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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

The universal experience of frequenters of the gaming tables at Monte Carlo is that you can't really beat the Bank. You may try. Mr. Butler has had his try. What else can we say of a Budget which is fundamentally indistinguishable from all other Budgets? Nothing. The tale of hair-raising disagreement between the Lion of Baruchia and plain Mr. Butler we count as a tale. It certainly doesn't show on the surface, and probably has its origin in some form of wishful thinking, which was not very comprehensive thinking in any case.

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Half the 'budget' of Pakistan for the coming year is to be spent on armament.

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Americans have paid more in taxes since Mr. Truman became President than under all previous United States Presidents, including Roosevelt; pre-Truman, $248,000,000,000 (two-hundred and forty-eight thousand millions); post-Truman, $262,000,000,000 (two-hundred and sixty-two thousand millions). Tens of thousands of people are being added to the Federal payroll every month. Isn't Totalitarianism wonderful?

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Professors A. J. Ayer, P. M. S. Blackett, W. A. Lewis, P. F. Medawar, and S(olly) Zuckerman, Dr. Julian Huxley and Messrs. Noel Annan, J. A. Wolfenden, and T. E. B. Howarth are to broadcast as the Lunar Society of the Air, conversations in the tradition of the Lunar Society which met in Birmingham in the latter half of the 18th century, the early days of the industrial revolution. Perhaps we shall be able to revise our present opinion concerning the question, 'Can scientists learn from experience?' Perhaps not.

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The Ohio Mason has the following:—

"An exchange calls attention to the Masonic link with our famous Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island, at the entrance of New York Harbour. The statue, it will be recalled, was the gift of our sister republic, France, by the French people after their own republic came into existence soon after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, a Mason, was commissioned to design the statue, and the cornerstone of its base was laid with Masonic rites by the Grand Lodge of New York on August 5, 1884. The cost of the statue which was paid for by the French was $450,000. The base was paid for by the United States at a cost of $350,000. It was unveiled with great acclaim by representatives of both Republics on October 28, 1886."

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The Scotsman is not alone in complaining that the third annual report on the working of the Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Act provides slight evidence that the Monopolies Commission are pursuing their researches with remarkable speed or vigour. "During the four years of their existence" says an editorial, "they have produced reports on three industries, and they are engaged in inquiries into alleged restrictions in the supply of about seven other types of commodities. It would be unfair, however, to suggest that the work of the Commission should be judged by the volume of their reports. They started with the handicap of having no clearly defined instructions from the Government which appointed them. In theory everyone is opposed to monopolies, and not only Socialists who loudly condemn them as capitalist devices for maximising profits at the expense of consumers. The Monopolies Commission was the outcome of a Coalition White Paper in 1944, which urged investigation of the growth of combines and of the activities of trade associations. The present Government have put on record their intention of strengthening and widening the work of the Monopolies Commission. There is general agreement that the injurious effects of monopoly should be checked; but there are many kinds of restrictive agreements, and it does not follow that all these are harmful to the public interest."

A defence of the monopoly of credit? Newspapers are, very officially if not officiously, unaware of the monopoly of credit.

To "Fall Among Editors"

A soldier who believed in the Reform Bill of 1832 was rewarded with 100 strokes of the Cat o' Nine Tails for publishing a letter in which he expressed his views. The soldier became the hero of the English folk, and William Cobbett in a hotel in Coventry gave the hero advice upon his project of going to London. Cobbett says: "Now, you are going to London; let me give you a few words of advice. There are thieves in London, who steal money; there are swindlers in London who make victims of the unwary; but there are worse people in London than thieves and swindlers; there are editors of newspapers; take care of yourself if you fall amongst editors. You are property for them. Each will try to get you exclusively to himself. They will traffic upon you. If one gets you in his den, and you do not always after go to that den, he will rush upon you some day and tear you to pieces. Take care of the editors: I know them well!!" From *The Autobiography of a Working Man* by Alexander Somerville, page 341, (1848).

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: February 27, 1952.

Royal Style and Titles

Sir I. Fraser asked the Prime Minister whether he will introduce legislation dealing with the form of the Royal Style and Titles.

Mr. John Rankin asked the Prime Minister whether he will introduce legislation concerning the style and title of the Sovereign, in view of the decisions taken by the Commonwealth Conference of 1948.

The Prime Minister: I am not at present in a position to make any statement on this question. The hon. Members will realise that, in view of the Preamble to the Statute of Westminster, this is a matter which concerns not only this Parliament but those of other Commonwealth countries as well.

