Archivo Histórico · Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto · Argentina

pag. 185

Volume 368
No. 15



Wednesday
22nd Jan., 1941

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

N° IV

Contents

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS:

Tangier [Col. 151].
British Subjects, Paris (Arrest) [Col. 153].
"Daily Worker" and "The Week" (Suppression) [Col. 185].
Conduct of a Member [Col. 190].

ADJOURNMENT:

Production, Supply and Man-Power.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased in the manner indicated on the back of this wrapper

Price Sixpence net

TWO AND A HALF PER CENT

NATIONAL WAR BONDS

1946 - 1948

UNLIMITED ISSUE OF SHORT TERM BONDS

A full Trustee Security.

Price of Issue, £100 per cent.

Subscriptions of £100 or multiples of £50 will be received until further notice.

Payment in full at time of application.

No limit to holdings.

Repayable at par on 15th August 1948, the Government reserving the right to redeem at par on or at any time after the 15th August 1946, on giving three months' notice.

Interest 2½% per annum, paid half yearly—15th February and 15th August.

Interest accrues from date of purchase.

Income Tax deducted at source from interest payments of more than £5 per annum.

Bonds are transferable free of stamp duty.

Application forms and prospectus obtainable from all Banks and Stockbrokers.

There is also a Post Office and Trustee Savings Bank issue. Subscriptions of £25 or any higher multiple of £5 may be made. Maximum subscription £1,000. Income Tax is not deducted at the Source.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 22nd January, 1941.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

[Mr. SPEAKER *in the Chair.*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

TANGIER.

1 and 4. **Mr. Mander** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) the position at present existing at Tangier; and whether any Italian submarines are in the port;

(2) whether British rights in the International Zone have been restored; and what action has been taken?

7 and 8. **Mr. Cocks** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) what reply has been received from the Spanish Government to the protest of His Majesty's Government against the violation of the international Convention governing the neutrality and international character of Tangier;

(2) what is the present position regarding Tangier; and whether he can give an assurance that on agreement short of the full re-establishment of the international status of Tangier will be concluded with the Spanish Government before the House has had an opportunity of discussing its terms?

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Eden): His Majesty's Government have already placed on record a protest at the action of the Spanish Government in seeking independently to modify and to suspend without notice the institutions of the International régime in Tangier. They have reserved all their rights under the relevant instruments. His Majesty's Government have also made it clear to the Spanish Government that they are prepared to consider any proposals for regularising the situation which the Spanish Government may desire to put forward to them and to other parties interested Discussions have been proceeding at Madrid between the British and Spanish representatives with a view to concluding a provisional arrangement concerning British rights and interests in the Zone pending a final settlement. Such an arrangement will be without prejudice to the rights of His Majesty's Government and to those of third parties under the relevant international instruments. The discussions are proceeding satisfactorily. Though consideration of all the questions involved has not yet been fully completed, sufficient progress has been made to justify the view that pending a final settlement the existing rights of British subjects in the Tangier Zone will be safeguarded. I hope to be able to make a full statement shortly. There are no Italian submarines at present in Tangier.

Mr. Mander: Are the British subjects who were dismissed from the international staff now being reinstated, and, pending a settlement of all these questions, have the Government given consent to the import of large quantities of wheat to Spain, which was under consideration?

Mr. Eden: I should be grateful if the hon. Member will put those Questions down. We have definitely made certain progress, but I would rather not answer supplementaries until I am in possession of the full facts.

Mr. Cocks: Will the "Tangier Gazette" and British correspondence at the Post Office now be subject to Spanish or German censorship?

Mr. Eden: That is another of the matters which are under consideration.

Mr. Cocks: Why are we not insisting on the full rights of the International Zone? Why should we not instruct our Ambassador to take a firm attitude and say that the policy of appeasement is entirely discredited?

Mr. Eden: The attitude of the Government has been made perfectly clear. So far the negotiations have gone on as well as could be anticipated. I do not wish to go beyond that at present.

Mr. Gallacher: Does the right hon. Gentleman not agree that it would have been much better if there had been a democratic Republican Government in Spain instead of the Franco Government?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA.

2. **Mr. Mander** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the present position with regard to the negotiations for a settlement of outstanding Anglo-Soviet questions and for a trading agreement?

Mr. Eden: I have nothing to add to the answer given yesterday to the hon. Member for Consett (Mr. David Adams).

BRITISH SUBJECTS, PARIS (ARREST).

3. **Sir William Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now give the House any information with regard to the recent arrest of some 4,000 British subjects in Paris, and their despatch for internment to unknown destinations?

Mr. Eden: As the reply is inevitably long, I will, with permission, circulate it in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Following is the reply:

On 5th December, 1940, and the following five days a large number of British women of all ages and of men of over 65 were arrested by the German authorities in Paris and were sent to the Caserne Vauban at Besançon (Doubs), France, for internment. In the course of the operation some of them were detained for a few days at other places, but all had reached their final place of internment at Besançon by the middle of December. During the process of arrest and internment the United States Embassy at Paris kept in touch with the German authorities by personal visits and by telephone, and did everything possible to relieve the hardships involved in this sudden and widespread measure of internment. Doctors, German Red Cross nurses and special food for mothers and children were despatched to Besançon by the German authorities, and though sleeping facilities for the first few days were not sufficient satisfactorily to accommodate the large number of new arrivals, by 15th December everything had been organised and each internee had a bed. Arrangements to receive the sick and feeble have been made in the hospital at Besançon, where 300 beds are available for the internees, and there is a small infirmary in the Caserne Vauban. In addition to the German Red Cross nurses, there is a large number of English nurses and nursing nuns amongst the internees. The caserne is heated, and health conditions are good. The internees receive the regular ration allowed to the French population, in addition to which they are able to purchase food at the canteen.

Mothers with children under 16 years of age, and women over 60 years of age are to be released, unless there are special reasons for their detention. Released internees will not be allowed to return to their homes but will be required to select new residences in the Eastern part of France. There are approximately 3,000 men, women and children at Caserne Vauban. 685 men under 65 years of age, who had hitherto not been interned at St. Denis, have now been interned at Drancy near Le Bourget, on the outskirts of Paris. The United States Embassy at Paris are now engaged on the work of compiling lists of the names of all those who have recently been interned and of those who are being released on various grounds, and have undertaken to forward them to London as soon as possible. When these lists are received, all relatives in this country or elsewhere in His Majesty's Dominions, whose whereabouts are known, will be informed.

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

TRAINING CORPS.

13. **Sir Irving Albery** asked the Secretary of State for Air what progress is being made as regards the new Air Training Corps; whether any expression of appreciation has been conveyed to those public-spirited persons who have been assisting, financially and in the organisation of the Air Defence Cadet Corps, during the last two years; and, in numbering the squadrons of the new Training Corps, will he arrange that the existing squadrons of the Air Defence Corps may retain their old numbers?

The Secretary of State for Air (Sir Archibald Sinclair): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me an opportunity of supplementing in this House the expression of appreciation which has already been conveyed by the Air Council to the council and local committees of the Air Defence Cadet Corps who have given such devoted service to the organisation of the Air Defence Cadet Corps. I hope that all

those, including many hon. Members, who have been associated with the Air Cadet movement will continue to show the same lively interest in the Air Training Corps. The Air Training Corps will be formed as from 1st February next. Meanwhile good progress has been made in organising local committees for the formation of new units. Arrangements have been made to ensure that units of the Air Defence Cadet Corps when approved as A.T.C. units will receive the same number as they hold at present.

USE OF PARACHUTES (ENEMY ATTACKS).

14. **Mr. Simmonds** asked the Secretary of State for Air the total number of airmen of all British Air Forces who are known to have been shot at by enemy aircraft after they had taken to their parachutes and the number of British airmen so killed; whether such attacks are contrary to international convention; and whether His Majesty's Government have requested that any communication be made to any enemy Government on this matter?

Sir A. Sinclair: My hon. Friend will appreciate that it is not always possible to establish with certainty that such attacks have occurred. There is, however, firm evidence to show that at least 12 of these contemptible attacks have taken place, in four of which the airmen may have been killed. The answer to the second and third parts of the Question is in the negative.

Mr. Simmonds: Would the right hon. Gentleman review the matter and see whether, in view of the fact that this practice is highly repugnant to all airmen, of whatever nationality, some representation through a neutral Government might be made to the German or Italian Government?

Sir A. Sinclair: I am not hopeful of any such representations.

DOCUMENTS LEFT IN VEHICLES.

11. **Mr. Ammon** asked the Secretary of State for Air the number of occasions that papers and documents concerned with his Department have been lost by being left in motor-vehicles and public-service conveyances during the past 12 months?

Sir A. Sinclair: The number is 26. In all the cases, the documents, most of which were unimportant, were recovered.

AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION.

15. **Miss Ward** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aircraft Production, whether the aeroplane requirements of his Department for 1941 have been communicated to the Government Departments interested.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aircraft Production (Colonel Llewellin): Yes, Sir.

TRANSPORT.

BOMBED ROADS (REPAIR).

17. **Sir Adam Maitland** asked the Minister of Transport, whether the national or local authority bears the cost of repairing roads damaged by enemy action; whether it is the policy of the Government to maintain the responsibility of highway authorities for the repair of all roads vested in them regardless of whether the roads were classified or of strategic importance; and whether, in the circumstances prevailing, the cost of repair will be a national charge.

The Minister of Transport (Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon): It is the policy of His Majesty's Government to maintain the responsibility of highway authorities for all roads vested in them. The incidence of cost of repair or damage due to enemy action has been considered in connection with the War Damage Bill now before the House. The Government's proposals will be indicated in an Amendment to stand in the name of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Sir A. Maitland: Does that Amendment by the Chancellor meet the objections of the local authorities in regard to the matter?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: I am not familiar with what the objections are.

Sir A. Maitland: They are on the question of their being called upon to bear the cost.

PUBLIC VEHICLES, LONDON (LONG-DISTANCE PASSENGERS).

20. **Mr. Brooke** asked the Minister of Transport whether, in addition to the express omnibus system, he will arrange for conductors of omnibuses or tramway cars on infrequent services out to London suburbs to be instructed, when crowds

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Brooke.]
are at stopping places, to give preference to long-distance passengers, by requiring short-distance passengers to travel on other more frequent and less crowded services covering the same early portion of the route?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: To attempt to give preference to long-distance passengers on bus and tram services in London would involve inconvenience to the majority who travel relatively short distances, and serious delay at stopping places. It would also complicate unduly the operation of the queue system and place a difficult and invidious task upon the conductors.

ROAD ACCIDENTS.

21. **Sir A. Maitland** asked the Minister of Transport how many members of His Majesty's Forces were involved in road accidents for the month of October, 1940, or for a similar period later for which information may be available?

22. **Mr. Brooke** asked the Minister of Transport whether any large proportion of the 1,313 road fatalities in December was due to accidents in which military vehicles were implicated?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: Such information as is available on the points raised by my hon. Friends relates only to the Metropolitan Police District and to the month of December. Any general deductions from such figures as I have would be likely to mislead and their publication would not therefore be premature.

Mr. Leach: Do not those figures favour the idea that pedestrians are habitually committing suicide?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: It is a matter of opinion whether it is manslaughter or suicide, but figures and curves are very dangerous things.

Sir A. Maitland: Does the right hon. and gallant Gentleman remember promising to obtain figures for me with regard to October some seven or eight weeks ago?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: I was more anxious to get the figures than anyone, but it is not wholly within my province.

Sir A. Maitland: If I put down a Question in a few weeks' time, will my right hon. and gallant Friend be able to give me further information?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: I should like to be pressed as much as possible.

RAILWAY CLOAKROOM CHARGES.

23. **Mr. Butcher** asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware that the railway companies have increased their charges for deposit in their cloakrooms from 3d. to 4d. per article; what justification there is for this increase of 33⅓ per cent.; and whether he will arrange for a reduction?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: The increase from 3d. to 4d. is in accordance with my recent Order, under which the charges were increased on 1st December, 1940, by 16⅔ per cent., subject to the rule that in determining the amount of the additional charge fractions of 1d. if less than one-half are to be dropped and if one-half or more are to be charged as 1d.

Mr. Butcher: Is the right hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that the increase is levied on each article and that if three articles are deposited the charge is raised from 9d. to 1s.? Will he stop that practice at least?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: You must relate it to the individual pieces. You cannot relate it to the whole thing.

Mr. George Griffiths: Is the suggestion that 25 per cent. should be put on the original cost for tips?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: It does not come within my province.

RAILWAY MONTHLY RETURN TICKETS.

18. **Mr. Parker** asked the Minister of Transport whether arrangements can be made to extend the period during which monthly return tickets are available to three months for the duration of the war?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr. Montague): No, Sir. The monthly return ticket rate represents a substantial reduction, granted originally to attract traffic. In present conditions, I see no justification for encouraging travel of the type which would be assisted by return tickets at reduced rates available for a period in excess of a month.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

PRINTED MATTER (TRANSMISSION TO SWEDEN).

24. **Mr. Watkins** asked the Minister of Information whether he is aware of the difficulties being experienced in sending books and other printed matter to Sweden; and whether, in view of the importance of transmitting news about the Allied effort to the few remaining free European countries, he will take every possible step to secure an easier and quicker method of transmission?

The Minister of Information (Mr. Duff Cooper): The answer to both parts of the Question is in the affirmative. I can assure the hon. Member that every effort is being made to improve communications with Sweden.

LATE LORD LOTHIAN'S SPEECH.

26. **Mr. Tinker** asked the Minister of Information what steps have been taken to make known in other countries the speech made, on 11th December, 1940, at Baltimore, now printed in a White Paper [Cmd. 6229], by the late Marquess of Lothian, His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington?

Mr. Cooper: This speech was given world-wide publicity by the B.B.C., by the various news agencies and by the British Official Wireless Service. Guidance telegrams on the subject were sent to all posts in foreign countries. Arrangements are in hand for the despatch of copies of the White Paper to these posts, to information officers throughout the Colonial Empire and to various other British officials overseas.

Mr. Tinker: I am glad to hear what the right hon. Gentleman has done; the speech was a splendid contribution and should be known all over the world.

WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

REGIONAL POLICY.

29. **Mr. Ellis Smith** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Buildings whether he can make a statement on the regional policy of the Ministry; will he set up a committee of geographers, and other interested people, to advise on the regions to be adopted, having regard to a regional system of government, economic needs, planning, regional system of co-ordinated services and administration on a sound geographical basis, and ask them to report as soon as possible?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Buildings (Mr. Hicks): Representatives of the Ministry of Works and Buildings are stationed at the headquarters of all the Regional Commissioners and in co-operation with their colleagues from other Departments and with the local authorities concerned, are actively engaged in the current work of the Ministry. As my hon. Friend is no doubt aware, the wider issues involved in his Question are being referred to a Committee of Ministers presided over by my right hon. Friend the Minister without Portfolio.

Mr. Smith: Would it be advisable, before the Committee of Ministers considers this matter, for representatives of the various interests in the building industry and in general administrative questions to have an opportunity of discussing it, so that they could advise the Committee?

Mr. Hicks: I presume my right hon Friend will be inviting discussions in order to assist him.

MATERIALS (CONTROL).

30. **Mr. Bossom** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Buildings which building materials he has taken under control; who are the controllers in each case; is this control instituted exclusively to provide materials for the use of the services and to enable emergency repairs to be readily undertaken or, if needed by the public, what procedure should be followed to obtain any such materials?

Mr. Hicks: The industries in which control has so far been established are cement, bricks, asbestos cement goods and roofing felt. The Controller of Building Materials is Mr. Hugh Beaver. Under him have been appointed a Director of Cement, Lord Wolmer; and a Director of Bricks, Mr. T. P. Bennett. The appointment of a Director of Roofing Materials is under consideration. The object of the control in each case is to secure the maximum output with the greatest economy of raw materials and labour; and the most efficient distribution in accordance with

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Hicks.]
the demands of vital national works, provision of air raid shelters, air-raid damage repair and other essential work. Where the public require material for emergency repairs and are unable to obtain them through the ordinary channels, they should apply to their local authority, who can issue a certificate that carries special priority. It will be understood, however, that some materials are in short supply and the utmost economy is essential.

Mr. Bossom: Are any other materials which are important in the construction of buildings controlled by other Departments?

Mr. Hicks: Among the duties laid upon the Minister of Works and Buildings at the creation of the new Ministry in October was the control of any building materials not already controlled. Timber and steel have already been controlled by the Ministry of Supply. There were some other commodities in regard to which the raw material was already controlled, such as paper, which enters a good deal into the manufacture of roofing felt, beaver boards and things of that character, and that matter is being adjusted.

Mr. Ammon: How many of these people are directly interested in the trade?

Mr. Hicks: I do not quite follow the question. If my hon. Friend asks how many people are interested in the question of bricks and cement, I would answer that the Director of Cement is working under the Controller of Cement, who is Mr. Hugh Beaver, who has no financial interest in any shape or form in the cement industry. Lord Wolmer is the Director working under him on the question of cement, and Mr. T. P. Bennett is working under him as Director of Bricks.

Mr. Ammon: Is not Lord Wolmer directly associated, or was until recently, with the cement industry?

Mr. Hicks: I think that that is true.

ROYAL NAVY.

EX-NAVAL RATINGS (SHORE DUTIES).

31. **Mr. Robert Gibson** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that there is dissatisfaction among men of the Navy of 50 years and upward, who offered their services at the outbreak of the war, in that they are being sent on foreign service while younger men are on shore and port duties; and whether he will take steps to transfer such older men who desire shore jobs to work ashore, or, alternatively, in home waters?

The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. A. V. Alexander): I would refer my hon. and learned Friend to the reply given to his question of 20th November. I am not aware of any complaint that unfair demands are made upon the older men in the Navy as compared with the younger. It is, however, only natural that some men over 50 would prefer to serve on shore, and it is fully understood in the Navy that every endeavour is made to relieve men over 48 from sea appointments as and when trained younger men become available.

Mr. Gibson: Has that regulation been brought to the attention of men over 40?

Mr. Alexander: The publicity given both to-day and on 20th November by my hon. and learned Friend's questions will assist in that direction.

ADMIRALTY CODE (GERMAN RAIDERS, PACIFIC).

34. **Mr. Ammon** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Australian Naval Board are in communication with the Admiralty concerning their investigation into the possession of an Admiralty naval code by German raiders in the Pacific?

Mr. Alexander: Yes, Sir. Whenever a ship falls into enemy hands the possibility of any codes having been compromised is fully examined, and appropriate action is taken.

SHIP REQUIREMENTS.

35. **Miss Ward** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the naval and shipping requirements of his Department for 1941 have been communicated to the Government Departments interested?

Mr. Alexander: Yes, Sir.

S.S. "MENDOZA."

36. **Mr. Wedgwood** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the supervision of the "Mendoza" by the "Asturias" is to continue; what such supervision is costing this country apart from the loss of the services of the "Asturias"; and will he consider sinking the "Mendoza," in spite of international laws?

Mr. Alexander: As my right hon. Friend is doubtless aware, the "Mendoza" has now been intercepted.

Mr. Wedgwood: Is this business of hedge-hopping all along the coast of South America going on indefinitely with all French ships?

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend will no doubt remember that questions of international law do not affect only the nations whose ships are intercepted, but also all other nations, some of them friendly to us.

Mr. Wedgwood: If the Germans break all international law at sea, why cannot we do it?

Mr. Alexander: Any request for further explanation had better be put to the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Leach: Can the right. hon. Gentleman give the name of the captain responsible for this clever little piece of work?

Mr. Alexander: Perhaps my hon. Friend will put that Question down.

SEYCHELLES ISLANDS.

37. **Mr. David Adams** asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has considered urgent representations from the Taxpayers' Association of the Seychelles Islands pressing for publicly elected representation upon the Legislative Council, a free Press, and the right of reasonable public criticism as exercised in this country; and what steps are proposed in the matter?

The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. George Hall): A series of representations about affairs in the Colony of Seychelles has recently been addressed to my Noble Friend by the Seychelles Taxpayers' Association. These representations will be considered as soon as the report, which the Governor is preparing on them, is received.

Mr. Adams: Can the Minister say when the report is likely to be received?

Mr. Hall: I am afraid I cannot.

Dr. Haden Guest: Is it not a fact that a previous report on this precise subject has already been presented to the Colonial Secretary?

Mr. Hall: I cannot say that.

GOLD COAST.

GOLD COMPANIES' WELFARE WORK.

38. **Mr. David Adams** asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will obtain information showing how the figure of £854,880, being the sum expended by gold mining companies on welfare work, less that spent on statutory obligations such as housing, etc., in the return recently furnished by the Governor of the Gold Coast, is made up, in order that expenditure upon voluntary welfare work may be known?

Mr. George Hall: Inquiry is being made of the Governor of the Gold Coast, and I will communicate with my hon. Friend when the Governor's reply is received.

PALESTINIAN FAMILIES, GERMANY (EXCHANGE).

39. **Captain Strickland** asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the privations suffered by women and children, members of Palestinian families detained in Germany, he will expedite as far as possible an interchange of such persons with German women and children at present detained in Palestine?

Mr. George Hall: Yes, Sir. Action is already being taken, as the result of which it is hoped through the good offices of the United States Embassy soon to effect an exchange of such women and children on a reciprocal basis.

Captain Strickland: Could my hon. Friend indicate what length of time he anticipates will pass before these people are released?

Mr. Hall: I am afraid not. Rather long and protracted negotiations have been going on about this matter, and it is impossible to give anything lke a date, but the negotiations are proceeding as speedily as possible.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

LIMITATION OF SUPPLIES.

40. **Lieut.-Colonel Boles** asked the President of the Board of Trade what principle or specific instruction governs the release to retailers demanding stocks of household utensils such as knives, forks, kettles, etc., held by wholesalers?

The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lyttelton): Wholesalers are permitted by the Limitation of Supplies (Miscellaneous) (No. 5) Order, 1940, to supply retailers as a whole with controlled articles to a specified percentage by value of the total supplies made to them in the standard period, 1st December, 1939, to 31st May, 1940. For cutlery and hollow-ware the percentage is 25. There is no restriction placed by the Order on the supplies to individual retailers.

Mr. Charles Williams: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the standard period 1939 does not take into account the enormous increase of population in certain reception areas, and will he endeavour to adjust the figure so that the reception areas are no longer starved for materials?

Mr. Lyttelton: We are in continuous touch with the wholesalers on this point and are supplied with statistics to ensure that the larger supplies are received in the reception areas and that the evacuation areas get smaller supplies.

Mr. Lipson: How is that possible if 1939 is taken as the basis when we have to deal with the increased population of 1941?

Mr. Lyttelton: It is not so much a question of increases in the population in 1941 as the change in the location of the population.

Lieut.-Colonel Boles: Is my right hon. Friend aware that owing to the centralisation of supplies a large number of stocks have been destroyed by enemy action?

41. **Mr. Graham White** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is satisfied that the present administration of the Limitation of Supplies Act is not leading to undue concentration of reserved goods in warehouses in vulnerable areas?

Mr. Lyttelton: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave yesterday to the hon. and gallant Member for Bolton (Sir E. Cadogan).

