

# THE SOCIAL CREDITER

## FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM

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### From Week to Week

What part did Lord Lothian play in the development of pseudo-Social Credit in Alberta? "The [Lothian] Lectures will give British Audiences the opportunity of hearing distinguished citizens of the Commonwealth and United States speak, from time to time, about one or more of the countries with which Lord Lothian was so closely associated throughout his Secretaryship of the Rhodes Trust. . . ." The selection of Mr. Ernest Manning to inaugurate the series suggests that it was closer than we were aware; but it is not without interest that the reason advanced by the promoters is the particular interest of the choice to "many people connected with industry, commerce and banking." This excludes most of the people still interested in Social Credit.

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An article on page 4 examines a *Times* leading article of a few weeks ago, which in itself gives support to not only *The Recorder* of last week but *The Social Crediter* of December 8 and 15, 1951, wherein we indicated that the Constitution was under discussion by high-placed politicians. Says *The Recorder*:—"Serious writers like Mr. Raymond Mortimer in the *Sunday Times*, are increasingly (our emphasis) questioning universal suffrage. True, many thousands have votes who have not one *per cent.* of the mental equipment necessary to use them properly. But nowadays the only alternative to universal suffrage is the worst alternative of dictatorship. The answer is increasingly to give the facts to the people."

First, Mr. Mortimer: In last Sunday's *Sunday Times*, Mr. Mortimer replied briefly to the attack upon him, to which we alluded last week, by Mr. Trevor-Roper. The direct interest for us is slight. Whether Hitler's rise to power arose from wrongly counting heads or had nothing to do with counting heads is not primarily our concern. Mr. Mortimer's first point deals with Hitler. The rest of his letter, in the correspondence column, is as follows:—

"Secondly, Mr. Trevor-Roper presumes that I look upon elections of the Eatanswill order as grave intellectual contests. I do not. Nor do I pine for the restoration of rotten boroughs. I maintain merely that a limited suffrage offered little opportunity to demagogues and dictators.

"Thirdly, Mr. Trevor-Roper declares that when last the Liberal Party governed the country it was not thanks to a limited suffrage. I venture to disagree. The last Liberal Government was produced by the Election of December, 1910, in which the majority of adults could not vote: they were women.

"Fourthly, I do not know of any Liberals who advocate disfranchisement or plurality of votes. The party even opposed, in my view most mistakenly, the restoration of the University franchise.

"Finally, I did not attack universal suffrage (I believe its introduction to have been wise and necessary): I commented only upon the risks to which it is particularly exposed. If we should be submitted to single-chamber government and to an economic collapse—neither of which, alas, is impossible—might not universal suffrage give power to a dictator who knew how to exploit radio and television?"

While this does not carry us very far, it has not at all events the great demerit of *The Recorder* in falsely alleging that there is no alternative to dictatorship but universal suffrage on the familiar ballot-box lines. Nor does it say (falsely) "It's all the voters' fault." Doubtless voters have faults, and some more faults than others; but the exploitation of ballot-box democracy is not their fault. They are the victims, often accomplices in their own victimisation, but not the authors of this crime against society.

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Truth peeps (though shyly) from *The Tablet* of May 16 in this matter: "Democracy is desire. It is a way of bringing to the surface and into effective play peoples' wishes and emotions rather than their knowledge and judgment. Its great danger is that the great majority in every country has little or no information about other communities and Governments, and has in consequence always to learn by hard experience what it will not accept at second hand. The wishful thinking of electorates creates the constant temptation under which all public men labour, to deck themselves out with the phrases and emotions that they know correspond to what people desire and hope is true. There is then a constant temptation for ambitious permanent officials to write the memoranda that will suit their political chiefs at any given time and cause them to be marked for promotion as sound and useful advisers. The independent official may be vindicated by events, just as the independent politician may, so that the warnings given in a period of unpopularity become the basis of a reputation and authority later on. But, broadly speaking, the large current of affairs in countries ruled by their electorates is dominated by the hope that the easy and cheap courses will justify themselves.

"The century in which there is so much mass democracy is much less harmonious and more quarrelsome than was ever anticipated by those who in the last century looked forward to the brotherhood of man and believed that the ordinary man everywhere would prove not very political. . . ."

In the sense of M. de Jouvenel, called "revolutionary"

by *The Times* (see page 4 of this issue), the ordinary man everywhere has proved not to be 'political' at all: he has moved steadily farther and farther away from 'politics' as "quite simply the science of eliciting and maintaining co-operation between human beings."

