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FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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From Week to Week

THE SPECTATOR, January 30: "The Social Credit Provincial Government, a form of experimental Socialism, is . . ." The end of the sentence is Wall Street's joyously bestowed certificate of efficiency and honesty, "The sky's the limit" to the "magnificent prosperity" which (unless there's a slump) is within reach of the people of Alberta. The subject of the article quoted is oil.

Now, whatever Social Credit is, it is *not* a form of Socialism, experimental or otherwise; but you notice that *The Spectator* doesn't disapprove of Social Credit and Socialism provided they are the same thing.

According to the *Manchester Guardian* of January 26, eighteen out of seven hundred people at the Grand Palace in London's East End opposed an "anti-scapegoat" resolution moved at a meeting of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. Professor S. Brodetsky said the Jewish people would willingly bear the cost of the emigration of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain to Israel. The *Manchester Guardian* describes the eighteen interrupters (most of whom seem to have been ejected) as 'Communists.'

The Tablet devotes a thousand-word article to reviewing *Letters of Jews Through the Ages*, edited by Franz Kobler and published at 42/-. "The two volumes are beautifully produced and annotated. . . . They will be welcome especially to non-Jewish readers who wish to gain an insight into the soul of historical Israel, and to penetrate the curtain of prejudice, hatred and ignorance that surrounds it. We note the following sentences: "It was understandable that intermittent outbreaks of violence in Asia and Europe should have induced Menasseh Ben Israel, and Amsterdam contemporary of Spinoza, to welcome the Commonwealth interregnum as the 'hope of Israel.' His appeal to Cromwell, opposed though it was by the Treasury eventually re-opened the road to admitting the Jews back to England."

"The dawn of the Emancipation has been justly chosen as a stop, for the Jewish modern era begins with Moses Mendelssohn, grandfather of the musician, the pioneer of the rationalist and liberal Judaism of the nineteenth century which was to produce a very different kind of letter from that represented in this selection since the days of Solomon's Temple."

Is the impending Christianisation of the Jews to affect

the soul of historical Israel or the soul of rationalist and liberal Judaism of the nineteenth century?

The present wave of adulation of all things Jewish is a thing to be noticed.

Mr. Reinhold Niebuhr, an American theologian, has written a book called *The Irony of American History*. According to a reviewer, he has detected a variety of ironies associated with the unique transport of a people "from barbarism to decadence without an intervening phase of civilisation" as someone said. "It is as though a man were to dress up as Santa Claus and were to be treated like a cat burglar."

According to Mr. Niebuhr, Americans are dominated by "a theory of unique innocency." We have noticed it. "The Americans have realised an almost Messianic dream of power, and now that they have got it, do not know what to do with it. Looking for happiness, they believed that this consisted in making life more and more comfortable, only to discover that they were merely making it more and more unsatisfying. They sallied out into the world with the most benevolent intentions, only to find themselves accused of every conceivable crime."

Now the curious thing about this is that it is very far from being peculiarly American. It is what happens when a community is deprived of just that knowledge which the young Etonian revealed when he said (to an American, it is true) in reply to the taunting question what had he learnt at Eton: "To know my place, and to keep it." The truth is that man has very nearly lost any place he ever had, through not knowing what it was, or what it is, or how to keep it.

That American Newspaper, *The Times*, which is still, owing to minor technical difficulties soon to be overcome, printed in London, departed from custom last week (February 3) to the extent of the following paragraph in italic type above the heading to the first 'leader':—

"President Eisenhower's first State of the Union Message, delivered to Congress yesterday, opens a new chapter not only in American history but in world affairs. This formal declaration by the head of the most powerful of the nations of what his national and international policies are to be falls into four parts, each of which is the subject of a leading article below."

So the curtain is up. Now do we just have to sit still and listen, or does Mr. Winston Bonaparte change sides, or can't he because there isn't another?

PARLIAMENT

House of Commons: January 26, 1953.

Locomotives (Maintenance)

Mr. Nabarro asked the Minister of Transport which railway accidents occurring in 1951-52 were adjudged by the inspecting officers of his Department to be attributable to faulty or negligent maintenance of steam locomotives; and what total numbers of fatal or other casualties resulted from such accidents, including the Blea Moor disaster.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: In 1951, 13 accidents were reported which were adjudged to be caused by faulty or negligent maintenance of steam locomotives. These included the accidents at Weedon, in which there were 15 deaths and 36 injuries, and at Queen Street, Glasgow, in which seven persons were injured. In the remaining 11 cases three persons were injured.

