



# GOVERNMENT BETRAYS ELECTOR PROMISES

## MR. ALEXANDER SUPPORTS SANCTIONS

### VIGOROUS SPEECH IN THE HOUSE

MR. ALEXANDER used the opportunity of the motion for adjournment of the House on February 11st to stress Labour's case against the Government's ineptitude in Foreign Policy in general, and its betrayal of the Covenant of the League in particular. Replying to the Prime Minister's statement on that occasion, Mr. Alexander reminded him that he was a Member of the Government which appealed to the electorate in October, 1935. "In the General Election Manifesto the National Government in that month said that their attitude to the League was dictated by the conviction that collective action alone could save us from a return to the old system which resulted in the Great War.

"Lord Baldwin, who was Prime Minister at the time, pledged himself to strive always to bring the nations into agreement for an all-round reduction of armaments in a world where collective security had been made a sure protection against aggression.

"In the same election manifesto it was stated that the Government of the League was the keystone of the policy. The Prime Minister says: 'Yes, but it all depends how the League is constituted.' What is the change? In October, 1935, Italy was a member of the League, Germany and Japan were not members. Italy was already having sanctions operated against her by this Government and other Governments at the time that declarations were made. The Prime Minister has said from that Box to-night that it is no great help to the League to have Italy in; that the League have lost nothing by Italy going out. What is the difference in the strength of the League since the Prime Minister made his declaration at the election? What is the difference in the constitution? I want to know, because I am entitled to say that the charge that the Opposition is asking for war and striving for war, because we say that we support the League, is untrue, and the sooner it is withdrawn the better."

Prime Minister: "Nobody says that."

#### FAILURE TO USE LEAGUE MACHINERY.

Mr. Alexander: "It is a curious thing that when we ask the Government to support the League we are always met with the answer that that means war, and wherever it is commented upon in the country by Hon. Members supporting the Government, they always say that the Labour Party, in doing so, is against war. We have a right to resent this, and to say that it is a foul misrepresentation of the purposes and policy of the Labour Party. The sooner this is known in the House and in the country the sooner we shall get real unity behind a national policy working for constructive peace. It was very necessary to say this because we are up to the matter which is concerning us so much at the present time, the situation in the Far East, we do not feel that the Government have adequately used the machinery of collective security to meet the situation. As a result of Japanese aggression in China the Chinese appeal

to the League about September 19th, invoking Articles 10, 11, and 17. It is true it was considered and referred to a sub-committee, and I am glad to know that a compulsory resolution was finally passed by the committee and by the Assembly, but the real position is that there is no attempt apparently on the part of the League to put the further machinery of the League into operation in assistance to the victim or in restraint of the aggressor."

"That is the case we put against the Government, and I wish they could see that the more opportunities of vindication not only the honour, but the power of the League are allowed to slip, the weaker grows the position of the peace-loving nations and the stronger becomes the mood of the dictator nations."

Mr. Alexander gave a brief history of the development of the position in Japan, showing how the Government's shilly-shallying had virtually encouraged the Japanese in their wilder aggression, how the position was gradually deteriorating so far as the influence of this Government upon Japan was concerned.

#### LABOUR'S DEFENCE POLICY.

Replying to an interruption by Sir Roger Keyes, Mr. Alexander reminded the House that the Labour Party left this country relatively stronger than it was in 1913 or is to-day, in terms of categories of battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, large or small destroyers, &c. After a reference to the possible intervention of America in which Mr. Alexander drew attention to the fact that both sides politically in the United States were in favour of restoring the reign of law in international affairs (in place of force), he proceeded to demonstrate that the fact of other nations having interests in China could very well be made the basis of a general appeal through the League of Nations for collective action.

He said: "They ought to use the League and they ought to see that China is able to get arms with which to defend herself. I hope that all the sympathetic help that can be given will be given by the Government in that respect, and that instead of placing

an embargo on both sides, as they have done in the past, or of allowing both sides to continue to have it, I hope that they will give all the sympathetic help that can be given. China

Unfortunately, I am bound to say, Japan is still drawing supplies of arms from this country. An answer was given to one of my Hon. Friends to-day by the President of the Board of Trade, to that within the last three months, that is to say, considerably later than the beginning of the last phase of the operations in China, licences had been issued for the export of arms from Japan from this country, and when a supplementary question was put to the Right Hon. Gentleman, he just pointed out that there was no embargo against the export of arms to Japan. When I consider the indignation in the country, and the great mass meeting at the Albert Hall — (laughter) — I observe with great interest the reception by Hon. Members of a reference to a great meeting which was called by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of your State Church, a Church which probably has more members on the other side of the House than on this side, and to which many Members on this side have not the honour to belong. Is that the basis of the seers of Hon. Members opposite?"

"This is about China, from which you have been content in the past to collect your money, while sending your missionaries there to preach Jesus Christ to the people. Yet the Chinese have been subjected to the most horrible atrocities during this Japanese invasion, and if the attitude of the supporters of the Government on this question is as indicated by Hon. Members opposite, then we shall know exactly what to say to our friends in the country about it. I would much rather that that was not the case. I would prefer to be able to say that the Government would set from now onwards, in giving real help to China by seeing that China gets arms, and that Japan does not get any."

#### SANCTIONS ADVOCATED.

"With regard to the question of preventing supplies to Japan, the Hon. Member for Oxford University (Sir A. Salter) said that he had no doubt—

I am sure he knows as an economist of experience—that the principal sources of supply to Japan were the United States and the British Commonwealth. I also have looked up figures with regard to raw materials, and I agree with the Hon. Member. I feel that the Government will not be doing all that they can do to safeguard the Covenant of the League if they do not propose to the League the actual operation of sanctions to prevent these materials from getting to Japan to help her in making this aggressive war upon China.

"If there is to be actual trouble about that, then I do not want to run away from the issue. If attacks are made upon you because you exercise economic sanctions, and if you have done that in agreement with the rest of the Members of the League, then you must stand together and not give up those economic sanctions, and defend yourselves against attack.

#### LABOUR PARTY'S ATTITUDE.

"That is my view of what you ought to do. If that is what the Prime Minister calls 'the Labour Party asking for war,' then he is entitled to say it only on that basis. If we are to have sanctions, and if there is opposition to those sanctions which leads to some conflict, I am sure that if you have conflict in that way you will arrive much more quickly to a basis of ultimate world peace than if you let the position drift as it is drifting now. If it is allowed to drift we shall find ourselves within a very short time that our uses are being asked to extend in this country to light, not for the general principle of world peace, but in some particular theatre of war here or there for the sole purpose of defending some local British interest. There will be a very different response from the people of this country to any such appeal, from the real nation-wide support which you must get in favour of work for world peace. That is the case which we put to the Government with regard to Japan."

