It is Mr. Churchill Who Must Go To It

By JOHN MITCHELL

Mr. Churchill, in his House of Commons speech on production, barked and barked loudly. But, far from giving a satisfactory reply, his speech cannot be said to have provided a reply at all to the well-informed critics of our war production effort. He based his defence on what he declared to be the results of the Government's production policy, that, "the Ministry of Supply output in the last three months has been one-third greater than in the three months of the Dunkirk period."

The value of this statement can be assessed in the light of an article published in The Times of July 25, which expressed "the opinions of a group of industrialists, with individual knowledge of conditions in large undertakings."

The following statements are taken from the article:

".... The nation has never been mobilised for effective war production because the leaders do not realise what the potential production is. ....

"There would be a really enormous increase in the war output of industry if existing machines, men, and material were organised on a basis of co-ordinated operation. .... Production is increasing in most war departments, we are told. An article produced in tens a year ago is now produced in twenties or even fifties. But that is a meaningless basis of comparison if production might be in thousands or, if only fifties are needed, then in a fraction of the time, so that something else could be made on the same machines and by the same labour."

Mr. Churchill's basis of comparison, his "datum line" as he called it, for measuring the results of the Government's production policy can therefore be seen to be quite inadequate, and his complacency in the face of the opinion of the producers themselves that their production could be much greater than at present is inexcusable.

Interference with Production

The two main causes of sabotage of War production were not even referred to by Mr. Churchill. These are bureaucracy and lack of finance, combined with ill-conceived financial legislation.

On the question of bureaucracy the following statements taken from articles by producers and informed comment thereon are to the point:

"With the conditions and possibilities of mass production the Supply Departments of the Government appear to have no acquaintance, ....

".... But the crowning tragedy is the relative un-awareness in the Civil Service of the fundamentals of modern production technique. The Civil Service looks with clerical eyes on a mechanical and industrial world. ...."—from a leading article in The Times of July 25, 1941, entitled Latent Resources in Industry.

".... the manufacturer grows all the more resentful because he knows that things could still be put right or at any rate vastly improved if the national industrial effort were but regarded from the point of view of those who are making it and not confined to those who are endeavouring to direct it."

".... there is a deep feeling of frustration among industrialists and workpeople on account of the hampering effect of over-centralised Government control. ....

".... In their anxiety to create an industrial war machine the Government overlooked the fundamental principle that control, to be effective, must be exercised for the benefit of those controlled, not for the satisfaction of those who control. ...."—from a leading article in The Times of May 21, 1941, entitled Handcuffs on Industry.

".... It would be incredible, if it were not true, that twelve months after being asked to undertake the manufacture of tanks, and after having made an important experiment in the method of manufacture, a firm of world-wide repute should be awaiting the first order. Equally astonishing is the fact that an admirably designed gun carriage which in production could, in the manufacturer's opinion, be produced more quickly and not less efficiently by a small modification which would not reduce strength or efficiency, though the drawings would be a little less elegant. An authority able to put the manufacturer's claim to the test and reach a decision seems still to be lacking."—from a leader in The Times, July 29, 1941.

"Controls must be exercised for the benefit of produc-
tion and not for the satisfaction of those who control. Readily-available advice is much more important than a multitude of regulations and forms.”—from the memorandum of The Engineering Industries Association on War Production.

A manufacturer writing in The Times on July 26 gives an instance of how the lack of finance is diminishing the war effort:

“The memorandum [of the Production Executive] also states that arrangements have been made to enable all contractors engaged on vital work to obtain all the necessary working capital from their bankers. . . . There is certainly little evidence of such an arrangement when an organisation equipped and capable of carrying out £2,000,000 worth per annum of vital work is limited to a quarter of this by the absence of liquid capital.”

The memorandum on War Production recently issued by the Engineering Industries Association provides the clearest possible evidence of how lack of finance and the Government's financial legislation is damaging the war effort. The membership of this Association includes firms of all sizes, and yet no attempt was made by the Prime Minister to meet their criticisms. The chairman of the Council of this organisation, writing in The Times on July 31, 1941, said:

“My close contact with what is going on in the engineering industry brings a huge amount of most disturbing evidence of the seriousness of the position and the need for more prompt action by the War Cabinet to bring into being for industrial needs a financial system in line with to-day's facts and adjusted to suit war conditions.”

Different Policies Required

It is axiomatic that the producers are responsible for what is produced, but the power to decide and to do has been largely denied to them, because it has been usurped by the Government acting through the Civil Service and by the banks. Power has been divorced from responsibility, and second-rate experts are interfering with first-rate experts. This is a matter which is very apparent to the producers themselves, and further extracts from the articles already quoted will make this evident:

“... Let the Government Departments now admit that manufacturing for the fighting Services is a task rather for industry than for the Civil Service, and consequently that the organisation should be built on industrial and not on Civil Service lines. ...”

“... firms whose knowledge of industrial management is sound and built upon long experience, have adopted the principle that maximum production at the outlying works depends upon the maximum degree of decentralised executive authority. ...”


“... To deal with the problems of local firms needs local knowledge, and the full utilisation of all local capacity for the benefit of the nation can be achieved only by local action. Until this has been recognised we shall continue to beat the air rather than the armed forces of the enemy.”—from a leading article in The Times of May 21, 1941, entitled Handcuffs for Industry.

“Management should be given authority for making capital expenditure, since it is management which should be responsible for securing consequent improvements in production. Managerial responsibility should not be separated from authority.”—from the memorandum on War Production of the Engineering Industries Association.