42. **Mr. Lipson** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Limitation of Supplies Order, as at present administered, is causing very great hardship to manufacturers, retailers and their employés, and the consuming public; and will he arrange discussions with the interests concerned with a view to finding some means of alleviating existing grievances?

Mr. Lyttelton: The application of these Orders is continually under discussion with the trading interests concerned, and I am always ready to consider proposals made by those interests. Limitation of civilian home trade to the extent that is required to secure a full munitions output must mean sacrifices in the national interest.

Mr. Lipson: Will my right hon. Friend also take into account in this connection the increase in population in certain towns?

Mr. Shinwell: Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate that if a trader is bombed out of business he may make a claim for compensation which may be met subsequently, but that if he is thrown out of business as a result of a limitation of supplies, there is no compensation and no redress for him?

Mr. Lyttelton: The policy of paying compensation for loss of opportunity is one which we could not consider.

Mr. Levy: Does my right hon. Friend realise that the limitation of supplies has the effect of putting people out of work before the Ministry of Labour has time to absorb them and does he not think that some relaxation or modification ought to be made so as to allow time for people to get into employment instead of their being put upon the dole?

Mr. Shinwell: If there is a further limitation of supplies, as there is bound to be before the war comes to an end, what is to be done for the traders thrown out of business? Are they to be absorbed immediately into some other occupation? If not, surely some compensation must be made to them.

Mr. Lyttelton: The demand for labour will, in my opinion, be so great that nearly everybody will be absorbed, and the question of compensation will not then arise.

43. **Mr. Lipson** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that sports outfitters whose businesses have already been seriously affected by the Limitation of Supplies Order resent the monopoly for providing the sports requirements of the services given to the Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes; and can he now announce the steps he is taking to ensure that private traders are permitted to compete with the Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes for service business on equal terms.

Mr. Lyttelton: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave yesterday to the hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford (Lieut.-Colonel Macnamara).

GREECE (BRITISH TRIBUTE).

45. **Lieut.-Colonel Sir Thomas Moore** asked the Prime Minister whether he has come to any decision as to the steps His Majesty's Government propose to take to signify to the Greek nation our admiration and respect for the magnificent stand they have taken in the cause of freedom.

The Lord Privy Seal (Mr. Attlee): I do not think that I can add anything to the tributes which have already been paid to the valour of the Greek people in their stand against aggression. The co-operation of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force with the Greek armed forces is concrete evidence of our determination to contribute in the military sphere to final Greek victory. In the economic and financial sphere, too, we are rendering assistance designed to provide the Greek forces with the sinews of war; and military and civil supplies of all kinds are being sent to Greece.

Members will be aware of the fine response to the Lord Mayor's Appeal for the relief of War Distress in Greece, which has now reached the figure of £46,000, and this despite the many other heavy calls at home. Over and above this sum subscribed by the public His Majesty's Government have decided to place £25,000 at the disposal of His Majesty's Minister at Athens for relief purposes. I am confident that the House will agree with me that there could be no more fitting tribute to the valiant Greek nation than a gift for the relief of the sufferings of victims of enemy action behind the lines.

Sir T. Moore: While I agree with my right hon. Friend to some extent, does he not feel that as Greece was the first country to stand up for freedom against tyranny after the might of the Axis Powers had been demonstrated, she should receive some more tangible form of recognition, possibly such as was offered to France, and refused, last June?

Mr. Attlee: I have indicated that what the Government has done is very tangible.

WAR AND PEACE AIMS.

46. **Mr. Wedgwood** asked the Prime Minister whether he will make it clear that no negotiations for an armistice with any Italian Government will take place without considering the claims of Greece, Turkey and the Negus to the Dodecanese, Libya and Abyssinia, as well as the safety of our commerce in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea?

Mr. Attlee: It would be both premature and imprudent to discuss such matters in public at the present time.

MILITIA CAMPS (SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT)

47 and 48. **Sir Waldron Smithers** asked the Prime Minister (1) whether in view of the fact that the powers of the Select Committee on National Expenditure are limited by their terms of reference to recommendations and they have no authority to punish persons who are found guilty of acts of victimisation, waste and dishonesty, he will take immediate steps so that such cases may be heard before a court of law or other tribunal, where evidence can be taken on oath and the parties represented by counsel, and the malefactors punished;

(2) whether in view of the fact that the allegations of waste, dishonesty and victimisation preferred by Major H. H. Evans, late Royal Engineers, Major A. Reid-Kellett, D.S.O., M.C., and Mr. W. H. E. Carr, A.M.I.C.E., have not been dealt with by the Select Committee on National Expenditure, he will, in the national interest, take immediate steps for them to appear before a court of law or other tribunal where their evidence can be heard on oath and appropriate action taken?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Archivo Histórico Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

Mr. Attlee: I understand that the Select Committee will shortly present a report on the militia camps. The points raised in the two Questions must await the receipt and consideration of that report.

Sir W. Smithers: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the very serious nature of the allegations made by these three gentlemen, and in view of the limitations of the Select Committee, will he devise some means by which, in the national interest, those very serious allegations can be dealt with rapidly and effectively?

Mr. Woodburn: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the implication in this question that the Select Committee have found cases of dishonesty and victimisation is not founded on any facts? The Select Committee have found no such cases?

Mr. Attlee: I think it is clear that we had better await the report of the Select Committee before coming to any conclusion one way or the other.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

MEAT (CHANNEL ISLANDS).

57. **Mr. Ammon** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food to what extent supplies of meat are being received from the Channel Islands into this country?

Mr. Harcourt Johnstone (Secretary, Overseas Trade Department): I have been asked to reply. No supplies of meat are at present being received in this country from the Channel Islands.

Mr. Ammon: Can the hon. Gentleman explain why it was that in a broadcast the Ministry of Food announced prices for the Channel Islands?

Mr. Johnstone: I think my hon. Friend's misapprehension arises from the fact that the Channel Islands were mentioned in three new Orders amending meat prices. This was done on the advice of the Law Officers in order to safeguard the position.

ORANGES.

59. **Sir Herbert Williams** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether his attention has been drawn to the acute shortage of oranges at Christmas time; and why, in these circumstances, a ship full of oranges was in British waters for eight days before Christmas and until six days after Christmas before unloading commenced?

Mr. Johnstone: My Noble Friend is aware that oranges were in short supply at Christmas. He is satisfied, however, for reasons which he has already communicated to my hon. Friend in reply to a letter on the same subject, that it would not have been practicable for this cargo to be unloaded in time for the Christmas market.

Sir H. Williams: Can my hon. Friend explain why it was that this ship was in British waters for 13 days without any attempt being made to unload, during which time the whole of the oranges might have been lost?

Mr. Johnstone: My Noble Friend has already explained to my hon. Friend the reason why this ship could not be unloaded. It was not within the power of the Ministry of Food to unload the ship during the time of which my hon. Friend speaks.

Sir H. Williams: In the circumstances will the Minister of Food make representations to the Ministry of Shipping that they should not deprive the people of this country of foodstuffs through the incompetent management of British shipping?

Viscountess Astor: Is there not something more important than oranges?

Captain Strickland: Might not the information on this matter be given to this House? Questions are put down, not with the object that information should be given to individual Members but given to the House, and I should like to know what was in this letter which was sent to my hon. Friend the Member for South Croydon (Sir H. Williams).

Mr. Johnstone: My Noble Friend considered that the information should be given in confidence to my hon. Friend. We are not in Secret Session, and therefore the information cannot be given now.

Mr. Thorne: Does not the hon. Gentleman think it a disgrace that a ship should be standing 13 days doing nothing?

Viscountess Astor: Go to the ports and see.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

RUM.

60. **Sir H. Williams** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food when the rum control was instituted; the name of the rum controller; and what was his previous experience in dealing with this commodity?

Mr. Johnstone: No rum control has been imposed and no rum controller appointed. Imports, however, are now subject to licence. While stocks remain at their present high level licences will not be granted unless proof is forthcoming that the rum is required for essential purposes and not for maturing in bond.

Sir H. Williams: Do I understand that Mr. Keeley, of the Ministry of Food, and working from Colwyn Bay, does not in fact license imports of rum, and therefore that there is no control? Is the hon. Gentleman not aware also that no supplies are available for the civil population?

Viscountess Astor: Hooray!

Mr. Johnstone: I think my hon. Friend is probably aware that the licensing system is not the same as control. Imports of rum are subject to licence, but there are large stocks in this country, very considerable stocks, a third larger than a year ago, and my Noble Friend sees no reason for any change in the system.

Mr. Cocks: Should a rum controller be appointed, will the claims of the Noble Lady be considered?

RABBITS.

61. **Sir John Mellor** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether the Minister of Agriculture was consulted before the price of rabbits was controlled?

Mr. Johnstone: The answer is in the affirmative.

Sir J. Mellor: Would the Minister agree that rabbits are so destructive on the farms that their food value does not justify their existence; and, if that is so, why should there be any restriction on their slaughter through a price control?

Mr. Johnstone: I will draw the attention of my Noble Friend to the argument of my hon. Friend. At the present time, my Noble Friend has thought it best to control the price of rabbits, which are in short supply, as otherwise the price would rise beyond the power of purchase of the poorer people.

Sir William Davison: Would the Minister of Agriculture consider that there are large numbers of rabbits still left in this country and that they are a menace to our food supply and our timber supply? They are a perfect pest, and the Government should take the matter in hand with the least possible delay.

MINISTRY OF FOOD (STAFF).

58. **Sir Herbert Williams** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food the present total staff of the Ministry, and also the total staff employed in the local food offices?

Mr. Johnstone: The total staff employed by the Ministry is approximately 30,200, of whom about 22,000 are employed in the local food offices, and upwards of 4,000 in other provincial offices.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY.

FACTORY PRIORITY RIGHTS.

63. **Mr. Peat** asked the Minister of Supply the position at a factory of which he has been informed; and why the priority groups in the factory have been delayed in getting into production?

The Minister of Supply (Sir Andrew Duncan): Good progress is being made with construction at the factory to which my hon. Friend refers. I hope that the priority groups will all be completed by the end of March, and the remainder of the factory by the end of July.

PAPER.

64. **Mr. R. Gibson** asked the Minister of Supply whether, in view of the considerable quantities of paper and of material for paper-making in the country, and particularly in Scotland, he will vary the restriction order and allow of the 25 per cent. quota being raised to 50 per cent. or more; and what steps he proposes to take to facilitate the supplies of paper, printing plant and personnel in Scotland being brought into productive effort?

Sir A. Duncan: I regret that the shipping position would not justify any increase in the use of imported materials;

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Sir A. Duncan.]
but the production of paper made wholly from home-produced materials is not subject to restriction. The restrictions on the consumption of paper are constantly under review to ensure that proper use is made of all the paper that can be produced from the available materials.

Mr. Gibson: Am I to understand from that answer that there is no restriction at all on the use of such material for making esparto paper in Scotland?

Sir A. Duncan: There is no restriction on the production of paper from home-produced material, but the uses of paper are still constantly under review. As a matter of fact, quite recently the amount allowed for quite a number of categories of use was increased.

Mr. Gibson: In view of the abundant supply of raw materials in Scotland for making the substitute esparto paper, may we take it that there is unlimited use permitted in Scotland of this paper for printing purposes?

Sir A. Duncan: Unlimited production is allowed. I should be very glad indeed to go into the matter in further detail with my hon. and learned Friend.

WAR MATERIALS.

65. **Miss Ward** asked the Minister of Supply whether the demands of his Department for war supplies for 1941 have been communicated to the Government Departments interested?

Sir A. Duncan: Yes, Sir. Estimates of Ministry of Supply requirements for the 1941 production programme were made available in October and November last to the Government Departments interested.

Miss Ward: Am I right in assuming from that answer that the necessary information regarding the labour required is now in the hands of the Ministry of Labour?

Sir A. Duncan: Yes, Sir.

DIPHTHERIA (INOCULATION).

66. **Mr. Brooke** asked the Minister of Health what measure of success has so far attended his appeal to parents to have their children inoculated against diphtheria?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Miss Horsbrugh): It is too early at this stage to attempt to assess the measure of success achieved, but the available information indicates that, at any rate in many areas, the appeal of my right hon. Friend has so far met with a good response from parents and local authorities.

Sir Stanley Reed: Is the hon. Lady aware that the activities of the Ministry in this direction are being subverted by an organisation which is trying to persuade parents not to have their children inoculated?

Miss Horsbrugh: I should be glad if my hon. Friend would send me details. In all probability, if the case were properly put to the parents in this country, they would see that the policy of the Ministry is for the benefit of their children and of all the children of the country.

Sir S. Reed: Has the hon. Lady received the communication I sent her in this respect? If not, will she make inquiries, because it must be on the way?

Miss Horsbrugh: I will certainly make inquiries.

Mr. Leach: Is the hon. Lady aware that I am one of the subverters, and am proud to be one? Shall I ever have the opportunity in this House of presenting the case for the other side?

Miss Horsbrugh: I cannot answer the last part of the hon. Gentleman's Question, but perhaps if he had some conversation with me and our experts, instead of being a subverter he would become converted, and be a real propagandist.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

ANDERSON SHELTERS.

69. **Mr. Tinker** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that a good number of Anderson shelters are unfit for use because of flooding; and can he say what authority is responsible for seeing they are kept dry and serviceable?

The Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security (Miss Wilkinson): Yes, Sir. We are well aware of the problem of the flooded Andersons. Where it is within his power, the owner

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

of an Anderson shelter is expected to keep it in a habitable condition. In areas where there is serious flooding due to the nature of the ground this is clearly beyond the resources of many shelter users. The local authority then has the duty to undertake the work. But there are areas where owing to the magnitude of the problem it is proving beyond the powers of the local authority to cure the trouble. The whole position in such areas is being examined with a view to suggesting remedies wherever possible. It must be remembered, however, that there is an enormous demand for the labour needed for concreting and drainage which has slowed up the work on these shelters quite considerably.

Mr. Tinker: In the event of a local authority not dealing with this matter, is the Home Office the body to whom we must appeal?

Miss Wilkinson: Complaints sent to the Ministry of Home Security are dealt with direct.

Mr. Kenneth Lindsay: On a point of information and accuracy, is it now the local authority, acting under the Ministry of Health, which is responsible for the inside of shelters, or is it the Department of the hon. Lady?

Miss Wilkinson: The whole question of the inside of shelters is with the Ministry of Health. All questions in regard to construction and the plans of buildings are under the Ministry of Home Security.

Mr. Lindsay: Does this come under the morals section or under the other?

DETENTIONS.

70. **Mr. Stokes** asked the Home Secretary how many of the 150 ex-service men detained under Regulation 18B, to whose appeal his attention has been drawn, have since appeared before the advisory committee; and how many of them have now been released?

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peake): I have seen a petition to which presumably my hon. Friend refers, purporting to be sent on behalf of 150 ex-service men, but it contained no list of names, and I am therefore unable to identify the individuals. All applications, however, whether from ex-service men or others are being rapidly dealt with by the advisory committees.

Mr. Stokes: Will my right hon. Friend examine the names with which I supplied him?

Mr. Peake: Certainly. Of course, services rendered by a man in the last war are one of the factors taken into consideration, but I would remind my hon. Friend that some of the more prominent persons detained under Defence Regulation 18B are in fact ex-service men.

71. **Mr. Stokes** asked the Home Secretary in how many cases investigation by the Advisory Committee of British-born citizens detained under Regulation 18B, treasonable or other indictable charges, have been or can be preferred?

Mr. Peake: Whenever there is evidence to support a criminal charge, proceedings are taken in the courts. As a general rule, therefore, no occasion arises for making an order under Regulation 18B in respect of persons against whom criminal charges can be preferred, but there have been two cases in which after a person has been detained under this Regulation further information has resulted in the institution of criminal proceedings.

Sir W. Davison: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is still considerable delay in bringing cases of appeal before the Advisory Committee? Can he tell the House the normal period now that it takes for an appeal from one of these people under Regulation 18B to reach the Advisory Committee?

Mr. Peake: Perhaps my hon. Friend will await the statement which I am going to make in answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton), on Question 74.

73. **Mr. Stokes** asked the Home Secretary what decision he has come to with regard to Mr. Reginald Pobjoy who was detained under Regulation 18B on 20th July, appealed on 23rd July, petitioned the Home Secretary on 4th September, which was acknowledged on or about 25th September, and finally appeared before the advisory committee on 4th December, since when he has received no communication as to the recommendation of the committee; and whether he will give reasons for the 19 weeks' delay in hearing this appeal?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Mr. Peake: My right hon. Friend has recently received from the Advisory Committee a report, which is at present under consideration, and I will inform my hon. Friend as soon as a decision has been reached. My right hon. Friend has explained on several occasions the difficulties experienced in arranging for the review of the large number of cases of persons whose detention was ordered in June and July and the steps which have been taken to expedite the procedure.

Mr. Stokes: Can the hon. Gentleman tell me the date on which the Home Office received the report of the Advisory Committee?

Mr. Peake: It was 9th January.

Mr. Levy: Is my hon. Friend aware of the great delay which occurs in his Department in answering any sort of questions at all, and is he also aware that I received yesterday morning a reply to a letter which I addressed on 10th October last?

74. **Earl Winterton** asked the Home Secretary whether he can make a statement on the progress of the review of cases of persons detained under Regulation 18B of the Defence Regulations; and the total number of persons who have been released from detention up to the last convenient date?

Mr. Peake: I am informed that the number of cases heard by the several Advisory Committees is 1,368, and the number of cases outstanding is about 150. Up to 31st December, about 600 persons had been released from detention.

Earl Winterton: Can the hon. Gentleman say whether the average time taken between the arrest of an individual and the hearing of his case by the tribunal has now been reduced, and what that average time would now be?

Mr. Peake: I am afraid I cannot say what the average time would now be, but it is perfectly clear that in the course of three weeks all the cases will have been before the Advisory Committees, and therefore the cases of any persons newly detained under the Regulation will go before the committees very quickly.

Mr. Stokes: Will the hon. Gentleman say whether there have been many cases in which an Advisory Committee has made no recommendation?

Mr. Peake: No, Sir. The Advisory Committees always make a recommendation either in favour of release or in favour of detention.

Sir W. Davison: Is the House to understand that all of these cases will be disposed of in the next three weeks?

Mr. Peake: Yes, Sir, I think we can say that.

Captain Strickland: Will my hon. Friend explain why it takes such a long time for an Advisory Committee to come to a decision after they have heard the evidence—for example, from December to January?

Mr. Peake: I am afraid I cannot.

INTERNEES.

72. **Mr. Edmund Harvey** asked the Home Secretary the numbers of interned aliens released from internment under the different categories provided in the White Paper up to the latest convenient date; and the number of men and women still interned?

Mr. Peake: The number of releases authorised under the White Paper procedure up to the end of last week was 9,816. I will circulate the figures for each category in the OFFICIAL REPORT. Approximately 7,000 men and 3,000 women are still interned in this country.

Mr. Harvey: Will the figures include the internees in the Dominions?

Mr. Peake: No, Sir. The figures I have given are of people interned in this country. Approximately 6,000 internees have been sent overseas.

Mr. Harvey: How many of the internees sent overseas have been released?

Mr. Peake: I am afraid I could not say at the moment.

Miss Rathbone: May we have, in the course of the proceedings, particulars of the internees released?

Mr. Peake: I will make some inquiries and see whether that can be done.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Following are the figures:

Category	Germans and Austrians		Italians	Total
	Male	Female	Male	
1	225	8	13	246
2	317	18	26	361
3	3,846	186	441	4,473
4	39	—	3	42
5	19	7	1	27
6	360	3	10	373
7	301	—	—	301
8	227	2	12	241
9	75	—	1	76
10	37	—	—	37
11	12	—	20	32
12	1,568	—	156	1,724
13	69	2	—	71
14	28	—	3	31
15	49	—	26	75
16	33	8	4	45
17	473	82	6	561
18	342	349	35	726
*19	103	6	3	112
*20	36	—	1	37
*21	75	—	3	78
*22	29	—	117	146
*23	—	—	1	1
†Total	8,263	671	882	9,816

* These categories were added after the original issue of the White Paper and many internees who would have been eligible under one of them had already been released under one of the earlier categories.

† In addition, during the same period, 54 male and 226 female Germans and Austrians and 34 Italians have been released as special cases outside the White Paper procedure.

78. **Sir I. Albery** asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that there is much anxiety among friendly aliens who are still in internment lest their continued internment should prejudice their reputation and future in the eyes of the authorities, the public and prospective employers; and whether His Majesty's Government can give any assurance which would allay this anxiety?

Mr. Peake: It has been stated on several occasions that the general measures of internment which it has been necessary to take in the interests of national security were of a precautionary character and that they were not intended to make, and did not in fact make, any reflection on any loyal and friendly alien who was interned in pursuance of general directions. I gladly reaffirm that this is still the attitude and the considered view of His Majesty's Government. Under a scheme which involves scrutiny of each case individually some persons necessarily obtain their release earlier than others, and the fact that one internee is released before another does not imply that he is more loyal or reliable than the man whose release is deferred. Except in the case of persons detained on security grounds personal to themselves, internees not yet released have no reason to fear that their reputation or future will be prejudiced by their continued internment.

Mr. Lipson: Can my hon. Friend say by what date he hopes to be able to say that no friendly and loyal alien is still detained?

Mr. Peake: We are making very rapid progress, and as I informed the hon. Member for the Combined English Universities (Mr. Harvey), over 10,000 aliens have already been released.

Miss Rathbone: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that there are many aliens who were interned on public security grounds and whose cases also require consideration?

Mr. Peake: I am sure that the hon Lady does not expect me to answer, in reply to a supplementary to-day, a question which she has on the Order Paper for the next Sitting Day.

FIRE SPOTTERS.

77. **Sir T. Moore** asked the Home Secretary when he proposes to make the establishment of fire spotters compulsory, both for business premises and private dwellings?

The Joint-Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security (Mr. Mabane): I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the Fire Prevention (Business Premises) Order and the Civil Defence Duties (Compulsory Enrolment) Order made on 18th January, which fulfil the purpose he has in mind.

Sir T. Moore: In view of the doubt in the public mind as to when, where and under what circumstances these Orders will be applied, and also in view of the large number of empty houses to which they apparently cannot be applied, will the hon. Gentleman or the Government not consider taking over the whole administration of the Orders instead of leaving the matter in the present position?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Mr. Mabane: The Orders will remove all doubt from the hon. and gallant Gentleman's mind.

Dr. Haden Guest: Does the Order place any duty on landlords, especially the large ground landlords in London, who may have a great deal of empty property on their hands?

Mr. Mabane: The duty is on the occupiers.

Mr. Simmonds: Will the hon. Gentleman publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT the areas to which the Orders refer?

Mr. Mabane: I will consider that suggestion.

VEHICLES (THEFTS).

75. **Mr. Thorne** asked the Home Secretary whether he can give any information in connection with a grocer's van that was stolen on Tuesday, 7th January, at Kentish Town, in which was £400 worth of food; and whether the car was immobilised?

Mr. Peake: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the theft of the van in question occurred at Clapton. The value of the groceries was stated to be £180. According to the statement made by the owner of the car, the doors had been locked and the ignition key removed, but the further steps required by the Order in the case of vehicles left unattended during the hours of darkness had not been taken.

