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Decline of Rome: Fratricide and Fall

By H. SWABEY.

(Concluded)*

Gibbon contrasts the troubles of the Empire, caused by discharged mercenaries, or what to do with your gunmen, with those of his day when "our debts and taxes are the secret poison which still corrodes the bosom of peace." And he dismisses the Athens of his day with the proverb of that country: "From the Jews of Thessalonica, the Turks of Nogropont, and the Greeks of Athens, good Lord deliver us!"

The next chapter is headed, *Civil Wars and Ruin of the Greek Empire*: the emperor's grandson borrowed money from the "Genoese usurers of Pera and the oppressive debt, which consolidated the interest of a faction, could be discharged only by a revolution." Three civil wars followed (1321-28). A few years later, in *The Civil War*, both sides looked for help from Turkish mercenaries, and the admission of the Ottomans into Europe was "the last and fatal stroke in the fall of the Roman empire." Once more, barbarians and infidels were "invited to assist the Greeks in their mutual destruction . . . the Turk now struck a deep and everlasting root in Europe." Then the Genoese (of Pera, a suburb) rose up and conquered a combination of Venetians and Greeks, under the admiral Pisani, and were granted a *monopoly of trade*. (1352.)

Zingis Khan (d. 1227) is credited with establishing "a system of pure theism and perfect toleration." But only eleven years after his death, the terror of the Moguls and Tartars he had united deterred the merchants of Gothia and Frise from sending their ships to England for herrings, and the fish market collapsed. Kublai, the conqueror of China, was the next successor but one of Zingis. But the chapter reads something like a satire on the 20th century, although it was written before 1787. Voltaire's remark is given, that European battles are "petty skirmishes" compared with the holocausts of Asia. And we read that "the cities of Lublin and Cracow were *obliterated* by these savages, which provokes comparison with the feats of Bomber Harris and Truman in this line. The two hundred years servitude of the Russians imprinted on their characters a "deep, perhaps indelible, mark." However, Tartar "hostility to the Moslems inclined them to unite with the Greeks and Franks . . . to preserve the peace and balance of the Turkish frontiers."

But Othman (d. 1326) refounded the Tartar power, and the seven churches of Asia were soon ruined, although

Rhodes survived for two centuries. "The Greeks, by their intestine divisions, were the authors of their final ruin." This loomed up in the form of Bajazet (d. 1403), who penetrated deep into Europe. Retaliation, and massacre of prisoners, was a feature of his reign: he exercised the "justice of a sultan who disdains to balance the weight of evidence, or to measure the degrees of guilt." We may indeed be surprised to what extent thought on martial and legal matters has been *orientalized* for us. When ransom was demanded for some prisoners, some merchants of Genoa gave security to five times the amount of the sum: "commerce and credit are the links of the society of nations." But a further breathing space was granted, for "by the victory of Timour, or Tamerlane, the fall of Constantinople was delayed about fifty years." Tamerlane ("It was his firmest maxim that, whatever might be the consequences, the word of the prince should never be disputed or recalled") overcame and perhaps engaged, Bajazet in 1402.

The Christian powers, however, failed to profit from the respite given them by the usual chaos which followed the prince's death, and were diverted from unity by "the schism of the West and the factions and wars of England and France." Gibbon of course does not suggest that they should have sacrificed their sovereignty, but rather have ensured it. The Genoese had an alum monopoly, but this was lost in the crash of the empire, and alum became a papal monopoly. Constantinople survived a siege in 1422, and enjoyed "a servile and precarious respite of thirty years." It is worth noting that the Turks looked for soldiers "not in effeminate Asia, but among the hardy and warlike natives of Europe . . . and inhuman tax, of the fifth child, or of every fifth year was rigorously levied on the Christian families . . . the most robust youths were *torn from their parents*." This method ensured that they would be the slaves of the sultans, even though they rose to be "statues of glass." This oriental method of education is being closely followed today. At this point, the Greeks' only hope was "some more powerful weapon, some discovery in the art of war . . . Such a weapon was in their hands." But the secret "was disclosed to the Turks by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals." Perhaps it was the Genoese (they "must be accused"), and the Venetians soon told the Egyptians and Persians, about *gunpowder*.

Three emperors travelled to the West from Constantinople, which had become an outpost, to look for help in the sixty years before its capture. One of them was received by Henry IV on Blackheath (1400). The Turks did what they could to divide the Christians. Another emperor went to Italy and a reunion was patched up, to the amusement of some realistic English ambassadors they met. The patriarch accompanied the emperor and sought to learn from the pope the secret of freedom from servitude

*This instalment concludes both Mr. Swabey's article under this title and the series to which it belongs.

