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Thursday
9th May, 1940

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

Nº III

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 9th May, 1940.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

The House met at Eleven of the Clock,
Mr. SPEAKER *in the Chair.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

GOVERNMENT TRAINING CENTRES.

2. **Mr. Graham White** asked the Minister of Labour what steps have been taken since 16th April, or are now proposed, to increase the output of semi-skilled men from Government training centres?

1. **Mr. Horabin** asked the Minister of Labour whether he can give this House an estimate of the number of men who will pass through Government training centres this year?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour (Mr. Assheton): The present output of the Government training centres is at the rate of 34,000 a year, including 9,000 soldiers who are being trained as Army tradesmen. The capacity of the centres is being expanded, and the double shift system is being put into operation where possible. As a result of these measures the annual output of the centres, including both soldiers and civilians, will rise to over 50,000 after a few months.

GREENOCK.

3. **Mr. Robert Gibson** asked the Minister of Labour how the 684 men unemployed in the shipbuilding and ship-repairing industry in the Greenock area are distributed in categories as wrights, riveters, platers, etc.; and how it is that these men are unemployed in view of the shortage of labour in the shipbuilding industry?

Mr. Assheton: The number of unemployed registered at Greenock in the principal shipyard occupations on 11th March were 111 riveters, 57 holders up, 30 iron caulkers, 28 machinists, 26 platers, 10 shipwrights and six boilershop workers. This total of 268 fell to 206 by 29th April, the latest date for which I have figures. As the hon. Member doubtless knows, there are difficulties in securing the reabsorption of men who have been long unemployed even in the present state of demand, but no effort is being spared to achieve this in collaboration with the representatives of employers and trade unions.

Mr. Gibson: Can the Minister say what actually is being done in order to re-absorb these men into employment, because this matter has been going on for a long time?

Mr. Assheton: An examination of each man's name in the register has taken place, with the assistance of both employers and employed in the industry.

Mr. Gibson: Apart from the examination of the man's name, is an examination being made of the man, and are efforts being made to put men on to productive industry, which is so much needed at the present time?

Mr. Assheton: That is the very object of the examination.

Mr. Kirkwood: Arising from the original answer, in which the Minister said there were 20 platers unemployed in Greenock, if he sends those platers to Clydebank they will be immediately employed. Is he aware of that fact?

HULL.

6. **Mr. Muff** asked the Minister of Labour whether he is aware that there is a greater proportion of unemployment in Kingston-upon-Hull than in any county borough north of the Trent; and will he inform the House what steps the Government is taking to improve industry in Hull?

Mr. Assheton: The rate of the unemployment in Kingston-upon-Hull is considerably lower than that in several other county boroughs north of the Trent. I cannot state precisely the prospective demand for labour in Hull, but if strategic or technical considerations prevent full employment there I am confident that all able-bodied unemployed who are not liable to compulsory military service will

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[Mr. Assheton.]
wish to take part in the war effort either by assisting in other areas where there are urgent demands for labour or by filling the demands for volunteers in the Forces. My Department will give every help to men desiring to take advantage of such opportunities.

Mr. Muff: Will the hon. Gentleman give the name of one county borough in the county of Yorkshire, or Durham, or Northumberland, with figures worse than those for Hull?

Mr. Assheton: Yes, Sir. South Shields, Tynemouth, Gateshead, Sunderland, West Hartlepool, Newcastle, Leeds.

Mr. Ede: Does the hon. Member really quote that list with pride?

Mr. Assheton: No, Sir. I was answering a straight Question.

Mr. Gibson: Can the Minister say whether in those areas the Employment Exchanges are refusing to advance their railway fares to men who have got jobs in other districts, as has been done in Greenock?

Mr. Assheton: That is another question, but I should not like to be taken as accepting the premises of the hon. Member.

Mr. Leach: Are not all those places where this unemployment is so rife war production centres, and if so, what is the Minister doing about it?

INSURANCE COMPANIES (ENGINEERING TRADE UNIONS)

4. **Mr. David Adams** asked the Minister of Labour whether he is aware that three Manchester engineering insurance companies, namely, The British Engine, Boiler and Electrical Insurance Company, Limited, The National Boiler and General Insurance Company, Limited, and The Vulcan Boiler and General Insurance Company, Limited, refuse to recognise or negotiate with the trade unions representing a large majority of their staffs; and whether he will use his good offices to remove this cause of resentment?

Mr. Assheton: This question has been brought to my right hon. Friend's notice by the two trade unions concerned, who at his request supplied him with certain information on the matter. He is now proposing to approach the three companies with a view to discussing the position with them.

Mr. Adams: I take it the Minister agrees that it is part of his functions to assist the removal of grievances in order that good will may prevail in this industry?

Mr. Assheton: As the hon. Member is aware the Minister has no direct responsibility for this matter, but he will do what he can by seeing both sides.

Mr. Ede: When will the Minister approach the companies.

Mr. Assheton: As soon as possible.

Mr. Ede: He will not be there then.

MILITARY SERVICE.

Conscientious Objectors.

5. **Mr. Roland Robinson** asked the Minister of Labour under what circumstances applicants for registration as conscientious objectors have been granted the privilege of a hearing in camera before local tribunals?

Mr. Assheton: By Regulation 19 of the National Service (Armed Forces) (Miscellaneous) Regulations, 1939, the hearing of cases before conscientious objector tribunals is in public unless ths chairman in any particular case for special reasons directs otherwise.

Mr. Robinson: Are there any rules governing the discretion of the chairmen of the tribunals? Is it not to the public advantage that they should sit in public whenever possible?

Mr. Assheton: This is a matter in the hands of the chairmen of the tribunals.

Low Category Men.

7. **Mr. Sorensen** asked the Minister of Labour whether he is aware of the hardship of unemployed young men whose low medical category may involve indefinite delay in their calling up for military service, but who, nevertheless, are refused employment because of their age group; and whether he will take any action in the matter, either by guaranteeing them a long period before being called up, or

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in some other way, enabling them to assure possible employers that the calling up will be postponed?

Mr. Assheton: Men placed in Grade IV medical category are informed that they will not be called up. Men placed in Grade III will not be called up until further notice, unless they have been so graded on account of defective vision. Men placed in Grade III on account of defective vision may, if they wish, apply to be called up early, and those who do so will be called up before the remainder.

Mr. Sorensen: Is the hon. Gentleman not aware that it is precisely the men in this category who are in this most difficult position, in that they are not wanted either by the Army or by industry, and in those circumstances will he not ask his right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour to consider this particular difficulty?

Mr. Assheton: Unfortunately it is not possible to see the military situation clearly enough in advance to say what the future of every man in the country shall be.

Mr. Sorensen: But could not some guarantee be given that those who are in that low category should not be called up for a year, so that they might be in a position to get a job?

Mr. Assheton: Those who are in Grade III will not be called up until further notice, unless so graded on account of eyesight; but beyond that it is not possible to go.

INDIA (CONSTITUTION).

11. **Mr. Edmund Harvey** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now able to make a further statement as to the political situation in India?

The Under-Secretary of State for India (Sir Hugh O'Neill): I regret that I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on Thursday last to a similar Question by the hon. Member for West Leyton (Mr. Sorensen).

Mr. Harvey: May I ask whether an interview has been arranged between the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi with a view to exploring the possibility of such a settlement as was outlined in the Debate a week or two ago?

Sir H. O'Neill: I said last week that I was quite sure that the Viceroy would be only too glad to do what he could to bring about such a conference as was suggested, provided it was likely to be acceptable to the different parties in India, and I am sure that the Viceroy will take note of that and act accordingly.

Mr. Sorensen: May I ask whether he or the Secretary of State for India is likely to take the initiative in this matter? Does not the right hon. Gentleman realise that everything depends upon initiative?

Sir H. O'Neill: That is realised, and I think the hon. Member would agree that several times during the last few months the Viceroy has taken the initiative, but nothing has resulted; so far he has had no response.

Mr. Sorensen: Is there not a chance now?

HOMING PIGEONS.

12. **Mr. A. Edwards** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has inquired into the case of Christopher Newbould, sentenced for keeping homing pigeons without a permit, a charge to which he pleaded guilty, with a view to remitting the penalty as there was no criminal intent?

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir John Anderson): I have instituted inquiries into this case, but they are not yet completed. I will communicate further with the hon. Member as soon as I am in a position to do so.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

AIR-RAID SHELTERS.

13. **Mr. Ellis Smith** asked the Home Secretary what steps are being taken to provide at once shelters for the homes of the people in cases where it is impossible to erect an Anderson shelter; and who is responsible for the planning and provision of such shelter?

Sir J. Anderson: It is the policy of the Government that, in all areas specified for the purposes of Part III of the Civil Defence Act, free shelter should be provided at or near the home for all who cannot be expected to provide it at their own expense. The responsibility for

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[Sir J. Anderson.]
planning and providing such shelter rests upon the local authority; and, where the standard steel shelters cannot be made available, authorities should plan in terms of the alternative forms of shelter recommended by my Department. I am sending the hon. Member copies of circulars on this subject which have recently been issued by my Department. (Nos. 38, 68 and 77/1940.)

Mr. Smith: That is good as far as it goes, but what is the right hon. Gentleman doing to see that local authorities carry out the policy of the Government?

Sir J. Anderson: There are regional organisations which are in constant touch with the local authorities and do everything to ensure the most rapid progress possible.

Mr. Smith: Seeing that this is a matter of urgency, will the right hon. Gentleman send a circular to the area authorities calling their attention to the need for making this provision as soon as possible?

Sir J. Anderson: I have done so, and I am sending the hon. Member a copy of it.

Mr. Noel-Baker: Is the right hon. Gentleman satisfied that the provision of shelter is reasonably adequate in most parts of the country?

Sir J. Anderson: There are still gaps which ought to be filled.

Mr. Gibson: In view of recent happenings, has the right hon. Gentleman applied his mind further to the question of providing deep shelters where the ground is sloping?

Sir J. Anderson: That is another question.

14. **Mr. E. Smith** asked the Home Secretary what steps are being taken to ensure that adequate provision is made for air-raid shelter accommodation in houses, workshops, etc., and for the public in general, in cases where the houses are owned by people other than those resident in them; and who is responsible for the provision of air-raid shelter in such cases?

Sir J. Anderson: It is difficult to deal with the full range of points raised by the hon. Member within the limits of an answer to a Parliamentary Question. Briefly, the general principle is that, in areas specified for the purposes of Part III of the Civil Defence Act, a statutory obligation to provide shelter rests on the occupier of factory premises, and on the owner of commercial buildings, where more than 50 persons are employed. As regards private householders, persons in the lower income-ranges are provided with shelter free of charge at or near their homes; in other cases the responsibility for providing shelter rests generally with the occupier, though special provision has been made for certain types of private residential buildings. The local authority has also a general responsibility to take into account, in providing public shelter, the needs of persons for whom no special provision has been made.

Mr. Smith: While realising the right hon. Gentleman's difficulties in dealing with this matter in reply to a Parliamentary Question, will he take early steps to bring about serious consideration of the need to implement his circular amongst all authorities, in order that the best possible provision can be made?

Sir J. Anderson: I fully agree with regard to the urgency of the matter; I have been doing and am continuing to do everything possible.

21. **Mr. R. Gibson** asked the Home Secretary in how many churches in Scotland and England, respectively, the crypts or lower halls have been adapted for use as air-raid shelters; and how many of these are open to the public?

Sir J. Anderson: I understand that in approximately 250 cases, of which about 25 are in Scotland, public air-raid shelters have been sited in the crypts or lower halls of churches.

Mr. Gibson: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what steps he is taking to extend this form of humanitarian service?

Sir J. Anderson: The use of these crypts and lower halls is subject to very definite limitations because of the nature of the superstructure, especially where there is a spire. I think the fullest use consistent with the public interest is being made.

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CAMOUFLAGE METHODS.

19. **Sir John Graham Kerr** asked the Home Secretary, in view of the effectiveness of parti-colouring as a method of camouflage being dependent upon violent contrast in tone between adjacent areas of colour, and of the numerous buildings, service vehicles, etc., camouflaged in patterns of brown, green and other colours devoid of this essential contrast in tone, whether he is prepared to take immediate steps to replace the present ineffective methods of camouflage by a scientific system based on contrast in tone?

Sir J. Anderson: The officers of my Department are fully aware of the principle to which my hon. Friend refers, and in appropriate cases it has in fact been applied in practical camouflage work on industrial buildings carried out under the direction of my Department. I am not directly responsible for the camouflage of vehicles belonging to the Service Departments, but I will see that my hon. Friend's Question is brought to the notice of the reconstituted Advisory Committee on Camouflage which will include representatives of all the Service Departments.

Sir Herbert Williams: Would the right hon. Gentleman's answer still hold good if the word "parti" was spelt with a "y"?

20. **Sir J. Graham Kerr** asked the Home Secretary whether he will state the approximate expenditure to date upon research in connection with war camouflage; whether such research in the different Service Departments is under unified control so as to ensure co-ordination and avoidance of wasteful effort; and, if so, whether he will inform the House regarding the name and scientific qualifications of the responsible director of research?

Sir J. Anderson: I am informed that since 1937 the various Departments concerned have incurred expenditure on camouflage research amounting to above £20,000. The central establishment responsible for camouflage research has now been placed under the control of Dr. R. E. Stradling, the chief adviser on research and experiment in the Ministry of Home Security; and the Advisory Committee on Camouflage is being reconstituted so as to include, among others, responsible representatives of those branches in the Service Departments and the Ministry of Supply which are concerned with camouflage work. I hope that these and other changes which are now being made will result in better co-ordination, and a more effective pooling of information, as regards all branches of camouflage work.

SCHOOLS (CHILDREN'S DISPERSAL).

30. **Mr. E. Smith** asked the President of the Board of Education if he has sanctioned school children being dispersed in the event of an air raid while they are at school, and has he approved the use by education committees of Anderson shelters near the schools, erected to accommodate persons resident in the house, to provide shelter for children, instead of the required shelter being provided for the children at the school?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Mr. Kenneth Lindsay): The Board's policy has been that, in cases where air-raid shelters for school children are necessary, they should be provided, wherever possible in or near the school premises for all the children attending the school. Local education authorities were, however, informed in the Board's Administrative Memorandum 212, of which I am sending the hon. Member a copy, that it would be open to them, in consultation with the Regional Commissioner and subject to certain safeguards set out in the Memorandum, to make arrangements for the dispersal to household shelters of those children for whom it was not possible to provide shelter at the school owing to restricted school site or similar reasons.

Mr. Smith: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that this is a criminal suggestion that children should be dispersed in the event of an air raid, and will he ask the Board to reconsider their decision in order that panic may be avoided and adequate shelter provided for all children?

Mr. Lindsay: I am aware that there are difficulties in certain places. I am in touch with the authority at Stoke. My inspector has already seen the regional commissioners and is seeing the local education authority this week.

Mr. Smith: I have not only one locality in mind. This applies to other industrial centres. In view of the seriousness of this, will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Board to reconsider their policy?

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Mr. Lindsay: I could not accept the suggestion that throughout the country dispersal would be as dangerous as the hon. Member suggests, but I will look into the case of any specific locality.

RECEPTION AREAS, EAST COAST.

33. **Colonel Sir Edward Ruggles-Brise** asked the Minister of Health whether he is now prepared to reconsider the scheduling of the Blackwater River area of Essex as a reception area, in view of its position on the East coast and the experiences suffered recently in that vicinity from hostile aircraft?

34. **Mr. Naylor** asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of recent happenings on the East coast, he will now remove East and South-East coast towns and villages from the list of reception areas, and arrange for the transfer of the children now in those places to areas less vulnerable to enemy aircraft or other forms of attack?

The Minister of Health (Mr. Elliot): I assume the hon. Members have in mind particularly the recent crash of a German aeroplane at Clacton. I do not think that this incident justifies a change in the classification of the neighbourhood as a reception area. There are very wide areas of the country in which a similar occurrence might take place. If these areas were excluded from the reception areas the number of children who could be dispersed from the crowded cities would be substantially reduced. It is considered that, in the event of air attack on land developing the areas selected as reception areas, which offer the advantage of dispersal, give a greater degree of safety than the towns in which the children would otherwise be left.

Sir E. Ruggles-Brise: In view of the experience of air bombing in this area both in the last war and now in this war, does not my right hon. Friend consider it inadvisable to treat as a reception area a district which is obviously in the danger zone?

Mr. Elliot: I am aware of the experiences of this area in the last war but the range of aircraft has greatly increased since the last war.

Dr. Edith Summerskill: Apart from the vulnerability of these areas does the right hon. Gentleman think it in the interests of these children that they should be subjected to the noise of heavy gunfire for the duration of the war?

Mr. Elliot: I have to take these matters into consideration, but I must be guided by the considerations that I have mentioned. If all these areas were excluded the number of children who could be dispersed would be substantially reduced.

Mr. R. C. Morrison: It is not only the danger from the air in a place like Clacton but mines are being continually washed up.

Mr. Elliot: I have that very much in mind but the area covered by the sea coast and a short distance inland is a very large area.

MONEY AND ORDERS FROM GERMANY.

16. **Captain Ramsay** asked the Home Secretary what information he has showing the receipt of money or orders from Germany to formations or persons in this country; and whether he will give full details?

Sir J. Anderson: I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the reply which I gave on 2nd May to a Question by my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Sir R. Gower).

Captain Ramsay: Will the right hon. Gentleman inform the House when and as soon as he gets any information regarding the organisations in this country getting money and orders from Germany?

Sir J. Anderson: My answer was that information of that kind ought not to be disclosed unil action has been taken on it.

Mr. Thorne: Will the Home Secretary make inquiries about the hon. Member's own organisation and where it gets the money from?

Captain Ramsay: Does not the right hon. Gentleman agree that it is unfair that people of this country should be led to suppose that German funds and orders are coming to this country when there is no foundation in fact?

Sir J. Anderson: I always do my best to correct any unfair impressions which are held by the public.

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SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES.

17. **Captain Ramsay** asked the Home Secretary whether he is keeping under close observation the members of the organisation in this country which is receiving money from and carrying out the orders of the Comintern with a view to their deportation or internment, in view of the fact that they are working for revolution through this war; and what steps he is taking to prevent breaches of the peace resulting from the campaign of vilification of their opponents by this body?

Sir J. Anderson: Close observation is kept on all persons who are seeking to subvert constitutional methods of Government. As regards insulting words and behaviour which are likely to occasion breaches of the peace, the law on this subject was strengthened by the Public Order Act, 1936, and active measures are taken by the police to enforce the law.

Captain Ramsay: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the essential characteristic of the Comintern is that it is not Russian but International-Jewish, and that, therefore, in opposing the foul works of this body those who do so must to that degree be anti-Semitic?

Mr. Silverman: Would the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of applying what he said in answer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman's previous Question and doing what he can to make it clear that false and unfounded fraudulent statements of that kind do not receive public currency?

Captain Ramsay: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that no one would be more pleased than I if such a thing were done?

Mr. Thorne: Is the right hon. Gentleman keeping a sharp watch on the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND PRO-NAZISM.

18. **Captain Ramsay** asked the Home Secretary whether he will give an assurance that care will be taken, both in the administration of the present regulations and in framing revised regulations, that a distinction is made between anti-Semitism and pro-Nazism?

Sir J. Anderson: I hope that any restrictive measures applied to organised propaganda may in practice be confined to such propaganda as is calculated to impede the national war effort; and from that point of view I cannot recognise as relevant the distinction which my hon. and gallant Friend seeks to draw.

Captain Ramsay: While thanking my right hon. Friend for his reply, in view of the fact that he seems to be somewhat confused on the point, will he assure the House that he refuses to be stampeded into identifying the two things by a ramp in our Jew-ridden Press?

Sir J. Anderson: There is no question of my being stampeded into anything.

DEFENCE OF THE REALM.

GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS.

26. **Mr. H. Strauss** asked the Home Secretary whether he has now completed his review of the question of additional powers for dealing with possible dangers from enemy agents or evilly disposed persons, and from organised attempts to weaken the resolution of the people to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion; and whether he has any statement to make?

Sir J. Anderson: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the leave of the House, I propose to make a statement on this subject at the end of Questions. Perhaps my hon. Friend will await that statement.

At the end of Questions:

Sir J. Anderson: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I propose to circulate in the OFFICIAL REPORT a full statement on the matters raised in Question No. 26 by my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich (Mr. H. G. Strauss). It may be for the convenience of hon. Members, however, if I give now a short summary of that statement.

I have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to supplement the powers conferred by the existing law for dealing with possible dangers of the kind to which my hon. Friend refers: and following consultations which I have had with hon. Members of various parties, Orders-in-Council amending the Defence Regulations have been made this morning and

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[Sir J. Anderson.]
will be laid to-day before both Houses of Parliament. Copies of the new Regulations will be available in the Vote Office during the course of the day, but hon. Members may like to have a brief indication now of the subjects covered.

First, as regards possible dangers from enemy agents and evilly-disposed persons, the Government have decided to make four amendments of the law which will strengthen the hands of the authorities in dealing with any possible attempt by the enemy to undermine resistance to any attack upon this country. There is already power to intern enemy aliens; and power has now been taken to intern non-enemy aliens who would ordinarily be deported but cannot be deported to their own country by reason of circumstances arising from the war. Provision has been made for control over the entry into this country of persons repatriated from enemy territory who, though technically British subjects, have no close association with British interests: power has been taken to detain these persons, where it is thought necessary, pending inquiries into their bona fides. Regulation 18B of the Defence Regulations has been amended so as to enable the Secretary of State to direct that a person to whom the regulation applies may as an alternative to internment be required to reside within a specified area and not travel outside it without permission. Fouthly, a Bill will be introduced to-day providing for the imposition of the death penalty in grave cases of espionage and sabotage.

The second group of Regulations is designed to check the spread of propaganda calculated to undermine the resolution of the people to prosecute the war to a successful issue. These Regulations have been very carefully drawn so as to avoid penalising the mere expression of opinions while at the same time giving full power to deal with mischievous activities directed towards impeding the war effort of the nation. The main Regulation provides that, if the Secretary of State is satisfied that any person or organisation is concerned in the systematic publication of matter calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue and that serious mischief may be caused thereby, he may cause a formal warning to be given that if such activities are persisted in the persons responsible will become liable to proceedings; and if any person or organisation so warned subsequently publishes matter calculated to foment such opposition those responsible are liable to a sentence of penal servitude for seven years or a fine of £500 or both.

A second Regulation extends the scope of Defence Regulation 39A so as to make it an offence to endeavour to incite men who are liable to military service to evade their duties, or to endeavour to incite persons to abstain from enrolling voluntarily in any of the the defence services. Finally, a new Regulation has been made empowering the Secretary of State to direct that no further use shall be made, pending an application to the High Court, of any printing press which has been used for the production of documents published in contravention of the Regulations dealing with illegal propaganda.

These new powers will materially strengthen the hands of the authorities in dealing with the dangers to which my hon. Friend has referred; I am satisfied that these powers are necessary to meet situations with which we may be faced; and I trust that the action which the Government have taken will command support in all quarters of the House.

Mr. Attlee: From what the right hon. Gentleman has said, I take it that the consultations with Members of this House on the subject-matter of these regulations in no way implies that those Members either approve or disapprove of the regulations; and that they are necessarily passed on the sole responsibility of the Government?

Sir J. Anderson: Yes, Sir. While I am grateful to those hon. Members who have been good enough to enter into consultation with my colleagues and myself before these regulations were framed, I wish to make it perfectly clear that the Government take sole responsibility for the regulations in the form in which they appear.

Mr. McGovern: Did the right hon. Gentleman consult all parties in the House, even the minority parties who are most likely to be affected? If not, will he say why he did not consult with these minority parties who are entitled to have an opportunity to express their views?

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Sir J. Anderson: I consulted with representatives of the parties who were taken into formal consultation at a previous stage when the regulations were under revision. I did, as a matter of fact, address a communication to the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) which was designed to give him, if he thought fit, an opportunity to see me with any of his colleagues, but owing to circumstances of which I am not precisely aware but which I can conjecture, that letter did not elicit any reply.

Mr. McGovern: I am aware of that, but I have been in the House for some time and no consultation has taken place with me. Minorities parties, no matter how small they are, are surely entitled to the protection of the Official Opposition? As far as we are concerned we have no part in the regulations and shall oppose them.

Mr. H. Strauss: In framing these regulations did my right hon. Friend have in mind the experience recently suffered by other countries as a result of enemy action; and does he agree that the whole country is likely to support action which shows that a democracy which is defending itself must guard against the enemies in its midst?

Sir J. Anderson: While I should be sorry to think that the circumstances in this country were exactly comparable to circumstances elsewhere, the Government had certainly in mind in framing these regulations the dangers to which the country may be exposed and against which it is entirely proper and very necessary to guard.

Mr. Sorensen: Can the Home Secretary give the names of those with whom he actually consulted? [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] That is for the right hon. Gentleman to decide. Secondly, whether these were the actual proposals which were known to the representatives and, thirdly, whether we shall have an opportunity of debating them?

Sir J. Anderson: The regulations are in substance identical with the suggestions which were put before the conference. As to the composition of the conference, I would have no objection whatever to the names being published, but I do not think it is for me here and now to say before I have communicated with them. I have consulted the representatives who were nominated by the leaders of the parties concerned. In regard to the third point, the regulations which have been made will be laid to-day and the question whether they should be debated or not depends on our recognised procedure.