#### HELP TO RE-ESTABLISH THE LEAGUE.

Concluding, Mr. Alexander said: "We make no apology for raising this matter. Strongly as we disagree with the Government—and obviously we are on many points of policy, we say that if they could at this time show themselves to be really pursuing a true League policy, most towards world peace, towards the injustices to the Government of Spain, seeing that the Chinese people get a fair crack of the whip in order to be able to defend themselves, and working to re-establish the League on the basis of world peace, then we would not ask for debates and criticisms then on their foreign outlook. Until they can show us that there is to be a move towards the security of the kind we feel is to be got in that direction, they must not complain if we ask from time to time to be able to state to the House what their policy is. I hope during the Christmas time that is coming there will be a better spirit in the world. I should like to see a change in the outlook of Japan, but I do not think it is to be a move towards the peace-loving nations of the world will really not to restrain them."

### HILLSBOROUGH PARLIAMENTARY DIVISION

Rt. Hon. A. V.

# ALEXANDER, M.P.

WILL ADDRESS A

## PUBLIC MEETING

in the Walkley Council School, Greaves St., Sheffield, on  
FRIDAY, 11th FEBRUARY, 1938—8 p.m.

Questions and discussion invited. All Electors Welcome

## MILK FOR SPAIN

### CO-OPERATIVE FOOD REACHES HUNGRY FAMILIES

More than 350,000 tins of milk, representing the first consignment sent by British co-operators, have received a tremendous welcome from the under-nourished women and children of Spain. The Sheffield and Ecclesall Society forwarded £35 10s., representing the sale of tetrans in the shops, through the Society's education committee and the Sheffield Co-operative Party. In addition the society made a grant of £25.

The collections are being maintained, and proposals are to be made regarding further grants. The co-operators organised in the Co-operators' Circles and Guilds (under the secretaryship of Miss J. Evison) have assisted from the very beginning of the campaign in collecting goods, food, and money to help the Spanish sufferers.

Mr. G. Darville (president of the Sheffield Trades and Labour Council) is visiting Spain at the moment, along with a number of colleagues from other towns, representing the Trades and Labour Councils.

### A LIE NAILED DOWN.

Hatred of the Spanish people's cause has inspired a section of the British Tory press to print despicable lies as to the handling of the milk when it reaches Spain. Even before the first consignment arrived, it was stated in some quarters that Spanish Government and military officials were selling the milk at exorbitant prices or distributing it to favoured persons. This is a scandalous and deliberate misrepresentation.

The Co-operative Union and Labour Party have taken every possible precaution against any possible misapplication of this humanitarian work.

### SHEFFIELD HELPS.

Sheffield co-operators have played an active part in support of the milk fund.

The Brightside and Carbrook

Mr. G. Darville (president of the Sheffield Trades and Labour Council) is visiting Spain at the moment, along with a number of colleagues from other towns, representing the Trades and Labour Councils.

### J. R. GREGSON

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CITY STORES, EXCHANGE STREET.

## BOYCOTT TO END WAR IN FAR EAST

BY H. J. MAY  
(Secretary, International Co-operative Alliance)

In my opinion, as a British Co-operative, it is high time—even past high time—that the leaders of the British movement should issue a call to all co-operators and to all co-operative societies, whatever their size or importance may be, to unite in the most complete boycott of Japanese goods that is possible.

It seems to me that such a measure is necessary on the part of the co-operative movement in every country, if only to make clear to the co-operators of Japan the abhorrence with which the co-operators of the world view the baron's aggression of Japan against the Chinese people, and also their refusal to regard any disputes of an economic, political, or territorial character as the smallest justification for the denial to the Chinese people of their rights under international law.

That the co-operators of Japan should voluntarily declare their approval of the ruthless slaughter of women and children is to me inconceivable from any people professing the principles of freedom and peace, which constitute the basis of our movement. The further fantastic claim, as they do in direct communications which I have received from the Co-operative Union of Japan, that they are seeking to bring peace to the Chinese people and secure to them Eastern civilisation, then their attitude becomes stupefying and inexplicable—except on the conception that Eastern civilisation means Japan!

The suggestion that is made in certain quarters that such a course "might" start a world conflict is, to me, amazing, because it is shutting the eyes to the fact that the world conflict has already started, has been on the year in Spain and China for more than a year, and is steadily gaining ground.

The idea that if the lovers of liberty and world champions of democracy stand with folded arms before the avalanche of ruthlessness which Japan has launched upon China it will have the smallest deterrent effect upon the aggressors is, to say the least, fatuous in the extreme.

When there is still further the knowledge of Japan's declared intention of fanning her "Divine mission" by freeing Asia, and that the dominance of China which she seeks to furnish a "jumping off" ground for her real objective—Great Britain and Western civilisation—then this attitude of inaction becomes wild abandonment of the causes for which we stand, and the economic forces of which the world co-operative movement disposes.

The co-operative movement has not the means of government at its disposal, and cannot exercise governmental powers. But the organized movement of consumers in every country has in its possession an economic weapon of the most effective kind—probably the only one which in the present critical circumstances is capable of being understood by either the Japanese military authorities or the misguided co-operators of that country.

The whole co-operative movement should bind itself in a solemn covenant to use all the economic means in its power to stop Japanese aggression in China, and to restore peace and understanding to both peoples.

The Wholesale and the retail societies should forthwith cease to either buy or sell Japanese goods. In any case, co-operative consumers should refuse to buy them.

There can be no stronger evidence of the potentiality of such a decision on the part of the co-operative movement than the efforts which the Japanese are making, through the intermediary of the unhappy secretary of the Japanese Co-operative Union, to win the support of co-operation in every country, and to checkmate proposals of boycott.

We do not suggest for a moment that the war would automatically stop on the adoption of such a resolution. But if the co-operators firmly took the step their action would have an immediate moral effect that would have wide reactions, and might conceivably put a little backbone into the action of the Governments.

I know that the Trade Union International has just decided not to continue the boycott begun by the transport workers until they have obtained the support of the Government to that policy. That is quite an intelligible position for the trade unions to take up, because the transport workers constitute only a small proportion of the trade unions, and for several reasons should not be called upon to bear so heavy a burden until they are assured of the support of the public authorities.

The co-operative movement, however, is in a different and infinitely stronger position.

Its economic independence in each country enables it to exercise to a high degree that kind of moral force which makes the policies of Governments, and in the present world circumstances would give pause to the aggressors.