The Light Horse is running finely; but they aren't a quality set of stable-boys who are doing the riding so far, and we see no sign of a trained jockey's being allowed up.

## PARLIAMENT

*House of Commons: May 4, 1953.*

### State Trading Activities

*Mr. Nabarro* asked the Minister of Materials what progress has been made in the last 10 weeks in restoring those commodities to private enterprise trading which are the subject of State trading and for which his Department is responsible; and whether he will now announce a firm date for handing back to private traders all import and other transactions in relation to copper, aluminium, magnesium, tungsten ore, jute and imported jute goods, sulphur, pyrites and soft hemp, in accordance with the declared policy of Her Majesty's Government to restore a free, unfettered and private enterprise market in respect of each of these commodities.

*Sir A. Salter*: Encouraging progress is being made, but the announcement of a firm decision and date for returning any commodity to private trade must depend on the special circumstances of each case. With the permission of the House, I shall be making a statement later today on copper, which in terms of value covers over half of the Ministry's imports.

*Mr. Nabarro*: Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that these State trading activities are an unwanted relic of Socialism to which the whole of this party is firmly opposed, and will he take an early opportunity to scrap his Department and emulate the excellent example of the Minister of Food?

*Sir A. Salter*: I have on more than one occasion stated the general policy of Her Majesty's Government in this respect; but it is a very incomplete description of the reasons for the public trading that has taken place, and which, in some cases is still continuing to say that it is a relic of Socialist policy.

*Mr. Fernyhough*: Can the Minister say whether the Minister of Food consulted the hon. Member for Kidderminster (*Mr. Nabarro*) before he bought by bulk purchase, on behalf of the State, a million tons of sugar from Cuba?

*Mr. Speaker*: That is not a question for the Minister of Materials.

*Mr. Nabarro* asked the Minister of Materials what further losses have been incurred in respect of trading in those commodities for which his Department is responsible, measured from the termination of the accounting period to which the figure of £42,600,000 applies, to the latest con-

venient date; what part of that loss is due to his continued trading in copper and aluminium; and why he has not yet restored a free market in these commodities in accordance with the declared policy of Her Majesty's Government.

*Sir A. Salter*: It is less than five weeks since the period to which the estimate referred to ended. It would serve no useful purpose, and involve disproportionate work, to present an interim trading account for so short a period. I have just referred to copper; I can make no statement today about aluminium.

*Mr. Nabarro*: I am not very happy about that reply. Is it not a fact that last year we made a very heavy trading loss? Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that every competent private enterprise company produces a monthly trading account in order that it can tell whether it is making a loss or earning a profit, and will he do the same?

*Sir A. Salter*: The situation is being very carefully watched, but, as I said to my hon. Friend, it would involve a disproportionate amount of work to calculate the receipts and sales in respect of any one of a number of commodities from day to day.

*Mr. Nabarro* asked the Minister of Materials the duties for which his Department is responsible, other than State trading; what steps are being taken to abandon such duties in accord with the policy of Her Majesty's Government; and why he has been unable to prepare a timetable for elimination of the current administrative cost of his Department at £1,100,000 per annum, thereby expunging his Department.

*Sir A. Salter*: The duties of my Department have already been described in Command 8278. Whether public trading is practised or not the Government in present circumstances must continue to concern itself with problems, both long-term as well as short-term, which arise in the supply, distribution, and use of the materials needed by industry and for the strategic stockpile.

The estimated cost this year is 30 per cent. less than last year, but I am unable to give my hon. Friend the timetable he desires because I cannot control the world developments on which it must largely depend.

*Mr. Nabarro*: While congratulating my right hon. Friend on that 30 per cent. economy, may I ask him whether he appreciates that what hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House require is a 100 per cent. economy, and the total elimination of his Department which is merely a barnacle on the Board of Trade?

*Lieut.-Colonel Lipton*: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that last week in the House he gave an undertaking that he would make an important statement on certain materials in the autumn? May we have an undertaking from him that he will be spared until then to make the statement he has promised to make?

*Sir W. Smithers*: May I ask the Minister when the Ministry of Materials will abandon the hopeless task of trying to make Socialism work? Does he not realise that the only hope for this country is for goods and services freely to move both at home and abroad under the wing of private and experienced traders?

*Sir A. Salter*: If my hon. Friend refers to the statements of policy which I have made and statements which are being made, and the progress towards the reversion to private trade,

and if he will also consider the reasons for the continuance of public trading where it does continue, I think he will modify his attitude and his rather doctrinaire view.