The final figures for 1952 are not yet available, but the latest returns give 13 such accidents, in which there were 49 instances of injury and no fatalities. These included the derailment at Blea Moor, in which 36 persons were injured, and the accident at Crewkerne, in which there were eight injuries.

Mr. Nabarro: Is it not a fact that the present standards of uncleanness of British Railways locomotives, demonstrating a good deal of slovenliness in maintenance, are primarily the cause of these accidents? Does not my right hon. Friend recall that, in pre-war days, steam locomotives were gleaming and clean, whereas today they generally resemble travelling soot bags? Until this matter is gone into and standards of morale are improved is it not impossible to prevent further accidents on account of maintenance?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I think that it would be a good thing if everything on the railways and elsewhere was a little smarter, but I am anxious to make sure that people realise that although there are certain places, as shown in the Commission's Report, where these accidents were due to negligence, there is no general cause for alarm about the conditions of locomotives generally in our country.

Mr. Ernest Davies: Is not a more reasonable explanation of the difficulties which have arisen the fact that the locomotives are old and should be put out of commission, and that as a consequence of the starvation of the railways of capital investment it has not been possible to replace them?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: That certainly plays its part.

Mr. G. Wilson: Can my right hon. Friend say whether the altered regulations as to the reporting by drivers of defects of railway engines are an improvement on the regulations that existed under the old railway system or not? Has he considered whether the variations are an improvement or the reverse?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: There was an alteration in the basis of calculation in 1949, and I will discuss that point with the Chief Inspecting Officer.

Sugar Imports

Sir W. Smithers asked the Minister of Food approximately how much sugar is available from dollar and non-

dollar countries, respectively; how much was imported, and how much was exported since 1st January, 1952, to and from dollar and non-dollar countries, respectively.

Dr. Hill: At the present time the principal source of non-dollar sugar outside the Commonwealth is Eastern Europe, but there are no reliable estimates of the quantities available for purchase. Harvesting in the dollar area is only about to start.

The reply to the second half of the Question is as follows:

SUGAR

Total Imports into, and exports from, the United Kingdom for the Calendar Year 1952 by currency areas:—

	000's tons net quel	
	Imports	Exports (including re-exports)
Sterling Area	899.5	354.4
Dollar Area	1,067.6	0.5
Others	91.5	324.8
TOTALS	2,058.6	679.7

House of Commons: January 27, 1953.

Subsidies

Mr. Nabarro asked the Minister of Housing and Local Government (1) whether he will state the total cost to taxpayers and ratepayers, over 60 years, of the subsidies on a council house built today for £1,500; how much of this total subsidy cost is contributed by Exchequer grant; how much by ratepayers, both figures aggregated over 60 years; and what would be the total saving to taxpayers and ratepayers combined if such a £1,500 house were built on an owner/occupier basis with an initial Exchequer bounty or grant of £200 and free from any further or continuing subsidy, generally in accordance with proposals made by the Kidderminster Rural District Council recently;

(2) what communications his Department has received from the Kidderminster Rural District Council in regard to housing subsidies and reduction of future liabilities on tax and ratepayers in connection with council house subsidies; and what action he is taking in the matter;

(3) whether he will state the total estimated cost during 1953 of subsidies on council houses and by how much this figure in 1953 will exceed the 1952 figure; how many subsidised houses he anticipates will be completed in 1953; how many unsubsidised; and the total of the two categories.

Mr. H. Macmillan: The general standard subsidy on a council house is £35 12s. 0d. a year for 60 years. Three-quarters of this subsidy is payable by the Exchequer and one-quarter by the local rates. The capitalised value of the total payment at current interest rates is £769. No subsidy or grant is payable for houses built for owner-occupation. Nor could such a subsidy be paid without legislation, of which I see no prospect. I have accordingly told the Kidderminster Rural District Council that I cannot support their proposal. As regards the total estimated cost of housing subsidies, my hon. Friend must await the publication of the annual Estimates. I am not pre-

pared to prophesy about the number of houses which will be completed in 1953.

Mr. Nabarro: In consideration of the fact that over a period of 60 years the total cost of subsidies must be a figure substantially in excess of £3,000, is it not desirable to consider a small bounty so as to avoid this continuing burden on ratepayer and taxpayer until 2013 A.D., rather than to transfer the responsibility forward to many generations yet unborn?