Mr. Alan Herbert: Will the right hon. Gentleman keep a close eye on the insidious doctrine which is known as "Moral Disarmament," which has done so much damage in Scandinavia, America and elsewhere?

Sir Waldron Smithers: May I ask that the right hon. Gentleman when he gets these powers will not hesitate to use them to the full?

Mr. Gallacher: Will there be any attempt made to give a definition of what is meant by the very loosely worded phrase "opposing the national war effort," because it is very desirable that the working classes of this country, who were not taken into consultation in connection with the war, should have the right to oppose the war and take legitimate measures to change the Government and get a Government which will work for peace instead of for the spread of war. Will there be any effort made to provide a definition of this very loosely worded phrase?

Sir J. Anderson: Perhaps the hon. Member will wait until he has seen the regulations. Every effort has been made to define the purpose of the regulations in as precise terms as possible.

Mr. Mathers: Will the Home Secretary note that the hon. Member for Oxford University (Mr. A. Herbert) is wrong in his definition? Will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that no action is contemplated by the regulations which will have the effect of stultifying the efforts for Moral Rearmament?

Mr. Buchanan: Is not the right hon. Gentleman satisfied that there is in this country a minority who are honest and clean and who oppose the war, and that under these regulations there is power to punish people whose opinions are as honest and as clean as those of people who hold the majority view?

Sir J. Anderson: There is no question of punishing people who honestly express minority opinions. The purpose of the

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[Sir J. Anderson.]
regulations is to deal with activities which may constitute a grave danger to the State.

Mr. G. Strauss: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will be able to take retrospective action; that is in relation to retrospective documents or speeches which have been made in the past?

Sir J. Anderson: There is no provision in the regulations for dealing retrospectively.

Mr. R. C. Morrison: Is the right hon. Gentleman satisfied that the powers he proposes to take will be adequate to deal not only with people who take part in subversive activities but with those who employ them?

Sir J. Anderson: Yes, Sir.

Following is the full statement:

In a statement which I made on 25th April in reply to Questions by my hon. Friend the senior Member for the City of London (Sir G. Broadbridge) and other Members, I said that I was considering whether it was desirable that the existing law should be strengthened in some respects for the purpose of checking activities specifically directed towards impeding the war effort of the nation. After a careful review of all the circumstances, I came to the conclusion that, in view of the situation with which we may be faced, it is necessary that further powers should be taken to enable the responsible authorities to deal more effectively with subversive activities of this kind. During the last two weeks I have had the advantage of consultations with the Law Officers of the Crown and with hon. Members representing various parties in the House; and as a result of those consultations I think I can say that the measures now to be introduced are such as will command wide support in this House. While the Government itself takes full responsibility for these measures, every effort has been made to take account of the views of Members of all parties and I believe that public opinion in this country will recognise that the additional powers which are now to be taken are in no way disproportionate to our present circumstances.

The new measures fall into two groups, and I will first describe those which are designed to deal with possible dangers from enemy agents or persons in this country who might be willing to act as such. With the example before our eyes of the treachery which facilitated the German seizure of strategic points in Norway, it was only prudent—however different our circumstances may be—that we should consider whether any further powers were required to deal with any possible attempt by the enemy to undermine resistance to any attack upon this country. Our main guarantee against such dangers lies in unceasing vigilance by all the authorities responsible for national defence, and that vigilance will not be relaxed; but the hands of the authorities could be strengthened if their existing powers were supplemented in certain respects and new Regulations have been made for this purpose.

First, power has been taken to amend the Aliens Order so as to provide that, if an alien who would normally be deported cannot be deported to his country of origin by reason of circumstances arising from the war, he may be interned if the Secretary of State is satisfied that his detention is necessary in the interests of national security. Ample power to intern enemy aliens is already available; but a non-enemy alien cannot at present be interned unless he comes within the scope of Defence Regulation 18B as a person of hostile origin or associations or as having been concerned in acts prejudicial to the public safety. There is no power to intern the non-enemy alien who would in time of peace be deported because he is unreliable and an undesirable resident. A proper control of such persons is very necessary at the present time.

Secondly, provision has been made to enable the authorities to exercise due control over persons of British nationality returning to this country from Germany or from territory in the occupation of the enemy. A certain number of persons possessing British nationality are now being repatriated to this country from Germany and some of these may be only technically British and may have no close association with this country. Some may be women of German origin who have acquired British nationality by marriage, others may be foreign-born children of British parents resident for many years in enemy territory. While there is at present no reason to believe that any large proportion of these people are ill-disposed towards the British cause, it is only prudent that there should be power to keep such persons under control while any necessary inquiries are being made about them, and provision has therefore been made to enable the authorities at the ports to detain them on arrival, where necessary, or to require them to keep the police notified of their whereabouts, pending inquiries into their bona fides.

Thirdly, a small but valuable addition has been made to the powers of control exercisable under Regulation 18B in cases where it is thought unnecessary actually to intern a person who is of hostile origin or associations or has been concerned in acts prejudicial to the interests of national security. The Regulation has been amended so as to enable the Secretary of State, instead of interning the suspected person in such a case, to require him to reside within a specified area and not to travel outside the area without permission.

Finally, I should add in this connection that a Bill is being introduced to-day to enable the death penalty to be exacted in grave cases of espionage or sabotage. Regulation 2A of the Defence Regulations already makes it an offence, punishable by penal servitude for life, to do with intent to assist the enemy any act which is likely to assist the enemy or to prejudice the public safety, the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war. This Regulation is drawn in such terms as to cover a wide variety of mischievous activities undertaken with intent

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to assist the enemy; but for certain offences of quite exceptional gravity which involve a clear element of treachery the death penalty should be available. The Bill which has been introduced to-day provides that a person may be sentenced to death if, with intent to help the enemy, he does, or attempts or conspires with any other person to do, any act which is designed or likely to give assistance to the naval, military or air operations of the enemy or to impede such operations of His Majesty's Forces or to endanger life. In practically every case treachery of this kind would constitute an offence under the existing law of treason, but it has been thought advisable to make these treacherous activities separately punishable under an emergency measure valid only for the duration of the war which will obviate the necessity of complying with all the special forms and dignities of a treason trial and will also provide that the sentence of death may in certain circumstances be carried out by shooting instead of hanging.

The second group of Regulations is concerned with the activities of individuals and organisations who, by spreading defeatist or anti-war propaganda, are seeking to undermine public morale and to weaken the resolution of the people to prosecute the war to a successful issue. As I said in my reply to Questions on 25th April, there is a risk that our traditional reluctance to limit the free expression of minority opinions may be exploited by persons whose real purpose is to hamper, for ulterior motives, the war effort of the nation. The Defence Regulations introduced on the outbreak of war included stringent provisions dealing with propaganda, under which it would have been an offence for any person to endeavour to influence public opinion in a manner likely to be prejudicial to the defence of the realm or the efficient prosecution of the war; but after the Debate on the Regulations which took place in this House on 31st October last there was a drastic curtailment of those provisions of the Regulations which had attracted special opposition on the ground that they were capable of being used for the suppression of minority opinions. The Government are anxious to avoid any unnecessary interference with our traditional liberties, but they feel that a distinction can and must now be drawn between the mere expression of honest opinion on the one hand and, on the other, the deliberate and systematic advocacy of defeatist or anti-war policies with intent to weaken the national resolution to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. Legal provisions on this subject must necessarily be cast in somewhat general terms if they are to cover all forms of propagandist activity which are prejudicial to the national interests; and the difficulty has always been to find a form of words which will suffice to check the really mischievous activities without at the same time penalising expressions of opinion, with which we should all desire to avoid interference, however much we may disagree with the opinion expressed. The consultations which I have held have led me to the conclusion that this point cannot be fully met except by giving, to a responsible Minister answerable to Parliament, an administrative discretion to determine in what cases individuals or organisations should be made liable to criminal proceedings for engaging in mischievous activities of this kind; and in the new Regulation which has now been made a novel procedure has been adopted in order to secure that the sanctions of the criminal law shall be applied only to persons acting with deliberate intent to prejudice the national interest. The Regulation provides for the issue of a warning to any person or organisation who appears to the Secretary of State to be concerned in the systematic publication of matter calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue. The warning will draw attention to the matter objected to and will make it clear that if after the warning there is any future publication of matter calculated to foment such opposition the person or persons concerned will become liable to prosecution under the Regulation. Until a warning has been issued no person can be prosecuted for an offence under the Regulation; but if after receiving such a warning there is a continuance of mischievous activities those responsible then become liable to prosecution and, if convicted, to heavy penalties—namely, seven years' penal servitude or a fine of £500, or both. The Regulation provides ample safeguards against any misuse of the new powers which it confers. In the first place the Secretary of State must be satisfied, not by an isolated remark but by a consistent course of conduct, that there is systematic publication of matter which is calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue, and further that the continuance of these activities may cause serious mischief. Then there must be a formal warning by a notice in writing of the consequences of persistence in this course of conduct. Then, if such conduct is persisted in, proceedings based on a specific contravention of the Regulation can be instituted only with the consent of the Attorney-General and can be taken only at Assizes or courts of corresponding jurisdiction; and the defendant cannot be convicted if he can show to the satisfaction of the court that he had no intent to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue and had no reasonable cause to believe that his activities were calculated to foment such opposition. I hope that what I have said will suffice to satisfy the House that this new Regulation is so drawn as to penalise only deliberate, organised and systematic efforts to undermine the national morale; and I need hardly add that it is the firm intention of the Government to apply the criminal sanctions provided by this Regulation only in cases of real gravity where the national interests may be seriously threatened.

A second Regulation in this group is designed to extend and strengthen the provisions of Defence Regulation 39A, under which it is already an offence to endeavour to seduce from their duty persons in His Majesty's service or in the various services of Civil Defence. Experience has shown that it is not enough to restrict this provision to persons already embodied in the various services. The efforts of those who wish to

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undermine the efficiency of these services may be directed not to persons already serving but to those who are shortly to be called up for service; and the Regulation has therefore been amended so as to make it equally an offence to endeavour to incite persons liable to such service to evade their duties or to endeavour to incite persons to abstain from enrolling voluntarily in any of the defence services. Here again care has been taken to avoid penalising the mere expression of opinion. It will be no offence merely to state the statutory rights of men liable to military service to claim exemption on conscientious grounds, nor will the Regulation prevent the giving of guidance to a young man who is troubled in conscience and seeks advice from a priest or a friend. The Regulation is aimed at those who try to incite young men liable to military service to simulate conscientious objections for the purpose of evading their duties. I am satisfied that this limited provision is necessary and that it will command general support.

Finally, power has been taken to apply really effective sanctions against the use of printing presses for the production of publications which contravene either the new Regulation dealing with the corruption of public morale, or the expanded provisions of Regulation 39A regarding attempts to cause disaffection or Regulation 39B dealing generally with the publication of false statements prejudical to the national interests. Under this new Regulation the Secretary of State may, if he is satisfied that any printing press has been used for the production of any document in respect of which any person has been convicted of an offence under any of these three Regulations, direct that the press shall not be used for any purpose until the leave of the High Court has been obtained for its further use. The High Court may grant such leave if satisfied that the use of the printing press for the production of the offending document was due to a mistake, or even though not so satisfied may grant leave for its future use subject to conditions, or may if it thinks fit order that the printing press shall be destroyed. In many cases documents constituting an offence under these Regulations will have been printed by persons other than those convicted of distributing or publishing them; and in serious cases it is desirable that there should be power to bring it home to the printer that his plant cannot be used with impunity for the production of mischievous documents of this character which contravene the law. A power to seal up the printer's plant is likely to operate as a more effective deterrent than criminal proceedings leading to a fine; and this new power should materially reduce the extent to which printing presses will be made available for the production of documents of this type.

These new measures, taken as a whole, will substantially strengthen the powers which the responsible authorities can exercise for the purpose of checking organised attempts to undermine resistance to any hostile attack upon this country or to weaken the national resolution to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. I am fully satisfied that in present circumstances it is necessary that we should arm ourselves with these additional powers, so that we may be ready to meet any situation with which we may be faced; and I trust that the action which the Government have taken will command support in all quarters of the House and throughout the country.

BROADCAST GERMAN PROPAGANDA.

27. **Mr. Robert Morrison** asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that printed notices are being distributed outside factories in North London urging workers to listen in to the German broadcasting station named New British Broadcasting Station; and whether action will be taken against the distributors as hindering the national war effort?

Sir J. Anderson: I am obliged to the hon. Member for the information he has given me, which I have no doubt will be of assistance to the police in the efforts they are making to discover and bring to justice the persons responsible.

ENEMY ALIENS (DOVER).

28. **Sir Reginald Blair** asked the Home Secretary whether he can state the number of persons of enemy origin, giving numbers in each classification, in the protected area in which Dover is situated?

Sir J. Anderson: The time available since this Question appeared on the Order Paper yesterday has not been sufficient to enable me to obtain information except in respect of the Borough of Dover itself, where there are seven persons of enemy nationality registered with the police, all of whom have been placed in category " C " by the local tribunal.

CHIEF CONSTABLE, LIVERPOOL.

29. **Mr. Silverman** asked the Home Secretary whether he has given his approval to the recent appointment of a chief constable in Liverpool; and whether his attention has been called to the general public dissatisfaction which has been caused by the method of selection followed?

Sir J. Anderson: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. I am not aware that the method of selection has given rise to any public dissatisfaction.

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Mr. Silverman: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there was no advertisement, public or private, of the vacancy, that no opportunity was given to any person to make application to fill the vacancy, that the City Council was prevented from discussing the matter, and does he think in those circumstances that this gentleman is likely to have the confidence of anybody in the city?

Sir J. Anderson: I think these are mainly matters for the local authority. Although advertisements are the general practice they are by no means the general rule where, as in this case, the Watch Committee of this authority recommend that the appointment should go to an officer who has for a long period held the position of deputy.

Mr. Silverman: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of any other instances at all in which such an appointment has been made against no competition of any kind from anybody?

Sir J. Anderson: I am aware of another case within the last few months where the appointment of a deputy was made without advertisement.

Mr. Silverman: I am not talking of a deputy but of a chief constable.

Sir J. Anderson: I am referring to the appointment of a deputy to be chief constable.

DRAINAGE, WEDNESFIELD.

32. **Mr. Mander** asked the Minister of Health what action he has taken in response to the petition presented to him by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton East on behalf of 407 residents in Stubby Lane and Broad Lane, Wednesfield, Staffordshire, complaining of local conditions and, in particular, the lack of adequate drainage?

Mr. Elliot: I have been in communication with the Urban District Council of Wednesfield concerning the petition, and I am sending the hon. Member a letter dealing at some length with the various points raised by the petitioners.

Mr. Mander: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that the land and gardens surrounding these houses are absolutely waterlogged and that the residents are most anxious to have the water courses opened? Can he take steps to secure that some remedy in connection with that point is found?

Mr. Elliot: As I have said, I am sending the hon. Member a letter dealing with these points.

MENTAL HOSPITAL, NOTTINGHAM.

35. **Mr. Charles Brown** asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware that the Nottinghamshire County Mental Hospital (Female Block) is gravely overcrowded; and can he state the reason for the continued refusal to allow necessary extensions to be undertaken?

Mr. Elliot: I am afraid I am not clear to what refusal of necessary extensions the hon. Member is referring. I shall be glad to inquire fully into the position, if the hon. Member will send me the details of what he has in mind.

WIDOWS' PENSIONS.

36. **Mr. Silverman** asked the Minister of Health (1) why Mrs. A. Shipley, of 7, Wellington Street, Colne, Lancashire, whose husband, a fully insured worker, died on 31st December last, has not yet received her widow's pension;

(2) why Mrs. J. Brown, of 27, Clarence Street, Colne, whose husband, a fully insured worker, died in January last, has not yet received her widow's pension?

Mr. Elliot: I explained the reasons for the delay in determining claims for pensions under the Contributory Pensions Acts in the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Lambeth, North, on the 11th April. Everything possible is being done to overcome the difficulties to which I then referred. As regards the two particular cases mentioned by the hon. Member I am glad to be able to say that Mrs. Shipley has now been awarded a pension and I am taking steps to expedite a decision in the case of Mrs. Brown and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

Mr. Silverman: Can the right hon. Gentleman say on what date the award of a pension was made to Mrs. Shipley?

Mr. Elliot: No, Sir.

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Mr. Silverman: What steps is the Department taking to enable these people who are left without any means at all, to tide over their difficulties during the four or five months that it takes his Department to award a pension in a perfectly straightforward case without any complications?

Mr. Elliot: The hon. Member is aware that machinery exists whereby pecuniary difficulty in such cases may be avoided. Also I have explained before the difficulties under which the Pensions Branch has been working, including the pressure of work caused by the Act recently passed by this House, inevitably mean that a certain amount of delay takes place.

Mr. Silverman: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the delays in question arose before the recent Act was even contemplated, let alone in operation, and that a period of four months to award a pension in which no question can arise is altogether too long?

Mr. Elliot: I have pointed out before that not merely the extra work thrown upon the Department but other factors of which he is well aware have to be taken into consideration.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

38. **Mr. Sorensen** asked the Minister of Health whether he will recommend to assistance boards dealing with old age pensioners under the recent Act that they allow a proportionate increase in supplementary allowance for each five-point increase in the official cost-of-living figure?

Mr. Elliot: Supplementary pensions will be determined in accordance with regulations made in the manner required by the Act and I have no doubt that the Assistance Board, from whom I expect to receive draft regulations shortly, have taken all aspects of the matter into consideration.

Mr. Sorensen: When are those regulations likely to be issued and will they contain some provision for systematically raising supplementary allowances to old age pensioners according to any substantial increase in the cost of living?

Mr. Elliot: I expect to receive the regulations shortly.

Mr. Buchanan: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that they are issued as soon as possible in order that we may have an opportunity of going before them before there is a Parliamentary Debate?

Mr. Elliot: I hope to lay them as soon as possible. Obviously Members will require some opportunity for considering them closely before they are debated.

Mr. George Griffiths: When will the forms for supplementary pensions be issued?

Mr. Elliot: They could not be issued until the draft regulations have been laid, and I think it would be injudicious to issue them till the House has had an opportunity of considering, and possibly of debating, them.

Mr. Buchanan: In view of the fact that these old people are daily coming and asking what they are to do, could not the right hon. Gentleman issue some statement to allay their feelings?

Mr. Elliot: I will keep the point in mind. I hope to receive the draft regulations at an early date, and it would be more convenient if the whole matter could be dealt with in one issue of documents.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (MENTAL HOSPITALS).

39. **Mr. Sorensen** asked the Minister of Health whether he has given or will give guidance to mental hospital committees respecting charges to be made to the War Office to cover the use of mental hospital premises and services or whether any specific agreement has yet been reached on this matter?

Mr. Elliot: The matter to which the hon. Member refers is primarily one for settlement between the War Office and the local authorities concerned. I understand, however, from the Board of Control that agreement has been reached in principle and it is hoped that the details will be settled at an early date.

Mr. Sorensen: When will those details be circulated to mental hospital committees, and is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is great difficulty in discovering whether and when they are likely to get payment for their services?

Mr. Elliot: I will make inquiries.

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NATIONAL FINANCE.

INLAND REVENUE STATISTICS.

42. **Mr. Thorne** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the gross amount collected by the Inland Revenue for the years ended March, 1937, 1938, and 1939?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Simon): The figures are, for the year ended March, 1937, £483,842,726; for the year ended March, 1938, £529,634,963; and for the year ended March, 1939, £584,854,033.

Mr. Thorne: Does not that show that we are a very wealthy country?

Sir J. Simon: Yes, the hon. Member may be assured that we may be able to carry on the story for a few more years.

WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES (WEEKLY STATISTICS).

43. **Mr. Mander** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the advisability of arranging that the weekly statistics of subscriptions for War Savings Certificates shall, in future, be a net figure after deduction of the amount paid out for certificates which have become due?

Sir J. Simon: I think that the figures of actual subscriptions to Savings Certificates are of general interest, and I should not like to discontinue publication in their present form. Information as to the principal of certificates paid off is, of course, available with weekly Exchequer Accounts: these latter figures are of very much smaller order.

Mr. Mander: But it is not clear unless the amount which is being paid out is shown at the same time. Will not the Chancellor consider publishing figures which will give a real indication of the additional net weekly subscriptions?

Sir J. Simon: Such figures are not, I think, so immediately available. I dare say that the hon. Member will remember that in my Budget speech I was careful to make clear by how much receipts during the year as a whole exceeded repayments.

Mr. Mander: Will the Chancellor consider relating one figure to the other, instead of keeping them entirely separate?

UNITED KINGDOM COMMERCIAL CORPORATION.

44. **Mr. G. Strauss** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether the directors of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation have resigned their directorships of the companies with which they were associated; and what remuneration is to be paid to them?

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Captain Crookshank): The directors of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation have not resigned their directorships of the companies with which they are associated, and I am not aware of any reason why they should be asked to do so. No remuneration is being paid to any of the directors, except to the managing directors, for their work in that capacity.

Mr. Strauss: Are the managing directors connected with any existing company; and, if so, whom are these people to serve, the existing companies with which they are associated or the Government?

Captain Crookshank: The managing directors are full-time directors. As I have said, there is no reason why the other directors should resign their other directorships because of their appointment to this Corporation.

Mr. Strauss: Are the managing directors associated at all with existing companies? And might I ask the Financial Secretary to answer my other question, as to whether these people will be serving their private companies or the Government?

Captain Crookshank: I do not think they are now associated with any companies, but I should like to have the question on the Paper, so as not to give any false impression.

FIGHTING SERVICES (CO-ORDINATION).

45. **Mr. Hely-Hutchinson** asked the Prime Minister whether there is any staff course for senior officers of all three Services to provide an opportunity for the study of operations, involving the co-ordination of all three arms under a single command, with a view to making officers who have passed such a course eligible for appointment to such a command?

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The Prime Minister (Mr. Chamberlain): Up to the outbreak of war, the study of operations involving the co-ordination of all three arms (whether under joint command, unified command or command by the Service playing the predominant part) had been for many years the subject of particular study not only at the Imperial Defence College, but also at the staff colleges of the three Services. The courses at these colleges were closed on the outbreak of war, but it is clear that there are a number of senior officers who are qualified by their training for the command of combined operations.

In addition, an establishment known as the Inter-Service Training and Development Centre was set up by His Majesty's Government in September, 1938, with the following terms of reference:

"To study and develop the material, technique and tactics necessary for all types of combined operations."

This Centre is still in being, and functioning at full pressure.

AGRICULTURE.

Allotments.

46. **Mr. A. Edwards** asked the Minister of Agriculture what proportion of rent charged to allotment holders is paid to owners of land which has been taken under emergency powers?

The Minister of Agriculture (Colonel Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith): No specified proportion of the rent charged to allotment holders on land taken under emergency powers is paid to the owners of such land. Where the land is occupied land, the local authority is authorised to pay a rent not exceeding the rental value of the land for agricultural purposes.

Mr. Edwards: What is the position in regard to unoccupied land, where rent is charged to the allotment holders and the owner of the land receives nothing? Is it the intention of the Department that where there is a balance, the Corporation should keep that, or that the owner of the land should receive it, however small it may be?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: What the local authority may pay is laid down in the Compensation Act. Perhaps I can send a copy of the Act to the hon. Member.

Labour.

47. **Captain Sir Ian Fraser** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he has any statement to make as to the steps the Government propose to take to make available adequate and suitable labour to enable farmers to carry out the war-time programme of food production?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: Steps have been taken by the Government to retain as many as possible of the existing skilled workers on the land, and also to obtain other labour for agriculture. On the first of these points, the low age of reservation fixed for most agricultural occupations and the arrangements for postponement of calling up have had the effect, for the time being, of reducing to small proportions the number of agricultural workers taken into the armed Forces. As regards additional labour, a number of schemes have been prepared, some of which are already in operation. They include the recruitment of a Women's Land Army of regular workers, the organisation of gangs, and the encouragement of older boys who are leaving school to go into agriculture until they reach military age. Further proposals to assist in relieving the labour shortage are under active consideration.

Sir I. Fraser: Is my right hon. and gallant Friend aware that this is a very urgent matter, and that much more must be done if the farming schemes and the obligations that farmers have been asked to undertake are to be carried out?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: I fully realise the urgency. We are trying to work such schemes in conjunction with the military authorities. Every step that we can take is taken.

Mr. John Morgan: Are we to take it that public works contractors are instructed not to engage skilled agricultural workers; and, if so, are steps taken to see that the skilled agricultural worker is not penalised in any other way?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: We try to persuade contractors to go to Employment Exchanges.

Mr. Morgan: Are steps being taken to protect the skilled agricultural worker, who is called upon to make a financial sacrifice?

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Mr. De la Bère: Are the Government taking all the active steps that could be taken?

SUGAR-BEET.

49. **Mr. J. Morgan** asked the Minister of Agriculture what acreage of sugar-beet has been contracted for the 1940 season up to 6th May or nearest convenient date?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: Contracts accepted by the British Sugar Corporation up to 4th May cover approximately 334,000 acres.

Mr. Morgan: Is the figure not actually lower than last year's, and considerably lower than the figure set before the industry by the Minister?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: It is perfectly true that the figure is lower than that for last year, but the contracts are still coming in at a greater rate than they were last year.

Mr. Morgan: Is the Minister prepared to take special steps to get the acreage under sugar-beet which the Ministry of Food require?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: We are doing everything we can, but one of the difficulties is the fear of a labour shortage.