76. **Mr. Thorne** asked the Home Secretary whether he can give any information about a black leather brief case containing Government documents which was stolen from a car in Conduit Street on Wednesday, 8th January; and whether the car was immobilised?

Mr. Peake: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the car in question belonged to an employé of a private firm and contained certain confidential documents relating to transactions with a Government Department. According to the man's own statement, the car was locked at the time of the theft. The car was not removed, and it would appear that the door was forced open.

INCOME TAX (COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' MOTOR CARS).

79. **Mr. R. Gibson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the average amount of the deduction for Income Tax purposes allowed to commercial travellers and others for a motor car used for business purposes; what, roughly, are the upper and lower values of such a deduction; and on what principle such a deduction is allowed?

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Captain Crookshank): Under the Income Tax law a commercial traveller or other employé is entitled to deductions for Income Tax purposes in respect of amounts which he is necessarily obliged to expend out of his emoluments in travelling in the performance of his duties and in respect of the wear and tear of a motor car belonging to him which is used for the purpose of his employment. General statistics of claims under these provisions are not available, but the amount to be allowed in any case depends upon the particular facts. An employé is not entitled to an allowance in respect of travelling expenses which are not necessarily incurred in the performance of his duties.

Mr. Gibson: In view of the fact that Income Tax is now paid by a large number of workmen, and as they spend money in travelling to their work, will they receive an allowance for bus fares incurred in travelling to their work?

Captain Crookshank: That is another question. What I dealt with was the allowance granted to travellers and others whose expenses arise in the performance of their duties and not in getting to their work.

Mr. Gibson: If, in order to carry out his work, a workman has to travel, are such expenses deductible?

Captain Crookshank: I have said that that is another question. I am talking about the class of person who has to spend money in performing his work, not in getting to it.

OLD AGE PENSIONER WORKERS (WAGES).

80. **Mr. Woodburn** asked the Minister of Labour whether in any cases he takes action to prevent firms employing workers over 65 years of age from paying standard

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

wages less the amount of such workers' old age pensions; and whether, in the case of firms working directly or indirectly for the Government, it can be made clear that such pensions are payments for the pensioners and not subsidies to the firms?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour (Mr. Assheton): My right hon. Friend has no reason to suppose that a practice of the kind to which my hon. Friend refers is at all general, but he will be glad to inquire into any specific cases brought to his notice. It would be contrary to the Fair Wages Clause to pay less than the appropriate rate of wages simply because a man is drawing an old-age pension.

Mr. Woodburn: I take it then that the Minister disapproves of certain events which have occurred where an employer refuses to employ a man over 65 unless he sacrifices his 10s. pension?

Mr. Assheton: I should like to look into the case before I give an answer.

Mr. G. Griffiths: Is not the Minister aware of many employers who, knowing that a man is 65 years of age and about to draw the pension, say that he may continue at work if he draws less wages? It is done all over the country.

Mr. Assheton: I have already said that my right hon. Friend will be glad to inquire into any specific case.

Mr. Griffiths: I should have thought that you would have known of that long ago.

ELECTRIC PLUGS (STANDARDISATION).

19. **Mr. Woodburn** asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware of the serious waste caused to industry and householders in this country by manufacturers of electric plugs adopting different gauges which prevent interchange; and whether he is prepared to fix standards for 5 ampere, 10 ampere, 15 ampere, etc., plugs so that all plugs and sockets will be interchangeable?

Mr. Montague: All British manufacturers, except one, are now concentrating on the manufacture of plugs to British standard specifications. The manufacture of non-standard plugs could not be entirely stopped without grave inconvenience, but the amount of material involved is small.

Mr. Woodburn: Is my hon. Friend aware that all over the country great expense is caused by the fact that people purchase plugs which fit some of the sockets and not others, and that both in industry and in the household this is a disgraceful state of affairs in the present development of the electrical industry?

Mr. Montague: I am not aware of that. I have said in my answer that the manufacture of plugs to British standards has been made general except in the case of one firm.

ARMED FORCES (MAIL AND CABLE SERVICES, MIDDLE EAST).

27. **Mr. Simmonds** (*for* **Captain Sir Ian Fraser**) asked the Postmaster-General whether he will review the facilities for private communications by letter or cable between troops in the Middle East and the Mediterranean generally and their relations at home with a view to minimising the many delays that are now occurring?

The Postmaster-General (Mr. W. S. Morrison): I can assure my hon. and gallant Friend that the mail services to and from the Forces in the Middle East and the Mediterranean generally are constantly under review, and all possible steps are taken, in collaboration with the Service Departments and the Ministry of Shipping, to ensure that no means of improving the mail services is neglected. As regards cables, arrangements are being made in consultation with the Departments concerned and with Messrs. Cable and Wireless, Limited, which should expedite the transmission between this country and the Middle East of telegrams to and from the troops.

Mr. Simmonds: Is it not a fact that the expectations of improvement which have been suggested by my right hon. Friend have not actually been realised? In view of the great importance to the morale of an Expeditionary Force that it should be kept in touch with home, will he again review this matter with the other Departments, in order to see what further improvements can be made?

Mr. Morrison: The matter is under constant review, but my hon. Friend will

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Morrison.]

realise that the possibility of transmitting mails to that region depends upon the military situation. As that changes from day to day, so is the situation kept under review, so that every possible outlet to the troops is taken advantage of.

Viscountess Astor: Will my right hon. Friend also bear in mind that for six or seven months it has taken at least two months, sometimes more, for letters to reach Egypt from here? That does really seem to be excessive.

Mr. Morrison: The Noble Lady will realise that many Departments are involved in this.

"DAILY WORKER" AND "THE WEEK" (SUPPRESSION).

Mr. Gallacher (*by Private Notice*) asked the Home Secretary whether he has any statement to make on his reasons for suppressing the "Daily Worker"?

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Morrison): Yes, Sir. Defence Regulation 2D provides that if the Secretary of State is satisfied that there is in any newspaper a systematic publication of matter calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue, he may by Order apply the provisions of the Regulation to that newspaper. In pursuance of that power, I have made orders applying the provisions of the Regulation to the "Daily Worker" and to a news letter entitled "The Week," of which the policy is similar to that of the "Daily Worker." As a result it becomes an offence for any person to print, publish or distribute either of these newspapers or any newspaper published under any other name which is in continuation of or in substitution for the prohibited papers.

This action has been taken not because of any recent change or development in the character of these publications, nor because of the appearance therein of some particular article or articles, but because it is and has been for a long period the settled and continuous policy of these papers to try to create in their readers a state of mind in which they will refrain from co-operating in the national war effort and may become ready to hinder that effort. It is my firm conviction that freedom of the Press should be maintained even at the risk that it may sometimes be abused. It is newspapers which share the national determination to win the war there is occasionally published matter which, though not intended to be harmful to the national interest, may nevertheless have a prejudicial effect. I recognise that the inestimable advantage of maintaining a free Press far outweighs the risks which such freedom may sometimes entail.

There is, however, a wide difference between accepting such occasional risks and allowing the continuous publication of newspapers of which the deliberate purpose is to weaken the will of our people to achieve victory in this the greatest and most momentous struggle in our history. Since the end of September, 1939, when the "Daily Worker" reversed its policy, it has refrained from publishing anything calculated to encourage co-operation in the struggle which this country is waging against Nazi and Fascist tyranny and aggression; and has by every device of distortion and misrepresentation sought to make out that our people have nothing to gain by victory, that the hardships and sufferings of warfare are unnecessary and are imposed upon them by a callous Government carrying on a selfish contest in the interests of a privileged class. With similar falsity it has represented that the Government in alliance with us are inspired by equally base motives, and that the United States of America is assisting the Allied Cause not for the purpose of defending freedom and democracy but merely for the purpose of profiteering from every extension of the war.

The object of this propaganda is to bring about the downfall of democratic and constitutional government, regardless of the consequences to the fate of Great Britain and her Allies in the present war. All other considerations are subordinated to the fantastic hope that the weakening of democratic institutions may provide an opportunity for the substitution of a Communist dictatorship. In fact, as the history of European States has shown, the overthrow of democratic institutions would not lead to such a result but to the triumph of Nazi and Fascist reactions. Small as may be the prospects of such propaganda making headway in this country, the Government would be failing in their duty if in time of war—when all liberties and the whole future of

Archivo Histórico — Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

democracy are at stake—they failed to exercise the powers with which they have been entrusted against papers which are conducted for the purpose of weakening our war effort.

There has been a long period of forbearance. In July last the attention of the " Daily Worker " was called to the provisions of Regulation 2D, and the hope was expressed that the paper would be so conducted as to prevent the necessity of action under that Regulation. That hope has not been realised, and after careful consideration the Government have decided that it would be unjustifiable to allow these newspapers to continue any longer the persistent publication of matter which the Regulation is designed to prevent. Any step which has even the appearance of a departure from our traditional policy of allowing freedom for the expression of minority opinions must be a matter for regret. The policy of the Government is to make the minimum use, even in time of war, of methods of repression, and to confine such action to those forces, all of them agents or allies of reaction, which would consciously or unconsciously place impediments in the way of our war effort and thus help the enemy.

Mr. Gallacher: Having listened to this propaganda statement, may I ask the Minister whether it is not the case that this action coincides with, and is meant to suppress all opposition to, the conscription of labour proposal which was made in this House yesterday?

Mr. Morrison: There is not the slightest connection between the two. As a matter of fact, when the decision was reached to suppress the " Daily Worker " and " The Week," I had not the slightest knowledge that the proposal referred to by the hon. Member was coming forward, and I do not think that my colleagues as a whole knew that that other proposal was to be made.

Mr. Gallacher: Would the Minister be prepared to receive a small deputation on this question?

Mr. Morrison: I must consider that when the application is made.

Mr. Thurtle: Is my right hon. Friend aware that this action of his will cause great disappointment—in Berlin?

Mr. Mander: Does my right hon. Friend propose to prosecute and bring before the courts any of the persons involved in this matter?

Mr. Morrison: The question of prosecution and of bringing people before the courts is a matter for consideration in the light of specific provisions of the Regulation concerning individuals. I have acted under the Regulation which relates to the suppression of a newspaper, and that Regulation is not concerned with individuals.

Mr. A. Bevan: As this is the first opportunity the House has had to consider this matter, will an opportunity be given in the very near future for the House to discuss it? If no opportunity is provided for a discussion of this very important matter, it will be necessary to move the Adjournment of the House for that purpose.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill): If there is a sufficient desire to debate this matter, and if that is made known, the Government will, naturally, give an opportunity for a Debate. I suggest that the usual processes should be set at work. Then, it would be necessary that the Debate should take place at the earliest possible moment, namely, on the next Sitting Day. That would mean, of course, the postponement of the War Damage Bill; but the House must accept that as a consequence.

Mr. Bevan: Does the Prime Minister consider, in view of the fact that all parties in this House are involved in the Government, that opportunities for debate should depend upon representations through the usual channels? If no opportunity is to be given by the Prime Minister for Members of the House to discuss matters of this kind except by representation through official channels, there is nothing left for us to do but to move the Adjournment of the House, and hope to secure the support of 40 Members.

The Prime Minister: If I thought that the hon. Member had the support of anything like 40 Members, I should certainly agree; but if it were only six or seven Members, the interest of the country must be against such a course.

Mr. Bevan: May I suggest to the Prime Minister that if there are only six or

Archivo Histórico — Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

[Mr. Bevan.]
seven, or eight, Members of the House of Commons who wish to discuss it, it is important that the matter should be discussed? There have been occasions when the Prime Minister has represented fewer Members than that. I respectfully submit that the Prime Minister will not be able to prevent six or seven Members discussing the matter at some time or another, and it is far better that we should do it in an orderly and proper fashion now. In what way can we inform him as to how many Members actually wish to debate this matter unless we move the Adjournment of the House?

Sir W. Davison: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the great majority of the Members of this House think that this action by the Government has been far too long postponed?

Sir Richard Acland: Will the Home Secretary look at the discussion which took place in this House when the Regulation under which he has acted was challenged by a large number of Members; and will he find out whether my memory is correct when I say that the only justification advanced by his predecessor for insisting on that Regulation being used, rather than the other set of Regulations providing for warning, prosecution and then suppression, was that it might be necessary to use these powers suddenly in the event of enemy action dislocating the ordinary procedure? If he finds that that is correct, will he, as soon as possible, satisfy many members of the public who will be disquieted by this action by taking the damnable indictment which he has—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member cannot make a speech.

Sir R. Acland: What the Home Secretary has said must be tested in the courts.

Mr. Magnay: Might I respectfully suggest to the Prime Minister that he should allow this appeal in order to show to the country, as well as to this House, which hon. Members are in favour of Communist propaganda?

The Prime Minister: I think that where there is the slightest doubt the decision should be on the side of the minority. But I do not think that the matter can be arranged for the next Sitting Day. We have arranged to take the War Damage Bill then, and we must get on with that. Millions of people are interested in that Bill. Perhaps later it may be possible to arrange for a day, or perhaps a half-day. We have a good deal of business to do before Easter, but I will give an opportunity for the matter to be raised. I hope that if it is raised, it will be debated, not on the Adjournment, but on a Motion moved either by the Government, or by someone opposed to the action of the Government; and I hope that the matter will be pressed to a Division, in order to let us clearly see what is the balance of opinion on the matter.

CONDUCT OF A MEMBER.

Mr. Lees-Smith (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister whether he has any statement to make in regard to the report from the Select Committee on the Conduct of a Member?

The Prime Minister: The report came into our hands only yesterday afternoon, and I am sure that the House will require time to consider it, before any question of debate arises. If a Debate is desired, arrangements will be made for it to take place on an early date. As the House is aware, my hon. Friend the Member for East Aberdeen (Mr. Boothby) has resigned his office as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food.

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

MILITARY SERVICE (N.A.A.F.I. EMPLOYES)

Mr. Profumo asked the Secretary of State for War what number of men are at present employed by the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes who would otherwise be subject to military service under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939?

Mr. Law: The number is 3,812 out of a total male staff of all ages of 15,535. With the exception of about 500 men in key positions, whose calling up has been temporarily deferred, the men concerned are either covered by the Schedule of Reserved Occupations, or employed or waiting employment in His Majesty's ships, or medically unfit for military service.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

BRITISH ARMY.

Auxiliary Pioneer Corps.

Mr. White asked the Secretary of State for War whether the sickness and disability allowances for the men of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps is the same as for other units of the Army?

Mr. Law: Yes, Sir.

Enemy Parachute Troops.

Sir Smedley Crooke asked the Secretary of State for War whether, in preparing for possible German invasion, he will bear in mind the possibility of the enemy landing by parachute clothed in British uniforms taken from prisoners of war?

Captain Margesson: The contingency referred to is continually borne in mind.

Motor Accidents.

Sir G. Fox asked the Secretary for War how many soldiers, since the start of the war, have been killed or injured through motor accidents in this country in which soldiers themselves were driving vehicles?

Captain Margesson: I regret that the information for which my hon. Friend asks is not available.

Film Unit.

Mr. Rostron Duckworth asked the Secretary of State for War whether the producer appointed to take charge of the Army film unit has started work; and what scheme is being first handled?

Captain Margesson: The Director appointed to take charge of the Army Film Unit started work on 18th November last. Besides work on training and record films, his first picture for public showing entitled " Northern Outposts " is now completed. This depicts the life of the troops in Iceland, and it is to be followed by other films showing various aspects of Army life, now in active preparation.

Meat Ration.

Sir R. Glyn asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is now in the position to make a statement concerning the quantity of meat now issued to the Army in the United Kingdom as a daily ration?

Captain Margesson: The daily allowance of meat for men's messes is eight ounces a head. The daily allowance provided for on the leave or duty ration card is six ounces. The corresponding amounts for women are six ounces and four ounces respectively.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

Dr. Morgan asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that there is grave disquiet amongst medical practitioners at the fact that many officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps are engaged exclusively, or principally, on administrative and non-professional work; and whether he will cause the matter to be investigated and corrected and so reduce the demands upon civilian practitioners for service with the Armed Forces?

Captain Margesson: I am not aware of any grave disquiet, but it is the fact that, as happens also in civil departments, many officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps are engaged exclusively on administrative work, which could not be efficiently performed by laymen. There are certain appointments which have in the past been held by medical men, but can, by an adjustment of duties, be held by non-medical men. These are now being reviewed. Some medical officers have already been replaced, and the remainder will be replaced where possible.

Leave.

Mr. R. Gibson asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Scottish soldiers stationed in the South of England, when given 48 hours leave, are unable to take advantage of the privilege, as the long time spent in travelling North and South leaves an incommensurate time to see their families; and what change he proposes to make in order to ensure for these Scottish soldiers equitable treatment in respect of leave?

Captain Margesson: Soldiers are granted seven days leave at such intervals as the exigencies of the Service admit, and this enables them to visit their homes periodically even if these are at a distance from their military stations. The additional grant of 48 hours leave from time to time is not intended to be used for long distance travelling.

AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION (PREMISES, REQUISITIONING).

Mr. Profumo asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aircraft Production, whether he is aware that cases

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

are occurring where individuals are being authorised to inspect business premises with a view to requisitioning, without previously informing the manager or proprietor of their intended arrival or in any way inviting their co-operation; and is he satisfied that when such factories are under consideration for requisitioning sufficient effort is being made to avoid disclocation of local labour?

Colonel Llewellin: Requisitioning is in some cases a most urgent matter and it is not always possible to inform the manager or proprietor of a business of an intended inspection before the inspection takes place. Every effort is made to effect the requisitioning of premises with as little inconvenience and dislocation of local labour as is reasonably possible and with the co-operation of the management.

ROYAL NAVY.

Auxiliary Vessels (Crews).

Commander Bower asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that numbers of men, physically unfit for service at sea, are being drafted to His Majesty's auxiliary vessels, where their inability to carry out the arduous work in these lightly-manned ships throws a heavy burden on their comrades; and whether he will, in future, consider drafting such men to shore establishments or big ships only?

Mr. Alexander: No, Sir. It is not the practice to draft men physically unfit or sea to seagoing ships, big or small. The second part of the Question does not, therefore, arise.

Officers (Promotion).

Commander Bower asked the First Lord of the Admiralty the age of the youngest officers now eligible for promotion to rear-admiral, by selection, under the new regulations?

Mr. Alexander: The age of the officers to which my hon. and gallant Friend refers is approximately 46 years.

German Ships (Scuttling).

Sir Smedley Crooke asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the urgent need of increased shipping, he will consider the advisability of giving notice to the German Government that, after a given date, when their ships are intercepted by British, no attempt will be made to save the lives of those aboard German ships if those lives are jeopardised by the scuttling of ships?

Mr. Alexander: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for South Kensington (Sir W. Davison) on 24th January, 1940, to which I can add nothing further.

WORKS AND BUILDINGS.

Mr. Doland asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Buildings whether, before issuing his forthcoming Report on the reconstruction of works and buildings in London, he will take into consideration the schemes for new main arterial roads leading into and out of London, contained in the Bressey Report?

Mr. Hicks: The recommendations in the Bressey Report will be considered, though the possibilities of development have been altered by subsequent events.

BURMA-CHINA TRANSPORT.

Mr. Hamilton Kerr asked the Secretary of State for Burma whether, in view of the possibilites of the proposed Burma-Yunnan road for transport of Lancashire textiles into China after the war, he will suggest to the Burmese Government the desirability of preparing the section of this railway leading from the head of the present Burmese railway to the Chinese frontier?

Mr. Amery: The problems which the project of a Burma-Yunnan railway presents are receiving the urgent consideration of the Government. The engineering difficulties are very great and so is the question of the supply in present conditions of the material required.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

Vitamin B 1.

Mr. De la Bère asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether, in connection with the Government proposals to introduce vitamin B 1 into the loaf in the spring of 1941, he can give some approximate estimate of the cost to the nation of doing this for a full 12 months?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Mr. Johnstone: It is not possible to estimate in advance how the total consumption of bread may be divided between bread made with fortified white flour and with long extraction flour. Consequently the total cost of fortifying white flour with vitamin B 1 cannot be stated. The cost is not, however, expected to exceed one-tenth of a penny per quartern white loaf.

Sir E. Graham-Little asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food on what licence from the German I.G. patents for the manufacture of vitamin B 1 the Government is relying for the right to manufacture this product; and why, in view of the war, any such licence is required to operate a German patent?

Mr. Johnstone: His Majesty's Government have not undertaken the manufacture of vitamin B 1, but will for the present obtain supplies from a firm of chemical manufacturers which has the right to use patents Nos. 471,416 and 475,595, covering inventions made by the German company, I.G. Farbenindustrie. Bayer Products, Limited, of Africa House, Kingsway, are the registered proprietors of both patents in this country.

Sir E. Graham-Little asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that certain British firms of the highest standing proposed, in July last, after the Government's announcement of its decision to vitaminise white bread, to undertake the manufacture of vitamin B 1; whether these proposals were considered by the Ministry; what action was taken on them; and whether, in view of the delay in producing vitamin B 1 arising partly from restriction under existing contracts of its manufacture to one firm, and of the risk of the destruction of a single factory by enemy action, he will encourage the dispersal of its manufacture by inviting the co-operation of other firms than Roche Products, Limited, if these firms can satisfy him of their ability to undertake it?

Mr. Johnstone: My Noble Friend is aware of two firms, in addition to Roche Products, Limited, who had begun some months before the date of the announcement to which my hon. Friend refers to make plans for the manufacture of vitamin B 1 on a considerable scale. Proposals by these firms have been considered with the result indicated in the reply given on 18th December to my hon. Friend the Member for Evesham (Mr. De la Bère), of which I am sending the hon. Member a copy. My Noble Friend will gladly consider similar proposals by other firms.

FLOUR (COUNTRY MILLS).

Sir E. Graham-Little asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food if his attention has been drawn to the desirability of encouraging the reconditioning of country mills to start the milling of stone-ground flour, obstacles to which seem at present to be furnished by certain clauses of the orders issued under emergency powers legislation, 1939?

Mr. Johnstone: My Noble Friend knows of no Statutory obstacle to the reconditioning and operation of country mills which may operate under the General Licence (S.R. & O., 1940, No. 568) issued under the Control of Mills (Flour and Provender) No. 1 Order. Several small mills have recently recommenced work on the initiative of their owners, and the Ministry of Food has taken steps to bring back into production some larger country mills which had been closed down in recent years. Many small mills, however, have been either partially or wholly dismantled, and where this has happened it is doubtful whether the labour and materials required to re-equip and operate them could be made available.

EGGS.

Colonel Burton asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he can state details of the reduction in costs of poultry food which led to the official scaling down of the price of home-produced eggs?

Mr. Johnstone: The price of home-produced eggs is not determined solely by the price of poultry food but is also influenced by the volume of egg production. At this season of the year the production of eggs is increasing and the reduction in price was made in recognition of this fact.

PRICE CONTROL.

Mr. Lyons asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food (1) whether, in view of recent experiences consequent upon delays in fixing maximum prices of foodstuffs, he will consider

the scheduling of all essential foodstuffs as opposed to luxuries in consultation with all interests concerned, including the consumers, with a view to the adoption of a general policy of immediate price control and distribution of all essentials, and paying regard to present-day population and movement;

(2) whether, in view of the difficulties of supply and price increases which were consequent upon the time-lags before making effective price-controls on tinned peas, onions, apples, lemons and turkeys, respectively, he will in future consider more immediate action when representations are made and decision is reached in respect of price control for any particular commodity?

