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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TUESDAY, 15th APRIL, 1919.

Vol. 114.—No. 49.

OFFICIAL REPORT.



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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 15th April, 1919.

[OFFICIAL REPORT.]

The House met at a Quarter before Three of the clock.

The CLERK AT THE TABLE (Sir Courtenay Ilbert) informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker from this day's Sitting.

Whereupon Mr. WHITLEY, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table and, after Prayers, took the Chair as DEPUTY-SPEAKER, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Private Bills [*Lords*] (Standing Orders not previously inquired into complied with),—Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, namely:

Bankers' Guarantee Trust (Transfer) Bill [*Lords*].

D. H. Evans and Company Bill [*Lords*].

Legal and General Life Assurance Society Bill [*Lords*].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

Private Bill Petitions (Standing Orders not complied with),—Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, namely:

City and South London Railway.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

City of London Police Bill,

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred pursuant to the Order of the House of the 7th April, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, namely:

City of London Police Bill.

St. George's Church, Oxford, Bill,
Read the third time, and passed.

Bournemouth Gas and Water Bill,

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Pensions Funds (Cardiff) Provisional Order Bill,

"To confirm a Provisional Order under Section 8 of the Police Act, 1893, uniting the Police and Fire Brigade Pension Funds of the city of Cardiff," presented by Sir HAMAR GREENWOOD; read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill, Tees Conservancy Bill, Tyne Improvement Bill, Belfast Harbour Bill, Dublin Port and Docks Bills, Dover Harbour Bill, Swansea Harbour Bill, Bristol Corporation Bill, Blyth Harbour Bill,

Reported, with Amendments, from the Joint Committee on Dock and Harbour Bills; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Manchester Corporation Bill,

Petition for additional provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

SHIPPING ACCOMMODATION.

1. Mr. CLOUGH asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether he is aware of the very large number of men who are urgently needed in all parts of the world to fill the posts which they gave up temporarily to come home and fight, and who yet cannot return owing to the failure of the authorities to provide the promised shipping for them even after the lapse of a reasonable period of time; whether this delay is prejudicing our trade prospects; and whether he will use his influence to expedite their return?

Sir A. STEEL-MAITLAND (*Department of Overseas Trade*): I am fully aware of the importance and urgency of the matter to which the hon. Member refers. It has been engaging my attention, and every effort is being made, with the co-operation of the Ministry of Shipping and the War Office, to secure passages for these men as speedily as possible.

WAR DECORATIONS.

2. **Colonel BURN** asked the Secretary of State for War if it is intended to grant a medal to those old non-commissioned officers who joined as instructors in answer to the call of the late Lord Kitchener, and who have trained men continuously throughout the War?

The **SECRETARY of STATE for WAR** (**Mr. Churchill**): A full statement as to the award of medals for service during the present War will be published shortly. The claims of the non-commissioned officers referred to by my hon. and gallant Friend have not been overlooked.

4. **Lieutenant-Colonel Sir F. HALL** asked the Secretary of State for War whether the general service war medal ribbon has already been issued to many units; whether it has up to the present been given to the London Territorials serving overseas; and, if not, whether he will immediately take steps for the issue of the ribbon to this body of men so that they may be able to wear it on the occasion of their march through London?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No issues of the ribbon for the British War Medal have yet been made. It is hoped to commence issue at an early date.

22. **Captain HACKING** asked the Secretary of State for War if, in view of the dissatisfaction felt throughout the country at the delay in the issue of the 1914-15 star war medals to soldiers, or those dependants legally entitled to receive them, he will give immediate instructions to have the preparation of the medal rolls hastened and the issue of medals carried out without more delay?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The delay in completing the rolls has been due to the fact that the Record Offices have been fully occupied with demobilisation work. Now that this work has decreased, every effort will be made to expedite matters.

24. **Lieutenant-Colonel POWNALL** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is yet in a position to give a decision with regard to the issue of a medal to Territorials who were serving on the 4th August, 1914, and who volunteered for foreign service?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am not in a position to make a statement at the moment, but I hope to be able to do so very shortly.

27. **Colonel YATE** asked the Secretary of State for War whether, considering that the Admiralty on the 23rd August, 1918, in gazetting the award of the Distinguished Service Cross to an officer of the Royal Indian Marine, specially stated that the award was for valuable services in the defence of Kut-el-Amara, there is any objection on the part of the War Office similarly to distinguish between awards for the defence of Kut and awards for services rendered in connection with other military operations in Mesopotamia?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the answer given to his question of the 9th April, in which he was informed that it is customary when gazetting awards for services in the field to specify the theatre of operations only, without indicating the actual place or action in respect of which the awards were conferred. If we were to republish the Kut rewards in the manner suggested, we could not consistently refuse to publish similar details in the case, for example, of rewards for the Battles of Ypres, the Gallipoli landing, the Battle of the Somme, and so on. In fact, it would mean republishing practically all the old "Gazettes," which is quite impracticable.

Colonel YATE: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me about how many awards have been granted for the defence?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I could only do that in answer to a question.

Colonel YATE: I will put down a question.

BRITISH PRISONERS IN GERMANY.

3. **Brigadier-General Sir OWEN THOMAS** asked the Secretary of State for War whether all sick and wounded British prisoners from Germany have arrived in England; and whether there

are any and, if so, how many cases of ex-prisoners of war or other soldiers suffering from loss of memory or shell shock who have not yet been claimed or identified?

Mr. CHURCHILL: According to the information I have, there are two British prisoners of war sick and untransportable still left in Germany, and there is one man not an ex-prisoner of war at present in France, regarding whose identification there is some uncertainty, and whose case is at present being investigated.

NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

MRS. ADA SIVERNS, WEDNESBURY.

5. **Mr. ALFRED SHORT** asked the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that his attention was called on 13th February to the case of Mrs. Ada Siverns, of Wednesbury, wife of Gunner Ernest Siverns, No. 81355, 124th Brigade, 37th Division, Royal Field Artillery, British Expeditionary Force, and that the case was referred to the Special Grants Committee, he will say whether inquiry has now been made; whether the Wednesbury local naval and military pensions committee recommended the re-issue of Mrs. Siverns's separation allowance; and, if so, whether he will act accordingly?

The **FINANCIAL SECRETARY** to the **WAR OFFICE (Mr. Forster):** The Special Grants Committee have authorised the re-issue of separation allowance as from the 17th February last, and arrears have been paid from that date.

RE-ENGAGED SOLDIER.

33. **Lieutenant-Colonel Sir FREDERICK HALL** asked the Pensions Minister if a Regular soldier who joined the Army in September, 1898, served in the South African campaign, transferred to the Reserve in September, 1905, and re-engaged in Section D in 1910, and, as the result of a communication from the Army authorities, re-engaged on the Reserve for a further four years from May, 1914, is entitled, after completing twenty and a half years' continuous service with the Colours and the Reserve and being invalided out after serving in the present War, to a pension allowance; and, if so, of what amount?

The **PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY** to the **MINISTRY of PENSIONS (Colonel Sir James Craig):** In the circumstances stated, if the soldier were invalided out for a disability due to service he would receive a pension at least as large in amount as that which under the Royal Warrant of April, 1918, corresponds to his rank and degree of disablement. It is possible that he may be eligible for a higher pension by reason of his previous Army service, but that can only be decided on the facts of a particular case. If my hon. and gallant Friend has such a case in mind and will send me the particulars, I will have it investigated.

Sir F. HALL: In the case of a man doing twenty or twenty and a-half years' service similar to this who has been demobilised, would he be able to obtain a pension?

Sir J. CRAIG: Perhaps the hon. and gallant Gentleman will send me the case he has in mind. I would rather judge of it in that way than make a statement in the House.

NAVAL OFFICERS (COMPULSORY RETIREMENT).

55. **Sir CLEMENT KINLOCH-COOKE** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what grounds it has been decided to refuse naval officers who have reached the age of compulsory retirement, and have been continued on the Active Service list, the 25 per cent. addition to their Active Service pay granted to officers retired and continued to service?

The **CHANCELLOR** of the **EX-CHEQUER (Mr. Chamberlain):** I ask my hon. Friend to be good enough to postpone this question. It should have been addressed to the Admiralty.

WAR GRATUITY.

61. **Mr. T. WILSON** asked whether a man who served as a ship's joiner in the Navy is entitled to the war gratuity; if not, will he state the reason why, in view of the fact that electricians, boilermakers, and engineers who served under the same agreement, but were ranked as temporary officers, are entitled to the gratuity, and whether he will favourably consider the possibility of making a ship's joiner eligible.

The **PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY** to the **ADMIRALTY (Dr. Macnamara):** If my hon. Friend's question relates to a

[Dr. Macnamara.]
ship's joiner who served under the special form of Mercantile Agreement known as T. 124, or one of its variants, the answer is in the negative. These men are excluded in view of the rate of pay received, the naval war gratuity being issuable only to naval ratings who received pay at naval rates.

Mr. WILSON: Did not the right hon. Gentleman some time ago promise to consider the right of these men to be included?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The whole matter has been considered again and again.

CANADIAN TROOPS (REPATRIATION).

6. Mr. HURD asked the Secretary of State for War if he is arranging, or will endeavour to arrange, that the example of the United States Navy may be followed, and Canadian troops now awaiting repatriation be sent home upon available British warships in view of the scarcity of merchant shipping?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY of SHIPPING (Colonel Leslie Wilson): I have been asked to reply. The Admiralty have agreed to place certain warships at the disposal of the Ministry for the repatriation of troops, but the question of manning them is difficult, and is under discussion between the Admiralty and the Ministry of Shipping. In any case, I may say that no difficulty is now being experienced in providing sufficient tonnage for the numbers of Canadians in the Canadian Military authorities' programme.

An HON. MEMBER: Can the hon. Gentleman say what class of ship?

Colonel WILSON: If the hon. Member means what class of ship the Admiralty are providing, the class provided would be of the Magnificent and Mars type, and I understand that it is under consideration that that class shall be provided at the present time.

DEMOBILISATION.

BRITISH TROOPS IN HOT CLIMATES.

7. Mr. CLOUGH asked the Secretary of State for War whether there is any further need for the retention of men over

forty years of age in hot climates like that of Mesopotamia; and whether he will take steps to ensure that soldiers who have passed this age shall be at once sent home for demobilisation?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I would refer to the statement I made in the House on the 25th of February last, in which I dealt fully with the question of troops in the East. Every effect has been made to bring home as many men as are demobilisable before the hot weather sets in, subject to the requirements of the minimum garrisons. Reliefs for troops in the East are being collected as rapidly as possible, but, as I explained in my statement on the 25th February, some time must necessarily elapse, as the personnel to form the drafts is mainly composed of those who re-enlist under conditions which entitle them to two or three months' furlough before proceeding abroad.

The danger to health which would result in moving troops in the tropics during the hot weather and the question of shipping accommodation are further considerations which have to be borne in mind.

Mr. RENDALL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a large number of men have been brought down in order to go home and then sent back, great discontent being caused by this?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I think it quite possible there will be hitches and reversals of policy from time to time, owing to the shortage of shipping and the changing conditions under which we are facing these problems.

Mr. RENDALL: Will he say whether there has been a reversal of policy in the last three or four weeks with regard to two or three regiments there?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I don't know of any.

Mr. PEMBERTON BILLING: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he gave an undertaking, in answer to a question in this House, that men over forty-two should be released, and do the War Office now propose to retain them?

Mr. CHURCHILL: All the undertakings which I have given are in the minds of the House. I have explained that we cannot release men until they can be replaced, and we cannot release them until they can be brought home through the provision of shipping.

Major MORRISON-BELL: In view of the great number of letters that we have received on this subject, can the right hon. Gentleman have some short statement printed dealing with it?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Yes; I will. I should like to point out to my hon. Friend that the events of the last few weeks have made it necessary, for the time being, to suspend demobilisation in Egypt and India.

1914 EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

8. **Mr. CLOUGH** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a number of the original 1914 Expeditionary Force are still retained with the Colours; and whether the time has arrived when these survivors should be summarily demobilised in view of their long services?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Such men as are eligible for demobilisation are being demobilised as rapidly as circumstances permit. Amongst them are, no doubt, a number of soldiers serving on normal engagements who have not completed their term of Colour Service, and who, of course, are not eligible for demobilisation.

Sir F. HALL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that members of the New Army who enlisted in 1914 have been retained and that it is found very difficult to get them out?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am afraid I do not quite follow.

Sir F. HALL: There are many men of the New Armies who joined in 1914 who have not yet been demobilised, and notwithstanding communications that hon. Members send we still find considerable difficulty in getting these men of 1914 and early 1915 who have been retained demobilised.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Everything is being done to demobilise them as fast as possible, having regard to the practical difficulties of transport, climate, and replacement, and, as I say, over two millions have been demobilised since the beginning of the year.

Sir F. HALL: Will he take it up with the various Departments specially concerned?

Mr. ROSE: Will he cause to be circulated more widely the Regulations in respect to demobilisation?

Mr. SWAN: Is he aware that some of those who joined in 1914 have been returned on furlough and are still sent back again to the Western Front?

Mr. CHURCHILL: They may be in particular categories, like those engaged in demobilising others, but that should not occur in any case where a man is not in a special category. I will see what can be done to place a leaflet in the hands of hon. Members dealing with all these points.

Sir J. BUTCHER: In preparing that leaflet will he set out the compassionate grounds more fully than we know them at present?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Yes; I will try to make it complete. I may say I am contemplating a considerable extension of the compassionate ground regulations.

MEN OVER FORTY-ONE.

14. **Mr. RENDALL** asked the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that men over forty-one have not all been discharged; that Private F. A. Phillips, No. 407786, Royal Army Service Corps, attached to the 58th Field Ambulance, British Expeditionary Force, of Kingswood, Bristol, over forty-two years of age, is still detained; that younger men have left this ambulance; and is there any reason why this man should not be restored to his wife, family, and work?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Private Phillips is not registered either as pivotal or for special release, nor is there trace of any application on his behalf having been received by the War Office. If this soldier's age is as stated by my hon. Friend, he would appear to be eligible for demobilisation, and, if so, he will be released as soon as circumstances permit.

SHIPPING ACCOMMODATION.

15. **Mr. CLOUGH** asked the Secretary of State for War whether his Department is responsible for the Repatriation Records Office at Winchester; whether he is aware that the inability to organise the handling of the thousands of cases is causing a large number of men to spend months in idleness and penury through failure of arrangements to provide shipping accommodation to take them back to posts awaiting them; and whether he will say what action he will take in the matter?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The establishment of the Repatriation Record Office, Winchester, has been increased. Officers and men are given the opportunity of electing for an immediate passage, in which case they continue to draw pay until the

[Mr. Churchill.]