Mr. Rankin: Will the right hon. Gentleman, in giving thought to this matter, pay attention to the findings of the Commonwealth Conference of 1948 which recommended that the continued use of the description "British Commonwealth" no longer harmonises with existing relationships within the Commonwealth and recommended that the phrase "The Commonwealth" should be used in describing the association?

The Prime Minister: I should hesitate to attempt to make constitutional pronouncements in reply to a supplementary question, but the point of the hon. Member will be recorded in the OFFICIAL REPORT and I am sure that it will be taken into consideration when these matters are being decided.

Sir I. Fraser: Can my right hon. Friend say whether the Royal Style and Titles used in the Proclamation were valid or whether they require statutory authority to validate them?

The Prime Minister: I should not venture to trespass on such difficult and dangerous ground.

Mr. Gordon Walker: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that the variety used in the various Proclamations of Accession in different Commonwealth countries might now make it wise to consider taking an initiative with Commonwealth Governments on the matter of changing the Royal Style and Titles?

The Prime Minister: I certainly think the various versions which have appeared should confront us all with the need of considering these matters in the future in order that there may be the fullest possible agreement, but sometimes agreement is reached as a result of variety.

Mr. Rankin: May I thank the Prime Minister for his answer and, when he is considering the matter, will he also give thought to the fact that so far as the designation of the Sovereign is concerned there have been Scottish criticisms, and would he pay attention to those also?

Mr. Emrys Hughes: May I have your guidance, Mr. Speaker? There have been different Questions on the Order Paper this week in which the Sovereign has been referred to as "Elizabeth II." Is this historically accurate? Also I notice that the title "Elizabeth II" has been dropped from today's Order Paper, and I want to ask if it is as a result of your guidance, Sir, knowing the history of Scotland.

Mr. Speaker: Certainly it is not the result of any intervention on my part.

Butter

Mr. Osborne asked the Minister of Food how much butter was produced in the United Kingdom for the years 1938, 1950, 1951 and what is the estimated production for 1952.

Major Lloyd George: The figures are as follows: 1938, 44,000 tons; 1950, 25,000 tons; 1951, 15,000 tons: 1952 (estimated), 16,000 tons.

House of Commons: February 28, 1952.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Lee asked the Minister of Labour what progress is being made on the compilation of a new Retail Prices Index.

Major Lloyd asked the Minister of Labour whether he can now report further progress on the establishment of a revised cost-of-living index.

Sir W. Monckton: The Cost of Living Advisory Committee has submitted to me a report on the working of the present Interim Index of Retail Prices and possible means of effecting temporary modification in the present index until a new index based on the results of a family budget inquiry can be instituted. I hope to be able to make a further statement very shortly.

Mr. Lee: Will the Minister expedite that report, because he may not be aware that not only the benches behind him but many of his colleagues in the Government of other days have expressed the opinion that this index is a fraud to stop millions of workers from demanding increased wages, and that therefore there may be precipitate resignations of many—[HON. MEMBERS: "Speech."]—of them if they feel that they are now parties to the maintenance of such an index.

Sir W. Monckton: I have expedited this report, but I thought it undesirable to make a statement until it was printed and available.

Mr. Cyril Osborne: Is it not unreasonable to complain of the delay since last November in view of the fact that this Committee was appointed in 1947, that previous Governments were asked repeatedly to do something about it and that the hon. Member for Newton (Mr. Lee), who was a member of the last Government, stalled on it?

House of Commons: March 4, 1952.

Trade and Commerce (Decorated China)

Mr. Vane asked the President of the Board of Trade what restrictions still remain under his regulations on the manufacture of china with coloured decoration for sale in the home market.

Mr. H. Strauss: Under the Domestic and Ornamental

Pottery (Manufacture, Marking and Supply) Order, 1950 (S.I. 1130), a manufacturer is not allowed to manufacture domestic pottery without a licence granted by the Board of Trade. With certain exceptions, decorated china cannot be supplied to the home market. The principle exceptions are china teapots, teapot stands, sugar bowls and coffee pots with no decoration other than colouring in the glaze, which can be supplied freely on the home market, and export rejects supplied under licence.

House of Commons: March 5, 1952.