The organisation of industry for war production is essentially a matter for the producer; and the Government's function in relation to it should be confined to providing adequate inducements and facilities for industry to coordinate and organise its own efforts. And this is not present being done.

Mr. Churchill's Responsibilities

As the responsible authority for the carrying out of the war policy and as the purchaser of war production it is obviously the responsibility of the Government to decide what industry shall produce. But, if the principle of uniting power with responsibility is adhered to, as of course it should be, the decision in regard to what is produced will be decentralised to those responsible for the strategical and tactical employment of the war material, although of course in conformity with the general war strategy which must necessarily be decided centrally.

The careful distinction between policy and administration, the establishment of a proper relationship between those responsible for one and the other in the war effort, and the decentralisation and uniting of power, both functional and financial, to those functionally responsible; these are Social Credit principles and they are matters which should occupy the energies of statesmen. They are matters which should occupy Mr. Churchill's attention; they are his chief responsibility as Prime Minister. But it is precisely in this field that there is gross neglect and abominable confusion, and because of it and the wrong action resulting from it that the war effort is crippled and the liberty of the individual needlessly threatened. Oratory is not a substitute for correct action which the British people will be deceived about indefinitely. The setting up of a Ministry of Production so generally advocated by our daily press and the party politicians is not a substitute for correct action which will be acceptable to the British people; and the replacement of Mr. Churchill need not prove a necessarily preliminary to getting correct action. It is correct action which is required, action which is correct because it gets the results the people want, in this case, the maximum production of what is required for the war effort. No other action is correct. It is Mr. Churchill who must go to it.
Who Controls the Bank of Canada?

Mr. Ilsley, the Canadian Finance Minister, recently admitted that Parliament had no control over the Bank of Canada, in spite of its 'nationalisation'; three days later he denied that he made the statement, or, alternatively, if he did, that he did not mean it.

Just before the Canadian House of Commons rose on June 2, the Speaker suggested that the bill under discussion should be read a third time. Following a member's dissent because he wanted an opportunity to discuss matters concerning the Bank of Canada, the debate continued according to the Canadian Hansard:

Mr. Ilsley: I will go as far as I can on the matter of the Bank of Canada, but I do not think I would agree to a discussion of the policies or internal administration of the Bank of Canada, because it is a separate organisation.

Mr. Blackmore: Do I understand the minister to say that the Bank of Canada is not directly under the control of the Department of Finance?

Mr. Ilsley: Correct.

Mr. Blackmore: That is, independent of the Finance Department, and therefore independent of this house?

Mr. Ilsley: Correct.

Mr. Blackmore: Independent of the administration, too?

Mr. Ilsley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what stage we are at, but the Bank of Canada is a separate organisation, just like the Canadian National Railways or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. These separate corporations are owned by the Government; in the case of the Bank of Canada the stock is owned by the government and the directors are nominated by the government, but once the directors are appointed, I have no right, nor has the government any control whatever over the financial policy of the Bank of Canada.

Mr. Ilsley: I deny that I made that statement.

Mr. Jaques: Well, the Bank of Canada controls the financial policy of this country, and certainly the Minister of Finance told us that neither his department nor this house had any control whatever over the financial policy of the Bank of Canada.

Mr. Ilsley: I deny that I made that statement. I said the government had no control over the internal operations of the Bank of Canada.

Mr. Jaques: Then this makes the case even worse, because if the government had control.

The Chairman: Furthermore it is not permissible to quote anything said during a debate, other than the one now proceeding, which took place during the present session.

"SPITFIRE" comments in "Today and Tomorrow" of June 19:

Now it will be plain that Mr. Ilsley's denial of June 5 simply does not square with his categorical assertions made on June 2.

In the first place nobody in the responsible position of a spokesman for the Government could possibly confuse policy and administration. Policy has to do with objectives whereas administration has to do with methods for the attainment of objectives.

The Minister of Finance stated definitely that neither he nor the government had "any right to dictate to the Bank of Canada as to what its policies shall be."

If he had made a slip the opportunity to correct this arose when the Leader of the Opposition protested against the Minister's assertion and was called to order by the Speaker.

But Mr. Ilsley did not withdraw.

The second point to be observed is that the Minister of Finance implies that the Government has "something to say about monetary and financial policy," without controlling the day to day operations of the Bank of Canada. But it does not require a profound knowledge of organisation to know that control of policy automatically carries with it control of administration.

Another feature about the affair is
the amazing statement made by the Chairman regarding Hansard as the official record of debates in the House of Commons.

If a Minister of the Crown can make a definite statement, and, in reply to questions, clarify it so that no possibility of misunderstanding can exist, and then three days later deny he made the statement or alternatively, if he did, that he did not mean it, an extremely serious situation exists. For if he did not mean what he said the first time what assurance has the House of Commons or the public that he really means what he said the second time?

Of course the matter goes beyond this to anything a responsible Government spokesman may say in Parliament.

The next move in this altogether astounding affair followed the publication of the statement by Premier Aberhart* challenging Mr. Ilsley's rev-

*Mr. Aberhart pointed out that if neither the Minister of Finance nor the Parliament of Canada had any control over the policies of the Bank of Canada and had no right to question these policies, then clearly Parliament was subservient to the Bank of Can-

ada. "Unless the people of Canada demand immediate action to restore to Parliament its full sovereign powers over the control and issue of currency and credit and of monetary policy, how can responsible democratic government survive in Canada."

The following news item was published in the press on Friday, June 13.