(*Douleias*) to the temporal power. These negotiations spread the knowledge of Greek in the West, some Greeks stayed to teach the Italians, while pope Nicholas V (d. 1455) and the di Medicis helped in the revival. But when the emperor returned, most of the Greeks rejected the terms of the reunion (1440) and made a schism among themselves. The pope formed a league or crusade against the Turks, which had some success, and a ten years truce was concluded. But the violation of the truce was fatal to the expedition, although the sultan admitted that another such victory would ruin him. (We might have thought of this some years ago.) The White Knight of Hungary (Huniades) and Scanderberg of Albania checked and diverted the Turks for a few years longer.

The last emperor of Constantinople was appropriately named Constantine, and his conqueror was Mahomet II. The "indifference of Christendom" to the fate of the city is similar to considerable American feeling when Britain was in danger that it would be amusing for her to be taken down a peg. A cardinal was brought to the city in a final effort at religious union (*propter spem auxilii*, owing to the hope of assistance, a historian explains), but the union was rejected by the majority of the people. The rich hid or withheld their money. Four of five ships were valiantly manoeuvred in to bring supplies, when "a rational and moderate armament of the maritime states might have saved the relics of the Roman name . . . Yet this was the sole and feeble attempt for the deliverance of Constantinople." The sultan transported his ships overland into the harbour, and this is compared to "our own embarkations on the lakes of Canada in the years 1776 and 1777, so great in the labour, so fruitless in the event." But Mahomet was all too successful (May, 1453), the emperor was killed in the battle, and Santa Sophia was a mosque. It is now a museum or library. We may well be surprised that the Eastern empire, with its intrigues and usuries (*vide* Brooks Adams, *Law of Civilization and Decay*) lasted so long. But it is still more remarkable that the political maturity of the eighteenth century was so rapidly dissipated.

But Gibbon has not quite finished yet: it was not, of course, the end of Rome, and he devotes three final chapters to this city. In the twelfth century "Rome continually presented the aspect of war and discord." The senate made a reappearance, and issued coins for over a century (from 1199), inscribed *Rome, the Capital of the World*. Then a single magistrate was called Senator: but, "the senators of Rome indulged their avarice and ambition . . . the Romans were incapable of governing themselves." So they procured a foreign magistrate, called *podesta*; then foreign princes held the office of Senator. At times they looked to the Western emperor. Dante gives a lurid account of the popes, up to 1300. The state of affairs was disturbed, yet "the elevation of a Hebrew race to the rank of senators and consuls is an event without parallel . . . a wealthy and learned Jew was converted . . . the zeal and courage of the son were signalized in the cause of Gregory VII . . . their riches, the fruits of usury, were shared with the noblest families . . . the grandson was exalted to the throne of St Peter . . . only the eloquence of St Bernard and the final triumph of Innocent II has branded Anacletus with the epithet of anti-pope . . . none will be found of the modern nobles ambitious of descending from a Jewish

stock." The rivalry of the Colonna and Ursini families also distracted society.

Petrarch the Laureate and Rienzi the Tribune tried to restore "the good estate" of Rome, but the Tribune fell when he tried to impose one tax too many (1347). He returned as Senator, but the suggestion of a tax proved fatal to him. ("The senator's body was abandoned to the dogs, to the Jews, and to the flames.") The end of the 'Babylonish captivity' of the popes at Avignon was followed immediately (1378) by the Great Schism, in which England and Scotland supported different popes. Councils to finish the schism at first produced a third pope, but eventually, after England had insisted on having a vote among the great powers, harmony was restored and the pope took over from the senate the right of coining money. The "apprehension of a new excise" provoked a rebellion against the pope, but after five months he was called back and said no more about the excise. The last of the 'Teutonic Carsars,' Frederick III, was crowned at Rome in 1452: he "distinguished the dress and person of the senator of Rome; and in this last farewell, the pageants of the empire and the republic were clasped in a friendly embrace." The senator could not be a Roman; he was elected annually, other officials were elected for three months only; the secret council was a kind of senate, and the common council was for Romans only. The pope held the reins, and Pocarò, a new Rienzi, was easily subdued. Even the disorders of the nobles died down, and people noted "the easy taxes and wise administration of the ecclesiastical state." Politically, the "nice balance of the Vatican" was often subverted, and Rome was abandoned for seven months to a lawless army, worse in Gibbon's opinion than the Goths and Vandals. Then "the popes contracted their ambition," and leaned heavily on Spain. As a result, "a smooth and stagnant lake reflects the image of idleness and servitude."