### Wheat Supplies

*Mr. T. Reid* asked the Minister of Food, in view of his rejection of the price of \$2.5 per bushel asked for American wheat, what further steps he is taking to procure the necessary wheat supplies.

*Major Lloyd George*: I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer given to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (*Mr. Willey*) on 29th April.

*Mr. Reid*: Does the Minister think that that answer answers my Question? Is it not a fact that we are being asked to pay more for wheat to compensate the American Government for the subsidy which they are paying their farmers? Is that situation to go on, or can we get the wheat elsewhere?

*Major Lloyd George*: The hon. Gentleman knows the position. We did not accept the Agreement, because we thought the price was excessive. At present there is plenty of wheat in the world, and the stocks at the end of June this year will probably be double what they were last year. I do not think that there will be any difficulty in obtaining wheat.

### Meat Ration

*Mr. Lewis* asked the Minister of Food the latest non-take-up of the meat ration; how this compares with a similar date on the years 1950, 1951 and 1952; and whether he will give an assurance that the quantity of meat available is sufficient to enable every person to take up their full ration of 2s. per book as from 17th May.

*Major Lloyd George*: All ration meat was taken up during the four weekly ration period ended 18th April, 1953; for a similar period in 1950, 1951 and 1952 the non-take-up was 30 tons, 1,012 tons and 187 tons, respectively. The answer to the second part of the Question is "Yes."

### Agriculture (Toxic Chemicals)

*Mr. John Morrison* asked the Minister of Agriculture whether the Zuckerman Working Party on precautionary measures against toxic chemicals used in agriculture is now in a position to consider the general question of the effects on wild life.

*Sir T. Dugdale*: Yes. The Working Party has been reconstituted for this purpose under Professor Zuckerman's chairmanship and is starting at once on this third stage of its work. It will include representatives of the Agricultural Departments, the Agricultural Research Council, the Agricultural Improvement Council, the Nature Conservancy, the Fisheries Departments and the Medical Research Council. Its terms of reference will be:

"To investigate the possible risks to the natural flora and fauna of the countryside from the use in agriculture of toxic substances, including the possible harmful effects for agriculture and fisheries and to make recommendations."

*House of Commons: May 8, 1953.*

### Press Council Bill

*Sir Herbert Williams* (Croydon, East): . . . I do not think there is any need for a Press Council, either voluntary or statutory. The whole thing is a lot of nonsense. If the Press had had a little more guts they would not have offered a voluntary Press Council. What is it going to do? I noticed that the hon. Member for Maldon did not talk very much about what is proposed in the Bill. I do not know whether any of the supporters of the Bill are to speak today. They are all absent, except one.

Let us look at the Bill. Clause 3 says that the Council shall

"keep under review any developments likely to restrict the supply of information of public interest and importance."

That is the "exalted person," point I presume. It goes on to say:

"to improve the methods of recruitment, education and training for the profession of journalism."

Some people do not know that they are going to be journalists when they are educated; that may be a good thing, but I do not know how they can be taught. Next:

"to promote a proper functional relation among all sections of the profession."

I do not know what that means. Does that mean that an editor must not set up the type and that each man has to do his own job? That happens, anyhow. I do not know what it means, and I do not believe that the people who wrote the words know what it means.

*Mr. Driberg*: The Royal Commission did.

*Sir H. Williams*: It is no use shouting about the Royal Commission to me. I do not know its members. I am not impressed just because somebody says that the Royal Commission said so and so. I am entitled to use my own judgment. When I read leading articles they often say, "We think so and so." It is not "we" at all. It is Bill Smith who lives in Balham, and you take no notice of him when you meet him in a railway carriage. We should not over-estimate the importance of the journalistic "we"—not even when they write in the "Daily Express," or used to.

The Bill goes on to state that its objects include the promotion of

"technical and other research."

Everybody wants to promote research these days. Most of the people who talk about it have not the foggiest idea what research means. The real definition of research seems to be to look for what is not there and find it. The really great research has been carried out at trifling cost. There was Faraday at the Royal Institution, in Albemarle Street. I do not suppose he spent £100 in discovering the principles of electro-magnetic induction, which is the basis of all modern science. What does "other research" mean? And so we might go on through the Bill.

I have some criticisms to make of the Press. The Press are privileged. They have the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act which is very important. Newspapers can do things which we cannot do, except in this Chamber. They have their great Defamation Act, of which I was one

(continued on page 6.)

