had issued 197 private building licences, and that, up to date, 39 of those licences had been returned. He has written to me to give his considered opinion that the majority of those 39 private building licences have been returned because the persons who wished to build under those licences cannot afford, in addition to paying for the land and the cost of building, to pay a development charge varying from £250 to £400.

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Saturday, July 26, 1952.

From Week to Week

Whose "cardboard knight" is Eisenhower, chosen to ride the "lumbering, stubborn, powerful, short-sighted elephant," the Republican Party? Andrew Roth, described as a noted American commentator, summed up the answer in *Reynolds News* for July 13 in the following passages:—

"When left-wing ex-Congressman Vito Marcantonio was asked several weeks ago why he was so sure Eisenhower would win out over Taft, he snapped: 'I've never heard of the National City and Chase National banks ever losing a Republican Convention.'

"The convention actually did work out again as the victory of the Eastern financial tycoons over the party bosses. The Eisenhower leaders could boast of the support of such names as Winthrop W. Aldrich, chairman, Chase National Bank (dominated by Rockefeller); Thomas J. Watson, chairman, International Business Machines (Morgan); Philip D. Reed, chairman, General Electric (Morgan), and J. Frank Drake chairman, Gulf Oil Corporation (Mellon).

"As the *Wall Street Journal* has put it, the real differences within the Republican camp are differences of method and approach rather than of ultimate objective.

"Taft supporters are generally drawn from the rugged individualists of the Mid-Western industrialist-management crowd. Their view on labour is narrowed by years of battles with their trade unions. They are interested in short-range objectives: keeping down taxes and monopolizing the home market for their manufactures. They are the 'crude nationalists' 'isolationists' only when it comes to fighting their competitors in Western Europe.

"The high-level Eastern executives who crowd the Eisenhower camp are 'sophisticated internationalists.' This comes naturally to banking types, who have long had cartel relationships throughout the world. They are not interested in the 'short-range' competition from Danish cheese or British motor-cycles. They are concerned to keep world capitalism afloat.

"Their sophistication—plus their long-standing interest in world markets and sources of raw materials—make them more tactful in dealings with hard-up foreign allies."

But, characteristically in this world of illusion, Mr. Roth encourages the losers not to stop playing—there are the "if" chances.

Eisenhower is the son of one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the Gaullist party in France, it is evident that the split which has developed in its ranks reveals the familiar virus which attacks all move-

ments which envisage "coming into power" as their objective, or even a part of their objective. The crisis goes back to the return in the last election of 120 Gaullist deputies, whose votes could make or break any government. Liking M. Pinay's financial and economic programme, (someone can always be found to be respectful to the voice of Finance), a dissident group have supported him in crucial votes, and have drawn down upon themselves the wrath of M. Louis Vallon, the leader of the intransigent section of the Gaullist movement. They objected in a letter to General de Gaulle, saying ". . . but we consider that the means of coming to power must be reconsidered by you. For ourselves, we regard as hopeless any method which would lead to systematic, sterile, and unpopular opposition in the expectation of an inevitable catastrophe.

"It seems to us difficult to subordinate everything to a fatalistic conception of history while we are daily grappling with reality. Finally we consider that the road to power will open to you only through a political evolution which would follow our entry, on conditions, into the Government's majority, for 'modifying the system' by remaining 'outside the system' seems to us unthinkable."

The General replied that by voting for the Government the rebels had unconditionally entered 'the system.' "Permit me to say," he said, "that I find it difficult to see what changes have been introduced into the system since you entered it. On the contrary, you share responsibility with the system and its Government for what they do or do not do. In particular, it is partly thanks to the votes of the confidence you have given them—though on other matters—that the Ministers in power have been able to conclude the recent agreements on Germany, the so-called 'European Army' and the disappearance of the French Army."

It has been persistently asserted in some quarters that in France and in Italy there are still some people who *think*—that is to say, who think *correctly*: to think at all is to think correctly. It might be true. We had better consider a French and Italian edition of *The Social Crediter*.