The final chapter describes the buildings of Rome, among the ruins of which Gibbon "first conceived the idea of a work which has amused and exercised nearly twenty years of my life": without leisure, the work could not have been attempted. He mentions the state of the Roman Campagna, where "the scanty harvests are confined or exported for the sake of a monopoly." And he calls the history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, "the greatest, perhaps, and most awful scene in the history of mankind." Yet still more awful and remarkable is the state of another great empire, not long ago respected by her enemies and derided from within, built up by large men and pulled down by small men, that steadily refuses the life-line offered by Major Douglas. The most elementary impulses of self-interest, and even of survival, appear benumbed: education can be as successful as that. The greatest danger to the Roman empire, of course, throughout all its centuries and vicissitudes, was continuously *from within*.

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PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: July 9, 1952.

Sudan (Constitution Status)

Mr. Driberg asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what date it is proposed to hold a general election in the Sudan; how soon thereafter, and by what instrument, the transfer of power to a Sudanese government will be effected; and how soon he anticipates that the interim period of self-government will be followed by self-determination.

Mr. Nutting: The present position of constitutional development in the Sudan is that the Governor-General has submitted a draft self-government statute to Her Majesty's Government and to the Royal Egyptian Government. This statute is now being examined by Her Majesty's Government. Under the provisions of the statute, elections for the Sudanese Parliament will take place when the statute comes into force. The draft statute also provides that following on elections a Sudanese Council of Ministers responsible to Parliament shall take office.

As regards the last part of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend on 15th November last, to which I have nothing to add at present.

Mr. Driberg: Can the hon. Gentleman say whether it is regarded as probable that the general election will be held in October, and can he say whether he saw the very important interview in today's "Daily Telegraph" in which Sayed Abdel Rahman el-Mahdi Pasha expressed some anxiety lest the dragging on of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations should delay that general election?

Mr. Nutting: As regards the second part of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary, my attention has been drawn to that report. I do not think there need be any substance in those anxieties. As regards the first part of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary, I should prefer at the moment to go no further than the Foreign Secretary went in saying that the Government hope that by the end of this year the self-governing constitution will be effected.

Exports to Spain (Civilian and Military Material)

Mr. Wyatt asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what diplomatic exchanges with the Spanish Government preceded the lifting of the ban on the sale of arms to Spain.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd: None, Sir.

Mr. Wyatt: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman really mean to say that he is so anxious to placate the Franco Government that he is giving them those arms without their even asking for them?

Mr. Lloyd: As was indicated to the hon. Gentleman the other day, there is no question of trying to placate the Franco Government. These matters were looked at from an economic point of view and in the interests of the people of this country.

Mr. Ernest Davies: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman state whether there were any consultations with

any other country before a reversal of policy of this nature was undertaken? For instance, did we consult our N.A.T.O. Allies and the Commonwealth?

Mr. Lloyd: We consulted one of our N.A.T.O. Allies.

Captain Soames: Will my right hon. and learned Friend tell the House whether he has any information to show that the previous Government consulted with any other friendly Governments before selling jet bombers to Russia?

Armed Forces

Sir D. Savory asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that the strength of the Hungarian army has been increased from four infantry divisions in 1949 to 20 divisions, including three armoured and two air force divisions; and whether he will request Her Majesty's Ambassador at Budapest to draw the attention of the Hungarian Government to Section 1, Article 12, of the Treaty of Peace with Hungary signed in Paris on 10th February, 1947, and to lodge a protest.

Mr. Nutting: I am aware that the military forces in Hungary greatly exceed the limits prescribed in the Peace Treaty. I do not, however, consider that the proposal made in the second part of my hon. Friend's Question would produce any useful result.

Sir D. Savory: Is my hon. Friend aware that the increased military preparations on the frontier and the laying out of vast airfields under Russian engineers is causing very serious apprehension in Yugoslavia?

Mr. Nutting: Yes, Sir, I am certainly aware of that, but I do not consider it would serve any useful purpose to protest to the Hungarians about this. As my hon. Friend probably knows, the procedure laid down in the Treaty for dealing with disputes in connection with the execution of the Treaty requires, in the first place, joint action by the British, United States and Soviet Missions in Budapest. So far, the Soviets have, of course, declined to associate themselves with any protest or action by Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Snow: In connection with Hungarian soldiers, where are all the musical comedies in which they can perform?