Mr. Morgan: But cannot you give a specific guarantee that the necessary labour will be available in the areas where sugar-beet is most grown?

Mr. Mathers: Do these figures include Scotland?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: Yes, Sir, I think so.

Lieut.-Colonel Acland-Troyte: Will the Minister prevent the Air Ministry getting land which is required for growing sugar-beet, and using it for aerodromes?

FOOD SUPPLIES.

FEEDING-STUFFS.

52. **Sir I. Fraser** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food what new steps he is taking to see that there is an increased supply of straight feeding-stuffs available to milk producers and to check evasions of the terms of the Maximum Prices Order in respect of the prices charged for compounds?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food (Mr. Lennox-Boyd): I hope to be in a position to make a statement on this subject soon after the House reassembles.

Mr. De la Bère: Is not the main cause of this trouble the making of compound cakes by the milling combine; and will my hon. Friend take steps to see that undue making of these cakes ceases?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I think my hon. Friend will find my reply eminently satisfactory.

Mr. De la Bère: I think it will be found to the contrary.

BREAD (PRICE).

53. **Mr. De la Bère** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food what authority exists for the increase in the price of bread delivered last week in provincial areas throughout the country?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Increases in the price of bread in provincial areas are made by bakers on their own initiative. An inquiry is being held into bakers' costs throughout the United Kingdom, and the results of this inquiry will enable a decision to be taken as to whether such increases are justifiable.

Mr. De la Bère: Are the public justified in resisting this increase, or should they await an announcement from the Ministry of Food?

Mr. J. Morgan: Does the Minister suggest that there is no control over the price of bread?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: As the hon. Member knows, there is no maximum price for bread.

Mr. De la Bère: Will my hon. Friend answer my question, as to whether the public are entitled to resist the increase or whether they must await an announcement from the Ministry?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The public will, no doubt, do what seems to them to be sensible.

FLOUR (PRICE).

54. **Mr. Henderson Stewart** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that straight-run flour, sold to wholesalers at approximately 1s. 3d. per stone, is being retailed

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[Mr. Stewart.]
in shops at prices varying from 1s. 4d. to as much as 3s. per stone; and what steps he is taking to stop this unfair practice?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I am aware that the retail price of straight-run flour varies in different localities and according to the service rendered by the retailer. The matter is receiving consideration.

Mr. Stewart: As this is a matter of importance to all housewives, and as the variation in price seems to me quite unjustified, cannot my hon. Friend indicate that quicker action is likely to be taken on this matter?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Our difficulty is the institution of the Maximum Prices Order, because it allows an increase in the price of flour in those districts where it is definitely sold, sometimes, even below cost price.

Mr. W. Roberts: Is it not possible to make some arrangements to prescribe the price which existed before the Maximum Prices Order?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: That matter is under consideration.

Mr. McGovern: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that nothing causes so much discontent in this country as the profiteering that is going on in the food of the people?

Sir Joseph Nall: Is not this a matter for the profiteering committee, and should not their attention be directed to it?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: There is nothing to prevent anybody from making a complaint to the local price regulation committee.

Mr. De la Bère: Is not this matter affected by the milling combine, who are at the bottom of every single evil?

ANIMAL FEEDING STUFFS (NORTHERN IRELAND).

55. **Dr. Little** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether, as Northern Ireland has not been receiving its promised quota of feeding-stuffs for some time past, he will at once make arrangements whereby the promise of a quota equal to that given to Great Britain will be implemented to the full?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My information is that northern Ireland has received the same proportion of pre-war supplies of cereal feeding-stuffs up to the end of April as Great Britain. If my hon. Friend will let me have particulars in support of the statement on which his Question is based I will look into the matter.

Dr. Little: I would like to know, both from the milling end and the stock-raising end, whether the deficiency will be made up at the earliest possible moment, because in one week there is a supply and in the next a shortage?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: In regard to cereal feeding-stuffs, Northern Ireland receives the same proportion as other parts of the United Kingdom. I have not yet had time to make full inquiries with regard to feeding-cake.

BACON.

57. **Mr. Muff** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that in one Yorkshire area a distributor was advised to sell bacon ends and trimmings to the fat refinery at 2d. per pound; and whether he will de-ration such trimmings and bacon ends to prevent the waste of good food?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No information has been received of advice having been given to a distributor to sell bacon ends and trimmings as suggested by the hon. Member. In reply to the second part of the Question it has been decided to de-ration such trimmings and bacon ends and an Order to give effect to this decision is now in preparation.

SUGAR (JAM-MAKING).

58. **Mr. G. Griffiths** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is yet in a position to make a statement in connection with the extra allowance of sugar for fruit, particularly for that in the most common use, namely, apples and blackberries plucked from the hedgerows?

59. **Mr. Mathers** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is now in a position to make a statement regarding the supplies of sugar for preserving home-grown fruits and rhubarb and also wild fruits gathered for preserving?

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Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My noble Friend has decided to extend the date for the receipt of applications for sugar for making jam from home-grown fruit to Saturday, 18th May. Whether, and if so, how much sugar will in addition be available to persons who desire to make jam from wild fruits and purchased fruits, is a question which cannot be decided until the amount of sugar required for the preservation of the cultivated fruit crop is known. My noble Friend hopes that in view of the sugar situation the public will show moderation in making their applications. Special consideration is being given to the question of sugar for growers of rhubarb.

Mr. Mathers: Does not the Minister realise that even the new date is much too early for people to be able to estimate what fruit they will be able to preserve, especially in the way of wild fruit, which is not ready until at least two months later than the date which is fixed for the application for sugar?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It is essential that we should have a rough idea of how much the home fruit crop needs in the way of sugar before we can help people who produce or buy rhubarb.

Mr. Mathers: Will the widest publicity be given to the necessity for these applications to be in by the date which the hon. Gentleman has mentioned?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We shall take every step to ensure that being done.

Sir J. Nall: Is it not the fact that at this date it is quite impossible to estimate the yield?

Mr. G. Griffiths: Will the Parliamentary Secretary give serious consideration to this blackberry and apple business, because it comes on later when the poor people gather these fruits?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It will be because of that fact that we want the earlier statement as soon as we can.

POST OFFICE.

Appointments.

62. **Dr. Little** asked the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that a native of Eire, employed in the engineering department of the Post Office, was recently asked to leave the country because of his illegal activities, he will give instructions that in future all vacancies are to be filled by men of proved loyalty resident in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

The Assistant Postmaster-General (Captain Waterhouse): The regulations of the Post Office, as of other Government Departments, provide that a candidate for employment must be a natural born British subject and the child of a person who is, or was at the time of death, a British subject. The officer to whom my hon. Friend is thought to refer is a British subject. He was born in Ireland, and his father was a civil servant born in Edinburgh. He was himself educated in London and was resident in London at the age of 16 when he was engaged by the Post Office, and, as he complied with the regulations and was apparently a suitable candidate, there was no ground for rejecting him. I do not, therefore, consider that this case provides grounds for revising the nationality regulations at present in force in the Post Office.

Dr. Little: Will my hon. and gallant Friend promise that he will exercise a great deal more care in making these appointments?

Postage Stamps (Paper Supply).

63. **Sir H. Williams** asked the Postmaster-General why, at a time when paper is in such short supply, it has been decided to increase the quantity of paper in postage stamps by 20 per cent.?

Captain Waterhouse: I could not see my way to resist the strong public demand for the issue of a special series of postage stamps to mark the important occasion of the centenary of the introduction of the first adhesive postage stamp, and it was not possible to accommodate a suitable design in a stamp of ordinary dimensions. Substantial economies in other directions in the use of paper have been effected by the Post Office.

Mr. R. Gibson: How long is it proposed to continue that issue?

Captain Waterhouse: I think for two months.

Mr. Thorne: Cannot the Postmaster-General see his way clear to have these postage stamps made very much smaller?

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CIVIL SERVANTS (CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS).

66. **Mr. Roland Robinson** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he is aware that the case of an employé of his Department, working at Blackpool, was heard in camera before the local tribunal for the registration of conscientious objectors at Lancaster, on the 25th April, on the grounds that his employment at the Department in which he was engaged might be adversely affected by the publicity; and whether this was done at the request of his Department?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security (Mr. Mabane): My Noble Friend is aware that this case was heard in camera at the applicant's request, but does not know the reason for the request given by the applicant. The request was not made by or at the instigation of the Department.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY.

FACTORIES (WELFARE WORK).

67. **Mr. De la Bère** asked the Minister of Supply whether he will consider appointing a medical officer to supervise and be in charge of all medical decisions regarding workers engaged in factories carrying out work for the Ministry of Supply throughout the country?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply (Colonel Llewellin): As indicated in the reply given on the 25th April to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, East (Mr. Mander) appropriate local arrangements for medical services have been made at all Royal Ordnance Factories, and these include the appointment, as and when necessary, of departmental medical officers who work in close contact with the officers of the Home Office. As at present advised, my right hon. Friend is not satisfied that it is necessary to superimpose a central medical organisation at the Ministry of Supply, if that is what my hon. Friend has in mind.

WOOD-PULP AND PAPER PRODUCTION.

68. **Dr. Little** asked the Minister of Supply what steps he is taking, in view of the cessation of supplies from Scandinavia of wood-pulp for paper production, to tap every available source of supply, especially Canada and Newfoundland, in order to provide an adequate supply of this necessary commodity?

72. **Mr. Naylor** asked the Minister of Supply whether, in view of the increasing shortage of paper-making material, and the effect of such shortage on production and employment in the printing, newspaper and paper-making trades, he will take steps to secure a long-term agreement for the maximum amount of supplies of wood-pulp and logs from Canada and Newfoundland to prevent those stocks being absorbed by purchasers from other countries?

Colonel Llewellin: Steps have already been taken to secure alternative supplies and these will be continued to the fullest extent practicable in the circumstances. The possibilities are, of course, limited by shipping amongst other considerations.

Mr. Henderson Stewart: Will my hon. and gallant Friend bear in mind the possibilities of British Guiana in this respect?

Colonel Llewellin: Certainly, Sir, but I think that there it is mainly hard wood and not soft wood suitable for wood-pulp.

Sir I. Albery: Is my hon. and gallant Friend aware that several paper mills are already on short-time, and is he consulting with the directors and managers of these mills to ascertain what British raw material can be brought in?

Colonel Llewellin: The managers of local mills are all being taken into consultation with the Ministry of Supply on the question of the distribution of what raw material is available, and how to get it.

Mr. McCorquodale: Has my hon. and gallant Friend considered the possibility of getting pulp from Newfoundland via the Northern port of Petsamo?

Colonel Llewellin: That is another matter, and it is not put down in the Question, but certainly we got some pulp in that way earlier in the war, and there may be no reason why we should not get it again.

Dr. Little: Is the Minister of Supply aware that there is a large quantity of very suitable timber in Newfoundland awaiting shipment?

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WASTE REFUSE (SALVAGE).

70. **Mr. R. C. Morrison** asked the Minister of Supply whether any representations have yet been made to local authorities whose refuse collection is carried out by private contractors; and what steps are being taken to induce these contractors to take part in the national salvage campaign?

Colonel Llewellin: As has been explained in previous answers, representations urging the organisation of salvage work have been made to all local authorities throughout the country, including those whose refuse collection is carried out by private contractors. I am informed that in a number of those cases, including the five Metropolitan Boroughs who have collection contracts, the local authorities have arranged with the contractor to salvage the more important materials and to report the figures to the Ministry of Supply. Where this is done they are included in the total salvage returns.

Mr. Morrison: Is the Minister aware that there are still many thousands of tons worth of saleable refuse being deliberately dumped or burnt and that many people who taken an interest in this matter are not satisfied with the progress which is being made?

Colonel Llewellin: I am not at all sure that I am entirely satisfied myself, but we are doing our best to urge on local authorities and we are getting week by week more collections by that means. Every effort is tried to persuade local authorities to co-operate.

Mr. Morrison: Is not the difficulty that some contractors get a matter of 7s. a ton for taking refuse away and merely dumping it and that it is, therefore, of no interest to them to recover anything?

Colonel Llewellin: I appreciate that.

GOVERNMENT FACTORIES (HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT).

73. **Mr. Tinker** asked the Minister of Supply whether he is aware that, at some of the Government works in Lancashire, excessively long hours are being worked by women on night shifts; that this is having effect on their health; and will he have inquiries made to see if this can be avoided?

Colonel Llewellin: The hours worked are those agreed between the Department and officials of the trades unions representing the workpeople concerned. The health of the employés is being constantly watched, and there is no evidence that the hours at present being worked in Royal Ordnance Factories are having any effect detrimental to their health. The question of the best hours to be worked, regard being had both to the essential needs of production and to the welfare of the workpeople, is one which is under continual review.

Dr. Summerskill: Is the Minister being guided in this matter by the recommendations of the Industrial Health Research Board?

Colonel Llewellin: I would like the hon. Lady to put that Question down. I know that we are in consultation with a large number of people, but I am not quite certain whether that body is one of them.

Dr. Summerskill: Does not the Minister know that this body was set up by the Medical Research Council to investigate matters of this kind?

Colonel Llewellin: Perhaps the hon. Lady will put that Question down.

PROPERTY-SALE, GREENOCK (PAYMENT).

74. **Mr. R. Gibson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland why sanction has not yet been given for the payment of the sum due to Mrs. Helen McDonald, Greenock, in respect of the compulsory sale by her to the corporation of Greenock of her property at 6, Sir Michael Street, Greenock, for which arrangements were completed in May, 1939; and whether, as Mrs. McDonald is suffering hardship through the non-payment of the sum due to her, amounting to £345, and is being called on to pay interest on a bond on the property, he will sanction forthwith the payment of the sum due to Mrs. McDonald?

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Colville): The item in question was included in a comprehensive application for borrowing sanction submitted by the local authority covering capital expenditure amounting to approximately £300,000.

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[Mr. Colville.]
While that application is still under consideration I have arranged for special consent to be given in respect of the item referred to.

Mr. Gibson: I am very much obliged.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

PUBLICATION "NOTEWORTHY."

76. **Mr. Mander** asked the Minister of Information whether he will now consider the advisability, in the interests of economy and efficiency, of discontinuing the publication of the journal known as "Noteworthy"?

The Minister of Information (Sir John Reith): Yes, Sir. This matter is being considered, and in arriving at a decision the need for economy and efficiency will be borne in mind.

Mr. Mander: Is it not the case that this is one of the most ineffective publications ever issued to the world?

Sir J. Reith: No, Sir, I do not think so, but the matter is being considered.

Mr. Mander: Well, what are the others?

Mr. McGovern: The Liberal Blue Book.

TRANS-ATLANTIC TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION.

77. **Mr. G. Strauss** asked the Minister of Information whether arrangements can be made whereby telephonic communications may be resumed between the United States of America and authorised individuals and firms in this country?

Sir J. Reith: Yes, Sir, this matter is now under consideration but it is not yet possible to announce a decision. It should be possible within a fortnight.

TRINIDAD (CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS).

79. **Mr. David Adams** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that publications of Low's cartoons, "Europe since Versailles" and "Must the War Spread," by the hon. Member for North Hammersmith (Mr. Pritt), have recently been confiscated in Trinidad; and whether he will give reasons for this course, and prevent a repetition of the same?

Sir J. Edmondson: As far as my right hon. Friend is aware no books or pamphlets published in the United Kingdom have been banned in Trinidad since the outbreak of war. My right hon. Friend understands, however, that a shipment of books, which included those referred to by the hon. Member, was recently detained for examination by the local censor and subsequently released to the bookseller.

Mr. Adams: I take it that the Minister agrees that the situation in Trinidad is not too humorous to permit Low's cartoons going there?

PROSECUTION OF HERBALIST, BATH.

78. **Mr. Leach** asked the Attorney-General whether his fiat was obtained before a Bath herbalist was prosecuted recently for advertising a cure for cancer?

Major Sir James Edmondson (Vice-Chamberlain of the Household): Yes, Sir.

COAL PRODUCTION COUNCIL.

80. **Mr. James Griffiths** asked the Secretary for Mines what recommendations the Coal Production Council has made as to how best to re-absorb into the industry the unemployed miners; and what action it is proposed to take to deal with the matter?

The Secretary for Mines (Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd): I would refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 7th May.

Mr. Griffiths: Is the Minister aware that there was very grave feeling caused by the publication in the Press of a statement that there are now actually 5,000 fewer miners at work than there were at the beginning of September, especially in view of the announcement that the Government intended to increase our output by 13,000 tons a year? Will he take an early opportunity of making a full statement to the House?

Mr. Lloyd: No authorised statement was made and I hope to take an early opportunity of making a statement to the House.

Mr. Griffiths: May I ask whether the statement that there were actually 5,000 fewer men employed was correct or incorrect?

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Mr. Lloyd: I can say that tens of thousands of miners have recently been absorbed.

Mr. G. Griffiths: Will the Minister see that the that the men who are being victimised in the coal mines have work?

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. Attlee: May I ask the Prime Minister what business will be taken after the Whitsun Recess.

The Prime Minister: The business will be:

Tuesday, 21st May: Supply; Committee, 8th allotted day. A Debate on the conduct of the economic war will take place.

Wednesday, 22nd May: Second Reading of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, and Committee stage of the necessary Money Resolution.

Thursday, 23rd May: Second Reading of the Limitation of Dividends Bill, and, if there is time, the Second Reading of the War Risks Insurance Bill, and Committee Stage of the necessary Money Resolutions.

Mr. Attlee: I should like to ask a few questions with regard to the business after the Whitsuntide Recess. In regard to Tuesday, 21st May, I take it that if events should prove it necessary to have a Debate on the war situation that that subject will be taken, and that if there should be a proposal to take a Debate on the conduct of the economic war arrangements will be made that that should be taken in private Session? Secondly, I want to put a question as regards the Motion on the Paper to-day for the Whitsuntide Adjournment. May I ask whether it is understood that that Motion includes the power if necessary, in the event of either internal or external circumstances necessitating it to recall the House at an earlier date?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir, In answer to the first question; of course if events should make it desirable to have a general Debate on the conduct of the war or a phase of the war in consequence of fresh developments, we shall be ready to arrange it. The second question which he put to me was whether, if we do have a Debate upon the economic war, we could have it in secret Session. That, I have already said I would be glad to arrange, and, of course, I stand by that arrangement. With regard to the third question, the right hon. Gentleman will remember that on 30th November of last year the House passed a Resolution under which every time we adjourned for a Recess of this kind, power is given to Mr. Speaker to summon the House earlier if, on the advice of the Government, it is felt desirable to do so. Therefore, that applies to the Motion that will be moved to-day as it has done to similar Motions in the past.

Mr. Hammersley: May I ask whether, in the Debate on economic warfare which may take place in secret, the Resolution will be drawn in such terms as not unduly to restrict the scope of the Debate?

The Prime Minister: We have no desire unduly to restrict the scope of the Debate, and I will consider the suggestion of my hon. Friend.

BILLS PRESENTED.

LIMITATION OF DIVIDENDS BILL,

" to limit the dividends of certain companies and to impose certain restrictions as respects their share capital, and for purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer; supported by Sir Andrew Duncan and Captain Crookshank; to be read a Second time upon Tuesday, 21st May, and to be printed.

TREACHERY BILL,

" to make further provision for the trial and punishment of treachery," presented by Secretary Sir John Anderson; to be read a Second time upon Tuesday, 21st May, and to be printed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

CENTENNIAL POSTAGE STAMPS (NEW YORK FAIR).

Sir M. Sueter asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether any special steps are being taken to arrange for the sale of the new issues of stamps at the British Pavilion, New York Fair?

Mr. Shakespeare: Yes, Sir. In collaboration with the General Post Office my Department has made arrangements

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whereby 100,000 stamped envelopes addressed to the British Pavilion at the New York World's Fair will be on sale to the public in the International Centennial Stamp Exhibition which has been organised by the Fair authorities. Of these envelopes 98,000 bear the 2½d. centennial stamp, while the remaining 2,000 bear the full centennial issue of six stamps. The envelopes were so posted as to obtain the cancellation date of the first day of issue, which was 6th May, 1940.

BRITISH ARMY.

PERSONNEL (DRIVING LICENCES).

Mr. McCorquodale asked the Secretary of State for War whether he has considered the position of holders of licences to drive public service or heavy goods vehicles who allow their licences to lapse by reason of military service during the war; and whether he will obtain an assurance for them regarding the eventual renewal of such licences?

Sir E. Grigg: I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Transport that the Chairman of Traffic Commissioners have given an assurance that they will be prepared to renew, without further test, licences to drive public service vehicles or heavy goods vehicles held by personnel who allow them to lapse by reason of military service during the war, provided that they retain the necessary qualifications with regard to medical fitness and character.

CHIROPODY.

Mr. J. Griffiths asked the Secretary of State for War whether he has considered the offer from the National Institute of Chiropodists to place the skill and experience of their members at the service of the Army; and whether he will favourably consider their offer so as to utilise their services to the advantage of the men serving in the Army?

Sir E. Grigg: The offer from the National Institute of Chiropody has been considered. The institute was informed that chiropodists sufficient for the needs of the Army were trained at military hospitals, and, should further assistance be required, the advice of the British Medical Association would be taken.

NORWAY (CINEMATOGRAPH NEWSREELS).

Miss Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for War why, in view of the considerable amount of news regarding the Norwegian events that have appeared in the Press, his Department has asked the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association to omit from their newsreels all mention of Norway?

Sir E. Grigg: The War Office has made no such request to the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association.

BILLETING ACCOMMODATION (DOCKS).

Mr. Thurtle asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will have inquiries made into the conditions in which men are living at certain docks; and whether he will take steps to provide these troops with better and less crowded accommodation?

Mr. Stanley: I am aware that, owing to the difficulty of obtaining accommodation in the area referred to, the billet in question is less satisfactory than others elsewhere, but steps are being taken to effect improvement and to make the troops as comfortable as possible.

CASE OF INQUIRY.

Mr. R. Gibson asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the son of Mrs. Elizabeth Fisher, widow, 13, Mill Street, Greenock, joined the Royal Garrison Artillery, Territorial Army, early in 1938; on 18th November, 1938, joined the Regular Army and is now serving in France; that she is unfit to work and her son makes an allotment of 7s. per week; that she has applied on several occasions for an allowance but has on each occasion been refused on the ground that her son is a Regular soldier; and whether he will take the necessary steps to secure to her an allowance of 17s. per week?

Mr. Stanley: I am making inquiries into this case and will communicate with the hon. and learned Member as soon as possible.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS.

Dr. Guest asked the Home Secretary whether he will arrange that Regional Commissioners consult with Members of Parliament representing constituencies in their regions with a view to making use

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of their services in all matters concerned with civil defence in case of an emergency?

Sir J. Anderson: Regional Commissioners are glad to have the co-operation of hon. Members in dealing with administrative and other problems affecting constituencies in their region, but I doubt whether in times of acute emergency there would be much scope for Members of Parliament, in their capacity as such, to assist the Commissioner in the discharge of his functions, which would in the conditions envisaged be primarily executive.

LIGHTING RESTRICTIONS.

Sir G. Mitcheson asked the Home Secretary whether he will give the police discretion to authorise the use of lights to facilitate rescue operations in connection with fires caused by enemy action?

Sir J. Anderson: The Lighting (Restrictions) Order already makes provision for the use of lights required for urgent rescue work.

BANK OF ENGLAND (POLICE PROTECTION).

Mr. T. Smith asked the Home Secretary whether the expenditure of the police in respect of protection of the Bank of England as at present evacuated will rank for Exchequer grant, or whether the whole cost is borne on the local rates or by the Bank of England; and whether this police protection is subject to the survey and report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in respect of his certificate of efficiency?

Sir J. Anderson: The police authority would be entitled to include any such expenditure in their claim to the Exchequer Grant. As regards the second part of the Question, all forms of police duty are subject to inspection by His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary.

PERSONAL INJURIES (CIVILIANS) SCHEME.

Mr. Parker asked the Minister of Pensions whether he is aware that, on 20th February last, Mr. E. H. Newstead, 19, Ashcombe Street, S.W.6, a member of the Auxiliary Fire Service, was ordered to Heckfield Place, S.W.6, for exercise when slum property was burnt down; that he got drenched and was unable to change on return as no alternative uniform has yet been provided; that he was sent out three times later in the day, fell sick and has now died of pneumonia; that the Personal Injuries (Civilians) Scheme does not provide for such cases; and whether some amendment can be made to remove such anomalies?

Sir W. Womersley: I am informed that no record can be traced of a claim for compensation under the Personal Injuries (Civilians) Scheme having been made by the deceased fireman, or by a dependant in respect of his death. If such a claim is received, I will see that it is given careful consideration.

AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SERVICES (BADGES).

Mr. Parker asked the Home Secretary whether persons who have qualified as wardens, anti-gas and first-aid courses, and are acting as wardens in public buildings where accommodation is available for persons other than the occupants, are entitled to wear the air-raid-precautions badge?

Sir J. Anderson: Badges are awarded by local authorities in recognition of definite obligations undertaken by members of air-raid-precautions services. The question whether badges should be issued to persons carrying out the duties indicated by the hon. Member would be determined by the local authority concerned, in the light of their full knowledge of the particular circumstances.

EVACUATION.

Mr. Touche asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of the fact that certain householders in reception areas have had evacuated children billeted on them continuously since the outbreak of war, he will take steps to authorise local authorities in such areas to establish and maintain camps for such children during the summer months?

