

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

THURSDAY, 1st AUGUST, 1918.

Vol. 109.—No. 92.

OFFICIAL REPORT.



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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 1st August, 1918.

[OFFICIAL REPORT.]

The House met at a Quarter before Three of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

St. Olave's Church, Southwark, Bill [Lords],

Wandsworth, Wimbledon, and Epsom District Gas Bill [Lords],

Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

West Sussex County Council (Bridges) Bill [Lords] (by Order),

Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Staffordshire Electric Power Bill [Lords] (by Order),

Third Reading deferred till To-morrow.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

WAR.

MESOPOTAMIA.

DEVELOPMENT WORK.

1 and 2. Colonel WEDGWOOD asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether any steps have yet been taken to develop and work the petroleum deposits in the occupied territory of Mesopotamia at Kerkuk, Churmati, Kifri, and Mendeli; (2) whether the coal mines at Kifri are in British occupation; and, if so, whether any steps have been taken to get them working for the use of transport in Mesopotamia?

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Macpherson): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer these questions. It is not in the public interest to give details of what is actually being

done, but I can assure my hon. and gallant Friend that both local coal and oil are being developed and used so far as is possible under war conditions and having due regard to the quality of the products available.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: Will the right hon. Gentleman push the people on the spot?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I will convey my hon. and gallant Friend's suggestion to the notice of the authorities. I shall be most happy to show him what we are doing.

OFFICERS' LEAVE.

Sir CHARLES HOBHOUSE (*by Private Notice*) asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that in one of the British Divisions in Mesopotamia the total number of officers to be given leave this year is only five; whether this Division has been four consecutive summers in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia; and whether many of the officers have had no home leave for four years, and what steps can be taken to increase the amount of leave to such officers?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I have no definite information as to the accuracy of the statement contained in my right hon. Friend's question, but as I have frequently explained, leave for troops serving in the East is dependent upon transport facilities and the accommodation available is, unfortunately, very limited. Negotiations are, however, in progress, and I hope that in the near future it will be possible to increase to a great extent the numbers of troops granted leave from Mesopotamia and other theatres of war in the East.

Sir C. HOBHOUSE: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries as to the particulars I have given him in this question, and, if they are accurate, as I am assured they are, will he endeavour immediately to extend leave to these officers, who have not had any for four years?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I would like to point out, as it has been frequently pointed out, that there is nobody more anxious to give leave to the officers and men than the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief. I have been in communication with him on this subject, and he expressed a wish that we should see what can be done on this side to provide transport to take the men home, and, as I have stated

[Mr. Macpherson.]

in answer to my right hon. Friend, we are in negotiation with the Shipping Controller, the Admiralty, and the other Departments concerned, so that we may be able to do as much as is possible in this direction.

Mr. MacCALLUM SCOTT: Is my right hon. Friend aware that this difficulty is universal, and that it is experienced in even a larger degree by the men, and in making inquiries on the subject, will he take care not to limit inquiry to the case of officers, as is suggested in the question?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I cannot admit that there is any unfairness so far as leave is concerned between officers and men. I think that every General Officer Commanding-in-Chief is endeavouring, to the best of his ability, to be as equitable as possible in the granting of leave.

Mr. SCOTT: My right hon. Friend misunderstands me. I do not suggest that there is any unfairness. The question which I asked is: Is he not aware that this difficulty is universal, that it is experienced to even a larger degree by the men, and I would ask that he would not limit his inquiry to officers?

Mr. MACPHERSON: Certainly. The first person to resent my making any inquiries with regard to officers and leaving out the men would be the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief himself. I can assure the House that the inquiries which I make with regard to officers always include the men.

Mr. WING: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that those forces which have been transferred to the Western Front, including those referred to by my right hon. Friend, will have an early chance of leave as soon as circumstances will allow?

Mr. MACPHERSON: Yes. I have answered at least two questions on that particular point last week. I saw one or two particular officers to-day at the War Office, and they told me that everything possible is being done to meet the exceptional case to which my hon. Friend refers. Common justice requires that these men should have leave as soon as possible.

PASSPORTS (WOMEN).

3. Sir HENRY CRAIK asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether

the issue of passports for women and children passing overseas is controlled by the Foreign Office or the Admiralty; and which Department is responsible for the increasing stringency of the conditions under which such issue takes place?

The ASSISTANT-SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord R. Cecil): This is entirely a maritime question. The regulations restricting women and children from travelling through the danger zones are drawn up by the Admiralty. Applications for passports for such journeys are dealt with by an Inter-Departmental Committee, of which the Admiralty representative is chairman and passports are issued by the Foreign Office upon their recommendation only.

Sir H. CRAIK: If I put down a question next week will the Noble Lord be prepared to make a more full statement on the subject?

Lord R. CECIL: I think my hon. Friend had much better put his question to the Admiralty, and I have no doubt my right hon. Friend who represents the Admiralty will then be able to give full information.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: Is not the difficulty solely due to the chivalry which puts women first in the boats?

Lord R. CECIL: I think that is again a question for the Admiralty.

Sir H. CRAIK: Am I to understand that the Admiralty is the authority rather than the Foreign Office?

Lord R. CECIL: Yes, Sir; certainly.

RUSSIA.

REPORTED EXECUTIONS.

4. Colonel Sir FREDERICK HALL asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if any official information has been received that 200 members of the Left Social revolutionary party in Russia, alleged to have been implicated in the execution of the German Count Mirbach at Moscow, have been shot without trial; if so, if he can say whether this was done at the instigation of the German Government; and, if so, whether the Government propose to address any protest through the diplomatic channels to the

German agents in Russia at this attempt to suppress patriotic protests against the German Government?

Lord R. CECIL: Direct telegraphic communication with Moscow is interrupted, and I have no definite information as to what has happened there since the assassination of Count Mirbach.

Sir F. HALL: Has the Noble Lord received no communications at all on this subject?

Lord R. CECIL: No; I do not think we have had any communications from Moscow since that date—direct or indirect.

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Is not this one of those quite unauthentic stories which have frequently come from Monarchist quarters in Russia?

Lord R. CECIL: I cannot say anything more than I have already said.

Mr. KING: Is it not a fact that many of these stories are never anywhere nearer Russia than Amsterdam?

Lord R. CECIL: The hon. Gentleman is, no doubt, a very great authority on that subject.

IRELAND.

COAL.

5. **Mr. O'DOWD** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that coal is practically unprocurable in the West of Ireland at the present time; and, if so, can he state whether the Government contemplate taking any steps by encouraging the development of local coal mines in Arigna and elsewhere to prevent a fuel famine during the coming winter?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** for IRELAND (**Mr. Shortt**): I am informed that places in the West of Ireland are being supplied with coal from the ports of Duolin, Dundalk, and Belfast, and are getting full share of the available supply. With regard to the second part of the question, it has been decided to construct a railway connecting the coal-fields with the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway at Arigna Station. The connection between the Great Southern and Western Railway and the Wolfhill Colliery is nearing completion. The construction of a railway connecting the Castlecomer Colliery with

the same railway has been taken in hand. I would remind the hon. Member that the West of Ireland is specially placed with regard to bogs, and it is hoped the people will economise in the consumption of coal by saving and using turf.

Mr. FIELD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that there is not sufficient coal in Dublin to supply the local wants, and, therefore, it cannot be sent to the West of Ireland?

Mr. KILBRIDE: Is it the intention of the Government to link up what the right hon. Gentleman calls the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway with the Castlecomer branch?

Mr. SHORTT: The Arigna Railway will be connected really as an extension of a portion of the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway. The Castlecomer Railway is quite different.

Mr. KILBRIDE: What I am asking is whether the light railway is to be linked up with the Kilkenny-Castlecomer Railway or whether the intervening two or three miles is to be left in its present condition?

Mr. SHORTT: That is under consideration.

Mr. O'DOWD: In regard to the 3 miles of line referred to by the Chief Secretary, will its junction with the Cavan and Leitrim line be at Arigna, which is in the bog?

Colonel Sir J. CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that very inadequate steps have been taken by the Government in Ireland to impress on the people of the country districts the really serious shortage of coal, and that, except for small notices posted on the stations, the general public in Ireland have not had brought home to them the fact that there will be a serious shortage this year?

Mr. SHORTT: No; I do not at all agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman. There have been notices posted, and I have seen them myself, in many parts of Ireland, urging the digging and use of turf. They have been acted upon, and the amount of turf is very large.

Sir J. CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that while that may be so in some parts of Ireland, in many parts it has never been done?

Mr. SHORTT: That is not the fault of the Coal Controller. The people of Belfast undertook to arrange their own supply.

Mr. JOYCE: Will the Chief Secretary find and have fuel sent from this country to the ports of the West of Ireland? There is no greater danger in sending ships to the West of Ireland than to Dublin and Belfast.

Mr. SHORTT: That will be considered.

6. **Mr. O'DOWD** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that a Treasury expert who visited the Arigna coal region, extending from Roscommon into South Sligo, reported in 1903 that this district had deposits of coal amounting to 4,650,000 tons, besides valuable iron deposits; whether he is aware that a short line of railway from Arigna to Collooney, a distance of 19 miles, is necessary for the proper development of this district; and, if so, whether the Government will help and encourage the building of such line and otherwise aid in promoting the working of these mineral areas, fuel being so needed in the West of Ireland?

Mr. SHORTT: I have not seen the Report referred to. The proposal to make a short line of railway from Arigna to Collooney—a distance of 19 miles—has been fully considered, and acting on the best advice obtainable, it has been decided that in view of war exigencies the construction of such a railway at the present time would not be possible, and that the alternative is to construct a railway $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length connecting the coal-fields with the Cavan and Leitrim Light Railway at Arigna Station. The construction of the extension will be begun at once.

Mr. O'DOWD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the then Chief Secretary, and at a later date the Vice-President, paid a visit to this district, accompanied by myself, and that both expressed themselves strongly in favour of the development of this district by the construction of this railway and the development of this mine?

Mr. HOLT: Why are these very valuable coal mines not being developed by the proprietors?

Mr. SHORTT: They are being developed by the proprietors.

Mr. HOLT: Then why are you interfering?

Mr. SMYTH: Will the right hon. Gentleman say when it is expected that this $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles will be completed?

Mr. SHORTT: I cannot say when it will be completed. It is started, and the material is purchased, and we hope to complete it by Christmas, at any rate.

8. **Mr. J. P. FARRELL** asked whether, in the case of contracts made by local authorities in Ireland which have resulted in loss to these authorities, they are bound to renew the same contracts again; whether he is aware that in consequence of the failure of the contractor last year to supply 1,500 tons of his contract for coal to the Mullingar Asylum the committee, in the interests of the health of the inmates, had this year to authorise their R.M.S. to purchase coal in the open market wherever he could get it; is this arrangement now to be overruled by the Coal Controller in the interest of a defaulting contractor; and, if not, will the Coal Controller allow the committee to manage their own business without interference by him?

Mr. SHORTT: I am not aware that there is any Regulation making it obligatory on Irish asylum committees to renew contracts for coal which have resulted in loss to the committees. I understand that the new Irish Mining Company, on account of the flooding of the mines, were not able to supply the factor for the Mullingar Asylum last year with the quantity of coal required.

As I have already informed the hon. Member, the laid-down rule of the Controller of Coal Mines is that consumers are to receive their supplies from the same source and through the same channels as heretofore; therefore, if the Mullingar Asylum could recently have obtained coal, which I understand they could, from the new Irish Mining Company at Athy, they should have done so, and not contracted for Welsh coal. The Coal Controller will take steps to see that the Mullingar Asylum is dealt with regarding their coal supplies in the best possible manner under the prevailing circumstances.

Mr. FARRELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that because of the difficulty of getting a direct answer to the queries put by the Mullingar Asylums

Committee to the Irish Mining Company, who would not bind themselves on the point, the Committee did not enter into the contract, and got the coal elsewhere?

Mr. SHORTT: I do not know that. I know that the company can supply the coal.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS (BELFAST).

7. **Mr. KING** asked the Chief Secretary whether he has seen the sworn statement of Charles Kenny, made in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, containing allegations as to the treatment of prisoners in Belfast gaol; and whether he has ordered an impartial inquiry, other than reports or replies from persons implicated, into the allegations?

Mr. SHORTT: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative, and to the second part in the negative.

Mr. KING: Has the Chief Secretary had any personal relations or communications with the Mayor of Dublin on this matter?

Mr. SHORTT: No, Sir.

Mr. KING: Will the Chief Secretary make a statement on this subject in the course of the discussion on the Consolidated Fund Bill if I raise it.

Mr. SHORTT: I cannot promise that.

Mr. KING: I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to this subject on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

LORD CHANCELLOR.

9. **Mr. KING** asked whether the Lord Chancellor of Ireland was requested or required on his appointment to relinquish his office as legal assessor to the Ulster Provisional Government?

Mr. SHORTT: I have no knowledge of the post referred to, and the answer is, therefore, in the negative.

Mr. KING: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries whether he belongs to the two Governments—this Government and the Ulster Provisional Government?

Mr. SHORTT: I will consider any evidence which my hon. Friend can bring forward.

Mr. KING: Will the right hon. Gentleman accept my evidence if I give it to him?

Mr. SHORTT: Certainly, if it is his own personal knowledge.

Mr. KING: I will give it to the right hon. Gentleman.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' SCHOOLS.

10. **Colonel YATE** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, considering that the Christian Brothers' Schools in Ireland receive Grants from the Intermediate Board of Education in connection with the examinations held by the Board, he will now state whether any Grant was given to these schools in connection with the examination in Irish history for scholarships in Ireland, the questions for which were recently published under the heading of "How Irish Crime is Nurtured"?

Mr. REDDY: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question put by the hon. and gallant Gentleman will the Chief Secretary say whether the Christian Brothers' Schools have not the right to receive these Grants?

Mr. SHORTT: The only examination in connection with which the Intermediate Education Board pay Grants are those held by the Board. They have no knowledge of the examination in Irish history for scholarships referred to in the question.

Mr. JOYCE: Is it not a fact that the Christian Brothers in Ireland are supported by voluntary contributions?

Mr. O'DONNELL: Do not the examination papers set in Irish history apply to the Christian Brothers as well as to others?

Mr. SHORTT: They are under that management.

Colonel YATE: Will the right hon. Gentleman have these text-books examined and see if they can be drawn up afresh?

Mr. SHORTT: They have been examined.

SLIGO (EXTRA POLICE).

12. **Mr. O'DOWD** asked the Chief Secretary whether he is aware that a demand has recently been made on the Sligo County Council by the Inspector-General, Royal Irish Constabulary, for the sum of £341 10s., said to be due on account of extra police stationed in the districts

[Mr. O'Dowd.]

of Sligo, Ballymote, and Tubbercurry, and that, in the particulars of demand furnished by the police, it is stated that, with the exception of one head constable and twenty-two constables stationed in Sligo from the 27th February to the 31st March, 1918, those stationed in the districts of Ballymote and Tubbercurry were in those places one day only; and whether, taking all the circumstances into account and in view of the burdens already imposed on the ratepayers of this peaceable county, he will have inquiries made with the view of having this demand withdrawn?

40. **Mr. SCANLAN** asked the Chief Secretary whether his attention has been called to a resolution of the County Council of Sligo protesting against the charge of £170 15s. made against the county in respect of extra police in Sligo; and whether he will order the said charge to be remitted and any additional cost incurred to be borne by the Government of Ireland?

Mr. SHORTT: The resolution referred to has not been received. A demand for £170 15s., not £341 10s. as stated in the question of the hon. Member for South Sligo, was recently made on the county council of Sligo for the services of extra police employed in the county during the half-year ended 31st March, 1918.

In addition to the head constable and twenty-two men referred to as employed in Sligo from the 28th February to 31st March, sixteen constables were employed at Tubbercurry from the 28th February to the 16th March, and sixteen constables at Ballymote from the 28th February to the 31st March. These detachments were brought into the county in connection with a serious outbreak of cattle-driving, with which the ordinary county force was inadequate to cope, and there is no reason why the statutory demand made for their services should be withdrawn.

Mr. O'DOWD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in 1904 a similar claim of £3,000 was made precisely in the same way, and was that—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice, because that question requires research.

IRISH LEAGUE OF NATIONS SOCIETY.

13. **Mr. KING** asked the Chief Secretary whether he is aware of the international

reference movement in connection with the Irish League of Nations Society; whether the Government, having failed to bring forward any solution of the Irish question, is now prepared to consider the reference of the Irish question to some international authority; and whether President Wilson has sent to the Government any communication on the Irish problem?

Mr. SHORTT: I am informed that there are two small branches of a society called the Irish League of Nations Society. I can make no statement with regard to the remainder of the question.

Mr. KING: With regard to these being two small branches, has the right hon. Gentleman not seen the list of names, which occupies many pages, and if I send him a copy will he go through them carefully?

Mr. SHORTT: No, Sir; I will not.

Mr. KING: As this will be personal evidence that these are not small societies, but very big ones, will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider his answer?

Mr. S. MacNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman refer it to his friend Major Price?

LICENSED TRADE.

14. **Mr. FARRELL** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that a number of small retail licensed traders in Edgeworthstown, Granard, and Ballymahon, in county Longford, have not got their supplies of porter for months past, and that the middlemen who have these stocks in hand sell the porter at double the brewery prices in Dublin, leaving these people without any; and will steps be taken to suspend the collection of the Licence Duty in such cases, the retailers having nothing to sell?

21. **Mr. DUFFY** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware of the general feeling of alarm entertained by small licensed traders in Ireland in respect to the distribution of stout, porter, and beer by the wholesale purchasing agents, whether he is aware that a number of the small traders are threatened with ruin; and whether he will bring the matter to the notice of the Food Controller, with a view of arranging for a just and equitable system of distribution?

The MINISTER of FOOD (Mr. Clynes): The sale or retain of beer in Ireland in the

vast majority of cases is covered by a publican's licence which authorises the sale of wine and spirits as well as beer. In such cases, there being no separate licence for the sale of beer, provision cannot be made for an allowance in respect of periods when stocks of beer are not available. The retail off-beer licences are for the most part held by wholesale dealers in beer, who apparently have made no complaint of an undue shortage in supplies. I am considering a scheme put forward by the Irish Food Control Committee in order to improve the position of these small licensed traders, and I shall be happy to discuss it with any hon. Members who are interested in the subject.

Mr. FARRELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that over a month ago, owing to gross mismanagement, this matter was brought to the notice of the Food Controller in Dublin by myself, that action was promised, and no action has since been taken?

Mr. CLYNES: I have no other information on that point, but the Irish Food Control Committee has now submitted a scheme, which is under consideration.

Mr. FARRELL: How soon will that be given effect to?

Mr. CLYNES: I am prepared to discuss the matter with certain hon. Members from Ireland.

General McCALMONT: If more Irishmen joined the Army, would there not be a great deal more porter for those who are left behind in Ireland?

SUSPECTED PERSONS.

15. **Mr. NUGENT** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether a circular has been issued by Lieutenant-Colonel P. P. Curtiss, of the General Staff, in which advice is given to the military to co-operate with the police in the arrest of persons whom the police suspect of being aliens, Sinn Fein leaders, or other persons, and, without affording any trial to them, people so suspected are to be arrested and no opportunity given to the people to refute such charges?

Mr. MACPHERSON: My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. I am not aware of any particular circular, but it is naturally the practice of the military authorities, when providing

for contingencies which may arise, to prepare instructions which must of necessity be kept secret and confidential.

Mr. NUGENT: Inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman is not in a position to give the circular, which is described as a confidential document, will he investigate the matter to find out whether there have been a number of men arrested in various portions of Ireland for no other reason than that they have been strong politicians without any sympathy with Sinn Fein or the enemy, and is it not a case of the local police trying to have revenge on these men?

Mr. MACPHERSON: The main part of my hon. Friend's supplementary question must naturally be referred to the Chief Secretary, but I cannot understand how my hon. Friend is in possession of a private and confidential document.

Mr. NUGENT: My question is addressed to the Chief Secretary, and if the right hon. Gentleman has not the information it is not my fault, and he should have it.

Mr. FLAVIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that in many of the districts in Ireland the competent military authority has absolutely no power to give a permit in any shape or form to anybody except with the consent and knowledge of the local sergeant of police?

Mr. MACPHERSON: That does not arise out of this question.

Mr. FLAVIN: What is the use of your competent military authority?

PUBLIC GATHERINGS.

16. **Mr. NUGENT** asked the Chief Chief Secretary for Ireland what instructions have been given to the police of Ireland regarding bands parading; whether advice has been tendered to the police that, provided they have force enough, they are to break up the bands and the instruments on the spot and handle the people roughly; if this is in the interests of peace and order in Ireland; and whether a circular to that effect has been issued by the Inspector-General to the constabulary, dated 16th March of this year?

Mr. SHORTT: The instructions referred to in the circular of 16th March, 1916, have only reference to bands taking part in unlawful assemblies. No such instructions as suggested in the second

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part of the question have been given. The rest of the question does not, therefore, arise.

Mr. NUGENT: In view of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, may I state that I have a circular in my possession which clearly reveals that if the police have sufficient force they are to break up the band and instruments, and handle the people roughly, and should such a power for a moment be put in the hands of the police, giving them absolutely the right to decide whether to take such action or not?

Mr. SHORTT: I do not know what the hon. Member has in his possession, but I do know that a large number of documents of an extraordinary character have been printed and circulated in Ireland.

Mr. SCANLAN: Has the right hon. Gentleman given any help to the local police in Ireland to guide them as to what is a lawful and what is an unlawful meeting?

Mr. SHORTT: I do not quite follow what my hon. Friend has said.

Mr. SCANLAN: Is it not the case that the right hon. Gentleman thinks that all meetings of Nationalists in Ireland are unlawful?

Mr. SHORTT: Certainly not!

Mr. NUGENT: Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been directed to the circular dated the 9th June, 1918, and signed E. A. Britton?

Mr. SHORTT: I know of no such document.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS.

17. General McCALMONT asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he can now make any statement with regard to the grievances of Irish national school teachers, more especially with reference to the arrears due to paper-promoted teachers, the war bonus for teachers of Grade 1, and the appointment of committees?

Mr. SHORTT: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the question of the hon. Member for East Cork on this subject on the 30th ultimo.

Mr. DILLON: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman now state what the Govern-

ment propose to do in regard to the two committees that were to be appointed to inquire into the status and emoluments of the National school teachers?

Mr. SHORTT: That does not arise out of this question.

Sir E. CARSON: May I ask my right hon. Friend when he proposes to deal with the whole of this question? We have had many promises, and this is one of the questions on which both sides in Ireland are absolutely agreed.

Mr. SHORTT: There is a later question on which I propose to make a statement.

Mr. KILBRIDE: May I ask you, Sir, on a point of Order, whether it is for you to decide whether or not if a supplementary question arises out of the answer, and not for a subordinate Minister?

General McCALMONT: Am I to understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the supplementary question does not arise, and why does he not answer my question instead of giving preference to a later question?

Mr. SHORTT: I can make a fuller statement on the later question which appears on the Paper.

19. Mr. KING asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he has received requests from Irish teachers for a war bonus; whether he has inquired whether the salaries paid to national school teachers are sufficient to support their position under the increased cost of living; and what action he proposes to take?

Mr. SHORTT: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. With regard to the latter part of the question, I am not yet in a position to make a definite announcement.

Sir E. CARSON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he does not think it is time to look into the salaries which are paid to these teachers, and whether he does not think that the salaries are absolutely inadequate to their maintenance in the position they have to occupy?

Mr. SHORTT: I am going to announce the terms of the reference on that subject, and it would hardly be right to offer an opinion.

22. Colonel Sir JAMES CRAIG asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland how many Irish national teachers, since the outbreak

of hostilities, have joined the Colours, distinguishing them into teachers under Protestant management and teachers under Roman Catholic management; and if he will also say how many students and how many ex-students of each of the four training colleges for men in Ireland have entered the Army, Navy, and Aerial Force?

Mr. SHORTT: The number of Irish national school teachers who have joined His Majesty's Forces since the outbreak of war and who at the time of enlistment were actually serving in Irish national schools is fifty-nine. Of these, six were teachers in model schools, which are under the direct management of the Commissioners of National Education. Of the remainder, forty were serving in schools under Protestant management, and thirteen in schools under Roman Catholic management. It is estimated that there are also about sixty persons qualified to act as national teachers who have joined the Colours, and who were temporarily out of the Commissioners' service at the time of enlistment. The number of students of the training colleges who have joined the forces is twenty-six. Of these, eighteen were students of Marlborough Street, and eight students of the Church of Ireland College. So far as the Commissioners are aware, no student of either St. Patrick's or De La Salle College has joined the forces. The Commissioners have no information as to the number of ex-students who have enlisted.

24. Sir J. CRAIG asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland if the Commissioners of National Education issued a circular intimating that teachers desirous of enlisting might do so and appoint substitutes, provided the managers of their schools were satisfied with this procedure; if the Commissioners have arranged to protect from dismissal loyal teachers anxious to enlist whose disloyal managers are averse to their doing so; and if a loyal teacher joins the Colours and his managers give him a three months' notice will the Board veto the notice?

Mr. SHORTT: The Commissioners of National Education issued a circular, dated December, 1915, setting forth the conditions as prescribed by the Treasury under which national school teachers might join His Majesty's Forces for the period of the War and continue to be recognised in their schools whilst absent on military service. These conditions included the

consent of the school manager, and the circular made provision for the appointment of substitutes, when required, in the interests of the school. The Commissioners are not aware of any case of the kind specified in the question, but if they are furnished with particulars of any such case the matter will be investigated.

18. General McCALMONT asked whether the discrepancy between the conditions under which principals of large schools were to receive supplementary salary, as described in the White Paper and as described when the Grant was voted, will be brought before the promised Committee; and, if so, what powers will the Committee have in the matter?

32. Mr. O'DONNELL asked the personnel and terms of reference of the two Irish Education Committees?

Mr. SHORTT: The following persons have accepted the invitation to serve on the Committee of Primary Education, and in two other cases I am awaiting replies:

1. The Right Hon. Lord Killanin (Chairman).
2. The Most Rev. Patrick O'Donnell, D.D., Bishop of Raphoe.
3. The Right Rev. the Hon. Benjamin John Plunkett, Bishop of Tuam.
4. W. A. Goligher, Esq., Litt.D.
5. Robert T. Martin, Esq., B.A.
6. Miss Margaret Doyle, M.A.
7. W. Haslett, Esq.
8. William B. Joyce, Esq., B.A.
9. Robert Judge, Esq.
10. Thomas J. Nunan, Esq.
11. William O'Neill, Esq.
12. George Ramsay, Esq., J.P.

The terms of reference are as follows: To inquire and report as to possible improvements in the position, conditions of service, promotion, and remuneration of the teachers in Irish National Schools, and in the distribution of Grants from public funds for primary education in Ireland, with a view to recommending suitable scales of salaries and pensions for different classes of teachers, having regard to the character and length of training necessary, the special qualifications obtained, the nature of the duties which have to be performed, and other relevant considerations.

I am not at present in a position to give the names of the persons appointed, or the terms of reference, to the Committee on Intermediate Education.

Mr. DILLON: I think the reference is most satisfactory, but I would like to know whether any representatives of the Catholic managers of national schools are placed on the Committee; if not, why not? Is the right hon. Gentleman ready to consider a recommendation of a representative of the Catholic managers and also the Protestant managers?

Mr. SHORTT: I have not done that. I thought that the Committee was sufficiently large as it is, and that the interests of the managers was sufficiently safeguarded by the Bishop of Raphoe and the Bishop of Tuam; but I have arranged that if the Committee, when they meet, decide that the interests of the managers will be affected, or that of a manager upon the Committee would assist the Committee in its deliberations, representatives of the managers can be appointed.

Mr. O'DONNELL: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when he expects to be able to announce the personnel and the terms of reference of the Secondary Education Committee? I consider that as equally important.

Mr. SHORTT: I know the terms of reference, but I cannot give them from memory. I was waiting until we had all the replies from those who have been asked to serve.

Sir E. CARSON: When is the Committee going to deal with the question of bonus and paper promoted teachers? Is the right hon. Gentleman going to make an announcement on that subject before the Recess?

Mr. SHORTT: These seem to be subjects which cannot be properly referred to the Committee, but I am only awaiting the decision of another Department to make an announcement.

Mr. O'DONNELL: When does the right hon. Gentleman expect to be able to announce the personnel and the terms of reference of the Secondary Education Committee, and when does he hope the Report will be ready?

Mr. SHORTT: I cannot promise about the Report; that depends upon the Committee. If I do not get the whole of the answers from those who have been asked to serve on the Committee before the House rises, I will make such statement as I can. I will announce the terms of reference to-morrow if the hon. Gentleman wishes it.

Mr. O'DONNELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that the assistant teachers, whose position is lamentable, are properly represented on this Committee?

General MacCALMONT: Can the right hon. Gentleman expedite the work of this Committee and can he say when they will begin work?

Mr. SHORTT: As soon as they can be persuaded to come together.

61. **Sir J. CRAIG** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much is saved approximately per annum by the Treasury interpretation of what is known as the swing of ten, by which, while an average of from forty to fifty retains an assistant in an Irish national school, it does not suffice to ensure the recognition of her successor; and, in the interests of education, if the Treasury proposes to revert to the former interpretation of the concession?

Mr. BALDWIN (Joint Financial Secretary to the Treasury): The annual cost of the interpretation of this rule under which the Grant for an assistant teacher was retained, despite charges of personnel, so long as the average attendance at the school did not fall below forty, was estimated to have reached £26,000 per annum on the 1st April, 1915, and would ultimately have increased to over £30,000 per annum at least. I cannot say the precise amount of the saving resulting from the revised rule, but I see no reason to revert to the former concession which was based on a misunderstanding.

INTERNED PERSONS (APPEALS).

20. **Mr. KING** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that orders made by him on 17th May for the internment of certain persons in Ireland definitely specified Frongoch as the place of internment, and that none of these persons were taken to Frongoch; whether the offer then made to the interned persons of appeal to the advisory committee was met in several cases by requests to consult a solicitor before drawing up a statement of appeal, which request to see a solicitor was denied in all cases or deferred till the time for appeal was past; whether he has regularised these matters by subsequent action; if so, what action was taken; and whether he will now renew the offer to have cases referred to

the advisory committee, so as to meet the sense of injustice felt by interned persons and their friends?

Mr. SHORTT: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. I am not aware of any case in which an application was made by an internee for permission to consult his solicitor with a view to drawing up a statement of appeal and in which the application was refused. I will consider any application from an interned person for further leave to appeal.

IRISH HISTORY (TEST-BOOKS).

23. Colonel Sir J. CRAIG asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland if a deputation from the education board of the Irish Presbyterian Church pointed out to the Board of National Education on the 20th June, 1916, that certain books on Irish history, sanctioned for use in national schools, were fitted, both directly and indirectly, to foster a spirit of disloyalty, and urged that such seditious text-books should be no longer sanctioned; if on the 20th April, 1917, the Board, in reply to the convener of the primary department of the Presbyterian education board, intimated that sanction had been withdrawn from specified seditious text-books; if the sanction of equally seditious text-books has been continued; if no intimation had been sent to managers and teachers regarding the withdrawal of sanction; and if he is aware that some of these seditious text-books from which sanction has been withdrawn are still being used in national schools?

Mr. DILLON: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, can he give the House a definition of the word "seditious," and say whether the threat by the Ulster Provisional Council to rebel against the King and this Parliament is seditious?

Mr. SHORTT: I am not prepared to give a definition offhand. In reply to the question of the hon. and gallant Member, a conference on this subject was held between the Commissioners of National Education and representatives of the Presbyterian managers on the 20th June, 1916. On the 21st November, 1916, the Commissioners withdrew sanction from certain historical text-books, on the grounds that they contained matter to which objection could be made under Rule 124A of the Code. It is not the practice

to give general intimation to managers and teachers when sanction for books is withdrawn, as, under Rule 124B, the books to be used in each national school are submitted for approval at the beginning of each school year. The Commissioners are not aware that seditious text-books are used in any national school, but if any such case be brought under their notice they are prepared to take suitable action in the matter.

GAMES AND ATHLETIC SPORTS.

25. **Mr. FLAVIN** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether it is a criminal offence, punishable by arrest or prosecution, in the eyes of Dublin Castle for boys in schools and colleges, and in hand-ball courts, to play the game of hand-ball in any part of Ireland?

Mr. SHORTT: The answer is in the negative.

26. **Mr. FLAVIN** asked whether the police have received any orders from Dublin Castle yet to prosecute or arrest people who play marbles, or slash tops, or play twenty-one or thirty-one at cards; and, if not, why have these instructions not been issued so as to ensure peace and good order in Ireland?

Mr. SHORTT: No such orders have been issued.

27. **Mr. FLAVIN** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that a football and hurling match advertised to be held in the athletic grounds, Cork, on Sunday last in aid of the funds for the widows and orphans of the Cork sailors who lost their lives through the sinking of their ships by German submarines was not held owing to the action and prohibition of the police; whether, as a result, a large sum of money was lost to this fund; and whether this action of the police has his support and sanction?

Mr. SHORTT: The constabulary authorities inform me that the county inspector wrote to the promoters of the match referred to, telling them that it would not be allowed to take place without a permit. The permit was not applied for, and the match was not allowed to take place. It is very doubtful if the real object of the meeting was that alleged.

Mr. FLAVIN: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, a few days previously, a public concert was held by the people of

[Mr. Flavin.]

Cork for this same object; whether speeches were made and songs sung; and whether any permit was asked for, and why was not the concert prohibited?

Mr. SHORTT: I require notice of that question.

Mr. FLAVIN: Are we to understand that where sports are held for the benefit of the widows and orphans of men who have lost their lives through German submarines, such public entertainments cannot be held in any part of Ireland without a permit?

Mr. SHORTT: That depends on the nature of the entertainment.

Mr. FLAVIN: We are getting to know the right hon. Gentleman.

RECRUITING.

28. Major **NEWMAN** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he will give the names of the Irish Recruiting Committee; by what Minister of the Crown they were appointed and to what Minister they are responsible; have they power themselves to issue Regulations, conditions, or inducements with regard to recruiting, and do they possess the power of posting recruits to units or of issuing instructions that a recruit if he enlists shall be appointed to any particular unit they recommend; and will he say what remuneration, if any, is received by each or any member of the Committee?

Mr. SHORTT: The names of the Irish Recruiting Council are at present: Sergeant A. M. Sullivan, K.C.; Sir Maurice Dockrell, D.L.; Captain Stephen Gwynn, M.P.; Henry McLoughlin, Esq., and Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Leslie, Bart. There is no question of appointment; the first four members offered to undertake a recruiting campaign, and their offer was accepted by the Irish Government. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Leslie was invited to join them. They have no power to issue regulations or conditions, or to offer any inducements except such as the War Office may authorise them to offer. They have no power of posting to units, although the War Office will give every consideration to recommendations they may make. No member of the Council receives any remuneration.

Sir E. CARSON: Have they the right to offer land as an inducement to recruits in consequence of the Viceroy's Proclamation?

Mr. SHORTT: They have nothing to do with land.

An HON. MEMBER: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether any members of the recruiting committee are of military age?

Mr. SHORTT: Yes; and one of them has only consented to act on the Committee on being requested to do so, because he wants to go and fight.

Mr. LUNDON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the name of Major Price is among them?

Mr. STEWART: Has the right hon. Gentleman noticed in this morning's papers the reception they got in Galway?

Mr. SHORT: I do not know about this morning's papers, but I know they have had good receptions in many places.

An HON. MEMBER: Have they got any recruits?

29. Major **NEWMAN** asked whether any nominations to military rank have been made on the recommendation of the Irish Government or other Department in connection with the scheme for recruiting on a voluntary basis; and if the gentlemen so appointed draw the pay and allowances of their rank and to what superior officer are they responsible for carrying out the duties assigned them?

Mr. SHORTT: The Irish Government have no power to make recommendations for nomination to military rank.

FETHERSTONE ESTATE, ARDAGH.

30. **Mr. J. P. FARRELL** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the Fetherstone estate, at Ardagh, county Longford, has yet reached the stage for dealing with; whether he is aware that the tenants have now been paying interest in lieu of rent for over nine years; and whether anything can be done to speed up the sale, of which so far the tenants have had little benefit?

Mr. SHORTT: Proceedings have been instituted for the sale of this estate under the Irish Land Act, 1903, by the owner direct to the tenants, and purchase agreements at prices agreed upon between

the parties were lodged with the Estates Commissioners on 21st May, 1908, and subsequent dates. The purchase agreements provide that, pending the advancing of the purchase money and the vesting of the holdings, the tenants are to pay interest at 3½ per cent. on the agreed purchase moneys, which gives them a reduction in the rents they would otherwise have to pay. The estate has not yet been reached in its order of priority on the principal register of direct sales under the Irish Land Act, 1903, to be dealt with by the Commissioners, but when reached it will be dealt with as rapidly as practicable.

Mr. FARRELL: Can the Commissioners do anything to speed up the sale, as this thing has been hanging on for years?

Mr. SHORTT: The Commissioners are doing everything they can to speed it up.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

31. **Mr. J. P. FARRELL** asked when the local government elections, postponed under a recent Act, will now take place in Ireland; whether they will precede or follow the General Election; and whether the dates announced for Great Britain will apply to Ireland?

Mr. SHORTT: If the hon. Member will look at the Parliament and Local Elections Act, which received the Royal Assent on Tuesday last, he will see that local government elections which fall due before the 1st of March next in Great Britain or before the 15th of March next in Ireland are postponed for one year. As to the second part of the question, this depends upon the date on which the next General Election may be held.

HOUSING, DUBLIN.

33. **Mr. FIELD** asked when Mr. Cowan's Report on Dublin housing will be issued; whether he is aware that its publication has been promised several times; and whether he can explain the reason of the delay?

Mr. SHORTT: Before going to the expense of publication, the contents of the Report will be forwarded to the Corporation of Dublin for their information and consideration.

ULSTER VOLUNTEERS (ARMS).

34 and 35. **Mr. FIELD** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland (1) how many rifles

have at any time been lent by the Ulster Volunteers to the War Office; if these rifles were lent on any understanding that they should be returned or replaced at the end of the War; (2) whether he has any official information showing that any arms are in the possession of any civilians in Ulster; and whether he can say how many compulsory searches for arms have been made in Ulster and in the rest of Ireland, respectively?

37. **Mr. BOLAND** asked what steps, if any, he has taken to disarm Ulster Volunteers in North-East Ulster?

41. **Mr. SCANLAN** asked whether instructions have been issued to the police to seize the arms of the Ulster Volunteers; whether it is the intention of the Government to exercise, in the disarming of the Ulster Volunteers, the same methods which were applied to people possessing arms in other parts of Ireland; whether steps for disarming Ulster Volunteers have already been taken; and, if so, when he hopes to be able to assure the House that those arms have been seized?