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It is perhaps inevitable that the word "trends" should figure in headlines introducing reports of the study just published by the World Health Organisation of mortality from cancer and other malignant tumours during the fifty years to 1950 in many countries. "Trends" is an alibi word; the ignorance and folly of man does not cause a "trend," *cp.* "economic trends." Dr. M. Pascua, the director of health statistics of the Organisation and the author of the work, may himself be more realistic, and we notice that he wisely suspends judgment concerning one matter, upon which the planners are ever prone to express themselves dogmatically in the sense that the reason for the great apparent increase in disease in modern life is improved diagnosis. Cancer mortality "has clearly increased in practically all the nations included in this review." The report discusses the question whether this is a genuine or spurious increase, resulting from factors such as better medical diagnosis. The author leaves the question unanswered, but appears to be inclined to the former view.

On another point of some interest: deaths from cancer of the respiratory system have increased very rapidly in

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The Trade Union Oligarchy

Perhaps by a coincidence, the report of the court of enquiry into the dispute between D. C. Thomson and Company Limited, of Dundee, and members of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants was published on the same day as the second of two middle-page articles in *The Times* reviewing a Thesis entered by a student at the London School of Economics for a degree—or rather a book based upon that work. The Labour Correspondent of *The Times* is the reviewer, and the material covered is sensational—or would be to anyone who has not read Major Douglas's *The Brief for the Prosecution*, which is a more sensational work because it deals with causes not symptoms alone. Perhaps, reproved by the court (consisting of Sir John Foster, Q.C., Sir John Falconer and Mr. C. W. Guillebaud) for its noticeable detachment from the prevailing spirit of sweet reasonableness now prevailing under the New Dispensation of the New Order, Messrs. Thomson, a firm with much to its credit as a champion of British liberties, will study Mond-Turnerism seriously and induce others to do so. The firm's difficulties as well as the subject of *The Times's* book review have the same setting: one of the main reasons why Messrs. Thomson adopted their policy of non-unionism after the general strike of 1926 was, so the jurists say, "to insure against future industrial disturbances in their business due to any form of union organizational or interference. A further reason is said to be to protect those of their employee's who had not joined in the strike. But whatever the original motive, the firm's policy would no longer seem to protect either the firm or its employees, nor does it seem likely that it will do so again."

We take this to be an intimation that Mond-Turnerism has prevailed—and so we may as well all side with it? It is that suggestion that has earned the epithet, "perfidious Albion"—the infinite corruptibility of the English, which disposes them to sell their souls for sixpence, and to claim that, anyhow, they did get something for it. Messrs. Thomson, we understand, are not English, and, with what we should call guidance, they may take the matter further. The stakes are high.

The book which *The Times* has so well advertised is called *Government of British Trade Unions* and is by Dr. Joseph Goldstein. Dr. Goldstein follows in the tradition of M. Ostrogorsky, who wrote voluminously about the organisation of political parties in England and America long ago, but not so long ago that the technique of political corruption was not already implanted. His book did not impede its onrush, and, if we may infer the future effect of Dr. Goldstein's from the nature of his conclusions, his book likewise is noticeable for other reasons than the results we expect to ensue from it.

In order to make the study which is the basis for his book, Dr. Goldstein joined in 1947 a large branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union in London. The union itself gave him every facility, including access to confidential records and minutes. Mr. Arthur Deakin, the general secretary has even written a foreword to the book. A sentence quoted by *The Times* from this foreword says, doubtless truthfully, "If criticism comes our way we shall try to turn it to good account."

Dr. Goldstein found that at least 50 per cent. of the

union's members are in branches with a membership of more than 500, which by reason of size alone deny them the opportunity to take an active part in branch life. There are 126 branches with more than 1,000 members (and 26 per cent. of the membership), 31 with more than 2,000 members, four with more than 4,000 members and one with more than 9000 members.