OTTAWA, June 13—While responsibility for operations of the Bank of Canada rests upon the shoulders of the governor and board of directors the responsibility for Canada's monetary policy is the government's, Finance Minister Ilsley told the House of Commons to-day.

"He referred to a statement issued by Premier Aberhart of Alberta based on statements the minister made in the House on June 2 to the effect that the bank was not controlled by the government.

"The minister said he regretted that his words spoken during a 'question and answer' exchange on another subject, had provided a basis for misconstruc-

"The question as I understand it, includes Latin America and excludes those parts of the British Empire, other than Great Britain, which are not in the Western Hemisphere. Obviously the Latin American countries, so jealous of independent even of each other, would never willingly accept union with the more numerous and powerful English-speaking peoples. Nor would the British accept a union which would cut them off from most of the Empire. Taken literally, such a proposal is clearly without merit.

"Even a federal union of the United States and the British Empire is impracticable. The ideas of union fundamental to the creation and growth of the United States were closely associ-

ated with territorial and cultural homogeneity. Although necessities of defense or moments of imperialism have brought outlying regions under our control, we have steadily resisted the admission to the federal system of any territories outside the solid block of the forty-eight states.

"The British Empire, on the other hand, glories in its far-flung lands and recognises the cultural dissimilarity of its parts. India, the Crown colonies and the mandated territories include such a variety of peoples and governments that simple union would be impossible except on the basis of despotism. Union and representation in Westminster was tried in Ireland, but it has failed. Union of neighbouring provinces and responsible governments was tried in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and it succeeded. Years of growth have produced a Commonwealth with independent parliaments under one crown which is almost the antithesis of a union of many lands and peoples under one parliament.

"Much as we sympathise with the intentions of advocates of such a federal union, we must recognise that it would serve no useful purpose at the present time. Every nerve of the British is strained to sustain the war, and they are not likely to appreciate a proposal which would indeed join the resources of the United States to their own, but only at the price of subordination of the institutions they are defending. They do not ask and we should not suggest that the supplies which they sorely need should be delivered wrapped in a new constitution."

He is the only democrat among the contributors; and he is the only one of them who looks at the facts.

Rabbi Irving F. Reichert of San Francisco's Congregation of Emanu-El, on the other hand, is keenly in favour of union, and apparently thinks that it is the only alternative to chaos. He asks, "But if the Axis should be defeated, what then? Without an international federal union, our world must certainly revert to its old predatory nationalisms. .... Nationalisms, maybe, but not necessarily ' predatory.'"

"Objectors to the plan call it a scheme to salvage British Imperialism. Others criticise it as an attempt to sub-

(continued on page 11, column 3)
Country policeman, painfully learn-
in his new rôle:—

"Where's your identity cards, sir? You didn't ought to forget 'em. No one's allowed to go along the Maidstone road, not unless it's to visit a sick relative, or on important business or such like. There's not supposed to be no joy-riding of any sort. Where're you going? Only up the hill into the wood? You give me your word of honour you won't go no farther and that'll be all right, sir. But don't forget them cards again."

We are now approaching one of the most important of all turning points; and our interests as individuals are bound up irrecoverably with the outcome—will the British character stand the strain? All depends on the material—if it is sound, as I am certain it is, the small amount of leaven now being supplied will be sufficient.

The Kingdom of Heaven has been likened to some yeast, and yet again it has been suggested that reality (which is only another name for the Kingdom of Heaven) will be found to reside in something infinitely small, rather than in the infinitely large. No amount of intensive training would make that country policeman an efficient bureaucrat. He is only one, but multiply him a million times, and you get a picture of the situation. I think complete bureaucracy simply won't work and we need not fear it. We may, however, very probably have to go through a period of intense discomfort while this is being demonstrated.

That people who already have before them a working model of bureaucracy in the present Government departmental control should have the temerity to enlarge it, seems incredible, and must be due either to stupidity or deliberate malice aforethought. Neither of these explanations is feasible to the country—

"The egg producers scrapped the first scheme by indignant protests, but in the interval of relaxation that followed their anger, a second plan almost as amazing as the first was sprung upon them. That is a familiar technique which has been used over and over again."

I heard someone ask what gas-masks were for at this point.

The egg producers scrapped the first scheme by indignant protests, but in the interval of relaxation that followed their anger, a second plan almost as amazing as the first was sprung upon them. That is a familiar technique which has been used over and over again. What is particularly evil in this case is the inversion of the Social Credit which pays the retailers a form of dividend in the compensated price, but takes away from the consumers the sanction which they should have in demanding quality. Thus the consumers are doubly penalised in that they pay a high price, including increased taxation (or debt), for something they are forced to buy in the condition in which it is offered, or go without.

Those who govern us have the know-
ledge and power to manipulate the money system in any conceivable way. That is why we must not give them a loophole to divert the people's attention to the technique of prices, but must concentrate the whole of our effort on the development and use of the dynamic power of our sanctions.

We are economically disfranchised with every fresh article that comes under control. In a properly conducted democracy every citizen has a parliamentary vote which gives him power to express his wishes with regard to policy and administration, and the money vote with which he indicates his desires for production. Of what value is our money vote to-day? The money itself has become little more than a set of coupons which we are forced to give up in exchange for whatever is made available. This is what centralised socialist control has given us—uniformity of quality and a rapidly sinking standard. Though rationing may be necessary in wartime, pooling of quality is not. The persistent attempt to take from the consumer his power of demanding quality, and thus put an end to all competitive effort among producers can only lead, as Major-General Fuller has pointed out in his letter to The Times, to conditions of scarcity, perhaps even famine, because it runs counter to human instinct.