28th day after the expiration of the standardised voyage period. If men are spending months of idleness as stated by my hon. Friend, they must have elected a deferred passage. In that case they would have been informed before they so elected that a passage might not be available for some time subsequent to the date on which they wish to sail. They would therefore have to be in a position to maintain themselves and their dependants whilst awaiting a passage, and this is a matter that they must have carefully considered before deciding not to take an immediate passage, as it is very carefully impressed upon them before they make their decision. The Repatriation Office, Winchester, are not responsible for providing shipping accommodation, but are dependent upon that which is put at their disposal from time to time by the Ministry of Shipping.

NON-COMBATANT UNITS.

20. Lieutenant - Colonel DALRYMPLE-WHITE asked the Secretary of State for War if any preferential treatment as regards demobilisation in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Service Corps, and other departmental units is given to men who enlisted in 1914-15 in combatant units, but who, as a result of wounds or sickness caused by active service, were compulsorily transferred to non-combatant branches; and, if not, whether he will issue instructions that such men have priority over men who originally enlisted in non-combatant branches?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I regret I cannot entertain my hon. and gallant Friend's suggestion. Men who were transferred from fighting arms of the Service to departmental corps must for the present be treated under the conditions appertaining to the corps to which they have been transferred. If their qualifications are such as to render them demobilisable, they are being demobilised as occasion permits, subject to their liability to be temporarily retained until they can be replaced or their services dispensed with.

Lieutenant-Colonel DALRYMPLE-WHITE: Yes, but will priority be given to such men, or will two men, for example, who joined the Royal Army Service Corps on the same day, one of whom enlisted for the R.A.S.C. and the other for Infantry, receive identical treatment as regards demobilisation?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, the man has been transferred to this corps, and he will be demobilised in that corps, according to age and length of service which he has as a soldier, and not given any special favour or priority over other men in the corps.

LABOUR CORPS (AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES).

25. Mr. SPOOR asked whether it has been decided to withdraw all soldiers in agricultural companies of the Labour Corps, together with those men of other units attached to the Labour Corps who are at present working on the land; and whether, in view of the approaching seed-time and the effect of removing labour from the land at this period, this decision will be reconsidered?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. This decision was arrived at by the Cabinet after very careful consideration of all the aspects of the matter, and I regret that it cannot be reconsidered from the military point of view.

MEN IN THE FIFTIES

26. Sir CLEMENT KINLOCH-COOKE asked the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that a number of 1914 and 1915 men, some of whom have reached the age of fifty-five, are still detained in France on ammunition lorries; and whether, in view of the fact that the Government have seen fit to release from prison those men who style themselves conscientious objectors, he will take the necessary means to see that these men who entered the Service in 1914 and 1915 are demobilised?

Mr. CHURCHILL: It is no doubt the case that some men who are eligible for demobilisation have not yet been released, but the number demobilised since the Armistice is now approximately two and a half millions. This has entailed a vast amount of work and organisation and I do not think there should be any cause for complaint. Every effort is being made to release the remainder of those who are demobilisable at the earliest possible moment. I should think it extremely unlikely that men in the fifties are being retained, although there might be a small number of exceptional cases. If any specific cases are brought to notice steps will be taken to expedite their release.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how the Gov-

ernment reconcile the discrimination between these two classes—the conscientious objectors and the others?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That would mean an argument.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: Not necessarily.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

The following question stood on the Paper in the name of **Colonel WEDGWOOD:**

28. To ask the Secretary of State for War whether conscientious objectors who have returned to their unit at the expiration of their sentences, and are now awaiting court-martial, will be discharged from the Army, or whether they are to be re-court-martialled in spite of the statement on 3rd April?

Colonel WEDGWOOD: As I have received from the right hon. Gentleman privately satisfactory assurances on this point, I do not propose to put this question.

2ND DEVON REGIMENT.

9. **Mr. LAMBERT** asked the Secretary of State for War if, when the 2nd Devon Regiment, whose record in the War was the subject of a special French order of the day, returns to England, they will be permitted a special parade and reception at Exeter, the depot of the regiment and the capital of the county?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a similar question asked by the hon. and gallant Member for Totnes on the 1st April. The battalion mentioned will return from France as a cadre, but the date of its return is not yet known. The General Officers Commanding-in-Chief in the various commands have been instructed to communicate with lords lieutenant, lord mayors, and other authorities and to ascertain their wishes as regards the holding of triumphal processions in the big towns later on in the year. The General Officers Commanding will afford every facility and full co-operation in carrying out such processions.

Mr. LAMBERT: Will due notice be given to the civic authorities of Exeter as to when the regiment will return?

Mr. CHURCHILL: We are trying to give the longest possible notice, and I will see that the request of my right hon. Friend receives full attention.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

MEN IMPRISONED IN EGYPT.

13. **Colonel WEDGWOOD** asked the Secretary of State for War whether any, and, if so, how many men are still imprisoned in Egypt for refusing to accept transference from the Royal Army Medical Corps to combatant units; how long these men have been in prison; and whether he will now order their immediate release?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am making enquiries regarding this question, but am unable to make any statement to-day.

TRENCHES (COUNTRY DISTRICTS).

16. **Major WHELER** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a number of the trenches dug in the Sittingbourne district and throughout the country districts generally have not yet been filled in; that barbed wire entanglements still remain fixed, with the result that the land taken by the military authorities for these purposes is useless for cultivation, and the cultivation of surrounding land is impeded; and what steps he proposes to take to remove these obstructions to agricultural work?

Mr. FORSTER: I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the very full answers given on the 17th and 26th March to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Epping and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford, respectively. The arrangements for local settlement under the Defence of the Realm Losses Commission, referred to in the two answers quoted, have now been completed and were put into operation by an Army Council Instruction issued on 3rd April.

Major WHELER: May I take it that these trenches are to be dealt with?

Mr. FORSTER: Yes, Sir; I hope as quickly as possible.

GERMAN POST OFFICES (OCCUPIED TERRITORY).

17 and 18. **Mr. EVELYN CECIL** asked the Secretary of State for War (1) whether he can yet say what control, if any, has been taken over German civilian post offices in the territory under British

[Mr. Cecil.]

military occupation in respect of letters destined for the occupied territory itself, Germany and other enemy countries, Great Britain or her allied countries, and neutral countries; (2) whether a decision has now been arrived at as to the advisability of establishing a British administration of German post offices in the occupied territory, under which postage stamps would be surcharged G.R.I., postal salaries would be paid by the British Government, and profits would be received by the British Government as contributory to the German indemnity?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I regret that I have not yet received the Report from overseas which is necessary to enable me to answer these questions, but, as stated in previous answers, I am endeavouring to expedite matters. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will wait till he hears from me before putting down his questions again.

ARMY OFFICERS' GRATUITIES.

19. **Lieutenant-Colonel DALRYMPLE-WHITE** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a sense of grievance and injustice has been aroused in the minds of Territorial officers who, during the course of the War, accepted Regular commissions by the fact that their gratuities are based on a far lower scale than if they had continued in the Territorial Force; and whether he will take steps to remove this inequality?

Mr. FORSTER: Territorial Force officers who have adopted the Army as their future career receive the Regular officer's gratuity. The special gratuity issued to Territorial Force officers under Article 497 of the Royal Warrant is intended to assist them to re-establish themselves on their return to civil life.

SOLDIERS' LEAVE.

21. **Mr. HURD** asked whether special leave granted for such purposes as to bury a soldier's mother is counted as ordinary overseas leave?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The grant of leave from France is a matter which is dealt with by the military authorities there, but, so far as I am aware, leave granted to any officer or man from France for any pur-

pose whatever counts as leave, and therefore the individual who is granted leave in the circumstances stated by my hon. Friend would be placed at the bottom of the leave roster on return to France.

Mr. BILLING: As there is no particular stress on the Western Front at the present time, will the right hon. Gentleman consider the giving of compassionate leave?

Mr. CHURCHILL: There is a certain amount of accommodation and transportation for men going on leave, and I have done my utmost to have it made as large as possible. The leave has got to be shared among the men, and any man who gets leave on compassionate or other grounds gets it at the expense of someone else. I am afraid, although the rule may seem hard, it is absolutely inevitable.

23. **Mr. HURD** asked the Secretary of State for War whether it is because of climatic conditions and disability in respect of home leave that two months' furlough, on completion of the period of service, is now being offered to the Relief Force for Russia, and whether, in the light of this decision and in view of his promised reconsideration of the matter, he will also grant special treatment to the men who have been serving under exceptional climatic conditions and are now returning from distant theatres without having enjoyed any home leave since their departure from England in 1914-15?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The offer of two months' furlough to men joining the Relief Force for Russia is made as an inducement to attract men to volunteer for this force. As regards the later part of the question, I regret that I cannot at the present time consider service in the Middle East or other theatres as a claim for additional leave. I might mention, however, that arrangements have been made to grant special leave to men who have returned suffering from malaria attributable to long service in Salonika and the East generally.

MILITARY MASSEUSES (PAY).

29. **Sir J. BUTCHER** asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether any decision has yet been reached as to the increase of pay of military masseuses; and, if not, whether, in view

of the long time during which this question has been under consideration, he can state when a decision will be reached?

Mr. FORSTER: I hope a decision will be reached very shortly.

Sir J. BUTCHER: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that considerable time has elapsed already?

Mr. FORSTER: I am very disappointed, but I cannot say a decision has been arrived at. I hoped to have been able to announce it, but I cannot.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS.

30. **Colonel WEDGWOOD** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that there are three conscientious objectors still in Maidstone Prison who have been there without a single day's break since June, 1916; whether he is also aware that these men were sentenced to death in France, these sentences afterwards being commuted to ten years' penal servitude; and if he will say why these men have not been released from prison with other men who have served two years' imprisonment?

The **SECRETARY OF STATE** for the **HOME DEPARTMENT** (**Mr. Shortt**): The men referred to have been released.

MINES INSPECTION.

31. **Mr. CASEY** asked the Home Secretary whether mines inspectors or other competent persons are authorised to examine and report to the Home Office on the efficiency or otherwise of all colliery visual signal indicators; and, if so, whether he can say if such indicators correctly record the signals to give confidence to the winding engineman in complying with the signal registered?

Mr. SHORTT: No. 95 of the General Regulations under the Coal Mines Act, 1911, requires the provision of effective visual indicators. The mines inspectors have power to examine these appliances, and it is their duty to enforce the Regulation, and the matter is one to which they have been, and are, giving special attention. There are several types of efficient indicators which have been installed at a large number of mines. During the War some difficulty was experienced in getting

a supply, but this is now disappearing, and a circular is about to be issued from the Home Office to colliery owners and managements to call their attention to the necessity of a full and immediate compliance with the Regulation.

32. **Mr. CASEY** asked the Home Secretary whether mines inspectors or other competent persons are authorised to examine and report to the Home Office if overwinding machinery at collieries is in satisfactory working order, so as to prevent overwinding accidents; and, if so, what is the period between one inspection and another?

Mr. SHORTT: The manager of the mine is required, under Section 66 of the Coal Mines Act, to appoint a competent person, whose duty it is to examine thoroughly the machinery in actual use for winding persons at least once in every twenty-four hours, and to make a full and accurate report of the result of the examination; and the Section provides that these reports shall be recorded without delay in a book kept at the mine for the purpose and accessible to the workmen. It is the duty of the mines inspectors, in the course of their inspections, to check the observance of these requirements, and they frequently examine and report on the overwinding appliances.

Mr. STANTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman any information to give us as to encouraging inventors of safety appliances for overwinding?

Mr. SHORTT: I should require notice of that question.

ENGLISH MAIL. NEWTOWNARDS.

41. **Mr. T. W. BROWN** asked the Postmaster-General on what grounds the fee for delivery of the English mail to a special messenger of the Irish Tapestry Company at the Post Office, Newtownards, has recently been increased from £1 1s. to £3 10s. per annum; whether letters received by the ordinary postal delivery of the English mail in Newtownards can be answered by the outgoing English mail at 1.39 p.m. on the same day; and whether, in view of the fact that delivery to a special messenger at the post office means the saving of a day in the transaction of business, he will take steps to restore the former charge of £1 1s.?

The **POSTMASTER-GENERAL** (Mr. Illingworth): I have asked for a report upon the matter, and will communicate the result to the hon. Member.

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 "GOEBEN" (ESCAPE).

44. **Commander BELLAIRS** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state on what date the Troubridge court-martial was held; whether it was held with closed doors; and on what date the Order in Council became operative enabling these Courts to be held with closed doors?

The **FIRST LORD** of the **ADMIRALTY** (Mr. Long): The answer to the first part of the question is, from the 5th to the 9th November, 1914. As regards the second part, I must refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the replies to his previous questions of the 3rd, 5th, and 19th December, 1917. As regards the last part of the question, the Order in Council establishing the general procedure now embodied in Article 670 of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions in this matter became operative on the 23rd May, 1916.

59. **Commander BELLAIRS** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty the name of the president and the ranks of the remaining officers constituting the court-martial on Admiral Troubridge for the escape of the "Goeben" in 1914?

Mr. LONG: The president of the court-martial was Admiral Sir George Le Clerc Egerton, K.C.B., then Commander-in-Chief on the Plymouth Station. The ranks of the remaining members of the Court were one vice-admiral, three rear-admirals, four captains, R.N., together with a paymaster-in-chief as Deputy-Judge Advocate of the Fleet.

Commander BELLAIRS: As I have already given notice, I will draw attention to the question, of the escape of the "Goeben" and the failure to publish the proceedings of the court-martial on the Adjournment this evening.

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 MERCHANT TONNAGE.

35. **Major BARNES** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Shipping Controller if he will cause to be issued a weekly Return of the number of vessels of over 500 tons deadweight actually being

loaded with coal cargoes and the number awaiting turns to load such cargoes in the United Kingdom, together with the total deadweight carrying capacity in each case?

Colonel WILSON: I should strongly deprecate the very considerable expenditure of time and labour that would be required in the preparation of such Returns, but if there is any specific point on which the hon. and gallant Member desires information, I shall be happy to supply it.

36. **Major BARNES** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Shipping Controller if he will explain the principle adopted in the selection of tonnage for direction to carry cargoes at low scheduled rates, saying whether tramp tonnage owned by the Ministry is so employed, and, if so, its percentage; whether liner-owned tramp tonnage is employed in the same way; and, if so, to what extent compared with other tramp steamers, both State and privately owned?

Colonel WILSON: In the selection of tonnage for the carriage of British Government cargoes at Government rates, the suitability of the available vessels is necessarily to a considerable extent the determining factor, but, so far as possible, care is taken to avoid the imposition of an undue amount of Government service upon any particular owner. In addition to the privately-owned vessels so selected, all Government-owned vessels are employed on Government work. The fact that a tramp steamer may happen to be owned by a company which also owns liner vessels in no way affects the selection on the lines indicated above, and such vessels are treated in precisely the same manner as other tramp steamers. The last part of the question does not, therefore, arise.