Ministry of Food (Eggs)

Mr. Dodds asked the Minister of Food in view of the discrepancy between the increased production of home-produced eggs and the official egg allocation, what progress has been made in the special investigation by his officials into this problem.

The Minister of Food (Major Lloyd George): I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Coventry, South (Miss Burton) on 2nd July.

Mr. Dodds: That answer is not good enough. Does not the right hon. and gallant Gentleman appreciate that the black market in eggs has risen to tremendous proportions with the change of Government, and that it is the general opinion that even large poultry keepers are breaking the law? Is he not aware that people are looking to him to take action to bring some of these culprits to book and not to de-control

(continued on page 6.)

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Saturday, August 2, 1952.

From Week to Week

The commentary of Tacitus on Galba—*Omnium consensu capax Imperii nisi imperasset*—quoted by the *Daily Telegraph* in its leading article last Monday unfortunately applies with at least equal force to usurpers as to kings; but the modern multiple usurper, like the chain store of which it is the political isotope, multiplies incapacity in the same proportion as it divides responsibility. Ancient Egypt held sacred the baboon, yet knew the lion. We notice that the exiled Farouk is reported as bound for Italy, following, doubtless, transference of gum from one cheek to the other and a more or less dry intimation that the . . . States had no further use for even tame lions. The *Washington Times Herald's* banner announcement, "Farouk flees to U.S. Haven," was merely journalistic impetuosity touched with natural pride.

Considering a litter of nine Alsatian pups not so far as they ought to be from the editorial sanctum, we are bound to say that the attribution of baboon-like features, cynocephalic or 'dog-headed' features, to the next President of the . . . States is a particularly nasty libel, which we swear ever again to eschew. Comparing "the greatest single factor" which is said to have contributed to the rise of the two generals, Neguib and Eisenhower, we are astonished to discover that they disagree in one particular only out of four contributory items. "corruption" (in the opposing camp), a mark each; "maladministration," a mark each; "governmental ineptitude," a mark each; but, "Anglo-American interference in Israel's favour"—well, such a suggestion would not have any point to it in the . . . States, would it? Anyhow, the day of military dictatorships seems to have dawned, and we do not forget the reason given by a young National Service volunteer in Korea for electing to go 'regular,' that the Army offered the opportunity of entering "the only honourable profession left." In recording this opinion, in which, with one qualification only, we concur, we should mention that whether it is indeed "left" seems to be bound up with the question Captain Russell Grenfell, R.N., has just put to the Archbishop of York through a public medium. We cite the letter, which, tardily, goes back to the question of individual responsibility raised in so many forms by Douglas:—

"Sir—The Archbishop of York's recent condemnation of the use of the napalm bomb as morally wrong sets the Fighting Services a pretty problem. The Allied airmen in Korea have been and presumably are still being, ordered to drop these bombs, and the question arises whether they should

obey such orders after Dr. Garbett's pronouncement on the subject.

"Since 1944 they have been under the obligation to disobey orders which 'outrage the general sentiments of humanity,' and it is difficult to think of anyone more representative of such sentiments than an Archbishop.

"There can be no doubt that, if Dr. Garbett is right about the napalm bomb, the United Nations officers in Korea who are dropping it are in an awkward position. May I appeal to the Archbishop to say what, in his view, those officers should do?"

Now, boys, don't you butt in—let his Grace, the Archbishop of York, have the courtesy of the floor!

The Prime Minister, closeted with his Jew boss a hundred and seventy odd miles to the south, may, for all we know, be quite interested in the matter—or perhaps the time is not yet. Mr. Baruch got here a day earlier than he was expected. He was in a hurry.

Farouk's jest, that there would soon be only five kings left, the King of Hearts, the King of Diamonds, the King of Spades the King of Clubs and the King of England has an American accent. (In America they don't think much of kings and have promoted the—Jacks—to their places.)

Mr. Nabarro, Member of Parliament, has been writing to the *Daily Telegraph*, saying that hydro-electricity is dearer than electricity from steam power stations. It was not a good letter; but it has called forth from one of the gentlemen entrusted with the impudent office of explaining 'the State' to its victims the reply that when a hydro-electric plant is running it gets water "free." Then what production costs are there? Maintenance, yes. And how much, or little? That little is all that is distributed to pay the price (not the cost) of current for as long as the plant lasts, or the folly of consumers allows them to be cheated, whichever is the shorter.