Persian Oil Dispute

Mr. Janner asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for a statement on the Persian oil position.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd: Hon. Members will recall that the International Bank has for some weeks been considering whether it could in some way assist towards a solution of the present deadlock over Persian oil. Mr. Garner, one of the Bank's Vice-Presidents, recently spent some two weeks in Teheran discussing with the Persian Government what form that assistance might usefully take. He has since been in London, where he has had talks with Ministers and two meetings with my right hon. Friend.

In these talks Mr. Garner conveyed to Her Majesty's Government, as he had already conveyed to the Persian Government, the Bank's proposals for seeking an interim settlement of the Persian oil dispute. Her Majesty's Government gave Mr. Garner their views on these proposals. Mr. Garner is now in Washington, but one of his colleagues, who has accompanied him on his travels, has now returned to Teheran to resume discussions with the Persian Government.

In all his talks on this matter, Mr. Garner has made it clear that the Bank is acting as an impartial international body, whose sole interest is to use its good offices to assist in settling a dispute which has arisen between two of its members.

Mr. Janner: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether there is likely to be some successful or material result from these negotiations in the near future in view of his conversations with the Vice-President of the International Bank?

Mr. Lloyd: I certainly hope there will be a successful result of these negotiations.

Mr. Philips Price: Will the Minister assure the House that any negotiations between the International Bank and the present Persian Government will not in any way prejudice the rights of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company under the old treaty?

Mr. Lloyd: That is a matter which certainly has to be borne in mind.

Colonial Students, U.K. (Hostels)

Sir E. Keeling asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware of the loss of £70,215 during 1950-51 on the 11 residences for overseas students administered by the British Council for the Colonial Office, including a loss of £27,483 in six months on the residence in Hans Crescent without any amortisation of £78,598 spent on adapting the building; and if he will close these residences.

Mr. Lyttelton: During 1950-51 the British Council administered seven (not 11) residences for Colonial students on behalf of the Colonial Office and the loss on these residences was £56,751. The net operating loss of £27,483 at Hans Crescent includes overhead charges of £7,922 for the first six months of the year when, because of adaptation work, no occupation was possible. For the remaining six months only partial occupation was possible for the same reason. Three of these residences have been closed. I do not propose to close the remaining four residences, which play a useful part in the welfare of the increasing numbers of colonial students in this country, but I shall try to ensure that they are run with all reasonable economy.

Sir E. Keeling: Is the Secretary of State aware that the figures in my Question are quoted from the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General to this House?

Sir Richard Acland: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind there is also a need for increasing the number of places available to colonial students in hostels of some kind, which are preferable to the type of lodgings which is often provided?

Mr. Lyttelton: The hon. Member is asking me another question, but in any case I have no intention of closing any more.

House of Commons: *March* 10, 1952.

SUPPLY

Army Estimates, 1952-53, and Army Supplementary Estimate, 1951-52

MR. HEAD'S STATEMENT

Order for Committee read.

The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Antony Head): I beg to move, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

. . . Therefore, we now propose to offer to any young man who considers joining the Army a career—a life career. For that reason, I shall shortly propose to the House, in the form of an Amendment to the Army Act, a term of enlistment whereby a man can join the Army for 22 years. This is something novel in the Army which men used to join either for five and seven, or for seven and five. To join for 22 years does give a man a security of career. . . . We are not only offering men an opportunity to join the Army for 22 years, but any man who wishes to do so can leave at three-yearly intervals throughout his service. Furthermore, provided his conduct is good and he can be employed —and I think in the majority of cases that will be so—he can remain in the Army until he is 55 years of age.

I stress to the House that under these conditions the Army really does offer a life career. A man can join at 18 and, if he shows any promise, he should be a corporal by the time he is 24 and a sergeant by the time he is 29. If he marries early, as many do, and if he gets promoted, as I have said, by the time he is 24 he will be earning £8 a week and by the time he is 29 he will be earning £10 a week. If he serves for 22 years—when, we can take it, he will be 40 and a sergeant—he will earn a pension of £2 a week and a tax-free terminal grant of £200. If he

(*continued on page 7.*)