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 TROOPSHIPS (HOMEWARD BOUND).

37. **Colonel YATE** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Shipping Controller how many troopships homeward bound from Australia will be diverted *via* India; how many prize ships will be made use of for the conveyance of passengers from India during the month of May; and for how many passengers will accommodation be thus provided in addition to that provided during April?

Colonel WILSON: The number of troopships homeward bound from Australia diverted *via* India and expected to make May embarkation there is seven, and the accommodation available for ordinary passengers is about 1,000 first-class and 250 second-class. Information as to the accommodation in the prize ships at the disposal of the Indian Government is not available here.

SALVAGE (STEAMSHIP
"ERNASTON").

42. Mr. STEWART asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the steamer "Ernaston," of Glasgow, was picked up in the Channel in heavy weather, torpedoed and abandoned, during the winter of 1917 by a small party of Royal Navy and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve officers and men; that all those engaged in the operation carried it through at risk to their lives, and that the steamer "Ernaston" was eventually repaired at the taxpayers' expense and handed back to her owner at a time when the earning power of such a vessel was very high indeed; and if he will say whether any recognition of the salvage of this steamer under exceptionally gallant circumstances, at a time when shipping was invaluable to the country, has ever been made by the Admiralty in the way of decorations or of salvage money?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The steamship "Ernaston" was salvaged in November, 1916. No decorations were awarded for this service, but appreciation was expressed by the Admiralty to the officers and men concerned. The "Ernaston" was in Government service, and the salvors were not permitted to claim for their services, on the principle that it was the duty of officers and men of His Majesty's ships to save an Admiralty collier.

Mr. STEWART: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is a very strong feeling in the Navy that these and other services of a similar nature have not been adequately recompensed?

Dr. MACNAMARA: I do not know whether my hon. Friend means as regards decorations or appreciations or in payment for salvage. But both these points will be looked into again.

Sir F. HALL: If the "Ernaston" had been salvaged by ordinary sailors would

salvage have been payable? If so, why should not the men of the Navy receive salvage in like manner?

Dr. MACNAMARA: That is precisely the point that my hon. Friend desires to get at. I have said it will be considered.

BRITISH NAVY.

NAVAL OFFICERS (RETIRED PAY).

43. Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the policy of suspending the retired pay of naval officers called out for service and paying these officers active service pay plus 28 per cent. of the same has been submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown with a view to determining whether the suspension of the retired pay is legal?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The question has not been referred to the Law Officers of the Crown, but I am advised that the legality of the practice of suspending retired pay would appear to be implicit in Section 3 of the Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865, and the various Orders in Council framed thereunder.

Sir C. KINLOCH-COOKE: In view of the fact that the case of military officers in the matter of retired pay is not suspended as in the case of naval officers, will the right hon. Gentleman submit a case to the law officers of the Crown and promulgate the answer?

Dr. MACNAMARA: I have no authority to say that it shall be submitted, but I will put my hon. Friend's representations before the proper authorities, though the different practice of one Department and another is no ground upon which to claim to submit a case to the law officers.

OUT-OF-WORK DONATION.

TOTAL AMOUNT.

45. Major NEWMAN asked the Prime Minister whether he will give to date the total amount that has been paid in Government unemployment donation since the conclusion of hostilities?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY of LABOUR (Mr. Wardle): I have been asked to reply to this question. The total amount paid in

[Mr. Wardle.]
out-of-work donation from the conclusion of hostilities up to 4th April, 1919, is approximately £14,300,000.

Colonel THORNE: Have the Government taken into consideration what would have happened if unemployment pay had not been paid?

Sir F. HALL: Men would have worked more.

Mr. JOHN JONES: How much has been paid to the profiteers?

Mr. DEPUTY - SPEAKER: Order, order!

IRELAND (PROGRESSIVE DECLINE).

69. Sir J. BUTCHER asked the Minister of Labour the numbers of men, women, and young persons in Ireland, respectively, who have been in receipt of out-of-work donations for each week in March, and the amounts paid in respect of such donations each week?

Mr. WARDLE: I am circulating a full statement in the OFFICIAL REPORT. I may say that there is a progressive decline.

The following is the reply referred to:

	Week ended 7 March, 1919.	Week ended 14 March, 1919.	Week ended 21 March, 1919.	Week ended 28 March, 1919.
Men ...	63,039	41,003	39,958	43,566
Boys ...	2,205	836	503	352
Women...	25,445	15,187	14,440	7,442
Girls ...	1,348	956	788	473
Totals	92,037	57,982	55,689	51,833
Total pay- ments...	£ 142,000	£ 88,000	£ 65,000	£ 77,000

EDGWARE ROAD EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

68. Mr. MALLABY-DEELEY asked the Minister of Labour how many women are receiving unemployment pay from the Employment Bureau in Edgware Road; how many applications have been received there for women, especially domestic servants; and whether any women have been refused unemployment pay because they have not taken up offers made to them by the Bureau?

Mr. WARDLE: The number of women who received unemployment pay from the Employment Exchange in Edgware Road,

during the week ended April 4th, was 2,730. The number of vacancies for women on the books of this Exchange at the same date was 1,677, including 1,219 for domestic service; 409 of these vacancies are for day girls and char-women, and 732 for resident domestic servants. The number of women whose donations have been suspended at this particular Exchange for refusing suitable work since the commencement of the scheme is 674.

CENTRAL CONTROL BOARD (LIQUOR TRAFFIC).

46. Major CHRISTOPHER LOWTHER asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware that the salary of the general manager of the Liquor Control Board in Carlisle has been raised from £2,000 to £2,300 per annum, and whether such increase is due to the acquirement by the Board of the Maryport brewery undertaking?

The DEPUTY-MINISTER of MUNITIONS (Mr. Kellaway): My hon. and gallant Friend has been misinformed. There has been no increase in the general manager's salary since his appointment, nearly three years ago.

47. Mr. CARR asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the termination of the powers of the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic) within twelve months from the end of the War, he is aware that the Board is continuing its activities in Cumberland in the acquirement and extension, alteration, and closing of licensed premises; and if he will say what steps are being taken to secure that the present operations of the Board shall not conflict with the pledge of the Government that the establishment of the Board raised no issue beyond the period of the War?

Mr. KELLAWAY: The action of the Board is limited to the discharge of its obligations as the authority responsible for the proper control of the liquor traffic within the existing direct control area. This area is not being extended, and there is no idea of prejudging matters which must come up for subsequent decision.

Major LOWTHER: Is it not the fact that the arbitrary activities of the Board are a real and just cause for complaint, and cannot some restriction be put upon them while they are being inquired into?

Mr. KELLAWAY: If my hon. and gallant Friend will call my attention to any particular instance, I shall be glad to examine it.

IRELAND (SELF-GOVERNMENT).

48. Major MALONE asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the present prospect of peace, he is prepared to appoint a Committee of this House, representing all parties, to formulate a scheme of self-government for Ireland within the Empire that may give satisfaction to all who wish to see the Irish question settled on constitutional lines?

Mr. BONAR LAW (Leader of the House): I am afraid that the suggestion of my hon. Friend would not be likely to produce the desired result.

Major MALONE: Am I to understand from that reply that the measure already on the Statute Book for the government of Ireland is to be put into operation immediately on the declaration of peace?

Mr. BONAR LAW: No; I think it would be a mistake to have that idea.

Captain WEDGWOOD BENN: May I ask whether we are right in assuming that the Chief Secretary's statement the other day represents the full Government policy with respect to Ireland?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The Chief Secretary's statement, which I heard, represents the present policy of His Majesty's Government.

An HON. MEMBER: More bullets!

CASEMENT BRIGADE.

49. Commander Viscount CURZON asked the Prime Minister if any soldiers belonging to the Casement Brigade have been repatriated to this country; if so, can any statement be made as to their number and present whereabouts; and what action, if any, it is intended to take in the matter?

Mr. CHURCHILL: A number of these men have been repatriated. According to my present information, the number actually repatriated to date is thirty-three, besides the two who figured in the Casement trial. The whereabouts of the men are known, though they are not

actually I understand in custody. The case of these men is now under the consideration of the Government.

Lieutenant-Commander KENWORTHY: May I inquire if any action is intended to be taken against Ukrainians who joined the Germans, and are fighting against us on the lines of the Casement Brigade?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That does not arise out of this question.

EX-GERMAN FLEET (DISPOSAL).

50. Viscount CURZON asked the Prime Minister if any statement can now be made as to the disposal of the ex-German Fleet?

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is impossible at present to make any statement on the subject.

INCOME TAX.

MARRIED PERSONS.

51. Mr. GODFREY LOCKER-LAMPSON asked the Prime Minister whether the Cabinet as a whole have considered the question of altering the present system of Income Tax on married persons?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The Budget as a whole will, of course, be considered by the Cabinet before its introduction.

Mr. LOCKER-LAMPSON: Has this particular question been considered?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I have no doubt, largely owing to the perseverance of my hon. Friend, that it has been considered by individual members of the Cabinet, but not by the Cabinet as a whole.

57. Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the possibility of paying for the cost of removing the joint Income Tax assessment on married persons out of a higher tax on large incomes?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I can only give the same answer to my hon. Friend. I am unable to anticipate my Budget statement.

58. Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON asked whether repayment of tax on a married woman's income is in any cases made not to her but to her husband?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: The position was explained to my hon. Friend in a reply given by the Secretary to the Treasury on the 27th February last.

BRITISH PROPERTY IN GERMANY.

52. **Sir J. BUTCHER** asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware that many British subjects have large sums owing to them by German debtors and have or had on the outbreak of War property and assets of large amount in Germany which have been seized or confiscated or otherwise disposed of; whether, in order to liquidate the claims of these British subjects, he will endeavour to secure as part of our peace terms with Germany that these claims shall be set off against and paid out of the moneys, property, and assets of German subjects in this country; and what other arrangements have been or will be made for securing payment of these claims by British subjects?

Mr. BONAR LAW: This subject is being considered in connection with the Peace Conference, and I cannot at present make any statement in regard to it.

Sir J. BUTCHER: Will that arrangement be ultimately embodied in the peace terms?

Mr. BONAR LAW: That is the intention.

REVENUE BILL.

53. **Mr. G. LOCKER-LAMPSON** asked the Prime Minister whether the Government intend to introduce a Revenue Bill this year?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not anticipate that it will be necessary to introduce a Revenue Bill this year, but I must reserve my right to do so if circumstances should make that course desirable.

Mr. LOCKER-LAMPSON: Is it not a fact that only on the Revenue Bill one can discuss the administration of the Income Tax as distinct from the incidence of the tax?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: No; I think not. I fancy that any questions which my hon. Friend wants to raise could be raised either on one of the Votes or in connection with the Budget.

BEER OUTPUT.

56. **Sir J. D. REES** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can give the House any information regarding the future taxation of beer.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir. I am unable to anticipate my Budget statement.

Sir J. D. REES: Was the statement entirely unauthorised which appeared to anticipate the Budget in the "Times" a few days ago on this very subject?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: I am not responsible for what may appear in the "Times."

63. **Sir J. D. REES** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the House any information regarding the future limitation upon, or increase of, the barrelage of beer?

The **PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY** to the **MINISTRY** of **FOOD** (**Mr. McCurdy**): I have been asked to reply. The whole question of the future output of beer is now under review, but I may remind the hon. Member that the decision does not rest with my Department. I am unable to make a statement on the subject at present.

Sir J. D. REES: Has my hon. Friend discovered since the last answer that there is a fluid known as Government ale?

Mr. BILLING: Should not a question affecting the quality of beer remain under the Ministry of Food in view of the injurious effect that Government beer has upon the population?

NAVAL DECORATIONS (1914-15 STAR).

60. **Mr. TYSON WILSON** asked the Secretary to the Admiralty what decoration a man who served as a ship's joiner in the Navy is entitled to wear for service in 1914-15?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The "1914-15 Star" has been established for award to officers and men of the Naval Service who took part in active operations up to 31st December, 1915; and a joiner serving in the Royal Navy would be eligible for this medal if he satisfies the special conditions laid down for the award.

PAPER-MAKING INDUSTRY.

62. Major BARNES asked the President of the Board of Trade the number of paper-making mills in the United Kingdom, the amount of their paid-up capital, and the average dividends paid for the four pre-war years and of the past four years, stating the total number of employés engaged in the industry?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Bridgeman): The number of paper-making mills in the United Kingdom is about 233. With regard to their paid-up capital and dividends paid, I am unable to give the information asked for so far as it relates to private firms, but I am obtaining the information in the case of public companies, and will forward it to the hon. and gallant Member when complete. The number of workpeople engaged in the paper industry is estimated to be about 50,000.

Captain WEDGWOOD BENN: Can the hon. Gentleman tell us whether paper is regarded as a raw material or as a manufactured article?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: It is regarded as both.

Captain W. BENN: If the hon. Gentleman is unable to answer that question, how is he able to apply the policy as laid down in his answer?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: I did answer it. I said that I thought it was regarded as both.

Mr. REMER: Is there not an inquiry taking place on this question at the present time, and is it wise to prejudice the result of that inquiry?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: There is a Committee sitting inquiring into the paper industry.

PRINTING INDUSTRY (IMPORTED GOODS).

65. Sir J. BUTCHER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that, in consequence of the recent Order of the Paper Controller withdrawing the restrictions on printed matter being imported into this country, large orders are being placed with American houses for calendars, Christmas cards, toy books, and other printed matter at English pre-

war prices; and whether, in view of the largely increased cost of production of printed matter in this country and of the fact that the unrestricted import of printed matter from abroad will seriously injure the British printing industry, he will reconsider the matter with the view of modifying the recent Order of the Paper Controller?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: The Board of Trade has no definite information as to the placing of orders for printed matter of the descriptions mentioned, with American houses, but sees no reason to doubt that orders are being placed.

The Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to consider the position of the paper industry is sitting from day to day, and I am informed that the question raised by the hon. and learned Member has been brought before it and is receiving consideration. As the Committee expects to report at an early date, I do not consider that action in the direction suggested by him is desirable at the present time.

COTTON IMPORTS (GERMANY).

66. Mr. T. W. BROWN asked the President of the Board of Trade whether cotton-woven coloured tapestry piece goods and cotton-woven coloured table-covers are now to be admitted into this country from Germany without any restriction, and whether any steps will be taken to prevent these goods, made in Germany, under different labour conditions from those existing in this country, from swamping the home manufacturing trade?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: The importation into this country of goods of German origin is prohibited by the Trading with the Enemy legislation.

NATIONAL INSURANCE (SANATORIUM TREATMENT).