Mr. Elliot: There is a number of camps already provided by the National Camps Corporation which will be occupied during the summer months, but I cannot hold out the expectation that more could be provided by local authorities or otherwise before that time. The number of children who could be accommodated in this way is not large. I am, however, very much alive to the desirability of securing a period of relief for householders who have been taking care of children over a long period, and I hope shortly to be able to make further suggestions to local authorities for securing this result.

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METROPOLITAN POLICE FUND.

Mr. Parker asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that many local authorities would like to see the estimates for the Metropolitan Police Fund in their provisional form before publication, so that they would have an opportunity to ask questions and make representations about them; and whether he will make arrangements to this effect?

Sir J. Anderson: I am afraid that this course is not practicable for the reasons which I explained in the reply which I gave to the hon. Member's Question on 11th April.

PROBATION ORDER (BREACH).

Mr. Isaacs asked the Home Secretary whether he can now make any statement respecting the case of Mrs. Theresa George and the remission of the sentence of three months' imprisonment for a breach of probation?

Sir J. Anderson: I have had inquiry made, and I have been unable to find any sufficient ground to justify me in recommending any interference with the sentence imposed by the court. I understand that the justices, who attach much value to the probation system felt it was essential in this case that compliance with the terms of the probation order should be enforced.

FACTORY INSPECTOR.

Mr. Lunn asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been called to the remarks of one of His Majesty's Judges at Leeds Assizes on 2nd May, 1940, on the careless and inefficient manner in which one of His Majesty's inspector's of factories inquired into an accident the day after it took place in which a young man lost a hand and forearm at the Yorkshire Copper Works, and was awarded £2,000 damages; and what disciplinary action he proposes to take?

Sir J. Anderson: The question at issue appears to be whether it would be practicable to guard a particular type of machine more fully without interfering unduly with the working of the machine. I am causing further inquiry to be made into this matter, but on the information before me I have no ground whatever for concluding that the inspector, who formed an opinion based on his expert knowledge and experience, was inefficient or careless.

Mr. Lunn asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been called to a case at Leeds Assizes on 30th April, 1940, in which a man was awarded £1,450 damages against the Yorkshire Copper Works for the loss of an eye through a particle of copper entering it from an insufficiently guarded circular saw which His Majesty's Judge described as unsafe and defective although His Majesty's inspector of factories had frequently visited the place; and will he see that there are more numerous inspectors and more efficient inspections of these works to safeguard the employés against frequent accidents of this kind?

Sir J. Anderson: I understand that this case is likely to be the subject of an appeal to a higher court, and in the circumstances I think I should not comment upon it at the present stage.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION (MR. HERBERT NEWTE).

Mr. C. Wilson asked the Minister of Information what position Mr. Herbert Newte holds in the service of his Department; what are his duties and what salary he receives; and was it with his authority that he addressed a meeting at Brighton on 18th April?

Sir J. Reith: Mr. Horace Newte does not hold any position in the Ministry. He is one of many who volunteered to address meetings for which the Ministry might be asked to provide speakers, and he addressed the Preston Women's War Workers Guild on 18th April. He spoke as a private individual giving his own views.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY.

CIGARETTE PACKETS.

Sir S. Reed asked the Minister of Supply whether, in view of the limited supply of paper and paper-making material, he will take steps to ensure the sale of all cigarettes for home consumption loose, and so save the large quantity of cardboard, paper and metal foil used in the making of packets?

Colonel Llewellin: I will see that this suggestion is considered along with others.

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NEW FACTORY (MATERIALS).

Mr. Lunn asked the Minister of Supply whether he is aware that the Government are to build a large factory in Yorkshire; and whether, as there are in West Yorkshire some firms who make better bricks than are made in other parts of the country and to avoid long-distance transport by road or rail and to provide employment locally, he will see that all the requirements in bricks and stone for this factory are obtained in the county of York?

Colonel Llewellin: The factory to which the hon. Member refers is being constructed for this Ministry by the Office of Works, and that Department is responsible for matters such as that referred to by the hon. Member. The Office of Works ask me to say that the matter is primarily one for the contractor to be appointed, but he will be informed that, subject to such factors as suitability and price, he should utilise local products to the fullest possible extent.

INDIA (WAR COMFORTS, CUSTOMS DUTIES).

Sir A. Knox asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India will make, or have made, any concessions in Customs Duty on parcels sent to British troops serving in India?

Sir H. O'Neill: An Army Order has recently been published by the Government of India granting exemption from Customs Duties on articles sent by parcel post to soldiers and airmen serving in India provided that such articles are in the nature of war comforts. The only exceptions to this exemption are tobacco, alcoholic liquor and articles of high intrinsic value such as jewellery.

RANGOON (RIOTING).

Mr. Creech Jones asked the Under-Secretary of State for Burma whether, in view of the German wireless statements of rioting in Rangoon, with loss of life, he will make a statement on the position in that city?

Sir H. O'Neill: Hindu-Muslim communal trouble broke out among the Indian community in Rangoon on 20th April, when a fracas occurred, with Hindus as aggressors, outside a mosque in the centre of the city. The following day was quiet, but on the evening of the 21st another clash occurred between the communities. These riots were quickly stopped by the police, and since then there have been no further organised outbreaks. There have, however, been some sporadic cases of attack by members of either community on the other, on 28th April and on 3rd and 4th May. The total number of casualties up to 4th May was 27 killed or died of injuries, and 167 injured. The riots have been of a purely communal character, and the police have the situation well in hand. The Burmese population has not been affected.

ROYAL NAVY.

SERVICE CANTEENS.

Viscountess Astor asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will make provision for all merchant seamen, fishermen, and others serving in commissioned ships of the Royal Navy to be issued with armlets instead of the badges they wear at present in order that they may be easily recognised and enabled to use Naval Service canteens without embarrassment?

Sir V. Warrender: So far as I am aware, none of the men serving in commissioned ships of the Royal Navy find difficulty in using Naval Service canteens. The men are either provided with uniform or with armlets.

LODGING ALLOWANCE (INCOME TAX).

Mr. Gurney Braithwaite asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is with his knowledge and approval that Income Tax is deducted prior to payment of lodging allowance to officers and ratings of the Royal Navy, many of whom have to maintain homes and families at a considerable distance from their base?

Sir V. Warrender: My hon. Friend will appreciate that this question depends on the interpretation of Income Tax Statutory Schedules and is, therefore, not entirely within Admiralty discretion, but under existing practice officers and men of the Royal Navy are liable to Income Tax on lodging allowance only if that emolument is drawn in respect of an appointment, which is for a fixed, or practically fixed, term.

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MILITARY SERVICE.

Conscientious Objectors.

Mr. Lawson asked the Minister of Labour whether he has yet appointed a chairman of the Appellate Tribunal for conscientious objectors in succession to the late Mr. H. A. L. Fisher?

Mr. Assheton: The death of Mr. Fisher has necessitated reconstitution of the Appellate Tribunal. On the nomination of the Lord Chancellor, my right hon. Friend has appointed Lord Fleming, a Judge of the Scottish Court of Session, to be Chairman. He has appointed as members, Sir Cyril Norwood, President of St. John's College, Oxford, and Sir Arthur Pugh, who was a member of the Tribunal as originally constituted.

Mr. De Chair asked the Minister of Labour the number of conscientious objectors who appeared at the East Anglian Tribunal and who have expressed their intention of entering the teaching profession?

Mr. E. Brown: Up to the end of April, 1940, 108 persons who appeared before the East Anglian Tribunal at Cambridge as conscientious objectors expressed their intention of entering the teaching profession.

Carpenters and Woodworkers.

Mr. Touche asked the Minister of Labour whether, in view of the unemployment prevailing among carpenters and woodworkers, he will consider increasing the age at which such persons are placed in a reserved occupation?

Mr. E. Brown: The Schedule of Reserved Occupations is constantly under review, and the reservation of carpenters and woodworkers is now receiving attention.

Medical Boards.

Mr. Groves asked the Minister of Labour whether he is aware that few members of recruiting boards are appointed in the district in which they practise, but to boards elsewhere, with the result that time and petrol are wasted in travel; and what action is contemplated to prevent this waste?

Mr. E. Brown: I am not aware that the position is as stated by the hon. Member. Except in London, where special considerations apply, the panels from which members of medical boards are drawn are composed of practitioners normally residing in the districts served by the boards.

UNEMPLOYMENT (WALES).

Mr. A. Jenkins asked the Minister of Labour the number of unemployed men, upwards of 45 years of age, in South Wales and Monmouthshire mines who were unemployed during the month of April; and the number of them admitted to training centres during the same month?

Mr. Assheton: As regards the first part of the Question, the latest figures available relate to the number of wholly unemployed men in coal-mining occupations registered as unemployed in the Wales Division as a whole on 11th March, 1940. Out of a total of 10,584 such men aged 18 and over, approximately 7,000 were aged 45 and over. The figures asked for in the second part of the Question are not available and could not be obtained without an undue expenditure of time.

COST-OF-LIVING INDEX.

Mr. R. Morgan asked the Minister of Labour in what way the methods used before the war for compiling the monthly cost-of-living index figure have been varied under war conditions?

Mr. E. Brown: There has been no such variation.

CENTRAL REGISTER.

Miss Ward asked the Minister of Labour (1) what is the proportion of men to women on the Central Register; and of the 4,000 vacancies filled from the Central Register how many have been filled by men and how many by women;

(2) how many names have been submitted from the Central Register for vacancies; and how many of the names submitted were men and how many were women?

Mr. E. Brown: At the end of April the names of 14,578 persons of both sexes had been submitted for vacancies, and of these 4,800 men and 371 women had been notified to the register as placed, whilst some 4,000 others of both sexes were still under consideration. As the

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filing system in the Central Register is based on the qualifications of the individual volunteer without distinction of sex, I regret that I cannot without undue expenditure give the other information for which my hon. Friend asks.

TRANSPORT.

CHILDREN (RAILWAY HALF FARES).

Mr. Parker asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware that the maximum salary allowed to children over 16 years of age to qualify for half fare is 18s. per week; that this figure has remained unchanged for many years, despite many increases in fares; and whether he will consider raising it now to 25s., in view of the increase in the cost of living and the high percentage of weekly earnings children pay out in fares, amounting to nearly 50 per cent. in some cases?

Captain Wallace: I am consulting the Railway Executive Committee on this matter and will communicate with the hon. Member as soon as I have considered their reply.

RAILWAY FARES (AUTHORISED INCREASE).

Mr. Isaacs asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware that, before the original increase of 5 per cent., the fare from Loughborough Junction to the City was 5d., that ½d. was then added instead of ¼d., and that a further 1d. has been added, making an increase of 30 per cent. instead of 15 per cent.; and whether it is to be understood that the 10 per cent. increase recently sanctioned is not to be regarded as a precise figure but may be exceeded?

Captain Wallace: The first of these increases was made under the authority of an Order of the Railway Rates Tribunal in 1939 and the second under the authority of my Order dated 17th April, 1940. In reply to the hon. Member for Seaham (Mr. Shinwell) yesterday, I gave a full explanation of the operation of the fractions rules.

POST OFFICE.

POSTAGE RATES (INCREASE).

Mr. Naylor asked the Postmaster-General whether, with a view to ascertaining the effect of the increased rates of postage at the earliest possible date, he will be in a position to give a table showing the number of sealed and unsealed letters, circulars, postcards, and other postal packets passing through his Department in the three months ending December, 1940, together with similar particulars for the corresponding months of 1939; or can he indicate in any other way, during 1940, the extent to which postal business has been affected by the increased rates of postage?

Captain Waterhouse: Approximate figures for the purpose of such a comparison as the hon. Member has in mind will be available in the course of the current year.

NEW STAMPS.

Colonel Burton asked the Postmaster-General the estimated extra quantity and cost of paper, materials, and printing which may be incurred by doubling the size of the centenary issue of adhesive stamps?

Captain Waterhouse: The stamps of the centenary issue are not double the normal size, but only half as big again. The extra paper required amounts to about 18 tons; the extra quantities of other materials needed are small. As regards cost, it is contrary to Government policy to disclose contract prices, but the whole of the extra expenditure involved by the issue, including labour and design, will amount to about £5,500, and this is expected to be more than covered by extra receipts likely to accrue from sales to collectors.

AGRICULTURE.

LIQUID MILK PRICES.

Mr. Parker asked the Minister of Agriculture what the liquid consumption of milk, average retain price and average regional wholesale price of liquid milk were for the year 1938-39?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: The quantity of milk sold under the Milk Marketing Scheme for liquid consumption during the contract year 1938-39 was approximately 764,000,000 gallons. The average regional wholesale price for ordinary milk was 1s. 4¾d. per gallon and for tuberculin tested milk, 1s. 6¼d. per gallon. I have no information as to the actual prices at

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which milk was sold by retail, but I am sending the hon. Member a statement showing the minimum appropriate retail prices prescribed by the Milk Marketing Board.

SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS.

Mr. Leonard asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he will give up-to-date figures relating to subsidies under the following heads: complete de-rating of agricultural land, sugar subsidy and remission of excise, subsidy in respect of milk and milk products, land fertility improvement payments, cattle and sheep subsidy, wheat, oats and barley subsidies, bacon subsidies and land drainage grants?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for East Ham, South (Mr. Barnes) on 11th April.

PRODUCTION STATISTICS.

Sir R. Gower asked the Minister of Agriculture to what extent at the present time statistics of agricultural production are made available in confidence to the National Farmers' Union; and whether, in particular, the production figures of milk, sugar-beet, pigs and crops, are made known to them in this way?

Sir R. Dorman-Smith: The publication of statistics of agricultural production is restricted in war-time, but my hon. Friend will appreciate that it may be necessary for the purpose of consultations to disclose in confidence to the National Farmers' Union or other responsible organisations certain statistical information, for example, in regard to crop acreage and live-stock numbers. Statistics of the production of crops of the 1939 harvest, including sugar-beet, have been published.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

JAPAN.

Mr. R. Morgan asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he can make any further statement as to the course of trade discussions between this country and Japan?

Mr. Shakespeare: I would refer to the reply which my hon. Friend the Minister of Economic Warfare gave to my hon. Friend on 25th April.

ANGLO-FRENCH CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION.

Mr. Parker asked the President of the Board of Trade what is the division of functions between the Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee and the Anglo-French Industrial Council, set up with his approval, particularly with regard to the purchase of supplies, the elimination of competition between individual firms, and the stimulation of exports and of Anglo-French trade?

Mr. Shakespeare: The Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee is an official Allied body, the functions of which are to co-ordinate the work of the various Anglo-French Executive Committees responsible for supplying the requirements of the Allied Governments in respect of munitions, food, raw materials, shipping, etc., and to deal with any difficult questions of principle or priority which may arise between them. It also has the duty of co-ordinating the work of Allied Purchasing Missions abroad. The Anglo-French Industrial Council, on the other hand, is an unofficial body primarily concerned with developing co-operation between individual British and French industries.

RUSSIA.

Mr. Levy asked the Prime Minister whether consideration has now been given to the Russian reply on the question of Anglo-Russian trade negotiations; and what decision the Government have come to on this matter?

Mr. Butler: Yes, Sir. His Majesty's Government have had under consideration the communication received by them on 29th April from the Soviet Government. His Majesty's Government have now asked the Soviet Goverment to furnish them with certain further information in order that they may be in a position to judge whether the obligations undertaken by the Soviet Government would render it possible for them at present to conclude a Trade Agreement with the United Kingdom on the lines which His Majesty's Government had in mind and which were explained to the House in my answer to the hon. Member for Consett on 24th April.

ITALY.

Mr. Levy asked the Prime Minister what stage has been reached in the informal contacts between London and Rome for

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the opening of new trade negotiations between this country and Italy; and whether such negotiations are now likely?

Mr. Butler: Discussions between representatives of the two Governments continue, and His Majesty's Government hope that these may lead to useful results.

LONDON PRICE REGULATION COMMITTEE.

Mr. Parker asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that many local authorities feel that the area served by the London Local Price Regulation Committee is too large, and that the consumers are not sufficiently represented thereon; and whether he will take steps to divide the Metropolitan police area among a number of smaller units and appoint a number of representatives from local authorities on such committees to safeguard the interests of the general public?

Major Lloyd George: I am not aware that many local authorities hold the views stated by the hon. Member. Experience has not shown any reason for subdividing the area of the London Price Regulation Committee, and I consider that the representation of consumers on the committee is adequate.

NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

Mr. Rostron Duckworth asked the Minister of Pensions the average payment to date made under the War Service Grants Advisory Committee Scheme?

Sir W. Womersley: The average war service grant from the inception of the committee down to the payment date is 7s. 8d. per week.

Captain Plugge asked the Minister of Pensions whether, when a person has a right of appeal to the Minister, the facts submitted are considered by the Minister personally or by an independent tribunal or by civil servants in the employ of the Ministry?

Sir W. Womersley: The practice in a case of this nature is that all the facts are fully reviewed by an officer of superior rank to the one who gave the original decision. Where a medical issue is involved, a principal medical officer is consulted, and if thought desirable the opinion of an independent medical expert is sought. It would be clearly impossible for the Minister to see every case of complaint or appeal, but wherever the issue is one of importance the case would be put before me.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE.

Mr. Rostron Duckworth asked the Minister of Health how many approved societies since the start of the war have abandoned the grant of special benefits hitherto accorded to their members; and whether, in each case, he will give details and reasons?

Mr. Elliot: The schemes of additional benefits of a certain number of approved societies were varied as from 1st January, 1940, because on valuation as at 31st December, 1937, it was found that the financial position was not so favourable as at the previous valuation at 31st December, 1932. The detailed information asked for by my hon. Friend is not directly available, and under present conditions I do not feel justified in undertaking the labour and expense of extracting the information.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (RATES).

Mr. Lyons asked the Minister of Health whether he will publish a list of all local authorities for which rate increases have been made or announced for the current year or rateable period, and the amounts of such increases, respectively?

Mr. Elliot: I regret that I am unable to supply the information desired, pending the receipt of copies of the rate demand notes which are furnished to me by the local authorities. I will, however, if my hon. and learned Friend so desires, send him a summary of the information available to me from Press reports.

SWEDEN (WOUNDED BELLIGERENT SOLDIERS).

Mr. Joel asked the Prime Minister whether the Government have accepted the Swedish interpretation of neutrality to the effect that wounded soldiers of a belligerent are entitled to pass through a neutral country to their home country?

Mr. Butler: Article 14 of the Fifth Hague Convention gives the Swedish

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Government discretion to decide whether they will or will not allow the passage of wounded soldiers through Sweden. In the view of His Majesty's Government, they are bound by that Article to make a full investigation and to form a conclusion according to the merits of every case. His Majesty's Government have no reason to believe that this has not been done.

BRUSSELS (BRITISH EMBASSY).

Mr. G. Strauss asked the Prime Minister what is the staff attached to the British Embassy in Brussels?

Mr. Butler: The number of staff at His Majesty's Embassy at Brussels is 47.

EDUCATION (SOUTHAMPTON).

Mr. Creech Jones asked the President of the Board of Education what is the total number of children on the registers in the elementary and secondary schools of Southampton and how many are at present evacuated; how many elementary and secondary schools have been occupied by the authorities and how many of these have now been released; and when he expects full-time education to be restored for all the children in the county borough?

Mr. Ramsbotham: There are 15,526 children in the elementary schools in Southampton and 180 in the one secondary school which is open. There are 5,600 children evacuated under the Government scheme or privately remaining in reception areas. Nine elementary and four secondary schools, one of them partially, have been occupied by other services: three of these schools have now been released. I am satisfied that the authority are pressing on as rapidly as possible and that it will not be long before full-time education for all elementary school children except infants is attained. The question of further provision for secondary school pupils is under discussion with the authority.

SURTAX YIELD.

Sir G. Mitcheson asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue from Surtax is estimated will be lost as a result of his proposal to limit the rate of dividends of public companies?

Sir J. Simon: The yield of Surtax in the current year will not be affected by the proposal to which my hon. Friend refers. The Surtax on assessments which will include dividends paid this year, does not become payable until 1st January, 1942; and I am not in a position to forecast the yield of that tax in future years.

PETROL RATIONING.

Mr. Rostron Duckworth asked the Secretary for Mines how many evacuated civil servants are allowed special petrol coupons because they live far away from their work in towns where the new offices are situated; and whether he is sure that the extra consumption of petrol is unavoidable?

Mr. Lloyd: The reply to the first part of the hon. Member's Question could only be supplied by a detailed examination of all the cases dealt with in the divisional petroleum offices, which I consider would entail an unjustifiable amount of labour and expense. Evacuated civil servants like other members of the community are only able to receive supplementary allowances for the purpose of getting to their place of business when no alternative means of transport exist. I am satisfied that the same degree of scrutiny is applied in the case of their applications as in those of other persons.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

Soya Beans.

Sir J. Lucas asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether his attention has been called to the large imports of soya beans by Germany and to the fact that the United States are now growing these beans extensively owing to their nutrient value and general utility; and whether he will consult the authorities of those parts of the Empire that are climatically suited for their cultivation so as to ensure a regular and sufficient supply of these beans for use in this country?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I have no information to suggest that recent imports of soya beans into Germany have been large. Supplies of other oilseeds produced within the Empire are abundant, and there would, therefore, appear to be no pressing need to encourage the production of soya beans at the present time, and such production would be subject to the shipping

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conditions applicable to other oilseeds already grown. I understand from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies that experiments in producing soya beans in the Colonial Empire have not so far proved profitable.

MEAT RATIONING.

Mr. T. Smith asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that in the area of the Eston Urban District Council, with 29,800 people registered for meat rationing, and where most of the workpeople are engaged in the hard physical work connected with the iron and steel industry, supplies of meat during several weeks recently have been considerably below the rationed quantity; and whether he will take steps to have the supplies increased?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I am not aware of the shortage of meat referred to. Supplies have been available to meet in full all the ration requirements of butchers since the introduction of meat rationing on 11th March. I understand, however, that certain butchers have refused to accept imported mutton and lamb as part of their allocation and, in consequence, they may have been unable to supply the full ration requirements of their customers. As regards the second part of the Question, I am drawing the attention of the butchers in this locality to the position and to the necessity of ensuring that, within the limits of their buying permits, they draw sufficient meat to fulfil the ration requirements of their customers.

AREA MEAT AND LIVESTOCK OFFICERS.

Mr. Lyons asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he will issue a list showing the names, salaries and prior occupations of all area meat officers in London and the country, respectively, and showing which appointments were made from the Central Register of the Ministry of Labour and which were made after public advertisement?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The following statement gives the information desired with regard to area meat and livestock officers:

Area.	Name.	Salary.	Prior Occupation.
		£	
South West ...	Major Cyril H. Potter, O.B.E.	1,000	Stockbroker.
South East ...	A. H. Gold, Esq.	1,000	Wine Merchant.
Midland	Lieut.-Colonel G. Blewitt, D.S.O., M.C., D.L.	1,000	Farmer.
North West ...	J. C. Kidd, Esq., F.A.I. ...	1,000	Livestock and General Auctioneer.
North East ...	C. W. H. Glossop, Esq. ...	1,000	Director of Public Utility Companies and Farmer.
North Scotland ...	N. M. Paterson, Esq. ...	1,000	Bank Agent and Farmer.
South Scotland ...	A. Murdoch, Esq.	Serves without remuneration.	Chartered Accountant and Farmer.

These officers, with one exception, received designate appointments prior to the war and were doing voluntary work for the Food (Defence Plans) Department for some months before the outbreak. The only appointment made since the war was filled by the selection of a candidate from the Central Register of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

BRITISH DEPENDENCIES (RETIRED OFFICIALS).

Sir J. Mellor asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will identify those Colonies which impose an Income Tax upon the pensions of retired officials resident in the United Kingdom, stating the rate of tax imposed; and whether legislation for this purpose received his approval?

Mr. M. MacDonald: It will be necessary to examine the Income Tax laws of all the dependencies concerned to ascertain the precise position of pensions of retired officials, and I will communicate a detailed statement to my hon. Friend when that has been done. All these laws have received the approval of myself or my predecessors.

Sir J. Mellor asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is in a position to give any further information as to the progress of legislation in the Nigerian Legislative Council designed to safeguard the position of pensioners?

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Mr. MacDonald: The legislation to which my hon. Friend refers has been enacted by the Nigerian Legislature, and is now in operation.

Sir J. Mellor asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any organisation exists in the Colonial Office for the purpose of obtaining suitable employment for retired officials of the Colonial Service, whose pensions do not suffice to maintain them owing to increased taxation both at the Colonial source and in the United Kingdom?

Mr. M. MacDonald: A register has been opened at the Colonial Office for those Colonial pensioners who are willing to undertake further employment during the war. The names of any such officers with suitable professional or technical qualifications have also been sent to the Ministry of Labour and National Service for inclusion in the Central Register. About 60 vacancies in Government Service at home or in the Colonies are known to have been filled by the selection of retired Colonial officials from these Registers.

COLONIAL SUGAR.

Sir R. Gower asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, for the information of the House, he will state the disparity in the present value of the special preferences allocated to the different sugar-producing Colonies; and what, if the recommendations of the West India Royal Commission were adopted, would be the allotment of these preferences to the same Colonies?