And when I think of the amount of work, material and petrol which is consumed each week in order that I may have one egg, weight 2 oz. or less, of which a large percentage is water—words fail me. Perhaps before long a similar plan may be contrived to give me two teaspoonsful of honey.

Could we have a better example of the tragedy of human effort, which arises from, more than any other single cause, a failure to distinguish between means and ends, a state of mind in which eggs are not something to eat, but are something to be controlled and distributed?

And how does the country policeman come in? I think of him when I am in danger of discouragement, a sin which we must all avoid. At such times I think of his obvious delight at finding some excuse for allowing us to enjoy our picnic, his readiness to trust us—we did not insult him with a tip—and say to myself, "You can't turn a silk purse into a sow's ear."

July 27, 1941.
A Realm Rent in Twain

Mr. ANDREW RUGG-GUNN, F.R.C.S., in his preface to Osiris and Odin: the Origin of Kingship, published in 1940, has the following:—

"At this moment the British and French peoples are involved in deadly war in order to save European civilisation from extinction. The outbreak of war provoked in the press of this country and on the platform a strange and perverse chorus of opinions from representatives of almost all branches of national activity, but particularly from politicians, churchmen and members of that amorphous group, the self-styled 'intellectuals.' Almost without exception, they revealed among us a widespread and alarming ignorance and perverted and twisted by the deceits of an imported alien ideology styled 'intellectuals.' Almost without exception, they revealed among us a widespread and alarming ignorance and perverted and twisted by the deceits of an imported alien ideology styled 'intellectuals.' Almost without exception, they revealed among us a widespread and alarming ignorance and perverted and twisted by the deceits of an imported alien ideology.

A footnote to the assertion in the text that an imported alien ideology has recently dominated British thought states:—"Contrary to popular opinion the leftist swing in the British Isles is confined mainly to the so-called educated or middle classes. It began with the Whigs and under their successors has become progressively worse. It has affected deeply the national character. Thus in religion, national devotion to God has shrunk into faith in an abstraction—humanism; duty to country and to one's neighbours has changed into obedience to the laws of International Finance; standards of value, material and moral, have or tend to have merely a money reference; and native wisdom in terms of crisis has been superseded by bureaucratic planning. The moral defence of the country is neglected and belittled. Perversity is in the ascendant. As a consequence, public opinion, even in wartime, overriding all considerations of national security and every instinct for self-preservation, permits the country to swarm with communistically-minded aliens and the people to be dazed by reiterated propaganda of the pacifist-federalist-communist type."

CONTROL OF INDUSTRY

From "The Times" of August 5:—

"Eight Conservative private members have tabled in the House of Commons a motion praying for the annulment of the new Defence Regulation 78."

"This regulation supplements the provisions as to the control of industrial undertakings in which the Government, under Defence Regulation 55, have appointed an authorised controller. It proposes that the competent authority should have power to remove from office any person with functions of management who appears to be obstructing the authorised controller in the performance of his functions."

"Another provision is that an order may be made transferring all the shares of a company to such nominees as may be specified at a price to be fixed by the Treasury."

"The members who have tabled the motion are Mr. Spens, Sir Herbert Williams, Sir Arnold Grindley, Mr. Hely-Hutchinson, Captain Cobb, Sir George Davies, Sir Harold Webbe, and Mr. Rostron Duckworth."

AMENDED NOTICE*

(1). It is appropriate that a supporter of the Secretariat should, if he wishes to do so, reply directly to any question put to him by members of the public concerning the reasons which prompt him to support the Secretariat, since only the individual concerned is fully aware of these reasons.

(2). It scarcely needs to be pointed out that it is improper that readers or non-readers should undertake to reply on behalf of the Directors of the Secretariat, individually or collectively, concerning the structure, policy or affiliations of the Secretariat, or otherwise allow themselves to be presumed to be representing the Secretariat to the public.

(3). Circulars issued without the explicit authority of the Secretariat, even when accompanied by matter bearing some indication of such authority, have not necessarily the approval of any Director of the Secretariat.

*Amending a notice in the issue of June 28, 1941.

SPECIAL CREDIT SECRETARIAT

The duties of Director of Organisation have been undertaken by H.E. who continues to be Director of Overseas Relations.
From Week to Week

The Book of Daniel, from the V Chapter, and V verse of which our Black Magicians are said to have derived their V campaign of Sorcery, is almost certainly a forgery, written by a Palestinian Jew, hundreds of years after the events it pretends to foretell had occurred. This was the opinion of Porphyry, who wrote in the third century, and was well qualified to give an opinion.

Spinoza, Hobbs, Collins, and many other careful commentators, held the same view.

Whether Daniel himself was manufactured out of whole cloth, or was a composite character like Methuselah, does not seem clear. He and his prophecies were pressed into the service of the “Chosen People” idea in much the same way that malaria, physical debauchery, and similar causes were inserted into records of the Fall of Rome to cloak the monetary nature of the debacle.

It is becoming clear that this “Union Now” business may easily take a turn which its sponsors had not foreseen. It is intended to remove still more all initiative from the individual by centralisation but its opponents may yet succeed in stimulating an understanding of the situation which may enable a common front against the gangsters to become effective.

The names of only two “Russians”—Litvinoff and Lozovsky—appear with any frequency in the British Press. Both are Jews. Maisky, the Russian Ambassador in London, and Steinhardt, the American Ambassador in Moscow, are both Jews.