67. Sir ROBERT NEWMAN asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the reluctance of insured persons with dependants to avail themselves of sanatorium treatment, steps will be taken to amend Section 1 of the Act of 1913 in order that insurance committees might grant subsistence allowance in respect of dependants of insured persons while the insured persons were undergoing treatment in sanatoria?

Mr. PRATT (Lord of the Treasury): I have been asked to reply to this question. Provision is already made in Section 20 of the National Health Insurance Act of 1918, under which the sickness benefit of insured persons may be paid to dependants of insured persons undergoing treatment in a sanatorium. The question whether Parliament should be asked to provide further money under Section 1 of the National Insurance Act, 1913, is one which must, I think, merge in the larger economic question governing the residential treatment of the whole tuberculous population.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REGULATIONS.

70. Mr. HAILWOOD asked the President of the Board of Education if he will consider the withdrawal of Articles 5, 18, 23, and 24 of the Secondary School Regulations because of their effect on denominational secondary schools?

The **PRESIDENT** of the **BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Herbert Fisher):** I am not yet in a position to make any statement upon this matter, but it is receiving my careful consideration.

EX-SERVICE STUDENTS.

71. Sir J. D. REES asked the President of the Board of Education whether, under the existing Regulations of his Department, officers and men serving or who have served are allowed to apply for an university education at the expense of the taxpayer; if so, how long such Regulations have been or are to be in force; and what limits, if any, are imposed upon such expenditure of public funds?

Mr. FISHER: I am sending the hon. Member a copy of a leaflet which explains the scope of the Government scheme for assisting ex-Service students to follow courses of education and training, and of the Regulations for interim Grants made by the Board of Education under that part of the scheme which is administered by them.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

MILK.

72. Major WHELER asked the Food Controller whether difficulty is being experienced in getting the publication of the

Food Department known as "Milk 6"; and how and where this publication can be obtained?

Mr. McCURDY: The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. I am sending the hon. and gallant Member a copy of the document to which he refers. Further copies can be obtained by application to the Milk Section of the Ministry.

POTATOES.

73. Mr. F. C. THOMSON asked the Food Controller whether, in view of the large surplus of potatoes available for shipment in the North-Eastern counties of Scotland, he will reconsider the shipping arrangements already announced, and will arrange that Aberdeen be the shipping port for the North-Eastern district, there being ample storage and other facilities there for such shipments of potatoes?

Mr. McCURDY: If further sales for export are arranged on the termination of the present contracts which are being completed very shortly, the Food Controller will endeavour to arrange that potatoes are shipped from Aberdeen, provided that the necessary port facilities are then available.

AMERICAN BEEF TRUST.

74. Mr. SEDDON asked the Food Controller whether a Committee on trusts has been appointed to inquire into the working of the American Beef Trust; whether every person in the meat trade, either employers or workmen, has been excluded from this Committee; whether the only representative of labour is a dock labourer entirely unconnected with the operations of the meat trust beyond the landing of the meat; what is the reason for excluding from this committee all those who have special knowledge of the subject; and whether he will indicate the names of the persons composing this body and their qualifications for the inquiry?

Mr. McCURDY: I am not sure that I know the Committee to which my hon. Friend refers. If the question relates to the Committee recently appointed "to consider and report on the means of securing sufficient meat supplies for the United Kingdom at reasonable prices, with special regard to the development of meat production in the United Kingdom and in the British Overseas Dominions and to the protection of British markets and of producing countries within

the Empire from domination by foreign organisations," I must refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade by whom this Committee was appointed.

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NATIONAL SHELL FACTORY,
BRISTOL (SALE).

75. Mr. ROSE asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions whether the National Shell Factory at St. Philip's Marsh, Bristol, has been bought on behalf of E. S. and A. Robinson, a firm of manufacturing stationers, at the price of £18,300; what was the original cost of the building of this factory, together with its equipment with electric power, light, railway sidings, etc.; whether he can say to what purpose the firm which has now purchased it proposes to use it; and whether, in building the factory, the Government had before it any specifications from any firm designed to fit the factory for the fulfilment of post-war requirements?

Mr. KELLAWAY: The facts are as stated in the first part of the question. The building, sold for £18,300, was erected some years before the War. It was bought by the Government for £6,000, whilst £10,600 was spent on adaptation, heating, drainage, and sidings. As to part 3 of the question I have no official information.

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WORKMEN'S WAGES (MESSRS.
ROUGH AND SONS, OXFORD).

76. Mr. TYSON WILSON asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions whether workmen who have been employed in the making of seaplane floats, by Messrs. Rough and Sons, boat builders, Oxford, have a balance of wages due to them; that the firm put up a notice admitting liability, but stating that they are awaiting payment from the Government; and whether he will make inquiries into this matter with a view of these men receiving the money due to them?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS (Mr. James Hope): I have no information as to the first and second part of the question. Payment to this firm cannot be made until their claim has been investigated and settled. The claim was only submitted on

the 5th instant, and is now under investigation by the Accounts Department. It is not, therefore the fact that any non-payment of wages is due to delay on the part of the Ministry.

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IRON AND STEEL (GOVERNMENT
SUBSIDIES).

77. Colonel THORNE asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions whether the subsidies in connection with the manufacture of iron and steel, including those on iron ore, coke, and pig-iron, are about to be withdrawn; whether all the moneys due to the various firms that have been receiving subsidies have been paid over; the amount of money that is now due to the firms in question; and if he will take action in the matter?

Mr. HOPE: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. Payment of the subsidies due to the various firms is generally made to the extent of 80 per cent of the claims received and the balance is paid as soon as possible after the claims have been investigated and adjusted between the Ministry and the makers. The amount due to the firms in question cannot be stated until after their claims have been received and investigated, and every endeavour is made to settle the claims as promptly as possible.

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MECHANICAL TRANSPORT DEPOT,
SLOUGH.

78. Colonel ASHLEY asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions on what ground Mr. E. J. Poole, late Royal Engineers, who came over from South America in 1915 at his own expense to fight for his country in France, was dismissed from his employment at the Mechanical Transport depot at Slough when other men who had not served remained in employment in that particular gang?

Mr. FORSTER: I have been asked to answer this question. Enquiries are being made, and I will communicate with my hon. and gallant Friend as soon as I am in a position to do so.

Colonel ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether it is the policy of the Government that in employment of

[Colonel Ashley.]
this sort those who have fought for their country should have the preference over those who remained at home and drew large wages?

Mr. FORSTER: The policy is, so far as possible to give preference to the men who have served.

Colonel ASHLEY: Should there not be an absolute preference?

Mr. FORSTER: Other things being equal, there would be.

LAND DUTIES.

54. **Lieutenant-Colonel ROYDS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state with respect to the sum of £4,113,906, the revenue from Land Duties up to 31st March, 1919, what portions were derived from Mineral Rights Duty, Increment Duty, Undeveloped Land Duty, and Reversion Duty, respectively?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: The figures are as follows:—

	£
Mineral Rights Duty	... 3,026,466
Increment Value Duty	... 426,913
Undeveloped Land Duty	... 411,958
Reversion Duty	... 248,569

INDUSTRIAL INSURANCE COMMITTEE.

64. **Captain O'GRADY** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction existing among insurance agents and collectors at the terms of reference of the Committee to be appointed to inquire into industrial assurance; and, having regard to that fact, will he amend the terms of reference so that insurance agents and collectors will have direct representation on the Committee, to permit them to give evidence before the Committee, also to be allowed to cross-examine witnesses from the life offices when such witnesses give evidence before the Committee?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to the reply which I gave on 10th April to the question of the hon. Member for Aberdare.

MONEY RESOLUTIONS.

Sir D. MACLEAN (*by Private Notice*) asked the Leader of the House whether, in view of the Debate last night in Committee on the Housing and Town Planning (Expenses) Resolution, he will give such directions as will ensure that all money resolutions shall appear upon the Order Paper before the Committee stage is taken, and whether he approves of the continuance of the precedent set last night; namely, the previous circulation of a White Paper summarising the proposals of a financial resolution?

Mr. BONAR LAW: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. As regards the last part, there are, I think, great advantages in the precedent referred to, and I should be glad to see it adopted as often as possible.

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Sir SAMUEL ROBERTS reported from the Chairmen's Panel; That they had appointed **Mr. Turton** to act as Chairman of Standing Committee D (in respect of the Acquisition of Land (Assessment of Compensation) Bill).

That they had appointed **Sir Watson Rutherford** to act as Chairman of Standing Committee D (in respect of the Land Settlement (Facilities) Bill).

Report to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

First Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—

Criminal Injuries (Ireland) Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers upon the Sunderland Gas Company; to extend their limits of supply; and for other purposes." [Sunderland Gas Bill [*Lords.*]

And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Mansfield Railway Company to construct a branch railway in the county

of Nottingham in extension of their authorised undertaking; to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Mansfield Railway Bill [Lords].]

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Sunderland Gas Bill [Lords],
Mansfield Railway Bill [Lords],

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MEMBER SWORN.

John Zachary Malcolm, Esquire, Croydon Borough (South Division), took the Oath and signed the Roll.

BILL PRESENTED.

RESTORATION OF PRE-WAR PRACTICES (No. 2) BILL,—“to make provision with respect to the restoration after the present War of certain trade practices and to amend the Law relating to munitions tribunals,” presented by Sir ROBERT HORNE; supported by Mr. Shortt and Mr. Wardle; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

IMPORT AND EXPORT LICENCES.

Major BARNES asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the widespread dissatisfaction caused by the present system of giving import and export licences to selected individuals, he would set up a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the necessity of these, and, if necessary, to issue the same?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I am not aware of any dissatisfaction with the system of granting import and export licences other than that bound to arise under any system of regulation. An advisory council, consisting almost entirely of unofficial members, is now sitting to make recommendations as regards the restriction of imports. A similar body exists in connection with exports. The Departments con-

cerned are also in touch with other advisory bodies similarly constituted. Under these circumstances, the Board do not consider the setting up of such a Committee as is suggested in question to be necessary.

AEROPLANE MANUFACTURE (GERMANY AND AUSTRIA).

Mr. RAWLINSON asked the Prime Minister what steps, if any, have been taken to prevent the manufacture of aeroplanes in Germany and Austria at the present time?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No steps have been taken in either case to prevent such manufacture under the terms of the Armistice, but export is prohibited.

INCOME TAX.

ROYAL COMMISSION (CONSTITUTION).

Sir WATSON RUTHERFORD asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that, in the recent appointment of an Income Tax Commission, a representative of the co-operative societies has been placed upon such Commission; whether he is aware that this appointment is inconsistent with a statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself to the National Federation of Meat Traders' Associations, and subsequently in a private interview at the Treasury with the Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whereat a definite statement was made that no trading associations and not even the associated chambers of commerce and no co-operative societies would be permitted to have a representative upon such Commission; whether he is aware that the other associations of traders are much dissatisfied with the appointment referred to, especially having regard to the fact that co-operative societies pay no Income Tax under Schedule D, and whether, if it is intended that such representative of the co-operative societies is to be retained on the Commission, he will see his way to also appoint representatives of the free traders?

Mr. A. CHAMBERLAIN: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to similar questions on the 8th April.

HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

Major **HENDERSON** asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware of the desire for the establishment of a Stationery Office in Glasgow; and whether, in view of the size and importance of this city, he is prepared to give the matter favourable consideration?

Mr. BALDWIN: It was recently the intention of His Majesty's Stationery Office to open a branch in Glasgow, but owing to the closing down of munition factories and certain other Government Departments in that part of the country as a result of the Armistice, it was found that the need for the establishment of such an office no longer existed.

FOOD SUPPLIES.

CANADIAN CATTLE.

Mr. WILKIE asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the need of increasing the supply of meat in this country, he will say what steps he is prepared to take to remove the embargo on the importation of Canadian cattle?

Sir ARTHUR BOSCAWEN: No such steps as are suggested by the hon. Member are necessary in order to increase the supply of meat. Animals from Canada may be landed at the present time in this country provided they are slaughtered within ten days at the port of landing.

CALVES (SLAUGHTER).

Mr. DUNCAN GRAHAM asked the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware of the number of calves being killed for food purposes in Scotland and that in the abattoir of Hamilton, Lanarkshire, in the last week of March, 160 calves were killed as compared with sixteen in the whole month of March, 1918; if he will make inquiries from the Food Controller, the Live Stock Commissioner, or other competent authority as to the possible injury to the future supply of home-raised beef of such slaughter of calves; and if he will take steps to prevent a continuance of this menace to the future supply of home-grown meat?

Mr. McCURDY: I have been asked to reply. The answer to the first part of the

question is in the affirmative. The increase in the number of calves slaughtered in this authorised slaughter-house is due to the fact that under the Live Stock (Sales) Order, which came into force in May, 1918, all calves must now be slaughtered in authorised Government slaughter-houses. Both the Ministry of Food and the Boards of Agriculture are fully alive to the necessity for the rearing of as many calves as possible. With this end in view the live- and dead-weight prices fixed for calves sold for slaughter have recently been lowered, and I am informed that the Board of Agriculture are considering the establishment of centres at which calves can be collected from districts in which they are not required for rearing, and distributed to the parts of the country where they are in demand.

SALVAGE AWARDS.

Sir THOMAS BRAMSDON asked the Secretary to the Admiralty (1) how many vessels, distinguishing His Majesty's ships, Government chartered vessels, foreign Government vessels, and private vessels, and setting out each number separately, salvaged during the War, have had the assistance, by being towed in dangerous waters, of dockyard tugs; what remuneration was paid to the crews of each class above that which would have been paid in peace-time, exclusive of war bonus, and in the case of those ships owned or chartered by His Majesty's Government has a bonus been paid in any cases; if so, which, and is it intended to grant bonuses for the remainder; and, in the case of the private vessels, how many of the cases have participated in salvage awards; how many of the remainder are to be so dealt with; for what reason some are not so treated; whether a bonus was paid upon the steamship "Gloucester Castle"; whether it is intended to adopt the same course in all cases of the same nature; and, if not, why this course is not to be adopted; (2) whether, in cases where a salvage award has been allowed in respect of vessels salvaged by dockyard tugs, the Admiralty receive from three-fourths to five-sixths of the total amount; if so, if he will say upon what grounds this proportion is based; what is the amount, if any, accruing to the Government from the sum awarded to His Majesty's ships and tugs for salvage of private vessels after all liabilities have been paid; and whether,

although the Admiralty have taken all liabilities for certain vessels, they refuse to pay the salvors of such vessels any bonus for their services when the salvors are their own employés, although large sums have been saved on the liability by the salvors' exertions?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The whole of the information asked for by my hon. Friend is not available. It has not been the practice to pay salvage awards to the servants of the Crown for services rendered in that capacity in connection with the salvage of His Majesty's ships or of ships at the risk of His Majesty's Government or of an Allied Government. In cases in which salvage awards are made to the Admiralty on behalf of the Crown, for services rendered by the Admiralty, and their servants, in connection with the salvage of vessels other than those referred to above, the Admiralty in turn make awards to their servants.