The tendency of the Newspapers to speak harshly to one another, and whip each other when each other sneezes, is noticeably increasing; but may betoken little more than the irritation of chosen friends when their nerves are under tension.

The new Premier of British Columbia is Mr. W. A. C. Bennett, one of the three Social Credit Candidates to be elected by an overall majority on the first ballot. Mr. Bennett was formerly a Liberal. What is it that enables us to grow first one then another government taking the name of Social Credit as though from a grain of mustard seed? How many governments in the world, past or present, have been called by a name and title vouched for by a handful of people, for the most part obscure and interested primarily in other (and doubtless more significant) matters than politics, merely because the ideas they hold are right and significant—and, finally, we believe, irresistible. We are told (and by some who would call themselves our friends) that we are unimportant. Someone, someone hidden and powerful, dissents.

Letters from England

By Robert Southey.

(Continued)

Jews in England

LETTER LXIII. . . . In former times the toleration of the Jews gave occasion to the same disturbances here as in the rest of Europe. They cheated the people, and the people in return took advantage of every tumult to plunder them. The famous King John, who offered to turn Mohammedan if the Miramamolins would assist him against his rebellious subjects, extorted a large sum from a Jew of Bristol by a new and ingenious kind of torture: he condemned him to have a tooth drawn every day till he consented to lend the money; and the Jew parted with six grinders before he submitted. (*Editor's note*: This famous story was first told by Roger of Wendover, the thirteenth century chronicler. It was subjected to a damaging analysis by Sir B. L. Abrahams in the *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, viii, 179-80.) After the schism, as the Heretics began to persecute the Catholics, and then one another, the misbelievers were forgotten. Cromwell even favoured them; in one respect he differed from all his contemporary fanatics, for he willingly allowed to other sects the toleration which he claimed for his own. [*Editor's note*: Cromwell's adherence to toleration was a good deal less systematic and enlightend than this passage suggests. On the readmission of the Jews, see C. Roth, *History of the Jews in England* (1941), 156-8] Manasseh Ben Israel vrinted three editions of the Bible in Hebrew. This Rabbi is generally supposed to have been a Spaniard, but the Portuguese claim him, and I think we shall not be disposed to contend with them for the honour,—especially as most persons would decide in their favour, without examination.

During the last reign (in 1753) an attempt was made to naturalize them, in a body; and the measure would have been affected had it not been for the indignant outcry of the people, who very properly regarded it as an act of defiance, or at least of opposition, to the express language of prophecy. But this feeling has abated, and were the attempt to be renewed it would meet with little opposition. In Catholic countries our pictures and crucifixes perpetually set before the Christian's eyes the sufferings of the Redeemer, and there is no possibility of his forgetting the history of his religion. Even the most trifling ceremony is of use. At one of the public schools here, the boys on Easter Sunday rush out of the chapel after prayers, singing

He is risen, he is risen

All the Jews must go to prison.

The custom is certainly very old, though I cannot learn that it was ever usual to imprison this wretched people upon this festival. Some of these boys cut the straps of a Jew's box one day, and all his ginger-bread fell into the street. Complaint was made to the master; and when he questioned the culprits what they could say in their defence, one of them stepped forward and said: "Why, sir, did they not crucify our Lord!" Without admitting the plea in excuse, it may be remarked that if the boy had not remembered his Easter rhymes, he would have been as indifferent to the crime of the Jews as the rest of his countrymen.

Some years ago one of the best living dramatists wrote

a comedy for the purpose of representing the Jewish character in a favourable light. The play was very successful, and the Jews were so well pleased that they presented the author with a handsome gratuity. (Southey's note. This was publicly asserted at the time, but untrue. The reference is to *The Jew*, by Richard Cumberland, first performed in 1794.) A farce was brought forward at another time called *The Jew Boy*; and the fraternity knowing that it was impossible to represent this class favourably, assembled in great numbers, and actually damned the piece. This single fact is sufficient to prove that the liberty they enjoy is unbounded. It is not merely the open exercise of their religion which is permitted them, they are even suffered to write and publish against Christianity. If the permission of blasphemy were no sin, there would be little evil in this licence, so little are they able to make proselytes. The only apostate whom they have made within the memory of man is the very person who occasioned the insurrection against the Catholics in 1780, and who afterwards lost his senses, renounced his faith, and, though of noble family, died in a public prison a lamentable instance of divine vengeance. (Lord George Gordon. . . .)