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### The Light Horse takes a Fence\*

The text will be found in *The Social Crediter* for October 16, 1943, of the 'starred' compulsory question set in the politics examination paper for the Fellowship of The Social Credit Secretariat. It was composed by Douglas and is as follows:—

(a) Discuss the 'Rule of the Majority.' What is the basis of the idea? Has it, or had it, any validity? Is it, or was it, ever a fact? (b) In the light of your answers to (a), criticise the following statement: Man can only be moved to persistent mass action where there is a common participation in the gains and honours of an advancing exploitation. Note: Any technical terms employed should be carefully defined.

As, at a much later date, Douglas pointed out to some of his followers, there are several applications to even the most 'correct' answer to this question. The application to the gains and honours of the scissors-and-paste merchants bent upon snatching a shilling which might otherwise back a Light Horse is evident though of subordinate and even academic importance, for such shillings are minted to be wasted in any case. To give a brief study to something more significant, *The Times* on March 12 gave some evidently considered attention to some words of M. Bertrand de Jouvenel two days previously at the London School of Economics. "Discarding traditional definitions"—what are they?—M. de Jouvenel had come so close to our point of view as to "insist" (the word is the *Times's*) that politics is quite simply the science of eliciting and maintaining co-operation between human beings. Said *The Times*: "All action which is directed towards inducing men to co-operate in a common enterprise, whatever the nature of that enterprise, is, he maintains, sufficiently similar to enable it to be designated by the common epithet political."

We have asked in parenthesis above what are the "traditional" definitions which obstruct the recognition of the truth of M. de Jouvenel's thesis. The one *The Times* has in mind is sufficiently disclosed in the remark that in the West "the chief of these traditional academic conceptions is the idea of contract, the notion, that is to say, that states come into being and are maintained by rational agreement between individuals who have a common interest in view and who delegate power to a Government to pursue it for them." Having already stigmatised M. de Jouvenel's idea as "revolutionary," the leader-writer may

(we do not know) have one eye on the Vatican—the only embodied Political Intelligence ever on the alert which we can discern, whose persistent reaction against Rousseauism is well-known—and the other on the variety of 'ordinary reader' who buys *The Times* daily, when he passes at once, without further preparation, to M. de Jouvenel's own belief, that "The time has come for frankly recognising that states are initiated and preserved by political leadership exercised by the comparatively few, and evoking the response of the many. They differ widely in the extent to which the mass of their citizens accept this leadership voluntarily and consciously, but the element of leadership is always present." It would seem now safe to exonerate M. de Jouvenel from *Fuehrer-Principism*, which *The Times* proceeds to do: "M. de Jouvenel regards the idea of leadership resting solely on force as a pathetic illusion as well as an offence to morality. It is simply a plea for the recognition as the starting-point of political discussion at the inevitability (in all régimes, not least in democracy) of political inequality. Only when this inequality is recognised as a fact is it rationally possible to debate the bounds within which it should be held and the purposes which it should serve. M. de Jouvenel is appealing not for a particular type of régime but for the frank and realistic discussion of the problem of power."

We have long ago pointed out that it is useless to recognise "the fact" of inequality without specifying the particulars which are unequal. Is the syntax of *The Times* at fault? If not, why should discussion—and between whom?—reveal "the purposes which inequality should serve"? Our readers will appreciate the complete absence here of Douglas's idea of the attachment of genuine responsibility to the use of voting power. They have been given timely warning of the advent of their opportunity. Other references on another page may convince them that it is now actual.

### Private Socialism

"Peterborough" in the *Daily Telegraph* says:—"The appointment of Dr. Alexander Fleck, 64, as chairman of Britain's biggest industrial combine, the £386m. Imperial Chemical Industries, settles a long-standing City controversy.

"I.C.I.'s other deputy chairman, Mr. Alexander Quig, 61, and its accountant, Mr. Stanley Chambers, 49, both had their champions, and it was no secret that the present I.C.I. chairman, Mr. John Rogers, 75, agreed in 1951 to succeed Lord McGowan only temporarily.

"Dr. Fleck, who takes over on July 1, has long been regarded as one of Britain's leading scientists and business men. In his youth he worked his way through night schools to take a degree in organic chemistry at the university of his birthplace, Glasgow.

"He is the third Glaswegian in succession to become chairman.