Mr. SHORTT: As I have already stated in reply to previous questions on this subject, I cannot make any general statement at present with regard to the matters referred to, beyond saying that steps are in progress to secure the surrender of arms throughout the entire country.

Mr. DILLON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what answer he has received from the leaders of the Ulster party on this question of surrendering the Ulster rifles? We all know perfectly well that they could be surrendered immediately if they were ordered to be given up.

Mr. SHORTT: I cannot make any statement yet.

Sir E. CARSON: May I say, in justification of my own position, that no request has ever been made to me?

Mr. SHORTT: I was not previously aware that my right hon. Friend had control.

Mr. DILLON: Does not the right hon. Gentleman now realise that he is utterly unfit to govern Ireland?

POLITICAL PRISONERS.

39. **Mr. KING** asked the Chief Secretary whether he is aware that various Irish prisoners, including Francis Magennis,

[Mr. King.]

Joseph M'Donagh, and Professor O'Neill, have been released from Belfast Gaol on the conclusion of their sentences, and while they and their friends expected their freedom, and friends came to meet them, they have been immediately arrested under a deportation order and taken to England; and whether, in future, should such cases arise, the prisoners may be informed previously, and so obviate the expense and provocation caused by friends coming to meet them, but only to see them deported without trial?

Mr. SHORTT: The facts are as stated in the first part of the question. I am not aware that the relatives of the persons referred to incurred expense in coming to meet these prisoners on their anticipated discharge from Belfast Prison. In order to avoid demonstration, it is advisable that deportations and internments should be carried out without publicity.

Mr. KING: Could that not be done by carrying them out at an unexpected time, and not at a time when it is expected that the people will be there and friends will come?

Mr. SHORTT: I will consider any suggestion which my hon. Friend makes.

ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS.

44. **Mr. NUGENT** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that a sergeant of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Kingscourt, County Cavan district, waited on an officer of the local branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, warning him that he would not be permitted to hold the regular monthly meeting in the Hibernian Hall unless he had applied for and received a permit; will he state whether this officer was out-stepping his duty, or, if not, why information was not supplied to the executive officer of the society; is he aware that this organisation is registered under the Friendly Societies Act, and approved by the National Health Insurance Committee for the administration of National Insurance; that regular meetings are necessary to conduct the business of the society; and, if so, what action he proposes taking with reference thereto?

Mr. SHORTT: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given on this subject in answer to his question yesterday.

Mr. NUGENT: May I raise a point of Order? Inasmuch as this question was not reached yesterday, I asked that it should be put down for to-day, and I expected I should have an opportunity of putting it to-day.

Mr. SHORTT: I have nothing to do with that at all. The answer appears in the OFFICIAL REPORT this morning.

Mr. NUGENT: It is not a complete answer to the question.

POLICE.

43. **Mr. NUGENT** asked the Chief Secretary whether he is aware that Inspector John Purcell, C Division, is endeavouring to drive the men under him into acts of insubordination by making threats and using obscene language when the constables have not as many summonses as he thinks they should have; whether he is aware that, when Inspector Purcell was serving in the ranks as a constable in the B Division, he was himself arrested; is he aware of the nature of the charge against him and the penalty inflicted; and will he say if such a man will be retained in control over others?

Mr. SHORTT: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given on this subject, in answer to his question yesterday.

ANNUAL RETURNS (TRADE, ETC.)

70. **Mr. FIELD** asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) when the annual returns for Ireland of external trade, fisheries, agriculture, banking, railway, and shipping for the year 1916 and for last year (1917) will be published?

Mr. SHORTT: The Report on the Trade in Imports and Exports at Irish Ports for the year 1916 was issued last night. The Returns for the year 1917 have been summarised and the publication of the Report will be pressed forward as far as demands of the Government for special statistical returns allow.

The Fisheries Report for the year 1916 was published two months ago. Agricultural Statistics Reports for the years 1916 and 1917 have been published already, and the Banking Railway and Shipping Report for the year 1916-17 has been presented to Parliament, and will be published in due course.

CATTLE (SHIPPING).

71. **Mr. CRUMLEY** asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) if he is aware that calves over six months old are allowed to be shipped from Ireland to Great Britain, whilst heifers or bullocks over three years old, if they have not four teeth, cannot be shipped; if he can explain why this distinction is made, as both classes are sold to graziers in Great Britain as stores; and will he take steps to remove such restriction off three-year-olds?

Mr. SHORTT: The war emergency restrictions on live stock in force in Ireland under the Maintenance of Live Stock Act, 1915, do not at present prevent shipment of male cattle, whether bulls or bullocks, except such as are under six months old. Heifers, however, may not be shipped without a licence until they have four permanent incisor teeth fully up—a stage of maturity usually reached about two and a half years. The object is to prevent undue depletion of young breeding stock. At three years old, heifers not in calf may be exported.

Mr. CRUMLEY: Why prevent the shipment of three-year-old heifers and bullocks because they have not got four broad teeth, and permit the shipment of calves but six months old, both classes being sold as store cattle?

Mr. SHORTT: I must ask for notice.

MRS. SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON.

67. **Mr. SHEEHY** asked the Home Secretary what crime Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington has committed that warrants the Government to refuse her permission to return to Ireland?

The **SECRETARY OF STATE** for the **HOME DEPARTMENT** (**Sir George Cave**): I am not aware that Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington has committed any offence within the jurisdiction of our Courts, but she has been engaged in anti-British propaganda in the United States, and, as her presence in Ireland in existing circumstances is considered by the Irish Government to be undesirable, she has been prohibited from returning to Ireland by an Order under Regulation 14 E of the Defence of the Realm Regulations.

Mr. SHEEHY: In view of the nature of the reply, I beg to give notice that I shall take the earliest opportunity of discussing the matter.

Mr. MacVEAGH: Is it a fact that Captain Coulthurst, who murdered this lady's husband, has been allowed to return to Ireland?

Sir G. CAVE: No, Sir.

Mr. MacVEAGH: Where is he?

Mr. SPEAKER: We have had that question several times.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

FOOD PRODUCERS, DUBLIN.

36. **Mr. FIELD** asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that the St. Patrick's Division Plot-holders' Federation have passed and forwarded several resolutions during the past two years asking that measures be taken to give security of tenure to food producers; whether he is aware that the Dublin Corporation has demanded that all advantages enjoyed by British plot-holders shall be extended to Ireland; and will he say what action he proposes to take?

Mr. SHORTT: This matter has not before been brought to my personal attention. I am looking into the matter, and will communicate with the hon. Member.

NATIONAL WAR AIMS COMMITTEE.

45. **Colonel YATE** asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider the desirability of reconstituting the War Aims Committee, with a view to a more definite policy of popular lectures on Sunday mornings in the market places and at factories during the dinner-hour and such like places, to counteract the harmful meetings and Bolshevist propaganda that apparently are being allowed to go on unchecked and are doing so much harm amongst the workers throughout the country?

Captain GUEST (**Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury**): The War Aims Committee make use of every suitable means for countering any propaganda that has the effect of defeating, or interfering with, our War aims. The Committee are grateful for the suggestion made in the question.

Colonel YATE: Are they going to act on it?

Colonel C. LOWTHER: Will the Government take immediate steps to prevent all Bolshevik meetings in this country?

Captain GUEST: That question must be addressed to the Home Secretary.

46. **Mr. GEORGE TERRELL** asked the Prime Minister whether the Win the War centres inaugurated for supplying official information to the public, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Ministers are members of the council, form part of the organisation of Government information bureaux which are conducted under the auspices of the National War Aims Committee; if not, whether, having regard to the fact that the headquarters are in the Public Trustee's Office, it is an official organisation; whether the expenses are paid out of the public funds; how many Government information bureaux are in existence; whether they have proved a success; what has been the cost of establishing and maintaining them to date; and whether, in view of the announcement that, as a result of the experimental scheme in London, seventy additional bureaux are to be opened in provincial centres, he will reconsider the desirability of a competing organisation such as the Win the War centres being now started?

Captain GUEST: The answer to the first three parts of the question is in the negative. As regards the fourth, fifth, and sixth parts, there are fifty-six Government information bureaux, of which the cost of establishment and maintenance up to 27th July is under £31. The sites and kiosks have been provided free of cost to the Government. The possibility of combining this organisation with the Government bureaux is at present under consideration.

Sir R. COOPER: Is it an official organisation?

Captain GUEST: The answer to the first three questions is in the negative.

MILITARY SERVICE.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

48. **Mr. CLOUGH** asked the Prime Minister whether, at the conclusion of four years of war, he will advise His Majesty to open the prison doors for all conscientious objectors, but especially for those who

have been wrongfully persecuted for conscience sake under Section 2 (1) (d) of the Military Service Act, 1916?

Sir G. CAVE: My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. I cannot accept the suggestion of the hon. Member that any of the men now in prison and claiming to be conscientious objectors have been wrongfully persecuted. All of them have had the opportunity, first, of going before a local tribunal and claiming exemption from military service, and, secondly, of going before the Central Tribunal and asking to be released from prison for civil work of national importance; and those who remain in prison are there either because their claim to be conscientious objectors has been negatived by the tribunals or because they refuse to perform any work of any kind for their country in time of war. Out of mercy to these men the prison rules have been somewhat relaxed in their favour, but I see no reason why they should be wholly released.

ALIENS.

PROHIBITED AREAS AND INTERNMENT CAMPS.

50. **Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS** asked the Prime Minister what steps he proposes to take in regard to the recommendations of his Committee that all aliens should be forthwith removed from prohibited areas, and also with regard to the recommendations as to internment camps?

Sir G. CAVE: My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply to this question. As regards the first part of the question, all alien enemies have been removed from prohibited areas, except those referred to in the Report of the hon. and gallant Member for Knutsford and Sir Louis Dane, presented to Parliament on the 7th December, 1916. The cases of these exempted persons will now be reviewed by the Advisory Committee. As regards the second part, the Government, after careful consideration, did not think it necessary to adopt the suggestion.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

49. **Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS** asked the Prime Minister what are the terms of the reference to Lord Justice Bankes' Committee in regard to the weeding-out of

enemy aliens from the Government Departments; and whether they include a reference to combatant officers?

The **CHANCELLOR** of the **EX-CHEQUER** (Mr. Bonar Law): The Prime Minister has appointed the Committee with the following reference:

"Whereas His Majesty's Government have determined that no person shall be employed in any Government office during the present War who is not the child of natural-born subjects of this country or of an Allied country unless there is a definite national reason for such employment. Now I appoint the following:

Lord Justice Eldon Bankes, K.C.,
Colonel Sir James Craig, Bart., M.P.,
Albion Richardson, Esq., M.P.,
to be a Committee to examine the case of any such person as to whom it may be alleged that there is a definite national reason for the continuance of his employment and to report to me thereon."

Combatant officers would not be included unless employed in a Government office.

Mr. HOLT: Does that include Ministers?

Mr. BONAR LAW: Yes.

Mr. S. MacNEILL: Does the Judge-Advocate-General, the Attorney-General for the Army, come under it?

Mr. BONAR LAW: Yes.

MARRIAGE WITH ENEMY ALIENS.

63. Mr. HEMMERDE asked the Home Secretary what is the existing practice in regard to the marriage of British subjects with enemy aliens in this country?

Sir G. CAVE: Interned alien enemies are not allowed to marry. In the case of those who are not interned there is no direct power to prohibit marriage between a British subject and an alien enemy, but such a marriage can be prevented by internment or repatriating the alien enemy, and earlier in the War, it became necessary to take steps for that purpose, particularly in the case of German women who attempted to escape their liability to repatriation by going through the form of marriage with a British subject. All cases, therefore, in which one of the parties to a proposed marriage is an alien enemy are now reported to the Home Office, and such marriages are not generally allowed except in the case of persons who, though technically enemies, belong to races which are friendly to the cause of the Allies.

INTERNMENT.

64. Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS asked the Home Secretary what instructions he issued to the Aliens Advisory Committee recently reconstituted by him to deal with the internment of enemy aliens?

Sir G. CAVE: The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows:

"To examine the cases of enemy aliens who have hitherto been exempted from internment or repatriation, and to report in each case whether they recommend that the exemption should be withdrawn with a view to the internment or repatriation of the person concerned, or whether they recommend that the exemption should be continued, and, if so, on what grounds."

No other instructions have been given.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

59. Sir JOHN BUTCHER asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will introduce legislation for the purpose of extending to applicants for old age pensions the concessions to existing old age pensioners which are embodied in the administrative order, Cd. 8340?

Mr. BALDWIN: It has been frequently stated His Majesty's Government is not prepared in present conditions to introduce legislation for the alteration of the Old Age Pension Acts.

Sir J. BUTCHER: Is it not right that applicants for old age pensions should not be put in a worse position—

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter for argument.

WAR CASUALTIES.

47. Mr. CLOUGH asked the Prime Minister whether he will give the total casualties sustained by His Majesty's Forces since 4th August, 1914, in France and Belgium, Italy, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Salonika, Africa, and on the high seas under the heads of killed, missing, wounded, and taken prisoners?

Mr. BONAR LAW: It would not be in the public interest to give the figures asked for.

PEACE TERMS.

56. Sir F. HALL asked the Prime Minister if the outline of the reasonable

[Sir F. Hall.]

peace terms, indicated by him recently at a dinner to the Canadian editors, is to be taken that unqualified territorial and material restitution by Germany to Russia and Roumania, involving the abrogation of the treaties of Brest Litovsk and Bucharest and subsequent economic arrangements made by Germany in those countries, will be an essential condition of such peace terms to which the Government would be prepared to recommend this country and the Imperial Dominions to give assent?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I cannot add anything to the previous replies which I have given to questions in this House which refer to possible terms of peace.

Sir F. HALL: Will the statement by the Prime Minister at that dinner be adhered to?

GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

57. **Sir F. HALL** asked the Prime Minister if the statement by General Smuts in a speech at the Cannon Street Hotel on the 24th July, as to the incorporation of German South-West Africa in the British Dominions was made after consultation with him or with his knowledge and the approval of the Government?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The statement made by General Smuts was that "it was the strongest wish of every South African that German South-West Africa should remain part of the territory of the Union." The Government was not previously consulted in regard to it, nor was it necessary to do so.

Sir F. HALL: The Government agreed to do that?

INDIA.

MR. MONTAGU'S REPORT.

58. **Colonel G. COLLINS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware of the growing interest in the Report on Indian Constitutional Reform by the Secretary of State for India; and can a day be allotted for a Debate on this subject?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I will deal with this subject when I make my statement on business at the end of questions.

IMPERIAL PREFERENCE.

51, 52, 53, and 54. **Mr. OUTHWAITE** asked the Prime Minister (1) whether, in return for the preference to be accorded to Dominion products, the representatives of the Overseas Dominions undertook to lower the protective duties imposed for the purpose of excluding British goods, or so enhancing their price as to enable them to be undersold by local manufacturers, as particularly in the case of woollen goods imported into Australia; (2) whether he can state the products of Australia which will come under the preference on existing duties which the Government has decided to establish; (3) whether he can state the existing duties which furnish the opportunity for the grant of a preference to the products of the Dominions; (4) whether it is contemplated that the preference which the Government has decided to grant to the products of the Dominions by way of preference on existing duties will enable the wine growers of Australia to supplant the French wines imported into this country?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I can add nothing on this subject to the answer given to the hon. Member for Northampton on Monday.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: In view of the fact that it is announced that a complete change in the fiscal policy of this country is contemplated, when is the right hon. Gentleman going to state how it will be carried out?

Mr. BONAR LAW: My announcement is quite plain—that this Government has adopted the principle of Preference, and nothing more.

Mr. CHANCELLOR: Is Sir Robert Borden's statement true that this matter has not been adopted at the request of any of the Dominion Premiers?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Runciman) has given me private notice of a question. Perhaps the hon. Member will wait for the answer.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: Has the policy of Preference been adopted in conjunction with the Dominion Government, and is any countervailing advantage to be got from them?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I do not quite follow the question. At almost every Imperial Conference, including that of last year, a Resolution in favour of it was adopted.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: Has the right hon. Gentleman suggested to the Dominion Governments that they shall reduce their Protective tariffs in return?

Mr. BONAR LAW: No; it is not a question of reducing tariffs, but of Preference.

62. **Mr. OUTHWAITE** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has taken into consideration the enhanced difficulty that the French Government will be faced with in the matter of fulfilling its financial obligations to this country when a policy of Preference to Dominion products has achieved its object of excluding imports of French wines, spirits, and other competing products; and will he bear this factor in mind in connection with the matter of the grant of further loans to the French Government?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The Government has no such object as that stated in the first part of the question. The second part does not therefore arise.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: If there is a grant of Preference to Colonial products, does it not necessarily follow that certain foreign products, including French products, will be excluded, and therefore the question arises?

Mr. BONAR LAW: That is a matter for argument.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is the advantage of Preference if it does not exclude foreign goods for the benefit of the Colonies?

Mr. BONAR LAW: That also requires more than an answer to a question to explain.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (*by Private Notice*) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has seen the statement in a speech made by Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, yesterday, and reported in this morning's newspapers to the effect that it should be clearly understood that neither the Imperial War Cabinet nor the Imperial War Conference has had under consideration this year the question of Preference. . . . Moreover, the people of Canada would not desire the people of the United Kingdom to shape or modify their fiscal policy for the sole purpose of giving a preference to the products of Canada, especially if such change should involve any sup-

posed injustice or should be regarded as unfair or oppressive by a considerable portion of the people of the United Kingdom; whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will correct the impression given to the House in reply to questions a week ago that the subject of Imperial Preference was being discussed at the Imperial Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet; and whether he will proceed with his undertaking given on Monday to publish what was apparently to be an Imperial Conference resolution and the discussions on the subject?

Mr. BONAR LAW: There is nothing in the least inconsistent in the speech of Sir Robert Borden with the statement made by me. The question of the special fiscal policy to be adopted either by the United Kingdom or by the Dominions must be settled by each independently, and what I said was that the British Government had put itself in line with the Dominions by deciding to give preference on any duties now existing or to be subsequently imposed. A resolution accepting the principle of Preference was adopted by the Imperial Conference last year, and though this subject was not specially discussed again this year, there was much discussion at the Imperial Conference of the general economic policy of the Empire.

Mr. HARRIS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the majority of the House of Commons was elected to oppose Imperial Preference — [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"]—and are we to believe that the War Cabinet for war purposes used their position in order to lay down a policy which was rejected by the electors?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I think that there must be room for difference of opinion as to the majority of this House. In any case, certainly this Government, like any other Government, has the right to make its own decisions either on that or on any other subject.

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Is not the point that Sir Robert Borden's statement shows that Imperial Preference has been adopted by the Government not in response to the request of the Dominions, but as an excuse for the establishment of Protection?

Mr. BONAR LAW: That is really an illusion. The general principle of Preference was adopted by every Imperial Conference that ever sat, including that of last year.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: In view of the statement that this matter was not discussed at the War Cabinet, who has decided on this policy?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The hon. Member has apparently not read Sir Robert Borden's speech. What he said was that it was not discussed at the Imperial War Conference. My answer, and I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me, was meant merely to be a declaration of the policy of this Government.

Colonel Sir F. HALL: Does not the right hon. Gentleman think that the action of the enemy Powers since the outbreak of the War has been one more proof of the great necessity of an alteration of our fiscal system?

—

INCOME TAX SUB-COLLECTOR,
HIRWAIN, GLAMORGANSHIRE.

60. Mr. STANTON asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer who is responsible for the appointment of the sub-collector of Income Tax at Hirwain, Aberdare, Glamorganshire; if he is aware that this man is a pacifist, a pro-German in sympathy, a conscientious objector, and a member of the Independent Labour party; if he is aware that the loyal workers and tradespeople of Hirwain are shocked at his appointment; if he will have inquiries made into his general conduct and honesty since his appointment; if he will see that he is at once dismissed; and if his Department will see that in no case such people will in future be appointed?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The hon. Member is apparently referring to Mr. Gwilym Richards, who was nominated by the South Wales Miners' Federation to assist at the Tower Pit, Hirwain, the collector of taxes for the Aberdare district. Arrangements of this kind, which are directed to secure the collaboration of representatives of the working men, have been adopted wherever possible, and have contributed in no small degree to the smooth working of the wage-earners' Income Tax. The value of assistance of this nature must obviously depend upon the acceptability to the taxpayers concerned of the person nominated; and in view of the statement made by the hon. Member, the Board of Inland Revenue propose to place themselves in communication with the South Wales Miners' Federation.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING ORDER).

65. Mr. GILBERT asked the Home Secretary whether, as the present Early Closing Order for shops expires in September next, and the House proposes to adjourn early in August, he can make any statement as to renewing the Order, and if it is proposed to vary it in any way; and if it is the intention of the Government, in view of the shortage of lighting facilities during the coming winter months, to propose a much earlier hour for closing shops than exists now?

Sir G. CAVE: I do not think that it is desirable to come to a final decision on this question before the middle of September, as circumstances may change before that time; but my present view is that the existing Order should be renewed. The shortage of lighting facilities is, as my hon. Friend knows, being dealt with in another way.

—

WALTON GAOL (HUNGER STRIKES).

66. Mr. KING asked the Home Secretary whether there have been hunger strikes at Walton Gaol; whether any prisoners have been forcibly fed; if so, how many; whether Edmunds, who went on hunger strike, has been released; how many prisoners have been in hospital; and how many released from Walton Gaol in the last two months?

Sir G. CAVE: Seventeen men were hunger-striking in Liverpool Prison on the 25th July, two of whom have been forcibly fed. The daily average number of all males in hospital since the 20th July has been fifty-seven. Edmunds was discharged on 20th July and three other prisoners were released during the past two months, in addition to one temporarily discharged.

—

METROPOLITAN POLICE (BICYCLE ALLOWANCE).

68. Mr. WILES asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that the police cyclists of the V Division of the Metropolitan Police Force have received no payment for their duties since 4th April; and, if so, on what authority the superintendent compels them to produce their cycles for reserve duty without payment, and if such action on the part of the superinten-

dent is contrary to the Regulations issued by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police?

Sir G. CAVE: The bicycle allowance to constables is based on the use of the bicycles on patrol duty. The question of extending the basis so as to include the use of cycles for attendance at police stations on reserve duty is now under the consideration of the Commissioner. Pending its decision, constables in the V Division are receiving the allowance at the rate hitherto authorised.

REGISTRATION OF BUSINESS NAMES ACT (PROSECUTIONS).

69. **Sir F. HALL** asked the Home Secretary if, in prosecutions under the Summary Jurisdiction Act for offences under the Business Names Act, it is necessary that the charge should be brought within six months of the offence; and, if so, whether, in view of the seriousness of such offences at the present time, he will take steps to enable such charges to be pursued irrespective of the period which may have elapsed after they have been committed?

The **PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY** to the **BOARD OF TRADE** (Mr. Wardle): My right hon. Friend has asked me to answer this question. An appeal is being lodged against a recent decision as to the time within which proceedings must be instituted under the Registration of Business Names Act in respect of a false statement, and the matter will be considered after the appeal has been heard.

FUEL AND LIGHTING ORDER.

Mr. SMALLWOOD (*by Private Notice*) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the promise made in the course of last night's Debate on coal control, he can now indicate what day will be convenient for him to meet with London Members in order to discuss the working of the Household Fuel and Lighting Order?

Sir W. ESSEX: Before that question is answered, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give a corresponding meeting to the Staffordshire members in regard to the question raised as to the allocation of county raised coal partially to the Pottery district?

Sir T. WALTERS: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly indicate the date on which he will receive the Yorkshire Members?

Mr. P. A. HARRIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman also consider the country Members, who are equally concerned in the matter?

Mr. WARDLE: My right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has agreed to see the London Members concerned, at 4.15 on Tuesday next. With regard to the other questions that have been asked, I must ask my hon. Friends to combine the deputation into one—[**HON. MEMBERS:** "No!"]—regarding country Members as a whole, and my right hon. Friend will be pleased to see them the next day at the same time.

WAR ANNIVERSARY SERVICE.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: May I ask you, Sir, if you can favour us with a statement as to the arrangements as to the attendance of Members at the service in St. Margaret's on Sunday, and, further, if you can give us any guidance as to the wearing of uniform on this occasion?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have been in consultation with the Lord Chancellor and rector of St. Margaret's, and what we suggest is that the House should meet about 10.45 o'clock, though, of course, it will not meet formally. I propose to enter the House at about ten minutes to eleven and leave at five minutes to eleven. The Mace will head the procession in the usual way. I will follow. The Clerks at the Table will follow behind me, and then I would respectfully suggest to the House that it should follow in fours, Privy Councillors coming first and, as far as possible, in the order of seniority, and then other Members following. The procession will go down as far as the Central Lobby, and then turn through St. Stephen's Hall, and out of St. Stephen's Porch, Westminster Hall not now being available. We shall go across the road and between the Abbey and St. Margaret's Church and enter at the West door. The seats reserved for the House of Commons and its officers are all the seats on the south side of the nave. Any ladies—wives of Members or ladies who are relatives of Members—having tickets will be pleased to enter by the East door, and room will be provided

[Mr. Speaker.]

for them in the south aisle. It is hoped that they may be in their seats by eleven o'clock.

After the service is over the 4.0 P.M. King and Queen will leave first, and after they have gone the Lord Chancellor and the House of Peers will leave in procession as they entered. After they have left I will leave with the Mace. We will reform the procession and return by the same route. If hon. Members will make it convenient to resume their places in the procession and return as far as this House, I think that would be the most suitable and the most dignified course. With regard to dress I would respectfully suggest to hon. and gallant Members who happen to be serving that they should appear in their Service uniform. As far as other hon. Members are concerned they should appear in ordinary morning dress.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTION BILL.

The **MINISTER of BLOCKADE** (Sir Laming Worthington-Evans): I beg to move, "That leave be given to introduce a Bill to make provision with respect to the searching and boring for and getting petroleum, and for purposes connected therewith."

There was a previous Bill introduced last Session, but some of the proposals of that Bill were objected to and it was not thought right to attempt to press a controversial question as a War measure. This Bill avoids, I hope, all controversial questions. There is already power for boring and getting petroleum under the Defence of the Realm Act and power to prevent anyone else boring without a licence. These powers cease when the Defence of the Realm Regulations come to an end. The main object of this Bill is to extend the prohibition against boring and searching for petroleum without a licence, and it is necessary in order that oil pools, if such can be found in this country, should be protected. If it were not so there would be a great scramble of speculators boring where oil was supposed to exist and there would be a great waste of natural resources. Under the Bill the Minister of Munitions is given power to grant licences to bore. Power is also taken for another purpose—to take compulsory possession of land. That power will exist during the War under the Defence of the Realm Act, but

after the War further legislation will be required in order that the industry may be carried on. All vexed questions are thus postponed until after the War, when powers will have to be asked from this House to continue the occupation of land which may be necessary for boring. All those questions, whether there is property in oil, and if there is property in oil whether it belongs to the owner of the land upon which the bore happens to have gone down or whether the adjoining owners have any claim, or whether the discoverer of the oil is the person entitled to it—all these questions are reserved until after the War; and all I need say now is that while Parliament reserves these questions it is not the intention that new vested interests should be created under this Bill, and while I cannot prophesy what another House of Commons will do at a later date, I cannot believe that the House of Commons, when it comes to deal with further legislation, will disregard any legal interests that there may be at present existing, and, on the other hand, I do not expect, nor do I think it would be reasonable to expect, that they will allow future legislation to be hampered in any way by any interests created after the introduction of this Bill. The main object is to protect oil pools by preventing indiscriminate and wasteful borings. The other Clauses are subsidiary, and, I think, unimportant. There is power to inspect plans of workings, and there is a Definition Clause. There is a specific Clause which affects existing natural gasses which are commercially used in this country. I am asking leave to bring this Bill in in order that I may have an opportunity of making this short statement to the House, and of appealing to the House to let me have the Bill in all its stages at as early a date as possible. The Bill will be printed and circulated to-day, and I hope that on a very early day the House will let me get the rest of the stages.

Mr. RAFFAN: Before the Adjournment?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: Yes. Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Mr. Churchill, and Sir Gordon Hewart.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTION BILL,—“to make provision with respect to the searching and

boring for and getting Petroleum, and for purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 82.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—

Rotherham Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

Maternity and Child Welfare Bill, with an Amendment.

Criminal Law Amendment Bill [*Lords*] and Sexual Offences Bill [*Lords*],—The Lords have appointed a Peer as an additional Member of the Joint Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill [*Lords*] and the Sexual Offences Bill [*Lords*], as requested by the Commons in their Message of Thursday last.

The Lords propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A on Tuesday next, at a quarter-past Twelve o'clock.

— Ordered, That so much of the Lords Message as relates to the Joint Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill [*Lords*] and the Sexual Offences Bill [*Lords*] be now considered.

Lords Message considered accordingly.

Ordered, That the Committee of this House do meet the Committee of the Lords, as proposed by their Lordships.— [*Lord Edmund Talbot.*]

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Report brought up, and read, with Minutes of Evidence; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LUXURY DUTY.

Report from the Select Committee brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Minutes of Proceedings and Appendix to be printed.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill,

Reported, with Amendments [*Cardiff* Provisional Order not confirmed; remain-

ing Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill,

Reported, with Amendments [*Provisional Orders confirmed*]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 7) Bill,

Reported, without amendment [*Provisional Order confirmed*]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill,

Reported, without amendment [*Provisional Orders confirmed*]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

South Metropolitan Gas Bill,

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

WAR.

REAFFORESTATION.

Colonel WHEELER asked the Prime Minister what action it is proposed shall be taken on the Acland Committee's Report on reforestation, and what it is proposed to make any Government statement on a forestry policy for Great Britain?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I am not yet in a position to make any statement on this subject.

INCOME TAX.

Mr. CLOUGH asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the rates of Income Tax and Super-tax for 4th August, 1914, and 4th August, 1918, respectively?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The rates are as follows:

INCOME TAX.

	On 4th August, 1914.	On 4th August, 1918.
	s. d.	s. d.
Standard rate	1 3 in the £	6 0 in the £
Rate on Earned Income, where total earned and unearned Income		
Does not exceed £500 ...	0 9	2 3
Exceeds £500 and " " £1,000 ...	0 10½	3 0
" £1,000 " " £1,500 ...	1 0	3 9
" £1,500 " " £2,000 ...	1 2	4 6
" £2,000 " " £2,500 ...	1 3	5 3
" £2,500		6 0
Rate on Unearned Income where total earned and unearned income		
Does not exceed £300 ...	1 0	3 0
Exceeds £300 and " " £500 ...	1 2	3 9
" £500 " " £1,000 ...		4 6
" £1,000 " " £1,500 ...	1 3	5 3
" £1,500 " " £2,000 ...		6 0
" £2,000		

SUPER-TAX.

	On 4th August, 1914.	On 4th August, 1918.
Incomes chargeable	Exceeding £3,000	Exceeding £3,500
Rate of Tax in force—	s. d.	s. d.
On the first £3,000 of the Income	Nil.	Nil.
On the first £2,000 of the Income	0 5 in the £	1 6 in the £
On the first £3,000 of the Income	0 7	2 0
On the fourth £1,000 (£3,000 to £4,000)	0 9	2 6
" fifth " (£4,000 to £5,000)	0 11	3 0
" sixth " (£5,000 to £6,000)	1 1	3 6
" seventh " (£6,000 to £7,000)	1 3	3 6
" eighth " (£7,000 to £8,000)		4 0
" ninth " (£8,000 to £9,000)	1 4	4 0
" tenth " (£9,000 to £10,000)		4 6
remainder (above £10,000)		

OFFICERS' RETIRED PAY
(DEDUCTIONS).

Colonel YATE asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether, considering that officers in receipt of wound pensions are specially exempted from the deductions levied from the retired pay of officers who accept any civil employment under any public Department, he will now alter the rules under Section 6 of the Superannuation Act of 1887 by adding the words "and disability" after the word wounds at the end of Section 1 (a)?

Mr. BALDWIN: I am advised that there is no power to amend the rules, otherwise than by obtaining fresh powers from Parliament?

FOOD SUPPLIES.

WHEAT (MILLING).

Mr. O'DOWD asked the Food Controller whether he is aware that, owing to the restrictions surrounding the purchase of flour and the impossibility of procuring foodstuffs for the feeding of cattle, pigs, and poultry, many small farmers in the West of Ireland have this year grown crops of wheat with the double object of procuring flour for themselves and securing bran and pollard for stock-feeding purposes; and, if so, whether the Order prohibiting the grinding of such corn by small mills specially erected for the purpose will be either cancelled or modified?

Mr. CLYNES: There are no restrictions on the grinding of wheat by small mills

provided the millers are registered and comply with the instructions governing the manufacture of flour. The use of wheat except for purposes of milling or of seed is prohibited, and it is impossible to contemplate any relaxation of this restriction. I may repeat that every effort will be made to relieve the shortage of feeding stuffs, and while the prospects of further importation in the near future are small it is hoped to arrange for increased supplies in the autumn.

BREAD.

Mr. FARRELL asked the Food Controller whether he is able to announce any improvement in the quality of the bread at present sold in Ireland; whether he is aware that in some cases serious illness has been produced by the use of bread made from the war flour on sale in that country; and whether, in view of the prospect of increased wheat all over America, Australia, and the Home country, some less deleterious article could now with safety be given to the public?

Mr. CLYNES: Some improvement has been already effected in the quality of the loaf by reducing the length of extraction from the wheat ground, by reducing the percentage of diluent cereals in Government regulation flour and by increasing the percentage of imported flour. The amount of dilution necessary to maintain such supplies as will admit of bread distribution without rationing will be settled from time to time in conjunction with our Allies. I am not aware that serious illness has been produced by the use of bread made from war flour. Careful investigations have frequently been made into this subject, and there is a consensus of opinion that the dietetic value of bread during the War has been satisfactory.

Mr. CLOUGH asked the Food Controller if he will state the prices of the 4-lb. loaf on 1st July, 1914, and 1st July, 1918, respectively; and if he can give a comparative table of their food properties?

Mr. CLYNES: The Board of Trade returns show that on 1st July, 1914, the price of the 4 lb. loaf varied from 4½d. to 7d., and having regard to the larger quantity sold at the lower figure, it was estimated that the average price for the whole Kingdom was 5½d. per quartern loaf. On 1st July, 1918, the price of the 4 lb. loaf in the majority of districts was

9d., as fixed by the Flour and Bread (Prices) Order, 1917. In areas where it appears that, by reason of exceptional circumstances, bread cannot be sold by retail at the maximum provided by this Order so as to provide a reasonable profit, the Food Controller has issued licences accordingly, and in the majority of these areas the quartern loaf is now sold at 9½d., and at 10d. in a few instances. The Royal Society has from time to time carefully investigated the food properties of bread, and has carried out elaborate experiments over a considerable period of time. I think it can be fairly stated that there is extremely little difference in the dietetic value of bread on the two dates mentioned.

NATIONAL RESTAURANTS.

Mr. GILBERT asked the Food Controller (1) whether any accounts of the National Restaurant in New Bridge Street, E.C., have yet been received by his Department; whether they have been submitted to any audit; and what is the result of the trading up till now; and (2) whether his Department propose to establish in London and provincial cities further national restaurants on the lines of the existing one in New Bridge Street, E.C.; whether he can state the number so proposed and the districts they will be placed in; and will he consider the desirability of awaiting the financial result of the first one established in New Bridge Street before he expends further money on these experiments?

Mr. CLYNES: The accounts of the restaurant in New Bridge Street from the date of opening, 26th June, are being made up to 3rd August. It is proposed to establish twelve restaurants in London and eight in provincial towns—namely, Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, and Brighton. I have no anxiety as to the financial results of the establishment in New Bridge Street.

FEEDING-STUFFS.

Mr. BOLAND asked the Food Controller what further steps, if any, he has taken to secure a proper supply of feeding-stuffs for Ireland?

Mr. CLYNES: As I have already stated, my advisers are in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland with regard to this.

matter. It is hoped that it will very shortly be possible to make a further announcement on the subject.

Sir J. SPEAR asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food if he is aware that the storage of cotton-seed cake, except in very dry places, results in a deterioration that renders it dangerous for cows producing milk; and, seeing that the milk supply for next winter is threatened because of the scarcity of hay, will he provide and protect as much cotton cake as is possible?

Mr. CLYNES: I do not think that my hon. Friend need fear any deterioration in the supplies of cotton-seed cake at present in store. Instructions have, moreover, been given to crushers to reduce the moisture contained in this cake to 12 per cent., with the object of increasing its keeping qualities. The temporary restriction on the issue of supplies has been established solely for the purpose of conserving a supply for use in the autumn and winter months, and every effort will be made to provide as much as possible for purposes of winter milk production.

MEAT.

Mr. CRUMLEY asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether the average price of fat cattle in Dublin markets on 25th July was 65s. per cwt. live-weight, equivalent to 1s. per lb. dressed, that the prices of mutton and lamb were about the same, namely, a 1s. per lb. dressed, and that consequently best cuts could be sold by the retailer to the public with reasonable profit at 1s. 4d. per lb.; and, if so, will he say what steps he proposes to take?

Mr. CLYNES: The information at my disposal does not bear out the suggestion contained in the first part of the question. Recent quotations of prices at the Dublin fat cattle market show that the average price for best bullocks and heifers on the date mentioned was 75s. per cwt. live weight and for second quality 68s. With regard to the latter part of the question, I may point out that retail meat prices are not fixed in Ireland. The butcher, however, must not exceed in any fortnight a gross profit of 2½d. per lb., or 20 per cent. on the cost of the meat to him.

Sir J. SPEAR asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food if he is aware that much of the frozen meat supplied to butchers in Devon lately has been

of very poor quality, some of it being quite unfit for human food, and has he seen the report that 3,000 lbs. of frozen meat had to be destroyed at Plymouth last week, and the statement that some of the meat had been in cold storage for four years; and will he take steps to prevent a recurrence of this?

Mr. CLYNES: I was not aware that any of the frozen meat supplied to butchers in Devon was unfit for human food or that 3,000 lbs. of this meat had to be destroyed at Plymouth last week. I am making inquiries into the truth of these allegations, and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

BARLEY.

Sir JOHN SPEAR asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food if, seeing that barley has proved so valuable in contributing to the bread supply, he will consider the desirability of grading this grain and fixing a price according to quality, so as to encourage the growth of the finest quality?

Mr. CLYNES: The question of differentiating between different grades of barley has been carefully considered, but there are serious difficulties in the way. Seed barley will remain, as last year, uncontrolled.

TEA.

Sir WILLIAM COLLINS asked the Food Controller whether it is the case that tea has been rationed by the Ministry of Food; and, if not, whether it is obligatory on the customers when purchasing tea from those with whom they have registered to produce stamped slips for their weekly supplies?