### SHEFFIELDERS, PLAY YOUR PART!

The two Sheffield Co-operative Societies have definitely decided to boycott Japanese goods as advocated in the above article. The Sheffield branch of the League of Nations Union is supporting a similar policy amongst its members. Readers, whether trading with the co-operative stores or not, should intimate to their retailers that they will refuse to give their trade if Japanese goods are sold in the shops.

The Sheffield branch of the League of Nations Union has arranged a meeting in the City (Memorial Hall on Monday, February 21st, at 7-30 p.m., when Mr. Vyvyan Adams, M.P., will speak on "The Way to Avoid War," with special reference to support of the Japanese Boycott. Councillor J. H. Bingham, J.P. (secretary of the Brightside and Carbrook Society), will preside. Admission is free.

### The BOY-who-wouldn't-grow-up And the MANufacturer that does

GROWING up is the destiny of most of us. Peter Pan was one exception.

He just wouldn't grow up. The C.W.S. is another exception, but in a totally different way. Unlike Peter Pan, the C.W.S. never stops growing. Yet there is nothing magical about the Co-operative Wholesale Society and its development. It grows when it is consistently supported by retail Co-operative Societies which finance and control it. Finally, of course, it depends upon YOU—the consumer. Ideals have been the guiding principles of the C.W.S. since the beginning—ideals of service, quality, and honest manufacture. Keep the flag flying! When you shop, shop co-operatively, and insist on C.W.S. goods.

Advertisement of the CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LTD.

## SHREDDED WHEAT

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THE FOOD FOR GENERAL FITNESS



# THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY'S PEACE POLICY

(TWELVE MONTHS' PROPAGANDA REVIEWED)

BY A. BALLARD

It was inevitable that the Co-operative Party should give a lead to the 8,000,000 co-operators on the important question of international policy. The first reaction of co-operators to entry into the political arena was that of purely defensive tactics, a phrase which soon passed into one of constructive proposals in the "British Robots" series. From this point to an outline of the relationship of co-operation to the municipality and the emphasis of the danger to democracy if we move from democratic control to commissioner control, was a natural step. "Civic ideals" therefore followed upon a constructive policy on home affairs.

The Party can claim to have brought constructive thought to bear upon foreign policy. More earnest criticism or defensive tactics are not needed by co-operators who are not completely to change the system and not merely score political advantage.

## CONFIDENCE IN THE LEAGUE.

Writing with some experience of the effect upon co-operators and the general public, we can say that the peace policy has been received in a main with whole-hearted appreciation. Details have been given so often through these columns (and rightly so) that we do not propose examining the policy at this point. Sufficient to say that our emphasis on support of the League of Nations at a time when that institution is receiving the opprobrium of powerful newspapers, naturally aroused a good deal of opposition amongst misinformed and uninformed people. The general effect in this connection has been to draw public attention to the valuable work of the League and to begot a new confidence in this extra-national authority. The fact is, of course, that the League, as such, has always been adequate to the task of settling international disputes; giving confidence to small nations and pointing the way to world peace. So much so that every audience we have addressed at least ultimately accepted the position that the future is not in League machinery but in the statesmen unwilling to use it.

## SANCTIONS.

The question of Sanctions has naturally aroused the opposition of sincere

proletaria. Generally the objector visualises a combination of capitalist States attacking democratic countries with international forces. When it is pointed out that whilst the civil police may have been a minor capitalist interest on occasion, everybody accepts the idea that the police are necessary to protect the community against the bully aggressor, and that to visualise "sanctions" as either economic or military, as capitalistic aggressive measures instead of peaceful protection and security is to mistake the whole purpose of the League and misinterpret the intentions of every decent democrat in the world.

## THE MAN IN THE STREET.

Time was when any discussion of foreign policy was so far above the heads of the average audience as to be almost futile. To-day, the man in the street, through the windows, great flight records, international travel, &c., is far more interested in these matters than heretofore. This was reflected in many questions, discussions, and general acceptance of the idea that international affairs affect us far more closely and quickly than ever before. So much so that one of the main criticisms heard at the policy outfit has been that it had been dumbed-down earlier.

## PEACE FACTS.

The proposal for the promotion of peace facts met with ready approval, most audiences realising that here was an opportunity for an early start in the rebuilding of confidence in the League: an alliance of existing democracies and an appeal to proceeding by practice rather than theory that there was something greater than nationalism. The ratification of peace facts by the National Government, state diplomats, also appealed to the average person with the knowledge that he or she had grown beyond the stage where they were willing to be tricked by the accepted international game of murder for profit.

## PROFIT ON ARMS.

The idea of the abolition of profit in armament manufacture has been well propagated before, and the effect of this was obvious except that a few "doubting Thomases" seemed to forget their co-operative experience and thought that profit could never be removed from an industry of this kind. It was easily demonstrable, however, that a Government that allowed profits to be fixed by Marketing Acts, quotas, &c., could abolish profit whenever it was disposed to do so. Dr. Addison's experience, as Minister of Munitions, was often quoted also in support of the proposal. The revision of the National Government's enquiry into the source of raw materials has been generally accepted as the only just line of approach.

## A CO-OPERATIVE ORDER OF SOCIETY.

The final point as the ultimate ideal and the only permanent solution in the establishment of a co-operative for granted. On the whole, the Co-operative Party's peace policy has stood up to well-informed criticism as firmly as to uninformed glibness. The reaction of the Women's Guild, which has given much thought to this question, has been one of general support with extra caution in the matter of Sanctions. The Guild, however, has been wise as on every other point in the policy, and is certainly helping in the great work of rebuilding public confidence in the ideal of a real League of Peoples, pledged to extend Democracy and preserve Peace.

After twelve months of publicity there appears to be no reason to vary these proposals either in detail or in general.

## NOT AN ACCIDENT

The fact that food is dearer is no accident. It is due entirely to the policies of the so-called "National" Government.

Milk is dearer because, under the "National" Government's legislation, it is sold for manufacturing purposes at from 4d. to 6d. a gallon. People who buy milk to drink have to make up the loss by paying 2s. 4d. a gallon.

Bread is dearer, partly because the wheat subsidy has imposed a tax on bread consumers; partly because capitalist restriction schemes (sponsored by capitalist governments) have reduced the world's wheat acreage by 10 per cent. since 1930.

Tea is dearer, partly because Mr. Chamberlain's 1936 Budget added 2d. per pound to the tax on tea; partly because the International Tea Restriction Committee (composed of representatives of the British and Dutch Governments) has reduced output by 12 per cent.

Bacon is dearer because the British Government has deliberately reduced Danish supplies, whilst British farmers have failed to increase home supplies.

Meat is dearer because the "National" Government has reduced importation by means of tariffs and quotas.