"Dr. Fleck's appointment will mean no change in I.C.I.'s opposition to Socialist plans to nationalise the firm. He is as determined a believer in private enterprise as Lord McGowan, who rose from office boy to founder and first chairman."

\*See Page 8 for a brief explanation of "A Light Horse."



## The Policy of a Philosophy

The Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot, with all the authority of a *Daily Telegraph* leader (May 4, 1953) hails the recent Budget as the dawn of a new day. Like a child awakened from a nightmare, he welcomes Mr. Butler's sixpenny rushlight as though the sun of real prosperity were just breaking through. According to him here is the illumination by which we are to be enabled to see whether "a free economy" will work. There is no other proof possible, as he says, because "with taxation at its present levels the budget is not a series of sums ending in a balance. It is an exercise in applied psychology." How very true, and how awful.

The Great Spender, Mr. Elliot calls the State, not without justification. But what seems to impress and annoy him even more is that the State should also be the Great Investor. He is outraged at the modern State's pretensions; but so are all decent, independent-minded people. There is nothing new in that. Socialism is Statism, as is Communism, and all the other varieties of philosophic, centralized coercion under whatever name. Mr. Elliot and all the other Free Economy advocates, apart from not seeing anything new, are not sure that they want to see anything new, even though they realise that "the old" isn't going to do them much longer.

In Mr. Elliot's view the crux of the matter is to be found in capital investment. What a remarkable example of viewing half the truth! As readers of this journal are well aware, there is a sense in which it can be said with truth that capital investment, which is capital expenditure, is not far from the root of the matter, an example of the common habit of looking in the right direction and not seeing what there is to be perceived there. None the less, the fact is being more and more forced upon him and many like him, that, "without some payment not included under the heading A and/or B, etc.," the consumers' market must come to a standstill and consumer production go into liquidation. So far they reason, but no further. And though Douglas and his followers come offering them the comparatively simple, and entirely logical and correct explanation of the phenomenon, and the obvious way round it, they refuse to accept it and, with every encouragement from High Financial quarters proceed to elevate capital investment, *i.e.*, expenditure, almost into an end in itself; at the least, into a Sovereign Remedy.

Investment Control, then, above all others, according to Mr. Elliot and his friends, is the control that must go, if Britain is to survive. They never stop to ask themselves why, if overseas financing should be done by the individual out of his voluntary savings, instead of by the State, presumably out of his confiscated savings, the nett result should be, financially, so vitally different; though, admittedly, there is a considerable psychological difference. Mr. Butler takes sixpence off the income tax; accepting this graciously as a gesture and concealing a smile at the paltry amount, how, never the less, can one see in the investing of that sixpence the supreme test as to whether the Free Economy of the Western World has the will and/or the ability to survive, as Mr. Elliot suggests he can? Especially when all the time unchecked and, under the prevailing orthodox economic conditions, uncheckable, inflation continues with steady accentua-

tion. Though Mr. Elliot makes no mention of the fact, we all know that the cost of living continues steadily to rise, while wages and salaries struggle to keep up with it, and debt—national, municipal, urban, individual—continues to pile up all over the civilised globe to uncomputed and uncomputable heights.

The capital investment of society today is fantastic and growing at the same rate almost as world indebtedness, and out of all proportion to the reasonable needs of the consuming population, which are more than adequately catered for if the system was permitted to operate freely. Though the lifting of almost any control is to be welcomed, under the circumstances it seems a matter of comparatively small importance that overseas investment should be opened again to the private investor, whose only source of cash, beyond the strictly limited advances of his Joint Stock Bank, is from savings, or abstention from consumption. The suggestion that it could make the least mathematical difference to the world situation seems ridiculous.

However, that is the direction in which Mr. Elliot and quite a lot like him, discern the dawn. That he can be so excessively grateful for such small mercies is surely an indication of the narrowness of his vision of Real Abundance, dependent as it is on his acceptance of the Moneylenders' claim to the right to dole it out to society on their own conditions. That we of the Social Credit movement are unable to be so meekly thankful to Mr. Butler, even though meekness is one of the qualities scheduled for reward in the Sermon on the Mount, is perhaps because we see more deeply into the cause and nature of the *unreal scarcity* which is the direct result of the Bankers' claim in operation. Nevertheless, our humility, though of a different kind, is perhaps as profound as Mr. Elliot's when we contrast the immensity of Natural Abundance with the meanness of human nature's capacity to accept it.