Mr. CLYNES: There is no national scheme of rationing for tea. Each food control committee has power to ration tea in its district at the rate of 2 oz. per head. In districts where tea is rationed the national ration book must be produced, and marked off on the occasion of each purchase. In other districts retailers may have found it necessary to require their registered customers to produce on purchase some document to show that they are entitled to be supplied. Catering establishments and institutions must present an official order form for each purchase, whether tea is rationed in their district or not.

SUGAR.

Commander BELLAIRS asked the Food Controller whether he will encourage allotment holders who grow marrows by allowing them some sugar for making jam?

Mr. CLYNES: Under the scheme for the issue of sugar for the domestic preservation of fruit, discretionary power was given to local food control committees to authorise the use of sugar for the preservation of marrows in districts where they are commonly preserved, and it is not proposed to interfere with the exercise of this discretion.

General CROFT asked the President of the Board of Trade whether a firm has been appointed as the sole buyer for Government sugar; and, if so, what is the name of this firm?

Mr. CLYNES: I have been asked to reply. The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative, the second part, therefore, does not arise.

WEXFORD CO-OPERATIVE MEAT SUPPLY COMPANY.

Mr. FFRENCH asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food whether he is aware that the Wexford Co-operative Meat Supply Company, whose turnover is about £200,000 annually, is placed in an unfair position by the Ministry of Food as compared with the exporters of live cattle and English co-operative societies; is he aware that the exporter in live cattle has freight commission and insurance paid for him as well as shrinkage, and receives payment at the port of landing, and is relieved from all further risks, whilst in the case of dressed meat all these charges are paid by the exporter, and as the sale of dressed meat is at least 3d. per stone of 8 lbs. less than that made by the live beast it is equivalent to 21s. of a bonus on a breast of 6 cwt. shipped alive; why, when the right of free sale is withdrawn and the produce placed under control, the Wexford Society cannot obtain the same terms offered to the new societies in England, which receive a bonus of 1½ per cent. on the value of their meat, 5s. 6d. cost of collection, a free slaughter-house, and payment of meat off the hooks; is he aware that English co-operative societies get an indirect bonus of about £1 per head compared with the Wexford Society, while its established

customers are taken away from it and an extra 2½ per cent. added to the commission on the sale of its offal when consigned to the wholesale meat supply in London; and will he look into this matter and see that no difference is made with regard to the Wexford Meat Supply Company?

Mr. CLYNES: It is certainly not intended to discriminate between different classes of Irish exporters. While exporters of Irish cattle have sea freight to the port of landing and other charges paid, the slaughterer of cattle in Ireland obtains the full benefit on the sale of offals, representing a difference in his favour on such sale of about 13s. on a 10 cwt. beast. The live and dead weight prices are as nearly as possible on a parity. Nor is it the case that any preference has been given to the Farmers' Co-operative Societies in England. The charge of 5s. 6d., referred to in the question, is a flat rate to cover slaughtering and other standing charges, and no indirect bonus of £1 per head is given to any English Co-operative Society by the Ministry. I will consider the question of the commission payable on offal exported by the Wexford Society.

UNLAWFULLY ENTERING UPON LAND.

Mr. OUTHWAITE asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland whether he can state the number of men and women who since the outbreak of war have been fined or imprisoned for unlawfully entering upon land in Scotland for the purpose of cultivation or grazing?

Mr. MUNRO: I am not in a position to state the figures asked for.

LAND CULTIVATION.

Mr. PULLEY asked the President of the Board of Agriculture if he is aware that the farming industry views with anxiety the possibility of an Order being issued compelling farmers to plough up a further acreage of grass land this winter; if a decision has been arrived at with reference to this matter; and, if so, the nature of the same?

Sir R. WINFREY: The Board have informed the agricultural executive committees that any large new ploughing programme is impracticable till the labour position is substantially or permanently improved, or until a fresh emergency arises, and instructions have been issued

that no fresh Orders to plough up grass land should be served before the 21st August. In the case of any Order served after that date, the owner or occupier will have a statutory right to have such Order referred to arbitration, and in default of agreement the arbitrator will be appointed by the President of the Surveyors' Institution.

SKILLED LABOUR, SHORTAGE.

Mr. ALDEN asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the Middlesex War Agricultural Committee had represented to the county council the serious condition of the agricultural industry in that county owing to the number of key men of highly skilled capacity who have been called up; and whether he intends to take any action with regard to the report?

Sir R. WINFREY: The hon. Member probably refers to a paragraph in the report of the Middlesex War Agricultural Committee, dated the 11th ult., which relates to the effect of the depletion of skilled labour on any programme of increased tillage for the 1919 harvest. That effect has been met by the suspension of the compulsory programme of increased tillage which was announced by the President at a meeting of the Federation of War Agricultural Committees on 3rd July, and which was indicated in the President's statement in this House on the 18th ult. I do not think that in the existing circumstances it is practicable for me to take any further action in the matter.

IRELAND.

HAY (SALE PERMITS).

Mr. NUGENT asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he is aware that the military authorities have issued an Order quite recently in the Ardee district, county Louth, prohibiting any hay from being sold until they issue a permit; and whether he is aware that this has caused injury to the farmers, inasmuch as they usually sell the hay when it is raised in cocks or lumps in the field; that they have at present many purchasers; and that loss may be sustained if this Order is retained in force and a permit not issued immediately?

Mr. FORSTER: For many months it has been necessary to obtain a permit before

hay can be sold in Ireland. In all cases of meadow hay at the present time this is readily granted, but not in cases of seed mixtures, which will undoubtedly be required for the troops overseas.

STEEL STOCKS (ADMIRALTY CONTRACTORS).

Captain BARNETT asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been drawn to an Admiralty memorandum, dated 25th June, which contains a list of eleven British firms holding stocks of steel and direct contractors and sub-contractors to deal with them exclusively; whether these firms were selected by reference to the trade or how otherwise; and if it is necessary in the public interest that a preference such as this should be given to a few firms at the expense of hundreds of others?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The steel stockholders referred to are those who are maintaining special stocks reserved exclusively to meet urgent Admiralty requirements, principally for ship repairs. The names of these firms were given simply for information of Admiralty contractors, so that urgent Admiralty work might not be delayed where small lots of steel were required which could not readily be obtained directly from the steel rolling firms. The Admiralty letter does not direct contractors to deal with these stockholders exclusively, but provides that the services of merchant and stockholders generally may be utilised for delivery ex-stockyard, and for orders which cannot readily be obtained from steel rolling firms. There was no intention of limiting contractors to a few firms in such cases.

SHIPBUILDER'S FOREMAN SHOT BY SENTRY.

Mr. WILKIE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that, on or about 16th October, 1917, Mr. Thomas B. Levie, a foreman in the employment of Messrs. A. Hall and Company, shipbuilders, Aberdeen, while proceeding to his work along a public road regularly and habitually used by Messrs. Hall and Company's workmen on the way to their work, was shot and seriously wounded by the Admiralty sentry posted in defence of the

Aberdeen pontoon, although Mr. Levie was obviously on the road leading to his own work, was not on any road leading to the pontoon, and was not approaching the pontoon; whether the action of the sentry was within the scope of his instructions; whether any independent inquiry into the circumstances has been or will be held; and whether the Admiralty will pay compensation to Mr. Levie for his injuries and for the loss he has sustained on account of his being negligently shot?

Dr. MACNAMARA: About 8.15 p.m. on the 16th October last the sentry on duty was at his post when he saw a man (who subsequently proved to be Mr. Thomas B. Levie) going in the direction of the Pontoon Dock. The sentry challenged the man three times and received no reply; he took a few more paces and challenged the man again. No reply was given; the sentry fired, and Mr. Levie was shot in the wrist. The sentry had instructions to challenge three times before firing. A Court of Inquiry was held on the 18th October last, but no other inquiry has been considered necessary or desirable. It appears that the sentry acted entirely in accordance with his orders; that he duly challenged Mr. Thomas Levie before firing, and there was no reason at all why the challenge should not have been heard, as the night was still.

The question of compensation has been fully considered, and it has been decided that no claim can be admitted in such a case.

NAVAL PENSIONERS AFLOAT.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that a considerable number of naval pensioners over fifty-five years of age are now serving afloat, and that many of them have been away from home since the commencement of the War; and can he see his way to recall these men to home billets and allow younger men who have not yet seen active service to take their place?

Dr. MACNAMARA: Generally speaking, the policy is to bring home the older pensioners and Reservists who have been a long time abroad; much has been done in this direction, and it is proposed to continue this policy. The number of cases such as those suggested in the question cannot be numerous, and I shall be very grateful if my hon. Friend will give par-

ticulars of the case of any rating over fifty-five years of age who is serving afloat and who has been away from home since the commencement of the War, when he will be at once relieved.

MINE SWEEPERS (LEAVE).

Mr. TICKLER asked the Secretary to the Admiralty if he is aware that, although repeated promises have been made, there yet are a number of men serving on mine sweepers in foreign waters who have had no home leave for three years and upwards; and will he endeavour to secure leave for these men to visit their wives and families?

Dr. MACNAMARA: It is a fact that a certain number of men have remained abroad for about three years, but every effort is being made to relieve them as soon as possible. Orders have already been issued to send some of these home, and a further draft of reliefs is now in process of formation. The relief of all men abroad is carried out as expeditiously as present circumstances and transport permit.²¹

OFFICERS AND MEN (BOARD AND LODGING ALLOWANCES).

Colonel ASHLEY asked the Secretary to the Admiralty how many officers and petty officers of His Majesty's Navy were in receipt of lodging and provision allowances on 1st July, 1914; and how many were receiving similar allowances on 1st April, 1918?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The information desired by my hon. and gallant Friend could only be prepared at the cost of a very great amount of labour, which, in the present conditions of pressure, would scarcely be justified. I trust that in the circumstances he will not press for the preparations of these statistics, but will accept my assurance that officers and men are not placed on lodging and provision allowances without careful consideration in each instance. If my hon. and gallant Friend—of course, I may be wrong here—is under the impression that officers and men are under any circumstances deliberately and for no other reason put upon a scale of allowances simply because those scales are less advantageous to the

recipients and more advantageous to the public purse, I can assure him that his impression is entirely unfounded.

Colonel ASHLEY asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office how many officers and men were in receipt of allowances in lieu of board and lodging on 1st July, 1914, and how many were receiving similar allowances on 1st April, 1918?

Mr. FORSTER: I am afraid that this information is not available, and it could not be obtained without much labour, which I hope my hon. and gallant friend will not press me to undertake.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

Major Sir B. FALLE asked the Under-Secretary of State for War if he can give any date or information when the promotion of the field officers, Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial and Volunteer, is likely to take place or as to the retirement of such officers in default of such promotion?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I presume my hon. and gallant Friend is referring to the promotions in accordance with the Instructions issued recently regarding the introduction of a general seniority list for officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial Force. The promotion of the officers of the Territorial Force mentioned will take place as soon as possible after the receipt of the recommendations from the various theatres of war in which these officers are serving. Officers not selected for promotion will not be retired on that account.

VOLUNTEERS (CEYLON).

Sir B. FALLE asked the Under-Secretary of State for War if he can give the number of men sent from the Volunteers got together and commanded by Colonel R. A. Fell, Ceylon, since 1914?

Mr. MACPHERSON: It is not desirable in the public interest to give this information.

SOLDIERS' LEAVE.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that men in a certain Labour

company in France can only have leave after twelve months from previous leave whilst men in other units are far more generously treated; and whether he will see that equality is established between this and similar units?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I am making inquiry, and will inform my hon. and gallant Friend of the result in due course.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he can state approximately the percentage of officers and men now and for the past three years stationed at Salonika who have been granted leave; how many such soldiers there are who have had no leave; and whether there is any prospect of leave being given to them, subject to the provision of transports?

Mr. MACPHERSON: The percentage of officers and men who have been granted leave now and for the past three years from Salonika has varied from time to time, as it is dependent on transport facilities. As I stated last week, arrangements have now been made for the resumption of leave parties from Salonika to the United Kingdom, and I am hopeful that it will be possible to give leave in the near future to all those who have been abroad so long at Salonika without leave.

LIEUTENANT A. B. MEYER.

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether Lieutenant A. B. Meyer is still employed at Donington Hall Internment Camp; and, if so, whether he will see that his name is brought before Lord Justice Eldon Banke's Committee to consider whether his work in that capacity is essential in the national interests?

Mr. MACPHERSON: The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. Lieutenant Meyer is at present employed in the Army Ordnance Department, Woolwich Arsenal.

SOLDIERS (POLITICAL DISCUSSION).

Mr. TREVELYAN asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether orders have been issued by officers commanding, when giving out registration claims to soldiers, that soldiers were not to enter

into any political discussion; whether such orders will hold good in case of a dissolution of Parliament; and, if so, how citizen soldiers are to be expected to use their voting privilege to the best purpose if they are to be debarred from political discussion?

Mr. MACPHERSON: No such Instructions have been issued by the War Office, and I have no information that any commanding officers have issued any such orders.

BRADFORD VOLUNTEER CORPS.

Mr. JOWETT asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the fact that the Army Council has issued no order or instruction to enforce additional training on Volunteers by means of summer camps on men who have faithfully observed the conditions imposed upon them in regard to the number of drills per week required of them, it is with his consent that the military authorities have ordered the drill stations used by Bradford Volunteers to be closed during the month of August next, thereby precluding the possibility of members of Bradford corps, who are ready and willing to fulfil all the conditions of their exemption, putting in the required number of drills during the month of August, unless they leave their work or their businesses, as the case may be, to attend the summer camp for at least a week, the effect of this action on the part of the military authorities being to impose compulsory attendance at a summer camp by an indirect method; and, if the military authorities have acted without his consent in this matter, whether he will take whatever steps are necessary in order to give members of Volunteer corps the opportunity of fulfilling the conditions imposed upon them by tribunals, as they are prepared to do?

Mr. MACPHERSON: Attention has already been drawn to this matter, and a report is being obtained. I will acquaint my hon. Friend of the result in due course.

VOLUNTEERS (RELEASE).

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that there is uneasiness in the minds of some Volunteers who have signed

on for definite periods of two or three months that they will not be released at the termination of their respective periods of service; and whether there is any grounds for this uneasiness?

Mr. MACPHERSON: There is no ground whatever for the existence of any uneasiness such as my hon. Friend suggests. At the termination of their respective periods of service these Volunteers will be released, and there is no power to retain them, unless, of course, the force as a whole has, in the meantime, been called out for actual military service.

MILITARY SERVICE.

CASES UNDER INQUIRY.

Mr. JOWETT asked the Under-Secretary of State for War, concerning Private No. 142089, son of two blind parents, aged sixty-seven and seventy-three respectively, whether, having regard to the fact that the only other member of the family is Private Muff's sister, a married woman residing in London, who is obliged to go out to work and cannot either offer a home to or contribute to the support of her parents, and that prior to his joining the Army Private Muff managed the affairs of his blind parents and, since he joined, Private Muff's father has had a paralytic seizure and is now unable to walk across the floor of his cottage without assistance, and, having regard to the further fact that in civil life Private Muff was employed as a warehouseman by a firm engaged on Government contracts, he will consider all the circumstances of this case with a view to Private Muff's discharge from the Army, or, alternatively, his transfer to the Army Reserve for so long as his blind and aged parents require his care and support?

Mr. MACPHERSON: Inquiries are being made, and this case will receive careful and sympathetic consideration.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD asked the Under-Secretary of State for War if his attention has been drawn to the case of Private Bernard Heron, No. 27040, C Company, Seaforth Highlanders, who is not yet eighteen years of age, a miner by trade, and one of a family of eight children; and whether this youth can be sent home to work at his trade till he has reached military age?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I am making inquiry into this case, and will inform my hon. Friend of the result in due course.

EXEMPTION CLAIMS.

Mr. KILEY asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that men whose national status, and liability for military service under the Military Service (Conventions with Allied States) Act, 1917, remain to be determined and who are entitled to submit their claims to exemption from service to a Civil Court comprising a judge and jury have, under a mistaken view of the law as to the jurisdiction of stipendiary magistrates to do more than commit such men, been handed over to a military escort; whether he is aware that direct orders have been given by the War Office to commanding officers of Labour battalions that, so long as a man who challenges his liability to serve is not released from service, he is to be treated in the same way as any other man and included in drafts for dispatch abroad; and if he will further consider the regularity of this course, and, in the meanwhile, give directions that such men shall be retained in this country for home service?

Mr. MACPHERSON: I am not aware of any cases where men have been handed over to military escorts in the circumstances stated in the first part of my hon. Friend's question. As regards other men, when applications have been made by individuals, they have been retained on home service whilst inquiries have been made.

MEDICAL GRADING.

Mr. HAYDEN asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether officers and men classed by the medical board as C2 are regarded only fit for office work; if any such persons are sent to general service work, and, if so, are there many such cases; and whether it is contrary to the usual practice to have men so classified sent to work of this description?

Mr. MACPHERSON: Category C2 has for some considerable time been incorporated with Category B2. Such men are considered fit for service in Labour units, or on garrison or regimental outdoor employment at home or in North-West Europe, and in other theatres of war, subject to special medical examination as to their fitness before proceeding overseas. The answer to the second part of

my hon. Friend's question is in the negative, and the third part does not, therefore, arise.

Mr. ELLIS DAVIES asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, particularly in the older ages, a man certified by his medical attendant to be suffering from some affection of the heart is, when before the medical assessors, examined by a specialist in diseases of the heart; and, if not, whether, in view of the importance of the matter both to the men and the nation, he can arrange for such examination to be made by some eminent consultant?

Mr. HAYES FISHER: Each group of examining assessors includes a physician who is one of the leading consultants of the profession and who is competent to decide on disabilities of the heart; in addition, if in any case the examining assessors think it necessary, they are authorised to refer the man for examination by a specialist.

LAST SURVIVING SONS.

Sir JOHN BUTCHER asked the President of the Local Government Board whether any decision has been arrived at for extending the existing power to exempt from military service the last surviving son of a widow, so as to give power to exempt the last surviving adult son of a widow or of a woman whose husband is a prisoner of war when at least one son has been killed or has died as a result of service?

Mr. HAYES FISHER: The restriction as to the last surviving son of a widow applies only to men who come under the recent Proclamations. I understand that it is not proposed to alter the terms of these Proclamations; but that the Minister of National Service has given discretion to the regional directors of National Service to give administrative protection in exceptional cases of grave domestic hardship outside the strict limits of the Proclamation.

FARMERS.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister of National Service whether a farmer, hitherto holding a certificate of exemption for agriculture, but of military age, can be called up before an opportunity has been afforded him to appeal to the local tribunal for exemption, both for national and for personal reasons; and, in a case where such a farmer has actually been

taken by the military authority before his appeal has been heard, whether he can indicate what steps can be taken by the farmer to obtain a hearing?

Sir A. GEDDES: Certificates of exemption held by farmers on occupational grounds were cancelled by the Military Service (Agricultural Exemptions) Order, which came into force on 11th June last. Any man whose certificate was thus cancelled had the right to lodge an application within four days to a tribunal for a certificate of exemption on personal grounds. If my hon. Friend will send me particulars of the case to which he refers, I will have inquiries made, and inform him as to the position.

Sir LEICESTER HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, by an agreement made between the representative of the Board of Agriculture for Scotland and the National Service representative, the tenant of the farm of East Greenland, Caithness, which extends to 100 acres, of which 70 acres are in cultivation, has been called up for military service; whether he is aware that the farm was being worked without assistance by the tenant, and has, since his calling up over three weeks ago, been left derelict; whether the facts of the case have been brought specially to the knowledge of the Board of Agriculture; and what action it is proposed to take to ensure that the farm will not remain in a derelict state and that the season's crops will not be lost?

Mr. MUNRO: The man referred to is aged twenty-two and became liable for military service under the Proclamation of 20th April. He was at that time employed on another farm, and did not enter on the tenancy of East Greenland Farm till Whit-Sunday last. No application for exemption was made by his employer nor did he make an application on personal grounds. The Board of Agriculture for Scotland have made special inquiries and inform me that as the man's father has a croft in the immediate neighbourhood of the farm, the district agricultural executive committee consider that suitable arrangements can be made by him for the management of the farm during his son's absence.

EXEMPTIONS.

Colonel STIRLING asked the Secretary for Scotland whether two men of military age have been, and are being, retained in

the service of the Scottish Smallholders Organisation, Limited, and of Scottish Central Markets, Limited, respectively, on the recommendation of the Board of Agriculture for Scotland?

Mr. MUNRO: I am informed by the Board of Agriculture for Scotland that they have on agricultural grounds supported appeals made on behalf of the Secretary of the Scottish Smallholders' Organisation and the manager of the Scottish Central Markets, Limited, to the tribunals, who apparently have taken a favourable view of the appeals and granted exemption to both gentlemen.

MILITARY TELEPHONISTS.

Mr. T. WILSON asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he is aware that soldiers are being employed in telephone exchanges ostensibly on definite military duties, but are also, especially in cases of emergency, employed on ordinary post office duties; that for the performance of these latter duties the soldiers receive only their military pay; and whether, in view of the fact that the soldiers are under the direct control of the War Office and the question of their pay is not one with which the Post Office can deal, he will make inquiry into the matter and give instructions that civilian duties shall be paid for at the proper civilian rates?

Mr. FORSTER: I will make inquiry into the matter.

NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

Mr. T. WILSON asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, in cases where the dependants of soldiers were only receiving the allotment deducted from the soldiers' pay, the Government is now paying the amount so deducted; and, if so, whether these soldiers are receiving the full increase of pay recently granted?

Mr. FORSTER: No, Sir; the Government only took over payment of the allotment in cases in which separation allowance was issuable.

Colonel ASHLEY asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, when an officer is reported as missing and has left no instructions with his agents, he

will give orders that children's allowances shall be paid over to the wife of that officer or any duly appointed guardian?

Mr. FORSTER: I am considering the matter, and will have it further investigated.

Sir F. HALL asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions whether any communication has been sent to the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation with reference to the case of Mrs. Doe, widow of Private H. E. Doe, No. 17347, late 1st Royal Berkshire Regiment, who was killed on the 17th June, 1916, as to the gratuity of £5 which should have been paid to her; and, if so, what is the nature of the reply?

Sir A. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN: I have been in communication with the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, and I am informed by them that they cannot now consider any applications for these gratuities. As I have explained in reply to previous questions on this subject, the Corporation did not award the gratuity indiscriminately, and in the case of Mrs. Doe their local representative, to whom they sent a form of inquiry immediately upon the soldier's death, may have found that no expenditure had been incurred which made the grant necessary. Mrs. Doe, I may add, made no application herself until several months after her husband's death. In any case, I fear that the matter cannot now be reopened.

Mr. WILES asked the Pensions Minister why his Department has refused to grant a pension or gratuity to J. Murray, late No. 50083, 4th Reserve, Royal Scots, who was wounded by a gunshot in the chest and has now been discharged from the Army?

Sir A. GRIFFITH - BOSCAWEN: Private James Murray was discharged on the 16th July, 1918, as no longer physically fit for war service in consequence of amputation of the right forearm, the result of an accident in civil life, while he belonged to Class "W" of the Army Reserve. As this disablement was in no way connected with military service, his claim to pension was rejected. It appears, however, that prior to his transfer to Class "W" of the Reserve, Private Murray was examined by a medical board on 23rd February, 1918, and was found to be suffering from disordered action of the heart, which was

considered by the medical authorities to have been aggravated by active conditions. It also appears from his casualty form that he received a gun-shot wound of the chest in August, 1915. In these circumstances steps are being taken to have the man re-examined by a fresh medical board, with a view of ascertaining whether he is now suffering from any disability caused or aggravated by his military service, such as would entitle him to consideration under Article 9 of the Royal Warrant.

PENSIONERS (SANATORIUM TREATMENT).

Sir GEORGE TOULMIN asked the Pensions Minister whether he has any information as to the number of pensioners requiring sanatorium treatment for tuberculosis who are now awaiting accommodation; and whether, in cases where sanatorium treatment would be more beneficial, domiciliary is being ordered by reason of the want of free beds?

Sir A. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN: There is, as far as I am aware, no delay in the admission to sanatoria of men requiring sanatorium treatment on discharge; and as regards those for whom such treatment subsequently becomes desirable, it is not possible to state, without a detailed inquiry that I am making, the proportions not admitted on account of want of accommodation and on account of other reasons which are common, such as refusal on the part of the pensioner, unnotified change of address, etc. I have no knowledge as to domiciliary treatment being recommended for any other reason than that it is the treatment most suitable to the case.

IMPORTED WIRE RODS.

Captain BARNETT asked the Minister of Munitions whether, in view of the decision to import wire rods into this country, steps will be taken to issue trading permits to the regular importers of these goods in accordance with the principles laid down by the London Chamber of Commerce and the Commercial Committee of the House of Commons and approved by the Prime Minister in a letter to the former body dated 1st July?

Mr. FORSTER: The importation of wire rods is only a temporary measure, as it is

hoped that in three months this country will be self-supporting in this respect. On arrival the rods will have to be distributed to the particular wire mills where they are most required for Government contracts, and as merchants will not be in possession of information on this subject, they would not be in a position to undertake the distribution of the rods. In the circumstances, I am afraid it will not be practicable to adopt my hon. Friend's suggestion.

MUNITIONS.

DRUNKEN EMPLOYE.

Mr. HANCOCK asked the Minister of Munitions whether he is aware that an employé, after being refused admission at two gates to a large North Midland munition works, was afterwards found on the works late at night and in a drunken condition, for which he was prosecuted and fined; and whether these works are sufficiently guarded, especially seeing that explosions causing many deaths have recently occurred there?

Mr. KELLAWAY: This case had not previously been brought to my notice. If my hon. Friend will give me privately the name of the factory, I will have inquiries made.

PATENT APPLICATION.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Minister of Munitions whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. R. W. Bates, formerly assistant to Mr. Lambourne at the M.M.O.P., and now with Sir A. Churchman, who has applied for a patent for an annular low temperature retort, based on the Tozer annular retort; whether Mr. R. W. Bates was frequently, in the course of his official duty, at the Battersea works supervising tests in, and had access to all the details of, the Tozer retort; whether unrestricted permission was given to Mr. R. W. Bates by the head of his Department to apply for this patent, and whether Mr. Bates, in preparing his application, used Government time and materials; and whether he will now grant the inquiry asked?

Mr. KELLAWAY: Mr. Bates has applied for and has been granted a patent for an improvement in vertical retorts. I am advised that it is a combination which has nothing in common with the claims for the Tozer intermittent retort except that both relate to the same general class of

apparatus. Mr. Bates' duties were as described, and he had access to such details as can be observed when the plant is in use and when standing. The permission given to apply for the patent was not unrestricted; on the contrary, the Government have the right of free user and assignment. The improvement to existing forms of intermittent annular vertical retorts was worked out for the use of the Department to which Mr. Bates belongs, and so was done during ordinary working hours with Government materials. As I am satisfied that the sanction to Mr. Bates' application for a patent was granted by the head of his department in a proper manner, I do not see the necessity of holding any inquiry.

WORKS STAFF (GALLANT CONDUCT).

Mr. CECIL HARMSWORTH asked the Minister of Munitions if he is in a position to give wide and authoritative publicity to the facts relating to the gallant conduct of the staff of a munitions works in the Midlands that was recently the scene of a serious disaster; and what public recognition, if any, is to be accorded to the surviving members of the staff?

Mr. KELLAWAY: I should like to give the widest possible publicity and recognition to the magnificent conduct of all concerned, which was beyond all praise. A list of recommendations for conspicuous bravery has been compiled, and will shortly be submitted to the Home Secretary, but there has been the greatest difficulty in singling out individuals, partly because the explosion was a matter of a few seconds and there were no resultant fires, and partly because inquiry in all cases could elicit no more than that "they only did their duty." The great mass of workers returned almost instantly to assist in the work of rescue, and I may state that production was resumed within two days on the remaining portions of the factory, working three shifts, with the result that the factory was turning out over 50 per cent. of its former production within a week, and this has since been continually improved upon. In the past, presentation of honours for similar acts of devotion has been made the occasion for a public function at the factory, presided over by the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, and I am considering the best means of securing public recognition of those who have deserved so well of their country on this occasion.

TREATMENT OF BOYS.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD asked the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that no change has taken place in the treatment of the boys from an institution in a certain munition works; whether he has made the promised inquiry; and whether the Report bears out the allegations made by the employés?

Mr. MUNRO: The inquiry which I promised has been made, but I have not yet received the Report. I am informed that it will reach me very shortly, and I shall give it my careful consideration.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS (APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT).

Mr. CLOUGH asked the Under-Secretary of State to the Air Ministry whether

he can state the rates of pay and their appointments of Members of Parliament serving in his Department?

Major BAIRD: The only Member of Parliament holding an appointment in the Air Ministry is my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for South Dorset, who is acting as Parliamentary Private Secretary, unpaid.

Mr. CLOUGH asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions whether he can state the rates of pay and their appointments of Members of Parliament serving in his Department?

Mr. KELLAWAY: The names, rates of pay, and appointments held by Members of Parliament serving on the staff of the Ministry of Munitions are as follows:

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Appointment.</i>	<i>Rate of Pay.</i>
Right Hon. W. S. Churchill ...	Minister of Munitions ...	£5,000 per annum.
Major-General Right Hon. J. E. S Seeley, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.	Parliamentary Secretary, Deputy Minister and Member of Council (W)	£1,500 per annum.
Major A. H. Burgoyne ...	Controller, Priority Department ...	Unpaid.
Mr. E. Craig ...	In charge of Labour, Iron and Steel Production Department	Unpaid.
Mr. G. W. Currie ...	Adviser and Assistant Controller for Assisted Contracts in Factory Audits and Costs Department	Unpaid.
Major F. Goldsmith ...	Liaison Officer with Allied Government Departments in Paris	R.P. & A.— £456 4s. 10d.
Captain D. B. Hall ...	Raw Materials Section of the Department of Explosives Supply	R. P. plus 10s.— £428 17s. 6d.
Major C. G. C. Hamilton ...	Assistant Controller, Contracts Claims Branch, Contracts Department	R. P. & A.— £456 4s. 10d.
Mr. F. G. Kellaway ...	Parliamentary Secretary ...	£1,500.
Hon. H. D. McLaren, C.B.E. ...	Director of Area Organisation Department	Unpaid.
Major Right Hon. Sir H. B. Norman, Bart., P.C.	Delegate from Munitions Inventions Department to the French Ministry of Inventions	Unpaid.
Mr. A. MacCallum Scott ...	Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister	Unpaid.

In addition to the above, the following Members are serving on Boards or Committees created in connection with the work of the Ministry:

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Appointment.</i>
Sir W. H. Cowan ...	Vice-Chairman, Hours of Labour Committee.
Sir R. A. Cooper, Bart. ...	Prices Sub-Committee.
Major Evan Hayward ...	Central Billeting Board.
Hon. A. Shaw ...	Chairman of the Special Arbitration Tribunal on Women's Wages.
Sir A. H. Marshall, K.B.E. ...	Chairman, Central Billeting Board.
Major Hon. Waldorf Astor ...	Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic).
Sir E. Coates, Bart. ...	Financial Advisory Committee.
Mr. C. Duncan ...	Central Billeting Board.
Captain W. Edge ...	Central Billeting Board.
Mr. Philip Snowden ...	Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic).
Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas ...	Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic).
Mr. W. Thorne ...	Women's Trade Union Advisory Committee.
Mr. A. Wilkie ...	Trade Union Advisory Committee.

Mr. CLOUGH asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he can state the rates of pay and their appointments of Members of Parliament serving in the Army?

Mr. FORSTER: I will have a list prepared with a view to its being published in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

POST-WAR ECONOMIC POLICY.

Sir F. HALL asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a Mission has been dispatched to Australia by the French Government with the object of developing commercial relations; if so, whether the policy to be considered has been disclosed to the British Government and has received their concurrence; and whether one of the matters to be discussed will be the question of the economic relations with the enemy after the War?

Mr. HEWINS: In response to an official invitation from the Commonwealth Government, the French Government has sent a Mission to visit Australia in the interests of the national and commercial relations between the Republic and the Commonwealth. I am not aware that any subjects have been proposed for discussion.

GENERAL ELECTION (SOLDIERS' VOTES).

Mr. TREVELYAN asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in the event of a General Election, the votes cast at home will be counted before the arrival of the ballot papers marked by the soldiers who are away from home?

Mr. HAYES FISHER: The answer is in the negative.

Mr. TREVELYAN asked the President of the Local Government Board whether means are being taken to secure that, in the event of a General Election, the ballot papers marked by soldiers away from home cannot be opened until they reach the returning officer of the constituency in respect of which the votes are cast?

Mr. FISHER: The procedure in connection with the method of voting by absent voters is now under consideration and the point taken by the hon. Member will be noted.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

Mr. GILBERT asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, as he is aware that the registration officers have now organised their staff and offices for registration purposes under the Representation of the People Act, he can make any statement now as to the preparation of the second register, the occupying time for which would be October next; and whether he proposes to issue any instructions to registration officers on the matter, and, if so, when?

Mr. FISHER: A further Order in Council will be necessary fixing registration and other dates in connection with the second register. As soon as the Order in Council is issued instructions will be given to registration officers, but I am not in a position at the present time to make any definite statement on the subject.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (GRANTS).

Sir J. SPEAR asked the President of the Local Government Board if, seeing the charge for the maintenance of the insane poor at lunatic asylums has doubled in consequence of the War, he will take steps to increase the Grant-in-Aid to local authorities from 4s. to 8s. per head?

Mr. FISHER: As the hon. Member is aware, the amount of the pauper lunatic Grant is fixed by law, and I can hold out no hope of introducing legislation for the amendment of the law at the present time.

LODGERS' VOTES.

Major CHAPPLE asked the President of the Local Government Board whether registration officers in Scotland have made arrangements to grant no local government vote to lodgers living in houses rented at under £15 a year in burghs, nor to lodgers living in houses in counties rented under £13 a year; and, if so, can he state the authority under which this action has been taken?

Mr. MUNRO: I have no information as to the observance by registration officers in Scotland of any general rule such as that mentioned by my hon. and gallant Friend. As he is aware, the qualification for the lodgers' vote for local government

purposes is the occupation of lodgings of a yearly value of not less than £10 if let unfurnished. I can imagine that in making up the electors' lists registration officers have found it necessary, if the value limit was to be given effect to, to proceed upon some such working rule as is suggested. It is, of course, open to any lodger who considers that his name has been wrongfully omitted from the lists to claim to be registered, and any disputed question of yearly value will then fall to be determined as provided by the Act.

ALIENS.

COMMERCIAL FIRMS.

Captain BARNETT asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the firm of Weiss, Biheller and Brooks, Limited, carrying on business in London and the United States, now consists only of two naturalised Austrians; whether this firm is closely associated in offices and management with Rothschild, Meyer and Company, a New York firm of alien enemy origin; whether Weiss, Biheller and Brook, Limited, has on more than one occasion of late received preferential treatment as regards shipping space from the British authorities in New York; and, if so, for what reason?

Mr. WARDLE: The answer to the first two parts of this question is in the affirmative, except that I have no information that the firm of Rothschild, Meyer and Company, of New York, is of alien enemy origin. The last part of the question should be addressed to the Minister of Shipping.

HOLZAPFELS.

Mr. PENNEFATHER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the products of the concern at Bergen, in which Holzapfels, Limited, hold shares, are in any way available for the use of enemy warships or other vessels owned by or trading with the enemy?

Mr. WARDLE: I am informed that shortly after the outbreak of war the company obtained an undertaking from the company at Bergen that supplies sent from England would not be used to supply enemy countries, either directly or indirectly. There is no knowledge of any supplies being made to enemy warships or other vessels owned by or trading with the enemy by the Norwegian company.

Mr. PENNEFATHER asked the President of the Board of Trade if there will be any impediment to the retransfer to Mr. A. C. A. Holzapfel, or his nominee, after the War of the shares recently transferred by him to his children and son-in-law without valuable consideration?

Mr. WARDLE: I am informed that a written undertaking has been given to the company by the transferees that the shares transferred to them will not be retransferred to him either during or after the conclusion of the War.

Mr. PENNEFATHER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the proceeds of the 89,856 shares formerly held by Mr. Max Holzapfel have been invested in National War Bonds in his own name; and, if not, in what names the investment has been made and for whose account, where these bonds now are, who is their custodian, and under what authority they are acting?

Mr. WARDLE: I am informed that Bonds for £800 are registered in the name of Max Holzapfel; that Bonds for £19,600 are registered in the joint names of the British Bank of Northern Commerce and Max Holzapfel, and are in the custody of the bank, and that the remainder of the Bonds are in the custody of Messrs. Criddle and Ord, of Newcastle. I am sending my hon. Friend a list of the persons in whose names they are registered.

COTTON (PURCHASES).

Mr. PENNEFATHER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the Board of Trade have, during the last three years, made any important purchases of cotton or cotton-waste from any firm in this country of which any of the partners are of enemy birth; and, if so, will he state the name of such firm and the total amount of business transacted with them?

Mr. WARDLE: So far as I am aware, the reply to the hon. Member's question is in the negative.

PETROL SUPPLIES.

Sir R. COOPER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government has considered the fact that the Regulations recently issued by the Home Office and other authorities concerning

the use of petrol for game-shooting purposes must result in depriving the public, and especially the hospitals, of a valuable food supply; whether these Regulations are the result of a permanent shortage of petrol; and, if so, whether the Government will take steps to increase the supply for useful and patriotic purposes by reducing the quantity now supplied to Ireland, where its use for private purposes of business, sport, and recreation is widespread?

Mr. WARDLE: In framing the Clauses of the Motor Spirit (Consolidation) and Gas Restriction Order, 1918, the possible effect of the prohibition of the use of petrol for game-shooting purposes upon the food supplies of the country was very carefully considered. The Regulations affecting the use of petrol form part of the scheme for controlling the consumption of this commodity which has been necessitated by the serious shortage of supplies. The use of petrol in Ireland is subject to the same restrictions as in the rest of the kingdom.

Mr. RENDALL asked the President of the Board of Trade whether garage proprietors will be complying with the petrol Regulations if they let out motor cars to Members of Parliament and candidates who desire to address their constituents or prospective constituents in rural areas from this date; and will special licences for petrol for the same purpose be granted to owners of private cars previous to a General Election being announced?

Mr. WARDLE: The Motor Spirit and Gas Restriction Orders, 1918, do not permit the use of hire cars or private cars by Members of Parliament and candidates who desire to address meetings in other constituencies. The special permits for use during the period of an election only, to which reference was made in the reply given to the hon. Member for Mid Shropshire on 23rd July will be granted to all *bonâ-fide* candidates upon applications made by their election agents, but applications will not be dealt with until the writs have been issued.

RAILWAY FARES, IRELAND.