The most dangerous piece of Black Magic practised by Governments is the propagation of the dogma of the virulence of Labour, per se. Modern industry is founded on the principle of reducing the need for intelligence, which the old craftsmen required, so that it can be concentrated in a few politically weak draughtmen and designers.

The voting strength is passed to “the Worker,” who, by lack of experience, habit of mob action, and susceptibility to propaganda, can be swung into action against any threat to the Black Magicians.

Odd, isn’t it, that although the Luftwaffe can penetrate the London airdefences almost at will, and do serious damage, and the R.A.F. can drop heavy high-explosive on the centre of Berlin, the air defences of Moscow are so effective, according to the Russian communiques, that raids consisting of 150 German planes are unable to get more than three or four machines through, and these content themselves with dropping a few incendiary bombs.

The Russian Army numbers at least 12,000,000. The Germans have possibly 4,000,000 troops available. The Russian individual, apart from his politics and leadership, is a first-class fighter, like all fatalists. The fanatical admirers of the Russian regime seem to be unduly modest in their satisfaction with Russian achievements, so far.

From “The Courier and Advertiser,” August 1, 1941.

THE UNWANTED HOUSE

“Pitcorthie is its name. It lies pleasantly in the parish of Carnbee, near Collinshurg, Fife.

“It’s a good old house with good water supply. The only snag is no electricity, but the mains run quite near.

“No Government department will take it for any purpose.

“Sir Thomas Erskine of Cambo says—It is a shocking state of affairs. Here is a very large country house, suitable for hundreds of evacuees, and it is going to be pulled down.”

“Lord Crawford, the owner, was willing to help and give the use of the house if he was relieved of rates and taxes.

“The County Clerk says—‘I tried every possible Government department in the hope of getting them interested, but not one responded.’

“So the house goes to the hands of the housebreaker.

“Could anything be more wasteful—at a time when the demand for accommodation grows steadily—when the building trade is overwhelmed with work?

“When emergency accommodation of all kinds is needed for the bombed-out, for children, even for stores.

“The Government has gone to great lengths in a questionnaire about storage—a questionnaire that would take a staff days to fill up.

“Yet the use of this house, which for many years before the war served as a Church of Scotland Home, is declined all round.

“It housed up to 90 people and was only given up as a church home just before the war.

“Sir Thomas is right. It’s a shocking state of affairs.

“The matter should be pressed by the Fife authorities—surely they know better than officialdom in London or Edinburgh or anywhere else.

“If they want the house for the war effort they should accept it and fight about the costs afterwards.”

Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN

Mr. Brendan Bracken, the new Minister of Information, came from Sydney to Sedbergh as a school-boy. At 24 he was director of Eyre and Spottiswoode, the Royal Printers, and editor of the Banker. He then became chairman of the Financial News Limited, which owns all the shares of the Investors’ Chronicle Limited and Practitioner Limited, 50 per cent. of the shares of Economist Newspaper Limited and a substantial interest in Moodys-Economist Services Limited. He became managing director of The Economist, and at 28 entered Parliament as member for North Paddington. A close friend of Mr. Churchill for many years, when Mr. Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty Brendan Bracken became his Parliamentary Private Secretary.

New Leaflet

Taxation is Robbery

Prices:
£1 for 1,000; 12/6 for 500;
3/- for 100; 1/9 for 50
(Postage Extra)

Obtainable from:
K.R.P. PUBLICATIONS LIMITED,
49, PRINCE ALFRED ROAD,
LIVERPOOL, 15.
Mr. Maxton: I think the hon. Gentleman intended to do that, and the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary at once seized upon that as the logic of his proposal. It would be true to this extent: if the committee were made into a judicial committee, with a standing similar to that of a judge of the High Court, it would not be answerable for its actions to, nor could it be criticised in, this House. At present, if I know about it, I can raise every individual case, and I want to retain the right to do that.

Sir I. Albery: I did not, as the hon. Member knows, put forward any specific proposal, but I may say that one of the arrangements which had entered my mind was that some Select Committee of this House could act.

Mr. Maxton: But I understood that that referred only to persons who might be Members of this House.

Sir I. Albery: Not necessarily. . . .

Mr. Spens (Ashford): . . . I cannot add anything to what my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for West Derby (Major Maxwell Fyfe) has said. I concur entirely, as I believe his view that you cannot substitute for every practising lawyer concurs, with his view that you cannot substitute for this responsibility of the Home Secretary any other procedure whatever in wartime. We in the House of Commons have a very close grip upon the Home Secretary and upon everything that he does. We are now showing how tight that grip is. We have shown it on innumerable occasions at Question Time, and we shall continue to show it. If at any time he fails, by any positive act of administration or by any omission in administration, there is only one remedy, and that is for my right hon. Friend to give place to somebody else. That is our sanction and that is the great protection of every member of the public.

Taking it by and large, having regard to all the difficulties, although I do not say that there are not details of administration that could be improved, the administration of this Regulation has been good. I do not think that the House of Commons realised when this Emergency Powers Act was passed, in the form in which we passed it, what enormous power to make Regulations it gave to the Executive. Our position of being able to pray against Regulations is one which, having regard to the enormous number and intricacy of the regulations made, is very little protection against individual injustices. . . .