## BRITONS EATING LESS

The majority of the British people are eating less! Here are figures, which give consumption per head of population in 1932 and 1936 respectively, of certain foodstuffs in daily use:—

BACON.—1932, 50.0 lbs.; 1936, 43.7 lbs.

MUTTON.—1932, 32.2 lbs.; 1936, 29.5 lbs.

POTATOES.—1932, 228 lbs.; 1936, 195 lbs.

These figures are taken from returns issued by the Imperial Economic Committee. In every case, the fall is due to the "National" Government's policy of deliberately restricting food supplies, so as to keep prices up in the interests of farmers and landlords.

Bacon imports have fallen from 33,238,000 cwt. in 1932, to 8,670,000 cwt. in 1936; yet we are paying the foreigner the same amount of money for the smaller import! Could anything be more idiotic than the "National" Government's bacon policy?

Ministers plead that they have "saved British agriculture." There is not a word of truth in that excuse! Here are official figures issued by the Ministry of Agriculture showing the decline of British farming during 1936:—

32,600 FEWER farm workers employed.

278,000 FEWER arable acres.

80,000 FEWER acres farmed.

6,000 FEWER acres under wheat.

1,100 FEWER acres under fruit.

"National" policy subsidises failure, scarcity, dearth, and profiteering; but it taxes the consumer who protests himself by joining the "Co-op."

## HILLSBOROUGH CO-OPERATIVE INSTITUTE

The friends at Hillsborough have again produced an excellent programme of educational work. Starting with Monday at which from 100 to one hundred women attend the section meeting week after week, the programme is crammed full of enthusiastic co-operative work. On Tuesday the orchestra rehearsals; Wednesday: Women's Guild; Thursday: Divisional Party meetings, with a programme of speakers, debates, social evening, &c. that does credit to all concerned; Friday: Commodore's Circle; Saturday: Learners' Classes for dances; Sunday: Fellowship Meeting, one in its eighteenth year, and still conducted by Councillor J. H. Bingham, J.P. The subjects discussed here range from "Secrets" to "The Approach to the Age of Laisaue." The musical programme arranged by Mr. J. E. Poppleton, L.R.A.M. (musical director), is, as always, of a very high order. The popular Sunday Evening Meetings, reminiscent of the old Labour Club, and favoured with visits from famous national as well as local speakers. In addition to the Member of the Division, Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., we observe such names as Mr. H. D. Linn (a Co-operative member who has already spoken on "The Future in China"), Mr. E. J. Baker (principal of the new Child Guidance Clinic in Sheffield), Dr. F. T. Wood (Bernard Shaw); the City Treasurer; Mr. E. J. Young, R.N., of the Co-operative Productive Federation; Mr. E. Topham (editor, publications department of the Co-operative Union); and Lieutenant Commander E. P. Young, R.N. As well as communal singing from an excellent authority, a full musical programme is presented each evening by the co-operative choir and orchestra, together with well-known Sheffield artists. A copy of the programme will be supplied free on application to the secretary, Mr. A. Ballard, 17, Bank-street, Sheffield.

## IF YOU WANT TO KNOW

If you want topical up-to-date information about the co-operative movement, may we introduce you to two important year books? The first "The People's Year Book" (7s. net), published by the Co-operative Wholesale Society. This volume gives statistics and information relating to the co-operative movement at home and abroad, as well as much information on the social questions at home. In addition, there are a number of enlightening articles on Co-operation, Labour, Literature, Art, &c. The other volume, "The Co-operators' Year Book" (6d. net), is published by the Co-operative Productive Federation. This year book contains much useful information respecting co-partnership societies, and topics relating to workers' control in industry.

No information co-operator can afford to miss these informative publications. Anyone experiencing difficulty in obtaining copies should write to the Co-operative Union, Holbeck House, Fawcett-street, Manchester, 4.

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# SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATIVE PARTY

## NINTH ANNUAL TRIP



STRANRAER (Scotland) via Shortest Sea Route to LARNE, ANTRIM COAST, PORTTRUSH, FAMOUS GIANT'S CAUSEWAY TO BELFAST.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 1938

#### PROGRAMME

ALL TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE

- 7.30 p.m., FRIDAY—Sheffield I.M.E. via CARLISLE, SOUTHERN SCOTLAND, and STRANRAER. Breakfast on train.
- 6.5 a.m., SATURDAY—Seaside via LOCHR RYAN, taking shortest Sea Route en route. Motor Coach drive along fine coastal road via Ballygally, Glenties, Castleside (short stay), Glenties Point, Waterfoot, Cullinagh, Glenties, and over Mourne to Ballyvaughan.
- 11 a.m.—LUNCH at Trocadero Restaurant, Portrush.
- 12 Noon—MOTOR drive to view Giant's Causeway, returning via Ballyvaughan and ANTRIM to BELFAST, including Lake, through City.
- 4.30 p.m.—TEA at Co-operative Hall, BELFAST.
- 5.25 p.m.—Return by Motor Coach to LARNE HARBOUR, arriving 6.40 p.m.
- 7.5 p.m.—Depart by Seaside for STRANRAER—see hours stay.
- 11 p.m.—Leave STRANRAER on return journey Seaside on train. Arrive Sheffield 7 a.m. SUNDAY.

**COST FOR WHOLE EXCURSION - 37/-**  
(including FOUR MEALS)

Booking fees must be paid in order to enable us to guarantee accommodation. Incoming visitors should forward deposit of £1. 10/- to the Secretary of the Co-operative Party under the Voluntary Membership Scheme. Non-members forwarding deposit should include 6d. for membership of the local Co-operative Party, where membership cards will be forwarded in return.

#### APPLICATION FORM

Excursion to STRANRAER, LARNE, ANTRIM COAST, PORTTRUSH, FAMOUS GIANT'S CAUSEWAY, and BELFAST. SATURDAY, JUNE 8th, 1938.

Mr. A. Ballard, Secretary, Co-operative Party, 17, Bank-street, Sheffield, 1.

Kindly book ..... seats, for which I enclose booking fees) .....  
and membership fee(s) of ..... (\*Non-members.)  
Name ..... Address .....

## EX-SERVICEMEN'S GRIEVANCES

GOVERNMENT REFUSES LABOUR'S REQUEST FOR INQUIRY

On December 23rd the Labour Party passed the occasion of the adjournment of the House of Commons to raise the question of the treatment of ex-service men, and urged that the Government should set up a Select Committee to inquire into the pension grievances.

The subject was introduced by Mr. F. O. Roberts, who said every Member of Parliament knew of cases of men who were passed into service as A1, but were now broken in health, without pension and without hope. The matter had become so serious that the British Legion had started an inquiry, and even the Conservative Party had passed a resolution calling for a Government inquiry.