In Rome these misbelievers are obliged to hear a sermon once a week; here a sermon attracts them as a novelty. One of the Methodist itinerants, some few years ago, fancying that, like St. Vicente Ferre (1355-1419, Spanish Dominican preacher), he had a special gift for converting this stiff-necked generation, undertook to confute their errors, and invited them to attend his preaching. The place appointed was the great Methodist Chapel in Tottenham Court Road; and they assembled in such crowds as to fill the chapel and the court in which it is built. . . . There can be no reason to suppose that they came with hearts more accessible to conviction than usual; but, had it been the case, the method which this fanatic took was little likely to be successful; for he began by telling them that he was not yet twenty years old, that he had no human learning whatever, and that for all he was about to say to them he trusted to the immediate impulse of the Lord. The rest of his discourse was in character with the beginning, and the Jews returned, the greater number ridiculing his folly, the more thoughtful remembering their own law against him who presumes to speak in the name of the Lord, what the Lord hath not commanded him to speak. Yet from the readiness with which they assembled to hear him, it does not appear impossible that if some true Christian, inspired with the zeal of our St. Vicente, were to collect them together, their curiosity might be made use of to the triumph of the faith and the salvation of souls.

The English Church has no zeal for souls. At the beginning of the last century, the daughter of a rich Jew, by name Jacob Mendes de Breta, was at her own instance publicly baptized. The father ran into the church like a madman, charged the officiating clergyman to desist, and, when he perceived that this was in vain, cursed his child with the bitterest imprecations, and prayed to his God that the church might fall in, and crush all who were concerned in the ceremony. After this he utterly disowned her,—the law had made no provision for such cases, and the parish were obliged to support her; which, to their honour, they did in a manner suitable to her former situation in life. At their petition, however, a bill was enacted compelling the

Jews to provide decently for their converted children. Thus much was done upon the emergency of the case, and nothing more. Not the slightest effort is made for their conversion, nor the slightest impediment opposed to the public celebration of ceremonies, which the Gospel has expressly abrogated. The Jews have nothing to complain of, except they pay tithes to the clergy, and that they are liable to the trouble of parish offices—the law even allowing them to be made churchwardens. Any person may be excused from serving this office if he chooses to pay a fine amounting to about ten pieces of eight: it is not long since a parish in London nominated a Jew for the sake of getting this money; he, however, was determined to disappoint them by taking the situation;—the profanation was theirs, not his; and accordingly the church affairs were actually managed by this son of the Synagogue.

(To be continued).

PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3.)

eggs, which may mean that people get less eggs than before?

Major Lloyd George: The answer to which I referred said that I was looking into this question at the moment. With regard to the question of the black market having increased since this Government came in, all I can say is that the allocation of eggs is practically the same this year as it was last year.

Mr. Dodds: It is not.

Major Lloyd George: The allocation per ration book is just what it was last year, having been slightly above it at the beginning of the year. The figure was 62, which is practically the same as last year. As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary said, until we have developed a new scheme it is either a question of de-control or increased inspection.

Mr. Dodds: The Minister in his own words said that there were as many eggs given out this year as there were last year, but is it not a fact that in the aggregate the number is many millions more, and therefore they are going to the black market?

Major Lloyd George: The hon. Gentleman is wrong. Egg production is less this year than it was last year.

Food Subsidies

Mr. Deedes asked the Minister of Food what level of food subsidies would be needed now to keep the cost of food where it was in April, 1949, when the subsidy ceiling was fixed at £410 million.

Major Lloyd George: If the prices of the main subsidised foods were reduced to the levels ruling at 1st April, 1949, I estimate that food subsidies of something over £800 million a year would be required. I cannot make a more precise estimate owing to changes in ration levels and in the range of subsidised food.

Mr. Deedes: Do I understand that the price of food passed on to the consumer between that date and the end of last year is something in the region of £400 million, which is considerably in excess of the reduction for which this Government is held responsible?

Major Lloyd George: The actual figure is nearer £475 million.

Mr. T. Williams: Can the right hon. and gallant Gentleman tell the House what was the extent of the increase in prices for imported food between the two dates referred to in the question?

Major Lloyd George: I have not that figure separately. There is a definite proportion which I have not in my mind at the moment, and that is the nearest answer that I can give to the question.

Mrs. Mann: Can the right hon. and gallant Gentleman say when the free private enterprise traders are to be sent out to bring us in some cheaper food?