Mr. H. Nicholls: Is the Minister aware that in the Isle of Man they have a scheme whereby they grant up to £250 per house to encourage self-building and up to £500 interest free, and if that were transplanted to this country would it not save an enormous amount of direct and indirect taxation?

Mr. Macmillan: I am much encouraged by these questions and by the advance that they reflect. A year ago there was practically no private house building in this country, but there has been a great change and we have made great strides. I hope we shall be allowed to see how these experiments develop because a new scheme was started only on 1st January this year and it would be wise to let it progress and then see how things are going.

House of Commons: January 28, 1953.

British Service Men, United States (Status)

Mr. E. Fletcher asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the detailed arrangements that have been made with the United States of America for British troops to have reciprocal treatment to that given to the American forces in this country under the Visiting Forces Act.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Aston (Mr. Wyatt) on 26th November last.

Mr. Fletcher: Will the Minister bear in mind that when that Act was passed by the House specific assurances were given by the Home Secretary that reciprocal arrangements would be made by the United States? Can we have an assurance that the Government are doing everything possible to get those reciprocal arrangements?

Mr. W. Lloyd: We are in touch with the American authorities on that point. We certainly hope that reciprocal arrangements will be provided.

Mr. S. Silverman: Can the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that no Order in Council under our Visiting Forces Act will be presented to the House so as to make the Act operative in this country until satisfactory reciprocal arrangements have been made with any country affected by that Order in Council?

Mr. Lloyd: That is another question, which should not be addressed to the Foreign Office.

Ministry of Food (Sugar)

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food how much of the demerara sugar available possesses its colour and flavour owing to the adhering film of molasses; and how much consists of white sugar coloured by aniline dyes.

Dr. Hill: I am not aware that any white sugar is being dyed and sold as demerara. Demerara sugar gets its characteristic colour and flavour primarily from the natural cane juice, although occasionally a little colouring matter is added in the course of manufacture to ensure a uniform product.

Jam (Fruit Standard)

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food what is meant by the term, "Fresh Fruit Standard," for jam; and how much fruit is the maximum permitted in strawberry and raspberry jam.

Dr. Stross asked the Minister of Food what is meant by the term, "Full Fruit Standard"; what are the dyes used for restoring the colour to the fruit pulp; and how the sulphur dioxide used for preservation is removed.

Dr. Hill: Fresh Fruit Standard jam must be made from fresh fruit and may not contain any added colouring matter or preservative other than sugar.

Full Fruit Standard jam need not comply with these conditions, and is normally made from fruit pulp.

There is no limit on the maximum fruit content of any jam. The minimum is 37½ per cent. and 25 per cent. respectively for strawberry jam and raspberry jam.

No manufacturers may add to jam any colouring agent which renders it injurious to health. The colours most commonly used are ponceau reds, carmoisine and amaranth. The boiling during manufacture of the jam removes all but traces of sulphur dioxide used for preserving pulp.

House of Commons: January 30, 1953.

Private Land Defence Works (Removal)

Mr. G. Longden asked the Minister of Works when he expects that work on the removal of temporary defence works on private land will be completed.

Mr. Eccles: During the past seven years approximately £3½ million has been spent by my Department on the removal of temporary defence works on private land, and substantial progress has been made. In the present economic circumstances it is not possible to provide enough money for me to carry out the residue of work quickly and it has been decided to discontinue the programme of restoration for which my Department has been responsible. Sites will be de-requisitioned and site owners will be paid terminal compensation assessed in accordance with the terms of the Compensation (Defence) Act, 1939, as subsequently amended.

In cases where it is desired to clear the defence works from the derequisitioned private land and the compensation is not sufficient to pay for the cost, it will be open to owners to apply to the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Housing and Local Government or the Secretary of State for Scotland for financial assistance under the Requisitioned Land and War Works Act, 1945. A local planning authority which takes action for removal of such works under the powers of the Town and Country Planning Acts, 1947, may apply similarly for financial assistance. My right hon. Friends the Minister of Housing and Local Government and

(Continued on page 7.)

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Saturday, February 14, 1953.