In the case of the "Gloucester Castle," bonuses were awarded to the crews of the dockyard tugs assisting in the salvage of the vessel, but this was regarded as a special case. It is not the usual practice to grant bonuses for such services. The proportion of the award made to the Admiralty on behalf of the Crown which is retained by the Admiralty does not, in general, exceed three-fourths, and varies according to the extent to which the personal efforts of the salvors have contributed to the success of the salvage.

As regards the second part of the second question, the appointment is usually made by the Court or arbitrator making the award, and if no such apportionment is made, the proportions are based on the practice of the Court.

As regards the third part of the question, I am afraid that I can give no indication as to the net amount which accrues to the Government after meeting expenses, as this is dependent upon the varying circumstances of each case. Where crews of dockyard tugs are employed on salvage operations deemed to be of a dangerous character, they are allowed extra pay, under the Dockyard Regulations, the amount of which varies according to the status of the vessel salvaged and other circumstances. Such extra pay amounts to not less than 50 per cent. of their ordinary pay, inclusive of war advances, and in certain circumstances an increase of 100 per cent. is allowed.

PORTSMOUTH DOCKYARD (WAR BONUS).

Sir T. BRAMSDON asked the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the reason for not paying the established men in Portsmouth Dockyard and district the 12½ per cent. on their earnings, which is the hired rate, instead of the established rate?

Dr. MACNAMARA: As stated in my hon. Friend's question, the 12½ per cent. bonus is a bonus on earnings; and, in the case of the established workmen the earnings have been held to include the wages of established men and not the wages of hired men. The matter has, however, been further considered, and it has been decided to calculate the 12½ per cent. on the "hired" rates in future.

DEMobilISATION.

CROFTERS AND FISHERMEN.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can give an approximate date as to when the demobilisation of crofters, fishermen, and other priority men in the Navy around Malta will commence; and whether he is aware of the great hardship that is being caused by the delays which are taking place in this matter?

Dr. MACNAMARA: It is regretted that no date can be given, but every effort is being made to proceed with demobilisation as quickly as possible. Nearly all priority men are now released.

APPLICATIONS FOR RELEASE.

Mr. MACQUISTEN asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will direct investigation to be made into the reasons for the non-demobilisation of Private Arthur M'Kay, No. M/371531, Mechanical Transport, Army Service Corps, Base Mechanical Transport Depot (N.), France, who was passed for demobilisation months ago and his demobilisation papers sent to France, and being lost in transit, or alleged to be lost, were renewed and again sent on three separate occasions, and that assurances have been given at the War Office on several occasions that he would be immediately demobilised, and that telegrams had been despatched to France to have this done; and whether, in consideration that this soldier is manager of a large business employing thirty men before the

War, and now managed by his father, an aged man whose health has broken down, and employing, *inter alios*, several discharged soldiers, and that there is imminent danger of the business being destroyed and unemployment increased, he will direct Private M'Kay's immediate demobilisation?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am informed that instructions concerning this man's demobilisation were issued some time ago, and a telegram has been sent to France to expedite his release.

Major NEWMAN asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will inquire into the cause that has led to the delay in demobilising Sapper G. Humber, No. WR 283631, 234th Light Railway Company, British Expeditionary Force, France, who joined in May, 1915, is aged forty-four, and has been applied for by his late employers?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Sapper Humber is not registered either as pivotal or for special release, nor is there trace of any application on his behalf having been received by the War Office. I am also informed by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour that he is not so registered by his Department. If this man's age and length of service are as stated by my hon. and gallant Friend, he would appear to be eligible for demobilisation, and if so he will no doubt be released as soon as circumstances permit.

Major LLOYD-GREAME asked the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Private Frederick Jones, No. 156587, Middlesex Regiment, attached No. 2 Detachment, V Company, Royal Army Service Corps, Forage Department; whether he is aware that this man is forty-three years of age; that his demobilisation certificate was endorsed by the appropriate local advisory committee in January last; and that his wife is waiting to undergo an operation until her husband has been demobilised and is able to look after his four children; and whether, in the circumstances, he will give instructions that Private Jones be demobilised without further delay?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Private Jones is not registered either as pivotal or for special release, nor is there any trace of any application on his behalf having been received by the War Office. The certificate referred to is probably a "contract" offer

of employment, or such as to obtain his registration as a "slip" man. If this soldier's age is as stated he would appear to be eligible for demobilisation, and, if so, he will be released as soon as circumstances permit. If my hon. Friend will obtain a statement giving full particulars vouched for by himself, a clergyman, justice of the peace, or a doctor, it will receive consideration as to whether it could be dealt with as a compassionate case. The statement, if not vouched by a doctor, should include a medical certificate.

Major HENDERSON asked the Secretary of State for War whether he can now give a decision in regard to the release on compassionate grounds of Private A. Reid, No. 1446684, D Company, Machine Gun Corps, 11th Corps Concentration Camp, British Expeditionary Force, France?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Special inquiry has been made in this case, but I regret the grounds put forward for Private Reid's release are not of such an extreme nature as to warrant his demobilisation on compassionate grounds.

Major NEWMAN asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will inquire into the cause that has led to delay in the demobilisation of Corporal A. G. Sanders, No. 78003, Military Foot Police, Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, a man qualified for demobilisation both in respect of age and length of service, and whose employers have applied for his services?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Corporal Sanders is not registered either as a pivotal or for special release, nor is there trace of any application on his behalf having been received by the War Office. I am also informed by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour that he is not so registered by his Department. If this soldier's age and length of service are such as would render him eligible for demobilisation, he will no doubt be released as soon as circumstances permit. I would refer to the answer I gave on the 8th instant to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Fylde to the effect that personnel of the Corps of Military Police are liable to retention as part of the military machinery of demobilisation even though eligible for demobilisation. Such men, however, are being released as soon as their services can be spared or they can be replaced.

ADVICE TO SOLDIERS.

Major **NEWMAN** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a circular is handed to soldiers on demobilisation advising them how to invest their savings and containing a recommendation to invest in co-operative trading societies; and why this advice to strengthen one section of the trading community especially is made by a Government Department?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, Sir; I have no knowledge of this circular, but if my hon. and gallant Friend will give details of a specific case the matter will be investigated.

RICHBOROUGH (ROAD REGULATIONS).

Lieutenant - Colonel **MOORE-BRAZON** asked the Secretary of State for War whether he will now abandon the Regulations regarding the road from Sandwich to Margate through Richborough, business being the only reason that will allow the local police to issue passes on this road?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The conditions at Richborough remain as described in the answer I gave to my hon. and gallant Friend's question of the 5th March. Large quantities of valuable stores are being returned from France, and I regret that the road cannot be opened to the general public at present.

OVERSEAS SOLDIERS (VISITS TO RELATIVES).

Sir **L. HARMSWORTH** asked the Secretary of State for War if he will endeavour to secure for soldiers in the Canadian and American Armies similar opportunities to visit relatives in this country to those he has secured for members of the Australian Imperial Force and New Zealand and South African Forces?

Mr. CHURCHILL: This is not a matter for the War Office, but would be a matter for the consideration of the Canadian and American authorities in this country. At the present time we are bringing 150 Americans daily on leave to this country and 7,000 Canadians a week, who have ample time to visit their relatives before they finally embark for Canada. In the

case of the Americans, I do not know whether the American authorities could arrange to give preference for leave to England to men who have relatives in this country. The British Army authorities naturally are not in a position to do so.

FOOTBALL GROUND, BARROW (MILITARY OCCUPATION).

Mr. CHADWICK: asked the Secretary of State for War when the football ground, Cavendish Park, Barrow-in-Furness, which has been in the possession of the military authorities throughout the War, will be evacuated, so that the tenants can again take possession, particularly in view of the strong feeling in the town that possession is no longer necessary from a military point of view?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am having inquiry made, and will let my hon. Friend know the result in due course.

TETANUS AMONG BRITISH TROOPS.

Mr. FREDERICK GREEN asked the Secretary of State for War if he can give the number of cases of tetanus among British troops in this country and abroad during the first year of the War and during each succeeding year while the War lasted, and the fatalities therefrom during those periods?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The number of cases and deaths from tetanus amongst the wounded arriving in this country are as follows:

	No. of cases.	No. of deaths.
1914	192 ...	104
1915	134 ...	75
1916	501 ...	182
1917	353 ...	68
1918	266 ...	68

Complete information is not available at present regarding the number of cases and deaths from tetanus which occurred among the troops with the various forces and were not sent to England.

SOLDIERS' LEAVE.

Mr. CHADWICK asked the Secretary of State for War whether soldiers belonging to the 3rd King's Liverpool Regiment, now

stationed at Blackdown, near Aldershot, have yet received the twelve day's Christmas leave promised to home-service men; and, if not, when it is proposed that this leave should be given?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am not aware of this, but inquiries are being made, and I will write to my hon. Friend in due course.

SPECIAL RESERVE OF OFFICERS.

Lieutenant - Colonel ROBERT PEEL asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is now in a position to indicate what will be the post-war organisation of the Special Reserve?

Mr. CHURCHILL: It is not possible to make a statement on the subject at present. The matter is under consideration.

Lieutenant-Colonel R. PEEL asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that ex-Regular officers who belonged to the Special Reserve before the War are on demobilisation only being paid gratuity at the rate of thirty-one days per annum, whereas in paragraph 496, Royal Warrant, it is distinctly stated that re-employed retired officers, other than those compulsorily recalled to the Service, may be included under sub-paragraph (b), which would give them the same and not a lower rate of gratuity than other officers holding Special Reserve commissions?

Mr. FORSTER: The hon. and gallant Member is under a misapprehension. Sub-division (a) of Article 497 applies to all officers who retired with retired pay or gratuity whether they are compulsorily recalled under (a) of Article 496 or re-employed under (b) of that Article.

REQUISITIONED PREMISES, HOLLAND PARK.

Sir WILLIAM DAVISON asked the Secretary of State for War why no compensation has yet been paid to the owners of 44, Holland Park, Kensington, which was commandeered by the War Office in December, 1917; and whether the premises can now be returned to the owners?

Mr. FORSTER: The owners' claim for compensation in respect of the military occupation was heard by the Defence of the Realm Losses Commission, who awarded no compensation, but gave an

indemnity against rates and tenant's taxes. Steps are being taken to ascertain whether the premises can be surrendered.

ARMY OFFICERS AS ELECTION AGENTS (PAY).

Sir JAMES AGG-GARDNER asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he is aware that certain officers in the Army who were allowed to resume, during the General Election, their former occupation of an election agent have been deprived of three months' pay and allowances and, as the statutory fee for their services is within £50, they have suffered considerable pecuniary loss; and whether, in these circumstances, the Government will defray the difference between the amount of the statutory pay received and the loss of Army pay and allowances withheld?

Mr. FORSTER: These officers were granted for this purpose three months' leave without pay or allowances. Those who did not avail themselves of the full three months' leave and rejoined for duty earlier resumed pay and allowance from date of resuming military duty. I am afraid that pay and allowances cannot be issued for the period covered by the actual leave.

NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

WIDOWS (WAR BONUS).

Mr. WILKIE asked the Pensions Minister whether he will grant a war bonus to the widows of men who have died from wounds, injuries, or disease neither attributable to military service nor certified as aggravated by such service, but not due to the serious negligence or misconduct of such men, seeing that there is no provision in the Royal Warrant for the grant of allowances for children of such men?

Sir JAMES CRAIG: The temporary pension awarded under Article 15 of the Royal Warrant to a widow whose husband's death was in no way connected with his military service is a gratuity, given in circumstances which cannot be said to justify a claim for assistance from the State. It is not intended to be a maintenance grant and therefore is not within the scope of the war bonus.

COLONIAL FORCES.

Mr. FINNEY asked the Pensions Minister whether he will give a Return showing the pensions and allowances paid to the Colonial forces compared with those paid to the British sailors and soldiers; whether he has received resolutions from discharged sailors' and soldiers' widows' and dependants' associations protesting against the smallness of the gratuity and pensions paid to the British sailors and soldiers in comparison with those paid to the Colonial forces, and protesting against the delay in the payment of the gratuity and the stoppages from amounts due without any reason being assigned; and whether he will consider the matter with a view to increasing the amount of the gratuities, pensions, and allowances, and ensuring prompt and full payment of the same as they become due?

Sir J. CRAIG: A statement showing the rates of pension granted by the British, Colonial and principal Allied Governments is being prepared, and if the hon. Member will put a question down after Easter I will circulate the information in the OFFICIAL REPORT. With regard to the remainder of the question, I would ask the hon. Member to await the statement which my right hon. Friend hopes to make this evening in the Debate on the motion which stands in the name of the hon. Member for the Westhoughton Division of Lancashire.

DOCKYARDS (ESTABLISHED MEN).

Sir T. BRAMSDON asked the Secretary to the Admiralty what was the amount paid out in pensions and gratuities or bonuses in respect of the established men in His Majesty's dockyards during the last three completed years, and setting out each year separately?

Dr. MACNAMARA: The following are the approximate amounts expended during the three years 1916, 1917, and 1918, respectively, on account of pensions, gratuities on discharge, and death gratuities in respect of the services of established workmen in His Majesty's dockyards and other naval establishments:

1916	£155,000
1917	143,000
1918	148,000

The separation from these figures of the amounts relating to service in His

Majesty's dockyards only would necessitate a detailed examination of records and would take a considerable time. In view of the great pressure under which the staff of the Admiralty Departments is working, I hope that the information now given will be sufficient for the purpose of my hon. Friend?

ANTI-AIRCRAFT SHELL EXPLOSION
(COMPENSATION CLAIM).

Lieutenant-Colonel MALONE asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been called to the refusal of the Treasury Committee to pay compensation to the dependents of Mr. G. A. Home, who was killed by the explosion of a dud anti-aircraft shell in his house at Leytonstone on 7th March, 1918; whether it is the intention of the Government to repudiate all liability for such events; whether the decision of the Treasury Committee was based on a misapprehension of the financial position of Mr. Home; whether, in view of the refusal of the Government to pay compensation, Mrs. Home and her family are living in very straitened circumstances; and whether he can see his way to institute an inquiry into the matter?

Mr. BALDWIN: The decision to pay no compensation in this case was not based on the circumstances in which the late Mr. Home met his death, but was arrived at in consideration of the extent to which the widow is otherwise provided for. I do not think there has been any misapprehension as to the financial position of Mr. Home, which was fully explained in an application from Mrs. Home to the Treasury in November last, and in the circumstances. I fear no useful purpose would be served by a further inquiry.

HOUSING.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (COMMITTEE'S
REPORT).