Mr. M. MacDonald: The existing special preference is at the rate of 3s. per cwt. on quotas fixed for each Colony. Its average value per cwt. of total exports in any year depends, therefore, on the proportion between the quota and the actual export. The figures below show the average values on the basis of exports during the three years ended 31st August, 1939. They would be different if any other period were chosen.

	s.	d.
Barbados	1	0¼
British Guiana		11½
East Africa		7
Fiji	1	2
Jamaica		7½
Leeward Islands (Antigua and St. Kitts)	1	0¾
Mauritius	1	1¼
Trinidad and Tobago ...	1	2¼
Windward Islands (St. Lucia and St. Vincent)	1	1¾
Average for whole Colonial Empire	1	0½

The recommendations of the Royal Commission were, as the Commissioners themselves pointed out in their report, framed in the light of pre-war conditions, and the Commissioners expressly stated that they left open the question how far they could be applied under war-time conditions. The Commission's recommendation was that the special preference should be granted at the basic rate of 3s. per cwt. on an amount equal to 50 per cent. of each Colony's actual exports. The basic value of this special preference would accordingly have been 1s. 6d. per cwt. of the total export. This basic rate was, however, to be subject to reduction if the price exceeded 7s. per cwt. c.i.f. United Kingdom. Owing to the change in the whole basis of marketing brought about by the war, it is very difficult to say how this would work in current conditions, but if an adjustment is made on the basis of the price now actually being paid for Colonial sugar, including the extra freights which are being paid by the Ministry of Food, the value of the special preference payable to Colonial exporters would, had the Royal Commission's recommendations been literally followed, be reduced to nothing.

Sir R. Gower asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware of the heavy increase in the production costs of Colonial sugar since the outbreak of war, owing to the raising of freight rates for outgoing supplies; and whether he is satisfied that the present sugar price obtainable by producers is sufficient to make possible that improvement in living and housing conditions generally regarded as essential in the West Indian sugar-producing Colonies?

Mr. MacDonald: The expectation that increased costs would result from the war was taken into account in the price which was offered to and accepted by the Colonial sugar producers for the purchase by the Ministry of Food of their exportable surplus for the current season. Whether this price will be sufficient for the coming season, having regard among other matters to the producers' obligations towards their labour, will have to be considered when arrangements are made for the purchase of that season's crop.

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ADJOURNMENT (WHITSUNTIDE).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That this House, at its rising this day, do adjourn till Tuesday, 21st May."—[*The Prime Minister.*]

12.17 p.m.

Mr. Clement Davies (Montgomery): I beg to move, in line 2, to leave out "21st" and to insert "14th."

My hon. Friends and myself do not think it right that this House should adjourn at a time of crisis of this kind for such a long period as 12 days. We have felt that the House should meet again, certainly not later than Tuesday next. We had this Motion in mind before the events of last night, and if it was right before last night that this House should not adjourn for longer than till Tuesday next, I suggest that the events of last night and the vote which was taken then make it all the more necessary that this House should meet again at the earliest opportunity. The situation has been considerably changed by the vote which this House recorded at a late hour yesterday. There is a feeling undoubtedly to-day throughout the country that at last after eight months, or really after 20 months, we should be putting ourselves upon a real war footing. There must be, quite obviously, a reconstruction of the whole of the Government machine, and it is the hope of everyone that now at long last it will be put upon a truly national basis. By that, I do not mean a mere all-party basis. It is not a question of whether a Whip chooses and the other Whip chooses, and we merely get the choice of certain persons who are representative of the parties on either side, but that the very best persons who are available in the nation should be asked to join the Administration.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and learned Member's remarks appear to have no relevance to the Amendment. He should confine himself to reasons for not having 21st May in the Motion and for substituting 14th May as the day for the re-assembly of Parliament. That is the only question before the House.

Mr. Davies: I thought that these matters might be relevant to the reasons why the House should not adjourn for so long but should meet again at the earliest possible moment. If this question of reconstruction has to be considered by the Government, it will have to be considered at the earliest possible moment. It is unfair either to the country or to Ministers concerned that there should be any delay about this matter. There is at the moment in the mind of everyone a feeling that this reconstruction is about to take place. The House is representative of the nation. We are the trustees of the people, and, therefore, we should be present and not scattered over the countryside for a period of nearly a fortnight while these matters may be discussed. For that reason, I thought it was only right that I should mention the possibilities that would have to be considered in making that reconstruction, and I thought it right to point out that the country was calling for a real national Government. I hope also that it will be an Empire Government, and that the representatives of the Empire will also be considered.

The situation is growing more serious day by day. At any moment there may be a new thrust. The thrust that came upon these other countries came overnight. We know how Denmark was invaded, how Norway was invaded. Holland is waiting at this present moment, not knowing when its hour of destiny will arrive. It may arrive to-night; it may arrive over this week-end. The same thing applies with regard to Belgium and with regard to the Balkans, and we know not what may be before us. In these circumstances it is not seemly that this House should be adjourning for a long period. We ought to be setting an example to the rest of the nation, and the example that we are setting at the present moment is having its effect throughout the country. I observe that at present some of the munition factories, like Woolwich Arsenal, are proposing to close down for three or four days, that industry at Sheffield is closing for four or five days, and that some of the mines are closing for three or four days, and even now the output is not comparable with what it should be at a time like this. What is happening? The Government suggest, not only to this country, but to the rest of the world, that we can just go on as before, that we can go on as in peace-time, that we can have the same kind of adjournment as we had last year and the year before, when war was not threatening us.

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[Mr. Davies.]

Let us have a realisation of how near this thing is upon us, that it is upon our very doorstep, and let us by ourselves show the example that we ought to be showing to the rest of the nation. Since I put forward my objection to this long Adjournment, I have had several letters from various parts of the country. Those letters show that the eyes of the country are upon this House. People want to know what we are doing, what progress we are making, what effort we are making, what example we are showing of what we ought to be doing in order to put forth the full war effort of this country. I should have liked to have gone on to consider the kind of reconstruction that should take place, but I understand from your Ruling, Mr. Speaker, that that is a matter which I cannot raise now, and I will content myself with saying that I am certain that at this moment, while this clock is ticking on, one knows not what danger is awaiting Holland, Belgium, or the nations of the South-East of Europe. Is it right that when these people are trembling as to what fate may befall them, we should disperse for a holiday? In my submission, we should not.

12.24 p.m.

Mr. Boothby (Aberdeen, East): I beg to second the Amendment.

Before certain recent events took place my hon. Friends and I had already had a discussion and decided to put this Amendment on the Paper, because we felt that, in view of the existing situation, not so much in this country as abroad, it was undesirable that what may perhaps be described as the opening of the summer campaign, this House should separate for as long as 10 days; and that it might not make a very good impression in the country or outside the country; and I still feel that very strongly. Certainly, nothing has happened during the last two or three days to diminish the seriousness of the strategic position which now confronts us; and indeed, we were assured yesterday by Ministers that the strategic situation is a serious one, and that we must be prepared for any emergency at any moment. In these circumstances, I submit that 10 days is too long a time for us to adjourn.

It would be idle to pretend that the situation has not been further aggravated, if I may so put it, by what took place in the House last night. We are now confronted not only with a very serious military and strategic situation abroad, but a serious political situation at home. Many of my hon. Friends may disagree with me, but I submit that on the whole, the events of yesterday proved that the Government, as at present constituted, do not possess the confidence of the House and of the country in sufficient measure. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] That is at least a reasonable interpretation. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] In these circumstances, I feel it is more than ever necessary that the House should not separate for a period as long as 10 days, leaving behind an administration in which it does not possess sufficient confidence, at any rate in time of war. The Prime Minister himself made an appeal to the House yesterday to realise the menace, and to increase our efforts. I could not help thinking that if he had made that appeal two years ago, or even one year ago, with all the force with which he made it last night, we might have been in a happier situation to-day. Apart from that, he made a final appeal for national unity, and many of us feel that national unity, real national unity, is now absolutely essential.

Sir Granville Gibson (Pudsey and Otley): A fine example last night, too.

Mr. Boothby: I will only say that I believe it is common knowledge to every hon. Member, if he faces the facts, the truth, and the realities of the present situation, that national unity can never be achieved under our present political leadership.

12.28 p.m.

Mr. Loftus (Lowestoft): When I first read the Amendment on the Order Paper, I had a great deal of sympathy with it, but after the episode of last night I have definitely altered my opinion, and oppose it. I felt there was a great deal to be said in favour of it. When the suggestion was first made, I felt that the House should set an example to everyone in the country and curtail, although not abolish, its holiday. I realise, as the hon. Member for East Aberdeen (Mr. Boothby) so eloquently put it, that we are meeting to-day at a time of danger, the gravest danger that our nation has ever faced, danger not only to our material prosperity, but to the spiritual

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things which we value even more highly. Therefore, I feel it is essential that all the political leaders and industrial leaders of the country should consult together to get the strongest possible Government.

The only thing that influences me is this. Which is the best method by which we can abolish personal considerations and party considerations, and all unite together to get the strongest possible Government? Is it the best method for the House to meet in a few days' time and continue acrimonious Debates, not to the edification of the rest of the world? Surely, the best method, now that we all realise there has to be a complete change of Government, that there have to be new members from all parties and members from outside, men such as Sir Walter Citrine and Mr. Ernest Bevin in the Government, would be to have this Recess of 10 or 12 days in which daily consultations could take place with the leaders of the Opposition and the leaders of various sections of opinion. That is the right procedure, and it is the procedure which was adopted in the last war. At a time of intense danger such as the present, I beg the House, in the words of our Prayer, to

"lay aside all partial affections, prejudices, and private interests,"

and collaborate together to get the best possible Government. I ask hon. Members to leave 10 days for this close consultation between all sections and between the leaders of all parties. For these reasons, I shall vote against the Amendment.

12.31 p.m.

Mr. Mander (Wolverhampton, East): I think there is a good deal in what has been said by the hon. Member for Lowestoft (Mr. Loftus). Certainly, consultations will have to take place between the leaders of the different parties, but there is no reason why we should not meet next week, and then, if it is found desirable to adjourn from day to day, to do so. Obviously, an entirely new situation has arisen as a result of what happened last night. It is all very well for certain hon. Members on the back benches opposite to pretend that everything is all right and the same as before, that the Government have a majority, and that they can carry on under the present leadership. There had always been opposition from this side of the House to the Prime Minister, but what we are faced with now is that last night, on a three-line Whip, after a personal appeal from the Prime Minister, something like 44 loyal supporters of the Government—[*Interruption.*] Are they not?—44 Members who take the Government Whip, and who had always supported the Government so far, went into the Lobby against the Government. That number contained not unimportant Back Benchers, but some of the leading personalities in the House. I think that nearly all the Privy Councillors outside the Cabinet voted against the Government. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] A very large number did; all those of distinction. What is more important is that 18 young men in uniform——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member must not go into the circumstances of last night's Division.

Mr. Mander: I will not pursue the point, except to say that in deciding whether we should adjourn for this period or not, the fact that 18 Government supporters in uniform voted against them is a matter which we have to take into consideration. I say this with reference to the suggestion made by certain hon. Members, who are still guided by party feeling, that we should carry on as if nothing had happened. Obviously, in view of what happened last night the Opposition have to play their part. It is no good having a crisis of this kind, involving as I think the formation of a new Government, a national Government to which we can all contribute our utmost efforts, without every Member, to whatever party he may belong, being willing to sink his personality and play his part. I hope that, whether we adjourn until Tuesday next or until the following Tuesday, the intervening period will be usefully occupied.

Sir Irving Albery (Gravesend): Will the hon. Member enlighten the House as to which of his arguments are in favour of restricting the period of the Adjournment, and which are opposed to that course?

Mr. Mander: I am trying to balance the arguments, in order to give the hon. Member and others an opportunity of making up their minds, after a dispassionate

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[Mr. Mander.]

statement of the case for and against this proposal. I was about to say that, whatever course we adopt, I hope that the intervening period will be occupied in a devoted, unselfish and patriotic effort by Members of all parties to secure a National Government which will win the war in the shortest possible time.

12.36 p.m.

Brigadier-General Spears (Carlisle): If the procedure which has been suggested by the hon. Member for Lowestoft (Mr. Loftus) were possible, I would be entirely in favour of it. If the House were given some assurance that the Recess would be employed to reconstitute the Government, I think that assurance would be welcomed on all sides, but failing any such assurance I do not think, for many reasons, that this House ought to adjourn for the period proposed in the Motion. I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty is not in his place. He ought to support the view which I have just expressed, because it is a view which he held very strongly at the beginning of August last when the same question arose. This is what he said on that occasion:

> "It seems to me that this House is a recognised addition to the defences of Great Britain, that we are safer when the House is sitting and that the power and will of this House count very much . . . therefore it seems to me that it would be regrettable if we, as it were, go out of action, just at a time when the situation is becoming most acute."

Again, he said:

> "At this moment in its long history it would be disastrous, it would be pathetic, it would be shameful for the House of Commons to write itself off as an effective and potent factor in the situation, or reduce whatever strength it can offer to the firm front which the nation will make against aggression."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd August, 1939; cols. 2439, 2441, Vol. 350.]

That is what the First Lord said in August last when we were not at war and it seems to me that those arguments are much more potent to-day. This situation, I believe, would never have arisen had the Prime Minister consented to reorganise his Government and place it on a national basis, as the vast majority of the House wished, and if he had in that reorganisation got rid of some of his colleagues whose ability is not perhaps great enough to cope with the war situation and had also eliminated from the Cabinet certain elements which, as the House well knows, are more given to procrastination and delay than is desirable in time of war. As regards the points which the House ought to discuss without delay, there is, for instance, the question of the immediate creation of a secretariat to the Supreme War Council of France and Great Britain. There is, to-day, no organisation which carries out the decisions reached by the two Governments sitting together. That is an impossible situation which leads to utter and absolute confusion. I do not know and I do not believe anybody else knows who is in command of the Allied troops in Norway.

Captain Sir William Brass (Clitheroe): May I ask my hon. and gallant Friend what that has to do with the question of whether we should sit again on 14th or 21st May?

Brigadier-General Spears: It has much to do with it. It is one of the matters which Members of this House ought to discuss in this Chamber, instead of going on holiday. The consideration of that question was too long postponed in the last war. The creation of a secretariat to the Supreme Council is absolutely essential and should be undertaken without delay. There is another matter which at the present time does not brook delay. That the problem of how the Committee of Chiefs of Staffs is to function. That is a question of supreme importance in relation to the conduct of the war. I think hon. Members know that a long time ago, in 1921, the Salisbury Committee inaugurated——

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and gallant Member seems now to be going a very long way beyond the terms of the Amendment, which is that the House should adjourn until Tuesday, 14th May.

Brigadier-General Spears: My arguments are directed to showing that these questions to which I have referred, would be better discussed by the House on 14th May, than on 21st May.

Sir Henry Morris-Jones (Denbigh): I rise to support the Amendment which has been moved by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies) and before proceeding with my remarks I should like to ask for your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on the reasons

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which may be adduced in favour of the Amendment.

Mr. George Griffiths (Hemsworth): Will the people of Llandudno and Colwyn Bay be in favour of what the hon. Member is now supporting?

Sir H. Morris-Jones: I think the hon. Member can risk the assumption that I know my own constituency better than he does. Earlier in this Debate, Mr. Speaker, you in your discretion have seen fit to intervene on one or two occasions regarding the line of argument which it is permissible to follow in supporting this Amendment. I submit that the events of the last few days in this House and the repercussions of those events in the country have, materially and directly, affected the question which we are now discussing and I trust that you will be good enough to allow me to deal to some extent with those events in considering whether we ought to adjourn now for 10 days, or for a shorter period. I hope that we may be allowed a little latitude.

Mr. Speaker: I must point out that it is not permissible on this occasion for an hon. Member to make the speech which he did not make yesterday.

Sir H. Morris-Jones: I have no intention, Mr. Speaker, of trying to get in any remarks which I did not make yesterday or the day before, owing to my failure to catch your eye. I would, however, point out that we have now had time to scrutinise the Division List of last night, and that we have before us this morning, facts of which we could not possibly have taken cognisance earlier. I do not see how it is possible to debate a Motion for the Adjournment of the House without making reference to the result of the Division.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member may make references to it, but he cannot debate it.

Sir H. Morris-Jones: I submit that last night's Division has transformed the whole situation in this House. The situation in this House is not the same now as it has been at any time since 1935 when the Government came into office. A very substantial number of Members, who usually support the Government, felt in the circumstances of the day that they must oppose the Government, and those who did so included, as I have said, a number of Privy Councillors. In addition to that a very considerable number of Members who, in the ordinary way support the Government, deliberately abstained last night to support them in the Division Lobby, and I found myself as one of those abstainers. For one who for five years has known something about the tutelage of the Whip's Office and all its discipline, that abstention is a matter which one must take into account. It may not be a very heroic course, but a number of Members deliberately abstained last night, among whom were a number who generally constantly support the Government, and its constitutes one of the most grave reflections on the Government.

Mr. Speaker: I do not see what that has to do with the Adjournment of the House.

Sir H. Morris-Jones: I must bow to your Ruling, Mr. Speaker, if you will not allow me to develop further arguments which, to my mind at all events, will weigh with me and many other Members in this House as to why we should not adjourn for the period proposed in this Motion. However, I will turn to one or two other reasons, which perhaps are not quite so forcible, but at the same time they are reasons which appeal to me, and I think to Members of this House, and to a large number of people in the country. I understand that there are some circumstances connected with the Labour party which would make the adjournment of this House for a less period than proposed in the original Motion a matter of some inconvenience. I am quite sure that that would weigh very considerably with the House, but great events are pending in the country at the present time, and not a small event will be the meeting next week of representatives of the working classes of this country.

Sir Joseph Lamb (Staffs, Stone): Who are the representatives of the working class in this country?

Sir H. Morris-Jones: As I was saying, many matters of moment to this country are impending, not the least of which will be to determine whether organised Labour is to participate in the Government of the State. From that point of view I feel that there are considerations which might weigh against the Motion

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[Sir H. Morris-Jones.]

which has been submitted by the Government and which submission has to be proved. In spite of that I wish to put before the House certain considerations which, to my mind, make it completely wrong to adjourn this House at the present time for a period of 10 days at a time of internal crisis in the State and great peril without. First of all may I submit that to adjourn the House now will be a matter which will be very difficult for a large number of people to comprehend? They will not be able to understand why we should be adjourning for 10 days after the critical events that have been taking place. In addition to that, the Sovereign power of Parliament which, after all, is supreme, and which the next few weeks will prove conclusively is supreme, when complete and drastic reconstructions of the Government is impending, will not be able effectively to function, as it ought, by a suggestion that the House should adjourn for 10 days. We know that the Government, as it exists, will not be the Government which will be in this country, and it is important that Parliament in its Sittings should be able to face and have some effect in the reshaping of the new Government which is to replace the present one; the Government should not be replaced by a series of cabals outside the walls of this House. For the House to adjourn would be to abrogate the powers entrusted to us of shaping the destiny of this country, and it would have its effect in the Empire abroad at the present time.

Mr. Ede (South Shields): I apologise for interfering in this internecine quarrel among late supporters of the Government and people who may still be assumed to be half-heartedly supporters of the Government. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the circumstances in which this Debate is being conducted are not such as to bring Parliamentary institutions into great credit. It is hardly fitting, when discussing a matter of this kind that the House should be led by the President of the Board of Education, supported by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health.

Sir Edward Campbell (Bromley): Does the hon. Gentleman realise that outside this House there is a war going on?

Mr. Ede: It is because we realise so thoroughly that there is a war going on that I have made those remarks. After all, what are we being told this war is about? It is a war to maintain parliamentary institutions and democracy, and while on this side of the House every Member will vote as he pleases, I propose to give reasons for supporting the Amendment which has been moved. During the past two days in the two principal speeches which have been delivered I have heard uttered two grave threats to the supremacy of Parliament in this country. The first was by the Prime Minister on Tuesday when he said:

> "We cannot help it, but in this Debate we are giving hostages to fortune. Our military advisers have told us in very solemn terms of the dangers of holding such a discussion."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 7th May, 1940; col. 1085, Vol. 360.]

And last night the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty, after dealing with a similar argument said:

> "I hope this will be the last time."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 8th May, 1940; col. 1359, Vol. 360.]

I want, if I may, to read to the House a description which was given of the character of the founder of the family of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Sir William Davison (Kensington, South): On a point of Order. Has the history of the founder of the family of the First Lord of the Admiralty anything to do with the question whether the House should reassemble on 21st May?

Mr. Speaker: I am waiting to find out.

Mr. Ede: I think you will see, Sir, when I have finished the quotation, that the concluding words will show that it has everything to do with the subject under discussion. Trevelyan said:

> "Marlborough would not have been England's greatest leader in war if he had not understood the necessary relation between her war effort and her settled constitution. In that understanding he was not surpassed by Chatham himself. Long absences abroad, great victories in the field, the flattery of all Europe never made that cool head forget that he must answer for all he did to the Commons of England."

Sir W. Davison: Will the hon. Gentleman say how he could answer better on the 14th than on the 21st?

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Mr. Ede: Because between those dates steps may be taken, if the spirit of the two sentences which I have read from responsible gentlemen who are at present supposed to sit on the Front Government Bench are carried out, for which we may never have the opportunity of calling on them to answer. I suggest that in these times it is more than ever essential that the House should insist that the Government must answer to it speedily and effectively for the actions that they take. When the lives of millions of brave men are at stake we ought to be assured that as frequently as possible Ministers shall be able to answer here for the use they make of these men and the risks they call on them to run. I speak as one who fought in the last war, and I regret to see again the same loss of life and liberty of our troops through the way in which, unprepared and insufficiently supported, they have been sent into action. This House, no matter what our personal feelings may be, ought not to separate for so long a period as we are asked to do in this critical stage of the war.

12.58 p.m.

Sir Ralph Glyn (Abingdon): I should like to support my hon. Friend the Member for Lowestoft (Mr. Loftus) in his attitude to the Amendment. I think that we can leave it with full confidence to the Prime Minister and his advisers to take cognisance of the effect of last night's Division. It is of paramount importance that the sittings of Parliament should not interfere with the negotiations which, I hope, will take place to set in office a truly national Government which will enable us to carry the war to a victorious conclusion. It is, therefore, in the best interests of the country that we should rely upon the head of the Government to exercise the powers that exist to call Parliament together at an early date if outside events necessitate it. Departmental Ministers have had two valuable days taken up by continuous sessions in the House, and the enemy is probably reckoning what it means when Ministers responsible for Service Departments have been unable to be in their offices for that time. It means a great congestion of work thrown upon the Chiefs of Staff, and I am convinced that Members in all parts, while recognising the effect of the Division last night, feel it only right that the Executive should be left free and not hampered for a moment in the functions they must exercise day by day in carrying the war to a successful conclusion. I do not think many of us appreciate that probably if we can hold the enemy until next November we shall win the war. Therefore, every one of us, irrespective of party, must see that nothing in the nature of party loyalties or anything else matters and that we ought to leave it to the Executive to reassemble the House if circumstances make it essential.

1.1 p.m.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Captain Margesson): Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word on behalf of the Government. I am sure the House will forgive me, realising that the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet are meeting; otherwise, they would have been here to speak for themselves. During Question Time the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister whether implicit in this Motion was an understanding that the Government would ask Mr. Speaker to call the House together should occasion arise. The Prime Minister gave that assurance to the House. In case there are some hon. Members who were not in the House at that moment, let me repeat on behalf of the Government that, should the occasion arise, the Government will not hesitate to advise Mr. Speaker of their point of view and ask for the House to be called together at the earliest possible moment. I trust that with that assurance the House will agree, some discussion having taken place, to proceed now to other business.

Mr. C. Davies: We have made our protest, and in view of the statement which has been made by the Patronage Secretary, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Mr. Thorne (West Ham, Plaistow): Before the Amendment is withdrawn I would like to remove one impression made by the hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Amendment. He made a statement which was incorrect.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and learned Member has asked leave to withdraw the Amendment, but if the hon. Member continues the Debate it cannot be withdrawn.

Mr. Thorne: I only want to correct a statement which he made about Woolwich.

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1.4 p.m.

Mr. McGovern (Glasgow, Shettleston): I fail to see why the intervention of the Chief Whip and the condition that he has mentioned, which was already known, should make any difference. I have generally opposed long holidays for the House, and I oppose on this occasion because grave events are taking place in regard to the Government. I realise that Mr. Speaker has power to convene the House on the advice of the Government if further events develop. At the same time, I am not so greatly carried away by Parliamentary democracy that I think it matters a great deal whether the House meets next week or not, because I realise that the Government and the Civil Service usually carry on the country's affairs and will carry on the war.

I can take rather a detached view because, not being a supporter of the war and not having gone into the Lobby last night for greater drive in the war, and I want to ask that a few things should be borne in mind by those who advise that the House should meet on Tuesday next. For one thing, the Labour Party Conference will be taking place next week, and a large number of members of the Labour party will be absent. Then there is the fact that I am going on a cycling tour and shall be away, probably, for three weeks. I hope the war will not suffer in consequence of that fact. I want to go to Belgium, Holland and France—if I am permitted to go there, which is not always certain in these days. Therefore, even though Parliament does not meet next week I do not see that it should matter a great deal, because I noticed in the Debate last night that among the Members who were demanding greater vigour in the war were the hon. and learned Member for East Bristol (Sir S. Cripps) and the late First Lord of the Admiralty, both of whom went away for six or seven months' holiday. If they can go away for six or seven months I do not see why Parliament should not be entitled to 10 days' holiday.