No Genuine Revolt at Canberra*

In recent weeks there has been considerable press comment about opposition of some Government Members to the Government's proposals to divide the central and trading bank functions of the Commonwealth Bank, but to retain control of both sections by the Commonwealth Bank Board and the Governor of the Bank, Dr. H. C. Coombs. We are not excited about the alleged revolt by Government Members. Their proposals are merely concerned with administration and do not challenge in any way the policy of credit monopoly which the present Government is supporting just as strongly as did the Chifley Government. Even if there were a Commonwealth Trading Bank not directly controlled by the Bank Board and Dr. Coombs, its credit policies, like those of the private trading banks, would still be governed by the policy of the Central Bank.

Under present financial rules, the volume of financial credit made available to the community is determined by the policy of the Central Bank. Using inflation as a pretext for a deflationary policy, Dr. Coombs persuaded the Government to accept his suggestion that the Central Bank should use its monopolistic powers to force the trading banks to slow down the rate of credit creation and expansion. It is probably true that the monopolists, including the politicians, became a little alarmed when they realised that their policy of credit restriction, if continued, would result in a major depression. Mr. Menzies announced, just prior to the critical Flinders by-election, that all credit controls were to be eased. But the trading banks were quick to point out that they could not expand credit more rapidly because of their "liquid position."

The trading banks' "liquid position" is what cash reserves they have as a base for credit creation. Cash not only includes notes and coins, but also Central Bank credit. The policy of the Central Bank therefore controls the credit policies of the trading banks. Now, although Mr. Menzies has persistently warned about the dangers of any creation of Central Bank credit, we have it on the authority of October issue of the National Bank's "Monthly Summary" that, during August, £25 millions of Central Bank credit, in the form of Treasury Bills, was created and issued by the Commonwealth Bank, and that, during September, a further £30 millions were created. The National Bank's "Monthly Summary" comments that, "Without this expansion of Central Bank credit . . . there probably would have been a much larger fall in the volume of money during August. In the coming months, additional support to the liquidity of

both the public and the banking system may result from further issues of Treasury Bills. . . ."

All credit expansion under present financial rules means more inflation. But, supposing the £55 millions of Central Bank credit created to maintain the "liquidity" of the trading banks had been applied to subsidising the price of goods desired by consumers? This policy would have genuinely benefited the individual. Until Government Members deal with this question of decentralising credit power, they can do little to stay the steady imposition of Socialist—i.e., monopolistic—policies.

Mr. Butler and Agene

The following correspondence between Mrs. Mary Blakey, Hon. Treasurer, British Housewives' League; and The Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, M.P., is published in "HOUSEWIVES TODAY" for February:—

Dear Mr. Butler, 21st October, 1952.

In regard to the statement of the Medical Officer of Health for Essex advocating, in his Report to the Council, the fluoridation of Essex drinking water, may I ask you if you will be good enough to spare a little of your valuable time to consider the individual rights of your constituents and the people of Essex and elsewhere in this matter? And may I beg your reply to the simple question:—Do you favour compulsory dosing, or do you not?

Yours sincerely,

MARY BLAKEY.

Dear Mrs. Blakey, 29th October, 1952.

Thank you for your letter of 21st October. I have read the Medical Officer's Report. In reply I should like to point out that I have no personal knowledge of Agene at all. In general, however, I dislike adulteration.

Yours sincerely,

R. A. BUTLER

Dear Mr. Butler, 20th November, 1952.

Thank you for your letter of 29th October. There has evidently been some mistake and possibly the right letter has not been put before you, for, as you will see from the enclosed, you have answered a question that I did not ask, and you have failed to answer the question that I did ask. I am sure you will wish to put this right, and I should like to have your considered answer in a matter which goes down to first principles.

Yours sincerely,

MARY BLAKEY.

Enc. Copy of letter from Mary Blakey to Mr. Butler, 21st Oct., 1952.

Enc. Copy of letter from Mr. Butler to Mary Blakey, 29th Oct., 1952.

Dear Mrs. Blakey, 18th December, 1952.

You wrote to me on 20th November about the fluoridation of water supplies. I am sorry that I misunderstood your

(continued on page 8.)

*From *The New Times* (Melbourne) November 14, 1952.

Administrative Lawlessness

by NORMAN F. WEBB.

Professor G. W. Keeton is Dean of the Faculty of Law in University College, London. One would judge the publication of his lucid survey* of the gradual breakdown of the British Constitution to be of considerable importance, as much as an event in itself, as for its clear and most readable exposition of the state of our national affairs, as seen by a constitutional and legal expert, an eminent jurist, who is also a human being.