Sir JOHN BUTCHER asked the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received the Final Report of the Housing (Financial Assistance) Committee; and when this Report will be issued?

Sir AUCKLAND GEDDES: My right hon. Friend has asked me to reply. The

Final Report of the Housing (Financial Assistance) Committee was published last Thursday.

CROWN LAND (PRICES).

Major EDWARD WOOD asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that in the Forest of Dean Crown land has been offered to local bodies and societies at £50 to £60 per acre, whilst for similar land desired by private individuals the price asked is £240 to £320 per acre; whether he is aware that the latter price is a hindrance to working men of the district desiring to build and occupy their own houses; and whether he will explain the reason for this policy?

Sir ARTHUR BOSCAWEN: The area, so far as it concerns local bodies and societies, is approximately 11 acres. The figures stated in the question are substantially correct. The object of the Crown in offering land to local authorities and public utility societies at prices approved by the Treasury but below market rates is to facilitate the erection of cottages and to secure that the building schemes are adequately planned. The Commissioners of Woods as Trustees of the Crown estates would not be justified in selling land to private individuals on the same terms as the way would be laid open for speculators at the expense of the Crown. I may refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the answer given to a similar question asked in the House on 23rd March, 1914.

PARISH COUNCILS (TENANTS' ELIGIBILITY).

Captain COOTE asked the President of the Local Government Board whether tenants of a parish council are eligible for election as parish councillors, or are thereby disqualified from holding such office?

Dr. ADDISON: I cannot express any authoritative opinion as to the effect of Clause 46 of the Local Government Act, 1894, but I may point out that in reply to a question in the House of Commons on the 11th May, 1895, the then Attorney-General stated that in his opinion a member of a parish council did not become disqualified for continuing in office as councillor by reason of his taking an allotment which was under the management of the parish council.

RAILWAYS (TRAFFIC RECEIPTS).

Major BARNES asked the President of the Board of Trade what was the yield per annum in a full year to the railways of the United Kingdom of the increased fares, and also the yield of the increased pass charges?

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: It is impossible to separate the effect of increased fares from that of increased travelling, but passenger train traffic receipts in 1918 on the controlled railways in Great Britain exceeded those for 1916 by nearly £15,000,000.

DEMOBILISED POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES (RE-EMPLOYMENT).

Lieutenant-Colonel ARCHER-SHEE asked the Postmaster-General (1) if he can now make a statement as to the position of Private A. Richards, No. 3496, Royal Defence Corps; (2) whether he is aware that Private A. Richards, No. 3496, late 56th Protection Company, Royal Defence Corps, was employed in the Holloway Post Office before enlisting in 1914, that he has now been demobilised on the undertaking of the Post Office to re-employ him, but that on application to the Holloway Post Office he was sent to Studd Street, Islington, where he was told that he could not be given employment although he produced his A.F.Z. 16a given him on demobilisation, on which it states that the Postmaster-General has undertaken to employ him on his demobilisation?

Mr. ILLINGWORTH: I find upon inquiry that Private Richards' employment in Holloway Stores Depot was only temporary, and as such did not entitle him to employment upon demobilisation. The statement on Form A.F.Z. 16a, to which the hon. Member refers, was made by Private Richards, probably through a misunderstanding of the actual position.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK (DEPOSITS).

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir J. NORTON GRIFFITHS asked the Postmaster-General what was the total amount standing to the credit of depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank on the latest date for

which the information is available; and what was the market value of the assets at that time?

Mr. ILLINGWORTH: The total amount standing to the credit of depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank on the 31st of March, 1919, was approximately £257,000,000. The annual valuation at market prices of the securities held for the Post Office Savings Bank has been discontinued since 1904. Discontinuance was recommended by the Select Committee on Savings Banks Funds in 1902, on the ground that the valuation was misleading, and effect was given to this recommendation by Section 9 of the Savings Banks Act, 1904.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES (MANAGERS).

Colonel THORNE asked the Minister of Labour how many appointments have been made during the last two years as managers of Labour Exchanges, and the previous occupations of those appointed to such positions?

Mr. WARDLE: Four hundred and sixty-two posts of manager of Employment Exchanges have been filled in the past two years. Of the persons appointed (355 men and 107 women), 460 were members of the permanent staff of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour. The remaining two posts were filled by reinstating officers who had previously held the position of manager.

SCOTLAND.

POSTAL FACILITIES, HIGHLANDS.

Sir LEICESTER HARMSWORTH asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware of the grave dissatisfaction that exists throughout the Highland counties of Scotland with the inadequacy and haphazard character of the postal facilities in these regions; whether he is aware to what extent these districts are being deprived of their pre-war postal conveniences; and what steps, generally, he proposes to take to place the whole matter of Highland postal service on a practical and efficient basis?

Mr. ILLINGWORTH: I am aware that many parts of Caithness and Sutherland (the counties which I presume the hon.

Member has chiefly in mind) present especial difficulty from a postal point of view, and that in some cases curtailments of postal facilities have taken place as a result of conditions produced by the War. General directions have been given recently to review cases of this kind.

AFFORESTATION.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland what precautions he proposes to take in cases of afforestation that money so spent shall not be spent for the benefit of private owners, but shall be spent for the benefit of the State only.

Mr. MUNRO: At present any scheme for the afforestation of privately-owned land in Scotland is undertaken by the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and is carried out under terms approved by the Development Commission and sanctioned by the Treasury. The future development of afforestation and the terms under which it is to be administered are now under consideration by the Government.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland how much of the land purchased under the Small Holdings Acts for purposes of settling soldiers and sailors in Scotland has been acquired, and at what prices; and when such lands are to be cut up for their destined purposes?

Mr. MUNRO: The Board of Agriculture for Scotland have now purchased 6,830 acres under the Small Holding Colonies Acts. Owing to current leases, the Board are in occupation of 904 acres only of this area; 600 additional areas will be entered at Whit Sunday next, and a further 1,403 acres at Martinmas. It is not desirable at present to state the prices paid, in view of pending negotiations for other properties. Schemes for settlements on the lands immediately available are in an advanced stage, and expected to be in operation this year.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland whether the huts, timber, wire, etc., for the acquisition of which he has authorised the expenditure of £50,000, will be available for other smallholders than soldiers and sailors?

Mr. MUNRO: The reply is in the affirmative. The hon. Baronet would, however, be the last to suggest that a preference should not be given to men who have served their country.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS ACT, 1911.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the Court of Session has decided that the expression, "predecessors of the same family," occurring in the Small Landholders Act, 1911, does not include son-in-law of previous tenant; and whether, in view of the hardship that this decision is causing, he will introduce legislation to remedy the Act in this respect?

Mr. MUNRO: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. An opportunity will arise for considering this matter in connection with pending legislative proposals.

Sir L. HARMSWORTH asked the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to breaches of the Small Landholders Act, 1911, Section 17, whereby landlords are required to intimate to the Board of Agriculture the termination of possession of a holding by a landlord; and what steps he proposes to take to compel compliance of the Act in such cases?

Mr. MUNRO: A few cases have come under the notice of the Board where landlords have failed to give intimation as required by the Section that a holding has ceased, or is about to cease, to be held by a landholder. On learning of the vacancy, the Board have made inquiry and instructed the landlord to comply with the terms of the Act by reletting the holding on landholders' tenure, unless there were good reasons for a contrary course. If the hon. Baronet will supply particulars of any case he has in mind, I will have inquiry made.

HYDE PARK (CLOSED GATE).

Lieutenant - Colonel MOORE-BRAZON asked the First Commissioner of

Works why the middle gate at Hyde Park Corner is still closed; whether this gate was closed for the defence of the realm; and whether any danger the closing of these gates may have averted is now past?

Sir ALFRED MOND: The gate was closed in connection with the use of the searchlight on the top of the arch, and when the light was removed and the necessary repairs to the roadway had been effected the gate was opened on one occasion, but the confusion which arose with the traffic owing to the reduced lighting was so serious that the police advised that it should be kept closed until such time as the lighting restrictions could be removed entirely.

LEYTONSTONE TENANTS (NOTICE TO QUIT).

Mr. NEWBOLD asked the Attorney-General (on Monday) whether he is aware that notices to quit are being served on tenants in Leytonstone calling upon them to deliver up possession on 29th September, and at the same time suggesting fresh forms of tenancy and thus avoiding the operation of the recent Rent Act; and, if so, what action do the Government propose to prevent such action?

Sir GORDON HEWART'S written reply was intended to be as follows, and not as furnished for the OFFICIAL REPORT yesterday: I am not aware that notices as mentioned by the hon. Member are being served on tenants at Leytonstone, but I may point out that such notices will not have the effect of avoiding the operation of the Increase of Rents, etc., Acts in the cases of houses to which the Acts apply.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

RAILWAY FARES.

Major MORGAN: To call attention, on Wednesday, 7th May, to the question of railway fares, and to move a Resolution.

Mr. CHARLES PERCY: To call attention, on Wednesday, 7th May, to the desirability of amalgamating the two branches of the legal profession, and to move a Resolution.

Mr. J. JONES To call attention, on Wednesday, 7th May, to the condition in Ireland, and to move a Resolution.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Resolved,

“That this House do meet To-morrow, at Twelve of the clock.”—[*Mr. Bonar Law.*]

Ordered,

“That the Proceeding on Government Business be exempted at this day's Sitting from the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).”—[*Lord Edmund Talbot.*]

ALIENS RESTRICTION BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

The **SECRETARY** of **STATE** for the **HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. Shortt): I beg to move, “That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This is a Bill dealing with a problem of great importance and very considerable difficulty, and it is one which, I think, the House will be of the opinion requires very careful handling. It is a problem which has been before us for many years, and which has become more acute during the period of the War. We have, in approaching this question, to deal with two different sets of aliens. There is, in the first place the alien already in our midst, and in the second place there is the alien who wishes to come into our midst. The two problems are not quite the same. Equally we have to deal with enemy aliens, those who are to-day or have been in the last four or five years, the subjects of enemy States. We have also to deal with aliens who are

the subjects of neutral States or of friendly Allied States. Therefore, it is apparent it is not a matter which can be dealt with by one or two hard and fast, cut and tried rules and regulations. There are so many variations, so many changing circumstances that it is impossible to deal with a subject of this description by any hard and fast, cut and dried rule. We have to approach this subject as far as it is possible to do so with some sort of general policy in our minds. For my part it seems to me the most important things to consider are first our own safeguards and our own safety, and secondly, in securing that, we as far as possible avoid inflicting unnecessary hardship unjustly. Of course, our own safety and the safeguards for our people and for our nation must be the first consideration, and where it is a choice between our own safety and the safety of our people and the infliction of hardship upon an alien then that hardship becomes necessary and ceases to be unjust. We must approach this from the point of view of the Government responsibility that no hardship which may be inflicted on any alien shall be unnecessary and, therefore, unjust. Consequently, we must recollect that during the period of War we have made vast changes in the whole system under which we have dealt with the alien subject and we cannot possibly stereotype for all time, as part of our ordinary peace system, some of the regulations and some of the practices which were essentially necessary in time of War.

We cannot accept the position that everything that is necessary in War will be equally necessary when we come to a time of peace. That is a consideration we must bear in mind when we are approaching this subject. Another consideration which we must bear in mind is this: You cannot merely pass a single section Act of Parliament to say that no alien of any sort or description shall be brought within our gates. That is impossible: you cannot do it, and the moment you admit you cannot have a hard and fast rule excluding every alien of every description then you at once let in the principle of discrimination—the principle of the exercise of discretion—and you also at once open the gates to those many complications and many varying circumstances which make the whole question one of such difficulty. May I just remind the House what are the number of aliens who are already in this

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country with which we have to deal. At the time of the Armistice we had in this country in internment some 24,200 Germans, Austrians and Turks, and we had at liberty nearly 21,000 Germans, Austrians, Turks and Bulgarians—men and women—excluding all British-born wives of enemy alien subjects. We have these numbers either in internment or free in this country. Since the Armistice of those who were interned we have repatriated some 19,000, leaving interned here 5,160 on the 12th April of this year, and, of course, that number is, as ships are becoming available, rapidly decreasing. The number of aliens of all kinds who are at present in this country, including pure Belgian refugees who are in a different category and are as rapidly as possible being returned to their own country, is just about 20,000.

Brigadier-General CROFT: Do I understand there were 21,000 aliens in this country at the date of the Armistice—21,000 enemy aliens who were not in internment?

Mr. SHORTT: Yes.

Brigadier-General CROFT: That contradicts all the figures we had given us.

Mr. SHORTT: These are the figures which have been supplied to me. They are all-round figures of aliens in this country at that time. We have, therefore, to deal now with 26,000 enemy aliens who are being repatriated—those who are willing to go—as fast as ships can be got, while as to those who are not willing to go they are having their cases considered by the Committee over which Lord Justice Sankey used to preside, and over which Mr. Justice Clavell Salter will in future preside. Any of these enemy aliens who desire not to be repatriated can have their cases heard by that Committee. These, however, are the numbers with which we have to deal. Undoubtedly the number is considerable. May I now remind the House what is the position with regard to the law as it stands to-day and as it was when the War broke out? In August, 1914, when the alien question became not only acute, but one of national urgency, the position was that aliens were dealt with under the Act of 1905. There were no means of deporting an alien at that time, unless he had been convicted in some Court, and the Court had reported to the proper Department that the alien ought to be sent out of the country. That

was the only power we possessed at that time to get rid of aliens already in this country.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: But how if they became chargeable on the rates?

Mr. SHORTT: Then they had to go before a Court, and an order had to be obtained there. With regard to those who wished to come in there was no such thing as legislation excluding aliens as we understood the term. There was legislation excluding what were known as immigrants, and an "immigrant" was simply defined as "a steerage passenger." Equally it was only the immigrant who came in an immigrant ship that could be dealt with, and who came in the kind of ship in which there were more than twenty immigrant passengers—that is, alien steerage passengers who wished to land. They were only dealt with at the ports. So that if an undesirable person happened to come in any class except steerage, or if he happened to come in a ship in which there were less than twenty immigrants, or if he came to a port which was not an immigrant port and therefore was not searched, he got in without any trouble at all. There were other difficulties in the same way. An undesirable person—it happened many times in the case of women of ill-fame and others who were deported—went abroad and found some accomplice who happened to be a British subject; she married and came back as a British subject, and the Department were helpless. I do not think anyone would suggest that the law at that time was in a satisfactory state.