In view of the fact that there are bound to be negotiations going on during the next few days it might be wise if we gave time for developments to take place. The Labour party have to consult their rank and file at their Whitsuntide conference—it is a very obnoxious thing to have to do—on whether they will permit them to join the Government or not. They cannot give a decision on whether they are going into the Government until they have consulted those who attend the Whitsuntide conference. Therefore, taking a detached view, and holding the balance between the two sections in the House, I think we should allow time for things to develop and for the discussions which must inevitably take place.

Further, I would say in reference to Parliamentary democracy that if the country could see the House as I saw it yesterday they would not be so enamoured of Parliamentary democracy. It was a state of affairs which brings us on towards the stage where people say it is time that we had a Hitler in this country. Therefore, Parliament should be allowed a day or two to cool down. Whether I am in favour of the war or against it, I think that if we are determined to wage war it should be waged with the minimum loss of human life. Therefore there is an argument for taking in the best elements in the country, detached from party, whose minds go along that groove. There is also the mood of the country to be considered. I have been attending the by-election in East Renfrewshire, and every Conservative I met—and people should understand that I have no antagonisms in this matter—said that the only hope for this country was for the Prime Minister to surrender office. That is the genuine view of every Tory I have met in this country. I have every sympathy with those who have the job and those who may take on the job, because others will fail also if the present administration fails. The task is such that I do not see success being attained by any administration. Therefore, I say, " Allow your heels and your heads to cool." Allow the consultations to take place, and let us hope that when Parliament does meet we shall throw up in this country a Government which will realise that the lives and fortunes of millions of human beings are at stake, and that if we are going to wage war it must be waged in a manner that will promote the interests of those people. If any people stand out in this national emergency who are frustrating the will of the people they should quietly move out and allow others to take their place.

1.10 p.m.

Sir W. Davison: I wish to say a few words about the speech made by the hon.

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member for South Shields (Mr. Ede) in support of the Amendment. There could not be a better reason for not supporting the Amendment than his speech. He began by saying that at a time when the lives of millions of our fellow countrymen are at stake it was undesirable for this House to adjourn, and then commented on the fact that there were very few Cabinet Ministers present and that they ought to be on the Treasury Bench.

Mr. Ede: May I interrupt the hon. Member once? He interrupted me twice. He has got the argument the wrong way round. What he said that I said second I said first.

Sir W. Davison: I do not mind whether the hon. Member said it first or second. He said it one way or another. To my mind the lives of our fellow countrymen are much safer if they allow Ministers to get on with their work of helping to wage the war instead of having to come here, especially after having had two days of it, to be nagged at and harassed by questions. The hon. and learned Member who moved the Amendment said that as had happened recently we might have things coming on us overnight, and therefore Parliament ought not to adjourn until the 21st of the month. All the arguments of those in favour of the Amendment are arguments why Parliament should not adjourn at all, and why we should have daily discussions, with all the Ministers present. The " New York Times " said of our discussions over the last two days that they were a splendid example of democracy but that it was not war. Many of the speeches made yesterday, as I endeavoured to point out on several occasions, were most prejudicial in the national interest.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member cannot go into the subject of yesterday's Debate.

Sir W. Davison: The point of my remarks is that it is very desirable that we should have a little interval free from speeches such as we had yesterday, which would relieve Mr. Hee-Haw of his occupation. [HON. MEMBERS: " Haw-Haw."] I call him " Hee-Haw," which is what he is. I think that every quarter of the House feels it is desirable that there should be some reconstruction of the Government, and surely it is desirable that the Prime Minister should have 10 days for that purpose. The Speaker has power to call the House together immediately in the event of any emergency, and surely it is better that the Prime Minister should have time to make up his mind on this matter of vital importance. The Labour party, moreover, are having an important conference. If they are going to help the Prime Minister, as everyone desires they should, so that we may get all sections of the country together, is it not desirable that there should be time given to them to meet together and consult to see whether they can obtain approval to this course. For these and other reasons I think the Motion should be carried. Members will be assisting the Forces and assisting the country by allowing Ministers to attend to their duties instead of coming here to be constantly harassed as they were yesterday.

Question, " That ' 21st ' stand part of the Question," put, and agreed to.

Resolved:

" That this House, at its rising this day, do adjourn till Tuesday, 21st May."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935 (ADAPTATION OF ACTS OF PARLIAMENT (AMENDMENT) ORDER).

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [1st May]:

" That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 309 of the Government of India Act, 1935, praying that the Government of India (Adaptation of Acts of Parliament) (Amendment) Order, 1940, be made in the form of the draft laid before Parliament."

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved,

" That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 309 of the Government of India Act, 1935, praying that the Government of India (Adaptation of Acts of Parliament) (Amendment) Order, 1940, be made in the form of the draft laid before Parliament."

To be presented by Privy Councillors or Members of His Majesty's Household.

FACTORY ADMINISTRATION.

Motion made, and Question proposed, " That this House do now adjourn."—[*Captain Margesson.*]

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1.16 p.m.

Mr. Rhys Davies (Westhoughton): I hope the House will forgive me introducing for Debate so late in the day the subject of factory administration relating to those millions of people employed in the factories of our country. We are all interested in the progress of the war, what is happening in Norway and other fields of battle, and incidentally in the quarrels that seem to emerge within the Tory party from time to time. I am sure, however, that one thing is certain, that this House of Commons cannot afford to forget the welfare of the industrial population of our country. I propose, therefore, to say a few words on certain issues connected with the Factory Department of the Home Office. The Government have set up a body to inquire into the health and welfare of our factory population, and I can do no better than commence the few remarks that I have to make by referring to the very excellent report of the Industrial Health Research Board of the Medical Research Council. This report commences by saying:

> "During the war of 1914-18 the increase in the output of munitions became of primary importance. To this end hours of labour for men were increased, 70 to 90 hours a week being common and over 90 hours a week not infrequent. The assumption was that if one unit of work could be done in one hour then six could be done in six, 12 in 12, and so on. A simple calculation would give the output per week, per month and per year. The actual results were found to belie this assumption, for output did not increase proportionately to time and effort expended."

If the House forgets everything else that I say, I should like through this House to appeal to employers of labour to remember that long hours of labour for their workpeople and speeding up in factories do not necessarily increase production. Indeed, whatever views may be held upon the war effort one thing is certain; whatever our men may do in Narvik, Trondheim and elsewhere no national effort can be conducted successfully unless proper regard is had for the welfare of those who are employed in the factories and workshops at home. Therefore, we are dealing this afternoon with what I will call one of the main problems of the home front. Unfortunately, we are always in a quandary that we have not before us the annual report of the factory inspectorate of the previous year. It is a report that is always delayed—I can quite understand it—and what we must do to-day, therefore, is to deal with the information that is available.

One of the first points I want to put to the hon. Gentleman in charge of this Debate is this: We are very anxious to know whether the factory inspectorate is not only doing its work—as it always does—but whether, with the increased number of persons employed in the factories, the inspectorate is adequate in number. That is very important because I am assured from experience of this problem that unless we have a live inspectorate the legislation that we put on the Statute Book to safeguard the interests of the workers in itself will be of little avail. It is common knowledge to every Member of Parliament that merely to pass a piece of legislation is of no use in itself; unless there is an organisation or power to enforce the law it is of no avail whatsoever. If I had time and if it were pertinent to this Debate, I could give the case of the Shops Acts. The provisions of the Shops Acts are implemented by local inspectorates; and if it were the appropriate occasion, I would have something to say about the law providing the maximum number of hours per week for young persons in shops. I am not quite satisfied that the law in that respect is being implemented in every shop throughout the country. Let me quote once again from the very excellent report to which I have alreay referred. This is what it says:

> "One of the lessons learned in the last war was that excessive hours of work do not ultimately pay, even when considered solely on the basis of output and apart from the effects on the health of the workers."

I would say in passing that, as hon. Gentlemen know, I am a secretary of a small trade union approved society. It is amazing how few people take note of the importance of what I call vital statistics. Let me explain. The sickness experience of the people of our country for the first quarter of 1940 was 20 per cent. higher than any figure recorded in history. I know that the severe winter weather probably accounts for most of that, but I am not so sure that speeding up in industry does not account for it in part. For instance, in the distributive trades, it is quite common for 10 persons to be employed in a shop. One or two are drafted into the Army or Navy, leaving the remainder to do the same amount of work as the 10 used to perform; and that this

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practice is not uncommon in clerical occupations as well.

I would like to find out, therefore, whether there is not something else which may have affected the health of our population during the first quarter of 1940. We have the blackout. I am very pleased that the Home Office has issued a very excellent pamphlet on this problem covering the effects of the blackout on factory workers. Indeed, the blackout has provided one or two very humorous illustrations of what can happen. Some factory workers came to me some time ago and put it thus: The owner blacked out all windows so that no light from the factory could be seen by enemy aircraft. But, strange to say, by blacking out the windows to prevent the enemy seeing the light, they blocked the ventilation of the factory at the same time. Not only did they black out the factory windows during the night but they blacked out sunlight during the day at the same time. The large employer of course is always better on the average than the small one. It is the little bakeries and small places where tailoring work is done which do not very often conform to the requirements of the Factory Acts. I trust, therefore, that in addition to issuing this excellent pamphlet the inspectorate will see that these small employers especially carry out the suggestions contained in it.

There is another point which I do not remember having raised before. We speak much more eloquently by the way when we repeat ourselves. If we say it often enough, it may penetrate into the mind of the Minister in charge. I should like to know what happens in factories in this matter. Our education code provides that no child although 14 years of age shall be allowed to leave until the end of the school term. This is what happens, to my personal knowledge, particularly in Scotland in the distributive trades. I cannot tell whether it occurs in factories. A child is often allowed on compassionate grounds to leave school and start work before the end of the school term as stipulated by the local authority. Remembering the demands especially from some unscrupulous employers for young persons to be employed, especially in agriculture, I wonder whether that sort of thing applies to factories and whether the age of every child is scrutinised by the certifying factory surgeon. I was astonished the other day to find that the Westmorland Education Committee had decided that they were willing to wink at the absence from school of children of all ages provided they were working on farms. It will hardly be worth while winning a war if we allow that sort of thing to happen.

Here is another illustration of what can happen during war—I hardly think it could happen in peace-time. A number of women living at Blackpool working at a great munition factory near Chorley. The Home Office has issued a document giving a complete list of orders issued to employers allowing women and young persons to work overtime and allowing them to work two and three shifts and at nights as well. These women in Blackpool had to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and although they worked well within legal limits they could not ordinarily return home until ten o'clock at night. Their hours of labour, of course, do not account for all that, but transport facilities were not available to meet their requirements. All that has now been attended to. But has the Home Office any liaison at all with the transport Ministry to see that that sort of thing shall not happen again?

Is the Home Office pressing not only for the establishment of safety committees in factories but for the appointment of welfare advisers? Pressure ought to be brought upon employers to meet the sort of case I raised a moment or two ago.

Women are flocking into industry more than ever because men have been called up. Luxury trades are naturally declining in importance, and women employed in them are now drifting into the heavier industries. I should imagine that the factory inspectorate will have all that in mind when thinking out problems about industrial accidents.

It is very interesting just now to note the conditions under which people live in Germany. I have come across a translation of an article in German showing the number of industrial accidents in Germany. It is interesting to find out what happens under Fascism to factory employés. While we in this country only record accidents occurring inside factories, in Germany they include those arising between the worker's home and work; consequently the comparison is not fair. Incidentally, the probability of being injured in an industrial accident is 57 per

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[Mr. Davies.]

cent. higher for an inexperienced worker than for a skilled worker, and authority tells me that that is true throughout the world. To show the deterioration in Germany, the number of industrial accidents, including those on the way to and from work, rose from 491,000 to 1,338,000—that is, by 172 per cent.—from 1932 to 1938, although the number of employed persons insured against industrial accidents increased by only 73 per cent. This is important by way of comparison with our own country. It tells us also that 8,000 workers were fatally injured in industry in 1937 and 1938 in Germany. As far as I know, this is not an anti-Nazi article; it simply gives the facts of the situation as the writer knew them at the time. One of the reasons for the increase in the number of accidents is stated to be fatigue and speeding-up. We know, of course, that in all the totalitarian States there is always a shock brigade. I want therefore to have a proper perspective in this country.

I return again to this admirable report where it makes it clear that you do not increase production by increasing the number of hours of work or speeding up the worker in any way. What you do is to increase the rate of sickness and in some cases you reduce the production at the same time. I should like now to ask the hon. Gentleman what has happened to the orders issued since the issue of this interim report. It would be very interesting information, I am sure. The total number of factories covered by orders then issued was 2,914. I should like, if possible, to find out the number of workers covered by those orders. It does not convey anything at all when we are told that 2,914 factories were covered unless we know how many persons were employed. I would ask whether the hon. Gentleman is satisfied that the reduced hours of labour laid down in the Factory Act, 1937, are actually being implemented. I have come to the conclusion, after some experience, that, however keen the factory inspector, or any other inspector, may be, there is no saving the working people from long hours of labour merely by law. If they would have the benefits of the law—although the inspector does his work excellently—trade unionism is ultimately the deciding factor. People should be told that.

As I have said, we make no apology for bringing the House of Commons back to the home front. I hope that what has been said here to-day will result in at least two things. One is that we shall not, if we can help it, allow the unscrupulous employer to take advantage of the national emergency to exploit his workpeople for his personal aggrandisement. The next thing, and the most important, is this. When the Government are extending their operations in the manufacture of munitions and the implements of war, they might do what I feel sure they realise they ought to do—that is, to have regard to the health and welfare of the people employed in those factories.

1.38 p.m.

Dr. Edith Summerskill (Fulham, West): It is understandable that this House is empty this afternoon. This Debate is somewhat of an anti-climax after the last two days. If I had to choose the Member whom I should like to see on the Front Bench opposite, I should choose, in view of an answer that was given at Question Time to-day, the hon. and gallant Member who represented the Ministry of Supply. To my absolute amazement, the hon. and gallant Member told the House that he had no knowledge of this report which is being debated to-day, the report of the Industrial Health Research Board, a sub-committee of the Medical Research Council—which, after all, is financed by the Government. There was a Question on the Order Paper, about the working conditions of women in factories doing work for the Ministry of Supply. I asked whether the recommendations of this report were recognised by the Ministry of Supply, and the hon. and gallant Member evidently had not heard of the report. I feel sure, of course, that that does not apply to the representatives of the Home Office. If the Under-Secretary has not heard of it before, he will have heard of it by the time this Debate is over.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peake): I heard of it long ago.

Dr. Summerskill: Yes. This report was drawn up as a result of the experience of the last war. The recommendations in it are not frivolous: they are of great importance; and, in the light of what is

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happening in this war, they should be applied immediately. As a matter of fact, the acrimonious discussions here during the last two days have been due to the feeling of the House that the Government have not learnt by experience. I ask the Home Office to learn by experience so far as the conditions of the workers are concerned. If the troops are to be supplied with adequate clothing, equipment, guns, and all the other things needed to prosecute the war, it is surely absolutely essential that the industrial forces on the home front should be kept as fit as the troops, so that they may keep up the output. Apart from the humanitarian aspect, the Government should view the whole thing from the aspect that it will be in the interests of the country, in the interests of the Government themselves, for them to regard this report very seriously.

It is important to remember that by increasing hours, you do not necessarily increase output in the same proportion. I might illustrate that from the Debates which take place in this House. As the hours go on, the quality of the Debates certainly does not improve. As the atmosphere becomes more vitiated, Members become more irritable, and their brains get tired. I am informed that in the small hours of the morning speeches have been made which are quite incoherent, and Members have indulged in the most amazing mixed metaphors. We are like other workers, although I am glad to say we do a much lighter form of work than most of them do. As the hours go on, brains get tired, and, as we saw last night, the tempers even of the most experienced get a little frayed. The result of the operation of such factors can be seen in this report.

The recommendations are of an obvious character. First, avoid long hours. I want to hear what is being done about that. We still have nearly 1,000,000 unemployed, and I believe we have a huge pool of workers which has not yet been touched—I refer to the large number of women. Secondly, it is recommended that the workers' Sundays and holidays should not be interfered with. Thirdly, it is extremely important that lighting should be the best possible, and that factories should be heated properly. I have not examined every paragraph of the report, but I am surprised that it does not also deal with the question of night work. I regard the lot of the night worker as a very unhappy one. His health rapidly deteriorates. We have heard this very often from my hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury (Mr. Banfield), when he has spoken on the subject of night baking. The night worker finds that he cannot adjust his sleeping hours, and also there is a social factor of tremendous importance. His whole family life is disrupted. I feel so strongly on the matter that I still want to be told why workers in most industries, I think, have to work at night. I have known men who have been on night work for periods of 10 years. Can that be avoided?

Another point is the incidence of accidents. In spite of many factories introducing foolproof machines, there is still a large number of accidents. In the factories where there is artificial lighting accidents increased by 26 per cent., and in factories where the hours have been increased from 10 to 12 per day there are two and a-half times more accidents. What appeals to me chiefly in this report is that they say that these accidents are in a large measure due to sickness and fatigue. The conclusion at which these eminent scientists who drew up this report arrived is that they say that the basic problem is one of health, health of mind and body, since the healthier and the more contented the individual the more energy he had available.

I want to apply myself particularly to that aspect of the report, and to ask the Under-Secretary why in these enlightened days we examine only boys and girls under 16 before they go into the factory. Why does not the State assume any responsibility for the health of boys and girls over 16, and of men and women? Is it because the National Health Insurance Act provides for that? I know a good deal about the working of the National Health Insurance Act, and I maintain that that argument cannot hold during the war. An enormous number of women who are being recruited for war work have never been insured under the National Health Insurance Act, and, therefore, thousands of people are being introduced into our factories who have never had a medical examination at all. The argument, therefore, that a worker over 16 can be examined by a State doctor does not hold. It is a ridiculous

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[Dr. Summerskill.]

anomaly of this Act for a married woman to be left outside. If a man's wife dies and he decides to employ a housekeeper, the State remains responsible for the health of the housekeeper and guarantees that she shall have health insurance benefit and certain remuneration if she falls ill, but the State does not recognise a married woman in this way.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Colonel Clifton Brown): The hon. Lady is discussing something which would involve legislation, and it is out of order on the Adjournment.

Dr. Summerskill: Could not I quote this as an illustration of the injustice of the health provisions in order to urge the Home Secretary that the examination which already takes place by doctors who are employed by the Home Office should also be extended to other categories?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: An illustration is always permissible, provided it does not go too far.

Dr. Summerskill: May I ask the Under-Secretary whether he will ask the Home Secretary to consider this matter, as I believe it is not sufficiently realised that hundreds of thousands of people are going to be recruited for employment in war factories who have had no medical examination? I am not pressing for medical examination because I am a doctor, but I am quoting from a report which says that, if the accident rate is to be decreased, it is absolutely essential that the workers should be healthy. I feel that this is one of the most important steps which the Home Office should consider.

I want to say a few words about factory inspectors. I cannot say that I know of a large number of people who work in factories who have complained of bad conditions, but from time to time I do see men and women who tell me that they are working under conditions which are certainly not conducive to good health. I am sometimes told that a factory is too hot or too cold, or that there are fumes, and that there are places which should be called, if one were honest, slum factories. I know that factory inspectors are recruited from men and women, many of whom have university qualifications, but I want to know whether these inspections are carried out in a thorough manner. On the Order Paper to-day there was a Question in which the attention of the Minister was drawn to the remarks of a judge who said, with respect to a fatal accident which had taken place in a factory, that although the factory inspector had called on many occasions, he had not observed that certain machinery was not properly guarded. I believe that that is an instance of a certain laxity in this administration.

Is there a sufficient number of factory inspectors, and do they pay their visits unexpectedly—that is a very important point—or is the owner of the factory warned that a visit is pending? If you are to assess the real conditions under which a man or woman works, the inspector should walk into the factory unannounced. Surely some regulation should be made so that factory inspectors could go into a factory unasked. I think that the Under-Secretary will agree that the health visitor who inspects the conditions under which a foster child is kept does not warn the foster-mother, but walks into the house and says, " Here I am, let me see the kind of conditions under which this child lives." That, surely, should be the method adopted by the factory inspectors. I also feel that the time has come when the job of the factory inspector should be not only to inspect the machinery and the building, but also to examine the human machine. I agree that the ordinary factory inspector could not do that; it should be done by a doctor who should make a medical examination of the human machine. The answer in the past has always been, " But look at the large amount of money that the State is expending upon National Health Insurance." That may be, but the National Health Insurance Scheme is not a preventive scheme; it is only a curative scheme. Workers go to the doctor only when there are actual symptoms of illness apparent. If one looks at the figures in the report, it will be found that the wastage of labour is enormous and that on the average the worker who stays away during the year on account of sickness stays away a fortnight. May I call attention to the rather alarming aspect that the second cause of sickness among workers is gastritis? No worker goes to a doctor and says, " I have a slight pain," but when the worker becomes extremely ill he has to see a doctor, and

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as a result he has to have two or three weeks off when he might have been at work. If the Home Secretary was wise, he would save all these hours of labour for the State, which could be translated into goods and equipment for the Army. There should be that inspection of the human machine. If that was carried out, it would be found that all those workers suffering from this complaint would be spotted immediately, and treated, and there would be no need for enforced periods of illness and convalescence. I want to remind the Under-Secretary that during war this particular complaint increases because the predisposing cause is worry and anxiety. I believe my suggestion is practicable and that if carried out, it would mean that the number of working days wasted was considerably reduced. May I also impress on the Under-Secretary that in future not only should there be factory inspection from the angle of inspecting buildings and machines, but also of the human factor, which is tremendously important if we are to keep up our full strength and produce all the equipment which, I believe, the Army needs so badly?

1.56 p.m.

Mr. Ridley (Clay Cross): The Debate which is taking place to-day, compared with that of yesterday, is a marvellous testimony to the flexibility of British Parliamentary institutions, and happily this is not the first occasion on which this has happened. I am sure the Under-Secretary will remember the time of the Debate on the unemployment of young persons in this House, last July, when the atmosphere was not so charged with drama as yesterday but certainly was at a time of considerable international tension. I think it is a fine thing that some few Members of us can spare an hour or two, after the dramatic Debates of the last two days, in order to discuss a problem which is, after all, of considerable importance.

I wish to say a word or two about the interim report on the operation of the Factories Act, 1937, published in March of this year. I have read that report with very great care and would like to take this opportunity of saying that it is, as so many other documents of its kind are, a first-class Civil Service document, written with great clarity and considerable conciseness. Some of us have read it with some appreciation of what is being attempted. There is, apparently, a real desire on the part of the Home Office to prevent the provisions of the 1937 Act from being flagrantly violated, and I hope that the Home Office, in that endeavour, will be vigilant enough to be completely successful in achieving its purpose.

May I make one or two general observations? First of all, a reading of the document, and especially a reading of the historical preface, cannot help but impress the reader with the fact that some improvements have been made in the matter of the employment of women and young persons within the last 25 years. Although they have been improvements which have been timid and hesitant, they have been such that no Member of the House could do other than warmly welcome them. These improvements are to be continued by the legislation which has grown out of public demand and the constantly growing power and influence of the trade-union movement. I share the view of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies) that the adult worker, man as well as woman, should be expected to defend himself or herself, so far as is humanly possible in the field of industry, by the use of the trade-union movement, supplemented, where imperative, by legislation.

We are discussing this afternoon in the main, however, a body of young persons incapable of that kind of self-defence and therefore imposing on the House heavier burdens of responsibility to see that they are not unfairly and unfortunately treated in the field of industry. I remember that when I read the first draft of the Factories Bill, which eventually became the 1937 Act, I was astounded, not at what the Bill prohibited in terms of juvenile employment, but what it proposed to permit and ultimately did permit. I cannot refrain this afternoon from expressing my abhorrence at the sheer intolerability, in 1940, whether there is a war or not, of industrial employment at the age of 14 years especially under the extended conditions permitted by the special regulations.

I and others commonly hate this class structure of society, with its imposition of educational limitations at 14 years of age, the undue physical strain at that age and its further imposition, in consequence, of lifelong poverty. Although the House

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[Mr. Ridley.]

may welcome the improvements made in this matter, in terms of legislation, if it is examined objectively, it is, after all, a diabolical balance between what the health of young people of 14 years of age will stand and how they can best be treated in order to extract the maximum amount of physical energy, such as how many hours they can be allowed to stand, whether they shall have music to accompany their jobs, if so, how much, and what shall be their breaks. You get intolerable class dictinction when a boy of 14 is forced by the poverty of his parents to enter industry when he is entirely unsuited for it, and finds himself at the age of 20 a private in the Army, and remains in the non-commissioned ranks for the rest of his time, because he has been denied educational advantgaes, while another boy can go to a secondary school and to a university until he is 20 or 21 and then leave for a career that offers no probability of lifelong poverty.

When I consider some of the types of employment on which youngsters of 14 are now being engaged, I am bound to say that I feel provoked to language that would break the bounds of Parliamentary decorum. At the bottom of page 11 of the report it says:

> " There are, however, some cases where the refusal of a concession for young persons under 16 years of age would result in serious dislocation and loss of output, especially where the work of the young persons is very closely linked with that of older persons with whom they work, either as members of a team or assistants."

It goes on to speak of the various types of employment. It speaks of

> " rivet heating for riveters, or rivet catching and holding-up, or ' pulling ' or assisting drop-hammer smiths, or acting as moulders assistants in foundries."