Mr. CRUMLEY asked the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that the Great Northern of Ireland Railway Company has increased its passenger fares by

from 80 to 100 per cent.; and if he will take steps to have all passenger fares on the Irish railways reduced to their pre-war rates?

Mr. WARDLE: As regards the first part of this question, if the hon. Gentleman will furnish me with particulars of the cases he has in mind in which fares have been increased by 80 to 100 per cent., I will make inquiries into the matter. As regards the second part, I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the letter which my right hon. Friend sent to him on the 19th July explaining that, in existing circumstances, he could hold out no prospect of any reduction of the railway fares at present charged.

RAILWAY SEASON TICKETS.

Sir D. GODDARD asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that hundreds of families in Ipswich have been accustomed to use monthly season tickets to Felixstowe, and that this is the only holiday these families get; whether he realises that these monthly tickets are no longer issued; and whether, in view of the fact that family tickets are still being issued in France, he will amend the rules applying to season tickets, so that these families may not be deprived of these health-giving opportunities?

Sir A. STANLEY: I am afraid I cannot see my way to modify the Order authorising railway companies to refuse to issue season tickets for shorter periods than six months for a distance over 12 miles. The reasons which have made this and other restrictions upon travelling necessary I have already explained fully in this House. I am, however, calling the attention of the railway company to the right hon. Gentleman's point.

MERCHANT SERVICE (WAR CHEVRONS).

Mr. PETO asked the President of the Board of Trade whether any decision has been arrived at as to the granting of war chevrons to officers and men in the merchant service, and as to the use of the torpedo badge in suitable form to officers of the merchant service?

Mr. WARDLE: I would refer my hon. Friend to the letter which my right hon. Friend sent to him on the 30th July.

TRADE BOARDS BILL.

Mr. JOYNSON - HICKS asked the Minister of Labour whether he has considered the need for amending the Trade Boards Bill on the lines suggested by the hon. Member for Brentford; and, if so, will he state the Amendments?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: My right hon. Friend has been considering the matter to which my hon. Friend refers, and an Amendment will be moved on behalf of the Government in the House of Lords, the terms of which are printed in the Order Paper of that House.

WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATES.

Captain DOUGLAS HALL asked the Postmaster-General if he is aware that it is generally understood that War Savings Certificates are transferable; if he will state the reasons for refusing to sanction transfers except between members of any family; and whether he will consider the advisability of authorising transfers in the future?

Mr. PEASE: It is not intended that War Savings Certificates should form marketable securities, and transfers are, therefore, not usually allowed. I have no reason to believe that the public generally are under any misapprehension on this point, and I regret I am unable to alter the present rule.

COAL SUPPLIES.

Colonel WHELER asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that the farmers in the Isle of Sheppey are having difficulty in getting any supplies of coal necessary for farming work; that the local coal agents report that colliery companies are supplying Government orders first and that therefore the farmers may have to wait a long period before their coal is delivered; and whether, in view of the fact that threshing and other agricultural operations will be delayed if coal cannot be obtained, he will take steps to see that the farmers of the Isle of Sheppey get the necessary supplies?

Sir R. WINFREY: The Department is well aware of the difficulties in obtaining sufficient supplies of coal for agricultural needs, and has made strong representations to the Coal Controller in the matter.

EARDISLEY ESTATE, HEREFORD-SHIRE.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, with reference to the recent purchase of the Eardisley (Herefordshire) estate by Mr. Haden Tebb, of 18, Bolton Street, Mayfair, W., an application, under the Increase of Rent, etc. (Amendment) Act, 1918, has been made by the purchaser for a certificate that the seventeen cottages, or any of them purchased by him, are required for the occupation of persons engaged or employed in agricultural work of urgent national importance; and has an application in respect of these cottages or any of them been granted?

Sir R. WINFREY: The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative; the second part, therefore, does not arise.

BURGH GAS SUPPLY ACT, 1876
(BORROWING POWERS).

Mr. CURRIE asked the Secretary for Scotland whether the Bill to modify the borrowing powers conferred on municipalities by the Burgh Gas Supply Act of 1876 will be introduced before the House rises on 8th August?

Mr. MUNRO: I hope to be able to introduce the Bill before the Adjournment.

PROTEST MEETING, EDINBURGH.

Mr. OUTHWAITE asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that on 17th July, at Edinburgh, a meeting called to protest against repeated sentences being inflicted on conscientious objectors for the same offence, was broken up by an organised band of hooligans, who assaulted and robbed members of the audience; whether he is aware that Mr. G. J. Kibble, secretary of the National Union of Dock Labourers, of Leith, has published a statement that prior to the meeting he was approached by a well-known individual for the purpose of securing 100 dock labourers to break it up; whether any steps have been taken to prosecute this man?

Mr. CLYDE: The circumstances connected with the meeting referred to by the hon. Member are at present the subject of

inquiry. The information now before me does not, however, bear out the hon. Member's allegations as to what took place.

PRISONERS OF WAR (VISITS).

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS asked the hon. Member for Sheffield (Central Division) whether a regulation has been issued that no relations of our interned officers and men in Holland are to be allowed to visit them without the assent of General Hanbury Williams; if so, whether he is aware that German relations are freely allowed to visit their interned relatives; and why this difference is made in regard to the two countries?

Mr. MACPHERSON: A certain number of the relatives of prisoners of war are employed with the Y.M.C.A. and Red Cross in Holland for limited periods. Visits by relatives may be permitted in cases of serious illness of which the gravity is certified by the General Officer in charge of British prisoners of war in Holland.

It is understood that visits by relatives to German prisoners of war are strictly limited; but, in any case, the opportunities for transport between England or Germany and Holland are so different that the same rules cannot be applied.

National Education Board, Ireland.

Mr. FITZPATRICK asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he has received a copy of the resolution adopted at the Land and Labour Convention held in Cork, on 29th June last, asking that a representative of labour be appointed on the Board of National Education for Ireland; and what steps he intends taking to give effect to the wishes of this organisation?

Mr. SHORTT: I have not received a copy of the resolution referred to.

Insanitary House Property.

Mr. CURRIE asked the President of the Local Government Board whether he will publish a list of the names of the owners of house property in England and Wales which is brought to his notice, either in official reports or by representations made by municipal authorities or by reports of officers attached to his own Departments, as being unfit for human habitation?

Mr. HAYES FISHER: I could not undertake to adopt the course suggested. In many cases the statements are *ex parte*; in others the owners are not known. In others, again, the owners or some of them can have no responsibility for the condition of the buildings.

Mr. CURRIE asked the Secretary for Scotland whether he will cause to be published a list of the names of the owners of house property in Scotland which is brought to his notice in official reports or by representations made by municipal authorities as being unfit for human habitation?

Mr. MUNRO: I have considered my hon. Friend's suggestion which I presume he would limit to cases where the unfitness of the house has been established by process of law or otherwise. In such cases, however, publication must, I think, have already taken place, and further action on the lines suggested becomes unnecessary.

University College, Reading (Grant).

Mr. CHANCELLOR asked the President of the Board of Agriculture whether any portion of the Grant of £1,950 made to the University College, Reading, for dairying research is used for the purpose of animal experimentation in reference to tuberculosis conducted by Dr. Stanhouse Williams; if so, what sum goes for this purpose; whether any further portion of this sum goes to any other kind of experimenting on living animals; and, if so, will he specify the nature of such experiments and the sums used for each kind, respectively?

Sir R. WINFREY: The Grant of £1,950 is a "Block" Grant, made on the basis of salaries, cost of apparatus, etc., and is not allocated among particular experiments and researches. The Board are unable, therefore, to give a reply in the terms in which the hon. Member puts his question. If he so desires, however, I will willingly inquire of the college as to whether they are engaged in any experiments on living animals other than may be involved in keeping animals under examination, and what they are, and inform him of the result.

Scottish Small-Holders' Organisation, Limited.

Colonel STIRLING asked the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the conditions of the financial assistance given by or

through the Board of Agriculture for Scotland to the Scottish Small-Holders' Organisation, Limited; and what sums have been so granted or lent and, if lent, at what rate of interest, to this organisation and its associated undertakings, Scottish Central Markets, Limited, and Scottish Central Land Bank, Limited, respectively, in each of the years 1915, 1916, and 1917?

Mr. MUNRO: During each of the years 1915, 1916, and 1917 the Board have assisted the Scottish Small-Holders' Organisation Society and Land Bank by making a Grant from the Agriculture (Scotland) Fund equal to one-half of the administrative expenditure of the Society as approved by the Board, but not exceeding £600 in all. In accordance with these conditions Grants were paid as follows:

In respect of the year 1915	...	£592	17	0
In respect of the year 1916	...	£532	6	8
In respect of the year 1917	...	£600	0	0

In addition, during each of the years 1916 and 1917 the Board made a special Grant of three-fourths of the salary of the Land Bank Inspector, namely, £168 15s. for 1916 and £158 6s. 3d. for 1917.

With regard to the Scottish Central Markets, the Board have given short term loans to enable the markets to supply seeds and manures on advantageous terms to small-holders. The loan in each case has been free of interest, and the conditions fixed by the Board have been (1) that the loan should be secured by the personal guarantees of the directors of the markets, and (2) that repayment should be made within twelve months from the date of the first advance.

The following loans were made in respect of the years 1915-16, 1916-17, and 1917-18:

1915-16	£500 repaid
1916-17	£500 repaid
1917-18	£1,300

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. DILLON: May I ask the Leader of the House whether he proposes to take Order No. 5, Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers) Bill—Second Reading—before the House rises for the Recess?

Mr. BONAR LAW: No; I do not think it will be possible to take this Bill before the Adjournment.

Mr. DILLON: Do you propose to take the Second Reading before the Adjournment?

Mr. BONAR LAW: If we can get time we shall be glad to do it. It is simply a question of the time available for next week.

Mr. DEVLIN: When will the Bill be printed?

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is printed.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is the business for next week.

Mr. BONAR LAW: To-morrow, as the House knows, we shall take the Report stage of the Vote of Credit.

On Monday the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill.

On Tuesday the Committee stage of the same Bill, which is purely formal, and the Indian Budget, which will be taken in the afternoon. I hope that that may be finished at about seven o'clock, and the remainder of the evening can be given to other measures, including the Lords Amendments to the Education Bill.

On Wednesday the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill.

On Thursday I hope that it may be possible to adjourn.

Mr. SWIFT MacNEILL: As we have always had at least one day, and frequently two days, for the Indian Budget, does not the right hon. Gentleman think that only part of one day is not enough?

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is a question of time, and I do hope that the proposal may seem reasonable in the circumstances.

Mr. SWIFT MacNEILL: Having regard to the contemplated changes in India, can we not have more time to discuss Indian policy?

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is a question of time, and I hope that there will be ample opportunity when the House resumes after the Recess.

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS: Do you propose to take any formal Resolution approving of the Indian Secretary's proposals on the Indian Budget?

Mr. BONAR LAW: Nothing of the kind. It is only a question of the Indian Budget.

Mr. SNOWDEN: In reference to the business of to-morrow, has any arrangement been made between the Opposition and the Government as to what subjects will be discussed?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The hon. Member knows that I am always glad to assist in these matters; but it is not the duty of the Leader of the House to make these arrangements.

Resolved, "That Government business be not interrupted this night under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), and may be entered upon at any hour although opposed."—[*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*]

FRIDAY SITTING.

Resolved, "That this House do sit To-morrow."—[*Mr. Bonar Law.*]

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

[*Mr. Whitley in the Chair.*]

SUPPLEMENTARY VOTE OF CREDIT, 1918-19.

STATEMENT BY MR. BONAR LAW.

The CHANCELLOR of the EX-CHEQUER (*Mr. Bonar Law*): I beg to move, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £700,000,000, be granted to His Majesty, beyond the ordinary Grants of Parliament, towards defraying the Expenses which may be incurred during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1919, for General Navy, Army, and Air Services in so far as specific provision is not made therefor by Parliament; for the conduct of Naval and Military Operations; for all measures which may be taken for the Security of the Country; for assisting the Food Supply, and promoting the Con-

[Mr. Bonar Law.]

tinuance of Trade, Industry, Business, and Communications, whether by means of insurance or indemnity against risk, the financing of the purchase and re-sale of foodstuffs and materials, or otherwise; for Relief of Distress; and generally for all expenses, beyond those provided for in the ordinary Grants of Parliament, arising out of the existence of a state of war."

In moving this Vote of Credit I should like first to explain to the House why it is that I am asking for so large an amount. It is not, I am glad to say, as the Committee will perceive when the figures are explained, due to any increase in the rate of expenditure. It is proposed to take this amount to suit, as I believe, the general convenience of the House. My object, and I am sure that of my predecessors has always been, to spread these Votes of Credit as equally as possible over the Parliamentary year. Last year it was possible to do this. This year it has not been possible largely because we were aiming at obtaining a reasonable Whitsuntide Recess, a hope which was not ultimately realised. The total amount, according to the Budget Estimate, which remains to be voted, is £1,450,000,000. In asking the Committee for £700,000,000 I hope it may be possible to have only one additional Vote of Credit for the present financial year. If this is not possible, it will mean simply that in the period between our meeting in January and the end of the financial year there will be two Votes of Credit and two Consolidated Fund Bills. I am sure the Committee will agree that this ought to be avoided if possible, as the opportunity for discussion which it would give would be of no value. Under the arrangement I propose there will be this Vote of Credit to-day, another Vote of Credit in the Autumn Session, and, of course, a Vote of Credit for the subsequent year between the meeting of Parliament and the 31st of March. The Committee will thus have had five opportunities of discussing Votes of Credit, which is precisely the same number as we had last year. I come now to the Vote of Credit. The last Vote was introduced by me on the 18th of June, and it was then estimated that it would carry us until the end of August. That Estimate has been realised and there is enough to carry on the expenditure until well into the first week in September.

In introducing the last Vote of Credit the figures were analysed up to the 8th June. As the Committee know, it is almost useless to analyse figures for so short a time, and for that reason I do not propose to give any special analysis of figures between that date and now. I think it would be much more useful if an analysis were made from the beginning of this financial year up to the 13th of July, and it is on this basis that the figures have been worked out. Taking this as the basis, I find that on the assumption that the expenditure is spread equally over the whole period the amount for this period would have come to £726,500,000. The actual expenditure was under £724,000,000, so that the Estimate has not been reached to the extent of £2,500,000, the equivalent of only £24,000 per day. Perhaps it may be remembered that in the previous period the reduction showed a larger figure of £138,000 per day. But the figures of the present expenditure are really much better than would be indicated by taking them by themselves, for the analysis of them will show that there has been a considerable diminution in the dead-weight expenditure, while an increase has been incurred on expenditure which is recoverable. Looking at the figures more closely, if you take the four fighting forces—the Army, Navy, Munitions, and Air Service—I find there has been under-spending to the extent of £21,500,000. Part of that, to the extent of £4,000,000, is credited to the Air Service. I am glad to say—and the Committee will be pleased to learn this—that that does not mean that there has been any falling-off in the estimated production of material for that Service; on the contrary, that Service has been kept fully up to the Estimate, and this £4,000,000, I am informed, is largely made up of accounts for work which has been done but which has not yet been finally brought to account. There is another reduction, a larger amount, in the case of the Admiralty. The under-spending on that Vote amounts to a little more than £18,000,000, and of this a large part, exceeding £10,000,000, refers to merchant shipbuilding. The diminution from this cause is reason not for satisfaction but for anxiety, which I know is felt in the House generally. This subject has been very recently discussed, and my right hon. Friend the First Lord has explained the conditions so fully that

I do not think it would be right for me to occupy any length of time with regard to it.

I should like to point out to the Committee that the anxiety which is felt in the Committee generally is fully shared by His Majesty's Government. One of the causes of this falling off in merchant shipping, as the Committee well knows, is that the man-power of the country is not available for all its needs, and it has to be diverted to the needs which for the time being seem to be greatest. The consequence of that is that, after 21st March, the necessity of filling up our fighting forces has had some effect, though I am glad to say only a small effect on the men available for shipping. The other explanation is one which is more satisfactory, and it is this. On the United Kingdom has fallen practically the whole of the burden of meeting the submarine menace by a counter offensive. For that reason a very large part, larger than was expected, of our available resources has been employed in building craft to meet the submarine danger. That has been very successful. The Committee knows that the number of submarines destroyed is far greater than the number destroyed at any earlier period, and it will be seen also by the return of losses that the effect of that work on the part of the Admiralty is being shown. On the other hand, the position is by no means satisfactory. So long as British shipping is being sunk more rapidly than new shipping is being constructed, it cannot be looked upon as a good position from the point of view of this country. I think I can go further and say, though in the main we must look at the War as a whole, that it is a great satisfaction to realise that the world's shipping is being produced more quickly than it is being sunk, yet even from the point of view of the Allies, the position can never be regarded as satisfactory until here in the United Kingdom we are also producing more quickly than British ships are sunk. I can only say further, in reference to that, that we realise its importance as strongly as any other Member of the House. We are now taking steps to take the whole position again into consideration in the most complete way, and I can assure the Committee that nothing can be done will be left undone to restore the position of merchant shipping so far as the Government are concerned.

When we come to the Army, I find that there is an increase of expenditure there of £8,000,000. That, I am glad to say, is entirely satisfactory, for it is due altogether to the fact that the ration-strength of the Army has been during this period and is now greater than was estimated at the time that the Budget Estimates were prepared. That, of course, is the result of the very severe measures which were taken after the offensive of 21st March, and, as so much hardship is being endured by the people of this country, it is a satisfaction for us to feel that, at all events, the results are there, and that the Army is stronger than it would have been but for the special efforts which have been made. That deals with the fighting forces where, as I have said, there is an under spending of £21,500,000.

If we look next at the Loans to Allies and the Dominions, we find that the amount expended for this purpose is less than the Estimate by £22,700,000. That, of course, is not surprising, because, as I explained at the time the Budget was introduced, the Estimate on this head was in any case guess work, but at all events it is a fact that this service has shown this diminished expenditure. It will be useful, I think, if I again give the Committee the total figures of the debt of our Allies and the Dominions at the end of the financial year. The debt due from our Allies was £1,332,000,000; it is now £1,402,000,000. The debt due from the Dominions was £194,000,000; it is now £208,500,000. That is really £80,000,000 more than the exact figure, because, as I have explained, simply owing to the keeping of accounts, the Canadian Government's expenditure lent by us to the extent of £80,000,000 and our Loans in Canada of the same amount appeared as Loans both in the Canadian accounts and in ours. That is being put right, but the actual book-keeping entries by the two Governments have not yet been made.

I have often desired to give to the House the particulars of this debt, and I have now come to the conclusion that I can give them without any sacrifice of public interest, and I am sure the Committee will be glad to know what are the figures. The debt from the Russian Government or the Russian people is £568,000,000, from France £402,000,000, from Italy £313,000,000, and the balance of £119,000,000 is lent to the smaller States of the Alliance, including Belgium,

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Serbia, and Greece. I do not think that either the Committee or the people outside, both in this country and beyond it, realise what is the meaning of that assistance.

Mr. CHANCELLOR: Does that include Roumania?

Mr. BONAR LAW: Yes, in the £119,000,000. I do not think that they realise what that assistance means. We have become accustomed to talk of thousands of millions quite freely, and no one's imagination can picture what £1,000,000,000 really means. It is not a question merely of money. It is a question of the man-power and labour represented by the expenditure of that money, and perhaps, though it is rather a crude way of putting it, the Committee will be able to form some estimate of what it means when I tell them that £1,000,000,000 represents the labour of 10,000,000 men for a whole year. I always think that the assistance given by the British Treasury to the Alliance is like the Navy. It is so silent that nobody quite realises what it means, but in reality, up to the time that America came into the War, this financial assistance by the British Government was as vital and the absence of it would just as much have rendered the continuance of the War impossible as the absence of the work of the British Navy itself. I had hoped to compile, and I mean to do it in the Recess in some more detailed way, an analysis of what this assistance of the British Treasury means, and if, as I hope, it is interesting enough, I shall take some measures of making it public. But it is not only as regards finance that I think that our people at home and our friends abroad do not quite realise the full extent of the effort of the Mother Country in this War. It is not national prejudice which makes me inclined to believe that the British people are not very good at singing their own praises. I think it is not entirely discreditable, but in the long run with nations as with individuals the facts are apt to have their weight, and I think it is now being realised what that effort means.

We, the British representatives, the members of the Government, and others, have never tired of singing the praises of our Dominions for what they have done in this great struggle, and I do not think we can sing them too high, but I thought it very appropriate when one of the repre-

sentatives of the Dominions the other day, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, attempted to give a picture, and it was a real picture, of what has been done by the Mother Country in this struggle. I do not know whether hon. Members have had their attention called to what happened in Paris in connection with the American Independence Day. A great deal of notice of it was taken in the French newspapers. On that occasion an entertainment was given by the Chamber of Commerce to the American representatives, and I am glad to say that not only the representatives of the French Government, but also the American Ambassador in Paris painted so vividly, and I think also so accurately, the immense effort of this country in this struggle that it won the enthusiastic applause of everyone who was present, and, as a result, the British Ambassador, who had not intended to take part, was called upon by the audience to take a part in the proceedings which then took place. That gathering was not only useful for that. The War is all evil, but one of the good things that we hope will remain permanently is the feeling of close unity in aim and in principle between the American people and the British people, and that is one of the results which so far has come from the Alliance.

I should like for a special reason to make a reference to the assistance which we have given to Italy. The German Government, as the Committee I think will know, have spared no effort in propaganda not only in neutral countries, but in the countries of the Alliance. They have spent for this purpose sums of money in comparison with which our puny efforts in the same direction are absolutely insignificant, and nowhere have they tried it more persistently than in Italy. The object has been to create the impression that Italy is being utilised and exploited by other members of the Alliance—and especially by the United Kingdom—that we are making a commercial profit out of the miseries which the Italian people are undergoing. It is for that reason I thought it useful to point out to the Committee exactly what this Government have done for Italy. One of the evils from which Italy has largely suffered—it is true of many of our other Allies—has been the fall in her exchange, which of course interferes with business in every direction in the country. More than two years ago, in July, 1916, the British Government, in addition to other

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advances, arranged to give the Italian Exchequer a monthly credit to be used for the special purpose of helping the Italian exchange. Last week we had the pleasure of a visit from M. Nitti, Finance Minister of Italy, and during that visit it was arranged—it had been agreed to previously at Washington—that a similar contribution for the same purpose should be made by the United States. France also has agreed to help. The result is that already much more organised attempts are being made to stabilise the Italian exchange, and these efforts have already had an amount of success which has exceeded our expectations when we undertook them. The advances to Italy amount, as I have said, to £313,000,000. I ask the Committee to realise what that means. These advances were paid in sterling, so that to any extent that goods were supplied out of it the Italian Exchequer was saved the loss that would have resulted from the exchange.

These credits have enabled us to supply the Italian Government not only with munitions and with equipment for their troops, but with food and innumerable other articles for the civil population. For instance, all the coal sent to Italy has been paid for out of the credits, and we have also paid for freights and the losses in ships which are incurred in carrying these commodities. That has meant an immense advantage, without which it is not too much to say the Italians could not have continued their efforts. But there is another point, and I would refer to this because I had sent to me an Italian newspaper talking of the money that we were making out of the rate of interest we were charging the Italians. As a matter of fact, the rate we charge to them is 5 per cent., and, as the Committee know, that is actually below the rate which we are ourselves paying on National War Bonds, and, in addition to that, the amount of money which I have named, £313,000,000, was far more than sufficient to cover the whole adverse trade balance against Italy, and left a considerable amount to be spent in buying for Italy in neutral countries; and on money borrowed in neutral countries we have had to pay a much higher rate even than it has been necessary to pay at home. I have, I hope, said enough to show that in our dealings with Italy, and I think I can honestly say in our dealings with all the Allies, we have not thought of our own

selfish interests but have thought wholly of the best method of helping those who are fighting with us in this struggle.

But the visit of Monsieur Nitti makes me desirous to say something else. I had a long conversation with him, and he was full of the fighting and the sufferings of his own troops and his own people. The Committee will perhaps remember that on the last Vote of Credit the offensive against Italy had just taken place. I was not then able to say that the danger was past, though even then I was in a position to say that we believed it was past. Now we know that for the present at least that danger has gone, and when we praise and realise to the full, as we ought, the heroic nature of the struggle which these people are making, we should not leave out of our minds this vital fact, that the Italian Front and the Western Front are one, that if this offensive had succeeded it would have of necessity meant a drain on our forces which might have had the most disastrous consequences in the general conduct of the campaign. But M. Nitti said something else. He was hurt by the kind of criticism which has sometimes been heard in this country. That criticism assumed, because of certain treaties of which we have heard a great deal, that Italy entered into this War for purely selfish and annexationist reasons. I never believed that was true. He told me that even when the exigencies of the balance of power seemed to make it necessary for Italy to form part of the Triple Alliance, the Italian people were never pleased with that arrangement. They did not, as the Committee know, join in the War with the other members of that Alliance, and he tells me, and I believe it to be absolutely true, that the movement which brought the Italian people into this War was not a selfish interest, but a joining by them in a spiritual movement which meant their taking sides against those who were the oppressors of the world. That is my belief, and I assured M. Nitti, and I thought I could do so with confidence, that this also is the belief of the people of this country.

The only item in which expenditure has increased is miscellaneous services, and the increase there over the period is £41,000,000. The explanation of that is not difficult to give. Our estimate as to the amount to be expended on foodstuffs was limited by what we believed to be the capacity for carrying them. It was

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found, and the people of this country are now reaping the benefit of it, that there was a larger supply in the United States of bacon and other articles of that kind than had been anticipated. That material has now been brought here, and that is the explanation of this increase, and so far as this particular amount is concerned, there is every reason to believe that it will be sold and the proceeds realised before the end of the present financial year.

Now I should like to look at the whole question of deadweight and recoverable expenditure. In the figures given to me in preparing the Budget Estimate, the amount set aside for deadweight expenditure was £2,043,000,000; for recoverable expenditure, £507,000,000. Taking the 104 days, the proportion of dead-weight expenditure would have been £582,000,000, but the actual expenditure was only £547,000,000—that is to say, an amount under the estimate to the extent of £34,500,000, or £331,000 per day. Now on the assumption that the same rate continues to the end of the year, that would mean that the estimate would exceed the total expenditure by upwards of £100,000,000. I have no reason to express the hope that that result will be realised, but I have every reason to believe that there is no danger of that amount being exceeded. As regards the recoverable expenditure, the amount set aside for this period would have been £144,500,000. The amount expended was £176,500,000, a daily excess of £307,000.

I am sure the House has become accustomed to recognise the reasonableness of the way of dealing with our expenditure, and, perhaps, though it is not very complicated, it might be interesting if I explained to the Committee in a few words the system of accounts which are kept in regard to this. So far as the Treasury is concerned, it is ended when the money is paid out, and it is simply put down as an expenditure, but we realised that that was not a complete way of dealing with expenditure of this kind, and the Treasury gave instructions that accounts, such as would be kept by an ordinary business firm engaged in the same form of business, should be kept—a profit and loss account. These accounts are being kept, and most of them have been prepared up to the end of the financial year ending 31st March, 1917. Of course, as the Committee know, this system of a State business had not

reached anything like its full development at that time. The same system of accounts—and I may say that in the form of them the Government had the advantage of the advice of some very capable accountants who were giving their assistance to Government Departments—is being adopted for last year. Of course, they cannot be ready quickly, because the different spending Departments have accounts almost all over the world, and it will be some time before they can be completed, but they will be completed as soon as possible, and I can imagine no accounts which it will be more interesting to the House and to the public to see than these accounts. I cannot hold out any hope during the War that it would be proper to make these public, for obviously they must give information as to the sources of our supplies which it would be in the last degree improper to allow our enemies to see.

Mr. HARRIS: Will they be submitted to the Select Committees on Expenditure?

Mr. BONAR LAW: They are being submitted as they are got ready to the Comptroller and Auditor-General and, of course, to the Treasury, and if any other examination is necessary that will have to be considered later. But that is the system which is going on, and though I cannot say that it will be possible to make these accounts public, the Treasury is now compiling a statement of all expenditure since the beginning of the War on all the Votes of Credit, and as soon as that can be got ready, which obviously cannot be probably this year, but early in the next year, it will be presented to the House of Commons, giving all the details which can be given without danger to the public interest. As regards this system, I know that members of the Committee are a little sceptical. I hope that that scepticism is gone, but in any case there is this fact, that though we point out in one Vote of Credit after another which money is recoverable, yet the net result is that between each interval more money goes the same way, and hon. Members may be inclined to ask what is the explanation of that. It is not difficult to give the explanation. So long as the stock of the business, so to speak, is increasing it is obvious that there cannot be any net return, and the stock is increasing up to the present, and I am glad to say that I believe on this will depend to a great extent the contentment of the people of this country. It is our

hope that we will be able to increase the stocks of food throughout the whole of this year, so that there is no prospect of an immediate return of money from that source. But, of course, unless the Estimates are all falsified, it must come back when the goods are sold, and it is reasonable, therefore, to look upon it as not in the same class as expenditure on munitions, which once gone are gone for ever.

I think this is all that occurs to me as necessary to say in connection with the Vote of Credit, but there is one other subject which is, I am afraid, not strictly in order, but on which I should like to say a word or two, and I think the Committee will be interested to hear a word or two, and that is the question of borrowing in connection with the National War Bonds. The Committee know that an attempt was made to finance what it was necessary to get in that way by continuous borrowing. When I decided to adopt that course, I was very doubtful as to whether it would succeed, but I was so convinced, and so, I think, was everyone who had given any thought to the subject, that it was the best way, that I determined to give it a full trial. I am glad to say that the results have far exceeded my expectations, at least, when it was attempted. That will best be shown by a comparison with the results for 1917. The Loan floated in January, 1917, was more successful than any Loan which has ever taken place in the world, and therefore a comparison with that year is a suitable one. Taking the nine months from 1st January to 30th September, 1917, the total amount of cash received, not face value, by the War Loan was £948,459,000. During the same period War Savings Certificates were £50,550,000, and the Exchequer Bonds were £82,110,000, making for the nine months a total of £1,081,119,000. The system of continuous borrowing was begun on the 2nd October of last year, and from the 2nd October to the 27th July, a period of nine months and four weeks, the amount contributed to National War Bonds was £917,430,000. The amount of War Savings Certificates was £75,950,000, or nearly 50 per cent. more than for the corresponding period, and, in addition, there have been applications—money for which has not yet reached the Treasury—of about £35,000,000, making for this period £1,028,380,000. I think that is a result about which the Treasury has a right to be proud.

But I should like to point out to the Committee—and that is really my reason for referring to the subject to-day—that that result has not been attained without a great deal of hard work all over the country. In the first place, I think it is only right to say the bankers have given absolutely every assistance in their power. The Loan was not doing well in May. I had a meeting with the bankers, and they at once took the steps which I urged them to take in the interest of the Loan, the most important of which was to reduce the rate paid to depositors, and the result of that was immediately visible. Of course, it is to the interest of the bankers, as it is to everybody else, to help in this matter, for they realise as clearly as everyone that their credit is worth nothing unless the credit of the State is absolutely unassailable. But, in addition to that, I think we cannot speak too highly of the work of the war savings associations throughout the country. We have noticed very little of it in the London papers, naturally, but all over the country conferences have been held, a great many of which have been addressed by the chairman of the War Savings Association, Sir Robert Kindersley, and in every case they have been attended by the mayor or other leading people connected with local life, and it is largely due to their efforts that such good results have been attained.

Although I rather hesitate to mention names, I think it only fair to say—for if there is any quality of which I am rather proud it is this, that if I know I cannot do a thing myself, I try to get someone who can—we have been indebted, to an extent far greater than is realised, to the whole-hearted work which has been given in the publicity of this Loan by Mr. Sutton, who is helping the Treasury in connection with this. But we are coming now to a period when money would not naturally come in so readily, and my special object in bringing this forward is to urge upon the people of this country not only—though that is true—that by investing in War Bonds they will get a rate of interest something like $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. better than they can get safely anywhere else, but I have always found that the real way to get money is to make our people realise that in giving it they are rendering actual service to the cause in which we are engaged, and I would venture to ask any Members of the House who, from any cause, are making

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speeches during the Recess, to do what they can to stimulate the sale of these Bonds in the country.

Mr. McKENNA: I am sure we have all listened with the greatest interest to the speech made by my right hon. Friend. He has given us some extremely important figures both as regards the advances to our Allies and Dominion; and also with regard to the total of our dead-weight and recoverable expenditure. I am sorry to say that there is another side of the picture with regard to advances which we have made to our Allies—that is a picture of the advances which our Allies have made to us. I fear the day is not very remote when, while we shall be a creditor on the one side, we shall be an equally great debtor on the other. When my right hon. Friend spoke of the services which this country had rendered to the Allied cause, I felt very strongly the immense debt of gratitude which we in particular owe to the United States. I remembered my own difficulties three years ago, when a large part of these advances were made to the Allies, when we ourselves had to meet week by week the charges for immense contracts in the United States—that we had then to raise, somehow or another, about 10,000,000 dollars every working day in the year in order to liquidate our debts. At that time we were only able to borrow, for a definite period, comparatively very small sums in the United States. We had to pay for the goods we received, and the goods our Allies received on our credit, and then we had to pay, day by day, roughly, an amount of 10,000,000 dollars. We continued that task for upwards of eighteen months, and it was no light one. How infinitely relieved we ought to feel that the United States have now taken on the burden of discharge! They are meeting the cost of all our purchases and all the Allied purchases in the United States.

My right hon. Friend's task now is almost entirely limited to the task, difficult as it may be, of financing himself in this country alone. He has told us that in financing himself he has to meet an expenditure on the Vote of Credit of something over £2,000,000,000 for the year for purposes which are irrecoverable, and I think I took the figure of about £550,000,000 as expended on objects which were held, and which in due course we shall sell, and for which we shall pay. I

confess that not only now, but on previous occasions, I have racked my brains to form some sort of estimate of what the articles are on which we spend this vast sum. I have not got the figures, but, if I remember aright, at the close of the last financial year there was, on the expenditure of the year, something between £100,000,000 and £200,000,000 surplus of recoverable expenditure. There will be, at the close of the present financial year, if the present rate of expenditure continues, an additional £600,000,000, so that we shall have at the close of this financial year nearly £800,000,000 of assets, representing commodities purchased by the various Departments which will be resaleable after the War, and not merely after the War, but during the War. We none of us wish to press the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give us any information which could be of the slightest use to the enemy, but I do think it would be valuable for us to know generally under what heads those commodities are ranged. We should like to know, for instance, how much consists of raw materials, how much consists of food, how much consists of plant and machinery, and how much consists of ships. I do not believe that to give us those figures could convey the slightest information to the enemy, but it would be very useful information to this country.

It raises, in my mind, one point about which I think we may fairly ask for an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman. The Government is acquiring an immense amount of plant and raw materials of all kinds. No doubt the different Departments that hold and work this plant and own these materials have some anxiety as to the future. No doubt each Department will be desirous, if it can, of showing a good balance-sheet at the close of its dealings, and would like to have a surplus on the profit side. I am not sure it would be so much to the interest of the public as to the Department itself that the Department should be assured of finding a market for all its commodities. But the particular point that I feel anxious about is that no Department should now enter into contracts for purchases after the War. We do not want to be told, if we can help it, that this, that, or the other Controller or Minister has made engagements which are binding on this country either for the purchase or the supply of goods, except such engagements as have been reported to Parlia-

ment. For instance, we know in the case of certain engagements that we have many purchases from Australia for a period after the War. We have had notice of them, but we should be glad—at least, I myself, and I believe others, would be glad—to have an assurance that there are no other engagements, particularly engagements for the supply of commodities for any period outside the period of the War. The total, as I have said, of the recoverable expenditure is between £700,000,000 and £800,000,000. For my part, I am absolutely satisfied that all accounting questions and all ordinary business questions in regard to this recoverable expenditure are, in the main, thoroughly well dealt with. It is not so much to me a matter of surprise that there should have been, in dealing with particular commodities, some extravagance and some waste, but the surprise is that the extravagance and the waste, having regard to the immensity of the transactions themselves, have not been very much greater.

Mr. G. LAMBERT: They have been big enough!

Mr. McKENNA: They have been big enough, and in some cases they have been very reprehensible. I am not excusing them. I do not wish for a moment to excuse any case of extravagance or waste. But, when you look at the magnitude of the business, I think that, while condemning extravagance and waste, we ought also to bear in mind the very admirable work done by a very large number of public servants who have shown no extravagance and no waste, and have conducted a new business with very remarkable ability. We ought to look at the picture as a whole. I, for one, deprecate

very strongly the continuous
5.0 P.M. attacks in the Press upon the extravagance and waste of Departments, while no regard is paid to the admirable work which they and other Departments—and even some of the censured Departments—have done. We are asked to vote a very large amount on the present occasion—£700,000,000. This will last us till about the middle of December, so that, I suppose, the middle of November will be the next occasion on which we shall be asked for a Vote of Credit.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: In the middle of the election!

Mr. McKENNA: No; there can be no election. This figure, to my mind, precludes an election.

Mr. BONAR LAW: Without another Vote.

Mr. McKENNA: Without another Vote. An election would last a month, and we know it could not take place before, probably, the middle of November, and, consequently, it would be running it too fine to have an election on this Vote. I think my hon. Friend who raised that point may rest assured that unless the register is completed early in October there does not seem to be any likelihood—

Mr. LEIF JONES: Better run no risks, and take a couple of months!

Mr. McKENNA: There will not be any risks; though I am only expressing my own view. But, Mr. Whitley, whatever the amount in the service of the country, this House, I am sure, will grant this Vote, as it has all previous Votes, with an earnest determination to spare nothing in order to bring success to our cause.

Sir WILLOUGHBY DICKINSON: The two speeches to which we have just listened must have given rise in all of us to two thoughts—the first, the gigantic figures with which we are now dealing; and the second, the extraordinary equanimity with which this House faces these figures and the gigantic obligations in which the country is involved. The War has now cost us, approximately, £8,000,000,000. In four years we have expended almost as much money as the taxpayers of the United Kingdom were called upon to contribute during the whole of the last century. Nevertheless we vote the money without complaint, and, if I am not mistaken, I believe that this gigantic sum has passed through the House without a single Vote of any kind being actually recorded against it. What is the cause of this unanimity? It is because we and the British nation know that we are fighting for a great ideal, the value of which is beyond all price. I cannot do better than quote the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister in the speech he delivered on 7th June. He said:

“To-day, at this hour, there is a struggle with an idea more material, more sordid, more brutal, than almost any that has been sought to be imposed upon Europe—the Prussian military idea, with its contempt for liberty, its contempt

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for human rights, its contempt for humanity. If they were to succeed to-day, you would fling back civilisation into the dark dungeons of the past. Remember we are paying a big price for victory, a harrowing price for victory, a sad price for victory. But the dread total of human wretchedness which has been paid for victory will not equal in value what we are defending to-day. . . . The crisis is not past, but with a stout heart we shall win through, and then woe to the plague! In the interests of civilisation, in the interests of the human race, it must be stamped out. You cannot allow, the world cannot allow, it to come again to darken the lives of millions and to desolate millions of homes. That is what we are fighting for."