Major Lloyd George: As soon as we can get more stability.

Mr. F. Willey asked the Minister of Food the total amount of the food subsidies for the financial year 1951-52.

Major Lloyd George: About £415 million on the latest estimates.

Jam Making (Sugar)

Mr. Vane asked the Minister of Food what estimate he has made of the additional foreign exchange involved in making sweet coupons for July, August and September valid for 1 lb. of sugar per month instead of sweets, to meet the urgent need of those wishing to make jam.

Major Lloyd George: About 7 million dollars. My hon. Friend will recollect that arrangements have already been made for a bonus of 1 lb. this month.

Mr. Vane: In view of the great advantages not only to those who want to make more jam but also to the growers who are somewhat anxious about the disposal of a very heavy fruit crop, cannot my right hon. and gallant Friend take some emergency action to obtain more sugar even if it has to be done at the expense of such things as films and tobacco later in the year?

Major Lloyd George: I would, of course, do anything I could to improve the position, but my hon. Friend will appreciate that the question which he has raised goes far beyond my Department. It is a far wider subject altogether.

Mr. Vane: Will my right hon. and gallant Friend consult his right hon. Friends to see whether the suggestion is practicable?

Major Lloyd George: My hon. Friend's suggestion is not at all an easy one. It would be extremely difficult because we should have to provide stocks not only to meet the sweet ration but also to meet the needs of those who wish to exchange their rations for sugar, and that would inevitably lead to a large expenditure. However, I am anxious to do anything I can to assist in this difficult matter.

CIVIL LIST

Considered in Committee.

[Sir CHARLES MACANDREW in the Chair.]

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. R. A. Butler): I beg to move,

1. That there be charged on the Consolidated Fund as from

the last demise of the Crown the following annual sums (subject to adjustment in respect of parts of a year):—

- 5 For the Queen's Civil List: £475,000;
 For retired allowances: such sums as may be required for the payment of retired allowances granted by Her Majesty or by His late Majesty to or in respect of persons who have been members of the Royal Household;
- 10 For Civil List pensions: such sums as may be required for the payment in each year of Civil List pensions already granted and Civil List pensions hereafter to be granted, so, however, that the aggregate of the pensions granted in any financial year shall not exceed £2,500 a year;
- For His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh: £40,000, in substitution for any sum payable to him under the Princess Elizabeth's and Duke of Edinburgh's Annuities Act, 1948;
- 15 For the benefit of the children of Her Majesty, other than the Duke of Cornwall for the time being: in respect of each son who attains the age of twenty-one years or marries, £10,000, and in the case of a son who marries a further £15,000; and in respect of each daughter who attains the age of twenty-one years or marries, £6,000, and in the case of a daughter who marries a further £9,000;
- 20 For Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret: £9,000 in the event of her marriage, in addition to any sum payable to her under section six of the Civil List Act, 1937;
- In the event of the death during the present reign of the Duke of Cornwall for the time being leaving a widow, for his widow, £30,000;

25 and that provision be made for continuing for a period of six months after the close of the present reign certain payments charged as aforesaid upon the Consolidated Fund which would otherwise then be determined:

Provided that—

- (i) as respects any period during which the Duke of Cornwall for the time being is a minor, the sum of £475,000 for the Queen's Civil List shall be subject to a reduction of an amount equal to the net revenues of the Duchy for the year, less—
- 30 (a) for each year whilst he is under the age of eighteen years, one ninth of those revenues,
 (b) for each of the last three years of his minority, £30,000;
- (ii) as respects any period during which the Duchy of Cornwall is vested in Her Majesty, the said sum of £475,000 shall be subject to a reduction of an amount equal to the net revenues of the Duchy for the year.
- 35

During the past 10 days hon. Members have had an opportunity of reading and considering the Report of the Select Committee over which I had the honour to preside. Therefore, I do not think that I need go through its proposals in great detail today. It will perhaps be for the convenience of the Committee if I comment briefly, according to past practice, on the main features of the Report and on its most important recommendations which are embodied in this Motion.

Before doing so, however, may I invite the attention of the Committee to the first paragraph of the Report, from which they will note that the Select Committee have been afforded every facility to inform themselves of the subjects they have been considering and that we have taken in our nine sessions most valuable evidence.