Anybody who has ever seen inside a factory knows what work of that character is like, the terrible dirt and almost unbearable atmosphere. Think of youngsters of 14 years of age, not by any choice of their own but by the sheer economic compulsion of poverty, being forced into that kind of employment, even under the slightly restricted conditions of Section 71 of the Act of 1937 of a 44-hour week, which may be extended to 48 hours. On page 4 of the report it is recorded historically that in the last war factory legislation permitted boys of 14 to be employed at night, but on page 10 it is said, that " for the time being " permission for night employment at that age has not been conceded under the special regulations. I hope that the four words " for the time being " do not indicate that for any reason or fear in the mind of the Home Office they will permit night employment for young persons between 14 and 16. Night employment is bad enough for those between 16 and 18, but it would be really intolerable for it to be permitted for those between 14 and 16.

On page 8 reference is made to relaxation in the matter of hours under the extended hours provision. I want to emphasise the point made by the hon. Member for Westhoughton, that the figures as to the number of factories are absolutely meaningless unless they are accompanied by the all-important figure of the number of young persons affected. In one part of the report it is said that relaxation in the number of hours has been made only in a few industries, in cotton and woollen textiles. I think it is altogether too diminutive a fashion in which to dismiss the matter by saying that there was an extension from 44 hours to 48 in a few industries. They may be few in number, but the all-important fact is that they are industries in which a very considerable proportion of the employés are young persons. I should like the Under-Secretary to tell us, if he can, how many young persons have been affected by extensions from 44 hours to 48. As to night employment, it is permitted for young women over 18, and on page 9 of the report it is said:

> " Applications for authority to employ women at night have been relatively few and confined almost entirely to factories producing armaments or engaged in processes incidental thereto; altogether 57 Orders have been made. The system authorised is usually one of the following—(*a*) a system of three eight-hour shifts in the 24 hours with an interval of at least half an hour for meals and rest in each turn; (*b*) a system of day and night shifts allowing a weekly total of working hours of about 54 for the day shift and about 50 for the night shift. Under this system intervals for meals and rest amounting to at least one hour are required to be allowed during each turn."

I have had experience of night work, and I think it is a thing which should be avoided if it is at all possible. I have never yet been able to make up my mind as to whether alternative night work is to be preferred to consistent night work. Both are very bad. Alternative night work does give opportunity for domestic

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comfort and enjoyment, but a three-shift system means that week after week a man has to change his habits and accustom himself to different hours for food. If a man is on a night shift from 10 o'clock till six o'clock in the morning, he gets home just as the milk carts are rattling down the cobbled street, when other members of the household have awakened and all sorts of things are happening within the four walls of what is very often a small house. The opportunity for getting sleep on the part of that night worker is very limited and restricted. I beg the Under-Secretary to see that the conditions for night employment are restricted in an almost microscopic fashion, and that the Home Office will require abundant proof of its necessity before orders of this kind are extended. I do not want to fan into flame the embers of last July on juvenile employment and the 44-hour week, but I beg the Under-Secretary to remember that those embers are alive, and that my hon. Friends will not be slow to take whatever opportunity presents itself to press upon the Home Office the necessity for such legislation as will save our young persons from the intolerabilities of the present employment whether they are of 44 or 48 hours a week, whether they are in the special industries to which I have referred or in the field of industry as a whole.

I must say one word about the most extraordinary reply which the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply gave to an hon. Member this afternoon. It really is astonishing that a document of this kind, with its humane approach to this problem, has not been seen by Ministerial Departments covering a very wide field of productive employment in which many hundreds of young persons are employed and who are unaware not only of the terms of the document but that the document itself is in existence. Arising out of that amazing statement, I hope that the Under-Secretary will make it the duty of the Home Office to draw the attention of Departments engaged in Government production to the existence of this document and its terms, and that they will also realise the tremendous desirability of seeing that these regulations are imposed on employers wherever they can be. I should like the Under-Secretary to tell us exactly what the Government are doing in regard to the recommendations in the report.

2.15 p.m.

Mr. David Adams (Consett): The House is indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies) for having initiated this important Debate, since a discussion of certain defects of the partial neglect of our factory legislation cannot but be of value to the country. I wish to raise one or two relatively smaller matters regarding the effect of over-work in certain factories and shipyards on the Tyneside. It is generally agreed that the situation there in that respect is distasteful both to employers and employés. As a result of the admitted shortage of labour, it is necessary for intolerable hours of overtime to be worked. In certain shipyards where the three-shift system is not in operation, overtime is worked from 8.30 p.m., and every week-end, until the men become too exhausted to go to the factories and workshops. This overtime is being worked in certain of our larger industries on the Tyneside. There is an urgent demand for relief from this situation, as it is causing staleness, exhaustion and a coniderable amount of sickness, which eventually result in short time by many workers.

The situation has not been met by local action. The local trade union committees have taken upon themselves the task of advertising, at their own expense, for their particular classes of labour. Appeals have been made in other quarters and to other trade union committees for labour which, as a result of the depression, was transferred elsewhere. The result has been virtually nil. Some additional organisation, which has not yet been set up, is required to deal with the position. In some cases municipal employés have responded to the appeals that have been made by stating that to return to their old employment would mean a decline in their wages and possibly a loss of superannuation. Surely, this is a case in which the Home Office should undertake some inquiry for the purpose of seeing whether it is not possible to make arrangements to ensure that skilled shipyard workers of various sorts employed elsewhere should return to their employment. In that way, the very onerous situation on the Tyneside could be met. I have been in communication with employers and employés, and they have declared

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[Mr. Adams.]

that this is one of the most urgent problems to be dealt with. It seems to be a case of neglect by the Ministry of Labour or the Home Office, or by both, for clearly the matter has not had the official attention which it ought to receive. In County Durham, the great mining county of the country, certain employés are bitterly complaining that there appears to be work, but that they cannot reach it. In certain parts of the county there is great unemployment but, at the same time and in the same districts, considerable overtime is being worked in the mines. Surely, that is a situation which can be dealt with by one of the Ministries concerned. It is creating a great deal of serious discontent. I have received communications on the matter from many quarters and I have passed them on to the Durham Miners' Association for attention, but it is a matter which ought to have attention from all the Ministries, and I am sure that it could be rectified without further delay.

The information which has been supplied to the House this afternoon concerning the employment of women and children will be of great value to the Home Office. On the Tyneside we have the unenviable notoriety of having a tuberculosis rate which is probably the highest in the country. Although, since the last war, there has been a substantial decline in the incidence of this disease, nevertheless the North-East Coast remains well above the average for the rest of the country. This matter ought to receive the constant attention of the Ministry of Health. When Questions are put to the Minister about this, his response is that action is being taken in the provision of additional hospitals, and so on; but it is to means of prevention that attention ought more particularly to be directed. The high rate of the disease is alleged to be due to the low nutritional standards on the North-East Coast and also to overtime worked by women and girls in the relatively few factories there. It is, however, interesting to notice with regard to this disease that the figures show that 50 per cent. of the cases of tuberculosis in children under one year of age result from infection. Therefore, if adults are infected, it is not possible, even under relatively healthy conditions, to prevent the disease from spreading to babies and young children. It is a serious fact that during the last three years there has been an average of no fewer than 50,000 new cases of tuberculosis in the country.

Probably our municipal authorities are dealing with this matter as well as they can, but it requires a much greater effort from the central authority, particularly in the matter of nutrition, which would not necessitate additional legislation. There has been a request to local authorities to increase, at their own charge, the amount of cheap milk available to various sections of the community, but there is a revolt against the municipal authorities having to bear the additional cost of many thousands of pounds for the purpose of raising the standard of life among the industrial workers. If the Government are serious, as unquestionably they are, in their efforts to preserve intact the home front, from the point of view of the standards of the workers, in order that our munitions production and export trade may be kept at the highest level, that aspect of expenditure by the central authorities must be carefully examined. I am sorry that more Members could not be present at this Debate. The smallness of the attendance may seem to indicate a lack of interest in the subject, but I should point out that, unfortunately, the Debate had to be arranged at very short notice, and many hon. Members found it impossible to be present in the House this afternoon. This subject is of such vital importance and the revelations which have been made regarding it are so disquieting, that I hope an opportunity will be found, if possible on the initiative of the Government, for a further Debate upon it.

2.26 p.m.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peake): I think it must be the calm after the storm, rather than the calm before the storm, which the House is experiencing this afternoon. The hon. Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies) said that the welfare of our industrial population was one of the first essentials in time of war and with that statement I fully agree. Our industrial effort may be decisive one way or the other. The war has brought its problems to the industrial division of the Home Office and to the factory inspectorate, as to other Government Departments. I am glad, therefore, that the House should have this opportunity of showing its interest in this part of Home Office administration and that I should have the

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opportunity of giving some account to the House of what we have done since the outbreak of war. Like the hon. Member for Consett (Mr. David Adams) I regret that the Debate has had to be held at such short notice and although the hon. Member for Westhoughton has as usual been good enough to inform me in advance of some of the questions which he intended to raise, I am unable, because of the shortness of notice, to give the full answers to all his questions and all of the statistical information for which hon. Members opposite have asked.

I begin by stating briefly what is the field of Home Office responsibility in this matter. The speeches of the hon. Member for Consett and of the hon. Lady the Member for West Fulham (Dr. Summerskill) rather indicated that in their view we bore a heavier responsibility over a wider field than is actually the case. The field of Home Office responsibility may be described briefly as having regard to welfare in the factories, and the hours of work of women and young persons. Reference has been made to the admirable report of the Industrial Health Research Board and I was surprised to hear from hon. Members opposite that my colleague at the Ministry of Supply appeared to be unaware of the existence of this document. I cannot of course answer for my hon. and gallant Friend; it may be that he did not fully understand the Supplementary Question which was put to him. But I can assure hon. Members opposite that this document is well known in the Ministry of Supply.

As far as industrial welfare is concerned, there are many aspects for which the Home Office has a specific responsibility, because of the duty which is on the Department to enforce the provision of the Factories Acts. Those Acts are designed not only to protect the workers, men and women, against special risks of industrial accidents or industrial disease, but also to secure proper working conditions in the factories. They contain special provisions relating to cleanliness, heating, ventilation, lighting, washing facilities, accommodation for workers, protective clothing and first aid. Beyond the statutory responsibilities of the Home Office, it has become established practice in recent years for the Home Office and the factory inspectorate to supplement the enforcement of the actual statutory obligations by issuing pamphlets giving advice to employers, and by delivering lectures with a view to securing a wider adoption of safety, health and welfare arrangements than the minimum standards required by law.

As regards operations or processes which may involve specific danger to health, it is the constant duty of the Factories Department to assist in devising measures to counteract such dangers. New risks from time to time arise as a result of the introduction of new machines or new processes and it is the duty of the Factories Department to mobilise specialist knowledge for the purpose of devising protective measures. As a recent example—one among many—I may quote the development of what are known as radio-active processes. Special safeguards for work of this kind have been devised with the assistance of the medical and engineering officers in the Factories Department. In this field of welfare work special difficulties to which the hon. Member referred were encountered on the outbreak of the war, particularly as regards the ventilation and lighting in factories. The hon. Member referred in very generous terms to the pamphlet prepared in the Home Office on the subject of ventilation in factories under black-out conditions. That pamphlet has been widely distributed and we are convinced that it has produced good results. As regards lighting, a special study is being made of the subject by the Factory Lighting Committee which includes outside experts as well as representatives of employers and workpeople under the chairmanship of an ex-Chief Inspector of Factories, Sir Duncan Wilson. This committee had issued one report before the outbreak of war and has been asked since the war, to accelerate its activities. Meantime, special instructions have been given to factory inspectors to assist them in giving further advice to factory occupiers and in carrying on a vigorous campaign to improve lighting.

In reviewing some of the other welfare activities of the factory inspectors, I can assure the hon. Lady the Member for West Fulham that the activities of the factory inspectorate are very much wider than her speech seemed to indicate. They cover an enormous field of welfare activity, both imposed on factory occupiers by Statute, and also encouraged beyond the minimum statutory obliga-

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[Mr. Peake.]

tions. She addressed herself, in particular, to the question of medical arrangements and the medical examinations of persons entering factories. I agree with her that there is no statutory power at present to enforce medical examination for entrants into factories and industries over the age of 16 years. The question is one which would involve legislation, and therefore I should be out of Order in dealing with it to-day. However, I think I may claim that a good deal has been recently as regards the employment of whole-time doctors in the larger factories, and, in particular, in the factories which have been established by the Ministry of Supply. Furthermore, since the war there has been a considerable addition to part-time medical supervision in factories of moderate size.

Mr. Rhys Davies: When the Minister speaks of doctors fully employed in certain factories, does that mean that they are employed by the owners of the factories?

Mr. Peake: Yes, that is very often the case, especially where particularly dangerous processes are involved.

The hon. Member for Westhoughton mentioned the question of the welfare of workers outside factories. In this regard we have no statutory responsibility, but we do take a great interest in such questions as the housing of the workers, and the transport of the workers to and from their work. Where special extensions of hours are being asked for it is always the practice of the Home Office to ask for information on these points. The hon. Member mentioned the case of the factory near Chorley, in Lancashire, and questions have been put in the House in regard to the inadequate transport facilities from Blackpool, I think, and elsewhere. This is a matter which the Home Office took up with the other Government Departments concerned—the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Transport—and I have assured myself that a very substantial improvement of transport has recently come into operation. I turn for the moment to the question of hours of work, which is dealt with in the report made by the Home Office to this House some time ago in respect of the first five months of the war, and also in the pamphlet issued by the Industrial Health Research Board. I would draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the pamphlet of the Industrial Health Research Board, although it emphasises and endorses the general policy set out in the report of the Home Office which came out at an earlier date, at the same time covers a wider field. It covers the hours of work of men as well as those of women and children.

I would like to say that the experience of the Home Office fully supports the observations in regard to hours of work which are made in this document, and which have been quoted this afternoon by the hon. Member for Westhoughton. It is difficult to condense into a few sentences the gist of the report which we made to Parliament a few months ago, but I think that the general policy embodied in the report is contained in the last sentences of it, in which it is stated:

> "It is, however, the policy of the Government, while authorising where necessary hours which would not be permissible in peace time, not to authorise hours which are found in the light of experience and scientific investigation to be detrimental to health or to efficient production."

On the outbreak of war the Home Office had some exceedingly difficult questions to deal with in regard to hours of work. On the one hand, there was the urgent necessity of producing certain classes of goods in greatly increased quantities for our national war effort, while, on the other hand, there were the interests of the workpeople to be considered. There were difficulties of securing additional labour at short notice and the difficulties of travelling and so forth in the blackout. I think that the reception given to this report by the House shows that on the whole we have held the balance fairly between the interests of the workers and the demands of the Supply Departments and of Government contractors of all kinds for greater latitude in order to speed up output.

The hon. Member for Clay Cross (Mr. Ridley) asked a number of questions and made a number of comments on that report. As far as I could follow him, he objected very strongly to the adoption of a three-shift system. Generally speaking, our policy at the Home Office since the war started has been to encourage employers to adopt a shift system rather than to permit long hours of overtime for

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women and young persons. We believe on the whole that it is better to have two, or possibly three, shifts of workers, than to have one shift working very much extended hours. As between a two-shift system, that is, a night shift and a day shift, and a three-shift system, on the whole the preference of the workers has been for the two-shift system. Hon. Members will see that the adoption of a three-shift system with changes of shifts every eight hours involved, in the winter months, two-thirds of all the workers employed travelling during hours of darkness. With the two-shift system half of the workers change over their work during daylight hours, even in the depth of winter. As the days have grown longer, both shifts on a two-shift system have been able to get to and from their work during the hours of daylight.

The third feature in the policy that we have pursued as regards hours of work since the war is this. There has been general agreement among the parties whom we have consulted in regard to this matter that we must safeguard to the fullest possible extent the hours of the very young workers. If the hon. Member will refer to the report, he will see that we have done our best to prevent additional hours being worked by very young persons. For instance, in no case have we permitted employment by night of girls under 18 or of boys under 16. With regard to the employment of young persons under 16, it is satisfactory to see on the top of page 12 of the report that whereas we have granted up to 5th February 439 orders enabling the hours for young persons under 16 to exceed the 44 hours fixed by Statute, in 312 cases those orders were not renewed. The number of orders in operation at the end of the period was much smaller than the total number of orders granted.

Mr. Ridley: We can get no idea of the magnitude of the orders unless we have the figures of the number of workers.

Mr. Peake: The question of the numbers involved is one of great difficulty because the number of persons employed at any one moment at a factory varies. We know at the Home Office at any one moment how many orders we have granted in respect of extension of hours, but the number of workpeople is constantly fluctuating and figures which would not be misleading could only be got by a special census in a particular week involving inquiries at all the factories concerned. For example, an order to authorise additional overtime may be made for three months, but it would not necessarily be the case that all workpeople covered by the order would in fact be employed for the extra overtime. Some might be so employed for only a few weeks. Again, in the case of an order authorising shift working, the staff of the factory would usually be expanding and it would not be possible without specific inquiry at the factory to say how many women were employed in the shift at any particular time. The circumstances are so fluctuating, the orders are made for short periods, the orders lapse from time to time, and the amount of use that is made of the orders by employers varies so much, that it is difficult to get any figures giving even a general picture of the number of young persons or women covered by the orders. There are something like 240,000 factory premises covered by the Factory Acts and the number of factories involved by the orders are very small in relation to the total number of premises. I agree that the number of factories gives no accurate indication of the number of workers covered by the order.

Mr. Rhys Davies: We have been pressing this point on the Home Office for some time, and it would assist us if we could get the number of workers involved when an order is applied for.

Mr. Peake: I will look into that question and see whether it is possible to get some statistics which will give a picture of the extent of this question as regards the number of workers affected.

May I pass to the specific questions put to me by the hon. Member for Westhoughton? He asked when the annual report of the Chief Inspector would be available. It is usually issued in July, and I do not see how it will be possible this year under war conditions to produce it any earlier than usual; but I hope it will be possible to produce it at the ordinary time. He and the hon. Lady also asked whether the factory inspectorate is being kept up to strength. It has, in fact, been increased since the outbreak of war, for the obvious reason that additional supervision is necessary. Hon. Members will realise that it is difficult in

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[Mr. Peake.]

these times to train additional staff at more than a certain pace. If we take on large numbers of untrained staff who have to be taught their jobs, it is much more difficult for the skilled and specialised people who have been trained to carry out their work properly. The hon. Member then asked whether unscrupulous employers were engaging young persons in industry before the school-leaving age. That is a matter primarily for the education authorities. They are responsible for keeping the children at school up to the school age. We have no evidence in the Home Office that that practice is not being followed. In view of the importance of this question and the greater demand for child labour which there would be during the war, we issued in February a circular to local authorities in which we said:

"The Secretary of State thinks it desirable to remind local education authorities for elementary education of the provisions of Part II of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, relating to the employment of school children. While it is necessary that in the present emergency labour shall be available for all work of national importance, it is equally essential to maintain a high standard of physical and mental fitness among growing boys and girls and to ensure that no proposals should be entertained for their employment in such a way as would be likely adversely to affect their education or their health."

The circular concluded:

"The Secretary of State believes that there is a growing opinion among education authorities that children who are regularly employed out of school hours are not likely to get the fullest benefit from their education, and for this reason he is sure that . . . they will guard carefully against the risk of excessive employment both in country districts and in towns."

That shows we are alive at the Home Office to the importance of this question of the employment of young children and although under the Education Acts and the Young Persons Act of 1933 it is for the local authorities to take the matter up, we have drawn the importance of this matter to their attention.

I have touched on welfare supervision and also replied to the hon. Gentleman's point with regard to the transport of workers at Chorley. The hon. Member asked also whether I could give some additional figures in regard to accidents since the war. The full statistics are still being compiled for the annual report, but the figures we have show that on the outbreak of war there was a sharp increase in the rate of fatal accidents. There is not the slightest doubt that that was in great part, perhaps almost entirely, due to black-out conditions, with, for example, men going on to roofs and putting up black-out devices of all kinds. The fatal accident rate has since then steadied down to very little above the normal. I can send the hon. Member some actual statistics, but I will not waste the time of the House by quoting them in detail now. He also asked to what extent we had continued granting Orders for extensions of hours under the Factory Acts and under the Defence Regulations since our report was presented to Parliament, which covered our action up to 27th January last. As he said up to 27th January the number of Orders granted was 2,914. On 6th April that figure had increased by something like 600 to 3,503, but hon. Members will observe that whereas in the first five months of war we granted nearly 3,000 Orders, which is at the rate of something like 600 a month, in the next 2½ months we granted only an additional 600 Orders. The number of Orders granted has slowed down considerably in recent months, and in point of fact the number of factories which on 6th April were covered by Orders which were still alive, that is, which had not been terminated by effluxion of time, was 2,616.

As regards prosecutions and the enforcement of the Factory Acts, here again the figures are in process of analysis, but so far as we can say at the present time the number of prosecutions corresponds very closely to the number in recent years. I think I have now answered most of the detailed questions raised in the Debate. In conclusion, I would say that we welcome the interest of the House of Commons in this subject. We at the Home Office believe that publicity is the solvent of many potential causes of industrial friction and unrest. We are not complacent or self-satisfied, but I think I can claim that the Factory Department has done its best to cope quickly with problems as they arise and to make its contribution to the attainment of our maximum industrial effort. That can only be achieved, as hon. Members opposite are all agreed, if we safeguard to the full the health and welfare of our industrial population. We have received, and are glad

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to acknowledge, the co-operation of Service Departments and of the organisations of both employers and workpeople. We welcome all constructive criticism from whatever quarter it may come, in discharging the responsibilities which are placed upon us.

Mr. David Adams: Will the hon. Gentleman look into the question of the additional labour required in Tyneside factories and shipyards?

Mr. Peake: I certainly will; or if I find, as I rather suspect, that it is a point more for the Ministry of Labour than for the Home Office, I will see that attention is drawn to it.

RUSSIA (BRITISH SUBJECT'S CLAIM).

2.59 p.m.

Sir Cooper Rawson (Brighton): I ask the indulgence of the House with reference to the case of Mr. Joseph Martin, of Brighton. This may seem a small matter to bring up on a day like this but it is not a small matter for Mr. Martin, who is blind now and has been otherwise ill for 17 years. I have raised his case by means of Questions put in this House—and there have been other Questions which I have endeavoured to put but which have not been allowed—at intervals extending over a period of 10 months or more, and I have been advised by hon. Friends on both sides of the House that, having failed in that direction, my best plan is to submit the case for the consideration of the House on the Adjournment. This is entirely a non-party question, and I shall not make a speech. I just want to make a chronological epitome of what has taken place during the past 17 years, and I shall not take 17 minutes over it.

In 1917 Mr. Martin was a teacher in Moscow. After the Revolution in 1917 he was restrained from leaving the country and was kept in Russia, but after two years he was sent for and was informed by the Cheka that there was nothing against him and that he could apply within a few days to the Russian Foreign Office for his British passport, which would enable him to go home. That followed negotiations between the British Government and the Soviet Government. He was told by Litvinov that he would have to be detained in Russia to carry out anti-British propaganda, and he was given certain documents which he had to translate. Those documents when translated appeared to be incitements to anti-British revolutions throughout the British Empire, and in India particularly to start with. This he refused to do, and in consequence he was thrown into prison without being charged with any offence and without any trial. He was treated with the utmost brutality, he was starved, beaten and thrown into a cell full of verminous people. In his so-called bedchamber he was flung on to the floor and bound. All his clothing except his shirt was taken from him, and he had to lie on this verminous floor along with verminous people. He was refused all medical attention when he caught typhus. After five months, owing to the intervention of the British Government, he was repatriated, and then he became blind as a result of his privations.

In September, 1922, His Majesty's Government took up his case with the Soviet Government with a view to securing him compensation, and this was renewed on 2nd May, 1923. This is a very vital date, because at that time there were only three cases of personal cruelty which had been brought up before the Soviet Government. The other 206 cases, to which I will refer later, had not then been discussed. The two other cases were those of Mr. Davison, who had been shot, compensation being paid to his widow, and Mrs. Stan Harding, a journalist, who had been imprisoned for four months. Those cases were taken up by means of an ultimatum to the Soviet Government, and the Soviet Government were told that unless compensation was given in these two cases, His Majesty's Government would not sign the trade agreement with Russia. Mr. Martin's claim is that his case had been considered with these other two cases and everything settled in regard to those two cases. Compensation for £10,000 was given to Mrs. Davison and for £3,000 to Mrs. Stan Harding. But, through the omission of His Majesty's then Government, and Lord Curzon in particular, to include Mr. Martin's case, he was left with nothing. I am not blaming the present Government, except that they have not remedied the grievance. Successive Governments and Ministers have been dilly-dallying with this case of Mr. Martin's for 17 years and holding him off with the hope that some day he may get something when

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[Sir C. Rawson.]

a suitable occasion arises. A suitable occasion means carrying on negotiations again with Russia. It must be well known to Members of the Government that in these times there is about as much chance of getting anything out of Russia as there is of a cat jumping over the moon. Mr. Martin claims that, as the Government were guilty of neglect in not forwarding his claim, they should compensate him for all the sufferings that he has had to endure for 17 years. He is unable to follow any occupation. One reason why they cannot put his case forward is that they say it must take its turn with 260 other cases. Those cases had not arisen in 1923, and they are not cases of personal injury.