May I recall one more passage from the speech of the Prime Minister on 6th January:

"We are fighting for the creation of some international organisation to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the possibility of war."

That is the object for which we are fighting. It is that for which we are willing to pay this enormous price, both in millions of pounds and in the hundreds of thousands of lives which have been sacrificed. I venture to submit to the House that we ought to bear in mind that it is for this—and nothing smaller—that we are making this gigantic sacrifice. It is this—and nothing smaller—that inspires our soldiers to all their heroism. If by any chance we or they were led to think that we are paying this enormous price merely in order that France may regain Alsace, that the Trentino may be returned to Italy, that we may acquire any Imperial aggrandisement, are aiming at the enlargement of territory, or even the extension of trade, I firmly believe that the people of this country would refuse their support to any such policy. We can only maintain the *moral* of our people, and ensure the success of our arms, by holding aloft the standard under which we entered the War. I do not suggest that His Majesty's Government have at any time done anything else. I am perfectly convinced that every member of it can say with perfect good faith that we entered the War from no selfish reasons, and are prosecuting the War for no other purpose.

Whilst, however, I agree with the Prime Minister that we are out to destroy Prussian militarism, I say that we must be very careful, when we have achieved that end, so that we may not find that we have set up militarism elsewhere, and in other countries in which the curse has hitherto been unknown. We are out, as the Prime Minister said, to destroy a plague. I be-

lieve it can only be destroyed by fighting this War to a successful end. But we must fight it, I submit, with a full knowledge that we are doing something which will ultimately eradicate the evil. Almost exactly four years ago, on the day after we had declared war, I ventured to speak in this House. At that time I had been engaged for several years in trying, in co-operation with others, to bring about some pact between the nations of Europe that might even, had it been successful, have prevented this War. Those of us who laboured in that work had always found one great obstacle before them—that was the powerful military caste that had gained control over the whole of the German people. I had long been convinced that until that organisation was absolutely disintegrated, either by peaceful methods or by war, there was little hope of Germany ever subscribing to any international arrangement for the preservation of the world's peace. I held that view then, and nothing that has happened since has led me to change it. For that reason, from the moment the War began, from the moment we realised that the military power in Germany had got hold of the strings of Government, and I realised that nothing but military failure on their part could bring about a permanent peace in the world, I have personally, on every occasion, supported the Government in its endeavours to ensure military victory. I personally have never been under any delusion as to the occasional assertions that have been made by the German Government that they were anxious to set up a League of Nations, or any organisation of that kind. I firmly believe that until the idol of militarism, before which the German race bows down, has been overturned and smashed into pieces, the high priests of that divinity will never allow their position to be undermined by the creation of a League of Nations or any other device of the kind.

I know there are many people who consider that the ideals for which we contend can be won by negotiation. They may be right—I hope they are. If so, it would, of course, be criminal to continue the ghastly slaughter for any other purpose. But whether the War is ended by negotiation or by complete victory it will rest with us, and us chiefly, that is the British nation, to secure to the world the full realisation of those ideals for which we entered the War. If this War ends merely by the cessation of hostilities, and

if the nations of Europe drop back into their old relationship the state of the world will be worse than it was before, because, instead of Germany being the sole protagonist of militarism, we shall all have to join in the race. France, Italy, Russia, England, Japan, and even America will find it almost impossible to demobilise a single man. We shall have to keep our armies and our navies up to the highest possible pitch. Every nation will live in terror of its neighbour. International suspicion, mistrust, and duplicity that were the chief causes of the War will, I submit, be multiplied tenfold. The peace will be nothing but an armistice which will only last until we are all ready again to embark upon a war ten times more terrible than the present. Therefore, I think we are justified in asking His Majesty's Government what preparations they are really making to avoid this danger? So far as the Allies are concerned I believe the real answer would be, "Practically none." In fact, I am convinced that if peace were to be declared to-morrow, if the belligerents found it necessary immediately to assemble at a conference to discuss terms of peace, we should find that the German Government was better prepared with its plan for securing a world-peace than would be the Governments of the Allies.

The German plan might be incomplete. I think it is very possible it would be insincere. But anyone who knows the German character knows that the plan would be there, and would form the basis around which the discussion would range. On the other hand, the Allies would have no plan for the simple reason that they have not yet come to a prior agreement amongst themselves. We have from time to time asked the Government what progress they were making in elaborating their scheme for a League of Nations. In December of last year the Noble Lord, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated that he would not remain an hour a member of any Government who did not make an arrangement for a League of Nations after the War one of its main objects. I would respectfully ask the Foreign Secretary who, I am very glad, will take part in this Debate to-day, what steps the Government have taken to assure to my Noble Friend the continuance of his position in the Government, which he has for so long continued to occupy. I should like to draw the attention of the House to what took place in the House of

Lords the other day. Speaking in that House on the 26th of June, 1918, Lord Curzon, in the discussion on Lord Parmoor's Motion in respect to the League of Nations, used the following words:

"The noble Viscount asked me whether we are in earnest in the matter. Yes. He asked me whether we are exploring the matter. Yes; we are considering it very carefully, and shall continue to do so. Doubtless before long we shall exchange ideas with our Allies. The Noble Viscount referred, and with much greater knowledge than I possess, to what has been passing in France. He told us that there a Commission was set up some time ago by the French Government, under the presidency of a very distinguished Frenchman, which has lately reported. I see in the papers that this Report has been communicated to the Allied nations. It has not yet reached us, but perhaps it may do so at no distant date."

The Commission which Lord Curzon referred to was presided over by Monsieur Leon Bourgeois, formerly Prime Minister of France, and it included sixteen other gentlemen occupying the highest positions in political, social and judicial circles in that country. The Report, I understand, is a complete and weighty document, which sets out fully the principles which in the opinion of the Commission should govern the establishment of a society of nations. These principles were set forth in the statement and were sent by M. Leon Bourgeois to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 17th January with a recommendation that the Government of the Republic should submit them forthwith for examination and approval by the Allies, in order that there should be a full agreement in their views before negotiations for peace were begun; and also in order that the enemy Governments should not be able, in the treaty of peace itself, to introduce some Clause which had not been foreseen, and which might alter or weaken those principles of justice and right without which no real peace could be established or maintained. That Report was sent in as long ago as January of this year, and yet on 29th June Lord Curzon had to confess that all he knew about it was what he saw in the papers, and that the Report had not yet reached our Government. The Foreign Secretary, I have no doubt, will tell us that a Committee has been sitting during the last few months at the Foreign Office, and has prepared its Report. We know that; it has been stated in this House, but we know nothing definitely about the Report. We do not even know whether the War Cabinet have given it any consideration,

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and I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman what reason is there why we should not follow the same course that has been adopted in France, and refer this subject to some Commission of men outside Government Departments, who could consider the question on its broad grounds, and give advice to the Government thereon? I am sure such a course could only do good. Why do we not follow it? What is the object of hiding away all our deliberations upon this great **problem?** We cannot be ashamed of it. It has been announced by all our statesmen as the chief aim for which we are fighting in this War.

It is true that the French Government have hung back considerably in this matter, and were very doubtful in its attitude. But French opinion has ripened enormously during the past few months. There are already societies established in that country for popularising the idea of a League of Nations. The great popular organisation named the League of the Rights of Men, presided over by M. Buisson, has adopted the question as part of its main work at the present moment. In America there is a society called the League to Enforce Peace, which is presided over by ex-President Taft, has an enormous membership, and exercises a great influence throughout the whole continent. It has developed its scheme in much detail, and explored the subject in all directions. Here in this country I have the honour to be the chairman of the League of Nations Society which has also prepared the ground and elaborated its proposals in very considerable detail. I can assert to my right hon. Friend and the Government that, whatever may have been the position of the question in the early years of this War, at the present moment great masses of people in this country are rallying to the cause, and no political party will find any difficulty in attracting **the British public to this standard** if they will only have the courage to unfurl it. We must all have noticed a very remarkable article in the "Times" of this morning, strongly urging upon the Prime Minister the advisability of having a General Election on what the "Times" calls "the reshaping of our politics on lines which can be followed by Unionism, Liberalism, and Labour as a single patriotic programme," and the article continues with the words:

"We say patriotic, advisedly, because the most pestilent of current political heresies is the view that patriotism is somehow antagonistic to the highest of all the ideals which the War has brought us—the vision of a future League of Nations. No appeal to any electorate in any country can afford henceforth to ignore that vision."

If that is the view of the "Times" newspaper, which surely by this time may be expected to be the view of the Government, I believe that on this occasion the "Times" is perfectly correct—that there is no nobler vision than the people of this country are looking to than the idea that this War is to result in the establishment of a League of Nations. But if we must assert our belief in this ideal, it is the more important that we should prepare ourselves to tackle and to solve the difficulties of the problem. I do not ask the House this afternoon to give me the time that would be necessary to develop this subject in detail, but if I may say in four sentences what I conceive to be the essentials of a League of Nations, I would say:

Firstly, the League of Nations must be capable of ensuring the sanctity of treaties. In the past there have been hundreds of treaties made between different nations. Many of them have been loyally observed, others have been neglected, but in every case the observance of the treaty has depended solely on the moral sense of the national Government of the country concerned. In private life men make contracts with one another and the State enforces them. Ordinary society rests on contract; it cannot subsist without it. This War has shown that international society also cannot exist unless international contracts are made binding upon those who enter into them. There is no means of making a treaty binding upon two nations who enter into it unless the whole society of nations are willing to unite their forces to compel a nation to keep its word. Until the nations of the world can realise the cardinal fact that the peace of the world depends upon the invariable observance of international obligations no advance can be made, but I believe that when this War draws to a close humanity will have learned this lesson and will be ready to insist that the Governments of the world shall form some organisation which shall be capable of securing this result and secure the principle that international contracts must be binding by universal consent and universal assistance.

Secondly, it must be laid down that no nation may take the law into its own hands without reference to the League. It is essential to prevent the sudden outbreak of war, and, if this War has taught us nothing else, it has shown us the impotency of former arrangements to prevent sudden hostilities. The nations of the League will have to bind themselves together to restrain the disturber of the peace, whoever he may be, and whatever may be the rights and wrongs of his case. It will be in the interests of every nation to stop even the smallest war now that we know how inevitable war, once started, spreads from one country to another.

Thirdly, if the nations are to insist upon the observance of treaties, and to prevent the disturbance of peace, it will be indispensable that some judicial organisation shall be set up to deal with disputes in the same way as Courts of justice do in national affairs. The question, of course, is one of great difficulty, but it is one which must be settled. The nations of the world will have to find some means of establishing a Court of men of high distinction who will be able to divest themselves of national sentiment and to assume a position of world responsibility. We have a precedent for this in the constitution of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. When that Court was set up it was thought that it would be impossible to institute any system by which justice could be administered as between the then sovereign States of the New World. But as time passed the contrary has proved to be the case, and no Court in the world commands more respect than the Supreme Court. It is by no means impossible that when once the nations have been brought together into some league or other international organisation, the same demand for universal justice will make itself apparent, and nations which at the present consider it would be impossible to establish satisfactorily an International Court, may find in practice the task is less difficult than it appears, and that the cause of international justice will make itself apparent in international affairs as it has in other matters.

Fourthly and lastly, the nations of the League must stand together in good faith and with an earnest desire to make the League a living thing. It will have to insist upon the abolition of secret treaties and a thorough observance of good faith among its members. The process of co-

operation will tend to grow into confidence, and if we do not attempt to build too elaborate an edifice at the commencement we shall find that it will develop of itself as nations come to understand each other better. If we do not do this, I only ask what is the alternative? The alternative is too awful to contemplate. It is our duty to those who have fallen to see that their sacrifices have not been made in vain. If in twenty or thirty years hence war breaks out again, posterity will condemn, not the Germans, but us, if we fail to take the opportunity that victory will offer to us of securing permanent peace for a world that is ready to accept it.

Mr. J. H. THOMAS: First of all, I would wish to join in offering my congratulations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the very admirable and clear statement he made in moving the Vote of Credit. There are one or two observations I desire to make with reference to his speech. Whilst the Committee generally were pleased to know the importance he and the Government attached to the shipping problem, I personally feel that there is some considerable misapprehension in the country with regard to the situation. The way the figures are presented to-day of our submarine losses are calculated to deceive the great mass of the people as to the real state of affairs. It is not sufficient to say that our shipbuilding programme for the Allies as a whole has exceeded the losses. That may be perfectly true, and it is a tribute to America, but the hard fact remains that there is no problem so difficult and dangerous as that so far as this country is concerned, because not only are we not holding our own, not only is there a great net loss in shipping, but the condition of things that exists to-day is such that it enables our competitors to take advantage of the world's market, and this will be a very serious factor after the War is over. I hope the Government will realise that this is not the first occasion that promises have been made with regard to shipbuilding which, unfortunately, have not yet materialised.

I also join with the right hon. Gentleman in noting that there is a tremendous success and improvement in the War Loan. I think too much importance was attached by the Government to various statements that were being made with regard to some idea existing in the minds of labour about the repudiation of the National Debt. I

[Mr. Thomas.]

have a fairly good chance of gauging labour opinion, and I say deliberately that I have never heard of any responsible body of persons in the labour world who anticipate anything of the kind, because they realise, as I realise, that anything that would check the credit of this country, apart from the immorality of the act, would be the very means of affecting our credit, and would probably result in starvation in a very short time. Therefore, whilst that should be made perfectly clear, I also submit that a serious mistake would be made if we do not realise the artificial nature of to-day's prosperity. It is remarkable, when one deals with large masses of people, how it is assumed that money is like manna from Heaven, and can be dropped down I think—and I am sure the House generally will agree—that there must of necessity come a day of reckoning. We must realise that this prosperity is purely artificial and that no greater service could be rendered to our people and the country generally than to emphasise continually the absolute necessity of pointing out that just as it is necessary that the nation should prepare for the bad days that are ahead, so individuals should take the same precaution in their own interest and in the interests of the nation.

I was glad to note the Chancellor of the Exchequer's remarks in regard to the tendency in neutral countries, and especially amongst our Allies to minimise the great war efforts of this country, and the right hon. Gentleman put it that we ourselves were somewhat responsible for them not understanding the great efforts that this country had made. I agree, but I am afraid it is not alone that we have failed to blow our own trumpet in this matter, but it is because we have allowed for a long time other people to depreciate the value of the work done by this country. It is no good to expect neutral and Allied countries to understand all that we are doing when statements such as Lord Northcliffe made when he returned from America, when he deliberately said that American opinion was such that unless we altered our methods, then America was going to take charge of the position herself. Is that the kind of thing that is going to influence and help this country? I could quote many illustrations such as that, all of which go to prove that even to-day neutrals and Allies do not understand to the full the tre-

mendous sacrifices, valour, and heroism which the people of this country have made during the past four years, and I believe I am justified in saying that they will continue to make them in order to obtain a satisfactory peace.

That brings me at once to the primary object for which I rose to take part in this Debate. I do not believe that even to-day it is a crime to talk of peace. I do not know who is responsible for what I believe to be the most infamous of all phrases "a peace offensive." I do submit that whilst it is not a crime to talk of peace, and whilst it is our duty to talk of peace, it would be a crime to talk of an inconclusive peace. It would be a crime to talk of a German peace. It would be a crime to talk of a peace that would leave the germs of future wars. Whilst I lay no particular claim for the Labour movement or the workers, because I believe that there exists in the ranks of all classes and all people an anxiety to obtain peace if you can get it, I do submit that it is a profound mistake in regard to this policy which we see debated from time to time, to suggest that those who talk of peace are either enemies to their own country or are in the pay of the enemy or some such kind of suggestion. As my right hon. Friend suggested, I believe this War and peace is not now a question of territory. I do not believe you could get a soldier to continue to fight to-morrow or for an hour to obtain one yard of territory for the British Empire. I have no hesitation in saying that, stripped from everything else, the one guiding spirit, and one fundamental principle above all others that guided and actuated and influenced our people in 1914 and to-day is not in order to secure territory, not to promote Imperialistic aims, but to crush, root and branch, what they believe to be the cause of all war, namely, militarism.

That being so, I think that it is the duty of the Government to carefully explore the evidence that is likely to obtain that. I believe that one of the best guarantees for the future is the growing power of democracy, not alone the power and influence of the people of this country, but the power of democracy the world over. But just as I believe that that power will tend for good, so equally I believe that it is necessary for some scheme to be devised that will prevent the world having a repetition of this slaughter. I know that any talk of a League of Nations could be ridiculed by those who merely want to find fault. I

can quite conceive that any scheme will be open to a criticism of that kind. What I am going to submit is that unless we do obtain a scheme, unless there is some solution of the problem, what is the alternative? We have seen in four years the development of your submarine menace and your Air Service. You see to-day that even mere frontiers or geographical boundaries do not count owing to the development of war. If that is the position after four year's development, I ask the Committee to realise what is the possibility if we are faced with another war in fifteen or twenty years' time? Civilisation will break down, and will have failed unless we do find a solution, and I believe the only solution at this moment which is practical is a League of Nations, which I interpret as a league of free people. I think the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of the Government in the early part of the week is fatal to the success of a League of Nations. Whilst I believe that an economic boycott may be one of the most effective means that a League of Nations could use, whilst I would reserve to a League of Nations not only the power, but I believe it would be one of the formidable weapons, yet I submit if you are going to start out with the idea of a League of Nations, in order to free the world from future war or act as a safeguard to any aggressive nation, surely it is madness to start out immediately by propounding a policy that will mean economic war in the very near future, because I believe that is dangerous, and I hope the Foreign Secretary will himself deal with this aspect of the question.

In conclusion, I only desire to say that for twelve months I have never missed an opportunity of testing the feeling of the country on this question. There can be no doubt about the feeling of the people of this country, because it is not only growing, but it is to-day such that they look upon it as the only alternative to war, and I hope that in the discussion that will follow we shall not reduce the discussion to one of enemies of ours, but we should realise that everyone who approaches this question approaches it as a friend of his country, and also the friend of civilisation. The alternative, to my mind, is too horrible to contemplate, and, whilst I believe there will be difficulties at the onset in Germany coming in, I hope that in this discussion we shall frankly face the fact that a League of Nations is necessary whether Germany come in or not. It is

because I believe that this question ought to be explored, and it is because I believe that public opinion in this country and in all countries is tending in that direction, that I welcome the opportunity of making some small contribution to this Debate.

Major E. WOOD: In his concluding observations the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Mr. J. H. Thomas) struck a note which I think will find a unanimous response from all quarters of the House, when he said we should approach this question as friends of our own country, but friends, also, of civilisation. I respectfully suggest that is exactly the point of view from which all ought to endeavour to regard this subject. I am also glad to learn from the right hon. Gentleman opposite and from the right hon. Gentleman who introduced this Debate, that neither speaker had any confusion in his mind as to the relationship which the ideal of a League of Nations bears to the present situation of the War. It would be, in the judgment of all, I think, most dangerous if the ideal of a League of Nations were in any sense to get us into a position in which it would weaken the war efforts of this country; and that for this very reason, that those of us who appreciate the idea of a League of Nations are all of us painfully conscious that a League of Nations which did not include Germany would be very foolish, and a great mutilation of the ideal. On the other hand, the inclusion of Germany at the present moment in a League of Nations is so impossible and so unthinkable that it means that there must be a change in the mentality of Germany by her defeat, and, therefore, the only object for which we can rightfully strive is victory. A League of Nations, therefore, is not, and cannot be in any sense, a substitute for that victory, and I suggest to the Committee that it would be criminal folly to so regard it.

I would like to lay one or two observations before the Committee as to the light in which I see this ideal. The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken pointed out that humanity was against divisions between nations which have produced wars all over the world. Just as at different times Christian peoples have been sensible of the tragedy of the religious divisions, so, on the other hand, humanity has learned more of the horrors of war and more of the dark side of national divisions that breeds war. In both these

[Major Wood.]

spheres we are moving towards a more complete philosophy of humanity, which is becoming more and more conscious to what extent the purposes of civilisation are being thwarted, baffled, and destroyed. Therefore, that is the motive force which is behind us, and it is interesting, I suppose, to the historian to see in this ideal a restatement of the mediæval ideal of some sort of society or organisation which would be charged with the duty of preserving world order. There is a great difference between the Holy Roman Empire and the League of Nations for which we are striving. The Holy Roman Empire was in theory a single, corporate entity, and, so far, was a simpler conception than a league of free and independent nations. With this background of history behind us, in any attempt made there would be great unwisdom in endangering a magnificent ideal by any effort in the early stages to lay upon it too unfair a weight, or to lay any weight upon it, without due regard to the facts of the world in which we live. I am convinced—and this is my only excuse for introducing this passage from ancient history—that history and reflection alone show that if internationalism and nationalism are brought into conflict, then nationalism wins. For this reason, among others: that the recollection of wars is too transitory to hold its own against the facts of human nature.

There is another consideration that bears on it—that it is really a false appreciation, a false perception, as has been pointed out this morning in a newspaper article, to think of internationalism and nationalism in terms of antipathy and conflict. I would go further, and I would say that nationalism is the only possible and sane basis on which you can build a sane internationalism, for this reason: I am inclined to think that a great many of us are inclined to undervalue the importance of the part which is played by all those local associations, all those immediate loyalties that touch the hearts and consciences of human nature, which play as vehicles through which the greater loyalties and wider ideals are made articulate and are brought into individual consciousness. Every ordinary man finds it extremely difficult to translate into terms of his own conscience any very wide ideal with which he has not personal and immediate relationship. What we have to

do in everyday civil life is to work through those loyalties of the ordinary man which extend to families, villages, counties, trade unions, home, and all those other things, and out of those foundations build up loyalty to the wider national and international aims for which we are striving. There is one other reason I would suggest to hon. Members, why it is wrong to suppose that there is any conflict or antipathy between these two orders of things, nationalism and internationalism. I, as an individual, feel convinced that my nation has made a definite contribution to internationalism. It may be thought conceited, but I think that the British nation, the British race, has, on the whole, done more for civilisation than any other race in the world in the way of liberty, institutions, and in a hundred directions. If that is true, and if we have our own definite contribution to make to an international arrangement, we can only do it by being ourselves. Do not let us try to do it by being somebody else; the only way in which we can make our contribution is to be ourselves. These are the general considerations.

But I want us to face two or three facts. One is this: As I understand, the ultimate ideal of a League of Nations demands at least three things. It demands universal disarmament, it demands economic freedom, and—here I am in agreement with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—it demands arbitration. But I wish to draw the attention of hon. Members to this, that for the successful establishment of a League of Nations it demands some assurance of success everywhere. Let me explain what I mean by that. Until you can give an assurance of success in the practical working of the ideal, it is impossible to expect that nations would be willing to exchange their whole methods, the whole of the foundations of their existence, until they had actual experience of the new system to which you invite their assent. Take the question of disarmament, unless the countries of Europe can have some assurance that the whole system is going to work, when you come to the point, no country will be willing to divest itself of its ultimate guarantees of security, namely, its armed forces in the first instance. No one supposes, on the economic side, even making what allowance he will for the necessity of some international economic action after the War, that we are in sight of complete economic freedom.

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The best and only possible line of advance is to lend such support as we can, and urge it with such force as we can, to the development and recognition among the nations of the world of the duty of submitting their disputes to arbitration before going to war. It may be said that step does not take you very far. It takes you this far, that in practice it is the only practical test that I can see exists, by which you can really form an estimate of what is the worth and what may be the practical utility of a League of Nations. After it has been found working well for a term of years, then the free nations of the world will be in a condition to say: "We wished to keep our armies and navies in order to resolve these disputes, but we have learnt a better way to resolve them, and now that we are satisfied that it is not a wild scheme of fantastic dreamers, we are prepared to go further, and do the thing that we were not prepared to do until we had some practical knowledge of it."

Therefore, my conclusion is

6.0 P.M. that it is along that line we must endeavour to advance. It is by arbitration and by the influence of such international economic action as it may be necessary to take that we shall gradually work up in days to come to that state from which we shall see armies and navies as instruments of a less complete and earlier civilisation. But we are in danger of impairing and ruining the best of the ideal that we wish to see if we ask it to do impossibilities in the first years of its existence. If we do that we shall indefinitely postpone the very ideals we wish to promote.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: I do not think that will do. The hon. and gallant Member who has just sat down has given us a most admirable speech on the League of Nations, but I think he realises, as the Committee ought to realise, that any League of Nations means a definite surrender of national authority. It seems to me that the only chance to get each individual nation to sacrifice some of its natural sovereignty is at the end of this War. If we are to submit to it gradually, whether by a sort of international arbitration or by some extension of The Hague Court, then afterwards you will have all the isolation of these different countries going on and you will have no strong incentive to the whole world to make the sacrifice that is necessary to start the

League of Nations. It is no good believing that the League of Nations can come along because we all want it. The League of Nations does mean a sacrifice by England just as much as it means a sacrifice by Germany. If we are to have a League of Nations, then all sorts of questions which we regard as affecting solely our sovereignty must be discussed by all the other peoples of the world. The League of Nations is not a kindly scheme that is going to solve all our difficulties. It is a sacrifice made by every country in the hope that, by making that sacrifice, they will bring all the nations closer together in a real brotherhood. I feel certain that what the people have got to realise is that you are not going to get, and cannot get, any national advantage out of a League of Nations, and that one can only make national sacrifices for which an ideal has to be your sole reward. That is why America is such an enormous factor in this League of Nations idea. You have in America a cosmopolitan State, built up from all the *emigrés* of Europe. You have there a State upon which has been grafted all the Liberal idealisms of England in the eighteenth century, and even in the nineteenth century. You have there a nation and a President probably more imbued with idealism than has been any other nation or any other head of a State in the whole history of mankind. With this country combined with America and the American President, I believe you have a real chance of starting what they call a League of Nations, but what is really the brotherhood of man.

Do not imagine, however, that it can be made by slicing Africa between the different contestants in this War and handing over one slice to one country and another slice to another country. If a League of Nations is to do anything, then the contested areas in this world struggle will have to be handed over to the League of Nations as the only way out of the contest. It must be Alsace-Lorraine for the League of Nations and Persia for the League of Nations. It means that international rule is to take over the contested spots wherever there is conflict, and that the people who consider themselves the nation primarily responsible for that particular area will have to lose something of their responsibility. For instance, the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) urged the other night that President

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Wilson should be asked to arbitrate about Ireland—an idea which caused a cold shiver to run down the backs of the English people. We have to get accustomed to that sort of thing. Any League of Nations means that we shall have to remember that people outside the British Empire ought to have some say in how the present parts of the British Empire are to be governed in future. It is a hard doctrine to stomach. A League of Nations, if properly understood, will arouse an enormous amount of opposition. It is no good pretending that everybody accepts this idea. It is nasty medicine to take, but I believe that to swallow it is the only way out. Hon. Members who have preceded me in the Debate have spoken of the development of science in this War. I would call the attention of the Committee to the fact that the use of poisoned gas has only come in with this War. It has only had four years to develop. In fifty years' time the use of poisoned gas might be developed to such an extent that it will not be merely the unfortunate armies at the front who suffer from it, but the whole of the populations. You have an indefinite possibility of the diabolical development of new methods of warfare. It is worth making considerable sacrifices of nationalism in order to do something really effective to put down the possibility of strife in the future.

That is only one small objection. The ethical objection, of course, has always been strong, and has never been so strong as it is at the present time. I was induced to get up by the speech of the hon. and gallant Member opposite (Major Wood), because I think that idealists like the hon. and gallant Member, who bring fresh views before the House of Commons, ought to realise that they have to get over a stile, and that it is no use thinking you have got over the stile when you have put only one foot over. I, for one, want England to take a leading part in the League of Nations, because I believe the English nation is the best in the world. You have either to support a solution of this War which will end in making large parts of the map red, which shall conduce to the greatness and glory of the British Empire, which shall conduce to the possibility of building up our trade by closing our frontiers, and which shall secure to the British manufacturers special raw materials from the

other ends of the world, or you have to throw that ideal out completely and really work for a world in which all mankind will pull together. The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Mr. Thomas), that Imperial Preference would make a League of Nations difficult, is perfectly correct. I notice that President Wilson, when he spoke a year ago, said that what he looked forward to was a League of Nations which would secure free intercourse between all nations.

Major TRYON: Are they giving up their tariffs?

Colonel WEDGWOOD: That is what he suggested. Of course, we are not giving up our tariffs and they are not giving up theirs, but if we accept a League of Nations it will mean that sacrifices such as that will have to be made. You can see in this Imperial Preference what a bad effect it must have on something which is perhaps nearer to the hearts of many hon. Members here even than a League of Nations—I mean the closer alliance of the Anglo-Saxon races. If Imperial Preference is used as a weapon against America, all we have hoped for in the way of Anglo-Saxon solidarity may be seriously endangered. That is what comes from trying to make the best of both worlds—trying to get a League of Nations and also your British Empire. One or the other must go down. [Hon. MEMBERS: "No!"] Well, it will not go down, but one of them must lose weight and authority. I do not think you can bolster up both. I should prefer that we should get a League of Nations even at the sacrifice of some of the authority of the British Empire, of which I am so proud.

Mr. DEVLIN: I only intervene in this Debate for a few moments in order to express the pleasure I feel at seeing the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the Front Bench and prepared, I have no doubt, to answer any germane questions which may be put to him by hon. Members. We have not had the privilege of hearing anything like an extensive statement of his experiences in America, though I am sure every member of this Committee, however much he may differ from the right hon. Gentleman in politics, will recognise that in America he discharged the high functions which he was called upon to perform with that con-

summata tact which we know is one of his chief gifts. I am very sorry that since he came back from America he has not enlightened the House or the country as to his experiences there in meeting representative men, the descendants of all races, and especially representative Irishmen. When he went over to America, I have no doubt that he found in that great land a tremendous and passionate interest in Ireland and her difficulties, because of all the many great contributing factors in the advancement and glory of the American Republic no nation has contributed more to the building up of America than Ireland. She gave the vigour of her youth, her freshness, her buoyancy, and her native virtue to the creation of that great commercial, industrial, and intellectual power which America possesses. Most of these Irishmen, being either themselves men or the descendants of a race whose contribution to America was consequent upon the tyranny and misrule to which they were subjected at home—most of these Irishmen, deeply feeling for their motherland, were anxious to know where stood Ireland in the great world conflict in which you were engaged. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman informed his American audiences, and the various sections of men whom he met, that at the commencement of this War there was no country associated with the Empire which threw itself more enthusiastically into the War than Ireland, no country which more spontaneously responded to the call of freedom for the world, and that of no country was it said, what Lord Grey said of it on that historic evening when the House was so deeply moved by the announcement of the War, namely, that

“Ireland is the one bright spot.”

It was a curious thing for a British statesman to say, but it was a very striking and illuminating circumstance. When the statesmen of this Empire, of all parties, made the momentous announcement that this country was to take part in the great War the leader of the Irish people declared that Ireland would associate herself with that action. What was the reason that inspired the late Mr. Redmond to take up that attitude? It was because he, and we who were his colleagues and followers, were convinced that this was not in name but in spirit, and in reality a war on behalf of the rights of small nationalities. The Irish in America, believing that, rallied to the standard

when the appeal was made to them, and large bodies of Irishmen came to the right hon. Gentleman and asked him, Where did Ireland stand amongst all these small nationalities? Was she to be free? Was she to be given the right of self-determination in the conduct of her domestic policy? Was this guiding and inspiring principle of freedom for all peoples to decide their own destinies according to their own will to be applied to all the small nations in Europe, but to be detached from the programme when Ireland's name was mentioned? I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman told them the problem was a difficult one. The situation was of such tremendous complexity that it was hard for British statesmen to grapple with it, but I have no doubt he also told them that he would do his best to have this canker rooted out, and some attempt made to establish this principle in some form which won Ireland to the War when the War was first begun. What has the right hon. Gentleman done to contribute towards that settlement? How far has he kept his promise, which I have no doubt he gave, and is not ashamed of having given, that he would do his best to see that some settlement was arrived at? After all, you owe it to the Irish in America who have rallied to the standard so splendidly.

Thirty-three and a half per cent. of those who are fighting in the Army or the Navy of the American Republic are Irish Catholic Home Rulers, people who passionately love their native land, and you do not expect that they who have gone into this War on behalf of small nationalities like Belgium, Montenegro, and Serbia, are not made very unhappy, to say the least of it, and do not feel that there is something wrong somewhere when Ireland is denied the right of self-determination and when you refuse to establish in Ireland that principle which seemed to be the inspiring purpose when you entered this War. We often hear complaints made that the war aims of the Allies are not restated and repeated. But there is one war object of the Allies which, according to President Wilson, is the greatest of all the purposes for which this War is being waged. He states first of all the objects and purposes for which the War is waged and why America came in, and he says she does not seek territory. We know that. We know also that this

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country is not in the War for territory. Here is President Wilson's declaration. He says:

"What we seek is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organised opinion of mankind."

But we have not in Ireland the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed. We have a reign of law maintained by the most indefensible militarism that is to be found in all Europe to-day. We have not the consent of the governed, because Ireland is denied the slightest voice in the determination of the most infinitesimal question either of government or administration. The reign of law based on the consent of the governed: That is a magnificent and an inspiring principle. Why is it not put into operation in Ireland? Then with an almost complete prescience President Wilson goes on to say and I know no better picture of the Irish situation—

"These great aims cannot be achieved by debating and seeking to reconcile and accommodate what statesmen may wish with their projects for balances of power and for national opportunities."

The only reason why in Ireland we have not the reign of law sustained by the consent of the governed is because statesmen in this country are engaged in the task of accommodating themselves to circumstances and of balancing opportunities. To tell me that you cannot put the principles in operation, which is the very foundation upon which your whole case is laid before the conscience of mankind because it is difficult, is publicly to admit the bankruptcy of statesmanship, which I decline to believe. The question how to determine a problem of this character is not a new thing at all. You have had the same problem to deal with in other lands. You had it in South Africa and you have been well repaid for your attempt to solve it there. Why is it not tried in Ireland?

When this War was in the minds of the Irish people—a fight for law, based upon the consent of the governed—Ireland loyally and enthusiastically supported you. If Ireland since then has become tepid, if, as I think, a small element only has become hostile, if it were even true, which I do not believe it is, that there were German plots in Ireland, I think that is more an indictment of you than it is of Ireland. I know a good deal about Ireland. I know all the things that you can

blame Ireland for. But there is one thing I deny emphatically and fiercely, and that is that there is any substantial section, or, in fact, any section at all, even of the most extreme Sinn Feiners, who are pro-Germans. Ireland was asked to give of the best of her race, and in the early stages of the War did give of the best of the race. Three thousand five hundred of my Constituents responded to the call which I made to them by constant pleading. Most of them are now dead. Does anyone believe that Ireland, which has contributed these men, has not to her record, however much you may misrepresent us before the world to-day, a story of imperishable and superb courage and heroism on the field of battle, during which Ireland has written perhaps one of the most golden pages in the record of courage, fighting spirit, and self-sacrifice? And yet you tell us you want men, and we tell you how you can get them, and you will not give us the means by which you can get them. After all, human nature is human nature. You need not get up into the air when you are looking at this question. You must come down to the concrete bedrock of fact, and the concrete bedrock of fact is that while the people of Ireland believed that the War was for law based upon the consent of the governed, they rallied in numbers and in character—because character counts just as much as numbers in a fight of this sort—as no other part of the Empire rallied during the first two or three years of the War. How can you taunt Germany or Austria or any of the countries that constitute the Central Powers with waging war against small nationalities without being called a hypocrite and a pharisee? How can you go to the world and say, "We are really fighting for small nationalities and for the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed"? Therefore it is incumbent upon the right hon. Gentleman to answer this plain question: Is that the purpose for which you are carrying on this War? I believe in the main that is the purpose. I believe the British people would not support this War unless they believed that. But why should there be an exception, and why should that exception alone be the country which you control?

It may be you are afraid of the experiment, but you tried the experiment in South Africa, and we know what was the result. The Minister for Mines in South Africa, at a dinner to him the other even-

ing, related the story of a wounded soldier in hospital—I think in Cape Town—who said to a visitor, “My one great and passionate desire is to get well and strong again in order that I may go over and take my stand in France or in Flanders and fight the battle of that Empire which conceded freedom to my country. If England had refused to give us freedom, I never would have raised a hand.” That sentiment was enthusiastically cheered by the Minister for the Colonies, by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain), by General Sir Maurice Sankey, and by a number of Unionist Lords and Commons. Why should not the same principle be admitted in Ireland? How can you expect men to fight for the liberties of small nationalities if you refuse to give Ireland the right of self-determination? “The observance of law based upon the consent of the governed.” You cannot get away from that principle. It will ring in your ears. You will be taunted with it not only now, but in the future, and it will haunt you at the gates of the Peace Conference. Therefore we are entitled to have war aims restated. If we entered loyally and enthusiastically into this War in support of the Allied cause at the commencement, if we gave unexcelled material value, we want the Allied position restated in order that we may continue to give such help as you may require from Ireland. Secondly, I understand that this is a war against militarism. What have we in Ireland to-day but militarism? It is all very good for you to say that it is merely done to stamp out sedition. Nothing of the sort. This militarist war is being waged upon every section and every element in the country. Gaelic football matches, concerts, and dances are affected. When did it become disloyal to dance? The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Balfour) has some sense of humour. Even when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland that never failed him. When did it become disloyal to dance? We were taunted by the Prime Minister that we did not speak our own language, and the country, feeling that it deserved the rebuke, immediately started a series of Gaelic festivals, but the military governor immediately put the closure on Gaelic, which showed that the Prime Minister is not master in his own household. I am not a pro-German; I got more recruits for the Army than the Chief Secretary has done, and yet when I come to the House of Commons I must ask for a passport, and I cannot get out of it unless

I am granted a passport. Unless I apply at the police barracks for a passport I cannot get back to Ireland. They are so fond of us here that they compel us to get a passport before we can leave.

Sir E. CARSON: It is dull when you are away!