Mr. Elliot admits the issue to be a vast one; no less than collectivism versus the individual. But he still thinks to button it down to the party-political arena, as though the Tories, unaided, were qualified to represent or defend Individual Man, and the Labour Party, the only henchmen of the devouring State. Such a naïve picture is at once too simple and too complex. Too simple because the issue goes far deeper than Ballot Box Democracy and the mathematics of head-counting; just as Mr. Elliot, himself, admitted in the case of Budgetary-Control, which has abandoned the common daylight of the counting house, for the conditioning gloom of the psychiatrists' consulting-room. And too complex, because the operations of the psychological approach to any problem—if it is to be operative at all—are essentially simple, partaking of what is erroneously termed the miraculous and unanalysable; in confirmation of which one would have only to ask any genuine Social Crediter to explain why he is one, and his neighbour not.

This is how Mr. Elliot concludes his article:—"Here is the crux of the great and bitter argument which is now in progress. The stake is not this Finance Bill, or that. The stake is whether there is an alternative policy to the State as Spender, the State as Saver, the State as Producer, the State as Consumer, the State as Everything." You notice Mr. Elliot is not yet so humble as to ask whether there is an alternative philosophy. He never questions, or expects his

readers to question, the Christianity of his own philosophy. He is still arguing on the political plane, and of such matters as progressive sixpences off the income tax irrespective of the fact that the progressiveness of such deductions depends entirely on the philosophy of those who control the issue and withdrawal of sixpences.

That philosophy, to which as we have seen Mr. Elliot still subscribes, may be narrowly defined, in Douglas's own words, as a belief in Finance as a System of Government. In other words, budgetary control; hence the applied-psychological aspect of modern Budgets. As a creed it takes the form of a belief in the necessity for a supreme concentration of material power to direct social activity, human energy. The energising medium of organised society is financial credit (money); so that the policy of the control of its creation is the first and last essential to the concentration (monopoly) of supreme material power that the philosophy of the government of human society by Financial means demands. Finance as a System of Government is Statism, World Statism. The question, therefore, of whether there is (to be), or is not (to be) an alternative *policy* to Statism is in the hands of Mr. Elliot himself, and all of us, as individuals, and consists, in the first place, in an alteration in our philosophic faith, represented by our present acceptance of the validity of the Bankers' claim to ownership of the credit (money, purchasing-power) which society empowers them to issue. Only after the achievement of this alternative *philosophy* can Mr. Elliot hope to begin to implement the alternative *policy* for which he sees so vital a necessity.

He concludes, "Time does not stand still. Socialism is not enough. If the West cannot find some new solution of its own, there are Mr. Malenkov and Mr. Mao-Tse-Tung and already looking over their boundaries." True enough! And are there not some of us who have long thought it high time the West was looking over its own boundaries; not geographical, but boundaries of obsolete financial beliefs which preclude all new solutions?

NORMAN WEBB.

#### PARLIAMENT—

(continued from page 3.)

of the supporters last year because I thought it was desirable in the public interest that they should have it.

But consider the rights of the private individual. I think the journalists are worse than the editors. If a newspaper publishes a false statement which is libellous, the newspaper apologises to avoid an action, but if a newspaper publishes a piece of public information which is wrong and someone telephones them, as I have often done, they never correct the mistake because the journalist does not want to admit to his editor that he has made a mistake. If we ever have a Press Council I hope they will chase some of the journalists who hate being corrected.

There is not a Member of Parliament who has not grumbled that he has been misreported. Sometimes he has been and sometimes he has not. I knew one eminent Socialist who is dead now. He was a nice old man. He was one of the real Lefters. He and I were great friends. I remember having lunch with him with another less Left-Wing Socialist and we were having a chat. He said, "After so and so has made a big speech he is always well reported

and he rushes out in the morning to buy a paper to see exactly what he said."

I think that is true of all of us at times—except the people who read their speeches, and they do not make speeches; they read essays. There is too much reading of essays in this House. Of course, one is always accurately reported then, but it is rather boring. If one makes a speech and it is misreported, it may be a slip on the part of the reporter. Sometimes the context of the rest of the report shows that the journalist has made a mistake, but if one writes to the editor he replies and says, "We have examined our reporter's notebook and we are assured that that is what you said." They will not apologise. We ought to scarify them for that. If they have made a mistake why should they not correct it?