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The Twilight War

Ana-basis, *up* from the base (to Persia); *kata*-holos, *down* from the whole: universal, catholic. Ideas do not come up from the bottom but down from the top. A review in *The Times Literaray Supplement* reminds us of a desultory research we have been conducting as time and circumstances permit into the content of current books on art. These are a considerably high proportion of publishers' output, and, unless the selection made available to us is gravely biased, art criticism at the present moment must be a competitor with the "B." B.C. and its organ *The Listener*, for the lead in the race for the subversionist stakes. If there is a 'top,' what comes down is veridical; if the 'top' has somehow been prevented from functioning at its proper level, the down-pouring are (in the expressive language of slang) 'wet.' We have been told just how 'The Critics' who exasperate us on Sunday mornings are circumvented (when they merit it—and we mean 'merit': *i.e.*, when they are good enough to call down upon themselves the satanic ingenuity of interference). This is the exception which proves the rule; and the rule is that right ideas don't come up from below. The piecing together of mutilated ideas is a sort of Humpty-Dumpty surgery which the nursery warned us against; but the recognition of some of the pieces is not uncomforting at times such as the present, when disbelief in their existence seems almost universal. The 'crime-interest' also has its potency, and we look for the mutilator. In the commoner sort of commentary, he is naked and unashamed; blatant marxism slogan by slogan. But there is an uncommoner sort. Leonardo da Vinci surely did not choose to be born in 1452 just to provide material for a skirmish in the 'ideological' war of 1952. There may be, but whether there is or not is beyond our knowledge, some peculiar rhythmicity which touches the lapse of five-hundred years. The fact is that the ideological war is 'on,' and any arsenal is good enough to raid for ammunition. Also, Leonardo has been 'on tap' for a long time, and shows no sign of running short. Mr. Sherwood Taylor in *The Tablet* for March 15 suggests that "if there is anything common to the works [of science and art] displayed [in the Diploma Galleries], it is an intense interest in the movement and structure of things. . . . Above and beyond these is his attempt to find common elements in the working of very different parts of the world, human, organic and inorganic. We see him fascinated by vortices; again and again drawing the whirlpools of jets of water, of flowing rivers, of clouds and rain in the heavens, of blood in the heart, and even the curls of human hair, as if he sought in the curling vortex a sort of general principle of world-movement." We contrast Mr. Taylor's opinion that Leonardo suffers from "an impoverishment of the spiritual content of his work" with that suggested by an incident—in its way a dramatic incident—at that fantastic 'Critics'' table some months ago, when a speaker fumbling for expression was prevented in the nick of time by the Question-'Master' from asserting that Leonardo frightened him *because* the painter made him aware (through his painting) that really he did not know good from evil. At that point (we are certain) the speaker was suppressed by an interruption. The distinction between good and evil is naturally not one which the most actively satanic agency of our time would facilitate if it could do otherwise. To reveal to the beholder, in the world of the spirit, what he cannot himself see in the world of the flesh is the function of the artist. It is not a function discharged by accident; but by vision, and there is but one object of vision in this sense.

The most considerable recent analysis of Leonardo is the work of Dr. Martin Johnson, "Art and Scientific Thought" first printed in 1944 with a foreword by Walter de la Mare. To consider it here would be out of place. But this, from *The Times*, is not out of place:—"'Quality,' says Mr. Ruhemann, 'is based on more or less tangible facts of inspiration, physiology and craftsmanship.' But these are the very elements in art which the average person is no longer capable of appreciating, because he does not know how to look for them and because those who should guide and form public taste are no better equipped to appraise them than those whom they try to lead and inform. Therefore our standards are hopelessly confused, people are easily 'satisfied with the mediocre' and reputations are made and preserved at an inflated level through the general acceptability of slogans such as 'Art is what pleases' or 'Merit is a matter of taste.'"

Correspondence

"The Monopoly of Credit"

The Editor, *The Social Crediter*,

Sir, May I make a small correction in your announcement of last week under the above heading, in the interests of the individual subscribers who come from quite widely separated places?

The area concerned is correctly Northern Ireland, not the North of Ireland, which is a not very clearly-defined geographical point. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, is a self-conscious—intensely self-conscious—political and economic unit, and likes to be considered as such.

Yours, *etc*,

Randalstown, March 15. N.F.W.

"Niebuhr on Nature"

Sir, I hasten, from a remote spot, to rectify an error. I was referring to the claim made by a Rotarian society that their organisation did not exist to further their own interests and that their ideals were "higher than Christianity." They put forward a very similar motto to that in question, and claimed it as their own. The claim of the British Legion, on the other hand, is valid, for its members have served their *own* country. It is unfortunate that this ideal has been misapplied; under a fake idea of human nature, people might be led to serve alien interests. I think Dr. Niebuhr would have to admit that he was in truth serving his own interests.

Yours, *etc.*,

Port Perry, Ontario, March 14. H. Swabey.

Decline of Rome

by H. SWABEY.