Mr. DEVLIN: I hope that is not the only reason why the right hon. Gentleman keeps us here. I am very glad to be in the House when he is in it, but that does not make me so fond of the House that I want to remain here in preference to going to an Irish Parliament. We, the representatives of the Irish people, are ordered to get passports. It has made me wonder what is happening in this country. Before democracy secured the power that it has to-day, before it had a Labour party when we were the only Labour party, before it had a Liberal party—I do not know whether it has such a thing at the present time—and when it had a Liberal party with much narrower views of democracy than it has to-day, they would never have tolerated for one moment this outrage upon the liberties of this House—the only place where men can speak the things that they feel. How can they for one moment tolerate the insult put upon Members of this House, even though they are the Irish party, by compelling them to get passports? Even before we are allowed to address our constituents in Ireland we have to get leave from the police. Is this whole propaganda against sedition, or is it against liberty? Is it for this that we are to fight in Flanders and in France? Is it for the perpetuation of this system of Government in our country that we are to subscribe to a doctrine of upholding the law sustained by the consent of the governor? The whole thing is a farce. Constitutionally and democratically it is a farce. To Ireland it is a tragedy and it will be tragedy to you, because you cannot settle this question by handcuffing public opinion, by putting a gag into the mouth of public men, by trying to drive discontent under the surface. You cannot settle the Irish question in that way.

Above all, you cannot suppress the in-suppressible spirit of nationality that has burned through all the ages. There are gentlemen here who would probably scorn when I talk about Irish nationality, even at the bare idea of talking about such a thing, and yet they are the upholders of nationality. Everyone is to have nation-

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 ality but the Irish. Everyone is to have freedom but the Irish. Every nation is regarded as a small nation rightly struggling to be free so long as it is not Ireland. And then you ask us why we are not in the War, and you attack us and say we have not done the right thing, and you send your propagandists to misrepresent us throughout the world. These are things that cannot be denied. Therefore I invite the right hon. Gentleman to tell us precisely where we stand upon this principle laid down by President Wilson. Is that still one of the purposes of the Allies? Is it the chief purpose of the Allies? Does President Wilson speak for England? Is this the voice of the British Government as well as the voice of the American Republic? Is this the declaration of the chief war aim in which all these nations are engaged? If so, why is Ireland not included in the small nations that are to be free and where law is to be established and sustained.

Mr. A. WILLIAMS: Like the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, I fear that if the Irish question goes on as it is now that it certainly will meet us when we come to arrange terms of peace, and it certainly will be very difficult and humiliating for this country when we come to establish a League of Nations, for which I believe we are fighting much more than for anything else. I believe that the people of these Islands are determined to settle this Irish question, and that we shall settle it without leaving it over to be a humiliation to us or having to invite interference from other nations. I desire to concern myself with the subject with which we began the Debate this afternoon—the formation of a League of Nations for the maintenance of international right after this War. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyne (Colonel Wedgwood) expressed a different view from that put forward by the hon. and gallant Member for Ripon (Major Wood), who said that the power of the League of Nations would grow, and that the first thing we had to do was to establish peaceful means for the settlement of disputes. I could have wished that my hon. and gallant Friend had put the matter a little more strongly. Nevertheless, I am convinced that in the main he is quite right, and that we must be content to get the League of Nations into

being with the object of settling disputes and preventing aggression and war, and we must trust to the future as to the further developments. My hon. and gallant Friend (Colonel Wedgwood) spoke of the necessity of each of the States giving up part of their sovereignty, and the League of Nations becoming a sort of trustee for Persia, Alsace-Lorraine, Mesopotamia, and I do not know what else. He spoke of the British Empire weakening in proportion as the League of Nations strengthened. I think those opinions are speculations as to the future on which we can form no valid opinion at the present time, and that putting them forward in that way is a very great hindrance to the doing of what is practicable at the present time, and that is to form a pact of co-operation among the nations which will still remain to all intents and purposes sovereign. It is easy to say that a man who enters into a contract to perform certain service sacrifices part of his personal liberty. Theoretically it may be so, but practically it is not so. Practically he remains a free man.

The nations that enter into such a League of Nations as I contemplate will, for all practical purposes, remain sovereign nations, although they will have entered into a contract with one another to settle disputes among themselves. I will quote a very great historical precedent. Something more than 600 years ago the nucleus of the Swiss Federation was formed, when the three cantons of Ulrich, Weiss, and Unterwalden came together and made a very simple agreement, which is still extant. The said, considering the evil of the times, they had agreed together that if any one of them was attacked from the outside they would all stand together for mutual defence, and that if any disputes arose between their citizens, some of the most prudent men of the free cantons would come together and try to settle those disputes. That was a League of Nations, and that, I believe, is the kind of League of Nations we have to establish now. It has grown with the centuries into a much larger matter. It has become a confederation of united nations with more than twenty cantons. No man can set limits to what a League of Nations would develop into in the future. The practical thing for us to do now is to form it, and I think that putting forward dreams of

the future is only likely to debar people from doing what is practicable at the present moment.

This Motion has been brought on because we desire to see that in this matter, to use a vulgarism, the Government gets a move on. The Government in the other House has accepted the principle of the League of Nations and a Resolution pledging it to this question. We are very anxious to know what the Government is doing to establish the principles upon which they are going to work. We should very much like to know what the Committee they told us of some time ago has done. What are their views in regard to this League of Nations? We talk very vaguely about the League of Nations, but if we are to do anything practical we must be quite clear in our mind as to what the League of Nations is to be, what its functions are to be, who are to be its members, and when it is to begin. On all these things I take it that the Government, having had a Committee at work for a good many months, must have developed ideals, and I think it is most important that they should give us their views. It has been very well said by no less a person than Viscount Grey that in a matter of this sort it is not the sign manual of princes or statesmen that counts, but it is the support of the intelligent and informed democracies of the world. I should very much like to hear that the Government are prepared to give information which would help to educate the people of this country on this great principle. I should like to see established a joint committee, representing this country, the United States, and France, to form a definite plan which would be acceptable to these three nations and which might then be laid by them before their Allies. We all know that a scheme has been worked out in this country and in the United States. The scheme in the United States is that of a very celebrated society called the League to Enforce Peace. It has a very bad name, but it is a very celebrated society. It is under the Presidency of ex-President Taft. It has got a very definite programme, and I would like to know whether the Government are prepared to accept it. It proposes that the United States should join with other nations and bind themselves on three main things: First, to submit all disputes which they cannot settle amongst themselves either to an international tribunal or to a council of reconciliation,

according to the nature of the dispute, for hearing and, if possible, for peaceful settlement; second, to agree not to make war before such submission or after such submission until, say, twelve months have been allowed for a complete hearing; and, third, to use all their forces, whether economic or military or any other force, against any member of the League which violates such an agreement. That is the League of Nations in its simplest elements. I should think that the nations would be ready to go somewhat further than that, and to undertake that they will, at any rate, agree to accept the judgment of the tribunal on all questions of international law—those questions which distinctly arise out of a treaty or out of some accepted principle of international law. If the right hon. Gentleman, who is, I believe, going to speak, will tell us something on those lines how far the Government will agree, how far it is prepared to go, it would be exceedingly valuable in educating the people of this country.

There is, perhaps, one other point on which he might say something—that is with regard to the proposal which has been put forward by influential people in this country that a League of Nations should not be formed merely at the end of the War, but should be formed now, during this War, among the Entente Powers. That is a proposal on which I, personally, have quite an open mind. It has been before those of us who have been considering the matter from the very beginning, when we began to discuss the matter more than three years ago. It has, of course, evident advantages. The Entente Powers are already united for certain purposes. It would be a comparatively easy matter to bind them into this League of Nations with machinery which does not now exist for settling any disputes which may arise among them. It would probably be a very popular thing in the country, and excite a great deal of enthusiasm. On the other hand, the question arises whether it would be a dangerous thing, whether it might not lead to the break-up of Europe into two rival leagues and two hostile camps. This is certainly one of the questions which the Government will have to consider, if they have not already considered it. There are many other aspects of the matter to which I could refer, but we have had a long Debate and I do not wish to prolong it. If we go into this matter without dreaming, without expecting impossibilities, but

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at the same time with courage and a determination that something in the nature of a League of Nations must be set up if we are to avoid the destruction of our civilisation by the recurrence of such wars as this, and worse wars than this, I believe that we shall achieve great things for which future generations of mankind will have cause to bless us. I hope that we shall hear from the right hon. Gentleman some words to encourage us in this course, and some words which will give us more instruction as to what the Government are doing, what our Allies are doing, and what we may expect them to do in the immediate future with regard to this matter, which will not brook delay unless we are to find ourselves as unready for peace when it comes as we were unready for war when it came.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Balfour): I think that everyone will admit that the Debate to which we have listened has been very interesting. It has shown, if it has shown nothing else, great unanimity amongst men of all creeds and parties in favour of some organisation or the creation of some machinery by which the horrors which the world is now suffering may be spared to our children. The only, I will not call it jarring note, but the only observation made outside the theme on which we are engaged was contained in the speech of the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Devlin), a speech which certainly so far as I was concerned was couched in most courteous terms, and which from that point of view, or indeed from any point of view, had it been delivered on a more fitting occasion, would have met with no complaint from me. And I make no complaint even on this occasion, but I think that the hon. Gentleman will be prepared to admit that while every other hon. Member who spoke confined himself to the League of Nations, and to topics intimately connected with it, the hon. Gentleman went over the field of Irish grievances and gave us his version of Irish history. Frankly that version is not one which commends itself to my historic sense. I do not think that it is true of the history of Ireland taken as a whole. I do not think that it is in the least true of Irish history taken during the last generation, and I do not think it is true with regard to the action of the population of Ireland since this

War began. Does the hon. Gentleman really expect the House to believe that from the beginning of the War Ireland, inflamed by the greatness of the cause for which the Allies were fighting, threw herself, in the early stages, with special and exceptional enthusiasm into that great cause, and not only vied with England and Scotland in coming to the rescue of civilisation, but even surpassed England and Scotland in the magnitude of her efforts, and that this state of mind was only put an end to by the ineptitude or want of administrative consideration shown by the British Government?

Mr. SWIFT MacNEILL: By its treachery!

Mr. BALFOUR: I am the last person to underrate or undervalue the valour of Irish soldiers, which has been shown in countless wars, and I am the last man to undervalue the services which Irish soldiers have rendered in this War. They have shown themselves very gallant fighters, and all of us are ready to recognise the contribution which they have made to the forces of the United Kingdom. But the hon. Gentleman really must not expect us to agree with his estimate, not of the quality of the effort, but of the magnitude of the effort which has been made by Ireland prior to the unhappy events of 1916. Since 1916 Ireland has not contributed anything like the number of volunteers to the British Army which has been contributed by other parts of the United Kingdom. Since then she has contributed little or nothing, and I do not believe that it would be in the power of any Irish orator, however eloquent, to persuade either an English or a Scotch or an American audience, even if the American audience were composed entirely of men originally of Irish extraction, that the share which Ireland has taken in this great contest is worthy of the best spirit which Irishmen have so often shown. But the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not go further into this topic. I thought that he dragged it unnecessarily into a very peaceable Debate on the League of Nations, and perhaps to the League of Nations he will now permit me to return.

We have had speeches from several Members, all of them interesting, all of them showing the greatest zeal for a great cause; and yet while I have listened to those speeches, one and all with the

deepest attention, with sympathy and with admiration, I cannot honestly say that I have extracted from them many suggestions for carrying out a League of Nations or many practical methods by which the objects which we all have in view can be attained. My right hon. Friend who began the Debate told us, if I remember rightly, that the business of the League of Nations was to enforce treaties and to prevent wars. For that purpose he hoped to see established, as I understood him, a kind of supernatural Court of justice, in relation to which the various nations would be as the various States in America are to the Supreme Court of America; and he told us that this Court would administer justice, would secure the enforcement of contracts between nation and nation, and would prevent public wars, as Courts of law in a civilised country enforce contracts between the citizens of that country, and prevent the rude methods of personal violence by the use of legal methods carried out by the police. That is just one of the points where it breaks down.

It is quite easy to imagine a Court representing all the nations—a Court which would have the same relations to nations that the Supreme Court in America has to the States in America. But the Supreme Court of America, which my right hon. Friend truly said was a Court of as high authority as any Court in the world, is a Court whose decrees are enforced from one end of the United States to the other, and has behind it the organised police of the United States, and my right hon. Friend forgot to tell us where an international police was to be found likely to enforce the contracts between one nation and another, and to see that any default of public justice in international dealings should be forbidden. He must have felt, I think, himself, when he was developing this scheme of his for the enforcement of treaties, that it did want the basis on which all enforcement of contracts in a country rests—that is, that it had not behind it the power of the law to enforce the decision of the Court. My right hon. Friend finished, if I remember rightly, by making an appeal to the Government to have an inquiry into this subject—an inquiry which would be carried out by a different body of men from those who carried out the inquiry of which my Noble Friend and others have spoken in this House. My right hon. Friend in his speech appeared to

suppose that the Committee which the Government set up to investigate this subject was a Departmental Committee.

in the sense in which the word
7.0 P.M. “departmental” is sometimes used, namely, that it is a Committee composed entirely of Civil servants, and looks naturally at the question from that particular point of view. But that is not in the least the manner in which this Committee was set up. It is a Committee on which international law and history were most powerfully represented, and if erudition and impartiality are sufficient qualifications, and if knowledge of the course of history in connection with problems of this character is a qualification required by members of the Committee, I can assure my right hon. Friend that the Committee whose Report is in existence, but is not yet published, in my judgment was very well chosen, and I may say that without prejudice, because I was not responsible for it. The next contribution to the Debate was from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Thomas). He made a very able and interesting speech, to which I listened with very great attention. The point on which I think he specially dwelt was the danger which, in his judgment, lies in anything in the nature of an economic war after the end of this great struggle, which he said, and said, I think, with great truth, might destroy the whole effect of the League of Nations, and, indeed, make a League of Nations impossible. My right hon. Friend said, and I was glad to hear him say it, that the economic weapon was a weapon which must not be neglected. If that weapon is indeed required, as I am afraid it is, to see that the League of Nations is something more than a mere Court issuing its decrees without any power of seeing that they are carried out, unquestionably the economic weapon is one which the League of Nations cannot afford to disregard entirely. My right hon. Friend seemed to hint that that weapon would be used, or misused, for tariff differentiations, if any interruption took place in the absolutely free interchange of goods as between every industrial community in the world. I think if my right hon. Friend reflects on the matter he will see that he carries the doctrine much too far. It is perfectly true that the economic weapon may be used in a manner which would produce oppressive effects, differing in degree more than in kind from the oppressive effects of an

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economic character produced by foreign invasion. At this very moment the Germans have imposed upon the nations the subject of their will economic arrangements which are as destructive of liberty, as inimical to the proper relations between nation and nation, as full of the seeds of future wars as any of the military outrages which Germany has inflicted upon—

Mr. THOMAS: Ukraine!

Mr. BALFOUR: Ukraine and Roumania, and I would not confine it to them. When we come to discuss that it will be found that the German intentions of an economic character are inimical to all nations which come under her control. Therefore, so far I agree that the economic weapon—the power of imposing tariffs in certain cases—may be so misused as to amount to a very great international outrage. But I do not think that any country will consent to abandon the idea of putting on tariffs if its own economic needs, honestly and moderately conceived, require that to be done. My right hon. Friend is justly entitled to speak for the great organised industries of this country, but I do not believe in the long run that labour in this country would consent to give up its power of dealing, if necessary, by tariffs with the economic problems which may arise. If no doubt there was universal Free Trade, enforced by some Court of law, it might, it certainly would, add to the wealth of the world, and might not greatly injure their populations. But I venture to think that that proposition is driving the abstract economic theory to impossible limits. However that may be, I think the plan which my right hon. Friend indicates is one which he would not find communities would assent to. It would be impossible, among other things, because so many countries must have tariffs in order to find revenue to carry on the work of the country. They depend on tariffs rather than on internal taxation, and could not possibly, without the power of putting on tariffs, provide the necessary financial needs of their various Exchequers. Again, I have to say I think my right hon. Friend is open to the criticism that he, no more than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North St. Pancras, suggested what the true method or true sanction was for carrying out any arrangement that may be made

by an international Court. I do not think my right hon. Friend contributed to the solution of that problem any more than those who preceded him in the Debate or those who succeeded him.

The hon. and gallant Member for Ripon (Major Wood) made a speech of a very abstract and very interesting character, marked, as I thought, by a very noble and interesting idealism. He again told us that the League of Nations could only succeed if there was general disarmament, if there was universal freedom of trade, if there was universal arbitration, and if everybody believed in the success of those methods. I thought that last proviso showed that my right hon. and gallant Friend had clearly apprehended, as, indeed, his whole speech showed, what the difficulty of his scheme was. The scheme is based on universal disarmament. Universal disarmament can only be tolerated by States which believe that they are secure from invasion, and they will not believe that they are secure from invasion unless and until they feel confidence in the international arrangement which is to stop war. So that the whole scheme, I will not say moves in a circle, but depends upon people having a conviction that their scheme will succeed, and that conviction is based upon the fact that there is universal disarmament, while universal disarmament could only take place in the event of their being persuaded that the machinery for keeping the peace of the world is going to be successful.

Major WOOD: What I tried to suggest was, if you could, in the course of years, show the successful working of international arbitration, that would be the best basis on which you might ultimately be able to proceed to the other.

Mr. BALFOUR: I am not quite sure that I apprehend that when my hon. and gallant Friend was speaking. His idea, as I understand it, is that there shall be universal arbitration, and when experience has shown that universal arbitration is successful in stopping all war, then nobody would go to the cost of preparing armaments, either offensive or defensive, which would henceforth become unnecessary. Therefore, my hon. and gallant Friend's scheme entirely depends on universal arbitration. I am a great believer in arbitration. I have had to deal, and at this moment am dealing, with schemes of special treaties for arbitration between different nations. Wherever I

can, I encourage arbitration. But if you are going to have treaties of arbitration to stop all wars, you must extend to subjects on which arbitration is universally admitted to be extremely difficult, I do not say wholly impossible, but extremely difficult. But nations that do not want to keep the peace will not be bound by these treaties of arbitration, and will not enter into them. I believe at this moment I am right in saying that Germany has never at any time agreed to enter into any treaty of arbitration with any nation. No doubt the spirit of the world may change. Even Germany may make treaties of arbitration or enter into schemes of arbitration with other nations. The problem we are faced with is what you are going to do with a recalcitrant country before this general change of international opinion comes—a change which we all hope for, and which I personally am inclined to believe is destined some day to dawn on the world; certainly it has not dawned yet, and certainly, as far as we can gauge German opinion, it shows no sign of dawning. Many Germans no doubt repent the error of ever having gone into the War. Many regret that peace was broken in 1914, but I have not yet seen any sign of any German, whatever his views may be about the rights or wrongs of this War, who genuinely looks forward to a time when armies will be unnecessary, when fleets will be useless, and when all the States will live together in natural amity, uncoerced and unfeared of coercion by others. I do not see that my hon. Friend's most interesting speech really contemplates any remedy for our present ills, which is to have effect for many years after the War or until there has been a general change in the views of mankind.

Mr. THOMAS: Will not the experience of the War have taught all mankind that?

Mr. BALFOUR: I earnestly hope that it will, but I must frankly say, looking round the world and trying to understand the psychology of many of the nations, not necessarily or chiefly the greater nations of the world, that I have seen that they are quite as ready to quarrel with each other at this moment if they get the chance as the most ambitious and the greatest of their predecessors or contemporaries. However, I do not think my right hon. Friend can count upon this War having as yet produced a universal change of heart. What it has done has

been to convince nations that war is a very expensive, costly, bloody, cruel, and brutal thing. It has not convinced them yet, I am sorry to say, that it is a thing that ought to be thrust aside as beyond argument, and that two great States ought no more to fight with each other than a civilised man knocks his neighbour down if he happens to jostle against him in the street. I do not know that any of the other speeches that have been made in this Debate, interesting as they are, require special consideration, but one observation I may perhaps be allowed to make in this connection. I am one of those who, while keenly alive to the difficulties of the subject, are most firmly convinced that something of the sort must be done and that civilisation will be bankrupt, will have proved itself utterly incompetent to carry out the duties which it recognises itself are its duties, unless it can within a measurable time evolve some methods which will prevent a repetition of the world catastrophe under which we are all groaning. Therefore, I am one of those who are prepared vehemently to preach, and to the best of my ability I have preached, the doctrine of the League of Nations. There are those who think, I believe, that enthusiasm for a League of Nations has some connection with what is now technically known as pacifism in this and in other countries. As a matter of fact, it is just the other way.

Some of the speakers this afternoon have dwelt upon a point that I am now going to urge. I have myself, not in this House but elsewhere, at considerable length, tried to press it upon the attention of my countrymen. The point is this: A League of Nations, broadly speaking, is designed to maintain the territorial *status quo*. If the territorial *status quo* is inherently unjust, if it is of a kind which cannot conduce to stable relations and the peace, no machinery which you can devise will be strong enough to coerce or compress the forces with which mankind will have to deal. You must do your best to see that the world, as reconstituted after the War, is a world in which the territorial *status quo* is a tolerable and possible state of things. I do not think that you will be able to carry that out completely, because nothing, unfortunately, can ever be carried out completely; but that is what you ought to aim at, and those who say that the Entente Powers and America are fighting for causes so great that they can

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hardly be expected to attain them, and at the same time say that America and the Entente Powers should set to work and devise a League of Nations, are really supporting two mutually inconsistent and contradictory hypotheses. The man who is a genuine believer in a League of Nations is, or ought to be, if he understands his own doctrine and if he knows what political consistency is, a most ardent advocate of pressing this War to a successful issue. It is by the success of this War, and only by the success of this War, that future wars can be prevented. It is by the success of this War, and only by the success of this War, that you can hope to establish a condition of things in Europe and the rest of the world in accordance with the principles of public morality and general enlightenment, and to stabilise by machinery which from the nature of things it would be the business of a League of Nations to set up. Therefore, I do earnestly press upon all those who believe, as I do, that civilised mankind must set itself to work to see that nothing of what we are now suffering should ever be suffered again—those are the people to whom I appeal with the greatest confidence, and those are the people whom I feel I ought to be able to convince—that any weakening of our war aims at this moment is a crime, not merely against national pride and national ambition, however noble, but is a crime against those very principles of general peace which we all wish to see established when this War comes to a successful termination.

Mr. McCURDY: I should like to express the great satisfaction with which I have listened to the speech of the Foreign Secretary. He has expressed in his own manner the concurrence of the Foreign Office and of the British Government in the idea of a League of Nations. There was, however, nothing in his speech or in any of the speeches to which I have had the pleasure of listening to-day which struck me so forcibly as a passage which I read in a leading article in the "Times" newspaper this morning. With remarkable judgment and acumen, they pointed out to the Government that in no programme that is laid before the electors of this country at the next election, whether it comes early or late, will it be possible to leave out this idea of a League of Nations. I venture to suggest that when that election comes and when speakers

on behalf of the Government are addressing the electors of the country, they will find it necessary to expound the doctrines not merely in the philosophic language of the Foreign Secretary but in the more popular terminology of some of his colleagues in the other Departments of the State. This is a popular idea. One gets a very false idea of what the League of Nations movement is going to be before this War is over from listening to such a Debate as we have had in this House this afternoon. We listen to discussions about schemes for arbitration, and we listen to discussions as to what are the possible sanctions to secure the performance of the obligations which will be entered into by members of the league, but we lose sight of the broad human aspect of the problem. The people of this country at large are not interested in these juristic and legal aspects. They regard the League of Nations as a policy put forward by the President of the great western Republic, not yet fully or adequately explained, but which they believe and trust does contain within it some method and some principle by which their children are to be spared any possible repetition of the sacrifices both in blood and treasure which they have been called upon to bear.

I would venture to suggest not merely a more popular view of the League of Nations than any with which he has so ably dealt this afternoon, but also perhaps a truer idea. The essential idea of a League of Nations should not be the establishment of systems of arbitration, and should not be the undertaking of contractual obligations on the part of a number of Powers with regard to a great number of subjects, but should, as its basis, be confined to the simple proposition that it is a league of peoples who are sincerely convinced that war is not merely, in the language of the right hon. Gentleman, "expensive, costly, cruel, and brutal," but is wrong and indefensible, and who are agreed together upon the one thing that they will not, so far as they are concerned, resort to that indefensible method of prosecuting their diplomatic claims, however just, but will combine together, as Viscount Grey has said, to stamp out any attempt on the part of any aggressive Power to resort to war for its own purposes as men would combine to stamp out a plague. Once you look at the idea of a League of Nations in that simplified form you get rid of one difficulty which has puzzled a great many people

and which has been referred to more than once this afternoon. Is it true to say that we cannot ask the Powers to join in a League of Nations without asking them to make the serious sacrifice of their national sovereignty. If I am right in the broad outlines which I have drawn of the principles upon which a League of Nations should be founded, surely it is no great derogation of national sovereignty to renounce the right to do what is obviously wrong, the right to enforce your demands not on any principle of equity or justice, but merely on the ground that you are possessed of larger armies or larger navies than the neighbour with whom you have a difference to settle. And if, further, it be regarded as a limitation of sovereignty that we should respect our treaties and observe our treaty obligations, that renunciation must also be cheerfully made.

I am fully aware that so far as Germany is concerned there must be a renunciation of long-standing principles of German statesmanship and statecraft before they could possibly become honest and acceptable members of any League of Nations. They must repudiate the doctrine so plainly laid down by Trietschke, that no Sovereign Power can bind its future by a treaty. In every treaty made by Germany is reserved the implication that, as Germany has at all times the absolute right to declare war, and as the declaration of war *ipso facto* abrogates all treaties, there is in every German treaty the implied right that it can be renounced by Germany at her pleasure. Germany has got to renounce and repudiate these devil's doctrines before there can be any question of her entering a League of Nations at all. Looking at the matter again from the simple standpoint, that in the first place it is an agreement to regard aggressive war as a crime—not merely as a crime but as the worst crime which rulers or governors can perpetrate against a long-suffering humanity—the question of sanctions, which also troubles a good many minds, I think becomes somewhat simplified. I should venture with the utmost diffidence to express an opinion upon a point of constitutional law which seemed to differ from that expressed by the right hon. Gentleman, and yet there was one passage in his speech this afternoon from which I feel compelled to differ. It was the passage in which he drew the analogy between the League of Nations

and the Supreme Court of Justice in the United States, and asked where in the League of Nations is to be found the equivalent of the police Court which, as I understood him, he regarded as the sanction which stands behind the decrees of the Supreme Court of Justice. The late Lord Parker, whose death all friends of the cause of the League of Nations most deeply deplore, delivered, if I may respectfully say so as a tribute to his memory, perhaps the finest speech that has been delivered on the subject since this War began in a recent Debate in the House of Lords. I venture to say that Lord Parker clearly disposed of that suggestion. What is it that prevents the people of this country from committing murder? It is not the police, nor is it the law. There is no law against murder, or at any rate, into the middle of the last century there was no law against murder upon any of the Statute Books of England. The law against murder is to be found as far back as the time of Moses. It comes into our common law as part of the common conscience, and the sanction against the committing of murder, so far as 90 per cent. of the population are concerned, is neither the hangman nor the policeman, but the common conscience of us all.

The first step towards providing a really effective sanction for the decrees of a League of Nations—which is not to be formed as some people imagine, who talk as though it were to be a kind of supreme court of busybodies with functions which would enable them to impose their will upon the different nations upon all kinds of minor matters, but a league confined to the simple purpose of preventing the crime of war—the first step necessary to obtain effective sanction for the decrees of such a League is to start by educating the common conscience of humanity to recognise the fact that wholesale killing, by order of King, or Emperor, or Government, is just as much within the Divine prohibition as retail killing by an individual citizen. It can be justified, if at all, only upon similar grounds. If conducted for the purpose of aggression or as an instrument for enforcing a claim, it should be regarded as just as unjustifiable as homicide carried out by a private citizen for the prosecution of his private claim. Therefore, while thanking the right hon. Gentleman for the very friendly way in which he has referred to the aspirations of those of us who are working to bring this into the forefront of

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practical politics, I venture to express the hope that he will not confine his attention too much to the advice given him by Committees composed of distinguished jurists and historians. Personally, I do not know what the report of such a Committee might be, and I have never found very much satisfaction myself in perusing the treatises of eminent lawyers on this subject. In fact, the more eminent the lawyer, as a rule, the more disappointing I have found his utterances. I venture to ask the Foreign Office to bear in mind that this represents a great popular idea. The words themselves, "a League of Nations," are of course meaningless. They really mean nothing at all. They might mean anything, they might mean nothing; but, meaningless as those words are, they do to-day, by some chance, stand as the symbol of that vague, unexpressed longing, a longing so intense as to become on the part of multitudes a conviction and a belief, that out of all this welter of bloodshed and sacrifice some good must come at last, that far beyond all our present sacrifice there is a new order of international relations and a new and better Europe to which all the combatants are painfully making their way.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD: This is one of the most important subjects that has ever been brought before the House of Commons, and I do not think that anyone need apologise for carrying on the Debate. My hon. Friend opposite, in his concluding remarks, I think struck the proper keynote. This is a popular demand. The people will not care very much about the legal processes that have to be gone through in order to establish the machinery, but what they are convinced of is this, that the present state of Europe is such that the nations must be protected against falling back into it, and that the only way to secure them against that calamity is some form of international agreement in which the wills and the interests of the various nations shall be represented; and there the people leave it. Now, whilst I sympathise with the difficulty in which the Foreign Secretary found himself, at the same time I think the great function of this House at the present moment is not so much to build up in an architectural way a self-sufficing scheme as to discuss the problems. We cannot settle the League of Nations until we know what its problems are to be. I

respectfully disagree with him regarding the latter part of his speech, where he suggested that it is not a pacifist idea. I think it is. There is a kind of pious pacifism that lives in the clouds and which does untold harm to the world. There is, however, a practical pacifism which, understanding or trying to understand what war has always meant and how ineffective it has always been in solving any problem with which humanity has been confronted, has for a great many years, long before this War started, been trying to interest the peoples of the world in this idea of a League of Nations; and I am profoundly satisfied that at last what the right hon. Gentleman said this afternoon is perfectly true, that the people of all sections and of all kinds of interests are beginning to see that this is a practical problem that must be solved somehow or other. Now, I do not believe that we are going to solve it altogether. I do not believe that at the first attempt we are going to create a machinery which is going to be quite satisfactory. We must experiment, and if the experiment is to be valuable we must have quite clearly in our minds what are the big general problems with which the experiments will have to deal. There is one thing that I think we ought to disabuse our minds of. I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman is still living in what I think is a great delusion. He imagines that he is not to murder me to-night because the law prevents him from doing it.

Mr. BALFOUR: No, my view is that if there were no policemen I think the hon. Gentleman could walk about the streets in much less security than he does now.

Mr. MACDONALD: That may be so, but I do not think exactly that it is the policeman that is my real protection. My real protection is this, and I would like to advance the argument of my hon. Friend opposite a little bit further than he has left it. My protection really is, not that there is organised force round about me, but that there are involuntary social habits round about me. That is the point. It is not so much the policeman that one depends on as public opinion, and that brings in this point, that if we are to use the League of Nations for the purpose of creating in nations, as Law Courts and the processes of law have created in the minds of individuals, an involuntary social habit of peace, then we must immediately step in and use the experience and the

revulsion of war in order to put our house in order. Let the nations go back into the old ruts of diplomacy, let them fall back upon their old methods of self-protection, and then you can preach until the next war breaks out, and you will not have it at all. I do beg the Government to remember that the opportunity of writing some new chapter on some new principle will become less and less as the termination of the War becomes more and more remote. If we are not prepared to seize at once this opportunity of a new world, or the new heaven and the new world such as it might be, then every day we live reduces our chances of seizing it successfully. I would also put another point to the right hon. Gentleman. When he says that the purpose of the League of Nations is to maintain the *status quo*, is he not wrong? I am not quite sure that he meant it; I think it was a sort of *obiter dictum* that fell from him, with a somewhat narrower meaning than I think his words bore out.

Mr. BALFOUR: Of course, it is a very narrow, a very crude element in internal relations, the mere preservation of national integrity, but it is a most important one.

Mr. MACDONALD: The purpose of my dealing with the argument is to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that perhaps the League of Nations is going to have more to say about the termination of the War than he has admitted this afternoon. I think it is a question worth considering. Let us take the problem of the Balkans. If, when the War is over, the Balkan problem is going to be settled by either side—either the Allies or Germany—doing what they would like, irrespective of the wishes of the peoples of the Balkans—I mean, without being consulted in considerable detail—then he does create a *status quo* which will make it very difficult for the League of Nations to operate, unless it is able at once to step in and smoothe out difficulties. When this War ends, there is going to be an enormous territorial problem. If that problem is to be settled in the way those problems have always been settled hitherto after a war, then the League of Nations is to be presented by the Peace Conference with such a tremendous number of problems that it will not, and cannot, work at all. I do think it is worth while pushing and striving, at any rate, to get the rudimentary machinery

of the League of Nations into operation. If that, or something that can be made into a League of Nations the moment we get peace, can be created, and its first task the solution of some of the problems of territorial adjustment after the War, then you get the real feeling which will enable the League of Nations, as it were, to dig its roots right into these social and international hopes of Europe and the world. It is an expression of an idea, but it is a very practical idea, and it is an aim which those Gentlemen who are responsible for the foreign policy and the national policy ought to face, tackle, and try to solve in its details day by day, whilst the conflict is going on, and whilst we are preparing for the peace which is bound to come sooner or later.

There is another thing. I think no idea can be more mischievous at the present moment than the idea that the Allies themselves should form a League of Nations and then say to Germany, "Come in if you like." By all means keep your Alliance. By all means keep your harmonious co-operation. By all means agree to your common programme. But do not call that a League of Nations, otherwise you prejudice it from the very beginning. Nay, go further. By all means discuss your ideas of a League of Nations. By all means get your memorandum prepared. Find out French and Italian opinion and proposals, and have your proposals ready to put into operation as quickly as you possibly can, but do not form your League, do not call your Allied combination a League of Nations; otherwise you will never have a League of Nations at all, or merely have it on condition that you will have two camps inside your League of Nations. That is the difficulty about which the right hon. Gentleman has not spoken to-night, but it is one of the real difficulties. When we talk about the League of Nations, do not let us imagine that the mere phrase is going to solve all our problems. I can imagine a League of Nations running apparently quite smoothly, accepting all the tests my hon. Friend here has suggested should be laid down, and my hon. Friend there has suggested should be laid down, and I can understand how, out of that League of Nations, you will have Camp A and Camp B, and Camp A will be running its policy and Camp B will be running its policy, and, in the end, you will have exactly the same condition of things that you had in the Triple Alli-

[Mr. Macdonald.]

ance. The good sentiment, the tremendously genuine desire to end all this kind of conflict, is not going to be done merely by creating the machinery of a League of Nations. That danger is to be avoided, I think, if we take one or two things into account.

Before doing that, may I also suggest another difficulty? I am profoundly in favour of the League of Nations, but this House must take a world view of it. This is not a European or an American question. This is a question which is going to affect all present great nations and all possible great nations in the world. This House must not overlook the fact that, possibly, one of the results of this War, is to be that deplorable conflict between various races of the world, the Yellow and the White. In a League of Nations you have to cast your eyes on the Pacific as well as on the Atlantic, and also you have to remember the problem of the tropics, because so soon as you settle down to discuss the programme and the assigned subjects given to the League of Nations, you have not only to consider the possible growth of armaments outside the League of Nations, but also the economic possibilities behind the nations within the League, that in an instant can be turned into military possibilities. And these considerations present a very considerable problem to us. There is this safeguard that ought to be tried, and must be tried, if the League of Nations is going to be effective: It cannot be a league of Governments; it cannot be a league of diplomatists; it cannot be a league of Foreign Offices. It must be a League of Parliaments. You must have popular representation. Your League of Nations must not be part of the machinery of Governments—of national Governments. Your League of Nations must be part of the general political life of your nations. Without that you are bound to fail.

Then there is the question of sovereignty. My hon. and gallant Friend opposite dealt with the question of sovereignty. To me it remains as the great expression of individual personality in its historical sense. A League of Nations which interferes with national sovereignty is bound to break. It can break in many ways. It is bound to break in one way or another. A really effective sovereignty relates to nations, but there is no such thing as an effective common sovereignty in relation to empires, and,

therefore, what we have to do in considering this question of sovereignty is this: Every consideration and every decision of the League of Nations, Parliament or Committee, or whatever you call it, that is representing the League of Nations idea, in so far as it refers to national sovereignty, should be a recommendation to the national Parliaments, and should carry no authority whatever beyond the authority which, of course, a recommendation of that kind would carry. But, in addition to that, I think the League of Nations could well be used as the responsible authority in certain Imperial matters, and in the tropics—Central Africa, for instance—the League of Nations might be regarded as the authority on tropical economic products and distribution, the protector of peoples, and so on. And there comes in a double function of the League of Nations. If that double function is mixed up, then, I think, you will have nothing but international strife, because by the League of Nations to differentiate the national sovereignty, the League of Nations being an international advisory committee so far as that is concerned, and the League of Nations being also used for the purpose of emphasising human responsibility in countries and amongst people where that responsibility is very vague and very difficult to enforce, then I think run on those two lines—remembering the distinction between these two functions—the League of Nations might be of tremendous benefit and of great benefit to humanity all over the world. There is just one other point to which I should like to refer. The League of Nations, we are sometimes told, is going to enforce peace.

Mr. A. WILLIAMS: I objected to that!

Mr. MACDONALD: I agree with my hon. Friend that that expression is absurd. You cannot enforce peace. You cannot even enforce peace on the smallest nation in the world that knows when it goes to war that it is going to be beaten. It prefers to go to war rather than to keep the peace. The League of Nations can only make arrangements which will prevent the conditions under which war becomes possible. That is all that the League of Nations can do, and the only way to do that is so to enlighten public opinion. Those who look to guarantees in arms, and military, and force and all that sort of thing, are only just reading

once again, in a somewhat different phraseology, but in substance precisely the same, all the chapters that have been written in the history of the world, every one of which has ended in a war. Peace can be kept when you get public opinion upon international questions. At the present day you have no public opinion upon international questions. The German Government, assuming that it is as bad as one can possibly paint it, assuming that the War was the subject of devilish forethought years before it started, plotted, planned, schemed, diabolically prepared for—assuming that that is true, when it actually broke out the great mass of the German people believed it was a war of defence. They may have been stupid. They may have been servile. They may have been contemptible. But there is the fact. It is no use our shutting our eyes to it.