One of the interesting parts of the modern Press is the chatty column which talks about the activities of this person and that person. Occasionally, I see a mistake in a certain newspaper. I ring up a journalist friend of mine about it and he says, "Thank you very much," and that is the end of it. That is moral cowardice on the part of journalists. I cannot see that this Bill will do much about it. Certainly, what I am saying will do more than this Press Council will do in a dozen years. I know that the Press will not be very pleased with me. Tomorrow's newspapers will probably not report what I am saying now. They will probably say, "Sir So-and-So also spoke."

*Mr. George Jeger (Goole):* If the hon. Gentleman refers to Clause 3 (d) he will see that one of the powers of the Council would be to receive complaints " . . . about the conduct of the Press or of any persons towards the Press' and to deal with these complaints in whatever manner seem to it practical and appropriate."

*Sir H. Williams:* I have read that. What is the use of that? There is no penalty. . . . What are these most amazing powers

" . . . to deal with these complaints in whatever manner may seem to it practical and appropriate."

I do not know. Perhaps that is the charter of Grays Inn.

We really ought to be precise in these matters. A little criticism by public persons may be very effective in dealing with the Press, but the vague generalities of the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Driberg) will certainly not. I hope that this Bill will not become law, because I do not think it will do any good. Modern legislation seems to require that everybody in every trade should have a nursemaid. Even Her Majesty's Government suffer a little from that disease, and the Iron and Steel Bill and the Transport Bill provide for such nursemaids. I do not believe in them. Let us have the good, straightforward influence of competition. That will do far more good.

If somebody is defamed let us make sure what he was defamed about and when. Let us make a specific charge and not one of a vague and general nature. We have had 37 minutes of generalities from the hon. Member for Maldon. He said nothing which was precise. I am a little tired of it. Let us throw out this Bill and cease wasting time on what was a futile Royal Commission and what is a futile Bill based upon their report.

*Mr. Emrys Hughes (South Ayrshire):* . . . I used to belong to the profession of journalism, but, unlike my hon.

Friend the Member for Maldon (Mr. Driberg), I have not had the unfortunate experience of being in the gigantic machinery of the big millionaire Press. However, when he says that the advertisers do not influence the policy of a newspaper, I believe he is staking too large a claim. I mentioned in the course of an intervention earlier that the vested interests in drink exercise a very great pressure on the Press through their disposal of advertising money.

Perhaps the House is under a slight misapprehension as the result of a remark that I made. It is true that the drink vested interests did not try to bribe the newspaper with which I was connected, because they did not have a chance. All along our policy was rigorously against inserting any whisky, or beer or other intoxicating drink advertisements. But a newspaper which adopts the attitude that the advertisements of the vested interests in drink are not in the interest of the nation starts with a very heavy handicap indeed, and I submit that it cannot seriously be challenged that a big vested interest which has hundreds of thousands of pounds in advertising revenue at its disposal can easily influence the policy of a newspaper, and that it takes people with very strong minds to hold off such big vested interests.

The same applies in the case of the tobacco vested interests, which have a huge advertising organisation. At present there is a controversy in medical circles as to whether or not smoking or excessive smoking is one of the indirect causes of cancer of the lung, and I believe that there will come a time in that controversy when there will be pressure by the advertising vested interests.

I believe that in those circumstances we have to qualify to a considerable extent what we say about the basic freedom of the Press. The basic freedom of the Press is an illusion. It is useless saying that a small section of minority opinion can run a great newspaper these days. A great newspaper is an elaborate commercial and industrial organisation which has millions of pounds of capital at its disposal. In these circumstances we ought to look rather closely at the elusive phrase "the freedom of the Press."

Journalists are no worse than the members of any other profession under capitalism. Under our present commercial system they have to write things with which they disagree. The doctors prescribe things to make money, and the scientists are in a way prostituted in the interests of war. Under our present get-rich-quick private enterprise system every profession is more or less prostituted, and my claim is that journalists, who have been described as harlots, are really no worse than anybody else.

However, I demur from the assertion of my hon. Friend that the British Press is the best in the world. Are we not liable to be a little too conceited in that respect? I suggest that very often when people speak so glibly about the British Press being the best in the world they do so because they do not know any other Press. Some of the British newspapers—such as "The Times," the "Manchester Guardian," the "Observer," the "Scotsman" and similar newspapers which take a more serious view of politics and social life—are very good, but there are also some great American papers, such as the "New York Times" and the "Christian Science Monitor." Every country has its responsible newspapers, and some of these newspapers are very responsible indeed.

But when we get the Press at its worst, the British Press can be very bad. That remark was not intended to synchronise with the arrival of the hon. Member for Southgate (Mr. Baxter), who has just entered the Chamber.