The Roman Republic surrendered her liberties in or under the threat of war. In her case it was civil war. These liberties had long been undermined by a financial oligarchy, by voting clubs and by monopoly farming based on slavery. The growth of irresponsible power had ruined the burgess farmer and the middle class.

Edward Gibbon, in his monumental *Decline and Fall*, traced the resultant decay. He was under no illusions as to popular control. He wrote: "Under a democratical government, the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude." He quoted with just approval the observation of Seneca, *Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits.* And he described the period 98 to 180 A.D. as "the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous."

But he saw clearly the dangers of the tyranny introduced by Augustus, when he took over the Empire from Julius Caesar. "A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against the enterprises of an aspiring prince.

"Every barrier in the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator."

Augustus made a show of reforming the senate. "But whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence, of the senate. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive." The same trick has been played on Britain, whose parliament Wyndham Lewis has called *fake antique*. And under this solemn disguise, reigning "under the venerable names of ancient magistracy," Augustus collected the powers of the consular and tribunitian offices into his own hands for life. A note states that "Polybius observes three powers in the Roman constitution."

There had been two consuls and ten tribunes (representing the people), and they had been annually elected, and Gibbon noted that "as both in their private and public interest they were averse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution." The formula, Senate-Consuls-People of Rome, was in this way deprived of its real meaning and used as the cloak of monocracy.

Gibbon ascribed to the succeeding reign, of Tiberius, the measure "by which the elections were transferred to the senate. The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished. . ." The constitutional appearance given to the emperor's position was that "The emperor was elected by *the authority of the senate*, and *the consent of the soldiers*."

The arrangement worked apparently well during the period commended by Gibbon owing to the virtue of the rulers (98-180 A.D.). But even then, Gibbon noted, "This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished. . ." It was not Peace, of course, that introduced the poison. The real poison was probably servility, paralleled today in the jobs for the boys mentality, and the offer of freedom would hardly have been accepted if the virtuous rulers had made it. A precarious irresponsibility was preferred, under the shelter of the monarch.

There was territorial in addition to political monopoly. Gibbon remarked: "The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind." He contrasted this with the Roman system, and quoted Cicero's words to the exiled Marcellus: *Wherever you are, remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror.*

The loss of freedom was followed by a decline in literature: "A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators darkened the face of learning; and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste."

After the death of Marcus Aurelius (180 B.C.) the inevitable happened, for "Of all our passions and appetites, the love of power is of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since the pride of one man requires the submission of the multitude." And the corrupted multitude submitted for over twelve years to the tyranny of the next monarch (Commodus), one of whose first acts was to introduce the infamous *delatores*, the informers, whose progeny infests Britain today.

The tyrant was at last assassinated, and the upright Pertinax was promoted in his place. He at once punished the *delatores* and presumably abolished their office, (I do not know whether Mr. Churchill has taken similar action in comparable circumstances). He had the task of restoring the finances, but managed to remit "all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus"; he halved the expenses of the household, and "granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces to those who would improve them."

But the tragedy, and perhaps the moral, of this benevolent reign was that it only lasted for eighty six days. As he stood protesting his innocence, Pertinax was cut down by the praetorian guard.

The Melting Pot

Both Mommsen, the historian of the Roman Republic, and Gibbon, the historian of the Roman Empire, note the presence of aliens at the popular assemblies. Mommsen said that by about 58 B.C., "Greeks and Jews, freedmen and slaves, were the most regular attenders and the loudest criers in the public assemblies." Gibbon, describing the situation in 193 A.D., asked "but where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely among the mixed multitude of strangers that filled the streets of Rome, a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property." The tide could not be stemmed, and we read that a few years later, "In the reign of Severus, the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces . . . they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom."

One of the lessons of the Empire is the inefficiency of monocracy. After the practorian guard had killed an emperor, who might interfere with their bribes, they auctioned

the Empire, and the purchaser maintained himself for a precarious couple of months. The African Septimus Severus, who was in charge of the Pannonian army, seized his chance and marched on Rome. As he was a master of strategy and of deceit, he soon discomfited his rivals, and took care that his provincial governors should not revolt by detaining their families at Rome. He made the mistake of destroying the Byzantine fortifications (*cf.* Potsdam *etc.*), but after the usual blood bath he was wily enough to rule equitably. Gibbon notes, however, " the natural propensity of a despot to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence."