Immediately on the outbreak of war an Act was passed dealing with the matter very stringently. No doubt hon. and right hon. Members will have read the Memorandum in front of this Bill, which sets out perfectly clearly what were the powers taken under the Act of 1914. The powers taken were stringent and they were wide. The procedure adopted was this: That powers were taken to issue Orders in Council, by which the various powers possessed should be put in force. That was the procedure adopted and that was done. I think it was about the 6th or 7th August, 1914, when the first Order in Council was published. At that time we had not had experience of war so near our own shores, we had not had experience of the imminent danger of alien invasion, and we had not had experience of the danger of having enemies in our

midst who might take advantage of their presence here to our military disadvantage. All of that was new to us, and largely, therefore, we had to move in an experimental way. When I tell the House that experience and changing circumstances from time to time rendered it necessary to alter the first Order in Council by twenty-seven subsequent Orders in Council, the House will appreciate how experimental was the whole subject, how changing were the circumstances and how necessary it was, therefore, to maintain the power by which any necessary alteration could be made as rapidly and as thoroughly as possible. That was the position during the whole of the War.

What is the position to-day? We have had our war experience. I do not think that anyone will contend that your experience in time of war, although it is helpful, is a complete guide as to what should be your course of conduct in time of peace. A man in time of war can take no risks. We cannot for our country take any risks. It was impossible to give to any enemy alien the benefit of the doubt. We had either to be certain about them or to run no risks by internment. I do not think anyone would suggest that we ought to adopt such a high standard as that in time of peace. Equally with regard to those who were coming in, dealing with people who wished to come here possibly for perfectly legitimate purposes, in time of war we had necessarily to be stricter than would be necessary in time of peace. The experience of war we have had. We have not had really any experience of properly dealing with aliens in time of peace. I do not think I am overstating it when I say that the experience between 1905 and 1914, when War broke out, could not be called experience at all. We were working with absolutely inadequate machinery and with inadequate tools, and while the public servants, the immigration officers and others, did their best, they could not do what was impossible. Therefore, having regard to all the circumstances, I do not think we can describe that as peace-time experience in any true sense of the expression. We have had experience of war and now we are approaching, I hope, a period of peace, and it is now for us to decide what it is we ought to do. We can proceed in two ways. You can either plunge, you can theorise, you can calculate the difference between war and peace, and you can

put into an Act of Parliament all that you would otherwise put into an Order in Council. It then becomes stereotyped and can only be altered by another Act of Parliament. That is one course that can be pursued. On the other hand, you can do that which, after full consideration, we have considered to be much the wiser and more profitable course—you can continue the power for a period, and only for a period, of making Orders in Council. You will thereby get your experience. You will be able to take every necessary step.

It may be that some hon. Members think that experience is not necessary when you are only dealing with an alien. We think it is only right and fair that we should have experience. It is not only that we have found in the past that an Order was too weak, and wanted strengthening; we have found that they have been too weak, and we have found that they have been too strong. We found that in war-time, and we shall find it in peace-time. In our view, by far the preferable course is to continue by Order in Council for the next two years. That will give time to consider the experiment; it will give time to stiffen and strengthen where stiffening and strengthening are required, and it will give power to give relief where the hardship is unnecessary and unjust. Those are two very material and essential powers to possess, and unless we proceed by Order in Council we really do not possess them. That is, broadly speaking, the principle upon which we have gone in drafting this Bill. We appreciate how important it is that our system which I think we can say with every possible pride has done its work well during the War—should be continued equally efficiently during the period of peace. If hon. Members will turn to the Bill they will see what the proposals are. It is a very short Bill. It first of all provides that the powers which existed in time of war, or in time of national emergency, but not otherwise, should equally exist in time of peace for two years after the passing of the Bill. That does not in any way affect the power already possessed by the country to make any necessary regulations in time of war or national emergency, but it does extend those powers to a period of peace. The Bill further provides that as there is a difference between the urgent necessities of the War and of peace that an Order in

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Council made in peace-time should lie upon the Table of the House for thirty days. That is the ordinary procedure.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Is it not twenty-one days?

Mr. SHORTT: It may be; I was, perhaps, thinking of Orders in Council in another case. If there is any difficulty we shall consider that, of course, in Committee. That enables us to retain

4.0 P.M. every power we possess at the present and to increase any power which requires increasing or deal with it in any other way that may be necessary. We are considering, and have been very carefully considering, and the officials in my Department are now working upon, a draft Order in Council. There are certain matters which will require a change. For example, the ordinary military area of war-time will be a different thing from the detective area that we shall require in time of peace. Many changes of that kind are being considered. We think this is the wise thing to do, and for several reasons of that character we are satisfied that we must have the power to change by an Order in Council when change becomes necessary.

In addition to that, in Clause 2 of the Bill there are one or two small matters which will become permanent. These are permanent Amendments to the Act of 1914. Frequently it has been very difficult to ascertain what really was the nationality of an alien, and therefore we have taken power to set up machinery by which a decision can be given as to what the nationality is. The second part of that Act deals with what I mentioned before—the case of an alien who is deported from this country who then marries a British subject and insists on coming back again. Sub-section (m) of Clause 2 enables us to keep men who are at present interned for a further period of six months, if necessary. There may be difficulty, as, for instance, lack of shipping, which may make it impossible to get them all back to their own home.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman explain the difference between the Bill and the Memorandum? In the Memorandum the term “prisoners of war” is used, and in the Bill “enemy aliens.” The Memorandum and the Bill do not agree.

Mr. SHORTT: I had not noticed that, but it deals with all persons who are in-

terned. The term “enemy aliens” would include both. The next Sub-section of Clause 2 is merely put in for the purpose of what the Foreign Office call “economic hostility”—if there was any attempt to treat our British subjects improperly in any country, so that there should be some weapon of reprisals. They are not likely to be used, but the Foreign Office wish to have them in case of necessity.

We come to Clause 3, which also is a permanent provision. It deals with enemy aliens or aliens of any kind who come to this country for the deliberate purpose of stirring up disaffection or unrest. We have really at present no power for dealing with men of that description. If they come into this country and, for example, supposing the Defence of the Realm Regulation Act had been repealed, there would have been no means of dealing with the alien who came here for the simple purpose of trying to stir up trouble in order that something to his advantage or his country's advantage might happen abroad. This Bill proposes to deal with men of that description, and it makes the alien who is guilty of stirring up disaffection liable to penal servitude. This, of course, applies already in this country. Disaffection is a crime under the Defence of the Realm Regulations: it is continued as a crime, so far as an alien is concerned, when these Regulations cease to exist, and the punishment inflicted on an alien can be very much more severe than the punishment that can be inflicted on a British subject. It is hoped in that way that strangers who come for a wicked and mischievous purpose can be dealt with thoroughly and punished as they deserve. The next Sub-clause provides that if an enemy alien in any industry in which he is not *bonâ fide* engaged seeks to stir up unrest he is guilty of a crime. The punishment is a very small one. In the first place three months. No doubt it would carry an order for deportation, so that at the end of the punishment he could be got out of the country. The Bill is so worded, and I hope it will succeed in its purpose, that no alien who happens to be living in this country and is a member of a trade union *bonâ fide* engaged in any industry shall suffer in any way by taking part in a strike. This provision only applies to an alien who is not *bonâ fide* engaged in an industry and who has come here with a definite purpose, whether a trade or political purpose, to stir up un-

rest in that industry, not really for the good of the industry but for some ulterior purpose.

These are the main provisions of this Act. I appreciate from the Notice Paper that there will be opposition to the method of procedure by Orders in Council. I shall listen with the greatest attention to everything that is said on the subject. While I do not like to say I am not open to conviction—I hope I shall never say that—at the same time we have gone into the matter very carefully, and I think most of the arguments for and against have been put before us, and unless I hear new arguments to-day I shall certainly ask the House to adopt the proposal of Orders in Council. Equally I gather from the Order Paper and from what is heard in the Lobbies that there is a feeling that we ought at once to detail what the Regulations are to be and give them the force of statutory law. There again we have considered the matter from all points of view. I think the two questions are for all substantial purposes the same if the House is persuaded that procedure by Order in Council is the proper procedure, because of the change in circumstances and because of the difference in experience—if they are satisfied with that, they will be equally satisfied that we ought not now at once to stereotype or give statutory force to the procedure by Order in Council. In 1917 we had to bring in a special Order in Council to save a number of perfectly loyal British-born women who were unfortunately married to enemy alien husbands from suffering most unjust and unnecessary hardship. That is an example in one direction. There are numberless in the other where we found what we thought were ample safeguards proved insufficient, and at once an Order in Council was brought in in order to defeat the attempt to defeat the Regulations. That had to be done in numberless occasions; I could quote twenty-seven new additional Orders in Council, and I could tell the House of many cases where it was necessary to stiffen the Regulations, and instance one where it was necessary to relax them as the War proceeded and the enemy alien friend became the friendly or neutral alien of to-morrow. We had, as the Turkish Army fell, to make alterations. There was the case of the Czecho-Slovaks and of the other people friendly disposed towards us who had been subjects of

enemy State and who ceased to be so through the changes and vicissitudes of the War.

When you come to peace time, special measures will be necessary. There will be constant changes. At any moment there may be a treaty made here or a peace arrangement there which would render an alteration necessary. During the whole of that time there will be constant changes, and these changes will have to be met. Some of them will make the existing Regulations too large, and some of them would make them too small. Suppose you have a Regulation dealing with a country which has a stable Government ready to enter into all kinds of treaties with this country and the poison enters that country and it becomes Bolshevist; you would then have to make your regulations apply to the changed circumstances. All these things you can do if you have the elastic machinery of Orders in Council. But they would become practically impossible if you had a settled statutory Act of Parliament which could only be altered by an Act of Parliament.

No one would suggest that at this time of day the House should consider for a moment the lightning emergency legislation to which we grew accustomed when we were in the height of the War crisis. Therefore I ask the House to say that the course we have proposed is really by far the preferable. No doubt it has its disadvantages, but in this human cosmos of ours, what is there that has not its disadvantages? Most of our life is spent in choosing the lesser of two evils, and in the view of the Government, procedure by Order in Council is, we think, the best. At the same time, if any hon. Member can suggest to us any particular direction in which our experience is sufficient to justify a provision being made permanent as we propose to make permanent the provisions dealing with enemy aliens, who come to stir up unrest, it will be considered with the greatest care, and, if found feasible, will be adopted. We have not absolutely excluded from this Bill all measures of a permanent character. We have only retained an existing power to proceed by Order in Council. If amendments can be brought forward to show a direction in which the permanent provisions of the Act can be increased and extended, they will be carefully and sympathetically considered. Equally, any provision which would strengthen the measure, or in the

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 opinion of the House would give more complete control by the House of Commons over aliens in future, would be considered. It is a difficult and complicated subject. We have done our best to meet it, and we think, according to the best of our advice and consideration, that we are meeting it in the wisest way. We think we are meeting it in the way which is most likely to be really thorough and efficient, and to protect us, and while seeing that no injustice is done to ourselves and securing to ourselves the fullest measure of security and justice, we, at any rate, will see that no unnecessary injustice is inflicted upon other people.

Sir D. MACLEAN: I tender my sympathy to the House for having to listen to me once again. I am sure the Easter vacation will be a welcome relief to hon. Members. But on this matter, at any rate, I have some practical experience because I was one of the original members of the Committee which was set up in March, 1915, and which sat right up to the Armistice. One had many other occupations, but it is no exaggeration to say I attended the majority of its meetings and personally dealt with thousands of cases. I should like to say a few words on the general aspect of the question as it relates to enemy aliens in this country, which is, of course, exciting by far the greater portion of the interest of this House and the country. What rather alarmed some hon. Members was the figure which my right hon. Friend gave of 21,000 enemy aliens at large in this country. It is quite germane to ascertain how that figure is made up. They may be classed under six or seven heads. The first will be what we call the technical enemy alien—those aliens who are technically enemies by reason of the geographical fact of their having been born in a particular part of Europe, but as far as their sympathy with the enemy was concerned, they were as anti-German and anti-Austrian as any Britisher could be. Every one of those aliens, and they amounted to thousands, was personally vouched for by a committee which was carefully chosen, and which reported to us, and when the occasion arose we had personal investigation of any suspicious cases, and every one of those cases was also vouched for by the police and the military. The House may at once relieve its mind of any anxiety with regard to that description of alien. Then

there was a very large number of enemy aliens, Germans and Austrians, and a few Bulgarians and Turks, who were over seventy years of age or were suffering from some really serious illness or infirmity. Numbers of them were in hospital and many were quite incurable cases. Then there was another class as to which one uses the general term of ministers of religion, including members of religious orders. That was not a very large class, but we had to leave them alone, under very careful supervision, because otherwise we should have got into extreme difficulties with regard to our ministers of religion in enemy countries. Then you come to the class of enemy aliens who came here under ten years of age. It was impossible to assume that a boy or girl coming here under ten years of age could really have assimilated the virus of the German or the Austrian, at any rate, on an intelligent consideration of the facts that led up to the War. Then there was another class of enemy aliens who had sons serving in the Army. That represented a very large class, and there was a large number of Germans and Austrians who had two or three sons serving—mostly volunteers. Very few of them came under the Military Service Act. There is another class, consisting of those who have lived here for thirty-five years and married British wives, or those who have lived here for forty years and upwards and married aliens of enemy origin or not. Every single case was most carefully investigated, not only by the police but by the Army, and specifically and definitely vouched for. That, perhaps, will dissipate some of the alarm which might be present in the mind of hon. Members with regard to that seemingly large number of enemy aliens now at large in this country.

I joined that Committee with the idea that a very large proportion of the enemy aliens in this country were not unmindful of the hospitality and justice which had been shown to them during their residence here. I came with that very clean-cut idea in my mind. I frankly admit that the experience of the Committee led me very largely to modify that, and there is not the remotest doubt that in this country there were, in the first year of the War at any rate, a large number of Germans and Austrians who were hostile in a very marked sense to this country. I became gradually stiffened up, so to speak, with regard to the administration of our proce-

sure. Our experience on the Committee made us really work quite together. We had Lord Lambourne, better known as Sir Mark Lockwood. We had two judges, Justices Sankey and Younger, and we had the advantage of other Members of the House. The hon. Baronet (Sir J. Butcher) joined us at a later stage. Everyone there was desirous of being fair, but in case of doubt we gave the benefit of the doubt to the country. Those were pretty generally the lines upon which we worked. That was the way it operated on my mind. I came quite clearly to the conclusion that, although there may be exceptions, in a wide general sense the enemy aliens now at large in this country are not a danger. The evidence to my mind was quite overwhelming on that point. The work of our Secret Service, both of the Army and Navy, was certainly one of the most wonderful things which any country has ever known. It was done in that sort of casual, efficient British fashion which so often goes straight to the root of the matter. We have in this House now two hon. and gallant Gentlemen who have had exceptional experience in that way, and one of them on several occasions came and gave evidence before our Committee. I desire to render a most heartfelt tribute of gratitude and admiration to those branches of both the Army and Navy for the perfectly splendid work they did in conjunction with our police in the protection of the country. That is shown by the fact that there was not a single outrage, with all these aliens in the country, and many of them dangerous ones. No bridge was blown up, and no railway was attacked. We often heard very great alarm expressed about the numbers of aliens in the East End of London. The real danger did not come from those people at all. I do not say that many of them were not quite willing in that respect, but the real danger came from people much more highly placed than waiters and barbers and people of that class. The way in which the matter was handled reflects the greatest possible credit upon the officials concerned.