It is useless to make comparisons with the other two cases, but Mrs. Stan Harding and Mrs. Davison were charged with being spies. Mr. Martin was not charged with anything. He was not even tried. He was thrown into prison and was denied any serious consideration of his case. The Minister in charge and the Prime Minister both referred to Mr. Martin's as a very sad case, but they have not done anything to make it less sad. If he had taken on anti-British propaganda work, he would, like Lord Haw-Haw, probably have been drawing a big salary, but because he was a loyal British subject and refused to preach or to write against his country, he is left to his fate. He is 65 years old and has a wife, and he wants compensation in order to leave something for her. I appeal to Members in all parts of the House to support my request to the Government to grant him compensation, or, if they think they can ever get any money out of Russia, to make a grant on account of the compensation which he will get. Mrs. Stan Harding was given £3,000 and Mrs. Davison £10,000. I am not authorised to make a bargain, but why not split the difference between the two figures? It is a very small amount for all the suffering he has had to put up with. He has had typhus and other complaints and always has to walk about with somebody with him. I ask the Government not to give the usual reply that on the next opportunity that arises they will forward his claim. I would seriously ask my right hon. Friend whether he cannot do something. I know I have worried him a lot from time to time, though I do not apologise, and he has been very thoroughly into the matter. It does not rest with him, but he can surely use his influence with the Government to make some grant to this man before it is too late.

3.8 p.m.

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Butler): One thing that I am quite sure of is the earnestness with which my hon. Friend has presented the case of Mr. Martin and the care with which he has considered his constituent's interest. I can inform the House that no week passes without some communication from my hon. Friend on the subject, and, if they study the OFFICIAL REPORT for the past few months, they will find that the Government have consistently returned the same answer since the early days to which he has referred. It does not mean that the Government under-estimate the importance of the case or the suffering of Mr. Martin. If my sympathy, again expressed, is of any value, I should like to say that we are fully sympathetic with the very severe time through which Mr. Martin passed in his experiences in the Soviet Union and the suffering of mind that he must have been through since. When we examine the facts of the case, we can, I think, accept the hon. Member's statement as correct. The hon. Member has outlined the chronology of this matter. He has alluded to the intervention of His Majesty's Government to secure the release of Mr. Martin, and to the fact that his case was submitted by our representative to the Soviet authorities. It was submitted then without success. The hon. Member points out that in 1923 this case was not submitted by Lord Curzon together with two others. That is also correct. I am sorry that it was not submitted, but the reason was that it was not likely to be successful.

The hon. Member asks the Government to do their best to re-submit the case, and, if possible, to obtain some grant or compensation for Mr. Martin. Our difficulty is that the case was not submitted at the date in question, under a decision taken by the then Secretary of State, Lord Curzon, in his discretion. We are faced with the fact also that there are some 260 other claims against the Soviet Union. I have informed the hon. Member, in one of the many letters that I have written to

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him, that we have racked our brains for possible ways of securing satisfaction for Mr. Martin. It is not possible to imagine simply that, by a submission of the case, compensation will be immediately forthcoming for Mr. Martin. If that were the case, the Government would immediately take action, but their conduct must be guided by two considerations: first, whether such a step would be likely to be successful, and, secondly, whether they can now treat this case differently from the many other cases which are outstanding. The conclusion that I have imparted so frequently to the hon. Member is that we are unable to take action, first, in view of the results that would be likely to be achieved, and, secondly, because we cannot differentiate this case from the many others outstanding against the Soviet Union.

Sir C. Rawson: As I have pointed out so many times, there is no analogy between this case and the 260 other cases. The other cases are trade claims, against which there are counter-claims amounting to millions of pounds. It is confusing the issue to bring them in.

Mr. Butler: That may be the hon. Member's view.

Sir C. Rawson: It has never been denied.

Mr. Butler: We have gone carefully into the matter, and, while there may be no exact analogy between this case and the other cases, it is our opinion that we cannot differentiate. This does not mean that, if a suitable opportunity offers, we should not resubmit the case, which was unsuccessfully submitted in 1922. I will undertake that if any suitable opportunity occurs for obtaining redress, the Government will not dismiss it; but I do not want, in view of the suffering which Mr. Martin has gone through, to raise any false hopes. I do not think it would be right for the House, or, indeed, for the hon. Gentleman himself, who has gone to the very limit in trying to help his friend, to raise any false hopes that satisfaction can be obtained. If any suitable opportunity arises, this case will be dealt with, but, short of that, I can say no more. I think it would be very wrong, at this late date, to think that we can obtain the satisfaction that the hon. Member so ardently desires. If an occasion arose when we saw that satisfaction could be achieved on this and the other outstanding cases, he may be sure that the Government would not lose the opportunity.

Sir C. Rawson: Will my right hon. Friend deal with the point I mentioned of compensation from His Majesty's Government for neglecting to send in his case in previous years? Mr. Martin is not worried about his hopes of ever getting anything out of Russia. I have hardly ever seen him, but he is a constituent of mine, and I want to do what I can to get what I can out of the Government, Mr. Martin not having secured compensation as did Mrs. Stan Harding and Mrs. Davison. I appeal to His Majesty's Government to give, out of suitable funds or by other devious methods, a sum of money in compensation for what he has suffered at this time for his loyalty.

Sir Henry Fildes (Dumfries): Can my hon. Friend indicate to the House what would be regarded as suitable compensation?

Sir C. Rawson: Mr. Martin is not worrying about himself but about his wife. I suggested on my responsibility a figure between the two figures which were secured before.

Sir H. Fildes: What amount of compensation—£300 a year?

Sir C. Rawson: I have no authority to do that, but that would be better than nothing, anyhow.

Mr. Butler: I cannot undertake that His Majesty's Government can pay compensation to an individual, however hard his case may be, because of his claim against a foreign Government. It would raise new issues and would mean differentiating between this case and other cases outstanding, and I think I should be doing an ill service to Mr. Martin himself if I held out any hope that compensation could be obtained from His Majesty's Government. I have informed my hon. Friend of this quite categorically on several occasions, and particularly on 23rd March, and I again say that this matter cannot be re-opened. I am sorry to have to be firm about this, but in the circumstances I must be so.

Sir C. Rawson: I accept that, but it is my duty to do what I can for my constituent.

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CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

3.18 p.m.

Mr. Law (Hull, South-West): At an earlier stage of our proceedings to-day, Mr. Speaker, you indicated that you had no particular wish to have served up to you the undelivered speeches of the last few days as a kind of undigested hash.

Mr. Speaker: I do not intend to convey that impression. I said that a rehash was not in order on the question then under discussion.

Mr. Law: I am very sorry if I misunderstood you. At the same time I hope I can give you the assurance that I do not intend to do that this afternoon in any case. It is true that as the Debate proceeded on its rather intense course, I did have various things in my mind which I would have said if I had been fortunate enough to catch your eye, and it is true that the fact that I was not fortunate means that the House perhaps is being unfortunate now. I probably would not be speaking now if I had spoken then. Nevertheless, I do not want to go over the old grounds which were traversed yesterday and the day before, but I would like to give expression to some reflections which have been passing through my mind since the Debate yesterday and the Division last night. I think there has been a general feeling, which I myself have shared, that the Debate and the Division were rather shocking, and that it must have come as a terrible shock to the country and indeed to the world to have such violent differences of opinion expressed at a time like the present, when we are all of us in the very greatest peril. But I do not think that the results are altogether on the debit side of the balance sheet.

I think it is a very remarkable thing that, throughout the proceedings of the Debate of yesterday and the day before, whatever differences of opinion there might have been there was unity in one thing—a determination that this House and this country would carry on this war to a victorious conclusion. I do not think you could have had a Debate such as we had in any one of the dictatorship countries and the fact that this House of Commons could arise in its corporate capacity and urge, not surrender, but greater activity and decision is something that may justly strike fear into the hearts of our enemy. Still, it was a shocking thing. But I am afraid that the Debate and the Division was quite inevitable.

In my view it was inevitable, in the main, for one reason, that is that there has been in this House over number of years a too highly perfected machinery of party discipline. The reason that this Debate had to take place was that there was no other way in which Members of this House, who held genuine convictions and who had serious and genuine grounds for uneasiness, could bring them to the real attention of the Government. On other occasions when there has been criticism from these benches the whole machinery of party has got into gear, and by a variety of devices and stratagems criticism has been suppressed, those who voiced it have been denigrated and the whole thing glossed over. The lesson we have learned from the Debate is that if you sit on the safety valve of a boiler the boiler will, in the end, blow up. And that is what happened in the Debate. Regrettable though it was I think it was absolutely inevitable. But there are one of two other lessons which we can learn from the Debate. The most important of them I believe to be this: It is that there is a genuine demand and a desire from this side of the House that Members opposite should be associated in the Government of the country at this time and I think Members opposite will recognise from the course of the Debate that we have that desire, that we wish to see them taking their share in government, not because we want to dress up the window or disarm criticism but because we recognise their energy and ability and their love for their country. We wish all who love their country to combine at the present time to save their country. That is one lesson of the Debate. I believe there is another lesson we should learn. There is some talk in some of the newspapers to-day about reconstruction of the Government but I think every Member of the House knows that the thing has got beyond talk of that kind. Effective reconstruction might have been possible some months ago, or even some weeks ago, but the opportunity was lost. I think it is quite clear that there must be a new Government and that it must be, very probably, under new leadership.

Reconstruction and the shuffling about of the furniture again simply will not do

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this time. I know one of the things which is in the mind of many hon. Members on an occasion like this is the question of the alternative. They say there is no alternative. That is always said on these occasions. My right hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that that belief existed even in December, 1916. There was a general opinion that there was no alternative to Mr. Asquith. Mr. Asquith, like the present Prime Minister, was a very able man. Mr. Asquith, like the present Prime Minister, had a loyal and devoted following. A number of people felt that perhaps he was not the right man to run the war, but still they felt that there was no alternative. In these days we are all accustomed to think of the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs as the man who won the war, and perhaps he himself has from time to time contributed to give us that idea, but I do not think that was the case in December, 1916. My right hon. Friend had a great position in the country, but if there was unity of opinion on one point in the House of Commons it was that neither the Liberal party nor the Conservative party would conceivably serve under my right hon. Friend. That may be putting it rather strongly, but it is broadly true. I think we need not have any fear of finding an alternative now.

The events of the past few days are bound to exacerbate feelings and create anger and bitterness. I hold that we should do all we can to avoid the expression of such feelings. I have differed from the Prime Minister and opposed the Prime Minister on one line of policy, sometimes with vehemence and sometimes with bitterness. But I have never believed that those who were supporting him were actuated by any unworthy motives, I do not believe it now; and those who supported him in the Debate should not believe that those who are opposed to him have been actuated by unworthy motives. I myself have been accused of nourishing a somewhat curious unaccountable personal spite against the Prime Minister. I can assure the House that that is complete nonsense. For a variety of reasons, with which I need not bother the House, I have always had a high personal regard for the Prime Minister, but I do not think that that should cloud my opinions about public policy.

I have not been engaged in politics for very long but I have been connected with politics for the whole of my life, and one of the lessons which I had to learn first in my own home was that a public man was different from a private person, that a public man had to expect to be wounded; but he had also to expect to wound if it was in the public interest for him to do so. I believe that it has been in the public interest and in the interest of this country that we should have had yesterday's Debate. I believe that the leadership of this country since the beginning of the war, and in some respects before the war began, has been at fault. That is not because I have any dislike of the Prime Minister; that is quite absurd. I would say one thing more. I believe that the Government has not only to be reconstructed but that there has to be a new Government. This has to be done as quickly and as expeditiously as possible, and I believe that it is and will be the duty of the present Prime Minister, however difficult it may be for him and however much he may feel that he has earned a rest, to serve in that Government.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Beverley Baxter (Wood Green): I want to make only one or two comments in much the same way as my hon. Friend the Member for South-West Hull (Mr. Law). Before the Prime Minister accepts last night's Vote as a vote of censure from this House, it would be well if he remembered that many of those who voted against him last night from his own party were professional rebels, men that you might call in the City "bears," who have gone "bear" on the European situation, and have proved right. It was made very difficult for some of us who criticised the Government, and hoped for stronger action, to vote for the Government last night, but the attacks upon the Prime Minister rose to such a degree of unfairness that many of us who were wavering finally decided to go into the Lobby and vote for the Government.

I understand there is no desire for that Debate to be re-hashed, but what has caused me to rise at this late hour is the presence of that very distinguished statesman the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George). I hope so much that his genius, his gaiety of heart and his indomitable

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[Mr. Baxter.]

spirit will be used in the future conduct of this war. If my rght hon. Friend will accept those very complimentary things, I would like now, with great diffidence and some apprehension, to ask him whether he would not consider, so great being his reputation and so great his gifts, being a little more helpful to the cause of administration and not quite so brilliantly mischievous. In his speech yesterday, the right hon. Gentleman was such a model of timing, style, irony and eloquence, that it makes those of us who are back benchers despair of ever reaching anything like his standard; and yet, as he stood up yesterday in the role of public prosecutor, in the role of Torquemada denouncing the victims before they were taken to be roasted or twisted, I wondered whether he thought at all of the part that he has played in the complicated situation of the last three or four years. I will pass over the fact that to-day Turkey is our Ally, although the right hon. Gentleman set Greece on to Turkey to destroy her. One may say that it is luck that Turkey is our Ally to-day. The First Lord of the Admiralty last night used the word "luck." I remember that when Premier Gounaris came to London, with the Turkish Army outside Smyrna, I lunched with him, and he said, "I have been trying to see Mr. Lloyd George, he will not see me, he will not say go on, and he will not say stop." Ten days later, or a fortnight later, after the attack by the Turks on the Greeks, Gournaris was taken out and shot through the head. It is not only Hitler who will see dead men's ghosts arise. Gournaris' was a very tragic story, as I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will agree.

Then we came to that moment when the Germans entered the Rhineland. That was a tragedy because if ever there was a time when we should have met firmness with firmness it was then. The whole world was poised to see what would happen, and it occurred to the right hon. Gentleman that it was an opportunity for him in his own unique way to help the national cause. He wrote an article—and I have the greatest respect for all men who write articles for newspapers—which appeared in the foreign Press of the world. In it, he said that the last war had not been caused by Germany; that it had been caused by Austria and that Austria only wanted a little scrap. In one sentence the former Prime Minister of Great Britain wiped out the guilt clause which he had invoked and insisted on at Versailles. He did not come to this House and say, "I wish to remedy the blunder of some years back." He did it with a gesture of the pen—with what Shakespeare called "the licence of ink."

Not content with that—because those who write articles for newspapers know that a writer must fill a certain space—he then wrote these words: "If a European war results from the present conversations"—that is the conversations which were taking place between the British and French General Staffs—"not a corporal's guard will come from any Dominion to help this country." We came last time in our hundreds of thousands from the Dominions, not because Britain was right or wrong but because it was the call of the blood. Do you think that, right or wrong, we would not have come again? To think that of all men, this great man—in some ways the greatest of our generation—should have repaid the effort of the Dominions with a slur like that. I was one who came last time, and my son, if he were old enough, would fight again. If England were ten times wrong they would all come again, and nobody in this House knows that better than the right hon. Gentleman. But with that vitality and persistency which made him so formidable and which still make him so formidable a statesman the right hon. Gentleman went on. There was a little trouble in Austria, and the right hon. Gentleman stood up in his place and said that it might as well be understood that if there was war over Austria, not one British soldier would go to Austria's aid.

I do not doubt the truth of that, but if we were dealing with this madman Hitler, as we were, what encouragement the right hon. Gentleman gave him at a very critical moment. He relieved Germany of the war guilt clause at a time when the German troops in the Rhineland did not know whether to stay there or retreat. He declared to Germany and the world that not a corporal's guard would come to this country's aid and that England would be left alone. I do not know how Hitler could have been more strongly encouraged. So we came to Czecho-Slovakia. Yesterday the right

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hon. Gentleman spoke of Czecho-Slovakia with sympathy. It was, let me repeat, a speech which delighted us all by its style. But let me recall what the right hon. Gentleman did at the time. Again seizing the pen he delivered a violent attack on Dr. Benes. Poor Benes. I think the right hon. Gentleman when he spoke of him said that he had never kept his word.

Mr. Lloyd George: That he had never kept his word to the Sudeten Germans.

Mr. Baxter: Once more there was encouragement to Hitler and Hitler went on. Yesterday the right hon. Gentleman was chief mourner——

Mr. Lloyd George: I must correct what the hon. Member has said, because this is very important. The Austrians were a German people and they wanted at that time to enter into an arrangement with Germany. I thought it was a great mistake that we stopped it. But Bruening was in at that time and not Hitler. With regard to the Sudeten Germans a promise of autonomy was given by Dr. Benes to the four men who drafted the Treaty, and I was one of them. That was not redeemed, and I think there is a good deal, I will not say of justification, but of cause for trouble there. I think that if he had kept that promise Hitler would never have had the excuse for intervening, and I stand by that.

Mr. Baxter: I accept everything the right hon. Gentleman has said. My only objection to the Czecho-Slovakian incident was the time chosen. At a moment when a friend of this country is in difficulties it it is not the time to investigate his mistakes, but either to stand by him or foresake him. The speech to which I refer, which the right hon. Gentleman made, was when Hitler was in power. With his great experience of men and nations, and of public opinion and international opinion, a name such as his counts so much. The people of foreign countries do not follow our politics too closely any more than we follow the politics of theirs. But when the name of Mr. Lloyd George appears denouncing this Government at a critical moment as being poltroons——

Mr. Lloyd George *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Baxter: Oh, he said much worse than that—cowards, hypocrites, slavers in the market in the business of selling small countries. The right hon. Gentleman would have been the greatest cartoonist of all times if he could have drawn what he thinks in dreams of imagery. But how often that message went out, and how can these nations distinguish, when he attacks the Government, that he is not attacking the nation. At the same time how much more he could have helped if he had confined his remarks to the House of Commons rather than to the foreign Press. I think he is too big a man to use the foreign Press to disparage the Government in power. I know he will forgive me because he is a great man. He is a man with a big heart, with enough charm to charm a sparrow off a twig. I know that I shall feel badly in some ways that I choose this moment to make this speech because I admire his spirit and respect his record so much. I wonder in the difficult days which lie ahead if, even at his age, he will consider reforming a little bit. I plead with him to go to the penitent bench, realising that he has sinned very deeply, and realising that if he changes he can help this country so much. Those of us on this side of the House want his assistance. We want that great brain and gaiety of heart, but not if he is going to rock the boat every time there is a storm.

3.44 p.m.

Mr. Mander: I really do not feel that my right hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) needs the remonstrances which have just been addressed to him. I venture to think that he never rendered a greater service to this country than in the magnificent speech he delivered yesterday, particularly in the closing words of that speech. I think that the phrase which came out as being more important in the Debate than any other, and which will ring throughout the country as it rang through the Chamber last night, were the words of Cromwell quoted by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery): "For God's sake go." I think that is the view of the people of this country at this moment towards the Prime Minister and his Government. It is no good imagining that you can carry on under the present leadership. I understand that consultations are going on with those who supported the Government last night, to whom the promises were made

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[Mr. Mander.]
that if they voted for the Government certain concessions would be made and reconstructions take place. Consultations are going on as to whether it is possible, by getting rid of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Air, for the Prime Minister to be allowed to carry on with partially fresh colleagues. I venture to say that that is all perfectly useless and will not work at all. We have come to a stage now when there has been a complete parting of the ways. Let me say to the hon. Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter) that I hope those Privy Councillors and those young men in uniform who are supporters of the Government and voted against them last night will appreciate being called professional rebels. I think it was a very unfair and unjustifiable charge to make.

The First Lord of the Admiralty in the magnificent speech he made last night made it clear that he strongly disapproved, as we well know, of the policy of the Government up to the time when he joined it. He referred to the Prime Minister's appeal to his friends and said that the Prime Minister had friends when things were going well. I would like to know when things were ever going well under the present Prime Minister. I have never heard of any period during the time he has been in charge when we were not going from one tragedy and disaster to another. We ought to get this point clearly into the minds of Members who would like to see the Prime Minister remain in power. He cannot remain in power because, if he did, the party truce would come to an end. Things have gone too far and it would be impossible to continue it. There would be violent controversy and opposition in the House and in the country. It is clear what the country thinks, rightly or wrongly, and I hope that in the quiet consultations that will take place in the next few days the real peril in which this country would stand if it were to continue as a divided nation will be borne in mind.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Thomas Moore (Ayr Burghs): With whom or with what has the hon. Gentleman entered into a truce? I had not noticed any.

Mr. Mathers (Linlithgow): Would it not be better for the hon. Member to give it its proper name? It is an electoral and not a party truce.

Mr. Mander: I agree, but Members of the Opposition and of my party have done everything we can to encourage, stimulate and support the Government in the prosecution of the war. We are only too anxious to see the war won and greater vigour devoted to it. Personal matters ought not to be allowed to enter into the question at this juncture. It seemed to me last night that the Prime Minister was putting his personal position above the interests of the country. That is the way in which it will appeal to a great many people. I want the Prime Minister to go, not because I have any personal animosity to him; I have nothing but the kindest feelings towards him as a human being, but to him as a statesman I am very hostile indeed. It is purely in the political sense and for political reasons that we want to see him go. I hope sincerely that the position in which we are at this moment in this House, and the position of parties towards each other in the country, will be realised, and that when we meet again after the Recess we shall find a new Government, if not in office at any rate well on the way to office, a National Government with representatives of all interests and all parties, not picked or selected by the party whips or anything of that kind, but composed of people put in because they are the best people for the job, and for no other reason whatsoever. I hope we shall find that we can then go forward in a great united national effort to win this war at the earliest possible moment.

3.51 p.m.

Mr. Lloyd George (Carnarvon Boroughs): As a fellow journalist, I wish to say a word or two in answer to the very kindly and very friendly observations made about me by my hon. Friend the Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter). I have no reason to quarrel with the tone of his remarks, and I am hoping that he will extend to me some sympathy, because one of the difficulties when you have to write an article at a given date is, as he knows, that it is not always easy to find the necessary matter. I have had to earn my living exactly as he has, although it has not been as sumptuous a

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success. I only want to say that I would rather at this moment not go into particular instances, because if I did so, I should be guilty of the very deed that the hon. Member has admonished me for having done. If I were to go into all the things that have been done during the period between the signature of the Treaty of Versailles and the beginning of this war, the things I should have to point out would show that the faults were by no means all on one side, and I do not think I should be very helpful. He has provoked me to do so—very much so.

The Treaty of Versailles was not carried out by those who dictated it. A good deal of the trouble was due to that fact. We were dealing with Governments in Germany which were democratic Governments, based on a democratic franchise, with democratic statesmen, and it is because we did not carry out the undertakings we had given to those democratic Governments that Hitler came into power. There was a good deal that was done to Germany, more particularly with regard to disarmament. The solid promise that we gave, not merely in the Treaty itself, but in a document which I took part in drafting, which was signed by M. Clemenceau on our behalf, that if Germany disarmed, we should immediately follow her example, was not carried out, and there is no Government that is more responsible for that than the present National Government which came into power in 1931. They had their opportunity. America was ready, Germany was ready—it was a time when Herr Bruening was in charge—but we refused to carry out the terms after Germany had been completely disarmed. We had the certificate of the ambassadors to say that disarmament was completed, but in spite of that, we did not carry out our part.

The same thing applies to minorities. I repeatedly called attention to it. Mr. Benes, in the conference in Paris—I am sorry to have to go over this at the present moment, but I am not in the habit of failing to reply to attacks—was responsible, first of all, for giving a direct pledge to the conference that if Sudeten Germany were to become part of Czecho-Slovakia—the same thing applied to the Hungarians and to the Slovakians—the same autonomy would be given to them as in the Swiss Confederation of men of different races under the same flag and forming part of the same federal constitution. It was not carried out. The last conference I attended as Prime Minister was at Genoa in 1922, three years after the signature of the Treaty of Versailles. I begged that the promises which had then been given to the minorities, to the Hungarians and to the Germans—the same thing applies to Poland and to the Ukranians—should be carried out. It was not my fault that they were not carried out.

I do not intend to apportion the blame at this particular moment, but ever since the signature of the treaty I did my very best, as Prime Minister, and I did not alter my policy in the least when I became an independent Member of the Opposition or when I was Leader of the Liberal party. Of course, as an independent Member of this House I could not bring the same pressure as I did when I was Prime Minister, but I urged the conquering powers who were then all powerful to exert their authority to compel these countries to carry out the pledges which they had given. I pointed out over and over again that if they did not do so, it would end in a great European war and that there would be trouble. My predictions, unfortunately, have turned out to be true, and when the history of the whole of these transactions comes to be written, if the hon. Gentleman will take the trouble to read it, he will find that most of this trouble has originated in the fact that the victors in the late war did not carry out solemn pledges which they gave in a Treaty which they themselves dictated. They had the opportunity. Germany was prostrate. The creation of this terrible power in Germany, the spirit which is behind it, and what makes it so formidable at the present moment is due to the fact that we did not carry out our pledges. What is the result? Democracy has been swept away in Germany; democracy has been attacked by Germany. That spirit in Germany was created by the fact that the dominating democracies in Europe did not keep faith. We are now confronted with the most terrible answer that has ever been given to those who have broken faith and broken

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covenants. I do not apologise in the least for the fact that not only when I was Prime Minister but afterwards I did my very best to persuade them to carry out the pledges which they had given solemnly in writing to the world.

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

Adjourned accordingly at One Minute before Four o'Clock, until Tuesday, 21st May, pursuant to the Resolution of the House this day.

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