Mr. Johnstone: As was stated in an announcement on 7th January, and of which I am sending my hon. and learned Friend a copy, it has been decided to extend considerably the field of price control over foodstuffs, and an interim Order came into operation on 13th January making it an offence for any manufacturer, dealer, wholesaler, or retailer to sell any of a considerable number of foodstuffs at higher prices than those which he charged on 2nd December. Maximum Price Orders covering these foodstuffs will be issued in due course, and the practicability of applying price control to certain foods not included in the present list is under examination. The arrangements for the allocation of supplies between different areas are under constant review, with due regard to the movements of population.

CHEESE.

Mr. Price asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that there is a shortage of cheese in the Forest of Dean; that there is a large mining population there for whom cheese is of the utmost importance; and whether he will take steps to secure that a mining area like this shall get a first call on whatever supplies are available, irrespective of whether an increased population has come to the area in recent months?

Mr. Johnstone: The distribution of cheese by the Ministry is based on local pre-war consumption. Cheese is in short supply at present, but on the existing basis distribution in the Forest of Dean is substantially in excess of the average for the rest of the country. My Noble Friend is endeavouring to secure the maximum imports of cheese and meanwhile he has asked the general public to reduce their consumption so that supplies of cheese will be left for those who need it.

CARROTS.

Colonel Carver asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that in the great war shops were encouraged to sell carrots singly to children and that this was done with great benefit to their health; and whether he will consider recommending this practice now in view of the fact that certain fruits and sweets may not be plentiful?

Mr. Johnstone: I am grateful to my hon. and gallant Friend for his suggestion, which is being communicated to the retail fruit and vegetable trade. My Noble Friend welcomes any suggestions that will lead to an increase in the consumption of carrots—especially in their raw state—because they are the richest source of vitamin A among the common vegetables available in winter.

ROYAL AIR FORCE.

PAY AND ALLOWANCES.

Mrs. Tate asked the Secretary of State for Air whether he is aware that hardship is caused to many wives and families of officers of the Royal Air Force through the irregular remittances of their allowances; and whether he will take steps to arrange for these allowances to be sent direct to the wives of officers as in the case of other ranks?

Sir A. Sinclair: Pay and allowances are issued regularly to officers of the Royal Air Force and it is their responsibility to provide for their families. The evidence available does not suggest that it is necessary to change the procedure in the way proposed by my hon. Friend.

OBSERVER CORPS.

Squadron-Leader Errington asked the Secretary of State for Air whether he will define the status of the Observer Corps at an early date, in view of the numerous difficulties due to its somewhat anomalous position?

Sir A. Sinclair: The Observer Corps is a Civil Defence organisation administered by the Air Ministry. If my hon. Friend will let me know of the difficulties to which he refers, I shall be glad to consider them.

PETROL WASTE.

Mr. Craven-Ellis asked the Secretary of State for Air whether his attention has been called to a recent prosecution, at Andover, of a member of the Royal Air Force for stealing petrol, when it was disclosed that petrol used to wash the undercarriage of an aeroplane was afterwards thrown away although it could have been filtered and used for road transport; and will he arrange for all such petrol in future to be filtered and so put a stop to this form of waste?

Sir A. Sinclair: I understand that the prosecution referred to by my hon. Friend took place in April last. The use of petrol for the washing of undercarriages is unauthorised and I have no reason to suppose that there has since been an extension of the practice. I am, however, having inquiries made and will arrange for the issue of any necessary instructions.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

ALIENS (RESTRICTIONS).

Mr. Wedgwood asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that German or Austrian refugees, who served in the Pioneer Corps and were discharged on medical grounds, are still subjected to the same restrictions applicable to aliens; that these people, who fought in the British Army, have still to apply for permission to work and have none of the amenities accorded to ex-service men; and will he remove automatically all restrictions that apply to foreigners in the case of former soldiers in His Majesty's Forces of German or Austrian origin who had to leave the Army for reasons for which they were not responsible?

Mr. Peake: It is regretted that it is not possible to grant exemption from the aliens restrictions to all foreigners discharged from His Majesty's Forces on medical grounds, but my right hon. Friend recognises that such persons deserve special consideration and accordingly directed the police in November last to submit particulars of persons so discharged in order that their cases might be individually considered. In addition, it is open to any alien discharged from His Majesty's Forces to apply for exemption. At present, such aliens are freely given permission by the Ministry of Labour to take employment.

DEPORTATIONS (CANADA AND UNITED STATES).

Mr. Rhys Davies asked the Home Secretary whether he will enter into an arrangement with the Canadian Government whereby aliens deported to that Dominion from this country, who have the necessary qualifications to enter, may be allowed to proceed direct from Canada to the United States of America instead of being brought back to this country and then sent to the United States of America?

Mr. H. Morrison: This is one of the purposes for which I have sent a representative to Canada and I hope that it will be possible to make arrangements to avoid bringing such persons back to this country *en route* for the United States of America.

INTERNEES.

Mr. Wedgwood asked the Home Secretary what progress has been reported from Canada since Mr. Paterson arrived in that country; how many cases have now been re-examined by him; how many internees had volunteered for the Pioneer Corps, and the number of those accepted; what is the position of those refugees who could not be taken into the Pioneer Corps for medical reasons; and whether Mr. Paterson has also arranged for the return to England of those persons whose release has been authorised?

Mr. H. Morrison: One hundred and seven volunteers for the Pioneer Corps and 131 internees who appeared to be eligible for release under other categories of the White Paper have already returned to this country under arrangements which I authorised Mr. Paterson to make. In addition, 51 men whose release I had specifically authorised have been sent back to this country. Internees who are found unfit for the Pioneer Corps on medical grounds are eligible for consideration by the Tribunal set up for the purposes of the new Category 23 of the White Paper which I announced on 26th November.

Mr. Wedgwood asked the Home Secretary how many Italians have volunteered for the Pioneer Corps; how many

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Archivo Histórico · Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

have been accepted; and are the cases of those who were rejected being re-examined by the tribunals?

Mr. H. Morrison: According to the latest statistics available, 259 interned Italians have volunteered for the Pioneer Corps. One hundred and fifty-six have been accepted and 50 have been rejected on medical grounds. Those rejected on medical grounds are eligible to apply for release under the new category No. 23, of the White Paper which I announced on 26th November, and any such application would be referred to the Tribunal set up for the purpose.

Mr. Rhys Davies asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that Mrs. Ellen Doking, a Welsh-speaking person, born in Wales of Welsh parents, is interned in the Rushen internment camp, Isle of Man, because she is married to an enemy alien, has made several applications for release but has not received a word in reply; that her son, 18 years of age, has been transported to Australia and that her youngest child has been suffering from diphtheria; and will he look into the case and consider her request?

Mr. Morrison: The suggestion that the only reason for the internment of Mrs. Doring is her marriage to a German is mistaken. Many British born women who acquired enemy nationality by marriage have not been interned. Mrs. Doring was interned because the Tribunal which investigated her case felt it necessary that she should be subjected to special restrictions and placed her in Category B. Her case has been reviewed by the Advisory Committee which is sitting in the Isle of Man for the review of B Category cases, and having received the committee's report and considered all the information available about Mrs. Doring I have decided that she should be classified as Category A and that accordingly I cannot authorise her release from internment.

Rear-Admiral Beamish asked the Home Secretary whether he has now made provision whereby husbands and wives who are both interned may be interned in company or see each other occasionally?

Mr. Morrison: As I informed my hon. and gallant Friend on 19th December, I regret that it is not possible to arrange that men and women detained under Regulation 18B shall be confined together in the same establishment. As regards visits, arrangements are being made to enable men who are detained in London to visit their wives in Holloway once a fortnight.

PERSONNEL.

Sir J. Mellor asked the Home Secretary what progress is being made with the general review of civil defence personnel; and what factors, in addition to population, are being taken into account in revising establishments?

Mr. H. Morrison: A considerable amount of exploratory work has been done in connection with this matter but it is bound up with a number of major related questions such as the recently announced fire prevention scheme, and no final conclusions have yet been reached. In addition to the active numbers of the population, such factors as the character of an area, its industries and its resident population, and other factors, which it would not be in the public interest to specify, require to be taken into account.

FIRE FIGHTING (PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT).

Rear-Admiral Beamish asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been drawn to a simple and cheap device for the protection of the shoulders of fire fighters and others exposed to the danger from falling debris; and whether he will have enquiries made and steps taken with a view to reintroducing such an ancient safeguard.

Mr. H. Morrison: Shoulder plates are in use in some fire brigades, but the standard type, if substantial enough to give effective protection, tends to restrict the wearer's freedom of action. A new type is now being tested in actual working conditions, and if found satisfactory the possibility of its adoption for services requiring it will be considered.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

Sir R. Gower asked the Home Secretary whether his department has considered whether traffic lights are seen by enemy aircraft; and whether he will consider their extinction at night.

Mr. H. Morrison: I am advised that traffic lights masked in accordance with the regulations afford no assistance to pilots of enemy aircraft. I see no reason therefore to require these lights to be extinguished at night.

Archivo Histórico · Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

TRANSPORT

Evacuees (Visitors, Travel Facilities).

Dr. Morgan asked the Minister of Transport, why cheap travel facilities are denied to parents wishing to visit evacuated children at week-ends in places served by the Great Western Railway; whether this is in accordance with the practice of other railway companies; and whether he will consider bringing the system into conformity to allow of cheap travel facilities on all lines at week-ends, and not only on certain week-days.

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: As I announced on 5th December in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for North East Bethnal Green (Mr. Chater), the restrictions on the Great Western Railway Company's system have been removed. The facilities have been available since that date on all railway systems on any day of the week, and a large number of parents are taking advantage of them.

Direction Signs (Removal).

Sir R. Glyn asked the Minister of Transport, under the authority of which Minister and under which Defence Regulation all signposts were removed and statutory milestones removed or defaced; and whether, in view of the loss of time and consequent waste of petrol involved by service and other vehicles not finding the direct route when engaged on work of national importance, the whole position will be reviewed and one-third of the signposts replaced on the understanding that the local police shall have them removed should the military situation merit such action?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazon: The Removal of Direction Signs Orders were made by the Home Secretary under Defence Regulation 4(B). The position has recently been reviewed and, whilst the inconvenience caused by the absence of signposts is recognised it is considered that the military situation does not at present justify their replacement.

Railway Wagons.

Major Braithwaite asked the Minister of Transport whether there is any improvement in the expedition with which railway wagons are being handled?

Lieut.-Colonel Moore-Brabazan: The latest figures show some improvement in the handling of coal wagons, but unfortunately this cannot be said of other traffic. I am pressing the Departments concerned to assist in securing a better turn round of wagons with traffic under their control.

AGRICULTURE.

Labour Supply.

Major Braithwaite asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his consultations with the Ministry of Labour have resulted in a greater labour move for the industry?

Mr. Hudson: The Minister of Labour and I are combing every possible source of labour for land reclamation and drainage work and a number of additional workers is being obtained.

Farms (Classification).

Major Braithwaite asked the Minister of Agriculture the number of farms surveyed in their different classifications of A, B and C?

Mr. Hudson: This information has been obtained confidentially for the assistance of County War Agricultural Executive Committees and is now being used by them in connection with the campaign for increased food production. It is not proposed to publish classified figures at this stage.

Hours and Wages.

Major Braithwaite asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he will consider increasing the statutory minimum hours to be worked in agriculture from April, 1941, to October, 1941, as a wartime measure to increase production; and whether he will adjust the minimum wages to met the longer hours?

Mr. Hudson: Each Agricultural Wages Committee fixes the minimum wages for its area, the numbers of hours to be worked for those wages, and the overtime rates payable. There is no statutory limitation upon the number of hours that may be worked, and my information is that there is no general reluctance on the part of agricultural workers to work overtime. On the contrary, I have no doubt that they will be willing to put in whatever hours are necessary to secure the nation's needs.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

NATIONAL FINANCE (PURCHASE TAX).

Sir J. Mellor asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the confusion that has arisen from the application of the Purchase Tax to stationery made from paper, owing, for example, to the similarity in some cases between duplicating paper and wrapping paper and between envelopes and bags; whether he is aware that unnecessary printing is likely to be done on paper bags and cartons to avoid the incidence of the tax; and whether he will review the position in consultation with representatives of the industries concerned?

Sir K. Wood: Duplicating paper and envelopes of a kind suitable for use as stationery fall within Class 21 of the Schedule of chargeable goods. Wrapping paper and paper bags of a kind not used as stationery are not subject to the tax. I understand that representatives of the trades concerned have recently discussed the liability of certain articles with the Commissioners of Customs and Excise and that printed evelopes which are specially made for use as containers of goods or coin are regarded as not chargeable with Purchase Tax.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY.

DOCUMENTS LEFT IN VEHICLES.

Mr. Ammon asked the Minister of Supply how many times have documents and papers belonging to his Department been lost by being left in motor cars or other carelessness since August, 1939; and when was the last occasion?

Sir A. Duncan: So far as can be ascertained during the period in question there have been seven cases in which such documents have been left in cars or public vehicles. All have been subsequently recovered. The last occasion was on 24th December, 1940.

SHEEPSKINS (NORTHERN IRELAND).

Mr. Creech Jones asked the Minister of Supply what representations he has received from the Fellmongers Association regarding the diversion of skins to Northern Ireland; and what were the reasons for the decision?

Mr. Harold Macmillan: A small quantity of sheepskins produced in Northern Ireland has been allocated on an experimental basis to a firm started there shortly before the war. The Fellmongers Association protested on the ground that this reduced the quantity available for distribution among established fellmongers, but it was decided to make the allocation in view of the heavy unemployment in Northern Ireland, and the fact that the undertaking in question produce particular grades of leather for which there is an export demand.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION PUBLICATIONS.

Mr. Doland asked the Minister of Information whether he will arrange for Members of Parliament to receive the books and pamphlets issued by the Ministry and supplied to all local information committees in the London region up to the 17th of December last?

Mr. Cooper: All publications of the Ministry of Information are available to hon. Members in the Library of the House. I do not feel it is necessary to supply Members individually or that the House generally would desire this. In the case of the few books which are purchased from private publishers for the use of local information committees I have no authority to supply Members gratuitously.

PALESTINE (IMMIGRATION).

Mr. Wedgwood asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether he is in a position to state the fate of recent illegal immigrants into Palestine; what is being done with them; to which British Colony they are being deported; and how many refugees have been treated in a like manner since the steamship "Patria" accident;

(2) whether further Jewish refugees have been sent on to Mauritius since the sinking of the "Patria," and, if so, at whose expense are they maintained and shipped?

Mr. George Hall: In accordance with the policy stated in my reply to a Question by the right hon. Member on 4th December, those Jews who were recently

Archivo Histórico Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

intercepted in an attempt to enter Palestine illegally and who were not on board the steamship " Patria " when it sank in Haifa Harbour, have been deported to Mauritius for detention for the duration of the war. The number so deported was 1,634. The cost of their shipment to and maintenance in Mauritius will be a charge on United Kingdom funds.

Mr. Wedgwood asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies why no Jews are being given permits to enter Palestine in view of the fact that the food products of Palestine can no longer be exported?

Mr. Hall: The decision that no immigration quota should be issued for the current six months' period was taken partly on the ground that under present conditions prospective legal immigrants can seldom reach Palestine within the period contemplated for their absorption in the economic life of the country; and partly in the light of the difficult economic conditions and widespread unemployment caused by the war.

GOVERNMENT TRAINING CENTRES.

Miss Ward asked the Minister of Labour how many Government training centres are in operation, and how many are unable to accept further trainees?

Mr. Bevin: There are at present 32 Government training centres devoted to civilian training and this number is increasing. All these centres are continually taking in trainees as vacancies arise either through the placing of trained men in industry or through expanding resources, but recruits are at present wanted in greater numbers than those coming forward. A beginning has been made with the training of women in the Government training centres and this is an aspect of the work which I am developing.

UNITED STATES (PRESIDENT'S SPEECHES).

Mr. Doland asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will issue, in the form of a White Paper, the speech of the President of the United States of America as a companion issue to the speech of the late Marquis of Lothian?

Mr. Eden: I find it very difficult to choose any one of the excellent speeches of the President of the United States to lay as a White Paper.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

PRODUCTION, SUPPLY AND MAN-POWER.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Mr. James Stuart.*]

Mr. Clement Davies (Montgomery): The speeches made yesterday by my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton) and by my hon. Friend the Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell), and the reception which those speeches received in the House, show clearly one or two points which I should like to emphasise. The first is that the criticism of the Government is not that the Government are doing too much or are interfering where they should not interfere. The criticism is that the Government are not doing enough but are doing too little. The second point is that those who criticise are animated by the desire and determination that the war shall be and must be won, and the belief that it will be won if we strain every nerve and put every ounce of our resources into the winning of it. The third point is that, in order to achieve victory, we feel that both property and persons must be subject to discipline. I would go so far as to say that even the instrument of Government itself might have to be changed if the war could not otherwise be won.

It seemed to me yesterday that some of the speeches, notably that of my hon. Friend the Member for Llanelly (Mr. J. Griffiths), debated not alone the question which is before the House, but an entirely different question. The real question before the House to-day is not whether the conscription of wealth, or the compulsion or direction of labour, is right or wrong. That question, surely, was decided by this House on 22nd May last unanimously and at the request of the Government. I would remind the House once more of the notable words, which have been cited time and time again, used by the Lord Privy Seal to describe the situation as it then was. Might I first remind the House of the thrill which went through the whole country on the advent to power of the present Prime Minister? That was on 10th May. On 22nd May, within 12 days, the very action which we expected of that Government was forthcoming. In spite of the great danger in which the country was at that time, properly described by the Lord Privy Seal, nevertheless the Government were able to move straight away, and the Lord Privy Seal received the full assent of this House to these words:

> "It is necessary that the Government should be given complete control over persons and property."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 22nd May, 1940; Col. 152, Vol. 361.]

If it suits certain Members of this House to reverse the order of those words and to say "property and persons," I agree, but I am citing the words of the Lord Privy Seal. Those words referred not just to some persons of some particular class of the community, but to all persons, rich and poor, employers and workmen, women and all. All were to be subject to the control of Government. Surely the question which we should be debating—and it is on this question that we would ask for the guidance of the Government—is this: Is the situation so serious or the threat so imminent to-day, that we have to use these compulsory powers here and now? That is surely the question that should have been debated yesterday. But three-quarters of the speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Minister of Labour were devoted to a general review, which tended to show that the situation was, on the whole, eminently satisfactory, that, indeed, production was forthcoming, that the unemployment figures had gone down so much as to indicate that the reservoir was practically exhausted, and that labour and raw materials were being so used together, that the flow of production was continuing very much as desired.

Three-quarters of an hour were devoted by the right hon. Gentleman to that review, and then, quite suddenly, without any explanation whatever, came the announcement of a radical and revolutionary change in the policy of the Government—a change for which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Horsham, the hon. Member for Seaham and I, and others, had been asking two-and-a-half months ago without getting a word of encouragement. On the contrary, we got a direct and immediate negative. Will anyone in the House who heard him forget the words which were used by the Minister of Labour in November, when we asked that these very powers should be used? Speaking at that Box, he

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

announced to the House and the world that what we were asking for and what the hon. Member for Seaham was asking for were dictatorial powers, and he said he preferred not to be a dictator, that he preferred to be a leader. What has caused the right hon. Gentleman, within two months, to change his mind? At least we are entitled to an explanation from someone on that side of the House. That explanation was not forthcoming from the right hon. Gentleman. I was even surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Llanelly, following upon the announcement of the change that had been made in policy, should stand at the Box on the other side of the Table and say, "Let it never go out from this House, that the House is going to compel labour." What have the Government been doing?

Mr. James Griffiths (Llanelly): May I interrupt the hon. and learned Gentleman?

Mr. Davies: I have not my hon. Friend's exact words, but I certainly remember that he held up his hands and said, "Let it not go out from this House that we are going to compel labour."

Mr. Griffiths: What I said was that I did not want it to go out from this House that the House and the country at this time were taking powers to conscript labour and persons, whilst still begging for money and for the use of property.

Mr. Davies: With that part of my hon. Friend's speech I most entirely agree, as I have done throughout. As I have said on more than one occasion, why should we be appealing for help from charity and at the same time compelling men? All property is at the disposal of the Government, but what has the Government's policy been? There has been indirect compulsion for a very considerable time. Men were given the option of remaining in reserved occupations or going into the Army. If a man went out of a reserved occupation, he went into the Army. That, of itself, was compulsion. Now there is to be registration. That is another matter about which we asked. Now there is to be direction to do certain work; there is to be control over management, and there is to be change of management, if it is decided that such change is necessary. Those are all matters which we suggested to the right hon. Gentleman in November, when, as I say, we were met with a direct negative. I do not know when this change of mind took place. I should imagine that it took place very recently, probably within the last two or three days. But the right hon. Gentleman goes no further now. May I remind him that he may have to go further within another short time and that he again will have to change his mind? What will he have to do? He has now set up a mechanism which will enable munition industries to keep the labour that they have got. It is the mechanism which may give them additional man-power, if that man-power is discovered. But what is missing is the mechanism for discovering it.

I will give an instance by mentioning training centres. These have been set up. They were set up by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Scotland, I forget how long ago, but certainly over 12 months ago, and the machinery is all there. The teachers have been put in, although they can ill be spared, and machinery has been put in, although it can ill be spared. But what about the response of the men? Are these training centres half full, or have they ever been half full? What is the good of setting up a machinery and a mechanism unless you are also carrying on the step to supply that mechanism with the raw material? I will return to that, and I will give the right hon. Gentleman or whoever is to reply a further opportunity of dealing with it.

How do the Government propose to get hold of these men? We are told that a number will be leaving the non-essential trades. What has happened with regard to the non-essential trades? The Board of Trade have now issued Limitation of Supply Orders, which is a sort of indirect method of closing down certain trades. You cut down the amount of raw material which the factory can use. First of all, they were cut down to 75 per cent. of their normal supplies, and then some of them were cut down to 50 per cent., and some to 25 per cent. What is the result? A number of factories cannot possibly carry on. The overheads are too much for them. Business is coming to a standstill. The managements and businesses may be ruined, and the men will have to go on the dole. I am glad that the right hon.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Davies.]
Gentleman the Minister of Supply is here. He may be able to check these figures. My information is that the last batch of Orders made by the Minister in December, which undoubtedly have put out of business a number of small businesses, have resulted in the production of 75,000 men and no more, and that the earlier batch of Orders which were issued in June have produced another 75,000—150,000 men all told. These men, I assume, will be put into training, but what is that compared with what the enemy is doing, with 200 centres and the training of roughly 800,000 men in a year?