As a milestone in the slow progress of public awakening from the dazing effects of the impact of the Industrial Revolution, I would place its educational value very much higher than, for example, that of Professor Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, which appeared in 1944, an unhelpful and depressing post-mortem study, which had nevertheless an effect on the temper of the Conservative Party, which Professor Keeton's work deserves in richer measure. The success of Hayek's book arose from the fact that it represented the first major defection from the Fabian ranks. It was the first hint of disagreement behind the Kremlin-like front of that ideological stronghold, the London School of Economics; an indication of doubt as to the philosophic ends of Socialism and the ethics of "Social Justice."

A valuable disclosure of Hayek's book was that of the long-standing division of thought between the Austrian School of Political Economy and that of Prussia, with its descent through Marx from Frederick the Great and the Eighteenth Century Freemasons and Illuminati. Subsequent historical events suggest that the audacious transfer in 1916, in the very thick of the First World War, of the headquarters of the Zionist Movement from Berlin to London, was paralleled by a similar translation of the Prussian school of political economy, in the guise of the London School of Economics, which was founded in 1921 by Beatrice and Sidney Webb. Subsequently it was endowed by Sir Ernest Cassel, in the words of his friend Lord Haldane, "to train the servants of the coming Socialist State." An Austrian by birth, professor of Economic Science and Statistics at University College, London, since 1931, Hayek took approximately thirteen years passed in association with the London School's principal supporters, Laski, Beveridge, Gregory and Dalton, to induce in him what must rank as one of the most profoundly pessimistic verdicts ever passed on a national culture still potentially great, although under the shadow of the greatest defensive war in human history.

Now comes Professor Keeton's admirable book, an altogether more robust and cogent work, such as one might expect a life of study of the English Common Law might produce. In its own way, Professor Keeton's book is no more optimistic, or directly encouraging than *The Road to Serfdom*. Its indirect effects are more considerable. Keeton begins with the setting-up of the Committee on Ministers' Powers in 1929, following the stir created by the publication of Lord Chief Justice Hewart's *New Despotism*. Apparently, from the point of view of this committee, of which one of the members was Professor Laski, Lord Hewart was an alarmist. There was little that needed attention. Referring to its

findings, Professor Keeton says, "This is not accidental. Those who regard modern developments with equanimity, however, do so because they have regarded the growth of administrative power as an instrument of planning in a period of rapid social change. . . . Sir Stafford Cripps and Professor Laski pointed out in the interwar period that revolutionary changes might be brought about by a general delegation of powers by Parliament to the executive . . . also the establishment of new, administrative tribunals working independently of the courts. . . . If ministerial conduct is to be scrutinized it is no longer by ordinary courts, but by an *ad hoc* Tribunal of enquiry. If rents are thought to be excessive, no one suggests that magistrates courts may establish fair rents. Special rent tribunals are set up. From here to special marketing tribunals, and special tribunals for motor car accidents is no more than a step, and then what is left of the Common Law, or for that matter of private rights?"

The issue posed today as Professor Keeton sees it is exactly the same issue raised by the Stuart Kings. Were they subject to the Common Law, or could it be annulled by royal proclamation? In the Revolution of 1688, Parliament and the Common Lawyers were victorious, ". . . and it was the nature of that alliance which gave our constitution, unwritten and relying to such a considerable degree upon the Common Law rights of individual subjects, its peculiar character in the next two centuries. So long as that alliance was all-powerful, personal liberty and Parliamentary sovereignty were alike secure." Up to the last quarter of the 19th Century, men like Dicey wrote with admiring complacency of Great Britain's Unwritten Constitution, and the average Englishman went out confidently to bat under its established rules. But Professor Keeton acutely points out other and less satisfactory results which arose from the settlement of 1688. One was that it established a Whig government in control for the next 80 years, in which changes were only to be changes in Whig faction. It was in this highly rationalized, political atmosphere, when English domestic architecture attained its grandest and most graceful heights, that Liberalism grew to maturity, and with it a somewhat self-conscious conception of the rule of tolerance, without a proper awareness of the cost in bitter struggles that had gone to establish the political climate in which alone such tolerance was possible. But politics, as Professor Keeton admits, had become an agreement to differ; in effect, the Whigs, whether they knew it or not, had undertaken to go in for shadow-boxing, at the instance and in the interests of some party who was certainly not the individual voter, though the show was staged for his diversion. "There is no warrant in English constitutional history, for the tolerance of intolerance," says Professor Keeton, "whether the intolerance was that of militant Catholicism, or that of the advocates of arbitrary power." Everything in the Whig garden was lovely. Britain was greater than she had ever been even after the loss of America. "It was natural for the constitutional historian of the late nineteenth century to assume that these social conditions would continue indefinitely."