The Times's handling of the book and its data is, in its way, as evidential as the book itself—there is no reason that we can see why the immense resources of *The Times* could not have unravelled the inner workings of the Trade Union movement in its relation to modern politics on its own account (or even on ours). So we continue citing the words of the reviewer:—

"The author argues reasonably that a big turnover of membership is both a sign and a cause of apathy. A large proportion of members may not be in the organization long enough to become familiar with the union's system of government, while there is a comparatively small number of old-stagers to maintain and pass on any tradition. He then gives some startling turnover figures for the union. During the period from 1935-47 a third of the membership lapsed every year. Since the total membership was growing the average number of new members was even greater—38.3 per cent. The period includes the war years, but in 1946 and 1947 lapses were slightly above the average. At the end of 1947 the total national membership of 1,317,842 was 141,826 short of the number of new members during the preceding three years.

"Because one must be a member in good standing for at least two years before becoming eligible to hold any office in the union, these figures mean that a very large percentage of the membership is automatically deprived of the opportunity of official participation. Moreover a very large number have never got to know candidates for office well enough to make a knowing choice.

"Dr. Goldstein has gathered together a good deal of evidence to show that owing to the indifference of rank and file members malpractices if not corruption at the ballot box are not uncommon in some areas. (One area had a 104 per cent. vote in 1943.) In any case the elections do not enable members to make an informed decision because the voice of opposition has no means of making itself heard beyond the branch and members have little information about the candidates.

"Dr. Goldstein attended his first meeting of his branch, which he has called I/AAA, on November 10, 1947, and he remained a regular attender until July the following year. During that period he examined carefully the minutes and records of the branch, got to know the active members, and conducted a sample survey of the attitudes of both active and inactive members.

"The branch, which is a comparatively active one, was then rather more than 1,000 strong. It met in a trades hall which would accommodate 50. At his first meeting Dr. Goldstein found 37 present, and there were 10 nominations for 10 official positions.

"Dr. Goldstein later worked out the average attendance in 1947 at 27 members, or 3 per cent. of the membership. When there were only 300 members, in 1942, the average attendance had been 7 per cent. Leaders of the union had told him that when things went wrong members flocked to the branches, but he could find little evidence of this. The

highest attendance was 67 out of 1,015 when a very important change was made at the factory where the members work. The writer quotes a good deal of evidence to suggest that attendance at I/AAA branch is not exceptionally low.

"He goes on to inquire into the number of members participating each year in branch activities, such as the proposing and seconding of resolutions, the making of reports, and the initiating of discussions. The yearly average between 1943 and 1948 was 25. The highest number, in 1947 was 30. He suggests that between 20 and 30 members are sufficient to maintain the continuous operation of a branch, whatever the size of its membership.

"Within this active nucleus of 25 or 30 is an inner circle of six or seven which is responsible for 60 per cent. or more of all branch activities:—

Since January, 1946, close to one-half of 1 per cent. of the branch membership is all that has been required to constitute this inner circle. Over this period only 19 different members have served within its circumference. . . . Of the group of seven with three or more years service as members of the inner circle, five have acknowledged membership of the Communist Party during this period, though not necessarily throughout the entire period of their intensive activity. All were simultaneously serving the branch as shop stewards or collectors.

"The author goes on to calculate that for the years since the close of 1945 an average of less than 1 per cent. of the membership has been responsible for proposing all branch resolutions. During this period 60 per cent. of the 91 resolutions before the branch for consideration were placed there by no more than 0.4 per cent. (four out of 1,000) of the entire branch membership. 'It becomes clear how ludicrously small is the rather stable minority which speaks as well as acts in the name of the ever-changing membership of the I/AAA branch.'

"Dr. Goldstein then deals with the argument that though only a small group may be responsible for all branch activities, the democratic nature of the organization may not be impaired, for the locus of power may be in the hands of a duly elected body, ultimately responsible to the membership. At only one of the six elections for branch officers between 1942 and 1949 was there a contest providing the membership with the opportunity of making a choice. Then, in 1945, a Labour Party man challenged the Communists for the chairmanship and was defeated by 14 to nine. The 23 members present, out of 685, were more than half of them standing for office. That year 14 people, 12 of whom were candidates for branch office themselves, served as movers and seconders of all the nominations.