If a Regulation is, in fact, inflicting injustice, once the Prayer has been passed in this House, there is really no remedy for the subject. I propose to take the opportunity on another occasion of dealing with another Regulation which has just been passed, for controlling businesses, because the attention of the House must be directed in detail to what that provides. I ask the Home Secretary and other Ministers responsible for Departments to take a great deal more care in the consideration of new Regulations than appears to be taken at present. The wording of the Regulation should be confined to dealing with the particular difficulty or hindrance of the war effort which is in the mind of the Department or Minister dealing with the Regulation. We should not have day after day, and week after week, Regulation after Regulation in very wide terms covering, goodness knows what, until the matter comes to be tested, with the result that throughout the whole of our industrial life there are instances of individual hardship which I am certain could be avoided. . . .

With regard to other Regulations in respect of trade and industry, the Government, under the Act, have two alternatives. They can either take possession of a concern, in which case they have to pay full compensation, or they can control it. Who knows exactly what "control" means? I ask the House to look at what the Government or somebody in the Government can do in a particular case. It comes to putting in officials or agents of the Government to manage a business, or dismiss all the existing managers or people concerned with the business, and still to run it as if it were the old business and on account of the business, and still to run it as if it were the old business and on account of the owners of that business. Those are questions which, under other Regulations, are affecting industry and personal rights of all kinds. Many of them are extremely good and helpful, but some of them go far too far and are prepared without sufficient consideration. All that I ask in this Debate is that, in extending this enormous power to the Executive and to the responsible Ministers of His
Majesty’s Government who are responsible for making these Regulations, we should see that they do not make a Defence Regulation one which is necessary for the specific purpose which they consider essential to the safety or well-being of the country in the present emergency.

Mr. Loftus (Lowestoft): My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Leslie) asked why Members of this House should be placed in a different position from that of the general public. Under our proposals a Member of this House would be liable to arrest, to imprisonment and to internment just as a member of the public. He would appear before a tribunal in the same way as a member of the public, but the tribunal would consist of fellow Members of the House. That seems to me very necessary, for this reason. To-day every safeguard of the ordinary citizen for personal freedom and for protection against executive tyranny has gone, and the only one that remains is the freedom of the Back Bench Member of Parliament. What are the ordinary citizen’s safeguards in peace-time? The first is Habeas Corpus, and that has gone. The second is that every five years at the longest there has to be a general election. That was a magnificent check on an arbitrary Executive, and it has gone. The third check is the continuous series of by-elections, one of the most valuable things in our Constitution. It is a constant check on and criticism of the Government. That has gone. To-day we have co-opted Members, of whom there are nearly 100 in the House now.

The fourth safeguard is the idea that the House of Commons is above all a check on the Executive and that therefore, the ordinary Member must be independent of the Executive and must not receive any position of profit without seeking re-election. Some years ago we abolished re-elections for Ministers. It was an excellent safeguard, although a horrible nuisance to the Executive. We have now gone one step further. We create new posts for Members of Parliament, salaried posts overseas and at home, and they accept them, and there again they are the servants of the Executive. And now we, the ordinary Members of Parliament can be arrested by the Executive without cause being given to this House of Commons. And yet the only protection for the man and woman in the street is the back bench independent Member of Parliament who is not a Member of the Government or salaried officer of the Government. That is why it is so essential that this House should keep control over the liberty of its Members.

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich): The hon. Member for Lowestoft (Mr. Loftus) in the early part of his speech made reference to the experience which he had had, and which I think a great number of us have had, of frivolous reasons for the detention of some of those who have been detained under Regulation 18A. I myself know of a great number of cases. I shall not refer to them in detail because nearly all of them—at any rate the older ones—were referred to in the last Debate we had on this matter, and I am bound to say that I have not come upon a recent case where there has been any detention on more frivolous reasons. The hon. Member also referred to what the hon. and learned Member for Ashford (Mr. Spens) said with regard to the great control which this House has over the Home Secretary. I support the view of the hon. Member for Lowestoft, with all due regard to my right hon. Friend, who will know that I am not speaking personally in any way, because I find that I have very little control. As a Member of Parliament I get a frightfully slow response to the suggestions put forward and the complaints made.

I am still not satisfied with the way cases are handled. The individual is not given sufficient information before he goes before the Advisory Committee, to enable him to defend himself. It is no use saying that that is not so. For my sins, practically everyone detained has written to me at one time or other, and I have at least 50 cases where the information supplied to them before going before the Advisory Committee was perfectly useless. When a man is kept in prison for six or 12 months, and is told at three or four days’ notice that he is to appear before an Advisory Committee, he has quite inadequate information on which to defend himself. When he goes before the Advisory Committee, therefore, he is not capable of putting up the best case for himself, especially having regard to the fact that he is not assisted by a prisoner’s friend or a lawyer.

I do not wish to say anything about the hon. and gallant Member for Peebles and Southern (Captain Ramsay), because it would be out of place, but I do want to say to the House that it surprises me, a comparatively junior Member of this great institution, to find the supine way in which the House as a whole have accepted the detention of one of their number without demanding to know the reason why. I do not know what he has done; it is not germane to the discussion here to-day. I only know that he is a perfectly honest, straightforward individual, perhaps with a kink in one way or another—perhaps some of us have kinks in this strange world. What I complain of is that Members have not risen in a body and told the Home Secretary and the Government that they are not going to stand for it and that they insist on having the hon. and gallant Member brought here to state his own case and to hear what it is all about. I leave it at that.