Mr. Roberts added that the majority of ex-service men had been dealt with equitably, but there were those who regarded themselves as under-assessed, and others had not received a suitable award. He instanced cases of injustice to various classes of ex-service men, and said the position was very grave.

### SOLDIERS' WIDOWS HARSHLY TREATED.

Major Milner, supporting the plea for an inquiry, dealt especially with the cases of ex-service men's widows

whose pensions have been stopped on the alleged ground of unworthy conduct. While making no defence of widows guilty of proved misconduct over a period, he declared that there were many cases where a pension was terminated without a scintilla of evidence which would be accepted in any court of justice.

The whole procedure in these cases, he said, was extremely unfair, and designed to put widows at a disadvantage. Speaking from personal knowledge of particular cases, Major Milner said many of the reports against widows were based on anonymous letters; inquiries were made and a mere gossip was accepted as truth; a committee sat in secret and decided the matter without giving the accused woman the right to cross-examine witnesses or to appeal against the verdict.

Many other cases of hardship were quoted from the Labour benches, after which the Minister of Pensions replied with an evasive speech, in the course of which he declared that there was "general satisfaction" with the administration of the pension system. Referring to Major Milner's charges, he admitted that the accused widows are not confronted with witnesses, and that the system has "certain imperfections"; but he did not propose to alter the system. The Government would accept the report of the British Legion inquiry.

## MOVEMENT WINS EFFICIENCY TEST

ECONOMISTS REVEAL SUPERIORITY OF CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

### DISTRIBUTION COSTS GAIN TO CONSUMER

Out of every pound spent by the consumer on private trade grocery lines, distributive charges for the manufacturer, wholesaler, and retailer absorb about 8s.

Out of every pound spent on co-operative grocery lines, distributive charges amount for 5s.—less the dividends that pass from the wholesale societies to the retail societies and from retail societies to the individual members.

This is one of the calculations in "Co-operators' Co-operation in Great Britain," a study of the movement prepared by a committee of economists and published recently.

In retail distribution, a comparison with private departmental stores in this country shows co-operative societies to operate on a much lower margin of cost. Costs of distribution (including average operating cost, net profit, and financial charges) in departmental stores are given as 29.63 per cent. of turnover. In 100 co-operative societies, in all parts of the country, the comparable costs are found to be: Grocery, 13.2 per cent.; drapery, 18.46 per cent.

### BIBERY CHARGES.

A section of the book deals with the charge, which it states, is "very frequently made by private traders, the result of which is that the corruption is widespread in the movement. It is pointed out that bribery is ruled out for all transactions taking place within the movement because the incentive is absent.

"A salesman will only bribe a buyer if he is paid to do so by the firm he represents, or if he receives a considerable commission on sales," it is stated. "There are no such inducements in the co-operative movement."

"There is possibly some bribery of retail society buyers, but direct purchases by retail societies from private

traders amount to only 20 per cent. of their trade. . . . The close contact in retail societies between the chief buyers and the management committee makes systematic bribery difficult.

"It might be suggested that the management committee itself could also be involved, and while this may have happened in a few cases, the general publicity given to the affairs of a retail society, and the very strict view taken by the membership of any abuse of this sort, rules out such a possibility on any considerable scale.

"The co-operative movement takes a more strict view of these matters than is usual in the business world, even to the point of considering many of the accepted customs of retail society enterprises to be various forms of bribery."

### MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE.

Principal members of the committee which prepared the book were Mr. A. M. Carr-Saunders (London School of Economics), Professor F. Sargant Florence (Birmingham University), and Professor Robert Peers (Nottingham University).

Consultants in its preparation were Mr. Colin Clark (Cambridge University), Margaret J. Cole, Mr. C. R. Fay (Cambridge University), Mr. E. Harrod (Oxford University), Mr. Leonard Woolf (author of the Hogarth Press), Professor John Hilton (Cambridge University), Mr. R. F. Jencks (Manchester University), Mr. H. A. Silverman (Vaughan College, Leicester), and Professor T. Scars (University College, Hull).

Mr. G. Darling, formerly of the C.W.S. Information Bureau, acted as secretary to the committee.

In the introduction it is stated that the C.W.S., the S.C.W.S., and the Co-operative Union provided facilities for the survey.

## BIRTH CONTROL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The National Birth Control Association have arranged a conference at the City (Memorial) Hall, Sheffield, on Thursday, February 17th. Sessions: 10.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m., and a public meeting in the evening at 7.45.

The following is the programme:—

### MORNING.

Chairman: Mrs EDWARD BAKER (Chairman, Sheffield Women's Welfare Committee).

#### 10-10 a.m.

"Sociological and Nutritional Aspects of Birth Control." Speaker: COLLEEN J. ROBINSON, M.D., M.Sc., of Manchester. Discussion.

#### 11-30 a.m.

"Medical Aspects of the Work of a Birth Control Clinic." Speaker: DR. MARGARET OWEN, M.B., Ch.B. (Medical Officer of the Sheffield Clinic). "The Scope of a Birth Control Clinic." Speaker: Mrs. CONINGTON (hon. secretary, Sheffield Clinic). Discussion.

#### 12-45 p.m.

Luncheon. Lunch is provided in the City Hall at 2s. each.

### AFTERNOON.

#### 2-30 p.m.

Chairman: LADY DESHAM, D.B.E. "The New Methods of Increasing Population Growth and Their Results." Speaker: DR. G. F. McCLEARY, M.D. (ex-deputy Senior Medical Officer, Ministry of Health). Discussion.

#### 3-30 p.m.

Chairman: CONSTANCE W. ASHBY. "Abortion and Its Evils." Speaker: DR. J. CLARK, M.D., F.R.C.P. (Medical Superintendent, City General Hospital, Sheffield). Discussion.

Applications for tickets at 1s. each, should be made before February 2nd, to: Mrs. Ware, Hackworth-road, Niddon, County Durham, or Mrs. Cunningham, "Ashdell Grove," Westbourne-road, Sheffield, 10. Telephone, 61975.

### PUBLIC MEETING AT THE CITY MEMORIAL HALL AT 7.45 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. EDWARD BAKER. Speakers: THE REV. CANON T. GUY ROGERS (Rector of Birminham), "Practical Christianity and Birth Control." Dr. G. F. McCLEARY, M.D., "Birth Control and the Population Question." DR. HELEN STANDING, M.D., Ch.B., D.P.H. (Senior Assistant Medical Officer of Health, M.C.W. Health and Birth Control). Discussion. A collection will be taken.