"The author describes the circumstances under which the December, 1947, ballots for Area I representatives to the General Executive Council took place. He says they are typical and will serve to illustrate the procedure for holding a ballot election in the I/AAA branch. His account, in which all the names are fictitious, is as follows:—

Sister Johnson, the branch secretary, received from Area I office on behalf of the branch, 1,000 ballot papers for distribution to approximately 950 eligible members. These ballots were divided into 30 packets, each containing one ballot for each eligible member of the 'constituency' of the shop steward for whom the

packet was designated. In all but a few cases the distribution of these packets did not go beyond Brother Vinson, Convenor of Shop Stewards and C. P. member. Both Sister Johnson and Brother Vinson gave almost identical descriptions of the voting procedure that followed.

A few packets were distributed to shop stewards who might have been suspicious if they had not received them. A group of shop stewards, all members of the inner circle, gathered around a table one evening and with varied coloured pencils proceeded to place crosses to the names of C.P. candidates. To give the appearance of authenticity, only 432 of the 518 ballots cast in this way supported the branch's favourites.

"Dr. Goldstein points out that the deceptive record indicates that about 55 per cent. of the eligible membership participated in the election, though close to 1 per cent. would be a more accurate figure. Though not recorded in the minutes, Brother Vinson told him that on two occasions since the branch's formation Area I Office had disqualified the branch's ballot vote. The membership and most members of the inner circle were never informed of this. At that time the inner circle of the branch was Communist dominated, but at the beginning of 1948 control passed to Labour Party supporters.

"Appeals to remove Communist officials had been made by union and political leaders. They did not arouse the rank and file to action, says Dr. Goldstein, but the inner circle realized that their progress in the union was in danger. So they held a sort of branch 'cleansing ceremony,' when all but one of the members of the inner circle announced that they were no longer Communist Party members. The same people remained in power and ballot papers continued to be marked in the same way."

This from *The Times* of July 10. On the next day a second article appeared dealing with Dr. Goldstein's researches into the causes for "apathy" among trade union members. We may return to this later.

PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3.)

I fully appreciate that, in a debate of this nature, I cannot suggest legislation to remedy these defects, but, because I am anxious to do all I can in a humble way to co-operate with the Minister of Housing and Local Government and his Parliamentary Secretary, and because I yield to no one in my admiration of the magnificent work they are doing in connection with the housing drive, I should like to suggest two possible methods which do not require legislation, but which would immediately help the small man who wants to build for his own occupation a bungalow or a house.

Under Section 12 (2, f) of the Act of 1947, the Minister has power to make regulations which will vary the classes of uses which are to be exempted from development charge, and, in exactly the same way under Section 69 (2, b) the Minister has power to make regulations to exempt classes of uses from development charge, and, indeed, there have been at least two such orders made in 1950, which have permitted development of different types and classes without development charge.

I am now suggesting that the Minister should, by regulations, exempt from development charge the building

of a house for an owner-occupier, provided that the house does not exceed a prime cost of £2,500. The Minister could, by regulation, permit such building to take place provided the size of the building and its prime cost were in accordance with the regulations. I submit that to do that by Ministerial regulation would be a tremendous alleviation for the very many persons who are anxious and willing and able to build their own homes on land which they can purchase at a reasonable price and would exempt them from the development charge. If the Minister will do that at the earliest possible date, he will be helping many tens of thousands of people who wish to build their own homes, and he will be adding to the tremendously good work he has already done in connection with the housing drive.

My main object in raising this matter this afternoon is to call attention to some of the injustices, inequalities and anomalies which have arisen in the levying of a development charge under this Act, and to suggest those two methods whereby there can be some alleviation of the hardship caused to prospective house-owners. I sincerely hope that when the Parliamentary Secretary comes to reply he will at least be able to tell the House that the two methods I have suggested will receive his and his right hon. Friend's immediate consideration, and that they may well merit action at a very early date.

Mr. Anthony Marlowe (Hove): My hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. H. Johnson) has done a great service to the House by raising this extremely pressing matter this afternoon, a matter which I believe all of us have brought to our notice very regularly in our correspondence and interviews with our constituents. It is one which I think the Ministry ought to deal with as soon as possible.