The Report makes it abundantly clear that in considering the financial provision to be made for the Sovereign and the other members of the Royal Family, we must make allow-

ances for considerable changes of various kinds which have taken place since the last Civil List Act was passed in 1937. The Report brings this out with several illustrations which I need not repeat here. It shows the increase in the burden of public duty which now falls upon the Royal Family, and it shows the extension of the demands made upon Her Majesty the Queen and on the Royal Family as a result, among other things, of the changed relations between the Sovereign and the Commonwealth. In considering this matter, I feel sure that the Committee will bear in mind this aspect of the question namely, the relationship of the Sovereign to the Commonwealth as a whole and the implications of that relationship.

The Report also emphasises that it is impossible to foresee what further changes may occur in the duties of the Sovereign and the burdens involved. There may well be some further simplification in the scale of the official functions of the Sovereign, and I am sure this would be welcomed, but my right hon. and hon. Friends feel that this must be left to the discretion of the Sovereign. There may also be increases in costs and prices which would cancel out any resultant saving.

In these circumstances the main task of the Select Committee was to recommend such financial provision as would, in their view, not only be adequate to enable the Sovereign and the several members of the Royal Family to discharge their duties in a manner consonant with the honour and dignity of the Crown, but also—and this is of no less importance—to relieve her Majesty as far as possible of, among other burdens, that of any financial anxiety. . . :

Mr. Ralph Assheton (Blackburn, West): As a Member of the Select Committee, I should like to make one or two points this afternoon. I will not keep the Committee for more than a few minutes. I support the proposals which the Select Committee has put forward. They were considered with care, and I think that most hon. Members will be in agreement with them. There is, of course, a good deal to be said for the proposal made in the Amendment put down by the Opposition Front Bench; I can see the attraction of a 10-year review, and I think many of us were impressed with the fact that there are advantages in it. On balance, however, my own feeling is that it would tend somewhat to bring the Crown into the field of controversy from time to time, and that is something which I should prefer to avoid.

There are two points which are not, I think, fully understood by the public. One is that when a new Sovereign comes to the Throne a surrender is made by the Crown of the Crown Lands. It should be remembered that the revenue of the Crown Lands is greatly in excess of the total amount voted in the Civil List, so that not only is there no burden upon the taxpayer in consequence of the Civil List, but there is a profit to the taxpayer from that transaction. I do not think that that is widely known. I have seen little or no references to it in the Press, and I think it would be desirable that the general public should be made aware of it.

Mrs. White: In making that statement, would it not be correct to say that Death Duties are not payable on the Crown Lands, and that had they been payable that position would not have arisen?

Mr. Assheton: It is quite true to say that. Taxation does not fall upon the Crown, and in that connection I come to my second point.

Income Tax is not payable by the Crown itself, but it is not generally known that Income Tax is payable by other members of the Royal Family, although the Inland Revenue makes allowances for expenses, just as they make allowances for other people's expenses. I am quite certain that the Committee as a whole endorses the view of the Select Committee. We take great pride in the Crown; we have a great loyalty to it and we wish to see its dignity properly maintained. The burden of the Crown is a very heavy one, and I should like to conclude by reminding the Committee of some words of which I myself was reminded last night by my hon. Friend the Member for Carlton (Mr. Pickthorn), words used to Parliament by Queen Elizabeth I at the end of a long reign, when she said:

"To be a King and wear a Crown is more glorious to them that see it than it is a pleasure to them that bear it."

Water Supplies, Fluorination (Mission to U.S.A.)

Mr. Viant asked the Minister of Health which are the interested bodies represented on the mission which has visited the United States of America to examine American investigations into fluorine in water; whether the report of the mission will be made public; and whether the detailed evidence on which they formulate their report will also be published.

Mr. Iain Macleod: The members of the mission were:
Miss Jean Forrest, L.D.S., Dental Officer, Ministry of Health;
Dr. J. Longwell, D.Sc., Government Chemist's Department;
Professor H. H. Stones, M.D., F.D.S.R.C.S., Member, Dental Research Committee, Medical Research Council;
Dr. Allan Macbeth Thompson, Nutrition Research Team, Department of Midwifery, University of Aberdeen.

The question of publication will be considered when I have received the mission's report.

SCOTLAND

Firms (Electricity Supplies)

Mr. J. MacLeod asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many firms have asked for a supply of electricity from the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board at a lower rate than that to which the board are prepared to agree.

Mr. J. Stuart: The Board inform me that they have been approached by four firms for bulk supplies at a low rate for electro-metallurgical and electro-chemical processes. The price which the firms are prepared to pay is about one-quarter to one-half of the cost price of producing the electricity.

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