What was the next step? It was the training. All that has been done in regard to the training of these men is the setting-up of the mechanism, the centres and machinery for training. But what was the inducement? The inducement held out to these men was little better than the dole, although the men would have to be separated from their families and go along to be trained. What was the good of appealing to a man who would get no more than a bare existence on leaving to begin this training? That has been slightly changed, and the figures to-day are as follow: If a man is separated from his family, the woman gets 30s. a week and the man 27s.—57s. If, on the other hand, they are together, 15s. a week is paid to the woman and 26s. to the man—a total of 41s. Is that going to induce people to go into training? I will give the House another figure. It will be observed that, when a man is separated from his family, the amount which is paid to him to undergo this training is 27s. a week, and of that 19s. is deducted for his board and lodging, leaving him with 8s. to spend upon himself. Is that the appeal? It sounds to me—and I suggest this phrase to my hon. Friend the Member for Llanelly—like an appeal for charity, the charity of the labour man. How do you expect a man to go in for training when he is going to get only 8s., which is less than that which you give to the private soldier to spend upon himself.

Mr. George Griffiths (Hemsworth): You cannot keep him on 19s.

Mr. Davies: Anyway, that is all that they allow for his board and lodging. How many men are likely to come in answer to that appeal? And I put it to the Minister quite definitely, that to-day these training centres, which are only 40 in number, are not, and never have been, half-full.

Earl Winterton (Horsham and Worthing): Let us have an answer.

Mr. Davies: I will willingly give way if an answer is forthcoming now whether these training centres have ever been, or are to-day, more than half-full.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Ernest Bevin): The training centres are up to capacity according to the machine tools that we have been able to get.

Mr. Davies: Is that really a fair answer? May I put it in another way? Will the right hon. Gentleman give us the figure of the numbers who are in training to-day? We know the figure for Germany. Will the right hon. Gentleman—I will willingly give way—give the information as to the numbers who are in training? I think his very silence shows what the state of things is, and I need not carry it any further. The House will form its own judgment.

Mr. Ellis Smith (Stoke): What about the Anglo-German Fellowship?

Mr. Davies: Really, I do not understand the kind of smoke-screen which the hon. Member all the time seems to want to throw over the Front Bench. What is the relevancy of that?

Mr. Kirkwood (Dumbarton Burghs): Why are you attacking the Minister?

Mr. Davies: I am not attacking anybody. These attacks have been made ever since the right hon. Gentleman and this Government came into power. [*Interruption.*]

Mr. Bevin: To single out the training centres as in any way dealing with the training in this country is completely misleading. The concentration of training in the factories and the training scheme of the Ministry of Labour to-day are treated as a complete whole, whether in the factory or in the training centre. The facts are that, while I am unable to give the figures, practically every demand for extra skilled labour in the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production in the last six months has been

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

met by training, and if the hon. and learned Gentleman would look at my speech for the indication of the numbers I gave to the House, it ought to be sufficient to enable him to make an honest comparison.

Mr. Davies: I myself have all along advocated that the main source of training should be in the factories, for the very good reason that the training in the factory makes the man factory-minded and not merely school-minded. But the Government have put up training centres, and they have boasted that they have got them, and the only figure I have ever remembered that the right hon. Gentleman has given definitely was the figure he gave in July, when he gave a figure of 10,000 and said that that number had been increased by 1,000 that week, which was a record. How much increase on that figure has there been since July? Now we have this third method of keeping men in employment. They are not to be " fired " and must not quit their jobs without assent. That, I agree, is a big step forward. We now have the means of getting the people into essential work, and we must next devise means of getting them out of non-essential work without ruining businesses and starving people. The result is that it is only half a scheme. It was evident from the answers given by the President of the Board of Trade to-day that there is as yet no policy with regard to compensation, and until you get such a policy—and you will have to devise one—you will not be framing the maximum effort for getting these people out of non-essential employment.

I want to turn to what is really a fundamental matter at the present moment. Do what you will with all these matters—production, consumption, transport, shipping and labour—you will only be patching unless you go right to the top, and unless your structure of Government, of your War Cabinet and the position of your Ministers, is right. On 7th January an announcement was made by the Prime Minister that new committees were being set up. A careful reading of that announcement, which was obviously framed by the Prime Minister—nobody else would have used the word " animated "—shows that in his mind the structure was unsatisfactory, that it was unsatisfactory because of the multiplicity of committees which were still in existence, and that committees which waste time are undesirable in war, when the need is for rapid and decisive action. I will not quote this against the Prime Minister; I will only quote it because no one can put it in such trenchant language as the Prime Minister used when dealing with such a situation as this. In a chapter of the book which he issued in 1930 the Prime Minister draws the distinction between a Cabinet during peace-time and a Cabinet in war-time. It is a very wonderful description of how a Government and Prime Minister should act in ordinary times. When some question arose which caused for a moment tremendous passion, the Prime Minister said he would meet this by appointing a commission and postponing the issue for a while so that gradually tempers would quieten down, the issue assume a proper proportion and the matter could be dealt with by some compromise or other. He went on to use these words:

> " In war everything is different. There is no place for compromise in war. That invaluable process only means that soldiers are shot because their leaders in Council and camp are unable to resolve. In war, the clouds never blow over; they gather increasingly and fall in thunderbolts. Things do not get better by being let alone. Clear leadership, violent action, rigid decisions one way or the other form the only path, not only of victory but of the safety and even of mercy. The State cannot afford division or hesitation at the executive centre. To humour a distinguished man, to avoid a fierce dispute, nay, even to preserve the governing instrument itself, cannot, except as an alternative to sheer anarchy, be held to justify half measures. The peace of the Council may for the moment be won, but the price is paid on the battlefield by brave men marching forward against unspeakable terrors in the belief that conviction and coherence have animated their orders."

These are memorable words uttered by a master of English, by a man who had experience of Cabinet Government in the last war and who has now given, 10 years later, to the public at large the benefit of that experience. Every word in that passage counts:

> " The State cannot afford division or hesitation at the executive centre. To humour a distinguished man "—

Was all this a creation set up rather than have, in the next phrase, " a fierce dispute," with regard to my right hon. Friend the Minister without Portfolio? I say that these words should be weighed again by every Member of the House. The

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Davies.]

structure of which the Prime Minister himself complained has undoubtedly been weak, and the consequences of that weak structure are that we have no man-power policy. Even after the tremendous change which my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour announced yesterday, we still do not know what the man-power policy of this Government is, even after 16 months of war. Has it been decided whether we are to have a large or small Army? Has it yet been decided whether the Army is to be fully mechanised or whether the main instrument is still to be the bayonet? If the Government think we should have a vast Army, have they decided how they will equip it, because the numbers needed behind a highly mechanised Army to-day are much greater than the numbers required behind the Army of 1914-18? How is the shortage of labour to be made up? I was amazed to hear the Minister of Labour say, although he did not give the actual figures, that the reservoir of the unemployed had neared exhaustion. It is good news if it is so, but it is surprising, and what we would really like to know are the actual figures.

I have pointed out earlier that the Minister of Labour has set up an organisation for dealing with men already on essentials. When will there be organisation for shutting down non-essentials, and how will you distribute the skilled workers after you have got them? Which comes first with regard to the call for man-power? Will it be the Army, munitions or food? I am not sure whether the Minister of Labour referred to this yesterday in his speech, because one gets the OFFICIAL REPORT so late now that it is impossible to check things, but he did refer to agriculture. I thought he would refer to it in much fuller terms. At any rate, he said it was a vital matter, and, of course, it is. But will men be taken from agriculture again and put into the Army? Will the call of the Army be prior to that of the call of agriculture? Is it denied that to-day there is a shortage of agricultural labour in many districts? That is highly skilled labour. Is it also realised that very often men of 19 and 20 are the key-men on farms, especially family farms and on land where it is impossible to use the tractor and ordinary mechanised instruments?

There you still have to hold the plough and struggle with a pair of horses. I know a man from my own neighbourhood who was taken away from an upland farm, where he was a first-class man, and who is to-day picking up paper at a camp. Which of these jobs is to be regarded as more important, especially when it is realised that in normal times—I do not know what is the figure to-day—more than half the shipping capacity of the country is utilised in importing food? As much relief as can be given to that shipping space should be given to-day. No, there is yet no man-power policy.

There is no consumption policy. Some foods are rationed and others are not. Consumption has been cut down by indirect methods, by Board of Trade regulations, by increasing prices, by the Purchase Tax; but these things do not solve the matter. The distribution still remains unfair. Even to-day Questions were put to the President of the Board of Trade, which I think ought also to be directed to the Minister of Food, calling attention to the shortages in the reception areas. Under the present scheme people are supplied with a percentage of what was normal in 1938 or in 1939, but the population has moved — from some places people have been evacuated, and in other places the population has trebled. Another result of this indirect control is that supplies to the manufacturer are cut down. The manufacturer is human; he prefers his best customers, and what he does is to give things to his best customers and deny them to others. What is true of the manufacturer is true also of the retailer; one customer will be refused by the retailer and the other will get the commodity. Why should there be any distinction to-day. Why should not all be treated alike? Another result is that during the course of these months we have tremendously depleted our stocks. What is the policy at present with regard to this matter? Have the Government a policy by which they intend to restore these stocks as much as possible so that there is something to call upon if transport is disorganised or a certain place bombed? As far as I know, there is no consumption policy.

There is no production policy. When is there to be a really settled plan with regard to non-essentials? When will the Government say to these people that within a

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

certain number of weeks their undertakings will be closed down, that there will be no more work for them, and that arrangements must be made to deal not only with them, but with their employés? When is there to be an order that, in respect of those who are engaged on national work, only the efficient units will be used, and not the inefficient ones? When are the inefficient either to be controlled or closed down? Then, when they are closed down, how is compensation to be paid? The only answer which the President of the Board of Trade made to an interruption from this side of the House was that he anticipated that all those people would be taken into essential work, and, therefore, compensation was not necessary, and the matter would not arise. Is that the policy of the Government? Is there to be no compensation for loss of livelihood?

May I give the House one or two instances? In evacuated areas certain businesses have been closed down. People have had to leave their stocks and go. Their goodwill, even if they have built it up over a period of years, has been destroyed. They have simply been sent out, and they have not even the dole, but only the Unemployment Assistance Board to which they can have recourse. Yet, in this war, we are told that all stand on an equal footing. Then, it may be in a reception area, there is a similar sort of man, with a similar shop, doing better than ever before, and it may be making enormous profits, except possibly for the Excess Profits Tax. When is there to be a plan to deal with this? The Government will have to form a plan—just as we have warned them month after month that these things have to be planned, that they are inevitable; and although, at the time, we are met with a negative, after a month or two have passed, there is an announcement that the suggested plan has been accepted, or partly accepted.

Power has now been taken for dealing with management and for removing inefficient managements. That is a right thing, and such power ought to have been taken long ago. But will a plan also be put forward and steps taken to make suggestions to managements for the better use of their materials, for some gadget that may be used in one factory and unknown in another, so as to increase production? Who is to deal with the bottlenecks? The right hon. Gentleman, in speech after speech from the very first speech he made when he broadcast, has said that manpower is not the only problem and that we must, of course, have the raw materials and the workmen fitting in together, and that only when those are all working side by side in the proper quantities do we get the proper outflow of manufactured articles. But what is the Government's plan for dealing with this? Is it denied that there are bottlenecks to-day, essential machines, even aircraft machines, ready in every respect except for one little gadget? How do the Government propose to deal with this? When this is the state of things, is it suggested that there is a production policy and a production plan?

Let me turn now to agriculture. There is no agricultural policy. It is not enough simply to say, "Plough." It is not enough to say that we have ploughed so many thousands of acres. There is not an hon. Member here who does not know that if one ploughs an acre of one sort of land one may get five times as much produce from it as if one ploughs 10 acres of another type of land. I should have thought that the agricultural policy should be linked up with the food policy; I should have thought that the time had long ago come when the Minister of Food should be the boss and the Minister of Agriculture should be in the nature of his factory manager. The Minister of Food ought to be able to say, "Last year I imported so much and your production was so much; this year I cannot rely upon such large imports, and therefore, I insist upon your producing so much of this commodity, so much wheat, so much barley, so much oats, so much milk." There is no such plan to-day.

All that is said to the farmer is, "Plough." What the farmer puts into the ploughed land is left to his individual whim. This is a matter which should be left to the Minister of Food; he should lay down his necessities, and then the Minister of Agriculture should tell the War Agricultural Committees in the counties that their quota is so much. Then, if they are short of labour, as they are—certainly they are in my county to-day, although they are doing their utmost and ploughing up more than the War Agricultural Committee asked them—if they are short of labour, and tell that to the Minister, and

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Davies.]
tell him also that they are short of implements, short of manure, short of lime, he should say, "That does not matter; indent for them, and they will be there. You have to produce. You will have to grow so much wheat. You will have to give me so much milk and so much meat." Then you will have your plan, but when are you going to say, "That belongs to the Minister of Food"? What is the position to-day? Although some farmers have got their wheat, they are feeding their cattle upon it. You make your order that they shall not sell, but you do not make your order that they shall not use it. Because of the price of cakes, and because of the difficulty in getting them, cattle are being fed. Farmers are afraid that they cannot get alternative foods, and they are using it. One day you will have to have a full census of all the food produced in this country, and a fair distribution.

There is no finance policy. Expenditure to-day is at the rate of £4,500,000,000, and Revenue is only producing £1,500,000,000; there is a deficit of £3,000,000,000. We are borrowing at the rate of £1,200,000,000, and obtaining from selling securities and other things about £800,000,000. Add them together, and there is still a deficit of £1,000,000,000. What is proposed? Is it intended to increase taxation when we know that at the present moment the limit has just about been reached? Have the Government made up their minds that the time has come for a complete change in the economic attitude towards all these matters, and have they recognised that finance takes only a secondary consideration compared with economic considerations? What follows from not having a production policy, a consumption policy and a finance policy? You have no wage policy. The right hon. Gentleman said, yesterday, in a passing reference to this, that he proposed to leave it where it was. Is it right? Are we to have a wage policy in regard to certain people and certain industries, but say to others, "Let the whole thing go on as if this war did not exist"?

We shall have increases in some cases, refusals in others, and bribes of higher wages here and there. Why cannot the Government say, "We have to tackle this problem and plan to deal with the whole population"? Is there a policy to deal with children and a policy of family allowances? Have the Government even thought about it or tried to tackle it? Is some kind of assistance to be given to the children, or are they to be allowed to go on as before? There is no price policy. Some prices are allowed to go up, and then, when agitation arises, a new controlled price is put in. What follows with no wage price and no price policy? You have inflation. Time and again the Government have been telling us that they would use their greatest endeavours and take every step to avoid inflation, but whatever they have done inflation is here. What is their policy in regard to it?

Then, as I have pointed out, there is no compensation, and there is unequal distribution of sacrifice in evacuation areas, and even in bombed areas. The War Damage Bill is all that is being done at the present moment. It provides for a sharing of the burden of loss with regard to building; but that is not the main point. Bricks and mortar are only part of property, and do not represent what a man has built up in a period of years. Then there is no transport policy. The railways are not really controlled. Their primary consideration is still finance and rates, instead of service to the community. Canals are only partially used, and lorries are used by all and sundry in competition with one another. What is the result of that? Chaos and the main cause of our shipping difficulties. Colliers are only working one day or two days per week, and sometimes they go a whole week without working, merely because trucks are not forthcoming.

Mr. J. Griffiths: Since the hon. and learned Member has referred to this question, may I point out that during the Debate yesterday I stated that the worst bottleneck of all is transport, and that scarcely a word has been said about it?

Mr. Davies: May I remind the hon. Member for Llanelly that I, and I alone, attacked the Minister of Transport with regard to this problem, and that my speeches were made in November or December? What I suggest with regard to transport is that it should be taken over by the Minister—the whole of it: railways, canals and lorries—and that he should work it with a transport executive. What is the shipping position to-day?

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Even now the Minister of Shipping does not get the quick turnover. The House will remember that a Question appeared on the Order Paper to-day which showed that a ship was held for about 14 or 15 days. The Minister of Shipping should be setting up in every port people capable of dealing with the situation as a whole in order to give the quickest possible turnover for ships. This cannot be done unless he co-operates with the Minister of Transport. What is the policy in regard to coal? The same attitude is maintained now as before war broke out. The great thing, of course, is again finance, and the burden is placed upon the consumer. Inefficient mines are still being worked, and there are different prices charged to industry. Is it not time that there should be one whole policy? It cannot possibly go on as at present, with one industry getting coal at a certain price and another not getting it at all, and with shortages in some areas and a surplus in others. Why cannot we have equal distribution?

I suggest that it is all due to the weakness of the structure at the top. And now what is being suggested? The setting up of these new committees. There is the Import Executive—and it makes no difference that it is called an Executive and not a Committee—consisting of the Minister of Supply, as Chairman, the Minister of Aircraft Production, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Food. Then comes the Production Executive, with the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Aircraft Production, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade and Minister of Supply. All of them already have full-time jobs. Even if one looks at this announcement, one finds that there are five other Committees—a Committee of Civil Defence, a Committee of Home Policy, a Committee of Food Policy, a Committee on North-American purchases, and finally comes the Lord President's Committee. Again I would refer the House to the statement that I read—

" The necessity is for quick decisions."

May I also recall the phrase used yesterday by the Minister of Labour that you cannot pile organisation upon organisation? What is worse is that every member sitting on that Committee is a judge in his own case, and decisions will really turn upon who is the best advocate. Of necessity, the Minister goes there briefed by his Department that certain things are absolutely essential. What will be his position if he comes back from that Committee day after day and says " I have not been able to get you these things; I was overruled," or how proud he would be if he came back and said, " I have done all you wanted me to do." Has no one any pity for these men?

Take the Prime Minister himself, occupying all these tremendous positions—Prime Minister, Chairman of the War Cabinet, Leader of the House and Minister of Defence. Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister of Aircraft Production, sits on four other Committees, including the War Cabinet. The Minister of Supply is Chairman of the Imports Executive, member of the Production Executive, member of the North American Committee, member of the Lord President's Committee, and at the same time he has the full-time job of being responsible for supplies. How can he be responsible for the whole of the supplies and be called upon to attend committee after committee? The Minister of Labour and National Service has the full work of Minister of Labour, the full work of National Service and also is a member of the War Cabinet, Chairman of the Production Committee and a member of the Lord resident's Committee. What is wanted is not more committees, but no committee. What I should like, and what I have suggested on other occasions, is a small War Cabinet of not more than three, the Prime Minister and two others, with no executive task of any kind, but capable of reviewing the whole situation and deciding the whole of the war policy. Of course, they would have to be assisted by a general staff of the ablest men they could possibly find, ready to go at their dictate and in their name into any office or any place, make their inquiries and carry out the instructions of the War Cabinet. I should like under them again five main officers of State, each one with not only the power but the responsibility for decision—first, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, dealing with the Treasury, not having any control over the others but being in a position to warn them as to what they are doing and where they are tending.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Davies.]

At the other end of the scale, I would have a Minister responsible for all internal affairs, having under him the Home Office, education, pensions, the Post Office and so on; then a Minister of External Affairs, having under him the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Dominions, India, with the Minister of Economic Warfare and the Minister of Information responsible to him. Then in the centre, of course, is the Minister responsible for Defence, having under him the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister for Home Defence. That is the position to-day. I attribute a large part of our success in North Africa not merely to General Wavell, to whom every credit is due, but in no small measure to the fact that defence is under the Prime Minister, who can co-ordinate the Army, Navy and Air Force, with their Ministers responsible to him. Then, under them, responsible for all production, should be all the other Ministers—the Minister of Supplies, who supplies munitions to the War Office, the Admiralty side, dealing with production, the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Minister of Shipping for the producing of ships which should certainly be removed from the Admiralty, then food, coal, petroleum and, of course, labour. What would be the good of having these materials unless you have control also of the food situation? All these Ministers ought to be responsible to one man, who could then give his decision.

It may be suggested that in that way the Ministers of particular Departments would lose their constitutional position in the House of being responsible for the whole work of the Department, but that cannot be right. To-day they are responsible to a committee. Why should not they be in exactly the same position answerable to one man? It is only by getting a small War Cabinet that you will get that quick decision and that vigorous action which the Prime Minister himself has spoken of and which are wanted at the present moment. Undoubtedly preparations have been made throughout this winter. There is a time coming, whether it is in March or in April, and all that I am begging for is that everything that can be done to meet whatever is coming to us shall be done, and done now, and not at some other time weeks hence.

Mr. Lawson (Chester-le-Street): When this Debate was talked about in the country and written about in leading articles, and much more talked about in employers' circles, I was afraid of the damage that it was likely to do, because a good deal of the reason that has been given for it is not merely change and improvement in Governmental machinery. Wholesale charges have been made against large numbers of workers in factories and workshops of not doing their duty, and, in pursuance of that, there has been an adhesion of those who have stood for compulsion of the kind of people they probably do not like and who have used this campaign for their own purpose. I am glad that during the Debate the kind of story with which everyone is familiar about workers in factories has not been told. There has never been a hint of doubt about the workers, but they can take it from me that the campaign has been used for that purpose. I think the workers in factories, workshops and mines deserve a vote of thanks from the House for their splendid achievements, particularly since last June. No one has said, for instance, that if the British troops, by great daring and courage, have smashed their way through the defences of Tobruk it is not in great measure due to the fact that the workers have supplied the material, and very little attention has been paid to the fact that, in spite of the parlous condition of the Forces in the East last June, we have had a splendid victory in Bardia, the Suez Canal has become practically clear of a great menace, and we have been able to send great masses of stuff to the Greeks in their splendid stand against the enemy.

In June last what was the position in this country? The right hon. Gentleman the Minister of Labour referred to it. It is necessary to keep it as the background in order to understand something of the achievement both of the workers and the organisation and of the Government. In June it is a well-known fact that we had lost practically the whole of our speed up of a year or two in equipment for the troops. We lost transport on a great scale. We were reduced to a position in which our defences, if we had been attacked, were very weak indeed, and that is putting it mildly. What is the position now

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

while we are still threatened? I agree with the Noble Lord the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton) that the job before us is still on a Herculean scale. While that is so, how different is the position to-day from the position in June last, when the new Government came into office and when Labour joined the Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell) and I represent seats in the same county. I listened to his speech yesterday and thought it was one of the ablest speeches he had made in the House, but when he is at his best I disagree with him most. My hon. Friend the Member for Llanelly (Mr. J. Griffiths) is a South Wales miners' Member, and he will also agree that the position at that time, as far as the miners were concerned, was a tragic one.

I mention this because I was able from my own experience then to get a view of a mass of problems which the Minister of Labour has had to face about which I knew nothing before. I will tell the House about this, for there are apparently people in the House who need some information upon these matters. The Minister of Mines will probably agree that the county in which I live was the worst hit. We had scores of thousands of miners idle. One week we had been asking the workers to increase their output. Next week half the pits were closed. The problem was how we were to use those men. The leaders, with great courage, went to the men. This is relevant to what I am going to say because I have something very straight to say upon this matter to which the House will have to listen. If it does not, it will do infinite harm among the workers, who are co-operating heartily in the national cause. There is something below this campaign, in spite of the sincerity of some of my friends, that has not been mentioned and that has to be faced by the House before the debate closes.

Some of the leaders, with great courage, had to go to the men and say, " We are sorry, but there is no room for you in the pits. You must go away from home into other industries and do all kinds of things you never thought of doing before." Has my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies) ever faced a meeting of working men in order to tell them what they ought to do when they were in the position of these miners? They are used to calling a spade a spade, and I say, after an experience of trade union organisation and of facing workmen for a lifetime, that there are not too many Members of Parliament who dare do what these leaders did. It is necessary to bring this point out because labour and the trade union organisations are making a contribution in this matter and we are not going to treat them as if they were in leading strings. The white collar mentality and the superior note which certain people adopt with regard to trade union leaders has to come to an end.