This able despot was " justly considered as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire," for he " exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power." The subservient lawyers taught that *the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws.*

The massacre of twenty thousand citizens by the next prince, Caracalla, disgusted Gibbon, but the modern price of power is reckoned in millions of souls, and this side of Caracalla's reign might be dismissed on the biblical principle that Saul hath slain his thousands, David his ten thousands. But his racial, or anti-Roman, policy was important. For he " communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens . . . the last enclosure of the Roman constitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the separation of professions gradually succeeded to the distinction of ranks." (217-211 B.C.)

We may note that this process, which has by now given Oxford Street and large sections of the metropolis its indiscriminate appearance, was resisted for a very long time by Britain. The melting-pot process of America was described by Henry James in the early years of this century, and is now proceeding apace in Canada.* The Fair Employment Practices legislation, of U.S.A. and Ontario *etc.*, is designed to stimulate the change, and has been commended in the synagogue.

The laws, although they no longer restrained the emperor, were still useful as a pretext, and we find that the praetorian prefects began to assert a *legal* claim to the emperor's position, and that a Numidian prefect obtained the title. Rome next enjoyed " the first emperor of Asiatic extraction " and was " humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of oriental despotism."

But there was another complicating factor. Caracalla's prodigality with the franchise " was the sordid result of avarice." He wanted new citizens because he wanted more taxes. A standing army (also long avoided by Britain) was an increasing drain on the financial system of the times. So, in addition to the huge tribute, Augustus had restored Customs, introduced the Excise (a one *per cent.* purchase tax), a five *per cent.* legacy and inheritance duty, and assessed real and personal property. Caracalla raised the legacy and inheritance duty to ten *per cent.* Spain was " the Peru and Mexico of the ancient world."

Although these tyrannies had served " to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed in the minds of the Romans," even they grew tired of the effeminate oriental despot (Elagabalus). Alexander Severus and his regent mother (they were acquainted, it seems, with some of the rudiments of Christianity) chose sixteen senators, including the lawyer Ulpian as a perpetual council of state. Alexander reduced the tribute to a thirtieth of what it had been, for the new Romans were paying taxes in addition to tribute. However, Gibbon plainly exaggerates when he says that " the dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate were restored." For the army was out of hand: Ulpian was murdered and the historian Dion Cassius was threatened, shewing that large minds are intolerable to absolute power.

But is was yet another factor that ruined Alexander, the absence of a regular succession. Gibbon contrasts the Roman confusion, and the Asiatic rivalries, with the hereditary principle which, although it " seems to present the fairest scope to ridicule," has nevertheless been responsible for " the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies." Some recent remarks of Mr. Bevan appear to suggest a return to more bloodthirsty methods of securing power. Alexander was murdered by a brutal Thracian peasant, who slaughtered any he suspected of disloyalty to himself *without trial.*

The senate, at this point, " assumed the reigns of government," and attempted to revive the fiction that the emperor (*princeps senatus*) was their nominee. Montesquieu's evaluation, to which Gibbon refers, was nearer the facts: " What was the emperor, except the minister of a violent government, elected for the private benefit of the soldiers?" It is worth noting that one of the senate's candidates was undone because the soldiers were irritated *by an artificial scarcity.* (244 A.D.)

These internal follies naturally left the Empire exposed to the barbarians, who successively revolted and invaded. Not that the Romans were ignorant of the arts of power: " They deemed it a much safer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians. . . Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome."

At this crisis, the momentary emperor decided to revive the office of censor, and this gives Gibbon the opportunity to shew that a distinction, now almost obliterated, was recognized in the eighteenth century: The emperor (Decius) was, in this decision, " Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority. . ." The attempt miscarried, for very little *authority* survived in Rome. The attempt was made to buy off the barbarians (*cf.* Danegelt), then a Gothic chieftain was made consul, and an emperor captured by the Persians. All this time war, followed by famine and plague, was reducing the number of authentic Romans. And further wars were required to restore order.

When order had been restored, a revolt broke out in Rome which was ascribed to workmen of the mint. Gibbon shews that it was most improbable, but it might well be that the revolt, which was not in question, was due to taxation and was laid at the door of the mint. The axe fell on " the noblest families," and the emperor " disregarded the rules of evidence." After this, a foreign war was " expedient," just as war and wartime organisation is a permanent feature of 20th century economy.