Therefore, unless we can, by 8.0 P.M. hook or crook, get some device or some means or other to get an instructed, vigilant, and active public opinion upon international affairs, you never can keep the peace, League of Nations or no League of Nations. The League of Nations ought, therefore, to be used as a means for making clear to the public all the various methods of peace in international affairs. Publicity, the abolition of secret diplomacy—I do not mean it in its narrower sense—but a change by which foreign affairs which are withdrawn from the newspapers in times of peace—for they are hardly discussed in our papers at all except when there is some dramatic sort of affair—some change, I say, is needed. When we refer to public affairs on the public platform in times of peace—I do not know whether the experience of the right hon. Gentleman was the same as ours—I do not know whether he had as faithful advisers as we had—but right up to the War, when we spoke on foreign affairs, our friends used to come and say, "You were dull to-night; nobody was interested in what you were saying." That was a deplorable condition of affairs, but it was perfectly true until the War broke out. When public opinion is in this condition, then a handful of men, Germans, Austrians, or anybody else, can so arrange the affairs of the nations that whilst the people are thinking peacefully, walking peacefully, and acting together peacefully, the actual conditions are just at the point of thrusting them into war. So long as that is the condition of affairs

you cannot have peace. We want peace, and the League of Nations is one of the greatest and most beneficent agencies to prevent the sort of thing I have described. If you burn cordite in the open air it will burn peacefully. If you burn it closed up it will explode. That is precisely the analogy of the condition of things which I have described. Let us know. Let us discuss. Let us consider. Let us plan together openly, and then we shall have a chance of abolishing the anterior conditions of war. We can, however, only do that through an international organisation like this League of Peace.

There are a score of other questions profoundly interesting with which I would like to deal, but there are many other hon. Members who wish to address the House. I would say this: I believe the greatest service we can do to Europe at the present time is not to press the details of a League of Nations too much. Some of them cannot be settled theoretically: they can only be settled by experience, and rather by laying down in a somewhat sceptical frame of mind, whilst agreeing, and desiring, and pushing the whole idea in every possible way, laying down in a somewhat sceptical frame of mind the various problems—and discussing them—that those who have to build up the League of Nations will have to face, and ultimately to solve. I hope the Foreign Office will continue the production of its memoranda. I hope they will not confine their advisers to historical students of the study type, nor to international lawyers, because, after all, I would remind the right hon. Gentleman, there is this other element, the element of popular psychology. Professors and international lawyers are a type of men who are the least trustworthy guides to popular psychology. When the memoranda comes to be discussed, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will remember this element of public opinion, of public desire, and of public will which will make succeed in the days that are to come proposals that have failed in days that have gone by.

Colonel Sir MARK SYKES: The subject on which we are now has come forward, I think, to many Members of the House somewhat unexpectedly. Personally I regret very much that the subject upon which this Debate has chiefly turned did not appear earlier in the Session, and that the Members had not more notice, so that the matter might have been more clearly

[Sir Mark Sykes.]

thrashed out. I hope that the effect of the Debate will not be of a contrary nature to that desired, and make people feel that a League of Nations is rather in the distance. Perhaps it may be that the speeches made this afternoon on this point have been rather hastily prepared and at short notice: under such circumstances the difficult side springs to the mind rather than the easier side—the difficulties rather than the practical part appear first. The result, to my mind, of all the things I have heard this afternoon of the League of Nations—what it must do, and all the things it cannot possibly do, suggests to me that after all, taking everything together, the ground is much more favourable than I imagined it was some years ago. In fact, when the hon. Gentleman who just sat down began dealing with the tropics and other affairs of that description, my brain reeled at the prospect of what the League of Nations was going to do. With regard to what the hon. Gentleman who spoke last said, there are only two points to which I should like to draw attention. Firstly, he referred to the danger of there being two camps. It seems to me—I do not know whether it is a singular view—but I am afraid that there will be two camps until the Germans think in a different way to what they do at present. Until they alter their point of view, these two camps have got to continue. If they do alter their point of view fundamentally and really, I do not think the danger of two camps will exist. It means the Germans will give guarantees which everybody can understand, and have a changed attitude of mind. This will mean that the masses are not servile, and that the people who control the mass have altered their views. I do, however, think there are one or two practical points which have not been laid much stress upon this afternoon.

The first is the absolute necessity, if the civilised world is to continue, for devising some machinery to prevent wars—and this quite apart from ideals. If I were the grossest epicurean, I think I should say the same thing. It seems to me obvious when you examine the military history, when you see and consider the devastation wrought by Frederick the Great as compared with the devastation resulting from the Napoleonic wars; when you compare the devastation of the Napoleonic wars with the American Civil War, or say the war of

1870; and when you compare the destruction of 1870 with that of the present War, that a war, say fifty years hence, will not shake the fabric of civilization—it will destroy it! Unless some device is discovered to prevent that catastrophe, we shall not only sink into spiritual barbarism, but into material barbarism as well: the grass will grow in the streets and we shall destroy present-day civilisation, and the great mass of the human race as well. Therefore a League of Nations—if a League of Nations is the label of the machinery to prevent wars taking place—the idea of a League of Nations carries the good wishes of practically the whole of the civilised world. The leaders of the world, President Wilson amongst them, have spoken of this. Practically all the ruling bodies, certainly on the Entente side, are in agreement that something has got to be done, and I am certain the mass of this country and throughout the Entente countries generally, are absolutely and most deeply moved that something has got to be done. I am sure that the people of this country feel sincerely that this War is a war against war, and that if it is not the last war, whatever the material results of the War are, it will have been lost if it is not the war which is to end war. It is, therefore, I submit, our business to examine, from a practical point of view, what machinery can be devised to prevent war. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who spoke on the other side of the House referred to the Holy Roman Empire. It seems to me that we have now got just an exactly opposite situation. It is a situation entirely opposite to that which obtained with the Holy Roman Empire, so called, which was supposed to be a force in the world. I think it never was a force. It was not holy. It was not Roman. It had none of the attributes of an Empire. It was, I think, a theory, and one which nobody believed.

Now we have a theory, undefined, but in which everybody believes. To-day there are a great many very practical predisposing causes. If I may enumerate them they seem to be as follows: First of all, there is one predisposing cause—the future peace. That is to say, I cannot conceive of circumstances under which there can be individual war between any two members of the present entente. That is not to say that the Entente is a League of Nations, but I cannot imagine within the next century, say, a cause of war between any two nations who form the present

Entente against the Central Powers. By that I mean that you have only to remind one or other of the would-be combatants, after this War, that they had fought side by side for the liberation of mankind to make war between them out of the question. There is the basis there for having a permanent alliance, or, at all events, a permanent peace between the whole of the Entente side in this war. I think it will not be denied that throughout the world—and this applies to the whole world, whether Entente or not—there must be a universal desire on the part of the labouring classes to avoid military service in the future. It cannot be possible that the masses of mankind desire to be hurried into arms, or have compulsory military service inflicted upon the whole world if there is any honourable or safe way of avoiding that. Any machinery which can make it unnecessary, I am sure, will have their support.

It is quite obvious that after this War, after the enormous loss and destruction of this War, that all the people who are concerned with production and with commerce will want a period of peace, of permanent peace, in which to make up the losses which have resulted from the War. There is another great factor against war. The point has already been raised: that these large armaments and armies—and, in fact, all armaments—have at the root the defensive idea, that they are necessary, if not for purposes of conquest, for purposes of defence. It seems to me that the submarine and the navigation of the air are making those forms of defence less and less effective. That is to say that an enormous fleet cannot command the sea in the way in which fleets have commanded the sea in the past. They cannot even prevent incursion of an enemy who has no fleet; so that the fleet is not a real guarantee of defence, while at the same time the navigation of the air makes land warfare much less a defence than it was before.

It may be said by both sides that there has never been an equal defence and an equal attack put up as in France or on the Western Front or on any other Front at present. There is an absolute deadlock on both sides, and yet we see there destruction going on in spite of perfect territorial defence, so that something must be striking the minds of people which takes away that defensive idea to a certain extent. There is another point. The idea

of annexation and conquest which urges people on to war, the practicability of conquest, seems to be growing more and more remote. We see Germany now with her perfect machinery conquering the Ukraine, but already she is beginning to meet active resistance, passive resistance, and revolutionary resistance. That, in fact, is a blow at the evil kind of Imperialism, the kind of Imperialism which hopes to conquer a place, annex it, and make it one's own. All these things taken together, their cumulative effect is to make people more ready to consider the machinery for enforcing a permanent peace than the situation before the War made possible. One can conceive of things happening after the War which one never dreamed of before. Therefore, although we can do nothing definite now one may at least make a suggestion. First of all I suggest that the political parties, irrespective of the views on other things, might come to an agreement that if some honourable means of maintaining the peace can be discovered all political parties would agree to support that idea. That is the first point. Let the idea of the League of Nations for the maintenance or enforcement of peace be divorced from all party idea in the country. Then I submit that the Government Departments should on a large and complete scale make a full and wide examination of this question as it is possible to make, going into all the details of what can be done. Let the political parties say, "If anything can be done we will support you." Let the Government Departments find out what can be done, and let the Entente Powers discover among themselves what can be done. If that policy was pursued for a few months we should be able to have a Debate much more effective and inspiring, and giving much better hope than the one which has taken place to-day.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: We have certainly had this afternoon an extremely interesting Debate, but I dare say those of us who are most anxious about the League of Nations would consider it has not been extremely encouraging. My hon. and gallant Friend who has just sat down practically said as much when he said that it was conceivable that at a later stage we might have a more encouraging and inspiring Debate. Although in that sense the Debate has not been encouraging—that is to say, we have had a very great variety of conflicting views—nevertheless

[Mr. J. Robertson.]

the unanimity in one respect, the real intensity of the desire that something in the nature of a League of Nations should be set up, is, after all, in itself, an encouraging thing. My hon. and gallant Friend has suggested that we might later on come forward with better considered plans than have been put forward to-day. If we are to attain that, I think my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester (Mr. Macdonald) might apply more faithfully to himself his own precept that we should consider this in a more sceptical spirit. I thought there was some force in that, in maintaining an entirely open mind and a freedom from rigid conviction as to the shape the League of Nations should assume. My hon. Friend, in the speech in which he gave us that precept, committed himself to a more remarkable set of categorical imperatives than I have listened to in this House for some time. Among the number of things he said the League of Nations must not be, amounting, I think, to half a dozen, they were nearly all strong declamations in regard to points which have never been discussed or adopted. For instance, he said, "Your League of Nations must not be a League of Governments, but that it must be a League of Parliaments." The only practical meaning I can attach to that proposition is that the negotiations between the nations shall be direct between the Parliaments. They should communicate with each other, not using the machinery of the Governments which hitherto has conducted the negotiations of nations, but the Parliaments, as it were, directly communicating with each other as organised bodies in the place of the Government. I will not say that we cannot get to some sort of national negotiations of that kind, but I do think, and I say with confidence, that we are not nearly ready for it yet. If my hon. Friend set himself to imagine how business could be conducted between the nations in that way he will appreciate that you could not do it, whereas surely a League of Nations, in the sense of a League of Governments, is a real thing and can be thought of as an extension of the Leagues that are already existing. I want to make my humble contribution to the Debate in the form of a suggestion as to how I think a League of Nations might be got to work. I hope I shall comply with my hon. Friend's suggestion in putting it, not with any dogmatic conviction, but as the only way in

which it could be done in so far as it has repeatedly suggested itself to my mind in the last two years during which I have reflected on the possibility of a League of Nations. I am less discouraged by the variety of views put forward to-day, because when I took the matter up more than two years ago I found more than forty different schemes, all of which I collated. The diversity of to-day is not greater than the diversity was then, and even that diversity did seem to me reducible to some common and workable conception. We have been told very rightly by the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary that the League of Nations must have, I think he uses the word "sanction," though I should say "power," behind it. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. McCurdie) debated for some time the questions and answers, and he seemed to shift the meaning of the word from what the Foreign Secretary meant to attach to it. I agree with my right hon. Friend that the League of Nations must have power to enforce its decision. My opinion from the first as to the kind of power which the League of Nations would exercise was something like this, that all the nations which would enter should agree to the quota of power they should contribute. The phrase was used to-day in regard to the future of "universal disarmament." The ideal of disarmament must be aimed at all over the world, and all the belligerents of their own accord must consent. For me a fit peace would only be one in which we could secure that disarmament on the part of our enemies, and if we do not get a peace in which they have to disarm, there is no hope for civilisation, in fact that would probably mean the end of civilisation. If you are able to dictate disarmament to the most dangerous Power, then you can say to that Power being disarmed, "You can now come in to the League of Nations on the same footing as the other Powers." The idea would be that all the nations should guarantee a certain contingent of military force for the purpose of carrying out the decisions of the League.

Supposing two nations in the League had a quarrel. The League would have machinery for dealing with the dispute. Supposing one of those two nations in the quarrel proposes to press its quarrel forward. One hon. Member objected to the use of the phrase "a League to enforce peace," but that has a clear common-

sense meaning. We know in the past that National Governments have enforced peace and prevented nations from going to war, and in that way a League of Nations might bring pressure to bear against an obstreperous Power, and there might even be an economic boycott. A League of Nations ought to command a certain military force, and the practical suggestion I put forward is that all the members of the League should undertake to combine themselves to contribute, in the event of it being required, a certain contingent of military force to be used under the direction of the League in the carrying out of the decisions of the League.

Although this may seem to involve practical difficulties I think we might rely upon it to prevent war, and it is an arrangement that does not unduly strain the possibilities and probabilities. Some suggestions which have been made practically amount to saying that unless the League creates a new heaven and earth it is useless. If that is so, then everything is useless. There never has been any great reforms made in our history except by a very gradual development of our political machinery, and what I am suggesting seems no extravagant development. I have no doubt hon. Members will be able to show difficulties, but the necessity being really desperate, if we bring our minds to bear upon a practical scheme of this character in that way, the prospects of the League may be a little more advanced than they would be by the lofty ideals we have heard of this afternoon. No nation is going to renounce its nationality or make any violent change in its political status on account of the League of Nations, because that would represent a greater danger than the general danger of war. People will be got into the League of Nations by having it made clear that they are safeguarding themselves against the frightful danger which affects not only the belligerents in this War but every organised nation. It would be a sort of insurance—a war insurance, a scheme which they are all willing to enter upon, always keeping our minds upon the actual political machinery. I want the idea of political machinery to be developed by the working practice of the nations of the world, and then I think in a few months the more hopeful and encouraging Debate which has been forecasted may take place.

Major TRYON: After listening in this Debate to members of every party and

every section in the House, one realises, in the first place, how universal is the desire to secure a just and lasting peace; and secondly, how extraordinarily difficult the working of a League of Nations is going to be. One point which came out, to my mind, most strongly in the Debate is that there can be no hope of a successful League of Nations with an unbeaten Germany. I think that is unquestionable. I have been reading the pamphlet by Viscount Grey on this subject, and he says that in the case of a nation breaking away from the League of Nations and breaking the law of that League:

“If it breaks the agreement which is the basis of the League, rejects all peaceful methods of settlement and resorts to force, the other nations must, one and all, use their combined force against it.”

The point that seems to me overwhelming is that if this War should end with an unbeaten Germany, with the German people conscious that they have successfully defied the power of over twenty armed nations against her, it seems to me inconceivable that there is any hope for peace in a League where the nations will have disarmed and where Germany will be conscious all the time, even when they were strong and armed, that she was able to defy them. I feel very strongly what many of the speakers have brought out that is the fact that a League is not possible with an unbeaten Germany. That is a very important fact, and we should not weaken the efforts of our nation by suggesting that we need not get on too rapidly with the War, but that, instead of fighting, we should have a League of Nations. Such a league can only be established by fighting, and after Germany has been beaten.

I will not go into controversial matters. The hon. Member for Derby (Mr. Thomas) spoke of the impossibility of peace in the future if by some system of Colonial preference we started an economic war. If all the nations at the present moment were Free Traders, and we were going now to start this new principle, it would be quite a different thing, but how can it be said that we should be starting an economic war against other nations when the principle has already been conceded to many other countries? How can it be said by doing this, by doing what many other nations are already doing, that we are making war upon those other nations?

The ASSISTANT - SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord Robert Cecil): I do not propose to say more than a very few words at this stage of the discussion, because I myself very earnestly hope that at some future time we may have a fuller and a more complete discussion of this subject. I recognise this discussion as being very useful, but I also recognise that it has come upon a good many hon. Members very suddenly, and they have not foreseen that it was going to take place, and therefore, perhaps a discussion at a future time would be even more fruitful than this one. I do not propose to go into an elaboration of what has been said to-night. I agree very much with what has been said by my hon. Friend (Mr. Robertson). I do not think we gain very much at this stage of the discussion either by rather elaborate abstract observations or by eloquent aspirations for a league of peace. We want to concentrate our minds on what practically can be done. I am not going to attempt to-night even to indicate it, because I think it is very important not to hamper free discussions among ourselves and among our Allies. But it is obvious to anyone who has looked into the literature of the subject that there are certain things upon which all people agree. I think one of them is that there are two classes of international disputes—those which are called justiciable and those which are not called justiciable. For my part I think there is a great deal to be said for those who think that a League of Nations is only applicable to the smaller States, and that it would never be accepted, in the present state of public feeling, if you have larger disputes. As to the larger disputes I am disposed to agree provisionally with what has been said by the hon. Member for Leicester, that after all the great force must be public opinion. The question is, how are you to organise and make available your public opinion on an international basis, and, secondly, how you are to secure that there should be time for it to act. I agree that the great weapon of public opinion is open discussion. I think there is much to be said for the view that the most fruitful provision is not to venture upon war until the cause of the dispute has been thoroughly and openly discussed before the world at large. I think that would be a very valuable rule. But how are you to secure that the nations will do so? [An Hon. Member: "Agree!"]

Yes, but how are you to enforce the agreement when you have arrived at it? Indeed, that is the central difficulty of the whole problem; that is, how, what my right hon. Friend called sanction, and what my right hon. Friend opposite called the power to enforce is to be used, whatever may be the agreement. For my part, I believe there are two direct means, and one indirect means, which may possibly be employed. The two direct means are the military and economic. I am afraid I do not agree with my right hon. Friend opposite that the best way to apply military coercion would be by some central body representing the League of Nations. I doubt very much whether that would work. My right hon. Friend will recollect that in the days of the Holy Roman Empire they tried to enforce what was called federal action, but the difficulty was that the means employed were exceedingly ineffective. I must say that everybody who is a party to a League of Nations should be bound to use all the forces at their disposal in order to enforce the agreement to which they have come.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Are they all to have armies as big as each other?

Lord R. CECIL: That is a very difficult question, but I am not going to enter upon it at this moment. I am only throwing these observations out as a small contribution which may possibly serve in a fuller Debate hereafter, and they do not represent my considered view, and much less are they the views of the Government. If you had partial disarmament, even so, whatever Army was left to you, should be left to the service of the League of Peace. In addition to that, there is, of course, another method which many people have advocated, namely, that you may secure the adhesion of nations to this scheme partly by what, I think, President Wilson would describe as the partnership of free peoples—that is to say, making the peace conditions more favourable to those who are prepared to enter upon such an agreement. These are the kind of topics which, it seems to me, will have to be considered, and considered very carefully, before any scheme can be evolved which will secure the objects we have in view. So far as the Government is concerned, they are considering these things. As the House is well aware, they have had the subject under examination by the Committee which has been described by my right hon. Friend, and they have not

stopped there; they are now considering this subject in all its bearings. The problem is one of enormous importance and tremendous difficulties. The difficulties are great, and history has shown what they have been in the past. This is not a new idea. I suppose that at the close of every great war people turned round to see what they could do to prevent war in the future, and they have quite honestly tried. At the close of the Napoleonic Wars it was honestly tried to have a League of Nations, and if hon. Members read the Proclamations of the Czar Alexander they will see that he was quite honest and really perfectly genuine in his desire to establish a league, so that justice might reign supreme. It destroyed what was then the only general international trouble—namely, Jacobinism. It was an honest attempt, and an attempt that by no means stands alone. There were many other ideas of the same kind.

It is, therefore, a matter of enormous difficulty and one which deserves—and, I hope, will receive—the earnest attention and consideration of every Member of this House who takes an interest in it before we have another opportunity of discussing it, which I hope will not be very long deferred. I agree that not only is it a difficult subject, but that it is a subject of the utmost urgency. I accept most fully what my hon. and gallant Friend behind me (Major Tryon) said—that civilisation is at stake. I do not think anyone can consider what this War has been without seeing how terrible is the danger to the whole world unless we can devise some effective scheme for preventing its repetition. I agree most of all with those—I think the hon. Member for Leicester was one—who have said that now is the time. We cannot afford to put it off. We must be ready, when this War comes to an end, with our scheme if there is to be any hope of its being adopted. If you give the nations of the world a few years, memory is so short they will forget what they have been through, and the steam, the energy, will have passed. Therefore, we must devote our whole minds to considering this problem and to having, as far as human skill and human industry can make it so, a workable plan for establishing this safeguard against war in the future. I myself think that such a solution can be found. I believe we are on the right line towards finding it. I am also quite certain that the diffi-

culties of establishing it are very great, and that the difficulties in the way of its working will be so serious that it is only by the united efforts of all men of good will that this scheme, essential as it is to the future of mankind, can possibly be brought into execution.

Mr. ALBION RICHARDSON: I rise to deal with another topic, widely separated from the one which has rightly occupied the attention of the Committee during the evening, but yet is one which, while it affects a smaller number of people, is, putting aside those measures which are taken for the actual prosecution of the War, most urgent, and demands the most urgent attention of the Government. I refer to the condition of our prisoners of war who are in captivity in Turkey. I desire to press upon the Government with all the force I possess the imperative necessity of taking immediate steps to ameliorate the lot of these unhappy men. It is time that the Committee and the country knew something of the facts, for if they had knowledge of the facts, I feel that no further delay would take place in using every means within the power of the Government to secure some change for the better in the condition of our prisoners in Turkey at the present time. The numbers are small. Four hundred English officers and 1,600 men represent the total of the British troops, distinguishing them from Indian troops. Two thousand in all are white British troops at present in captivity in Turkey. In addition there are some 4,800 native troops, 200 of whom are officers, and the remainder non-commissioned officers and men. More than half of the men captured by the Turks as prisoners of war are dead. Between 1st January and the 31st July of this year the return shows 382 deaths. That is the death roll for the short period of six months. The question which now arises is whether the rest shall be left to perish.

Mr. D. MASON: From starvation.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I will deal with that. That is what must happen if things go on as they have been going for the last few months. As far as I have been able to discover, the deaths have resulted from typhus and starvation. I know the Government claim that they have done everything they can to ameliorate the lot of these men, that there is nothing that human foresight can suggest that they

[Mr. A. Richardson.]

have not provided, and that they have spared no effort and no energy in dealing with this question. But when one remembers that this mortality has been caused in the first instance through lack of proper food and proper clothing, one is necessarily driven to question whether every means has been used by the Government and is being used now to supply our prisoners of war there with proper food and proper clothing. My hon. Friend the Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. James Hope) said in this House a short time ago that some 70 per cent. of the parcels that were sent through Switzerland and Austria were lost in transit. Then came the complete shutting of that route by the Austrian Government. I understand it is now being reopened, and that parcels are again to be sent by that route. If the wastage is to be on the same scale as that which my hon. Friend admitted when the route was open previously, one cannot fairly rely upon that as the proper means of supply to our prisoners of war out there.

There is another and a much more effective means of providing food and clothing to our prisoners in Turkey. It is admitted by every man who has been a prisoner that while articles of food and clothing are only to be bought at fabulous prices, yet money can buy them. It is a question of payment. The prisoners' testimony on that point, so far as I have seen it, seems to be unanimous. If it is a question of money, then the cost of feeding and properly clothing these 4,000 prisoners is a burden of the War which the State should bear, and it should not quibble whether it is to be £1 or £2 that is sent out. I hope my hon. Friend will affirm the principle that he recognises it is the duty of the Government, if money can provide the necessaries of life for our men there, to find the money, and that it should be found at once. In a War which costs something like £8,000,000 a day that is a mere drop in the ocean. The Government have, to a very limited extent, recognised the principle, because they have, I believe, a Dutch agent out there who is allowed to disburse a sum which, at the present rate of exchange, amounts to £3 per head for every officer, and £2 per head for every man. How much that represents in pounds sterling is not material. I believe there is some arrangement that if you send £1 to Turkey it is only equivalent to something like 3s. when changed

into Turkish paper. How that rate of exchange is contrived I leave to greater financial authorities than myself, but I think the Government made a very bad bargain with Turkey when they arranged that rate of exchange. The first necessity, therefore, is that this gentleman who is entrusted with the safeguarding of the interests of our men out there should be instructed to spend twice and, if necessary, three times the amount the Government have given him authority to spend up to the present time. And we should have in Turkey, not the mere agent who happens to be there, but some man specially sent out with a full staff, visiting these men from week to week, and making periodical reports to the Government as to the progress that is being made and how our captives are being looked after. There is a very bitter complaint that clothing is utterly insufficient. I believe the Government has actually forbidden clothing to be sent to the men.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Lord of the Treasury) indicated dissent.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I have been told that on very good authority. I think it requires examination. The men have to rely on clothing which is purchased in Constantinople and other places in Turkey, which is very inferior in quality and perhaps useless in the colder weather, and which in point of quantity is utterly insufficient. I know the enormous cost of commodities which prevails at present in Turkey, but if they can be bought the cost ought not to stand in the way. Prices are fabulous. Bread, I believe, costs something like 3s. a lb., sugar 20s., potatoes 1s., and tea as much as £5, and all the other necessaries of life in proportion. A great many men have had to sell their clothing in order to obtain sufficient food to keep life in them. I do not think there is a more interesting illustration of the way in which this matter has been dealt with, and the want of energy which has been displayed by those responsible for the protection of the interests of our men, than that which has resulted from the Berne Agreement, which was ratified in April this year, under which some 300 British and 700 Indian invalid combatants of ours were to be exchanged for 1,500 Turkish. They got a balance of 50 per cent. A ship was to be sent from Alexandria to fetch them. The ship has not yet sailed, and I do not know whether there is the least chance of

it sailing during the period of the War. I want to know whether, if it is impossible to get a ship from Alexandria to take these men back and to give them a supply of food for some time, at any rate, it will be possible to arrange to bring them back overland a few at a time, and in that way ultimately repatriate 1,000 of the most pressing cases which were the subject-matter of the agreement. We have in our hands something like 50,000 Turkish prisoners. Has any step been taken to endeavour to arrange a basis of exchange? Of course, a man-for-man exchange is absolutely out of the question. Has any step been taken since The Hague Convention in regard to the exchange of German prisoners which gives

9.0 P.M. one encouragement to hope that one may be possible with Turkey? Can the right hon. Gentleman not give an undertaking, or, at any rate, recommend the Government to give this matter immediate consideration that the money required properly to feed and clothe our prisoners in Turkey shall be immediately remitted to the Dutch agent with authority to expend it there for this purpose? It is the very least they have a right to demand. The feeling amongst them is that they are deserted. They have seen their fellows dying like flies, and I think when the public understands what the true position is they will not allow these brave men—or the remnant of them—to perish as so many of their fellows have done during their months of captivity in Turkey. I make no apology for having invited the hon. Gentleman's attention to the matter or for having given it a publicity, which I hope will result in the Government acting in a more energetic way than that which has characterised their efforts hitherto.

Mr. HOPE: The hon. and learned Gentleman only let me know he was going to raise this question a short time ago, and even then I gathered that he was only going to ask questions on one or two specific points. Had I known he was going to raise the general question of Turkish prisoners and the possible exchange of combatants I should have been able to give him much more detailed information than it is possible for me to do now. I cannot help thinking he has exaggerated the figures as to mortality. They are serious enough, but though I speak without any data before me, I am sure they do not amount to 50 per cent., and although the

figures in the first few months, including prisoners taken at Kut, were to the last degree terrible, that ratio of mortality has not been continued up to the present time, and the latest figures show a more or less steady decrease. However, I quite admit that the whole position has been bad to the last degree for our unfortunate prisoners in Turkey, and no effort whatever ought to be spared to get them out of their captivity as quickly and to as great an extent as possible, and while they are in captivity to do everything to palliate and alleviate their lot, which must be so wretched. But when the hon. and learned Gentleman implies that the Government have done nothing—

Mr. RICHARDSON: I did not say that.

Mr. HOPE: Well, have shown a great want of energy in the matter, I would really ask him to say what more could have been done, at any rate, within the last few months. The Berne Agreement was negotiated in December. Four months passed before it was ratified. That was not the fault of this Government, which ratified it within a very short time. It is perfectly true that up to this date nothing whatever has been done. Is that our fault again? I must remind the hon. and learned Gentleman what the conditions were. In the first place that agreement provided for the return of 1,000 British and Indian prisoners, and it was agreed that the ship which was to take these thousand was to return some 1,500 Turks, all being invalids. The balance, on the face of it, is against us. If it be considered that all these men are invalids, and that we hold something like 50,000 Turkish prisoners as against some 10,000 that they hold of ours, it was not unreasonable that that extra number of invalids should be thrown into the scale. The difficulties of effecting an exchange are very great. The ship could not sail without a guarantee being received from the German and Austrian Governments that their submarines in the Mediterranean would not interfere with their passage. Without such guarantee it would be folly to send a ship with a large number of invalids on board.

Mr. RICHARDSON: You could escort her.

Mr. HOPE: I think not. She would have to lie outside an open roadstead for a considerable time, and her escort would have

[Mr. Hope.]

to lie there, and unless such a guarantee was given it would be folly to send out the ship, because it might involve the loss of people we wish to save. That was thrashed out at Berne, and it was agreed that when the Turkish authorities has selected, or were ready to say on what day they would select the prisoners who were to be returned, some weeks' notice would have to be given to the German and Austrian Governments. Ever since this agreement has been ratified, we have been pressing for that assurance to be given. We have been pressing for it by all manner of means, by neutral Ambassadors at Constantinople, at Vienna, and at Berlin, and also through the recent meeting at The Hague. But that assurance has never been given up to this day. If the hon. and learned Member can suggest any other means of inducing the Turkish authorities to obtain this very necessary assurance I should be glad if he would suggest them to me. If they have not done that, I cannot conceive what reason they could have for not carrying out an agreement which is of equal benefit to their prisoners as ours, unless it is on the supposition that they are careless of the interest of their own 50,000 prisoners. It all depends upon the safe conduct of the ship, and the safe conduct of the ship depends upon the action of the German and Austrian authorities, and that safe conduct has not been given, and, so far as I know, has not been applied for. If any other means of inducing the Turkish authorities to apply for that assurance, and of inducing the enemy Governments to give it, can be suggested, I should be only too glad to receive such suggestion, and to forward it to the proper quarter. So far, every step that has suggested itself to our Government to obtain that assurance has been taken.

As to the rest of the agreement, on paper it is excellent. There are all manner of provisions for inspections, delivery of parcels, medical treatment, and the rest of it. Here, again, I am bound to say, that these have not yet fructified. Whether there is some influence at work to prevent that agreement being carried out I cannot say. Once again I would point out that there is no step that has suggested itself to the Prisoners of War Committee, so far as I know, that has not been taken to ensure that agreement being carried out. My hon. and learned Friend spoke about an extension of that

agreement. That is before the Government at this present moment, and I do not think there would be the slightest difficulty in extending that agreement on our side to those who are non-combatants; but in view of the fact that now seven months have elapsed since the first agreement was concluded at Berne, it is not very hopeful to suggest a fresh and larger convention with the Turkish Government when so little progress has been made in carrying out the present one. I am afraid I must agree with my hon. and learned Friend that the thing at the moment to concentrate upon is a supply of food and clothing for the prisoners. With regard to parcels one difficulty has been remedied. The Austrian authorities stopped parcels going through the centre of Europe for a very considerable time. We remonstrated with them through the Spanish authorities at Vienna, and now they have removed their prohibition, and not only have they removed the prohibition, but they have agreed to see, with regard to the railway trucks which are sent through from Switzerland, that pilfering on the way is prevented. That is not enough. It is one thing to send the parcels to Central Europe, but it is quite another thing to get them delivered to the camps. What we have now to do, and what we now have in hand, is to devise an organisation which will see the parcels through Switzerland to Constantinople, from Constantinople through Asia, and from the landing place, whether it be at Smyrna or elsewhere, to the camps. That is not easy, but it is being most energetically put in hand at this moment.

It is quite true that individuals cannot send clothing by the ordinary course, for the simple reason that there is every probability that if sent in the ordinary course that clothing would fall into enemy hands and never reach its destination. We are now arranging for an alternative supply of clothing, and if the ship that is to be sent has not sailed, it is not our fault. In the meantime, we are making arrangements for a duplicate, a double supply going overland through Switzerland. That is being taken in hand at the present moment. Therefore, in regard to both food and clothing I do fairly claim that so far as the Department with which I am connected is concerned, we are taking every possible step we can to ensure that our prisoners should not have to face next winter, if they still remain there, without a proper supply of

clothing, and without a regular supply of food. It is perfectly true that the difficulty of getting the parcels through to the prisoners is very largely in the last stages, and, therefore, it is very necessary that money should reach the prisoners. The Dutch Minister in Constantinople has, since war was declared by America, been entrusted with all possible measures of relief, including this question of money and has been commissioned to grant allowances to the prisoners according to the local cost of living in the various camps. It is now certain that the exchange has been very much against us, but my right hon. and learned Friend is not quite fair in saying that this was the result of a bad bargain. There was no bargain in the matter. If you send money to Turkey, that is subject to the ordinary laws of economic exchange and undoubtedly the exchange has been abnormally low in recent times against us. I am not expert enough in these monetary matters to say how that has arisen, but undoubtedly that is so, and we are confronted with that problem at the present moment. We think that we have found means whereby the position of our prisoners in this respect will be substantially improved. I am afraid that I cannot go into details, but not only is the matter not escaping attention but very active steps are being taken. As regards this and as regards food and clothing we may fairly claim I think that we are doing all that is possible at present, but at the same time I repeat that if any further suggestion can be made as to how our unhappy prisoners who have suffered so much for the great cause which we all have at heart can be relieved more than has been done we shall be only too happy to think it over and to give effect to it to the best of our power.

Sir F. BANBURY: I am very much afraid that the picture which has been drawn by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite is too true. At the same time I do not quite see what the Government could have done that they have not done. There is a great number of difficulties which have had to be surmounted, and as far as I understand the matter the only question in which perhaps he has shown some want of energy has been the exchange of prisoners. I am not behind the scenes and I do not wish to express an opinion, but in all probability there have been difficulties in the way of which we do not know, and I feel quite certain

that my hon. Friend is only too anxious, as we all are, to do what he can to relieve the sufferings which we all deplore. I want to raise another question. It is connected with the Fifth Report of the Committee on National Expenditure, and it deals more especially with the War Office and the Ministry of Munitions. The Report is a voluminous document, but it raises a number of points of very considerable importance, and points which, I think, ought to be raised upon the Vote of Credit, because they deal with the expenditure of money, which is a very important matter at the present juncture. The matter to which I want to refer is the contract for cellulose acetates. I do not desire to go at any length into the question as to whether the War Office, which was primarily responsible for the contract, and the Ministry of Munitions, which came in later on—

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members being found present—

Sir F. BANBURY (resuming): Cellulose acetates are not words which would attract a considerable audience in the House of Commons, but the point which is raised in this Report is one which deserves the very gravest attention on the part of the House of Commons, and I am exceedingly sorry that there are not more Members present at the moment, because this Report does lay bare—I do not want to use strong language—financial methods which had been practised in the old days by a well-known man in the City called Baron Grant, and afterwards by Whittaker Wright and Ernest Terah Hooley, and it is really very important that methods of this sort should not be allowed in Government offices. What appears to have taken place, according to the Report of the Sub-committee, is this, and I hope this Committee will excuse me if I am obliged to quote at some length from that Report. The Committee say:

“The Sub-committee were led to make inquiry in the matter on account of reports which reached them that the Ministry were dependent for their supplies of this material on one firm, who had been guaranteed the refund out of excess profits of the whole capital expenditure incurred by them during the War; that the capital expenditure of this company was on an enormous scale and their deliveries unsatisfactory, and that all other offers to manufacture had been refused. Since the early part of the current year the Ministry have themselves been in negotiation with the company.”

With regard to that paragraph, let me point out that I raised in this House a

[Sir F. Banbury.]

few months ago the question as to whether the Ministry of Munitions were returning to any firm their excess profits. Here is a statement by a Committee appointed by this House that this thing has occurred. The mere fact that a Government Department have taken upon themselves to return the payment to individuals of taxation is something which demands the reprobation of this House. What is the use of this House passing measures imposing taxation on people if that taxation is to be varied at the good will of a Minister or of a Department? On that point alone, therefore, I say that this Report demands very serious consideration at the hands of His Majesty's Government. But there is a great deal more than that in this matter. Early in 1916—here I am summarising the Report in order to make my remarks as short as possible—inquiries were made by the War Office regarding the possibility of manufacturing cellulose acetate in England. Of the three companies invited to tender, the Cellonite Company, of Basle, alone submitted their tender. No tender was issued to the Cellon Company, of London, which was in touch with the Usines du Rhône and other French experts, although they had been in communication with the War Office and had put before them their views regarding the superiority of the Du Rhône product which they were themselves using for dope. I may here explain that dope is an ingredient which is used for the wings of aeroplanes, and therefore it is an ingredient which if mentioned in the company's prospectus would probably attract the attention of people who have money to invest and who are of opinion that as aeroplanes are very necessary at the moment anything which contributes to the making of them will probably be financially successful. It appears that the original condition on which the contract was placed with this company was that it should be self-supporting and not dependent on overseas shipments for any product required in the production of cellulose acetate, or solvents producing dope from that cellulose acetate. I am now going to quote from another paragraph of this report:

"In March, 1916, Sir Trevor Dawson, managing director of Vickers, Limited, and Colonel Grant Morden, on the Staff of the Canadian Minister of Militia, approached the Assistant Financial Secretary of the War Office

with a proposal to manufacture cellulose acetate by Dr. Dreyfus, if exemption from excess taxation could be obtained for five years."

I may here explain that Dr. Dreyfus is a Swiss who is connected with a company manufacturing cellulose acetate in Switzerland which has not always been successful in the quality of the article which it manufactures. Sir Trevor Dawson contemplated raising capital to the extent of £120,000, and that is a figure which ought to be borne in mind, because the Report goes on to show that something more than £3,500,000 represented the share capital of the company. We are accustomed here to talk of millions as if they meant nothing at all, but as the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us earlier this evening, they are a very important matter, and when you have a company which states that all that is needed to meet the requirements of the War Office is £120,000, and, afterwards, its demands go into millions, it surely is desirable there should be some explanation. The War Office ultimately put forward to the Treasury an application for consent to refunding the amount expended on plant by the company to a maximum equivalent to the Excess Profits Duty. Here, again, a very serious position arises. What right has any Department to put forward to the Treasury a request that a certain individual or company shall be exempted from taxation which has been imposed by this House? The Treasury agreed, on the 3rd June, 1916, to the grant of the special terms proposed by the War Office on the conditions proposed by them, and on the strength of the War Office assurance that the importance of the matter justified such an exceptional proceeding. But, as a matter of fact, very great delays took place before anything was done by this company, and the delay was always explained by statements to the effect either that they had not sufficient money or that the delay had been caused by some other Department of the Government refusing to give them facilities for the erection of their plant. There are several other things here which I do not wish to allude to, but which I shall be very pleased to explain if I am questioned. I do not, however, want to take up the time of the House too long. Before the Treasury were approached by the War Office in March, 1916, the British Cellulose Company was formed in this country for the purpose of erecting the necessary works for carrying out a con-

tract with the War Office, and the capital stated to be required for the undertaking, namely, £120,000, was said to have been found. I pass over certain paragraphs, and I come to paragraph 28, which says:

"During practically the whole of these negotiations offers to manufacture were made by other companies."