All of us have had to submit to the Minister cases of people anxious and able to build who are only deterred from doing so by this development charge. I have recently had dozens of cases in my constituency, and I have in mind the particular instance of a man who bought a little plot for about £280, or even less, with a 40-foot frontage. He has his building licence and is ready to go ahead, and he could have a house in which to live within three or four months. But he is deterred from proceeding in the matter because he would have to pay a development charge of £384, which is about 130 per cent. of the cost of the land he has acquired. Because he cannot afford to pay that money, the bungalow will never be built.

There is another case, which I sent to the Minister, of a man who has a site which was developed before the war when the main services were put in, but on which building was held up by the war. Some 30 or 40 houses would be built on that site this year if this development charge were not in the way. I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary will have a favourable answer to give to this matter. He must know, as we all do, that this was a piece of Socialist legislation. It is unbecoming of a Conservative Government to maintain this legislation, and I hope we can be informed as early as possible that this crippling charge will be abolished, and that by so doing building will be further encouraged.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (Ernest Marples): I am sure that the House is grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for

Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. H. Johnson) and to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Marlowe) for speaking on this very important subject of the development charge. I congratulate my hon. Friend on making his remarks very skilfully so that he kept within the bounds of order by not mentioning legislation, and I shall try to do the same. He also avoided some of the worst and most hideous planner's jargon which is now the fashion, and, again, and I will try to follow his good example.

He raised a number of points and I want to agree at the outset that there are many hardships amounting to almost an injustice, in the levying of the development charge. I do not dispute that. We start on the basis that the Government accept that as a fact. He mentioned several cases of certificates which caused anomalies in the case of the person owning an adjoining plot of land. One of the greatest causes of hardship and a burning sense of injustice among people is when a next door neighbour has an advantage which they themselves do not possess.

My hon. Friend mentioned a case of near-ripe land where two spinsters owned a single plot of land and could not develop it. He said that the change of user was a tremendous charge in that particular case. I do not know the details of the case but I must declare an interest, because I slightly changed the user of a small plot next door to my house and I had long wrangles for many months about how much I should have to pay on change of user. I assure my hon. Friend that I have great sympathy with the spinsters in that respect, and I still have a feeling that I was dealt with hardly.

But would it not be a good idea if we looked at the Town and Country Planning Act in perspective and as a whole? It is an enormous piece of legislation with many Sections and so many pages that it is almost baffling to look through it. But as a whole it has been an invaluable Measure. Its structure has been accepted and welcomed because 50 million people living in an extremely small island must make some provision for agricultural land and mineral rights, and future living conditions in some of our crowded industrial centres must be safeguarded by learning the lessons of the past and applying them to development in the future.

This Act, like the curate's egg, is bad in parts; and the worst parts are the financial provisions and the development charge in particular. But, as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Marlowe) said, this Government took over a going concern when it came into office in this piece of legislation which was on the Statute Book. My right hon. Friend has to administer the law as it stands or improve it by altering regulations, or by amending legislation, which is not in order for us to discuss in this debate.

No doubt this provision has proved repulsive to many people. Even when comparatively wealthy people have paid a small amount of money they have objected violently to the principle of paying this development charge if the person next door has not had to pay. We realise that that is one of the reasons why that part of the Act is so hated. And when the Act was brought before the House as a Bill its financial provisions were not discussed as fully as they might have been.

What are we trying to do? What are our intentions? That is the first question that is asked. It is the intention

that we shall remedy the weakness without sacrificing the advantage of the Act or saddling the nation with an unending bill of charges. We want to preserve those sections of the Act which are good and to eliminate those sections which the British people as a whole detest and are not really prepared to accept.

The second question which may be asked is whether we are really trying to do this or whether what I am saying is merely a Ministerial announcement to try to fob people off. The answer is that we are desperately keen to remedy the injustice to which my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown has referred. The Minister has worked on this without flagging to preserve the good and to amend the bad parts. We have sat almost with wet towels round our heads going into the various solutions which are possible.