An interesting constitutional comedy was played when

*Cf. *Brotherhood* Week, and the month of * * * music on the North American radio.

the throne was vacant: the senate referred the election of a new emperor " to the suffrage of the military order " (275 A.D.), and the soldiers referred it back again. Gibbon compares this vacancy, of seven months, with that after the death of Romulus, at which time " the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the patricians; and the balance of freedom was easily preserved in a small and virtuous community." An elderly gentleman was advanced for a few months, when " The expiring senate displayed a sudden lustre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguished for ever." His successor was killed by the troops when he expressed the hope for " the establishment of universal peace." Gibbon has given here and there sound reasons, constitutional, racial, legal and financial, why the hope was already quite vain.

PARLIAMENT— (*continued from page* 3.)

stays until he is 55 and if, for instances—which is quite possible—he is promoted to warrant officer, he will have a pension of £6 a week and a terminal grant of £600.

. . . . We have decided to eliminate this compulsory retention of Regulars as a matter of policy. That cannot be done at once, but it will taper off and it is our policy that by September, 1953, no Regular in the British Army will be compulsorily retained after his period of Service has expired.

The next snag which I believe to be a cause of discontent is cross-posting, which is sometimes called lack of stability, that is to say, moving from job to job with great rapidity. Soldiers have a more expressive, but less Parliamentary, term for this type of treatment.

. . . In order to minimise this cross-posting, we have decided that in all infantry and armoured car units we shall institute the three years' battalion tour. That is to say, a battalion will go overseas for three years and will be at home or within that area for the other three years. Units and battalions will move in that way with all the men in them irrespective of the length of time they have been overseas. I believe that will do much to avoid cross-posting, but I must say to the House that for the moment, with so many of our units overseas, North-West Europe will count as home service for this purpose. I think the House will understand that this is inevitable. I attach great importance to the elimination of this cross-posting.

The creation of seven second battalions will facilitate the transference of some men from their second battalion to their first. The re-creation of the regimental depots will help. We must cut down cross-posting because the British Army is fiercely tribal. Hon. Members can imagine what would happen, were he still in the Army, if I were to post the hon. and gallant Member for Perth and East Perthshire (Colonel Gomme-Duncan), from the Black Watch to, shall I say, the Devons. I do not know what the Devons would say, but I know that every hair on the head of my hon. and gallant Friend would bristle—

Lieut.-Colonel Marcus Lipton (Brixton): The Devons might have more to say than the Black Watch.

Mr. Head: These are matters of speculation. . .

. . . The late Government appointed General Templer, to whom I am sure we all wish the best of fortune in Malaya, to go round the static and administrative units in this country with a view to reducing their size and increasing the number and size of fighting units. Since that was done, we have considerably extended that policy, and General Callander, with great efficiency and despatch, has been to Germany, Trieste, Austria and the Far East. We have not included the Middle East because I do not believe that it would be opportune at present, although I hope that we shall include it later.

He has completed that combing out, but we have extended it further in that General Harding, who commands our Army on the Rhine, is now experimenting and making attempts, which I know will be successful, to reduce the size of, not static, but operational headquarters which, in my opinion, grew too big at the end of the war.

We have extended it still further, because under General Templer's examination in England the War Office was exempt. The War Office has been reduced considerably since the war, but I felt that with this intensive comb-out, it was not really right that the War Office should be exempt. The experience I have had of reductions in establishment is that it is no good arguing over every man, every clerk. The only way out is to have an arbitrary cut. Therefore, I gave instructions that the entire staff of the War Office should be cut by 10 per cent. That has been most loyally implemented and it will result in a saving of 750 soldiers and civil servants.

Sir Ian Fraser (Morecambe and Lonsdale): Does that include all ranks—generals included?

Mr. Head: It includes all ranks. It seems poor gratitude for the support I have had in the War Office to take this type of action.

Mr. Shinwell: The Minister is cutting down by 750. Are they dismissed or sent elsewhere? To where are they transferred?

Mr. Head: Soldiers are sent to fighting formations. I do not wish to turn civil servants out into the street, and where their decrease is concerned, we are allowing a year in which to implement it. We do not replace wastage and we stop recruiting to fill vacancies. Within a year we shall have got rid of those numbers without any undue hardship to the civil servants.

. . . The total of the reductions which I have mentioned before amounts to a total saving of men out of the " tail " into the " teeth " of 10,000, and I think that is not a bad saving. In addition, we have saved 10,000 men from the German Service Organisation, which is the administrative side of the British Army of the Rhine. . .