Viscountess Astor (Plymouth, Sutton): The hon. Member has got a white collar.

Mr. Lawson: The Noble Lady knows nothing about it. There are matters of Governmental construction, there are great matters for discussion, and I am going to discuss them, but let nobody be under any illusion. I do not think any Member is. They know very well that what I say is true and that there are bigger things behind this than have been dealt with upon the Floor of the House. When the workmen's leaders faced the miners, what did the miners do? They said, " You asked us to do our duty, to increase output and to lengthen our hours, and we agreed. We realise now what the position is." And the men agreed to go away. Some of them had been old soldiers and some were old men. The friends of one man of 60 came to me and said that he was in Scotland. I replied that he ought not to have gone away from home. He was used to different kinds of seams and had worked very hard all his life. He had written about certain difficulties over food and lodgings, which were very bad. In his letter he said, " I will stay here and do my duty if I have to die in the process." That is the spirit of the British worker generally. The country and the world and particularly our friends in America, ought to know that. They read these Debates, and from what has taken place in this Debate up to the present moment one would think we were in the doldrums and that defeat was sure and certain

Those problems emerged one after the other. Fortunately some of the pits resumed work. There are now something like 14,000 men left to be transferred. That is a very good record; but for 10 years we were asking for a Ministry of Industry, and could not get one, for 10

Archivo Histórico Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

[Mr. Lawson.]

years we were begging the Government to cease putting aircraft factories in the London and Coventry areas and to spread them about the country, but we talked to empty benches. When we spoke of unemployment it is notorious that for year after year we talked to empty benches opposite. One of my hon. Friends now present—at any rate one of my hon. opponents—did now and then put in an appearance at some of these Debates and showed some interest in them, but, my word, he was a lonely figure upon those benches. What problems arose when the men went to other places? It was found at once that lodgings presented a difficulty. Half a dozen young fellows came home from one place and one of them said to me, "Mr. Lawson, we will go anywhere and do anything, but we are not going to live in dirty huts." I remember that when reservoirs have had to be built the contractors made villages for their workers, including schools and churches, and all the amenities of life, and I thought contracting work had undergone a revolution, but, will the House believed it, it is still in the same positions as when Pat McGill wrote:

> "Hashing it out like niggers
> On a two-and-a-tanner 'sub,'
> Everything sunk at 'uncle's'
> And nothing to burn at the pub."

That is pretty much the position of affairs to-day. Sometimes the men have got very good lodgings; sometimes they have been promised good lodgings but arrived to find that someone else had got in before them. The matter of accommodation is a very serious one, and while it is true that the House of Commons is now discussing industrial matters in the large sense, as seen from above, we must also consider them from below.

In regard to accommodation I am glad to say, and I think the Minister of Labour will agree, that our miners' agents have been of great assistance. One of them who has some genius in these matters placed himself at the disposal of the Ministry of Labour, and their officials co-operated in fine style. We have heard a lot of criticism of civil servants, and I daresay that criticism does all of us good, but I should not be doing my duty if I did not pay the finest tribute I am capable of to the Ministry of Labour officials, Northern Division, for the warm-hearted way in which they came to the rescue of a great community and the sympathetic way in which they handled the men. If it had not been for that co-operation between them and the miners transference would not have been accomplished on so big a scale. All this may sound very humdrum to this House which is thinking of the general position, but, believe me, these are not humdrum matters to the men concerned.

Then there is the problem of travelling. It is notorious that we lost thousands of buses in France, and in the streets of London we now see buses operating which have been sent to London from all over the country, some of them from the north. In the places from which some of those buses have come men have to get up early in the morning and travel 15 or 20 miles to their work. That may not sound very much in these days, but the prospect is not pleasant when you have to wait your turn and when there is a rush for the buses, and you have to wait for buses both when going to and returning from work. Sometimes men spend 14 hours a day working and travelling to and from work. A young man who is a pretty tough fellow said to me, "I leave home at seven o'clock in the morning, and it is sometimes eight or nine when I get back, and, believe me, at the week-end I am about done in." [*Interruption.*]

Earl Winterton: I was saying that we ought to annex all cars—but I do not want to interrupt the hon. Member's speech.

Mr. Lawson: Owing to a position which I hold I am in pretty close touch with a local representative of the Ministry of Transport, and he has shown himself to be very considerate, but the position is that there are not enough buses to go round. Then there is the wages question After men have travelled long distances they find the weather is against them and they are idle for a week through no fault of their own. That has happened to those who have been assisting to build aircraft factories. It is regrettable to see the position in which the men have been left. These difficulties in regard to transport and accommodation, though they have been rather focussed in my particular area, have been general throughout the country, and the Ministry of Labour has had to wrestle with them. Some hon. Members

Archivo Histórico — Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

say, " Why was compulsion not put into operation six months ago or three months ago? " At that time men were standing in a queue to get transferred or to get training, and the Ministry had to contend with all the difficulties of which I have been speaking. Why should they introduce compulsion at a time when it was difficult to deal with the volunteers?

Mr. Clement Davies: My suggestion was that a plan ought to have been ready. The plan ought to have been ready months ago, at the beginning of the war.

Mr. Lawson: We agree. I think the hon. Member will acknowledge that no one has striven more for the preparation of plans for industry than those of us on this side of the House, in order to make quite sure that this position would not arise; but it was there. The Minister could not, in justice to the men concerned, put compulsion into operation, because of the volunteers that were there.

Earl Winterton: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Gentleman for more than a moment, but I would say, with great diffidence, that I hope he will accept my assurance. I, and others of us, are not attacking the Minister of Labour; we are attacking a lack of plan. That is the point.

Mr. Lawson: I have taken note of the point, and I will refer to it later. The Minister could not, in face of the facts as they were then, force men, when it was a matter of dealing with volunteers. I am not a supporter or defender of people, whether they are industrialists or independent, who are not doing work, and evidently will not do work. If I said anything in the matter at all, it would be that nothing has done more harm to the decent worker, or more danger of undermining, than the U.A.B. and its Means Test. It has kept men lying idle for long years. If any body has been to blame for that, it is the House of Commons. We protested for years against that policy, which did the best for the foolish type of person and punished most the best. I understand clearly that the drive now is for general compulsion. What does that mean?

Mr. Kirkwood: It means trouble.

Mr. Lawson: My hon. Friend the Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell) frankly compared the industrial side with the military side. He said it meant that every employable person should be subjected to discipline comparable to that operating in the Forces. It is true that later he said that there should be tribunals. The Noble Lord has had experience of the Army; I wonder whether he would like to make that comparison.

Earl Winterton: I think I should. I will say this to my hon. Friend who just spoke about trouble. Believe me, if you think you can keep 2,000,000 soldiers in this country, trained from every class, and expect them to be subjected to certain things, while leaving outside everybody else, whether peers or peasants, you will have trouble, if not now, in the future. If not now, after the war.

Mr. Lawson: I have had experience of both Army and industrial conditions. Those who want to compare compulsion in the Army and compulsion in industry simply know nothing about industry. From my experience in the Army I know that the principle there is " Obey." You have to obey. Individuality and individual thinking are to be discouraged among the ordinary rank and file when you are working with great masses, if you are to be successful. True, there are certain exceptional times and arrangements on the field of battle when the man who can readily use his individual judgment is entitled to very great credit, but, generally speaking, individual judgments are to be discouraged if you want to have good soldiers.

I well remember leaving the Forces and coming back to industry. I had to shake myself in order to resurrect the faculties which were necessary for individual thinking and for industrial work, and which had been altogether asleep. Those who stand for compulsion right through industry are not aware of the logic of their demands. The work of the soldier is to obey, but the workman has to think individually, and never the twain shall meet. In spite of mass production, the well-run workshop, mine or factory depends, as everybody knows who is acquainted with the subject, upon individuality, personal judgments and co-operation, and the good will of the workmen is necessary to production. I warn my hon. Friends to be careful that, in working to a given end, they do not kill the very thing that they want to keep alive and develop.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Lawson.]

The House has to face another fact, with which I have already dealt in some measure. There are those who genuinely want compulsion because they think it is right. I give to my hon. Friend the Member for Seaham credit for the same sincerity as I have myself, in dealing with these matters, but I do not like my hon. Friend taking the course he did. A man must speak according to his conscience to-day, and must do and say the thing that he thinks. That is what we are fighting for. There is another school, however, and another motive. Everybody knows the talk that has gone on. Everybody knows the things that have been said in this country. There is an attitude towards the worker. To put it bluntly, I know people who seem to think that because a man has a long name he is all right. There are intellectuals, and we have them in our movement, who seem to take that view.

Let me tell the House of experience that I have had. I had the experience of going to a university city. I went there from coal hewing, after 12 years in the pit. Those in command of the university were very kind indeed, and the late Mr. Fisher was one of the kindest at that time. When I went to that university city I was sorry for myself, but I saw young men in the university of my own age who had had great training and teaching, and when I saw how insecure their foundations were, compared with mine, I was sorry for them. This country tends to overestimate book-learning. In the industrial revolution poor families accumulated wealth and followed in the steps of what were known as the governing and educated classes of those times, and a great over-emphasis has been made on book-learning. We have had the white-collar mentality, and there is that attitude towards industrial workers in this country. The great mass of industrial employers still think of the average worker as a kind of ignorant clod there for their purposes, and they regard trade unions as something even less.

The fact that an ex-worker like my right hon. Friend is in charge of a great Department which controls the whole mass of labour in this country is not to the liking of certain sections. They are the driving force. You can see it in the Press. I am sorry to express what may be regarded as the class view. There is nobody more loyal to the great cause for which this country stands or who tries to think in terms of national well-being than I, but it is sometimes necessary to say some things, and I warn those concerned in these matters to be very careful what they do. They can use their Press and their leading articles, they can bring to bear all the influence and pressure they like, and they may even succeed in their ends in this House, but they will regret it when they see the results of their work in actual fact. If the Government can settle these industrial matters, well and good, but we have the common sense to know that it takes time and material, and time is not on our side in these matters. For the moment I am pleased that the Minister of Labour is in charge.

In order to give an indication of the attitude of the workers to this conflict in which we are engaged, I would like to tell the House that just before the end of the year there was a meeting of about 150 delegates of the miners' organisation, and they attended with instructions from their lodges. They were there to decide upon a message of good will to the rest of the miners of Europe. When this message, which has since been broadcast by the B.B.C. to all the countries in Europe, was read there was not a single objector. The delegates leapt to their feet and cheered time and time again. I will read one passage from it:

> "We are practically alone in Europe in having the right of free assembly, public meeting and free discussion. We are determined to retain that heritage. What we have for ourselves we desire others to enjoy. These are the aims of the miners everywhere with the Durham miners who live in a democratic nation and value democracy above their lives."

Right through the whole of that message they have pledged themselves to give all they can in labour and sacrifice in pursuance of the great cause for which we are fighting. That is the temper of the great mass of the workers, and I appeal to every Member in this House to beware lest that temper and spirit become modified or undermined.

Flight-Lieutenant McCorquodale (Sowerby): We have all listened with much pleasure and a very great deal of agreement to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just resumed his seat. We all know his sincerity, and those who

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

have been in the House with him for some time know how well he expresses the mind of the very best class of the British working people in this country. The trenchant criticism of the hon. and learned Gentleman who opened this Debate has its uses, but surely he overdoes it. I consider that he does more harm than good in the long run by such disruptive tactics. Possibly it is rather impertinent of me to say so, but I would beg him to believe that in his self-styled position of Jermiah to this country he is in danger of becoming rather boring. I must confess that my job at the moment—I am attached to a large and rather remote aerodrome in this country—has kept me from being in such close touch with production, industry and man-power as I was some months ago. These problems, however, must press down so constantly and heavily on those immediately responsible for them in government and industry hour by hour and day by day, that, possibly, those of us who stand back a little way and therefore have the opportunity of seeing the problem more in the broad sense may have something to contribute.

I think it is obvious that no one in the country is altogether happy about production. In many directions we have done wonders. I will give an example, which I do not think has often been pointed out—the repair of crashed and damaged aircraft which became available in very large numbers, when, suddenly, heavy fighting began in the skies over these shores. Organisation was needed. The organisation was set up and the repair of those aircraft was carried through promptly and in the shortest possible time. Many examples can be cited, but, on the other hand, I think there is a certain unevenness in our production and our productive method. This is obviously felt by the Prime Minister himself as indicated by the recent changes that he has made in the Government. I would like to make a few remarks upon those changes. It would appear to me that the new plan which has been announced puts all the production powers in the joint hands of three Ministers, the Ministers of Labour, of Aircraft Production and of Supply. These three gentlemen can call in the Lord President of the Council to help them to decide some problems, if and when their special interests clash, as clash they must from time to time. The plan as announced looks complicated; it did not look very pretty on paper and consequently it had a poor reception in the Press. But I think it will work, and surely that is the only test to apply to it.

These three gentlemen, if I may say so, have very remarkable if somewhat diverse gifts. Welded together into one more or less harmonious whole, with the Lord President of the Council as their manager, they should make a very formidable trinity to deal with our production and man-power questions. But this is a point which struck me the other day when I was reading it, and I make it purely on my own initiative: surely these three gentlemen should all be either inside or outside the War Cabinet. From a production point of view, I, personally, think it would be better of they were outside, and could therefore concentrate on the job in hand. But if the Prime Minister wishes to have their advice inside the War Cabinet, and I can quite well understand that, I consider that all three gentlemen should be there together, so that they are on the same plane. I was not here yesterday, for I travelled from Scotland during the night, but I have carefully read the speech by the Minister of Labour and most of the rest of the Debate. I have always had a great admiration for the Minister of Labour, if I may say so, and I am glad he is here to-day for me to say it in his presence, misguided though I have often thought him in his political views in the past.

Mr. George Griffiths (Hemsworth): It is the hon. Member himself who has been misguided.

Flight-Lieutenant McCorquodale: Possibly the right hon. Gentleman thinks so also. I must confess that I, personally, have more confidence in big, rather stout people than, in small people. I say this in all sincerity—and I hope my Noble Friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton) will not take it badly that I should say it while he is not here—but I would sooner trust the right hon. Gentleman's judgment of the British working man, since he must have wider knowledge than that of the Noble Lord. I do trust, however, that the Minister of Labour, just as he has not done so in the past, will not now and will never in the future show any lack of courage in facing any problem however difficult or distasteful

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Flight-Lieutenant McCorquodale.]

which may be presented to him in the very hard task before him.

To turn to another point I am not altogether happy about the smaller business concerns in this country. Our economic strength and our efficiency in the past have been built up not through great industrial combines, but through a multitude of small, efficient, flexible, happy and largely family businesses. I emphasise the word " happy " because it is my belief that in a great number of cases the workman or the manager who has been in the same business as his father before him is often more happy in that family connection than those in the great organisations where each is only one cog of many thousands, even though in the latter they may be better looked after in the material sense. Those concerns, moreover, are dispersed throughout the country. They exist not only in the big target centres, but also in the little towns and the villages, and dispersal is forced upon us as the main solution of our bombing problems in regard not only to children and aeroplanes, but also factories. Many of these firms, with their organisations, premises, staff and facilities are going to the wall for lack of orders, while vast new factories arise all over the countryside.

I maintain that an efficient small concern can change over their production completely much more easily than a big organisation. We shall need these small and medium sized concerns very badly after the war. The Minister of Supply has set up a number of area committees and area supply boards, and we heard the Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Supply talk eloquently about them some months ago. Are they doing their job adequately in obtaining production and in training these small concerns to change over from non-essential work to essential work and keeping the workers in the localities they know, out of the way of the bombing, and where they can get on with the job? I believe there is a great deal still to be accomplished in that direction.

Finally, and this is the point which I came to London to raise, I would like to refer to Sunday night's postscript, to which probably a great number of hon. Members also listened. In that postscript Mr. Maurice Healy, with his usual brilliance, charmed us all. He said that, in his opinion, invasion in the Spring was possible, but not probable. This is the type of soothing syrup which is being put over especially in the areas which have not yet felt the full weight of bombing. In my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of everybody in this House, an attempt at invasion within the next three months, before the nights get too short, is inevitable. If Herr Hitler thinks he has any chance at all of winning the war, that invasion will be the most terrific onslaught the world has ever seen. The situation will be one of acutest danger, but will afford also unparalleled opportunity. We shall not have to rely on American aid; that will come later. In this invasion we shall have to rely on our own strength. The invasion will be by land and sea and air, with chemical warfare and all the horrors that our foes can think of. The Royal Air Force is ready to smash it at the invasion ports, the Navy to sink it on its way over and the Army to annihilate the remnants that arrive in this country, if only we give them the weapons to do so.

There is, however, more to it than that. Our brilliantly successful campaign in Libya, which has so delighted us all, started, as is well known, with a limited attack on Sidi Barrani. It was successful, and its success surely has taught us one great lesson. It has taught us that in war nothing succeeds like success. I believe, if we can and do smash this invasion in the Spring, that then will be our great opportunity to follow it up and hit back on the Continent of Europe, if only we have enough weapons to do so. Victory is not inevitable, and there is too much complacency in many parts of the country to-day. I feel it up in the North where I come from. There are too many soothing articles in the Press, too many Maurice Healys on the radio. The Prime Minister has never failed in that respect in a single one of his speeches, but I would beg the other Ministers, every one of them—I would beg the Ministry of Economic Warfare, whose self-satisfied statements are a scandal, and that miserable Ministry of Information, to rally the country. I would beg every Member of Parliament to go down to his constituency and let the people know what the situation really is. Last summer we had to make a mighty effort to stave off defeat.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

We made it brilliantly, and in my opinion we have to make another even mightier effort now, not merely to stave off defeat, but to give us the basis of victory. The margin is small, time is short. Six months ago the then Minister of Supply, now Minister of Home Security, coined a phrase which went all over the country. " Go to it," he cried, and " Go to it " the posters screamed back. All the nation, every man of them, went to it. I believe that to-day, and for the next two or three months, our slogan should be " Keep at it—keep at it every moment." If this were properly put to the country, there is not one part of the country that would not respond adequately to the appeal.

Mr. Scott (Wansbeck): I rise to make my first contribution in this House with feelings akin to fear and trepidation—feelings that are only allayed by the thought of your protection, Sir, and of the tolerance that is shown by the House on such occasions. It is obvious that a Debate of this nature must cover a very wide field, but I have been disappointed to find that the still, small voice of agriculture has hardly been raised, either yesterday or to-day. The subject has hardly been touched upon. I wish to discuss the problem of man-power and the land. There is no need to remind this House of the tremendous importance of agriculture at this moment, an importance which is being realised by the whole country more and more as the war goes on. No matter how strong and well-equipped our armed forces may be, no matter how persevering and hard-working our munition workers, and no matter how zealous and how courageous and well-trusted our leaders, the vital problem of food supply remains. Food is the source of human energy and the source of a great part of our morale.

The people of this country have shown unmistakably that they can " take it." But the responsibility of seeing that they are not asked to take it on empty, or half-empty, bellies rests to a large extent on the shoulders of the British farmer and farm-worker. They, true to the best traditions of the countryside, have accepted their responsibility with courage, with pride, and with determination. They have accepted, too, with thankful hearts the various aids which the Government have given to agriculture, in order that this task may be undertaken. They have accepted, too, with gratitude the increased wages and higher price levels. And they have accepted with patience, albeit with a certain amount of bewilderment, the almost complete control of their industry, not only the control of buying and selling, but also the control of methods of husbandry, some of which are hallowed by tradition and proven by economic results. They are doing their best to meet the nation's need. Nevertheless, great anxiety is spreading through the agricultural industry about this question of man-power. Nor are the farmers and farm-workers entirely placated by the promise of substitute labour from the Women's Land Army and other volunteer forces. I should hate hon. and right hon. Members to think that I have anything but the very highest regard for the Women's Land Army. They have done magnificent work, and will do magnificent work in future. But unless and until they are fully trained they cannot be regarded as proper substitutes for the men who have spent their life-times in the countryside, and who have been brought up within sight and sound of the seasonal sequences of the countryside.

It is scarcely to be wondered that the farmers are greatly alarmed at the thought that before the next busy season comes they may lose a large proportion of their skilled workers. I believe that only those who have farmed or have worked with crops and livestock can appreciate the amount of skill required by a farm-worker, and the long and arduous training which is necessary in order to acquire that skill. Take the farming year as it affects the shepherd. It bears extremely little relation to the outpourings of the poet. It is a time in which one man plays many parts, and plays them very well. He is a dietetist, a " vet.", a midwife, a weather forecaster, and many other things. The ploughman too has to possess much of the knowledge of the " vet.", the surveyor, the geologist, and, above all, of the mechanic. His knowledge is of immense importance at this present juncture. People used to laugh a great deal at the kind of repairs which were improvised on farm machines. I have myself, only recently, seen tractors and other farm machinery so tended and nursed that they have continued to give valuable service long after they would

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Scott.]

have fallen to pieces in the hands of the inexpert or the learner.

I am making this case for the retention of a fair proportion of farm workers. I am not trying to suggest that British agriculture has any desire to shelter its personnel at the expense of the country. The response made by the countrymen to the call of the Territorial Army before the war, and to the call of the Home Guard since, proves that the agricultural community are as patriotic and as anxious to serve as any other section. I would go further, and say that we in agriculture are prepared to give as many men as possible, as many as are consistent with the ever-increasing demand for more production. I would beg the Government to spare to us as many key workers—shepherds, stockmen, ploughmen and tractor drivers—as are consistent with the demands of national security. I know that I may be accused of trying to shelter this industry, but I know that my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture realises, and that the Government realise, that that is not the intention of the farming community. It would be of terrific assistance to that community if at this juncture the Government would make a pronouncement at the very earliest opportunity on the whole question of labour and the land. Farmers might then plan ahead and have some idea of what labour, skilled and unskilled, is to be available.

It has been my privilege during the last two or three weeks to help to apportion extra potato acreage in a certain district. Where objections have been raised by farmers, they have not been on the grounds of unsuitability of soil or of lack of capital or of seasonal risks: they have been raised over and over again on that one point, Where are we going to get the men? For a moment I wish to deal with the question of gang labour. We have heard a certain amount about that, but the farming community is waiting now to hear what the Government plans are with regard to the provision of well-organised and well-distributed gang labour for the coming busy season. I, personally, want to see not merely gangs of the Women's Land Army, and of conscientious objectors and of other suitable helpers, but above all, gangs of those most adaptable workers, the miners, when they are out of work. That applies particularly, of course, to districts adjacent to South Wales and to County Durham. I have seen the miner work many times in the pit, and I have worked with him myself many times in the fields, and the one thing I know is, that he is the type of labour that we want on the land when he has not his own job to which to go.