The third question to be asked is whether it is difficult to correct these injustices and hardships. The answer is that it is extremely easy to see where the Act is not working, but it is extremely difficult to find a solution which is the perfect solution. Indeed, I believe that it will be impossible to find a perfect solution but we are not unhopeful that we will find at all events a solution which will be better than the present position.

There is unanimity in agreeing that it is bad, but no two professional bodies agree as to the remedies that should be applied. Recently, surveyors and lawyers met to try to achieve a degree of unanimity. I do not quite know whether the meeting broke up in disorder, but at any rate no unanimity was reached. That was a gathering of great experience, a very impressive gathering of intellect and respectability, and yet they were not able to arrive at an agreed solution.

The next question with which I should like to deal is, what progress have we made and how far have we got? We have examined every possibility, we have listed them and their advantages and disadvantages. We are almost dizzy with looking at the various permutations and combinations which are possible. My hon. Friend asked if we would look at Section 12 (2, a) of the Act, under which regulations can be made by the Minister that vary the class of user. He also asked us to look at Section 69 (2, b), which is to exempt certain classes. I cannot only promise my hon. Friend that it will receive consideration but that it has received consideration. Again, I do not want him to think that I am fobbing him off.

The main burden of the public's complaint against development charge is under three heads, which I should like to list. The first is that it adds to the cost of development. In theory, the developer should be able to buy land at existing use value, in which case his combined outlay on the land and the charge would not exceed what he would otherwise have had to pay for the land alone. In practice, this rarely happens unless compulsory powers are used. There is a wide gulf which has not been bridged between theory and practice.

The second objection is that it is a tax on development. Once again, in theory the charge is supposed to be part of the purchase price of land. In practice, the charge is used as a tax levied over and above the full cost of the land, and developers, especially private house-builders, cannot understand why they should pay the State before they can

carry out development which is in the public interest.

In the course of the discussion of the Town and Country Planning Act, I had a case raised during the Committee stage in which some of my colleagues and myself, in those happy days when I was not in my present position, were proposing to erect a large block of flats in the West End of London. We asked the Minister what would happen if the freeholder gave us a ground lease and insisted that we should pay the development charge. The then Minister dismissed the point by saying that it was purely hypothetical, that it would never arise and that if it did a compulsory purchase order could be provided by the Central Land Board. But it did arise, and they would not apply a compulsory purchase order. In every respect the Minister of the day was wrong in dealing with that case. The charge is, in fact, a tax on development.

The third objection is that the method of assessment is arbitrary. This criticism is made because people fail to understand the basis of development charge and are baffled by the wide variation of charges levied on say a three-bedroom house, not realising that it is the result of variations in land values. I can understand their feelings, because it is an artificial type of assessment and there is no right of appeal.

The criticisms that my hon. Friend has made are good ones. We recognise them and we shall do our best to overcome them. It is a difficult and complicated question, and although I cannot discuss legislation, if I could I should only have to say that the Parliamentary time-table was so choked with business that it would obviously not be possible to introduce any Measure until the next Session; but I must not speak about that because it is out of order.

I cannot say when an announcement will be made, but when it is made I can promise my hon. Friend that it will not be a half-baked scheme, because my right hon. Friend has a very fertile mind, great industry and astonishing perseverance. We shall try to retain the advantages and mitigate the disadvantages of the present Act. In other words, we must not throw the baby out through the bathroom window.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Twenty-nine Minutes to Five o'Clock.

FROM WEEK TO WEEK— (continued from page 4).

most nations, and at a decidedly greater rate in males. The largest rise has occurred in the last 20 years, and cancer of the lungs attains the highest percentage in this category. This has often been ascribed to tobacco-smoking. But the author states that other reasons have been suggested, including prolonged exposure to industrial emanations and automobile exhaust fumes.

The alternative, "Unemployment or War" may come to be written "Unemployment or Disease and War"—but, however cluttered with unwanted goods the world becomes, it may still be moved to believe it prefers work for work's sake to work for enjoyment's sake.