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## ATTERCLIFFE

The Attercliffe Divisional Council held their annual meeting on December 15th, and decided on a party of weekly meetings in the Carbrook Institute, to take advantage of the series of lectures on "Co-operation" that are being given by Mr. J. H. Pearce, secretary of the education committee. The monthly meetings will be held as usual, and members will be notified by circular. The officers and committee for 1930 were elected at the same meeting. Secretary, J. S. Worrall, 242, Prince of Wales-road; president, Mrs. E. Burton.

## BRIGHTSIDE

The annual report of the Brightside Division, including the financial report, was given at the meeting held on January 9th. Councillor J. W. Holland, J.P., was appointed president, and Mrs. F. Ward, 58, Sycamore, Sheffield, 5, as secretary.

The cash statement showed that the organization had maintained a sound financial position throughout the year. The report dealt with the meetings that had been held, including film display, addresses by local comedians, and an interesting lecture by Mr. C. W. Carpenter, the Sheffield Organiser of the League of Nations Union.

Seventy-one members took part in the party's trip to Edinburgh, and already there has been a good response to the proposed trip to Ireland on June 18th, 1930.

## BURNGREAVE

The members of the Burngreave Women's Section have maintained the usual interest in the organization, and an interesting programme has been fixed up for February. On February 2nd Mr. A. Beeli, of the Brightside and Carbrook education committee, will be the speaker. On February 9th the annual tea will be held at the City Stores Cafe at 5-30 (tickets 1s. 6d. each). On the 16th Councillor Mrs. Birch will speak on the City Council work, and on the 23rd Mr. A. Ward will take as his subject "The History of British Trade Unions." The election of officers and committee took place on January 12th, and a successful social was held on January 19th. Mrs. Austin gave an address on January 26th.

Meetings are held in the Burngreave Vestry Hall on Wednesdays at 7-30. Secretary, Mrs. E. Velland, 139, Scotland, Sheffield.

## HILLSBOROUGH

The members of the Hillsborough Division have, as usual, spent an enjoyable Christmas at their annual festivities. Commencing rather early (on December 8th), the Women's Section, in collaboration with the Women's Guild, arranged a turkey supper at the City Stores, when there were 30 guests present, received by Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Walker, the respective presidents. Alderman T. H. Watkins, J.P., was the guest of the evening, and gave an interesting after-dinner speech, following upon which Mr. Leverford's band played for modern and old-time dancing. Messrs. Mead and Bottom acted as M.C.s. An hour was also set apart for whist drive, the M.C. being Mr. Shillington. A collection was taken up in aid of the "Milk for Spain" fund.

The annual tea, social, and dance at the Institute was held on December 30th, and drew a big crowd of new and old members. The president's "At Home" was held on January 13th, when Mr. H. C. Organ entertained a large gathering in the Glee Room. Games, dancing, and communal singing completed a happy session, at which members pledged themselves to intensive work for 1930.

The Party's annual meeting received an encouraging financial report, and the annual report of the Central Executive, as well as a detailed report from Mr. W. H. Bottom, secretary, of the work accomplished during the year, including the municipal election campaign. Mr. R. Payling was appointed president, and Mr. W. H. Bottom re-

lected as secretary. Mr. F. C. Mead was elected as treasurer.

Thanks were accorded to all the officials. Membership showed an increase—apart from the Wisewood Secession—of 10. On February 3rd a dance will be held in the Institute; on February 10th Mr. C. Clarke will speak on "Why a Co-operative Party?" a social will be held on the 17th, and on the 24th Mr. A. Stringer (assistant grocery manager of the Brightside and Carbrook Society) will be the speaker. Meetings are held in the Guild Room, 120, Thurstons at 7-30. Secretary, Mr. W. H. Bottom, 2, Finsdon-street, Sheffield.

## Women's Section

The Women's Section (who have collaborated in the work of the division during the whole of the year) held their separate meetings for nomination of officials and committee on January 17th, and election on January 19th, at which meeting Mr. A. Ballard (organizer) gave a short address. On January 24th the agenda for the National Party Conference was considered. Mrs. Gethin spoke on "Why are we Co-operators?" on January 31st. Mrs. Mead has been reappointed president and Mrs. C. Bottom as secretary; address: 2, Finsdon-street, Sheffield, 6.

The section have played an active part in the sale of tickets for the N.P.U. for the N.P.U. Meetings are held in the Institute on Mondays at 3 o'clock, and the following programme has been arranged for February: Social on the 7th; Mrs. Billiam will speak on February 14th, taking as her subject "Co-operation: Its Use and Abuse." On February 21st Councillor S. H. Marshall, J.P. (a member of the Brightside and Carbrook Board of Management), will speak, and on the 28th the speaker will be Mr. E. Green.

## WISEWOOD

The Wisewood Section held their annual meeting on Wednesday, January 26th, when Mr. J. Taylor was elected president and Mr. W. Stephenson (42, Finsdon-road, Sheffield, 6) secretary. Meetings are held on Wednesdays in the Co-operative Institute, Wisewood-road, at 7-30 p.m. Membership is open to all residents in Wadley, Wisewood, Main and Woodland View Polling Districts, and includes membership of the Divisional Co-operative Party. Fees for 1930 are now due. The section will be pleased to welcome new members resident in the area specified at any of their meetings.

## NEEPSEND

At the Party meeting on January 21st Councillor Stokes gave an interesting report of City Council work, dealing specially with town planning, slum clearance, and the question of licensed premises on the housing estates. New bus routes were also suggested.

The Old People's Treat in the Neepsend area, promoted by Councillor F. W. R. Stokes, resulted in a larger gathering than on any previous occasion. No less than 550 of the old people were entertained to tea in St. Michael's (Rev. Forster). After tea a number of Corporation buses were chartered to take the old folk to Burngreave Vestry Hall, where the pantomime, "Cinderella" (produced by A. Mattan, L.P.) was performed. The menu received much notice, and the ladies' sweets in addition to cartons of ice-cream. Novelties provided by the C.W.S. publicity department were also supplied. Councillors Fisher, Mrs. Speight, and Mrs. Birch were present, and assisted with the arrangements. The children were similarly entertained.

## Women's Section

The Neepsend Women's Section (whose members assisted in the above) have continued their weekly meetings, and the following is the programme for admission fee: 14th, reports of various delegates will be received; 21st, Mrs. Ladbroke will be the speaker; and on the 28th Councillor Payley will speak on City Council work. The president, Mrs. Lee, was re-

elected, as was also the secretary, Mrs. E. Watson, 125, Fowler-street. Meetings are held in the Neepsend Institute, Manners-street, on Mondays at 2-30 p.m.