Finally, as my last supplication, I beg the right hon. Gentleman the Minister of Labour to use his powers with regard to those trained agricultural workers who are leaving the land in a surprising number to go to forestry. Apparently, they are allowed to do so, and it is not fair to the farmer, and it certainly is most unfair to the agricultural worker who sticks to his job and stays behind and has extra work to do thereby. I feel that I have spoken long enough, but I want to say in closing that the eyes of the country are on the farmer and the farm-worker, who cannot be severed or considered separately when it comes down to agriculture. They are perfectly willing to "Go to it" and to keep at it. They have great trust in the Government and great confidence in my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, and very rightly and properly so. They have great confidence in the future, although, at first, that may seem rather like Dr. Johnson's definition of a second marriage—"the triumph of hope over experience." But they have something for which to hope this time because they have solid promises on which to rely. They have great confidence in their own skill and in the bounties of nature, but just at this moment, between seed time and harvest, between the fold and the farm, between the lambing-pen and the market, and, if you like, between the cow and the pail, there stands a grim spectre—the spectre of an acute skilled labour shortage. If the Government can remove that ghost as they have removed many others from agriculture, then, the farmer and the farm-worker can go forward with heart, and this country will be fed.

Dr. Summerskill (Fulham, West): Most of us here have vivid recollections of our maiden speeches and of the poor efforts we made, and, therefore, I congratulate the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Scott) upon having made such an informative speech—one well worthy of old and seasoned Members. I want to deal with an aspect of the speech of the Minister of Labour which has not yet been mentioned. When the hon. and

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

learned Member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. C. Davies) ranged over the work of the Ministry of Labour, and asked the Minister about his policy on every subject, I listened hopefully for him to ask the Minister what was to be his policy, in the new scheme which he outlined yesterday, towards the industrial army of women workers. It is a very important matter because the Minister of Labour has outlined a vast new experiment which has no parallel in this country. He said that in 1914 the situation was entirely different. Women's labour had been used, and there was little reserve. He came yesterday to that Box and said that in the near future all women in the country, whether they have work or not, are to be asked to join in the war effort.

I am not concerned only with the women who are yawning their way through the war and wondering what to do with their time, and whose lives have been altered very little by the war, but with women who are to be recruited and will find themselves in a factory or a workshop for the first time in their lives. I think it has been suggested that the time is not yet ripe for the Minister to go to the country and say to the women, "We are ready for you." I understand that there are not sufficient raw materials and machines, but the important thing is that the Minister of Labour is to introduce a measure which I believe will cause as much social upheaval as the evacuation organisation. Therefore, the time has come when the Minister of Labour should realise that, if the women of the country are to respond—as I want them to respond—they must be prepared.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chester-le-Street (Mr. Lawson) rather illustrated my point when he said that a soldier had to get accustomed to obeying orders; that he must not think, and that when he was transferred to industry he had to resurrect his faculties. The Minister of Labour must not think that the women of the country, who have formed certain habits and are simply thinking in terms of cooking, cleaning, and looking after the household, could, almost overnight, be turned into first-class industrial workers. You have to go to these women and ask them to think in new terms. I do not believe it is necessary to wait for two or three months. Propaganda should start now. When I say that there will be a big social upheaval, I am very conscious of what this means. It has to be remembered that the woman in the home, who is now to be called upon, is controlled by what her husband thinks and wants. It is not a question of saying to the woman, "It is your duty to go out into the factory." You have also to tell the husband that the first loyalty of his wife in the near future is to the State. This will be a real obstacle, and I anticipate that there will be a great outcry among many men in the country who will suggest that the Minister of Labour is trying to disrupt family life. That is not an exaggeration.

I want this process of educating the nation to realise that the war effort must be in the forefront of their lives to commence immediately. After all, on the question of disrupting family life, we have to realise that the soldier is not asked whether or not he wishes to leave his wife. He is told that his duty is somewhere else and he must do it. So we face an unparalleled situation. I want all women—from those who have not been accustomed to doing their own work, not even making their own bed, to those who have no maid and do all the domestic work—to come out and do their bit. I understand that the Minister of Labour will do this. But he must take one step immediately. He must make the women of the country war-minded and their husbands, too, war-minded. They must realise that war will entail great sacrifices on the part of every citizen in the country.

I confess I was a little surprised that these very important points were not amplified yesterday. The Minister of Labour said he realised that if hundreds of thousands of women were to be asked to leave their homes they must be told that their children will be well cared for. For the first time in the history of this country the Government are to adopt responsibility for the welfare of the children of the country, which is as it should be. I do not believe you will get any married woman who has children to come out and give of her best, if she knows that her children are not being well cared for. The Minister said that it was proposed to set up day nurseries but it is of little use saying to women that there will be such nurseries unless you tell them what are the conditions which will govern the nurseries and what amount is to be

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Dr. Summerskill.]

charged. Will you say to a woman who has five children " It will take all your wages to pay for looking after the children at the day nursery." I suggest that these nurseries should be open and free to every woman worker in the country who wants to leave her children there. These new ideas which the Government have for dealing with this problem must now be conveyed to the women of the country so that they can plan their new lives.

The next point I would like amplified is that of the wages which the Government suggest should be paid to women? I know the Minister of Labour, quite rightly, believes that in dealing with workers, wages and conditions are of primary importance. Why on earth treat women, who are thinking beings, differently from men? You will not get the right response and service if you merely say " We call on the women to serve." The women who are reading about this new scheme are saying " Supposing I do leave my home, what are the conditions under which I shall work?" I want to know whether the Minister of Labour supports the principle of equal pay for equal work? In theory I know all fair-minded men say that this is a right thing but now you are to call upon women who have never been out of their homes to work. Curiously, an idea still exists in many homes that really respectable women should not go out to work. All such ideas, I believe, will be dissipated by the end of the year, but until you tell women the wages and conditions under which they will work I can see that in a few months time the Minister may be very seriously disappointed at the lack of response to his call.

I believe that the Minister of Labour should now give a lead to all employers in the country who still use women as cheap labour and do, in fact, exploit them in factories up and down the country. They exploit them, very often, because they know that the women come out of their homes in order to make a little more to subsidise their husband's wages. I believe that the Minister should say what wages are to be paid, and whether they are to be paid on an equal basis, and I also want to know something more about the conditions under which they will be asked to work. It is proposed that women shall be asked to work in munition factories and factories which the Nazi bombers regard as military objectives? Do not think for one moment that women will shirk from doing that; they have shown already that their courage is equal to that of men. But I am anxious to have this point clarified: Will the Minister co-operate with the Minister of Pensions who has announced his refusal to pay women workers the same compensation as for men if they undertake the same risks? There are many women's organisations—and I fully support their propaganda—making it their job now to explain to the women of the country that the Government, so far, have not announced an equitable scheme for compensation for women who are injured at work. I do not know whether the House knows it but if a single man is injured at work as a result of bombing he gets a pension of 35s. a week, whereas a woman in the same position gets 28s. a week.

Let us draw a picture of a munitions factory in the Midlands. In a few months' time it may be quite a commonplace to have women fire watchers—there may be one on this building—guarding men workers on factories throughout the country. The position to-day is that if that woman fire watcher is permanently injured doing her job, she gets a pension of 28s. a week while a single man she is guarding, who is so injured, gets 35s. a week. This, I suggest, is absolutely inequitable because it means that this woman is thrown on to public assistance or the charity of relatives. This is a position which exists to-day. If a woman who is not being paid a wage comes forward and does the job, she gets only 14s. a week, which means that certainly she would be thrown on to public assistance. When I ask the Government to tell the women of the country more about the details of the scheme, I do so because I feel this would be in the interests of the scheme. The women will not come forward, and the army of women workers will not materialise, unless they are given a square deal.

Furthermore, the Minister of Labour said that in future the Services are to be combed and that in those jobs in which women can do the work done by soldiers or officers, the places of the soldiers or officers will be taken by women. In some units I can see the whole thing being dominated by women,

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

when I think of the number of men in the Army who sit at desks and do the work of clerks. If the Minister of Labour says this is to happen, the situation will be almost revolutionary. If it is suggested that the only thing women cannot do is the physically heavy work of the Army, there will be a tremendous change over. Having said that, I should like the Minister of Labour to tell us whether, if we are in effect to have women soldiers in the Regular Army—by which I mean the Army as opposed to the auxiliary services—he is going to treat them like men. Will he allow the dependants of those women to have an allowance as the dependants of the men have one? This is a question which concerns women throughout the country, and because the dependants of the women in the auxiliary forces are receiving nothing, we find that the auxiliary forces are in a continuous state of flux. I hope the Government will take this matter extremely seriously, because, unless the new army of women are told exactly what their rights are and what are the conditions under which they will work, the recruitment will be slow. Finally, the hon. Member for Duddeston (Mr. Simmonds) more or less confined his speech yesterday to women, and he said it was disgraceful that women are not allowed to work seven days in the week.

Mr. Simmonds (Duddeston): If they wish to do so.

Dr. Summerskill: I noticed that no hon. Member took up the point, and I feel that I should respond for women. My view, in which I am backed up, I think, by certain scientific opinion, is that it is absolutely unwise to ask any worker, whether a woman or a man, to work seven days a week, for the simple reason that if one does so, one does not get the maximum production. It is not a question of physical strength, but simply a question of production. I was astonished at the hon. Gentleman, who has so often told us that he is an employer, not knowing that a Commission was set up to study this problem, and that those were their findings.

Mr. Simmonds: The hon. Lady must not misrepresent what I said. The position in this country to-day is that we have too few machine tools, and for the moment those machine tools must be working as near as possible 24 hours a day for seven days a week. Things may be better in two or three months' time, and we hope they will be, but at present it is imperative, to withstand the enemy in the next few months, that all these machine tools should be working night and day. One way of doing this is to allow women who want to do so, and who are strong enough, to work on the seventh day of the week during the next month or two, and not prevent them doing so.

Dr. Summerskill: I was talking about human beings and not about machine tools. Machine tools can be worked seven days a week, but in my opinion it is uneconomic to get human beings to work for seven days a week. The solution of the problem is to get the vast army of women who are doing nothing to-day, and who long to do a job of work to come in on the seventh day and do it. The appeal I make to the Government is this. Women are being told that we are fighting for democracy. I understand that democracy is based on the belief that men and women are equal. I want the Government to prove this to the women whom they are asking to come forward and help with the war effort.

Lieut.-Colonel Lancaster (Fylde): I should like to add my congratulations to the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Scott) on his most excellent maiden speech. I shall confine my remarks to the question of man power and production as affecting the coal-mining industry. That industry is now being asked to provide its quota of men, and I feel sure that every hon. Member who has any connection with a coal-mining area will be the first to claim that there is no body of men more anxious at this time to give their services. But the matter is a more complicated one than merely deciding that a proportion of men shall be withdrawn from the industry. I have no doubt that the Secretary for Mines has given this matter serious attention, and he has very wisely set up tribunals to deal with questions regionally as they present themselves, but there are certain aspects of the matter in its national implication to which I ask him to pay particular attention.

As the House knows, for the second year in succession there is a shortage of coal. I think we can reasonably be critical of that fact. Shortly after Munich, some

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Lieut.-Colonel Lancaster.]

of us put forward suggestions to the Secretary for Mines which I think would have gone some considerable distance towards obviating this state of affairs. Be that as it may, there is a situation to-day in which certain classes of coal for certain industries are lacking. Of course, when we made those suggestions we could not visualise Germany over-running the Low Countries, the defection of France, or even Italy joining in the war on the side of Germany. What we did anticipate was that there would be a considerable dislocation in the supply of coal to our national industries as a result of sea and air attacks on coastwise trade. In a great measure that has come about. The fact that the export districts have at this moment no great demand for their coal does not mean that the coal is available for our industries. A great deal of that coal from these districts is not necessarily suitable. In general, the export districts are remote from our main centres of industry, and the question of transferring that coal is very nearly a physical impossibility. The strain on the railways at a moment when they are being severely strained in other directions rules any considerable transference of coal from export districts inland out of the question. In the meantime the internal demand for coal is rising, slowly but steadily. We have to meet that demand, and we have to recognise, in considering the withdrawal of men from the industry, the particular districts from which that demand is at present emanating. Lancashire, Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Warwickshire and the whole of the Midland amalgamated district should continue to produce as much as they are to-day, and, if possible, more.

That raises the obvious difficulty that men will be asked to join the Forces from the export districts, where, through no fault of their own but purely as a result of what has happened during the war, they have been thrown out of employment. I think it is fair to say that no man at this moment claims exemption merely because he happens to follow a particular trade. The demands of the State in this matter must be paramount, and rather than attempt to spread this matter as between the two districts, we should hold very clearly in mind the fact that to withdraw any considerable number of men from certain districts will not be to the ultimate good of our war aim. In this connection I suggest that no man should be withdrawn from Lancashire, Staffordshire, Cannock Chase or Warwickshire. Notts and South Yorkshire could supply certain classes of certain age-groups.

If I may interject a personal note, I have the honour in peace-time to be the chairman of a concern which employs the second largest number of men in the Midlands. We have at this moment something over 10 per cent. of our men who have volunteered for the Forces. I only mention that because it seems to me that that is one of the matters which the Secretary for Mines should take into account when assessing the contribution to be demanded from any particular pit. If he ignores that particular fact he may be withdrawing from a pit an undue proportion of young men upon whom the main burden of production under conditions of mechanisation inevitably falls.

The whole matter is complicated, because there are so very many aspects which have to be considered if an intelligent determination is to be arrived at. We have a situation where a man in Nottinghamshire, for instance, is producing something like 30 cwts. per man-shift, but in Durham a man is producing something over 21 cwts. and a man at Bristol something over 19 cwts. The effect at the moment is that that man from Nottinghamshire has a greater value than the man, say, from the Bristol area. Equally you have men within a pit who contribute more to the actual production of coal than others. I can visualise a situation where a flat 5 per cent. quota from two pits might affect in one case 20 per cent. of the numbers gainfully employed, whereas at the other pit the actual production might be hardly affected at all. I think there should be some transference of labour—certain age-groups of labour at this moment—because of the vital need of the maximum production of coal from those districts where the output per man-shift is highest, and where the coal is suitable and where production is nearest to our essential war industries. It is no good to say to the industrialist that he should use an inferior coal; that merely means a greater consumption. Efficiency is governed by the adaptability of a particular fuel to the particular boiler installation. It is no good saying to the

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

domestic consumer that he should use an inferior coal.

The matter needs intelligent planning, and I would suggest, even at this late hour, that the whole question of transference of certain age-groups should be carefully considered. At the same time we cannot afford to see the export districts getting into a condition which will not enable them to take the earliest advantage of any demand. That point must be kept carefully in mind. Any transference of labour on a large scale at this moment from the social point of view is beyond the power of the coalowners to deal with. It should be dealt with by the Government, who must take into consideration all the matters which arise when men are asked to go from one part of the country to another—housing amenities and so on. Therefore I would earnestly request the Secretary for Mines, in consultation with the Ministry of Labour, to go into this matter and to recognise that if it is to be dealt with effectively, the Minister must show vision and must deal with the problem boldly. Notwithstanding the difficulties of the moment, I urge that, even at this late hour, this great basic industry, upon which possibly more than any other depends the fulfilment of our war effort, should receive the planning and foresight which it has long deserved.

Mr. Woodburn (Stirling and Clackmannan, Eastern): The beginnings of this Debate, one gathers, arose from a Press campaign which demanded that in the interest of the country there should be a general scheme of compulsion. The question of compulsion has been examined from two points of view yesterday and to-day; first on the ground of principle that, because the Army are compelled, industry should be compelled. I think the aspect from which this question should be examined is not as to whether it is fair or unfair, but whether compulsion in industry is going to produce the armaments which the Army requires. If compulsion is going to produce the goods, it is justified; if it is not, it is unjustified. I contend that compulsion would utterly fail. I am reinforced in that view by my experience due to the honour that the House has done me in making me a member of the Committee on National Expenditure. I am a member of a sub-committee which deals with the Ministry of Supply and which has been examining a very large number of factories throughout the country and going into the whole question of production. In its latest report that Committee has recommended that the Minister of Labour should, where necessary, use his compulsory powers. The Committee includes several people with great experience of industry. The chairman has had experience of the general engineering and the machine-tool industry for many years, and I myself have had 25 years' experience of the administrative side of the engineering industry. We say, from our experience and investigation, that if you introduce a general scheme of compulsion without an intimate knowledge of the industry affected, you will slow up production and harm the national effort throughout the country. I hope therefore that those who hold a theoretical opinion that you can introduce compulsion and make it work will hesitate before they introduce the scheme.

If I may follow the hon. Lady the Member for West Fulham (Dr. Summerskill) in her reference to the work that women are doing, I am acquainted with a rest-house for soldiers where there are 400 women who probably never in their lives before have done a stroke of domestic work. They have left their well-to-do homes and have organised four-hour shifts and are peeling potatoes and supplying 16,000 soldiers with meals every week-end and a lesser number during the week. Does anyone think that, if you applied compulsion to them, you would be able to get that result? You would not. In industry also if you resort to compulsion, you will arouse resentment against unfair treatment. The workers in industry are working, in the main, as hard as their physical capacity will permit. Our experience of the investigations of the Select Committee has been such that we had to recommend that the workers should work not longer but shorter hours, because during the period after May, when a special appeal was made by the Minister of Labour, the work was so intensive that workers broke down under the strain. Last winter the effects of influenza and other diseases following from overwork were so great that the capacity of the workers for industry was greatly reduced. I would refer hon. Members who have

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[Mr. Woodburn.]

not consulted the last Report of the Select Committee to pages 6, 7 and 8. The sub-committee whole-heartedly endorses the opinions set forth in the Ministry of Labour's circular which was endorsed by the trade-union movement that it was still of vital importance to maintain war production at the maximum, and it was essential to relieve the strain on workpeople caused by extremely long hours of labour. They were of opinion that it was of vital importance to reduce the hours of work, and they recommended that the ultimate aim must be the introduction of the three-shift system, wherever possible. The committee found by its experience that when workers were asked to work more than 60 hours a week efficiency was reduced. They summed up:

"If general health is undermined, a reduction to optimum hours will fail to effect the required increase of output."

That means that if you work the workers until their health is exhausted, you will not get maximum production even if the hours are reduced again. We must learn from the experience of the last war. In Glasgow we found women being asked to work in the munition factories seven days a week. Many of them had to leave industry because they were not able to run their homes and to find time to make their domestic purchases. They had to leave home at 6 in the morning and did not get back until 11 at night; they were working overtime, and many broke down under the strain. The committee recommended that as soon as possible the three-shift system should be introduced so that women would have a reasonable working day. That would enable a maximum production to be attained and would give a reasonable home life in the circumstances. I am of opinion that efficiency in war and in industry depends upon policy being settled by Parliament but carried out under personal responsibility. Committees cannot carry things out, but persons can. In the piece-work bonus system there has been developed the best way so far discovered of getting maximum production in mass production. I challenge anyone with experience in industry to suggest any other method that will produce munitions compared with the production attained by that method.

I see one defect in our present system. By the introduction of the 100 per cent. Excess Profits Tax there has been removed from employers the usual incentive to put their backs into it. I must say that in our committee investigations we found that in almost every case firms were doing their best, for patriotic reasons. I think, however, that one big section of the population has been missed out in this question of incentive. Some recognition should be given to those technical and administrative staffs which have been doing such magnificent work. In one case a man by his technical ability has invented a process of producing shells which has practically reduced the time required to about one-tenth of the original time. A contribution of that kind cannot be measured in money, but some recognition should be given to people who are giving such service. There is another handicap to production. Many firms during the last war had a bitter experience. They lost their ordinary trade after the war, and the result now is that they are afraid to take war work in case they are ruined, as they were after the last war. Something must be done to reach these firms. I could give the names of firms in the engineering and foundry industries who are deliberately not seeking to do extra war work because of what happened to such firms after the last war. Therefore, the onus must lie on the Government to seek out those firms, and compulsion may be necessary in such cases. But these are some of the cases which the committee foresaw in considering compulsion and which I am sure the Minister foresaw in his statement.

A further handicap to-day is the fact that in industry both firms and workers are not clear about what the Government want. There has been a lack of specification of what is needed from the engineering trade. There are firms who are anxious to help but yet who do not know what is wanted. It is true that the Ministry of Supply have opened up showrooms, but it is difficult to get concrete details of what is required. I personally know of firms in Scotland—and there are others all over the country—who are very anxious to find out what is required. I suggest that all the Services must make up their minds early about what is required and see that firms are advised in time. There is still another cause of delay. In order to economise we are apt to pursue the old idea of asking for

Archivo Histórico — Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto Argentina

tenders. In a competitive industry tenders are a sensible form of ensuring competition and low prices, but if there is no competition in industry, then to go through the form of tendering is simply a farce. I know of a firm which was going to produce fuses. It got the drawings in January of last year and sent in its tender immediately, returning the drawings with the tender, as instructed. When May came the firm had still not received the order, and they did not get it until June, but the drawings were not returned. Five months during which the machinery could have been got ready had been lost. I am not making any complaint about the Ministries, but only pointing out that the tendering system is the peace-time practice over the years and that we have not got out of that rut. Where firms are the only firms that can do the job the order ought to be placed with them immediately, because immediate production and the saving of lives is more urgent than the saving of a few pence.

My last point, perhaps one of the greatest importance, is that there is a complete lack of any real system of priorities. A good deal has been said about the Minister without Portfolio. I wish to say definitely that everyone who has an intimate connection with what has been happening in the matter of war production knows very well that the Minister without Portfolio had no real control over the priorities system, which was no system because it is not co-ordinated inside the Government itself. A very lovable old sea-raider has been placed in charge of the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Nobody doubts his capacity as a scoop reporter or a man who can get what he wants, but the man to put in charge of a sea-raider against the enemy is the last man to place in charge of a cruiser that is part of the battle fleet, because a different temperament is wanted. Unless he is somebody who can work in a team, it will throw things out of gear. Therefore, I was greatly relieved to see that the Minister of Labour had been made the Chairman of the Committee instead of our lovable old sea-raider, because unless we get co-ordination in this matter of priorities we shall have further chaos.

It is a remarkable fact that the man who had charge of the priorities in the last war and the men who were running the priorities then and had all the experience were not called in to give the benefit of that experience. Instead we started an entirely new system of priorities by licences and restrictions—instead of telling firms what to do. Firm after firm have assured me that in the last war they and their workpeople knew what was wanted and what was the order of priority. To-day they have only a collection of symbols, and I have never found one management which understands what they mean. The manager of one steel works has said, " When it comes to deciding priorities, I use my own discretion." In other words, the firms and workers of this country are guessing at what the Government want in the matter of priorities. I want to urge—helpfully, I hope—that the Government should institute a proper system of priorities at the earliest possible moment, and co-ordinate it over the whole system of production, not leaving watertight compartments from which the various Ministries compete with one another in the industrial machine.