There are five or six things to which I would like to press the Home Secretary to agree. I hope he will deal with them in winding up the Debate. First of all, I would ask, for persons who have been detained upwards of six months to a year, that they should have the right to a revised appeal before the Advisory Committee, and that they should be allowed to have a prisoner’s friend with them, that it should not be at the discretion of the Advisory Committee. If they have been detained, and there is doubt in their case, they should have a right to a prisoner’s friend who could prompt them and help them to state their case. Secondly, prisoners released should have every possible help given to them. I have had particulars sent to me of most pathetic cases, of people who have been released, not because the Home Office or police covered their identity cards with writing in red ink, they cannot get employment. They are left absolutely destitute. Surely there must be some other method in the year 1941 of keeping in touch with these people. Whether you like it or not, the fact that a person has been to gaol has a very great effect upon the mind of anyone who may be considering employing him. I have sent my right hon. Friend two very bad examples. He has not replied yet, but it takes time to deal with these matters, and no doubt I shall get a reply.

The Jewish Chronicle writes to me and says that I am a great supporter of Sir Oswald Mosley. The Communist writes to me likewise. All manner of people say all manner of things about me. I want to make it perfectly clear to this House that I have taken the action which I have taken in this matter for one reason only. I have taken up
the cases of people who are Communists, and semi-Communists, Jews and Gentiles, Fascists and anti-Fascists, because I think it is our responsibility to see that our liberties are not completely lost. Because a person holds views contrary to mine, that is no reason why I should not defend his liberties.

Mr. Morrison: .... But I do not think as a general rule Ministers ought, so to speak, to attempt to delegate their responsibilities to a Committee of the House. When you are in a jam and in some sort of disagreement with the House, it is right that that should be done to resolve the difficulty, but I think it is best in the ordinary run of administration, particularly on these Defence Regulations, that Ministers should take responsibility. If they feel that it is right to consult Members of the House and get their reaction to certain things, by all means let it be done, but from a Parliamentary and Constitutional point of view it is best for the Minister to take his action and wait for any shootings at him that may come when the House knows what he has done.

Mr. A. Bevan (Ebbw Vale): But surely it is the right hon. Gentleman's responsibility on behalf of the House. He cannot use the language of delegating his responsibilities to the House if a Committee of the House advises him, because he is responsible to the House.

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Member is constitutionally quite wrong as to the way in which this great Parliamentary institution works. In the first place, a Government is formed, and it has the confidence of the House of Commons. It can live only by the consent of the House of Commons. It can be shifted by the House of Commons. But the basis of the whole business is that Ministers are responsible for the executive Government, subject to the check of Parliament and the powers they get from Parliament. The point I am on is that if you weaken that responsibility which Parliament rightly expects Ministers to accept, you are in a dangerous situation in which you are making a constitutional innovation which would create great difficulties for this House.

Mr. Bevan: The Home Secretary has a special relationship to this House as Minister responsible for carrying out these Regulations. Indeed, he is acting administratively in this matter and not legislatively, so that there is nothing unconstitutional in being advised by a Committee of the House.

Mr. Morrison: I did not say that there was anything improper or unconstitutional about it, but I say that it would be a doubtful thing if carried on as a regular practice, for it would weaken the independent critical power of the House of Commons.

Mr. Morrison: .... In conclusion, I would say that it is useful and right that this Debate should have been held. It is always right that a Home Secretary, in exercising these very great and exceptional powers, should have two things in mind: first, that he must do his duty to the State and its security and that if there is any real doubt, security must have the advantage. He must not be cowardly in exercising his powers when the security of the State is at stake. Second, he must keep in mind the fact that he is responsible to the House of Commons and is liable to be pulled up. I can assure the House that that is in my own mind. It is right from time to time that we should have these discussions and Debates in order that administration may be reviewed, but I would say, as one who is as keen as anyone to preserve the liberty of the subject—and for that reason I have been so careful in the handling of these 18B cases myself, because they are British subjects—that after a good deal of experience of administration of one sort and another I can honestly assure the House that, broadly speaking although there may be exceptional cases where things go a bit wrong, the administration of this Regulation need not cause apprehension in the House and the country. ....

**JULY 25.**

**FOOD SUPPLIES (SMALL TRADERS)**

(13 columns)

**Mr. Beverley Baxter (Wood Green):** On Tuesday last, at Question time, my hon. and gallant Friend, the Member for Kettering (Captain Profumo) raised the question about the announced intention of the Ministry of Food to do away with rationed foodstuffs supplies to all shopkeepers with less than 25 registered customers, ....

Perhaps my right hon. and gallant Friend will say that the profits of the small shopkeeper on rationed foodstuffs, if he has less than 25 customers, are a small, paltry, few shillings a week. I think the figure has been given; it is something like 6s. or 7s., a week. But the entire profits of the little shopkeeper are paltry. He is a little man, he is not very important. But what happens, supposing that his profit is 6s. or 7s. or 8s. a week on the rationed foodstuffs, when his customers are ordered to register elsewhere? They will not come to him for unrationed goods, and go for rationed elsewhere, where they can get both. Therefore, it was, indeed, a sentence of death for the little trader.

In London it would have affected 8,000 to 10,000 shopkeepers; in Manchester, 700; and so on through the country. Therefore, I think we are justified in protesting as loudly as we can, with our pens and with our voices....

Were the customers of these little men to be told, “You must go down the the road and give your custom to this man’s competitor, who has 27 customers”? That would be laughable, cruel, ironic. The vast majority of his customers would have been driven to this steadily expanding octopus of the chain stores. It would be foolish to deliberately to undermine too strongly against the chain stores. They are run efficiently, and there are enough of them to make them competitive, so that their prices are not too high. But the tendency of this Government in this war, on the domestic front, has been to strengthen more and more the great combines at the expense of the individual. .... Perhaps the bureaucracy of Whitehall finds it easier to deal with big units than to bother about small units. I give this warning to the House, that, while, at present, these great chain stores are competitive, it is a habit of great and powerful competitors sometimes to get together, to combine eventually; in fact if not in name. I saw with my own eyes the rise of the chain store in Germany after the last war, until all over Germany the individual trader was disappearing, and these chain stores, by their very character, their very omnipotence, were paving the way for the greatest octopus of all—State control, State ownership, State direction, to which, I pray to Heaven, we shall not have to come, even in this most terrible of wars.