## SOUTHEY AND NORWOOD

The Southey and Norwood Co-operative Party opened their meetings on January 12th, when Alderman Harrop delivered an interesting report of the previous City Council meeting to a good audience. Nomination and election of officials for the forthcoming year took place, and Councillor R. Fisher was reappointed as president, Mr. A. Pickett vice-president, and Mr. Gulea treasurer. Mr. G. A. Holder, 84, Southey Hall-road (who was reappointed secretary), thus commences his seventh year of office. The section has organised a visit to the Lyceum, jointly with the Party, on February 10th, following upon which weekly meetings will be held on Thursdays at 7-30 p.m. in the Co-operative Institute, Southley-avenue. Residents on the Southey, Longley, Norwood, and Shirecliffe estates are cordially invited.

## Women's Section

The Southey and Norwood Women's Section have resumed their meetings, which will be held in the Co-operative Institute, Southley-avenue, on Wednesdays, at 2-30. On February 2nd an American tea and whist drive will be held; on the 9th a speaker has been arranged; the dancing club will take place on the 16th, and a speaker will be present on the 31st.

## SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL

The Sheffield and Ecclesall Section held their annual social, whist drive, and dance on January 10th, which drew a large assembly of members were present. The president of the Party (Alderman J. A. Longden, J.P.) and the organizer (Mr. A. Ballard) were amongst the guests. Mr. Ballard gave a short address on "The Principles and Purpose of the Co-operative Party." The chairman, Mr. Tyack, presided, and the arrangements were in the hands of the secretary, Mr. A. Wainwright. At the annual meeting Mr. Bramley treasurer, and Mr. Wainwright (9, Delf-street, Sheffield, 2) as secretary.

On January 20th Mr. Ballard (Party Organizer) gave an address on the annual report of the National Council, which will be the topic to be discussed for the National Party Conference. A good discussion followed. Meetings are held in the Co-operative Institute, Napier-street, Sheffield. On February 7th the business meeting will take place, on the 14th Councillor F. W. Harford will give the City Council report, Mr. G. W. Evison (Sheffield and Ecclesall education secretary) will speak on the 21st; and a whist drive will be held on the 28th, women's section.

## Women's Section

The Women's Section held their annual meeting on January 6th, when the report for the year was submitted. A substantial increase in the membership was indicated, and considerable help has been given to the Spanish war victims through the various activities of the organization.

Meetings are held on Thursday afternoons in the Co-operative Institute, Napier-street. On February 3rd a whist drive will be held, and on the 10th Mrs. Ladbroke will speak on "What is Life?" The annual tea will be held on Thursday, March 19, in the Institute, Napier-street; tea at 5-30, followed by whist drive and dance-tickets 1s. Tickets for whist drive and dance, commencing 7-30, 6d.

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## WOMEN'S NOTES

BY THE WOMAN WITH THE BASKET

### "EACH FOR ALL, AND ALL FOR EACH"

When this article appears in print, a month of 1938 will have passed, but in spite of the fact that my greeting is now a saluted, I still like to wish you all the very best of luck in this New Year!

#### SPINSTERS' PENSIONS.

You will remember that the Minister of Health was sent Christmas greetings in the form of reminders from thousands of spinsters that their demand for pensions was still "on the carpet." Whether such an avalanche will have softened the Minister's heart, I don't know, but only time will tell. But, personally, I think it will be left to our Party to pass this reform.

There are many and varied views on this question of pensions for spinsters at fifty-five instead of waiting to sixty-five. The number of spinsters drawing pensions at the latter age is approximately 80,000 and the cost to the country is £2,000,000 a year, while if the pension were paid at fifty-five, another 175,000 would benefit. And that would cost an extra £4,500,000 a year, which figure, if you are interested in these things, you would like to know, is, I think, just about the price of one battleship.

Now, if you asked a spinster of, say, forty-three years of age, who the co-operators herself justified in demanding a pension at fifty-five instead of waiting until sixty-five as a man has to do, she would probably reply "Because I think that a woman needs it more than a man does. A male worker is nearly always married, and can return to a home which is cosy and warm, and where a meal is usually waiting for him. On the other hand, I have no home as such. I return after a day's work to my rooms. I have to light a fire and then start to cook my meal. I've got both my trunk outside and inside. The result is that I am always tired, and when you have been carrying on that way for twenty years, you get to feel worn out."

Well, that is the humane point of view. But since it isn't on sympathy alone that the spinsters are basing their demands, let us have a look at the business side. A male worker pays 1s. 8d. a week to Health and Pensions Insurance, while an insured female worker pays only 1s. 2d. a week—the difference being accounted for by the fact that the scale of pay is lower for a woman than a man. If an insured male worker dies before reaching his pensionable age, there is a pension available for his widow and allowances for his children. There are, of course, additional benefits which only apply to male workers. And spinsters claim that over a total number of years their benefits are worth more than those allocated to men, and therefore they claim that, to simple actuarial justice, their pensions should start earlier.

It is also argued that an unmarried woman who has not had the cares of a family should be able to carry on working until well over fifty-five years of age. But as against that argument it is worth remembering that the normal life of a woman—and that means the bearing and rearing of children—increases health and tends to prolong life. A woman who is denied that normal life generally lives, both psychologically and physically. I read in a certain paper the other week that what these spinsters most often pensate for husbands is a cheap snorer. The spinsters who are now fighting for

pensions might have potential husbands who hadn't been killed in the war. That war happened twenty years ago; some of us are too young to recollect the catastrophe, others young enough to have a hazy recollection, but those spinsters have come enough never to forget. Some cynic called them "surplus women," which I think is the cruelest term ever invented.

There is also the view that these pensions would result in unmarried women's work being subsidized so that it would compete unfairly in the labour market. The same danger might be said to apply to male workers over the age of sixty-five. But trade unions can always insist that the wage level for men, and I know no reason why they would not be able to do the same for women workers.

What do you think should be done about this demand of the spinsters? I've told you how much it will cost. I've told you a battleship, or shall we spend it to give a woman a little case to the spirit of these women workers at an age when they begin to feel tired and far spent? M. D. S.

### ANNUAL HOLIDAYS WITH PAY

#### COMPULSORY SCHEMES FOR SWEDEN AND DENMARK

ANNUAL holidays of at least two weeks working days, with full pay, are to be made compulsory for all workers in Sweden. A comprehensive scheme has been presented to the Swedish Labour Government, which is expected to be put through in the coming session. The Danish Government also intends to introduce a similar Bill to include all workers.

Great Britain is almost alone among the civilized countries of the world in its denial of the workers' legal right to paid holidays. Labour pressure has, however, induced the Government to set up a committee to inquire into the matter.