I want to know why these offers were turned down. Why should a Swiss gentleman—I do not doubt a very excellent man—be picked out to be given what I shall show was practically a monopoly in one of the most important ingredients necessary for making aeroplanes and be allowed to make a big profit even in these times which is not nominally subject to any Excess Profits Tax? I have here the names of the companies who approached the War Office with offers to manufacture and who were turned down. The Admiralty appear to have been desirous that these other companies should have been given a chance to manufacture this article, but apparently the War Office refused to allow anyone but this Swiss gentleman. Paragraph 29 says:

"The hopes held out by Dr. Dreyfus that cellulose acetate would be produced at the new works by the end of August proved little better founded than his statement in November, 1915, that supplies would be forthcoming within a month."

I quote that to show that the promises of this gentleman were not fulfilled. I think I have read enough to show that there were very considerable delays, and that the undertaking given was not carried out. I will therefore come to the chief point in the Report on this matter. A private company was registered on 18th March, 1916, with a nominal capital of £4,000 in 160,000 sixpenny shares. I have had some experience in the city, and we always used to look upon £1 shares with a little suspicion, feeling that they were probably issued in that form in order to encourage speculation. Half of these sixpenny shares—£2,000—were held by Dr. Dreyfus, about one-eighth by Vickers, Ltd., and about one-fourth by the Prudential Trust of Canada. Subsequently, in November they issued £120,000 debentures without Treasury sanction. There is a Committee of which I was at one time a member called the Treasury Issues Committee, and any company desiring to issue stock were supposed to apply to that Committee to obtain their sanction; but this particular company did not apply, and they issued this £120,000 without Treasury sanction. In October,

1917, the firm sought the permission of the Treasury to form a new company with a share capital of 2,000,000 £1 shares and a debenture issue at 7 per cent. of the same amount. In March, 1916, the capital of the company consisted of £120,000 debentures and £4,000 in 6d. shares. In October, 1917, the firm sought permission to increase that capital to £4,000,000—£2,000,000 in £1 shares and £2,000,000 in debentures. If that £4,000,000 were being spent upon plant and factories and in doing some good for the country there would be nothing to be said except that it was an extraordinarily bad estimate, but if it is going to be put into the pockets of these gentlemen for nothing at all that is another matter altogether. We now come down to March, 1918, when a private company was registered. How it got the consent of the Treasury Issues Committee passes my comprehension.

Mr. HOLT: It was not necessary.

Sir F. BANBURY: We will not argue about that. A private company was registered under the name of the British Cellulose and Chemical Manufacturing Parent Company. In the bad days of speculation, when there was considerable experience of these things in the City, it was the trick of a sharp financier to have a parent company. He managed in some kind of way to get some sort of monopoly, and he re-sold to various subsidiary companies. It generally resulted in a loss to the shareholders in those subsidiary companies. Do we want parent companies when we are endeavouring to make aeroplanes? We do not want all these financial arrangements. There are plenty of people who are prepared to put down their money in an honest way. This company was registered with a share capital of £3,500,000 in £1 shares. Of these it appears that some £450,000 were paid for in cash. What happened to the rest? A very simple calculation shows that £3,050,000 had to be disposed of in some kind of way. How were they disposed of? I do not believe the Committee will believe it, but it is a fact that the remainder were to be exchanged and the present shareholders were to receive 14½ £1 shares for every share of 6d. they held in the old company. That is to say that the Gentleman who had put down £4,000 in 1915 or 1916 were to receive for that money £2,320,000, always provided that those shares could be realised at par. It may be said that the company had developed

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and that the £2,320,000 had been spent, but it had not. What took place was this, that gullible people, like myself, had taken these shares, and our money would go—what for? To provide new work, new plant, or new material? Not at all, but to put the money into the pockets of these gentlemen who for £4,000 received £2,320,000, always supposing they could sell those shares at par. I say that a more discreditable transaction has never been brought to the knowledge of this House. I do not know this of my own authority, but I am informed that a child company has been issued in America, and one of the statements in the prospectus there has been that the shares are very valuable on account of the monopoly given by the British Government here in England. I do not know that the statement I have made requires any further amplification. After all, what is it that we learn from this Report? We learn that though offers were made from two or three quarters to manufacture this article, these offers were always turned down, first by the War Office and then by the Ministry of Munitions. They were turned down in favour of certain people who, according to this Report, never fulfilled their promises, and when they did fulfil their promises manufactured an inferior article, and who, not content with having their excess profits returned to them, endeavoured on the strength of the monopoly which they got—and they undoubtedly did get it from His Majesty's Government—to float a company which would give to them inordinate and excessive profits.

Mr. HOLT: I think the Committee is very much indebted to my right hon. Friend for drawing its attention to this Report of the Select Committee on Public Expenditure. I have seldom read an account of a more gross scandal than this question of the Cellulose Acetate Company. There are one or two points to which I should like to draw the attention of the Committee, and, first of all, as to the question of delivery, because you may defend a bad financial contract on the ground that it was effective in the matter of supply, but that defence is impossible in this case. Paragraph 36 of the Report says:

“Yet how little this progress complies with the forecasts made by the Branch themselves is shown by the fact that instead of producing 2 tons a day at the end of September, they only reached that output seven months later, in April.

1918, and have still much ground to cover before they reach the output promised for the end of 1917.”

Read the Report through, and from start to finish it is one long tissue of false promises made by this company, and it is impossible for anybody who reads that Report to doubt that the men who made those promises knew they were false when they made them. The performance is so far short of the promise that no person could possibly believe that the men who made those promises supposed at the time that they could fulfil them. There is another paragraph to which some attention should be drawn, and that is paragraph 45, which says:

“Some of the items of expenditure deserve further consideration. The first unit, apparently capable of producing 6 tons per week of cellulose acetate (with acetic anhydride), and completed by July, 1917, was stated by the firm in evidence to have cost about £350,000. The additional plant for this product, say, 20 tons to 40 tons per week in all, is costing over £1,000,000. Two firms, Messrs. The United Alkali Company and Courtaulds, Limited, whose offers had been rejected by the Ministry, were questioned by the Sub-Committee regarding the estimated cost of their schemes. The former gave a rough figure of about £60,000 for the complete installation of a plant capable of manufacturing acetic anhydride, and turning out at least 4 to 5 tons per week of cellulose acetate. The latter gave as their own estimate £150,000 for a plant producing 40 tons per week, exclusive of the cost of buildings and land, and as the estimate of a reliable authority, £58,000 for a plant for 10 tons per week. The last two estimates include also the manufacture of acetic acid from imported carbide. Multiplication of the plant for an increase in output would cost proportionately less. The Committee consider that these estimates, which were made some time ago, should be considerably increased to meet present conditions, but even so the disproportion between them and the expenditure of the British Cellulose Company is very striking.”

It is evident from this Report that the Admiralty encouraged the United Alkali Company to manufacture this article. The United Alkali Company is a company of first-rate standing, an old-established British company of good standing, and I utterly fail to understand how it was possible for any Government Department to refuse to encourage that company to undertake the manufacture of what is supposed to be a key article. I cannot understand why it was done, but it is obvious from this Report that the difference between the 6d. shares and the fourteen-and-a-half £1 shares can come from only one source, and that is the estimated profits, supposing they existed at all, to be made out of the contract when

they were freed from the Excess Profits Tax. That is the difference, and, in the language of the other side of the Atlantic, it is what is commonly called "a take-off." There is a very sinister feature about this contract, and I am not going to hesitate to call attention to it. Who are the people who started it? The persons were Sir Trevor Dawson, a director of Vickers, Limited, assisted by Colonel Grant Morden, who is described as being on the staff of the Canadian Minister of Militia. Who was the Canadian Minister of Militia at that time? He was a gentleman called Colonel Sir Samuel Hughes, a person of the worst reputation in Canada, and who happens to be one of the shareholders in the £14 10s. for 6d. transaction. I think it is up to the Government to publish the list of the shareholders. I have seen a list of the people who got £14 10s. for 6d., and I undertake to say that when the House sees that list it will be horrified. Another thing to which attention should be drawn is the conduct of Sir Trevor Dawson. Whatever might be said—and I do not intend for a moment to say what I think—about the financial character of the concern, from start to finish the Government have been misled as to its capacity for supply. It is a very reprehensible thing for anybody engaged in supplying the Government to pay £14 10s. for 6d., but it is a very much worse thing to hold out to the Government absolutely false expectations. Persons who do that sort of thing ought to be looked upon with a very great deal of suspicion, and I think serious steps should be taken by the Government to prevent persons implicated in this contract having anything to do with them. The people who have been holding up all sorts of promises and prospects to the Government that they were going to supply articles to the Government at an early date, and have utterly failed to carry out their undertakings, ought never to be allowed another opportunity of contracting for the Government. I think we are very much indebted to my right hon. Friend for bringing this matter before the Committee, and I do hope the Government will make a serious effort to clear up what looks like one of the gravest scandals that have occurred during the War.

The MINISTER of BLOCKADE (Sir Laming Worthington-Evans): I am tonight in a rather difficult position, for this Debate has been sprung upon me without

any notice at all, and it is not possible for me to go into the details of this Report which, to tell the truth, I have never been able to read until just now, after the Debate commenced, and I was sitting on this bench. I do not say that because it was not published, as it was published about the 24th July, but at that time I happen to have been moved from the Ministry of Munitions elsewhere, and, while I wanted to see it, I have not, as a matter of fact. Therefore, I am not so well equipped as I should like to be to answer the *prima facie* case made to the Committee to-night. But, first, let us try to get on to the right plane. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, I understand—I was not in the House at the moment—compared this company with companies like those of Baron Grant, Whittaker Wright or Mr. Hooley, and others of sinister fame. Is that fair? Who are the people connected with this company? The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has called attention to one of them—one of the directors of Vickers, one of the largest contractors, to whom the nation owes as much as to any contracting firm in this country, and who ought not to be classed with Baron Grants, Whittaker Wrights, and the other swindlers of times gone by. And Nobels—ought they to be put in that rank? And the Chilworth Powder Factory—ought it to be said that they also are company promoters of a bad reputation, and ought this company to be classed with those individuals?

Let me put before the Committee, at any rate, one other side of the case before I deal with some of the more detailed points that have been raised. We wanted this acetate, this dope—it includes a great deal of other intermediate products, into which I do not propose to go in detail—we wanted it for our aeroplanes. We had to get it where we could. It was not made in this country. It was made in Switzerland, under the control of Dr. Camille Dreyfus. I am defending this, not because it is my business. It was done at

the War Office, and in the last 10.0 P.M. administration, not that it matters which Government or which office, because they have got to get dope, and, if necessary, they have got to get it at any price. They entered into a contract which, in the ordinary course of events, seeing that it included the remission of taxation in favour of an individual

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or a separate company, I could not defend on ordinary grounds, and would not defend. I think that class of contract which mitigates the taxation which is put on by the House of Commons is a contract which is to be condemned in the ordinary course. But if you have a chance of getting necessary war material—one of the most essential; never made in this country—to be made by a Swiss, who has the secret, and the only conditions upon which you can get it is to do something to which a financial purist would object, and to which I would object from a financial point of view, are you going to go without the substance, or are you going to make an exception? That was the proposition which was in front of the War Office. It is no use for the hon. Member to shake his head. There were two offers by other people who had never made the substance before. Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that they have ever made the substance?

Sir F. BANBURY: No.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: This was an absolutely necessary war material. Would the right hon. Baronet gamble upon other people being able to make it?

Sir F. BANBURY: As I understand the material had been made by another company and better than Dr. Dreyfus.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: That is not my information. The right hon. Baronet was out of the House when I opened this subject, but he will have heard that I complained—and in his presence I wish to repeat the complaint—that he raised this question without any notice whatever, so that it is not possible for me to be as accurate in the details as I should like to be. Therefore, I have got necessarily to treat it in rather a broader way, and I will tell the Committee presently exactly my connection with the matter and how much I know.

Sir F. BANBURY: I quite admit I did not give as long notice as I could have wished. About an hour ago I told one of the Whips I was going to raise it.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: The right hon. Baronet knows perfectly well that giving notice at 9 o'clock is not giving notice at all. The officers of the Department, from whom I have to collect

the information, are not in the House of Commons. The first statement was that this company was to be held up to obloquy; that it was to be likened to the notorious swindlers of the age because of its financial transactions. I say to the Committee that that is not a right way of judging, or of judging the Government, because, after all, it is the Government which is attacked in this matter; it is not the individual company. It is not their domestic concern. It is the concern of the House of Commons. It is the action of the Government relating to that company which is before the House. I am not defending the creation of 6d. shares. The 6d. bazaar has become popular. It is a democratic emporium. The 2s. share, at which the right hon. Baronet was shocked, or the 1s. share, or the £1 share—which has come since his day—these shares, the 2s. share, has been popularised, I believe, in rubber companies, and you have got the extension of it into the 6d. share. It is not a very aristocratic share. It may not be even a democratic one. I can understand the right hon. Baronet objecting to it on that ground. But the concern of the Government is not whether the company has got a 6d. share or a £1 share, or a £5 share, or £100 share, but whether it can deliver the goods! What you have to consider is whether the contract itself is right. I am not defending the principle of remitting taxation in individual cases, but I think there is a great deal to be said for this contract, made by the War Office in 1916, at a time when this was the only sure source of supply for the war material which was absolutely essential to the Air Force of this country. The right hon. Baronet introduced all the prejudice that could be introduced. He railed against the company being a parent company. I rather agree with him that that is an unfortunate phrase. I do not know why it is there. But what has that to do with the case, which is whether or not we should have entered into the contract? If the right hon. Baronet wants to prejudice the company in the eyes of the public, let him do it; but it is not germane to to-night's Debate, which is whether or not this contract should have been entered into for an essential supply. Then the hon. Gentleman opposite called attention to the fact that the £14 10s. shares were expanded from the 6d. shares. Again I ask, What has that got to do with it?

Mr. HOLT: It has everything to do with it!

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: What has that to do with the supply?

Mr. HOLT: The hon. Gentleman asks what has that got to do with it? I am sorry—[HON. MEMBERS: "Speak up!"]—

The rest of the hon. Gentleman's observations were absolutely inaudible in the Reporters' Gallery.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: That would be quite right if you could profit under the contract in the same proportion as the £14 10s. to the 6d. It is not so at all. The £14 10s. shares for 6d. may be a promoter's trick or anything that the language of the hon. Gentleman would like to convey. It does not at all follow that the £14 10s. shares represents a profit which would be made by this company out of this contract. Hon. Members know perfectly well that because a promoter calls a share a £1 share that that does not make it £1. It may only be 1d., or 6d., or 1s. The labelling of any £1 share by that designation does not make it £1, and the labelling of shares £14 10s., to be given in exchange for 6d. shares, does not make them £14 10s. But really that is entirely aside from the discussion. The question which is before the House of Commons is whether or not the Government Department did right to enter into a contract with this company. To raise prejudice against a Government and against its financial methods really is not the question, which is as I have stated. It was said that other offers were turned down, that this company was specially favoured, and that a monopoly was created in its favour. I do not know, and not having had notice I have not been able to go into the question as to what other offers there were. But I do know this: that the Department is an extremely well managed Department, run by extremely competent business men, and I am quite certain that if I had the opportunity of referring to them, they would be able to give good commercial reasons why any offers—if offers in fact were made by other companies—were refused in favour of the offer that was made by this company. I do not like the method of contracting which desires to remit any special incidence of taxation. I cannot say that in this particular case you could induce the foreigner to come to this country and to give us the benefit

of his knowledge and experience if at the same time you are going to say to him, "Having no pre-war standard, you are to pay the Government tax of 50 or 60 per cent." I will say this—and now I am coming for the first time to a part that I have myself played in this negotiation for this contract, and I can speak more definitely: this matter came before me two or three months ago. I inherited the situation which then existed, and the contract, which had been placed at a previous time by the War Office, which did remit taxation in favour of this company for five years—or, to be little more accurate, gave them a grant equivalent to the capital expenditure, incurred during that five years. That amounted, in effect, to a gift by His Majesty's Government to this company of capital expenditure equivalent to whatever sum they would pay in Excess Profit Duty. I shared, and I do share, the right hon. Baronet's objection to that form of contract. At this moment, however, this company, having a certain amount of capital subscribed by shareholders, required financial assistance to enable it to carry out a very much larger programme than what was at first contemplated. When the right hon. Baronet talks about £120,000 having been increased to millions I have to say that that is the history of almost all of our war-supplies. They start on a small scale, and the service expands, as the Air Service has expanded. In consequence supplies are required to expand and expand in the same way. So it was relatively a small demand in the early time which has expanded so much that a new carbide power plant has had to be erected. Previously they were able to rely on imported carbide, or carbide from other plants. The demand, however, became so great that they had to start afresh, as it were, and put up new electric carbide plant, and new plant for all—

Sir F. BANBURY: That is not my complaint. I am afraid I did not make myself clear. I do not object to the increase in the capital provided it was expended on capital plant, but I do object to the increase of capital which was going out in profits to a certain number of people.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I am extremely glad the right hon. Gentleman has made that quite clear, because the point I was making in picking up his statement was that £120,000 had expanded

[Sir L. Worthington-Evans.] into millions. But the demands had expanded parallel with the extension of the cash capital. I am not saying a word about the watered capital, but cash value as expanded in accordance with the demands and the supply. I was face to face with this: All that capital expenditure has been provided by the remission of taxation by the Government for a period of five years. I had either to continue that form of contract or to find some new method which would supersede what seemed to me to be, I say quite frankly, an unhappy and unsuitable form of contract. At the time I do not think it could be avoided. In the last month or so a new contract was made with this company. Again I have not the details, and I am speaking from memory, otherwise I would be accurate, but the contract itself is broadly this: that the remission of taxation, as my right hon. Friend says, has been abolished, and instead of that the British Government lends money in certain proportions, 60 per cent. I think it is, on certain classes of expenditure, and other percentage on other classes of expenditure. They have a security for the money they have advanced, and that money, so far as it is not repaid in certain way defined by the contract, is a debt by His Majesty's Government which is repayable at the end of a period. In other words, what might have been a grant has been turned into a loan, and special exemption from taxation has been replaced by an advance accompanied by an obligation to repay.

Mr. HOLT: And contract.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: The contract has been challenged on the ground that it allows too much writing off. I will not go into that. That is a detail in many senses, and, in any event, it is a matter of opinion with which this Committee can hardly be capable of dealing. All I can say is that the present contract, which, given a proper opportunity, I am prepared to defend in detail, has been an infinitely better contract in the interests of the taxpayer than the previous contract. I would be prepared to defend that at any time in detail, but my duty to-night is to defend the original contract. That is quite easy if prejudice is dismissed from the minds of Members of the Committee, prejudice which the right hon. Baronet called "juggling with figures," and it is borne

clearly in mind that we had to get the supply at whatever price it was necessary to pay if we were going to maintain and increase the output.

Major H. TERRELL: The speech of the right hon. Gentleman has been a very insufficient reply, not to the charges made by the hon. Baronet for the City of London (Sir Frederick Banbury), but to the charges which are made in this Report which the Government, of which he is a member, has had for over a week. I quite appreciate the position of the hon. Member by reason of the change in his office, and that he has not had the opportunity of studying this Report and of obtaining the information which he might otherwise have obtained. That may be a very good reason why he was unable really to answer the serious part of this Report. But between this and the Motion for the Adjournment he will have every opportunity of considering it, and I hope the matter will be raised on that occasion so that we shall have a real attempt at an explanation on what, on the face, appears to be a disastrous and ill-considered contract. I pass from that part because I want to call the attention of the Committee to a different matter. We are asked to-day to sanction a Grant of not less than £700,000,000—a very gigantic sum, and that following on a Grant made a few weeks ago of £500,000,000, that making in all the Grants made for the purpose of this War to no less than something over £8,000,000,000. It seems to me that that involves the country in a position the seriousness of which cannot be exaggerated. It will involve the country after the War in a most serious position. The interest alone on £8,000,000,000 will be some £400,000,000 a year. If, in addition to that, you have a small Sinking Fund of 2½ per cent., you will have another £200,000,000 to add. In addition, you will have the great expense which will necessarily be incurred in pensions and so on which cannot be put at less than £100,000,000. If the War were to stop before this House meets again, we should have to find every year no less a sum than £1,000,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a very interesting speech to-day, pointed out that a sum of £1,000,000,000 was one which the imagination of most men could not realise, and he explained it by saying it represented the work of 10,000,000 men for a year, a

very good way of bringing home the magnitude of the burden with which we shall have to deal.

Supposing the War were to cease now we should have every year to find this £1,000,000,000, that is to say, we should every year have to find the labour of 10,000,000 men, not the profit on that labour, but the whole of the produce of 10,000,000 men. So that if the expenditure goes no further and if the War were to stop to-morrow we should have after this War the labour of 10,000,000 men engaged in doing nothing but finding the necessary income to be applied in paying this enormous sum. How is the country to go on like this? How many million men shall we have available after the War is over? Certainly not 20,000,000, and more than the labour of half the men in the country will be taken in finding the annual income necessary to carry on. That is a very serious position, but if in addition to that the War goes on for another year we get, calculating at the same rate of the last four years, an additional £2,000,000, and a corresponding addition to the burden to find the interest and the sinking fund. How are we to do it? That leads me to this: A certain section of people say, "The bigger the debt the better for us. If you have a big National Debt you will have to have an Income Tax of 20s. in the £, and if you have that you have nationalised the capital of the country." That is what they desire. I do not know if that is what the Government desires. It seems to me it must be a disastrous result for the country, and that if we are to go on as we are going on now there will be one of two alternatives at the end of the War—either to repudiate the Debt—it could be done, of course, in a Parliamentary way, but that is what it will come to—or we shall have to meet this terrible deficit. Under these circumstances, we have to consider what is to be done. I think the Government might have considered that a long time ago. It is easy enough to spend. When the Government come down here and get advances of hundreds of millions without any criticism of any kind, without the House really having any interest in the matter—as can be seen when in the course of the Debate it is found that not a dozen Members are in the House—when the Government can come to the House and get the money so easily, then they will spend it freely, and that is what they have done. It is very easy to be extra-

vagant; it is far more difficult to be economical. It is very easy to pay extravagant prices for what you want. We have had an instance just now where the hon. Member for Colchester said, "We had to pay whatever was asked, whatever they chose to demand; we wanted the stuff, and we had to pay." That is a very easy business. No business can be continued on those lines. It is very easy to advance wages to any extent. It is very easy when the men are saying "We want an increase of wages," to reply, "Certainly, you shall have an increase of wages if you want it, and there will be an increase of the price of the produce at the same time." That must lead to disaster; that cannot go on. If you go on paying more wages than the produce of the labour will stand, you must come to a disastrous end. That is exactly what the Government is doing to-day. They will find at the end of the War that it is impossible to continue, as they have gone on during the War, paying these extraordinary wages sanctioned during the War. To-day the Government are the sole purchasers of the great bulk of the produce of the country. They can pay whatever is demanded. When the War is over the produce of the manufacturers of this country will have to be sold in competition with the produce of the manufacturers of other countries. We shall not be able to demand whatever prices we ask; we shall have to limit our prices by competition; and as the prices go down the wages go down. When the wages go down, when these great and still increasing wages which are paid to-day have to be cut down, then you will have serious trouble, a trouble which it will take a very strong Government to grapple with. During the War it is not only the wage earners who have been profiting, but, as we all know, commercial men have made huge profits. You have only to look at the Excess Profits returns to see the enormous profits that have been made during this War. Those profits cannot continue; they must stop. You cannot blame the working man if he says, "I want my share of all the good things that are going during the War, and, if the manufacturer and the dealer are to have these enormous profits, I also want my share in greater wages." But I do blame the Government for submitting to it, for allowing these great profits to be made and for allowing these

[Major Terrell.]

great wages to be paid, not because I am opposed to high wages—in my opinion, the higher the wages you can pay the better—but because you cannot pay an uneconomic wage. You cannot continue to do that; it is impossible. The time must come when a stop will have to be put to this sort of thing and when we shall have to revert to economic principles in the conduct of our affairs.

Let me give an illustration of the way in which prices and wages have gone up, as I submit, unreasonably. Let me take the coal trade. I take that, because it is the one fundamental trade upon which all other trades depend. Not only does every industry depend for its success upon coal, but the price of coal affects every individual man in the country. For this purpose, I made inquiries in the shape of questions as to the prices and the rates of wages in the South Wales coalfield. I take the South Wales coalfield, because that is the most important coalfield in the United Kingdom. We have always been told that if you increase wages and reduce the hours of labour you will really increase production. Let me give the Committee the figures given to me by the Board of Trade in reference to coal. Wages in the South Wales coalfield are all reckoned upon 1879 standard. On that standard the increase at the commencement of the War was 60 per cent. That was the rate on 1st August, 1914. On 1st June, 1918, it had risen from 60 per cent. to 133½ per cent. In addition to that, what are called war wages amounts to 3s. a day have been given. I am informed by the Board of Trade that that 3s. a day means that the percentage of wages is increased, according to the character of the employment of the man, from 198 per cent. to 223 per cent. above the standard. You have there an enormous increase—considerably over 100 per cent.—in the rate of wages during the War. In addition to that, you have had a decrease in the hours of work, and the decrease has been from forty-seven hours per week before the War to forty-four hours in the year 1917. That does not mean actual work, but bank to bank. The time starts when the men go down the pits, and it is continued until they reach the top again. The average time between the bank to bank and the actual work is something over an hour per day, so that that has to be deducted

from the forty-four hours, and as the men work on an average five days a week that means thirty-nine hours' work. The output, with these increased wages and decreased hours, is not increased, but decreased from 286 to 262 tons. That sort of thing has resulted, and must of necessity result in an increase in the price of coal by over 100 per cent. That affects every industry in the country. The other day the House was engaged in considering that question from the point of view of electric light and gas companies. They based their case for increasing the standard dividend on the fact that they had to pay 100 per cent. increase for their coal. What can be done under these circumstances when the War comes to an end? How does the Government think the business of the country is to be carried on? Are you going to reduce prices? Are you going to reduce wages? You cannot. And unless you reduce wages you cannot reduce prices, and unless you are able to reduce prices how are you going to carry on in competition with other countries? We shall have America competing very seriously with us. It is true that wages are very much higher in America than in England, but the output per man is very much higher than in England. As they have increased wages so the output has increased, but here as you increase wages and decrease hours of labour so your output is decreased. What are you going to do? You are, by recklessly allowing this rise in wages and in prices, building up a future which must be fraught with serious disaster to the country at the end of the War. There is an agitation on foot now for a still further increase in wages, which has been sympathetically considered by the Government. How long are you going on with these increases? Reference was made the other day to a resolution passed by some miners' association that they should receive six days pay for five days' work. Are you going to accede to that? Where are you going to stop? If you do not stop very soon you will increase the disaster which you are building up for the country.

There is one element to be taken into consideration in this matter and a very serious one it is. You are exempting these men from service on the ground that they are doing work of absolute national necessity. You have men who remain at home in comfort and in absolute security and who receive these high wages, and you take other men and force

them into the trenches. What is the feeling of the man who comes home after serving a year or two in the trenches, where he has been having his 1s. 3d. a day, while his wife and children have been receiving a miserable pittance by way of separation allowance? It is only a miserable pittance, having regard to the excessive cost of living. What is the feeling of that man, who has suffered, who has endured the hardships of the War, who has possibly been wounded more than once, and comes home for a short leave to find his wife and family scraping along on their separation allowance, while next door to him is a young man who has never done a day's service in the trenches, who has never endured a bit of hardship, who has only a thirty-nine hours' week, who receives two or three times more wages than he ever received before the War, and who is living in luxury, security, and happiness? What must be the feeling of the man who comes home from the front and sees that state of things; and what must be his feeling when he reads the eloquent speeches of Ministers, and especially of the said Minister who speaks so eloquently about equality of sacrifice? Will he not ask, "Where is the equality of sacrifice? Why am I, the man who has endured most, who has suffered most, who has risked the most—why am I the worst treated? Why am I forced to a miserable pittance while the other man is allowed to stay at home in luxury and affluence such as he never knew before?" Do you call that equality of sacrifice? Some day a new dictionary of the English language will have to be written and you will have to have an explanatory chapter dealing with the meaning of words used by Ministers. You will have to have the Parliamentary meaning. You will have to say that in Parliamentary language equality of sacrifice means that one man gives all the sacrifice and the other man gets all the plunder. You will have to explain that sort of thing. It is a fact—I know it—and every hon. Member who has spoken to men who come home also know it, that this matter is very strongly felt by the men who are serving. They are giving all the sacrifice, and the men who are staying at home are receiving all the benefit. Think of the position in which we shall be at the end of the War unless something is done to curtail the constant increase of prices and wages. I do

hope that the Government will put down their feet and say, "We will not submit any more to be always dictated to as to how prices are to go up and how wages are to go up." I hope they will realise the serious position in which they will place the country if they do not take that stand, and take it now. I would ask the Government to consider whether it is not their duty to the men who are serving so gallantly that Cabinet Ministers say they cannot find words in which to express their admiration of them, to place them on somewhat more of an equality with the men who have stayed at home. Unless something of that kind is done you will find that there will be a great revulsion of feeling on the part of the men who are serving, and you will find that there will be a growing grievance in the country, which will lead to very serious disaster in this way.

Mr. DILLON: Before this Debate closes I wish to protest against the procedure adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night. He has again returned to the system which I have protested against on more than one occasion of introducing this enormous Vote of Credit without giving the House any information as to the state of the War and as to any change of policy which has occurred since the last Vote of Credit was discussed. On the last occasion, I think, he returned to the earlier and better practice which was adopted in the first half of the War, when, in moving the Vote of Credit, the Prime Minister gave the House a general statement of the condition of the War and the general policy of the Government. A rumour has been spread abroad that the Prime Minister proposes to come down on the Second Reading or the Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill and make a statement on the condition of the War. That is not a satisfactory method of procedure, because then it will be too late to have any adequate discussion and the Prime Minister will not have had an opportunity of hearing questions addressed to him on points as to which not only this House, but the country is extremely anxious at this moment to have enlightenment.

There are two points which I would like to put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and would ask him, either to-morrow or, at the latest, on Monday, to give us some information as regards

[Mr. Dillon.]

Russia. Are we at war with the Soviet Government or what is going to be the policy of the Government? In reply to some questions put during the last fortnight as to the position on the Murman coast the Leader of the House refused to give any information. That is not fair either to the House of Commons or to the country. Nobody wants him to give any military information which it is considered undesirable to give, but when an expedition of this character is undertaken we are entitled to know what it means, what the Government look forward to in connection with it, and what policy they have embarked on. We are entitled to know what has been decided on with regard to intervention in the East, in Siberia, and Vladivostok, and whether it is true that the present Russian Government—a Government for which I have no regard whatever—has protested against our interference in the internal affairs of Russia. This is a matter as to which I do not think the Government has a right to commit the country to a policy which may have very great and far-reaching results without letting the House of Commons know what fresh commitments we are going to undertake. We have not got the knowledge on which to form an opinion as to whether it is a right or wrong policy, but nothing can be more certain than that the commitments in the interior of Russia are a matter of portentous importance. The Germans are beginning to find that out now. They went with a very light heart into the Ukraine, and apparently forgot the tragic results that generally ensued to any people who attempted to invade the interior of Russia, unless they were absolutely certain of the feelings of the population. I do not think that the Government have the slightest idea of what is the reception which they will get from the population. As far as we can judge from the latest information, the Germans would rather let the Ukraine alone. They certainly do not seem to be in a very comfortable position there now.

In connection with that I have been informed on what I consider extremely good authority that our propaganda expeditions—for we have sent out more than one expedition for the purpose of enlightening the Russian people—are shockingly qualified, and that the probability is that they may do as much mischief as good, and that the men who are

sent to the Ukraine and various parts of Russia on behalf of the British Government are not qualified from knowledge of Russia to do really good work. That makes the situation far more dangerous. These are matters which, I think, the House of Commons is entitled to information upon before we vote this enormous amount of money. We were told by one of the speakers earlier in the Debate that the amount we had spent on propaganda in the early part of the War was ridiculously trifling compared with that of Germany. I believe that to be true. No doubt our policy in that respect was penny wise and pound foolish. Had we spent more on collecting information a great deal of misfortune and disaster might have been avoided. Now I believe the Government are spending vast sums of money. I do not complain of that so long as the money is well spent. But I am told it is being disastrously badly spent. We have underestimated the Russian situation from the days of the Revolution, and even before. We all remember Lord Milner's Expedition. Then, and ever since then, our action has been characterised by the most crass incompetence. Lord Milner, after spending four or five weeks there, came back, and on the 8th March declared in a semi-official message, which was circulated, that the rumours about disturbances in Russia were wholly unfounded, that there was goodwill to the Entente everywhere, and that they were all anxious to get on with the War. Yet, within ten days, the Revolution took place. I had been told by friends a month before that it was coming in March. Yet the information Lord Milner brought back was quite different.

I am informed also on good authority that one of the main causes of the Russian collapse which brought us within an ace of disaster on the Russian front was that the British War Office, against the advice of their experts in Russian affairs, insisted on putting such pressure on M. Kerensky to make his advance in Galicia. That precipitated the Revolution, it ruined Kerensky, and handed the Government over to Lenin and Trotsky. M. Kerensky was most unwilling to engage in that offensive and although we read in the "Times" how he was driving German generals before him I am told that the whole transaction was absolute lunacy and practically suicide.

We know that it was the disaster which followed on the attempted offensive which led directly to the Revolution and the collapse of the whole of the Russian situation. This is one point which I press upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring under the notice of the Prime Minister, and ask him to give us some information in the House.

The second point that I do press and ask the Leader of the House to give us some information about on Monday, if not to-morrow, is this: There has no doubt been a very sharp and decided change in our policy within the last few months on the question of our relations with subject races in Austria. That had been the subject of very great controversy and debate in the newspapers for six months, and nobody knew exactly where our Government stood. There were reasons—I quite appreciate them—why our Government was very slow to declare itself, but contradictory and ambiguous statements were made all throughout last winter. Two months ago a meeting took place in Paris of the Prime Ministers of this country, France, and Italy, and they sent a dispatch to the leaders of the Polish people that they now solemnly declare it to be a prime object of the Allies that Poland should be reunited and constituted an independent State. That, of course, is a gigantic change. It involves taking from Germany one of her richest provinces and taking from the Austrian Empire the great province of Galicia. It is a very great change in our whole commitments in this War. Not only did we commit ourselves to that, but we also specifically committed ourselves to setting up the Czecho-Slovaks as a sovereign independent State, and practically to the obliteration of the Austrian Empire. These are large developments, to put it in the mildest possible way, in the war aims of this country, and, though I do not quarrel with them at all, I think the House of Commons is entitled to know where we stand before this Vote is passed, and I desire to make a protest against passing it without any information as to these fresh developments. As the "Daily Telegraph" said the other day, there must be changes in the war aims. America has come in with her vast resources of men and money and her ideals, and she has had a great deal to do with these developments in our war aims. It may be quite right that we

should develop them in this way, and I must say that I sympathise with these aims; but there is no use pretending that they do not change the whole situation, and that they are not vast commitments. To carve up the Austrian Empire and to set up these new Sovereign States is a huge undertaking, and I ask the Leader of the House to tell the Prime Minister that he owes it to the House and to the country to make a definite statement on these two matters. The House of Commons ought not to tolerate that the country should be committed to these gigantic fresh commitments without at least being given the information.

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is only courteous to the hon. Member and to the House to say a word or two on one point that he raised, that no statement on

11.0 P.M. the military situation was made to-day. I think on a previous occasion I gave the actual number of times that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife (Mr. Asquith), on previous Votes of Credit, had referred to military matters and the number of times that he had not referred to it, and I think the numbers were about equal. Of course, that is common sense. The House does not want us to talk of the military situation because there is a Vote of Credit if it is not in itself a suitable time for this discussion, and both my right hon. Friend who was previously Prime Minister and the present Government have adopted the same principle. But I quite agree that now, after all that has happened in regard to the War, and in view of the fact that the House is going to adjourn, the House would have had a good right to feel aggrieved if there were to be no statement on the military position in connection with this Vote of Credit, but in this matter we have tried to meet what we believe to be the real convenience of the House. The position every day, from the military point of view, is changing, and the view taken by the Prime Minister and by myself was that it would be an advantage to the House that the statement on this subject should be made on the last stage of the Vote of Credit instead of at the beginning. I should be very much surprised if that was not the general wish of the House, and it is the intention of the Prime Minister, unless he is prevented by something he does not foresee, to give a review of the military situation on the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund.

[Mr. Bonar Law.]

Bill. I am sure that that is the more convenient course, because nobody knows what may happen from day to day, and I should have thought that the House would be glad to have the latest possible review of the situation before the Adjournment.

I do not think it is necessary to say more as to the speech of the hon. Member, because he himself does not expect a detailed answer at this stage, but I may perhaps be permitted to refer to one point that he raised which has been raised very often before, and that is the condemnation of my Noble Friend, Lord Milner, because he was such a bad prophet. There is plenty of historical precedent for that. Everybody knows, for instance, that just before the outbreak of the Revolutionary Wars Pitt declared that we were in for an era of peace, and made all his plans accordingly, and it is common knowledge also that within a day or two only of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War our representative in Paris wrote home to the Foreign Secretary that the prospects of peace had never been so good since he had been in Paris. It is very difficult to foretell a revolution like that in Russia, and, as everybody knows, it is very easy to be wise after the event, and to say that we ought to have foreseen it. As regards the subjects with which the hon. Member has asked the Government to deal, I shall

certainly bring them to the notice of the Prime Minister, but I should like to say quite frankly that if the position is on Wednesday as it is to-day, and I was making the speech, I should certainly say nothing with regard to the military situation and military intentions with regard to Russia, and I am satisfied the House of Commons as a whole will take the view that the Government must be the best judges as to what are the subjects on which it is safe to talk in times like this. I do not in the least complain of the hon. Member having asked for that, and I am sure the Prime Minister will give any information which he thinks can be given without detriment to the public interest. I hope the House will now consent to give us the Committee stage of this enormous Vote of Credit, and I can assure the Committee that I share the feelings of other Members who have spoken that we should never forget what enormous amounts of money are involved in this Vote of Credit, and what the expenditure will ultimately mean in the cause of the country.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow;
Committee to sit again To-morrow.

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[For Continuation of Proceedings, see
Official Report, Friday, 2nd August, 1918.]

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