I do not think we want to see the little man put out of business. I do not think that my right hon. and gallant Friend or Lord Woolton wants to see it. The small trader is not very important politically. He is a “lone wolf,” operating in his small neighbourhood. He cannot affect either national or local elections. Surely, this is the place where we should protect the man who cannot speak loudly for himself. It is
only fair to say that out of the vast correspondence I have received from shopkeepers on this question, there are some who say that the Ministry of Food are looking after them better than they have ever been looked after before. That is worth saying. I have a feeling that those who say it are shopkeepers with just over 25 customers; nevertheless they do write that way. 

Mr. Doland (Balham and Tooting): 

It should be remembered that it is not only the commodities which come within the purview of coupon trading that are affected, but other commodities which are not yet rationed. People will go for those commodities to the shops where they are sent for the coupon commodities. This is a very insidious method, which I fear is spreading, not only in the Ministry of Food but in other Departments of State, of crushing out the small trader. The incidence of war has, undoubtedly, done a great deal in this direction, and has closed many places of business for the small shopkeeper.

I take a prominent part in the affairs of the borough in which I live—I have been mayor twice, and am now an alderman—and in that borough I have ascertained that no fewer than 941 shops have closed owing, primarily, to the incidence of war. That borough is, I admit, the largest in London. But, that is in one borough alone, and there are 28 such boroughs, even though all are not of that size. When we come to the provinces and the country generally, surely we must realise that it is time we called a halt to these restrictions, the latest of which have been made by the Ministry of Food. I represent many organisations—the National Chamber of Trade and the Federation of London Traders—and they have all received lately a document known as a questionnaire. This contains 20 or 30 questions for the traders to answer and send back to the Board of Trade Committee, which was set up by the Minister to consider these questions not only during, but after the war. There is no doubt that, in regard to two or three of these questions the assumption is that, ultimately, and sooner perhaps than we know, many more shops will have to close. 

Captain Cunningham-Reid, Wing-Commander James and Mr. Granville also supported Mr. Baxter's views.

Major Lloyd George: 

I want to give the House the reasons why we did in fact have to suggest this arrangement at the beginning. There is a very serious shortage of labour available for transport purposes and, despite what has been said, in shops; and when you have a large number of small packages which have to be delivered to many people it does enormously increase the transport and labour involved in making up the packages and in clerical work. It may be interesting to the House if I give one example. Take the case of the man with 24 registrations—although, as I have said, that does not arise now. The largest parcel that could possibly be issued per week to one of these traders would be a 12 lb. parcel and the smallest parcel would be 3 lb. 

Instructions were issued at the beginning of this week that cases in which there was hardship either to the consumers or the shopkeepers should be very seriously considered. What we are really anxious to do is to discourage those who are not in business for business purposes.

FIRE-WATCHERS ACT, 1941

Equipment to be carried by all fire-watchers:

1. Respirator.
2. Axe, stuck in belt.
3. One stirrup-pump carried over left shoulder.
4. One long-handled shovel to be carried over left shoulder.
5. One extending ladder to be carried over right shoulder.
6. One belt to go round the waist, with hooks (10) to carry six full sandbags and four buckets (two gallons) of clean water.
7. Two wet blankets to be slung around the neck.
8. One tin hat, with upturned brim, to carry spare clean water.
9. Spare sand to be carried in all pockets.
10. One full box of matches, to light all incendiary bombs which have failed to ignite.

Fire-watchers should be on duty all night and all day, and should be able to deal with all types of bombs (incendiaries, fire-bombs, gas, casualties, D.A.s, H.E.s, B.F.s and others), and should be able to smell out fires by their sense of smell. All olfactory organs to be examined by the M.O.H. every six months. In their spare time they should be able to assist the Wardens and the officers of the Casualty Bureau.

This Act is not to be confused with the Acrobats Act of 1756.

This scheme applies to all unfit persons for H.M. Forces and ladies unfit for service with the W.A.A.C.'s.

Red Tape Office, S.W. 

1941.

AMERICAN VIEWS ON FEDERAL UNION (continued from page 4)

In their spare time they should be able to assist the Wardens and the officers of the Casualty Bureau.

This Act is not to be confused with the Acrobats Act of 1756.

Both are mistaken. Its object is to begin a world state that will end all narrow nationalisms and imperialisms." [Our italics.]

The second of the three great advantages he quotes is:

"Even were the British Isles taken, the struggle could continue effectively from Canada. The British Fleet could not be surrendered by England. It would be controlled by the union."

Finally Rabbi Reichert looks forward to an international "arrangement" in which "economic, political, social and cultural values would be humanely fostered for the good of all and the hurt of none." How tepid!

Mr. Crum, a San Francisco lawyer, in saying that the United States was already committed to policies that led inevitably to Federal Union, concludes by letting the cat out of the bag:

"In the coming struggle, a federal union of the democracies would unify our efforts, would tend to insure against the reckless and stupid peace of 1919. It would begin to make positive our position (which we have certainly assumed) as the moral leader of the world. It would be the instrument to make effective our policies and our aims." [Our italics.]
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