. . . In all these areas—Malaya, Korea, Egypt and elsewhere—testing and difficult duties have been carried out with efficiency, determination and cheerfulness.

I am not suggesting for one moment that the British soldier has lost his talent for colourful and often blistering complaints and comments on the less attractive aspect of his duties, but between them the National Service men and the Regular soldiers have fused or, in Army parlance, have " mucked in " to form a very fine national Army. In my opinion it has the makings of the best Army we have ever had. . .

"News from the Past"

The following extracts are from "News from the Past: 1805-1887: An Autobiography of the 19th Century." Edited by Yvonne Ffrench and introduced by Sir John Squire:—

MR. MACAULAY'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND: There is hardly a page—we speak literally, hardly a page—that does not contain something objectionable either in substance or in colour: and the whole of the brilliant and at first captivating narrative is perceived on examination to be impregnated to a really marvellous degree with bad taste, bad feeling, and, we are under the painful necessity of adding—bad faith. (*The Quarterly Review*, 1849.)

JEWS IN THE HOUSE: The House of Lords last night debated at considerable length the Oath of Abjuration (Jews) Bill, the second reading of which was read by the Lord Chancellor. The main object of the measure, as his Lordship stated, was to omit from the oath taken by members of the Lower House the words "On the true faith of a Christian," which had the effect of excluding Jews from seats in the assembly. In concluding a speech, which was much cheered, he called upon the House "to do justice and to have mercy.". . .

The House divided, when the numbers were (including proxies),—For the second reading, 108; against it, 144; majority 36. (*The Times*, July 18, 1851.)

THE INCOME TAX: Expired on the 5th inst. the Income-Tax, the seventh holder of the title and estates. The first made its appearance in 1842, and lasted for three years, taking from us 7d. out of every sovereign. It was succeeded in 1845 by another three years, which again was followed in 1848 by a third: an attempt by Lord J. Russell's Government on this occasion to raise the tribute to 1/- was very soon disposed of; 1851 gave us a one year's tax, Mr. Hume beating the same Government on the question of the number of its days; and 1852, in prospect of a dissolution of Parliament, brought a successor of only the same brief existence. In 1853 came Mr. Gladstone's grand and comprehensive creation, the longest lived Income-tax of the series, extended also to Ireland and (but at a lower rate) to incomes of £100 a year, the rate to be 7d. for two years, 6d. for two more, 5d. for three more and then to cease. This tax saw many vicissitudes of fortune in the course of its seven years' existence, its rent-roll was doubled for a while, then had 2d. more added to it temporarily, and finally, when at its lowest ebb of 5d. and almost *in extremis*, it was raised to 9d. It came to its end in April 1860, and a temporary tax—a new rate—was granted for one year. The period expired on the 5th, and the family is at this moment extinct. . . Since 1842 Income-tax has got hold of £140,000,000 of the public money. (*The Times*, April 11, 1861.)

A DUKE'S SCORN: The Duke of Somerset observed that when the Indian dominion was transferred from the East India Company no such title as Empress was added to the titles of the Crown, and at that time the Queen had in the Prince Consort one of the best Counsellors any Monarch ever had; but now it was proposed to give the Sovereign a new-fangled title, which, if it meant anything, meant military power. Referring to what had fallen from Mr. Disraeli as to the expediency of the Queen assuming the title of Empress in order to stop the approach of the Russians to India, he sarcastically observed that this appeared to him to be the cheapest defence of nations that could possibly be conceived, adding that the Queen on assuming the title, would then be the newest Empress and the lowest in the scale, while she was now the first Queen in the world. (*The Times*, March 31, 1876.)

LORD GREY'S ADVICE: Lord Grey strongly urged the Government to pause before advising the Queen to assume a title which had been selected by a barbarian like the Emperor Soulouque for its tawdry grandeur. . . (*The Spectator*, April, 1, 1876.)

Under the chairmanship of the Mayor, Mr. Jason Saunders, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Oxford, yesterday, for the purpose of adopting a petition to the Queen, praying her Majesty not to assume any other title than that of Queen. Professor Rogers, in moving a resolution to the effect that the title Empress is foreign to the spirit of the British constitution as defined by the Act of Settlement, alluded to the Premier as "a man who is not English in race, sentiment, or character." The remark provoked hisses and a general uproar, in the midst of which three cheers for Mr. Disraeli was proposed and given. The original motion was passed by a large majority. (*The Daily Telegraph*, April 13, 1876.)

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