I was very disappointed with the hon. Gentleman who opened the Debate. He could have summed up his speech very simply by saying that the Government was a " wash-out." I hope he will cheer up when he reads the rest of the Debate and the Government's reply, and discovers that the country is not quite so bad as he made it out to be. We all have our faults but, speaking personally, I marvel at the achievements that we have made, as a democratic country with our own free-will system. I assure hon. Members that industry throughout the country, so far as I have been able to examine it—and I have intimate connection with it—is working to the last ounce of energy. If the Government can make up their minds early enough what is wanted and will bring the machine into being, the workers of the country will, I am sure, rally to it, without anybody using whips, compulsion or any other method of that kind.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill): Let me begin by offering my apologies to the House and asking for its indulgence, because I am winding up a Debate of which I have been able to hear only a portion. I have carefully read the parts of the Debate to which I was not able to listen, but I have addressed my mind to the large general issues which led to

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[The Prime Minister.]

the fixing of the Debate. I hope that hon. Members who have spoken when I was not present will accept my apology on account of the other calls which I have upon me. I think I have said before that to try to carry on a war, a tremendous war, without the aid and guidance of the House of Commons would be a superhuman task. I have never taken the view that the Debates and criticisms of this House are a drag and a burden. Far from it. I may not agree with all the criticism—I may be stunned by it, and I may resent it; I may even retort—but at any rate, Debates on these large issues are of the very greatest value to the life-thrust of the nation, and they are of great assistance to His Majesty's Government.

Therefore, when, as we gathered, there was a wish to have a day's discussion of large questions connected with the Home Front—man-power, priorities, supply and so forth—I offered not only one day, but two days. I think two are better than one, because sometimes, when there is only one day's Debate, especially under our rather restricted conditions of meeting, one may find that the Minister makes a long statement and that afterwards there is nothing in the Debate but the criticism; whereas, after two day's Debate, it is possible to perceive the main character of the criticism and to endeavour, as far as possible, to reassure the House upon the points which have most been called into question.

I want to begin by communicating to the House the main ideas which I have formed, with much thought and some experience, upon the machinery for conducting war. I have reached the conclusion that in the present circumstances a War Cabinet composed of four or five men free from Departmental duties would not give the best results. It may be submitted that that is a very arguable proposition. Some may say that that system assisted to carry us to victory in the last war. I saw the system at close quarters, and I do not think that it was in practice altogether what it was represented to be in theory. The War Cabinet of those days was largely an instrument designed to give the great man who then conducted our affairs wide powers to deal with matters over the whole field, and in practice the meetings of that body, theoretically so eclectic, were attended by very much larger numbers than those who now grace our council board.

Personally, I have formed the view that it is better that there should be in the responsible directing centres of Government some, at any rate, of the key Ministers. There is the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who always attended in the last war. There is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because, after all, one must not forget that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a function. There is the Minister of Labour, because, as we have been reminded in the excellent speech which the hon. Member for East Stirling (Mr. Woodburn) has just delivered, the spontaneous, sustained, good will effort of the labouring masses of this country is the sole foundation upon which we can escape from our present difficulties. Then there is the Minister of Aircraft Production, because aircraft production is the key to survival, and, if I may say so, the Minister of Aircraft Production, who was described by the hon. Member who has just sat down as an old sea raider, which is a euphemistic method of describing a pirate, is a man of altogether exceptional force and genius, who is at his very best when things are at their very worst. Then there are the Defence Ministers, the three Service Ministers. But, as the Prime Minister under this arrangement, which the House has approved, is also the Minister of Defence, he represents those Departments in the War Cabinet. We make altogether eight, and yet we hold a great many of the key offices in our body. I think it is better to work in that way than to have five Ministers entirely divorced from their Departments, because that means that when a discussion has taken place in the Cabinet, the leaders of these Departments have to be summoned, and the whole business has to be gone over again in order to learn what it is they think they can do and to persuade them and convince them that it is necessary to do what has been decided upon.

The House must not under-rate the power of these great Departments of State. I have served over 20 years in Cabinets, in peace and war, and I can assure the House that the power of these great Departments is in many cases irresistible because it is based on knowledge and on systematised and organised currents of opinion. You must have machinery which

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

carries to the Cabinet with the least possible friction the consent and allegiance of these great Departments. It is not a question of loyalty. It is a question of honest differences of opinion which arise, and there are many matters to be settled and decided which would not arise in the ordinary Departmental mind. There are great difficulties in dealing with Departments of State unless the key Departments are brought into the discussion in the early stages and, as it were, take part in the original formation and initiation of our designs.

I said the Minister of Defence represents the Service Ministers in the War Cabinet, and he, in the name of the War Cabinet and subject to its accord, directs the conduct of the war. Why then, it is asked, have we not got on the civil side another similar Minister? That I think was the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Montgomeryshire (Mr. C. Davies). Why should there not be another similar Minister who would equally direct and concert the whole home front or a great part of it? The answer is this: The Minister of Defence is also Prime Minister, and he can therefore exercise his general function of superintendence and direction without impinging upon the constitutional responsibilities of the Service Ministers. If, however, a Minister of Defence were appointed who was not the Prime Minister —and I am discussing this matter quite impersonally—he would not have any real authority except, of course, a co-ordinating and conciliatory power over the three great Service Ministries and their responsible heads. The First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretaries of State for War and Air could at any time appeal against him to the War Cabinet, and the whole matter in dispute would then have to be argued out there once more. If at any time it becomes necessary to appoint a Minister of Defence who is not also Prime Minister, then I tell the House plainly that that Minister will have to be in fact First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State for War and Air, and hold the seals or letters patent of those Departments, otherwise he will have no more power than the various Ministers for the Co-ordination of Defence have had in the years before the war and in the six months at the beginning of the war.

Let me now apply these considerations to the civil side. Here also the Departments have very strong characteristics, and the Ministers at their head have definite constitutional responsibilities to Crown and Parliament. Here also are immense volumes of specialised and organised knowledge. Where am I to find a man who, without himself being Prime Minister, would have the personal ascendancy in his nature to govern and concert the action of all those Ministers and Departments on the civil side, and drive in a happy and docile team the Minister of Supply, the Minister of Labour, and the Minister of Aircraft Production, to say nothing of the Ministers of Transport, Shipping, Agriculture, Food and Trade? I doubt if such a man exists. Certainly I do not know him. We do not live in a dictator country, where people can be brutally overruled. That is our merit. We do not want a dictator. We live in a country where His Majesty's Cabinet governs subject to the continual superintendence, correction and authority of Parliament. In the last resort, only the Cabinet can exert the necessary authority over all these Departments I have mentioned on the civil side. How, then, is this process to be achieved, with the maximum of action and the minimum of pressure? There is the problem for which I ventured, very respectfully, to offer a solution in the recent announcement of the formation of the Government Committees.

Let me, at this point, make a brief diversion upon the uses and abuses of committees and the possibility of administrative action by them. Four years ago I criticised the pre-war Administration for their reliance upon an elaborate network of committees. I was answered by a quotation from my own account of the organisation which I set up in the Ministry of Munitions in 1917. In this quotation I was represented to have said, quite accurately, that practically all the work of the Ministry of Munitions was done by a council of committees. That seemed a very good answer in those days, when I had not the advantage of so much support in this House as I have to-day. Let me make plain to the House the difference between the Council Committees of the old Ministry of Munitions and ordinary advisory inter-departmental committees. The Council Committees were exclusively composed of men who had under their

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[The Prime Minister.]
direct control the executive and administrative branches concerned in the problem, and who bore the great responsibility for executing any agreement or any decision reached among them. That is the fact. They were like chieftains, each arriving with so many of his clan, and when the clans were joined together the Highland army was complete. The ordinary consultative and advisory committee is attended by representatives of many branches and Departments—and everyone likes to have his representative on any committee that may be going; they try to agree upon forms of words for a report; and then, too often, they are inclined to pass the buck to some other futile body, equally respectable. The difference between these two kinds of committees is the difference between cheese and chalk—and cheese is much the scarcer and the more nourishing of the two.

Every British Cabinet in the last 30 or 40 years has conducted a large part of its work by Cabinet Committees. Instead of the whole Cabinet sitting there hour after hour, they appoint four or five Ministers to go into this or that particular matter, to hammer it out among themselves, and then to come back and advise the parent body. Such Committees are often based upon the Ministers, the co-ordination of whose Departments is essential to the solution of the problem. They have the strongest incentive to agree, because they are all colleagues: honourable men working for a common object; and if they do agree, they can make their Departments carry out their decisions, and carry them out with alacrity and good will. This was the system which I applied at the Ministry of Munitions in August, 1917. It was certainly generally considered to be a very great improvement and easement in organisation upon what had gone before, and this is the system, which *mutatis mutandis*, I have applied now to the two extraordinarily difficult and vital spheres of our life which are covered by the Import Executive and the Production Executive.

The Import Executive consists of the five great importers from these five Departments—the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Controllers' Department at the Admiralty, represented by the First Lord, the Food Ministry, and the Board of Trade, which also represents the minor importers. If the men at the head of these Departments, who are among the leading and most active Ministers in the administration, could not settle among themselves how to bring in the greatest volume of imports in which we are all vitally interested, I should be very much disappointed, and indeed, surprised. In order that control may be effective, the handling Departments, that is to say, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Shipping, the Department responsible for shipbuilding and repairs, and in this connection the Ministry of Labour, whose Minister is in the Chair on the other Committee—these Departments serve them and carry out their policy. Take all this business of the docks under the attack which is being made upon them, problems of labour and transport, of turning ships round and so forth. This group of men have everything in their hands. If they can agree—and at their service are the great Departments—they can execute the policy which they put forward.

Similar principles inspired the creation of the Production Executive, the kernel of which consists of the three same supply Ministers who are on the Import Executive and who also constitute the Committee regulating purchases in the United States. Here are these three Supply Ministers at the root of our war production business, and naturally you meet them in all these organisms of Government. This then, is the instrumentation which, I believe, will produce the most effective and rapid action. I am entitled to an opinion in the matter, because, after all, the House has laid on me the responsibility, and I have the right to be judged by the results. So far as the results have gone up to the present, they have given satisfaction to all concerned, and a number of very important and practical decisions have been taken by the complete and unanimous agreement of the parties concerned, followed by immediate action in the Departments concerned.

I see—and I am endeavouring to address myself to the pith of the argument which has been adduced—that some critics have asked, " Are you not overburdening these Ministers, each with his own Department, by making this one chairman, and these others members of this Imports or Production Executive? If they have to do all this work on these

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Executives, how are they going to do their own work? " But this is exactly their own work. This is the particular work they have to do. The management of these affairs and its interplay with other Departments constitutes the major problem before each one of them.

I saw that someone wrote in a newspaper that this was a policy of thrusting executives upon overburdened Ministries. Well, that is like saying you are thrusting the Stock Exchange upon stockbrokers or thrusting upon general managers of railways, at a time when railway action had to be concerted, frequent or occasional meetings together. This is the very process by which our business will be discharged. As to the Chairman of this Committee, he is not " *facile princeps* " but " *primus inter pares*," which, for the benefit of any old Etonians present, I should, if very severely pressed, venture to translate. At any rate, all these Ministries have equal and direct responsibilities. But it is asked, " Why should you not choose less busy men for these tasks? " It surely would not be any help to these busy men to burden them with the task of explaining over and over again their business to others who cannot know a tithe of what they know about it themselves and then, when inevitable differences arise, of having to carry them up to the Cabinet and fight all over again there.

The way to help busy men is to help them to come to a decision together by agreement and to give them power to make this decision promptly effective through all parts of the Government machinery at their disposal. I have my views about this, having served in so many capacities and relationships, and I can assure the House that there is no more formidable and effective organisation of power than a unit of four or five consenting minds, each of which has at its disposal full and necessary powers for the discharge of the business entrusted to them. It is not for these executives to decide how many men shall be allotted to the Army, Navy or Air Force, or how much shipping shall be used to bring in food or materials, or carry troops to this campaign or that. These particular blockings-in belong in the main to the War Cabinet, and I accept the responsibility of making sure that the general policy determined by the War Cabinet is interpreted correctly by the executives. In the event of differences I hope to adjust them, and if I fail the matter must be settled, in the last resort, by the Cabinet. In no other way can business in war-time proceed with the necessary despatch. However, it is most desirable that the Cabinet itself shall not be overburdened with business. Ministers must be free when they will to stand away from the intricate machinery of government and the routine of daily work and together survey the stormy skies. Therefore, in order to diminish the number of occasions on which it is necessary to have recourse to the Cabinet, we have this Steering or Planning Committee, over which the Lord President of the Council presides, which deals with the larger issues, and also deals with questions of adjustment It is fitted to do so, because, although it is not exactly the Cabinet, it contains a very large proportion of its members. The chairmen of the two Executive Committees, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who at this point—having, of course, already approved departmental purchases as a matter of routine—comes in on general policy, the Minister charged with reconstruction, and the Ministers at the head of the Security and Home Departments, should be able to settle most things there without its being necessary to bring these matters to the Cabinet presided over by the Prime Minister. In this way I hope my own work, which is considerable, will be reduced and more effectively devolved.

I must say a word about the functions of the Minister charged with the study of post-war problems and reconstruction. It is not his task to make a new world, comprising a new Heaven, a new earth, and no doubt a new hell (as I am sure that would be necessary in any balanced system). It is not his duty to set up a new order or to create a new heart in the human breast. These tasks must be undertaken by other agencies. The task of my right hon. Friend is to plan in advance a number of large practical steps which it is indispensable to take if our society is to move forward, as it must, which steps can be far larger and taken far more smoothly if they are made with something of the same kind of national unity as has been achieved under the pressure of this present struggle for life. The scope of my right

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[The Prime Minister.]

hon. Friend's task is practical and has regard to national unity on the one hand and about three years as a time limit on the other. There certainly will be four or five great spheres of action in which practical and immediate advance may be made if we can continue on the morrow of the victory to act with the unity which we shall have used to bring that victory. I feel my right hon. Friend is very well fitted for this great task, and it gives him a grand and a growing opportunity of historic national service.

Now, I leave these matters of Governmental machinery, and I turn to the larger issues. We had forceful speeches yesterday from the Noble Lord the Minister for Horsham—[HON. MEMBERS: "Member"]—certainly, it would be no unworthy department—the Noble Lord the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton), and from my hon. Friend the Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell), and to-day we have had a speech from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. Clement Davies), of which I heard only a portion, but which I gather from this sample was an exhaustive treatment of the subject in all its branches and in all its aspects, which had for its characteristic the aim of saying all that was true on both sides of the different aspects dealt with, and sought for the best of both worlds during a prolonged tour through the universe. I ask myself whether our affairs are in fact as badly managed at the present time as these speeches suggest. I am sure there are an awful lot of things which could be done better, and I do not at all resent criticism, even when, for the sake of emphasis, it for a time parts company with reality. But are my hon. Friend and my Noble Friend right in thinking that things are being so very ill done here, and so much less effectively done here, than they are in the great dictator countries? Let us look into this. At the root of all questions of man-power lies the size of the Army. The Navy and Air Force make gigantic demands upon us, but the great customers for man-power are the Army and the industries which sustain the Army. The size of the Army was settled within a few weeks of the outbreak of war. We have not altered that decision except to the extent of providing for the equipment of 10 more divisions. The scale of the Army is the scale which was settled in November, 1939. I am not going to say how many divisions it amounts to; but it is a very large and formidable force, both in connection with sea power and amphibious power, and of course for the defence of these islands. Counting the Home Guard we have round about 4,000,000 armed and uniformed men who would all play their part in defence of our hearths and homes. But naturally the armies which could be put into the field and taken overseas in formed military units would be measured by quite different standards—the principal standard would be fixed by shipping tonnage available. At the time when the scale of the Army was settled, in 1939, a vast series of factories, plants and establishments were set on foot, sufficient to provide this Army with all that it would require in continuous action on the Continent of Europe against the German enemy. The bulk of these new plants are only just beginning to come into production, and many of them are still structurally incomplete. We have a very large number of plants which are all simultaneously three-quarters or four-fifths finished. That is what happens at this period in any war when you change from peace production to war production. As these plants come into operation, the construction services—the builders and those who lay on the water, light and power and make the communications—will depart and the munition workers will have to be assembled. All this takes time and you cannot go faster than a certain speed. Perhaps we might go a little faster; by all means let us try, but the stages cannot be omitted. The Noble Lord was very scornful yesterday about the Minister of Labour because he said that we had more people now employed in munitions and aircraft than we had in 1918. I was astonished that my Noble Friend, who has some experience of Government, should show himself so unaware of the slow and gradual process of munition production, because he said he had been my follower in the re-armament agitation, and I have repeatedly explained to the House in the last three or four years how lengthy and gradual this process must inevitably be.

Earl Winterton *rose*——

The Prime Minister: I only have a few minutes.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Earl Winterton: It is a very unfair quotation.

The Prime Minister: I have the quotation here:

> "I want to say a word about production and what was really a calamitous statement of the right hon. Gentleman. He said, as if it were satisfactory to the whole House, that munition production to-day was greater than it had been in June, 1918. If I did not wish to be polite to the right hon. Gentleman I should say that it was a fatuous comparison." —[OFFICIAL REPORT, 21st January, 1941; col. 107, Vol. 368.]

It is not possible to make a warship go to sea and fight against the enemy until the fires have been lighted under the boilers, and have got hold, until the water has got tepid, and has got warm, and finally until steam and vast power has been generated. Whilst this is going on there is no use rushing about uttering alarming cries. This is not a very good thing to do if you happen to be one of the people who did not start to warm up the boilers in good time.

I was Minister of Munitions in July, 1918, and I am therefore able to measure more or less the intensity of the effort of munitions production which was then going on. I was greatly encouraged to learn some weeks ago that in the sixteenth month of this war we had already surpassed by several hundred thousand workers the number of persons employed in munitions and aircraft production in the forty-eighth month of the last war, and it was mentioned from the Labour benches that the productivity of one pair of human hands has greatly increased in the interval. I have kept myself constantly informed of the great tide of new factories which are rising to a productive level. In the next six months we shall have for the first time an intense demand upon our man-power and woman-power. This is the problem that lies before us. We are now about to enter, for the first time in this war, the period of man-power stringency, because for the first time we are going to have the apparatus and the lay-out which this man-power and woman-power will be required to handle. That is the reason for the very far reaching declaration of which the Minister of Labour thought it necessary to apprise the House and the country in his statement yesterday.

Now is the time when the full war effort will gradually be able to be realised as the plants come into being. It is true that we have not so many women employed as we had in 1918 but there are two reasons, one, which was given, that so many more were employed already before the war situation began—that is a reason which is very important—and also the shell filling factories are only gradually coming into being. They were only constructed after the outbreak of war.

I am, of course, aware that a mechanised army makes an enormous additional drain upon the administrative and tactical branches which lie behind the fighting vehicles. I have thought, nevertheless, for some time that the Army and the Air Force—the Navy not so much—have a great need to comb their tails in order to magnify their teeth. I have felt for some time that there was considerable scope for saving of man-power on the rearward and preparatory services in order to develop the highest economy and the highest manifestation of fighting power. I look to very considerable combings and scrapings in the Air Force and Army, particularly the Army, not in order to cut these Forces down, but in order to reduce their demands upon the man-power market as far as possible during the coming stringent months so that we shall be able to man the new factories and shipyards and to till the new fields which are coming into production. Both these fighting Departments are engaged in this process at the present time, and the Army in particular are making very great savings from their rearward services in order to promote the forward sharpening and expansion which is necessary.

In all this the Army problem has been greatly eased because, in the mercy of God, we have had no slaughter or wastage comparable to the last war. It is, indeed, amazing that after 16 months of war between the greatest States armed with the most deadly weapons not more than 60,000 British folks, nearly half of whom are civilians, have lost their lives by enemy action. It is a terrible figure, but it is far less than in a single protracted battle on the Western Front in 1916, 1917 or 1918. Therefore, while our Army is growing every week in power, strength, efficiency and equipment, and while a decisive expansion of the Air Force is in progress, it is the munitions factories and

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

[The Prime Minister.]

agriculture rather than the fighting Services which will in the next five or six months make the chief demand for man-power upon the public. It is to these problems and tasks that we are now addressing ourselves.

Criticism is easy; achievement is more difficult. I do not pretend that there is no room for improvement and for acceleration, even apart from the methodical expansion which is going on. It is certain that the peak of our war effort has not yet been reached. It cannot be reached until the plants are all working, but my mind goes back, not to what has been said here, but to what I read outside a few weeks ago, when our critics were crying out about our inaction against Italy and wondering whose was the hidden hand that was shielding Mussolini from British wrath. At that time I endured the taunts in silence because I knew that the large and daring measures had already been taken which have since rendered possible the splendid victories in Libya—Sidi Barrani, Bardia, and it may well be that while I am speaking Tobruk and all it contains are in our hands. Apart from the Libyan victories, extremely important developments are taking place on both frontiers of Abyssinia and in Eritrea which may themselves be productive and fruitful of pregnant results.

Far be it from me to paint a rosy picture of the future. Indeed, I do not think we should be justified in using any but the more sombre tones and colours while our people, our Empire and indeed the whole English-speaking world are passing through a dark and deadly valley. But I should be failing in my duty if, on the other side, I were not to convey to the House the true impression, namely, that this great nation is getting into its war stride.

It being the hour appointed for the interruption of Business, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Question again proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

The Prime Minister: It is accomplishing the transition from the days of peace and comfort to those of supreme, organised, indomitable exertion. Still more should I fail in my duty were I to suggest that the future, with all its horrors, contains any element which justifies lassitude, despondency or despair. His Majesty's Government welcome the stimulus that the House of Commons and the Press and the public of this island give to us in driving forward our war effort, and in trying to gain an earlier inch or a more fruitful hour, wherever it may be possible; but I have no doubt that the House, in its overwhelming majority, nay almost unanimously, will wish also to give its tribute of encouragement as well as its dose of correction, and will lend the heave of its own loyal strength to the forward surges which have now begun.

Question, "That this House do now adjourn," put, and agreed to.

Archivo Histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

THREE PER CENT

SAVINGS BONDS

1955 - 1965

UNLIMITED ISSUE OF MEDIUM TERM BONDS

A full Trustee Security.

Price of Issue £100 per cent.

Subscriptions of £100 or multiples of £50 will be received until further notice.

Payment in full at time of application.

No limit to holdings.

Repayable at par on the 15th August 1965, the Government reserving the right to redeem at par on or after the 15th August 1955, on giving three months' notice.

Interest 3% per annum paid half yearly—15th February and 15th August.

Interest accrues from date of purchase.

Income Tax deducted at source from interest payments of more than £5 per annum.

Bonds are transferable free of stamp duty.

Application forms and prospectus obtainable from all Banks and Stockbrokers.

There is also a Post Office and Trustee Savings Bank issue. Subscriptions of £25 or any higher multiple of £5 may be made. Maximum subscription £1,000. Income Tax is not deducted at the source

Archivo histórico
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Comercio Internacional y Culto
Argentina

Members who wish to have the Daily Report of the Debates forwarded to them should give notice at the Vote Office.

The Bound Volumes will also be sent to Members who similarly express their desire to have them. For these a charge will be made varying according to the size of the Volume.

No proofs of the Daily Reports can be supplied. Corrections which Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked in this Report, and *the copy containing the corrections must be received at the Editor's Room, House of Commons*

not later than

Monday, 27th January, 1941

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT GREATLY FACILITATES THE PROMPT PUBLICATION OF THE VOLUMES

Members may obtain excerpts of their Speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of Publication), on application to the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, c/o the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons, from whom the terms and conditions of reprinting may be ascertained.

The House of Commons Official Report may be purchased directly from H.M. Stationery Office at the following addresses:

York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh 2; 26, York Street, Manchester 1; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff,; 80, Chichester Street, Belfast

or through any bookseller.