No doubt that assumption was justified as regards the nineteenth-century thinker, but emphatically it is not for those of 1944 or of 1952. "Instead," continues Mr. Keeton, in his chapter of "The Passing of Impeachment," "our

**The Passing of Parliament* by G. W. Keeton. Benn, 21/-.

commercial supremacy is gone, our colonial empire is going, and for the first time since the Revolution of 1688, political doctrines based on intolerance of opposing views are being industriously propagated. . . . The progressive abandonment of extraordinary methods of coercion for political acts was . . . made possible by the acceptance of the conception of the Liberal State. . . . Today the Liberal State is passing away in favour of a planned society. . . . The increased responsibilities which have been assumed by servants of the Crown in recent years may have in the future important implications in the sphere of constitutional law. We have seen how the extraordinary remedies of the constitution fell into disuse when the Government became restricted to a choice of alternative courses of action within an agreed social and political framework. That framework is today passing away. . . . There is more disagreement over the basis of political action than there has been for two and a half centuries. This may involve a heavier degree of ultimate responsibility for mistakes. . . ." In short, when a Minister holding the highest position under that of Prime Minister announces that he regards himself as elected with a mandate to liquidate the Overseas Possessions and responsibilities of the nation, as did Sir Stafford Cripps at Bristol, it might again be possible and expedient, in Professor Keeton's opinion, to invoke the extraordinary safeguard of impeachment. But that would only be if enough individuals could be found to back the Law against the Government. And is it true that there is more basis of political disagreement today than there has been for two and a half centuries, as he says? Is it possible that the curtain behind which the Party shadow-contest has been enacted for so long is really getting torn and split? Or is it, perhaps, that the candle is getting shifted till the figures begin to lose all shape and form? One would like to think so; but I confess I see little sign of it yet.

To those who have studied Douglas, the emphasis that Professor Keeton lays on the Great Rebellion of 1688 will not seem either surprising or overdone. But for us there is another and possibly even more crucial date, and that is 1694, the date of the foundation of the Bank of England. The two events, of course, are closely connected, though one was political and the other financial; yet as regards the question of our understanding of subsequent history leading to effective action, there may be all the difference in the world between one and the other as a clue. However, that is a matter one would wish to take up in a later survey of the implications of Professor Keeton's book. Here I desire to welcome his achievement in the warmest terms, and I would like to sum up its positive virtues. It is out of the question even to enumerate the variety of constitutional and legal points which he lights up so that they take shape for the lay mind. The panorama he displays is immense, though only from one single angle, the constitutional and legal.

The most persistent under-current of conclusion running through the book is that of the unreality of the Party struggle, and of Party differences. The realization of this fact constitutes an appreciable move forward towards an understanding of the true position. It is perhaps the only stricture to be made on this excellent work, that the true inference is not drawn from this; the fact that alternate Party control of the immense concentration of power represented by

the modern machine of government must be a fiction also. In other words its power must be vested in other and hidden hands, neither Party nor national, at the behest of which the vast, neutral Executive toils on.

Speaking of the enactments of the Liberal Party at the zenith of its power; the Finance Act of 1894, Lloyd George's Social Service Budget of 1909, which included Death Duty and Social Insurance, the Parliament Act of 1911, which destroyed the power of the Lords' veto, Professor Keeton clearly shows from the preamble of the Parliament Act that it was the intention of the Liberals to follow it with a reform of the House of Lords such as might have given us an effective Second Chamber on a popular basis. But the first World War followed too quickly, and the Conservatives of the inter-war period were exhausted and overburdened with economic problems. The chance was missed, and the Lords today are "powerless to impede the achievement of major governmental policy. No one at this date would suggest that it should be otherwise, for the only effective brake that can be placed on the policy of an all-powerful Executive is one which must proceed from *the consciousness of widespread support*, [my italics] which the Lords, as a body, demonstrably do not possess."