I believe that an intelligent foreigner looking at the British Press at present—say, an independently-minded American from the Middle West, or an independently-minded Russian, or someone from any other part of the world—and looking at our newspapers would say that a large section of the British Press is a conglomeration of the Coronation and crime. In a civilised society I do not believe we should lay so great a stress on either. We have to face the fact that a large part of the Sunday Press is not contributing to the national welfare or national edification at all but is a cess-pool of crime and sex.

So long as that continues, and so long as we have papers with large circulations which devote such a large amount of space to murder, rape and all the violence and luridness of sexual crime, I think we shall be unable to say with real sincerity that our Press is the best in the world. In that respect it is inferior to the Russian Press. I know we can make the claim against the Russian Press that it is a totalitarian Press and does not publish minority opinion. But on the great sociological issues, and from the point of view of what is necessary for building up a country and a serious analysis of economic issues, when one comes from reading "Pravda" and "Izvestia" and reads the Press of this country one is astonished and revolted at the flippancy and sensationalism which exalts triviality and ignores serious issues.

I believe that if we had a Press Council such as is outlined in the Bill—and I am glad that there is to be some attempt to establish a voluntary Press Council—the British public, instead of being preyed on and exploited by the sensationalists, might be genuinely interested in real news and comments. I welcome the Bill and hope that the discussions in this House will lead to an improvement of the British Press so that it will be able to claim that it is at least as good as the Press in other parts of the world.

## Big Business Takes Over

Rupert Jackson in the *Toronto Financial Post* for May 2 says Newfoundland's provincial legislature has passed an act to set up the British Newfoundland Corporation, a new British Company, in the tradition of the great "Empire-building" companies of the past.

The Corporation is made up of 21 major British industrial and banking firms headed by N. M. Rothschilds & Sons.

"The new corporation is one of the first major efforts by British firms toward new investment in dollar areas since the war.

"British Newfoundland Corp., by today's standards, has been granted an empire in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has 60 square miles of mineral rights, 1,400 square miles of timber rights in Labrador containing 10 million cords of prime timber and water-power rights on all rivers not previously alienated in both Newfoundland and Labrador.

"It was the very size of the concessions granted to the new British corporation which raised the biggest debate in the provincial legislature this week, because of the big areas concerned. Malcolm Hollet, Progressive Conservative leader in Newfoundland termed the bill a 'vicious' one, saying it alienated all remaining crown lands in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"In rebuttal, however, Premier Joseph Smallwood, the man who was responsible for bringing the new corporation into being, claimed the corporation was a new start by Britain in rebuilding her overseas empire.

"Actually, in view of the huge concessions granted the new British corporation, there was very little concentrated opposition to the new bill. This was opposed to general expectations, which suggested hot and heavy debate on the subject.

"While debate was going on in the Provincial Legislature, the British Newfoundland Corp., under the immediate direction of A. W. Southam, was busily lining up a \$350,000 exploration programme."

### A Step Towards Responsible Voting

The title "A Light Horse" was that given by Douglas to a series of questions, in three parts, put to readers of this review for their consideration, the first part on January 19, 1946, "from a sporting notion that a light horse might after all move faster and more surely to the end which the tired multitudes of this world desire than the Heavy Brigade" of political organisation whose movements were then as now producing increasing apprehension wherever we turned.

Still in question form, the notion crystallised in Part III, March 16, 1946, as follows:—

#### A Light Horse. Part III.

To contributors to Parts I and II.

Please criticise, amplify or modify the following skeleton proposal:

(a) The secret ballot to be abolished and replaced by an open, recorded, and published vote.

(b) The Party system to be retained.

(c) Prior to an election, each Party to put forward an outline of any legislative proposals together with both the cost to the taxpayer and a designation of the interests and specific individuals affected.

(d) The cost of Legislation by the successful Party, together with the proved loss to any individual not having voted for the successful Party, to be borne solely by those having recorded votes for the successful Party, and any reduction of taxation directly attributable to specific legislation to be shared as to 25 per cent. by recorded supporters of the unsuccessful Parties, and 75 per cent. by the supporters of the successful Party so long as it may remain in power, after which the gains shall be equalised.

(e) Consider and if desirable suggest means to make these provisions retroactive over fifty years.

### Lord Samuel

"There is considerable support for the belief that the prime mover in the formation of the National Government in 1931 was not the King but Lord Samuel."

—H. J. T. Johnson in *The Month*, May, 1953.

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