### COMBATING THE COMBINE

A RECENT NUMBER of the "Catholic Worker" contained an article on the co-operative movement, warning consumers of the growth of monopolies. The article stated:—"To-day, the co-operative movement is such a weapon of defence as it was ninety years ago. Perhaps to-day more necessary. To-day, the small private trader is being crushed by the monopoly combines, and with that process prices are increased, because profits must be maintained. The shopper is at the mercy of the combines, and their huge profits show that they often take advantage of the fact. But the shopper has one line of defence. Bycutting the combine and organising with his fellow-shoppers into a co-operative."

### DEARER BACON, FLOUR, TEA!

THE following is a sample of prices of goods supplied by the Kettering Industrial Co-operative Society Limited, shows how the retail prices of bacon, flour, and tea have risen since the "National" Government took office:—

	Retail Price,	
	1932.	1937.
	Per lb.	Per lb.
Danish Bacon by the side.	1	4
	Per Stone.	
Flour.....	2	4
	Per lb.	Per lb.
Tea, No. 49.....	2	0
	Per 7lb. tin.	Per 7lb. tin.
	10s. 6d.	12s. 6d.

## LABOUR'S FIGHT FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR MINERS

### EFFORTS TO SECURE CONCESSIONS IN COAL BILL

DURING the committee stage of the Coal Bill the Labour Party has put up a big fight to secure something tangible for the miners, whose interests are completely ignored in the Bill. In the last few days before Parliament adjourned for the Christmas holidays a number of Labour amendments were moved for the purpose of making the Bill more acceptable.

Under the terms of the Bill the royalty owners are to receive £66,450,000 as compensation for the acquisition of the royalties by the State. A Labour amendment was moved to reduce the amount to £44,300,000, equal to ten years' purchase. Mr. George Hill pointed out that the tribunal held that the royalty owners were entitled to fifteen years' purchase, but the royalties are not to be acquired until 1947, which means that the owners are to continue to receive royalties in the meantime, giving them, in effect, nearly twenty years' purchase.

Mr. D. Grenfell said the compensation would be at the expense of the miners. He estimated that the levy already drawn from the mines in royalties would be sufficient to provide every miner's family with a house of the freehold value of 500.

The President of the Board of Trade opposed the amendment on the ground that the Government was bound to accept the award of the tribunal. The amendment was defeated.

A series of Labour amendments dealt with the disposal of an surplus and that the Coal Commission may leave after meeting the annual charges for acquiring the royalties. The Labour Party proposed that three-quarters of the surplus should be used to establish a pension fund for miners over fifty-five years of age, to improve miners' conditions as regards safety (measures), and to make some provision for displaced miners.

Mr. Gordon MacDonald and other Labour M.P.s. pleaded that as the

royalty owners and the mine owners would do very well out of the Bill, the miners should be given something of a definite character.

These proposals were opposed by the President of the Board of Trade, who evaded most of the arguments put forward, and, as Mr. Shawell said, made it clear that the miners can look forward to nothing out of the Bill. The Labour amendments were defeated.

#### WORKERS' INTERESTS IGNORED.

The Labour Party also moved to extend the powers of the Coal Commission to include the business of coal mining and the treatment of coal. The case for this amendment is that the Bill empowers the Commission to bore and search for coal, but if coal is found, it has to be handed over to private enterprise to work. Amendment defeated.

The same fate befell a Labour amendment to secure that in the directions to the Commission the words "interests, efficiency and best organization of the coal mining industry" should include the wage standards of workers, the full utilization of all existing social facilities, and works such as transport, roads, housing, places of entertainment, water supply, &c.

Another question raised by the Labour Party was that of the serious damage caused by subsidence in mining areas. An amendment was moved, to make the Coal Commission liable for damage caused by subsidence in mining areas. An amendment was moved, to make the Coal Commission liable for damage caused by subsidence in mining areas. An amendment was moved, to make the Coal Commission liable for damage caused by subsidence in mining areas. The Minister of Mines admitted that there were cases where no compensation was paid for such damage, but he opposed the amendment which was defeated. An earlier Labour amendment to ensure that the Commission should have power to deal with the prevention of subsidence was also opposed on an undertaking being given that the Minister would consider the matter with a view to including this provision.

## WHY RENT CONTROL MUST CONTINUE

### LABOUR M.P.'S PERMENT POINTS

WRITING in the "Daily Telegraph and Morning Post," on January 13th, Mr. Ellis Smith, Labour M.P. for Stoke, and president of the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils, gave some pertinent reasons against the decontrol of rents recommended in the Majority Report of the Government's Rent Act Committee.

The Report states that the Committee set out "to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the general housing position in Great Britain." Mr. Smith decried the fact that the Committee failed, or has refused to see the picture in full. He continued:—

"It was stated in 1933 that by the time the Rent Act of 1938 should have sufficient houses, and there would be no further need for control. This proved to be a fallacy, and looks like being another. I have just made a further examination of the report on the overcrowding survey; it is a revelation. Does anyone contend it is to issue and full picture of the problem? The standard on which the survey was based is altogether too low. This is the belief of all who know anything about the problem. The reports of Medical Officers and Unemployment Assistance Officers are almost unanimous in their condemnation of the housing conditions. Then why consider decontrol at all?"

"A report of the Birmingham House Improvement Society states that at the present rate of clearance of this type of slum Birmingham has twenty years' work ahead. In a recent examination of property sales I find that there is an excellent market and considerable competition for blocks of recently-erected houses about thirty years old. The fact

is that the value of houses has increased out of all proportion to the value of other property, and it is high time that this state of affairs was rectified by a reduction in rents, and by a great national housing scheme."

Mr. Smith concluded:—"The present Acts should be extended for a period of six years, while a great national housing scheme should be carried through, and an examination made of the whole housing needs of the people. Such an examination should include the effect of ground rents, road charges, and a relatively high interest charge in many cases of owner-occupiers."

How serious the situation will be for tenants if the Government adopted the proposals of the Majority Report can be seen from the following estimate of the effect of these proposals. Of the 4,500,000 houses in England and Wales which now come under the Rent Acts, 400,000 will be decontrolled next June; 350,000 will be decontrolled in two years; 2,500,000 will be decontrolled in four to six years; the great majority of the remaining 1,000,000 houses will be decontrolled in four to eight years, and any control which remains will come to an end in eight to twelve years' time.

Hitherto, the Rent Acts have been revised and continued from time to time following investigation by Government Committees. The present Committee recommends that there should be no further inquiries, and that there shall be only one more Act, which will lay down that control shall end steadily and finally without further reference to Parliament.

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