In this country today, without a written Constitution, and with the Courts of Law progressively overlain and set aside by administrative lawlessness masquerading as the Common Man's only friend, "it is no wonder that the Communists and other political extremists assure us that they are prepared to work constitutionally. If they had fashioned the constitutional machinery themselves, it could scarcely be apter for their purpose." Professor Keeton's conclusion is that it would be impossible to construct effective checks today; "Every one of them could be swept away by a Parliamentary majority. It is, in fact, the very existence of a formally unfettered Parliamentary sovereignty that is the main source of weakness in our existing institutions, when the legal sovereign has shown itself so willing to delegate its powers as Parliament has done during the past half century." That state of affairs, of course, described as "the supreme sovereignty of Parliament," is what Harold Laski and his companions of the London School of Economics have been striving to achieve ever since its foundation in 1921. Their efforts have embraced every field; education, the press, literature, radio, the screen. "If the temper of the times," says Professor Keeton in his conclusion, "remains favourable to increasing interference . . . then any safeguards which legal and political ingenuity can devise will remain as ineffective as Consumers' Councils within the State-monopolies are today."

It is a strange thought, that but for the fact that a few small textbooks—or let us say, "The Monopoly of Credit," copies of which must repose at this moment, unread, on the shelves of quite a number of back-benchers of both major parties at Westminster,—appeared between 1921-1931, that anticipatory epitaph on our fate as a free nation would be dialectically incontrovertible. That it is not, is due to Douglas alone.

As I said at the start of this appreciation, the *Road to Serfdom* created a stir, at any rate in the Conservative ranks. At the time of its appearance it was not rare for Members of Parliament to avow that it had become the Tory bible,

(about as encouraging a political guide as say, Ecclesiastes!) It is my hope that the clear exposition of Professor Keeton will be studied equally widely by the back-benchers of all so-called democratic assemblies all over the world, for he comes degrees nearer the hidden truth of the situation. My advice is, Read this book, and recommend it widely.

PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3).

the Secretary of State for Scotland are issuing circulars to local planning authorities explaining the procedure.

I must emphasise that it will only be possible for Ministers to give financial assistance in cases where they are fully satisfied that restoration is really essential in the national interest. The economic circumstances which make it impossible for large sums of money to be made available to me for a programme of restoration will severely restrict the number of cases in which it will be possible for other Ministers to give financial aid.

I am anxious that every facility should be afforded to site owners to remove defence works, and any applications for building licences needed for the work of restoring war damaged land will be considered as sympathetically as possible.

House of Commons: February 2, 1953.

Agriculture (Policy)

Mr. Hector McNeil (Greenock): I beg to move,

That this House, noting the widespread doubt and disquiet aroused by recent ministerial statements on food production, regrets the failure of the Government to announce a clear and firm policy for British agriculture.

. . . The substance of our charge and the point of this inquiry is that the Government have apparently wilfully destroyed the confidence which existed in British farming. And in the process of sliding from their policies of guaranteed prices they have endangered assured markets and have so recklessly attacked the foundations of a planned agricultural economy that the expansion programme to which they paid lip-service can no longer be assured.

As a result the safety of our country is to some degree in danger in the event of war and in peace the wealth and welfare of our community is comparably in danger. This threat to the stability of the British agricultural industry, this enfeebling of the confidence which had undoubtedly grown up in that industry since the introduction of the 1947 Act, is not one of immediately recent growth but has become most marked in the last three months.

. . . The Government are destroying the machinery by which the farmers, large and small, have been able to see with approximate certainty that they would be able to remain solvent, and at the same time, the Government must admit, they are systematically destroying the sanctions and methods by which the national planning of the industry was possible. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite know well what is the position. They are not so wicked or so foolish as to believe that they can say to a farmer, through any of the machinery at their disposal, that he must conform to their plans if they are asking him to undertake financial

risks. Development in gross quantities is not enough. It has to be development according to a plan, and the right hon. Gentleman has thrown away his sanction and his opportunity when he has taken his guarantees away from the farmer with the rapidity that he has shown here.

Secondly, I suppose the Government will tell us—or perhaps the Prime Minister will tell either us or the National Farmers' Union on 17th February—that it will be marketing schemes which will be the alternative. Of course, we could meet the difficulties of some farmers, and certainly those of the large farmers, by setting up a powerful marketing machine which would control its prices by controlling the size of the supplies.

If that is the mind of the Government, then they should disabuse themselves immediately, because the people of this country will not again be subjected to such a process. They will not allow restrictionist monopolies, even if they are disguised as marketing boards, to behave in that fashion. If either the Joint Under-Secretary or the right hon. Gentleman himself is going to tell us that that is the course which the Government intend to pursue, he must therefore give us an assurance that the consumers' interests will not only be carefully considered but carefully safeguarded in any such scheme. I am bound to say also to the right hon. Gentleman that, in order to get a marketing scheme, he will need a two-thirds vote, and if he thinks that he will get it in the egg-producing sector of the industry, then he seriously deludes himself.

The Joint Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. McNair Snadden): . . . Before dealing with the important Motion before the House, I think it is necessary to have a clear picture in our minds as to the present position, and that it is necessary to provide the House with a background for this debate by reviewing the policy developments and the progress of the industry up to date. It is impossible to see what the picture is unless we do that. In 1947, at the time of the first severe post-war economic crisis, the net agricultural production of the United Kingdom had substantially declined from the war-time peak level of 1943. The Labour Government announced its expansion programme in the autumn of 1947, which had as its objective the passing of the level of the war-time peak of 1943 by attaining an increase amounting to 50 per cent. above pre-war by 1952. That was a five-year programme. Such measures—those of us who are interested will remember—as the ploughing up grant and calf subsidy, together with the injection into the industry of substantial capital sums by way of price increases led to a rapid expansion in farm output, particularly livestock.

From 1947 to 1950, milk, meat and eggs were produced in increasing quantities from flocks and herds in this country which were expanding in numbers. An interesting point arises here, and I am trying to give the picture to the House. Much of this increase was due to increased supplies of imported feeding stuffs, because, on examination of our tillage figures, we found that our main crops had declined during the same period.

In actual fact, the fall in our tillage acreage by 1951 was no less than 700,000 acres since 1947. It was therefore clear that the expansion of the numbers of livestock had been accompanied by a dangerous decline in the acre-

age of home-grown feedingstuffs, and by 1950, although the high level of 1943 had been regained, the upward trend in numbers of cattle, sheep and poultry had lost its impetus and the output of 1951 was little higher than the previous year.

(Further extracts from this debate will be given next week.)

Mr. BUTLER AND AGENE— (continued from page 4.)

earlier enquiry. I cannot give you an unqualified 'Yes' or 'No' on your question of compulsory dosing, since it must depend on the circumstances in which any particular proposals may be made. The principal matter to which your question refers is to the fluoridation of water supplies.

On this question you may be interested to know that a mission has recently visited the United States and has returned with a great deal of information. If and when the Report has been published, I hope to be in a position to confirm the opinion as to whether the fluoridation of water supplies is desirable in this country. At present I know too little about it to express an opinion.

Yours sincerely,

R. A. BUTLER.

Dear Mr. Butler,

6th January, 1953.

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 18th December in answer to mine of October 21st and November 20th.

I was not seeking for your opinion on the effects, either beneficial or otherwise, of fluoridation of water supplies, since this aspect of the matter is clearly outside your field as it is also outside mine. It is, however, to be noted that controversy rages on this point among those whose field it is both here and elsewhere, and also that the members of the Mission to which you draw attention and of which we were aware at the time of its departure for the United States, did not meet those scientists who, in 1952, testified against fluoridation before the U.S. Select Committee, although they were "charged with the task of studying the whole question of fluoridation in all its aspects." The U.S. Select Committee issued an adverse Report on fluoridation on July 10th last. This information was printed in *Housewives Today* for October, 1952, page 3, a copy of which was sent to you, and a further marked copy of which I enclose with this.

My question was: "Do you favour compulsory dosing, or do you not?" Knowledge of fluorine or any other medicament, drug or dose, is not necessary before an answer can be given to a question relating directly to principle, and its application in policy and action. Your reply that you "cannot give an unqualified 'Yes' or 'No' on 'my' question of compulsory dosing, since it must depend on the circumstances in which any particular proposals may be made," leads me to ask four further questions:—

1. What are the circumstances you refer to in which compulsory dosing may be introduced?
2. In whom is vested the authority to decide whether compulsory dosing shall be introduced?

3. In whom is vested the power to decide upon the dose to be administered?
4. What limits are there to the extension of the dose, the compulsion and the power to administer it; by whom are these limits fixed, if any; and in reference to what known ethical standard?

Your sincerely,

MARY BLAKEY.

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