What does Parliament really propose to do? Are we going to send these aliens back to Germany or Austria? Just think what it means. Their roots are deep in this country, and their children are here going to our primary schools. A very large number of them have married British-born wives, and there was

evidence before us that the domestic relations between the technical enemy alien and his British-born wives and children were of quite a happy description, and those wives and children will follow the fathers if you repatriate them. We want to keep all these young British citizen here.

An HON. MEMBER: Technical British citizens!

Sir D. MACLEAN: Is it suggested that it is at all in our interest to export this kind of national asset? We want to keep them here. These people are safe and they ought to be kept here. [**HON. MEMBERS:** "No!"] Is this what it all comes to? Is it seriously suggested that for the sake of what I hope is a passing passion these people are to be shipped away like rats or vermin when they are British citizens and British assets? Their children are anyhow. Surely we are going to approach this thing with some balance of mind now anyhow, whatever we did during the War. I hope that the better judgment of this House will be asserted, or else I think the glory of it will be largely departed from, and I trust that we may have a balanced judgment on this matter. As for the people outside and those who are to be repatriated, the proper thing to do in that case is to give them a fair chance of being heard. Let me just give an instance which Lord Lambourne gave in the House of Lords the other day, and which was repeated almost identically in another case in my correspondence this morning. He gave an instance of a German who had been in this country for thirty-eight years, and was married to an English wife. He had four sons, all of whom volunteered in 1914. One of them became a sergeant and two of them corporals, and one remained a private. The sergeant and the corporals were wounded, the sergeant being wounded three times. On the last occasion on which the sergeant was wounded he was brought home, and his German father was summoned to the hospital, as the son was supposed to be dying. He went there and saw his son, and on his way back he was arrested and sent to the Isle of Man internment camp. A little while ago there was suddenly an order for his deportation and to be sent back to Germany, but fortunately the advisory committee was available, and they sat and heard the case. They had previously exempted him on the facts.

[Sir D. Maclean.]

Having heard the case the advisory committee made an order, which I am sure would meet with the approval of even my hon. Friends who sit below the Gangway. That kind of case—I do not mean so complete a case as that—would, I am certain, meet with the fair judgment of any Committee set up of which Mr. Justice Younger was chairman. That is the kind of case that ought to come before a Committee and have a fair judgment passed upon it.

I wish to say a word in conclusion upon the question of the general aliens as distinguished from enemy aliens. I hope that the Committee will examine with very great care Clause 3 as explained to us by the Home Secretary. Certainly one of the greatest claims for moral leadership which this country has made and sustained is the fact that, as far as we are concerned, we have never refused asylum to all those poor and distressed subjects of oppressed races who have sought asylum here. I dare say that in the past Regulations were made of which, so far as I am concerned, I have approved, and I think they go far to meet the case, but I do hope that this House will not, owing to panic and popular prejudice which is being exercised to-day from honest, but I am sure mistaken, motives, allow this great tradition to be lowered and degraded. As the Home Secretary put it, let us have two years at any rate of these restrictions sympathetically, humanely, justly administered. I quite agree. You cannot suddenly revert to the pre-war conditions. I quite agree with that. It must be done gradually, but the idea that we should give up those great and noble traditions of the past, which have, I venture to think, raised us in the estimation of mankind, and have contributed to a great deal of our material prosperity. [HON. MEMBERS: "No, no!"] There are a great many industries in this country which have been founded by political refugees. Art, science, literature, have all been enriched by men and women who have sought sanctuary in these islands. Are we, as one of the results of the War to wreck that noble tradition? I hope not. I do beg of the House to have a steady and long look at this matter before it allows itself to be swept away from its ancient traditions by any gust of popular passion.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to move to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the question to add the words "upon this day six months."

Before I put down this Amendment I waited and waited anxiously in the hope that the Labour leaders in the House would see the sinister danger to the whole cause of the workers in this country which lies concealed in this measure. As they did not do so, I waited in the hope, and I can well understand now why I was disappointed, that the Leader of the other half of the Opposition might have stepped into the breach and put down an Amendment. I confess if I were in any doubt when the right hon. Gentleman opposite finished his speech as to the justification for that step it has been entirely removed by the speech to which we have just listened. So far as the Labour Members interest in this matter is concerned I have no atom of doubt that if this particular measure is passed, and if the principle it embodies is endorsed by this House, they will find indeed a very strong element of opposition to all their pleas for a better standard of living and for higher wages, more so than they have ever had in the past. There are three grounds which seem to me to entitle a member to move the rejection of the Bill. Either the Member disapproves of the principle or, approving of it, he thinks the introduction of the Bill untimely and inopportune, or, approving of the principle, he thinks it is so clumsily constructed or so bureaucratic in its character and so utterly inadequate for the purpose at which it is supposed to aim, that no Amendment introduced can possibly make it a workable and satisfactory measure. It is on that ground I am moving the rejection of this Bill. I was staggered by one of the arguments put forward by the Home Secretary. He said, quite correctly, that precedents taken from a time of war might not be a safe guide for policy in time of peace. Then he seriously said, "We have had no peace experience of the working of alien legislation." Why, Sir, it was in August, 1905, that the main Act dealing with this matter was passed, and for nine years before the War that Act, with all its complicated machinery, was in full operation. I will show the House, with its permission, how it operated, and I will also show how the Orders in Council operated. Then we were told by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of half the

Opposition, that, so far as a large number of enemy aliens who were in this country at the outbreak of war were concerned that they had been personally vouched for by various committees. But Laszlo was personally vouched for by men of high position, and Caroline Haneman, who lived for six months at 10, Downing Street—

Sir D. MACLEAN: I referred to a committee of which I was a member.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Laszlo was personally vouched for when he was naturalised by eminent people, and Caroline Haneman, who lived at 10, Downing Street for a long time and who was naturalised after the War began and recently denaturalised, was also personally vouched for. Therefore I dismiss the theory that personal vouching by people whose names are never published and who are not called upon to give the reasons for their guarantees, counts for much with practical men. There is one observation of the Home Secretary with which I entirely agree and one with which I wholly disagree and they are both contained in the same sentence. He said this is an important subject, and no one can doubt that, and he added that it is a subject which requires delicate handling. The handling by this Bill is so delicate that no enemy alien will ever feel it. I say that this is one of the problems which requires rough and ready handling with no oversensitive regard for the feelings of those with whom we have to deal. I gather that this is part of the great problem of reconstruction in which we are now engaged, whilst others elsewhere are discussing the terms of peace. We have had land and housing and health and now we have the Aliens' Bill. I venture to say that we are getting almost to a stage of reconstruction running amok, while Ministers seem to be engaged in a somewhat indecent competition with each other in order to go down to posterity as great social reformers in connection with this War. This Bill is to my mind an instance of the scamping of the whole of this job, and having said that I would point out that it aims entirely at perpetuating a purely war emergency measure by continuing the absolutely objectionable system of Orders in Council when they are not necessary. After all, everything the right hon. Gentleman said could be secured by a standing aliens' authority, which could review the question whenever it was necessary. As it is, Orders in Council depend on the whim of

whoever may happen to be Home Secretary for the moment. One Home Secretary takes a different view from another. The other day I asked the right hon. Gentleman if he would give the names of the sponsors of a certain woman who was denaturalised. He said it was not the custom of his Department to do so, but in the case of Laszlo his predecessor gave the names. Thus you have lack of continuity of policy, and I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman instances in the working of these Orders in Council.

I could not help feeling as I listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition that we were going back to the old days when this vital question was made more or less an obsolete party shibboleth. I took the trouble of looking up this morning the Debates on the 1905 Act, and I was rather struck to find that when the Unionist Government of that day introduced that measure this is the kind of thing which very eminent occupants of these benches opposite said in opposition to it. The present Secretary for War (Mr. Churchill), for whom there is no greater admirer than myself, said:

"He admitted that this might be an acute question in certain places which had been mentioned, but it was in no sense a national, racial, or economic question. Except for these particular places, it was a mere party question which had been raised into a position of fictitious importance because it was believed to have in it the makings of a party cry in an election which was looked forward to with much apprehension."

Like the right hon. Gentleman here to-day, he could not resist, in passing, expressing his contempt at the

"spectacle of a great party trying to exploit the weakness and miseries of some of the poorest and weakest of mankind."

That it the sort of sentiment which underlies the utterance of the Opposition. It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman, with all his experience, has not learned from the experience of the War that the existence of an enormous alien colony in this country, ever increasing and mainly in percentage German or Austrian, was one of the contributory causes of the War. We do not want in these days, when clearing up a great world tragedy which has brought us to the brink of bankruptcy and ruin, to indulge in copy-book maxims about the rights of refugees. We have been the dumping ground for the refugees of the world for too long.

Coming to the actual operation of the existing law, let us see what it is the right hon. Gentleman is endeavouring to deal

[Mr. Bottomley.]

with. The alien law, for all practical purposes, began in 1905. The very wording of the Act shows how far we were from the real issue, because it was to deal with "undesirable aliens." It is my theory that, except in very few cases and with very strong proof to the contrary, every alien at this moment is *prima facie* an undesirable alien. The Act of 1905 is going to be repealed by this Bill. Unlike this Bill, it was mandatory. There is nothing in this Bill compelling anybody to do anything. It is purely permissive. Aliens may come in by the million, and there is no obligation on the Home Secretary or any State Department to take any step whatever. Under the existing Act an alien could not come into the country unless he could show that he had a certain amount of money. We all know that that provision was evaded, because quite a big trade was started on the Continent, lending £5 notes to aliens at 5s. each, which were duly returned, but which succeeded in getting them into the country. Then an alien could not come in if he were a lunatic, but there are not many lunatics among the aliens who come here. Then he could not come if he were suffering from disease. That provision has gone under this Bill. He could not come if he were an ex-criminal. All these provisions are swept away by this Bill. The Home Secretary need not put them into operation unless he chooses. Of course, they could come in if they were fleeing from religious or political persecution, but that was very much abused.

Then there was a provision as to the grounds on which they could be expelled. An alien could be expelled if convicted of certain offences or, subject to a very simple procedure, if he became chargeable to the rates. Let us see how that worked. The right hon. Gentleman has said that we have had no experience of peace legislation with regard to aliens. During the War the Act was suspended, but, in the year 1912, 614,149 aliens landed in this country. Probably I shall be told that they did not stay here, and that, perhaps, they only came for a day or two or were simply passing through. But the actual landing of such a large number of aliens in this country, with a mandatory Act like this in operation, contains at least the possibilities of mischief being done by emissaries of countries like Germany and Austria, which sent the great proportion of these aliens. The figures were always

going up from 1905 to 1914. In 1913 they were 691,000. If with such an Act as that in operation you could have such an immigration of aliens, what is going to happen when you have no mandatory powers at all? When the right hon. Gentleman, perhaps in the mutations of time, finds himself Home Secretary on the bench opposite, I do not think that he will be very stringent in his administration of the Act. He would say that *prima facie* an alien is as good as anyone else.

Now, with regard to expulsions. In 1912 the total number of expulsions was 300 odd. In 1913 they were just about 300, and when the War broke out we discovered about sixty who had been expelled who were still walking freely about this country. We had power to send them back if they were convicted of offences, but in 1913 there were 2,202 aliens in prison in the United Kingdom being supported by the British taxpayer, and every one of them was liable to deportation. Aliens were also liable to be sent back if they were upon the rates, and in 1913 there were 8,117 aliens on the rates, being kept by the Poor Law system of this country, and there was an enormous number of children as well. Then came the War, and, in the emergency of the moment, a Bill was rushed through, I believe in about twenty minutes or a half-hour. Under that Act we have power to make Orders in Council. No sooner did it come into operation than the Orders were evaded in every conceivable way. There was one provision that an alien seaman could not be landed unless he was in possession of a passport issued two years previously in his own country, but the Order in Council said that where an alien is under the provisions of this Act prohibited from landing at a port, an aliens' officer at that port may nevertheless grant him temporary permission to land. That power was exercised very freely, and an enormous number of these men were allowed to roam about at large. This is an illustration to show how under a system of Orders in Council without any notification to the public at all, the whole of the Act can be abrogated.

Under this Act of 1914 an enormous number of Orders in Council was issued. These were brought together in a volume which came down to 4th March, 1918. Then, before another volume is published, if anyone likes to go to the printers and see the index, and insists on getting hold of the subsequent literature, he will find

scores and scores of, I will not call them handbills, such as I have here. They are handbills with this distinction, that they are not distributed, but they are additional Orders in Council. Under Article 22c, which you will find on page 20 of this volume of Aliens Restriction Orders, nobody at the date of the Armistice could employ an alien without the permission of the Home Office, and he had to make a periodical return of every alien employed by him. We should all agree that this was a necessary enactment. The Armistice was scarcely signed before by another Order in Council, which I do not believe the right hon. Gentleman ever heard of,

"Article 22c and the 5th and 6th Schedules to the Aliens Registration Order are hereby revoked."

That established this alarming fact, that under this system of Orders in Council, which the right hon. Gentleman praises so much, we have actually, since the Armistice, legalised the employment of aliens to any extent by any firm, without any obligation on their part to give the names or to seek permission.

It is almost incredible that when we are setting about reconstruction, rebuilding our lost industries, and recovering our lost markets, the very first thing an Order in Council did was to say to the alien, "Welcome back little stranger! We have missed you. Come and take the jobs of the workmen of Britain." So one could go on illustrating the working of this system of Orders in Council. Throughout the whole of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman he never seemed to me to get hold of the real soul of the problem. I will tell him where he will find it. He will find it in

5.0 P.M. No. 4 of the six points of the Prime Minister for the guidance of Coalition candidates. This is what it says, "Britain for the British, socially and industrially." I should be interested to know from the Prime Minister to-morrow whether he has authorised any departure from that declaration.

We are faced with this new measure which is permissive in its character. What is its provision? That for two years you are going to continue the system of Orders in Council. You repeal the Act of 1905, and any Orders you make, provided a war is not on and there is no immediate danger, are to lay on the

Table twenty-one days. Then the House of Commons may petition for their annulment. I have set some years in this House, but I have never known a case where leave has been given to petition for annulment of Orders on that Table, except by the consent of the Government, who have to give the necessary facilities. I am certain that if I were to ask leave to petition to annul any Order, the Leader of the House would deeply regret that he could not spare the time. If it is done what happens? If this House petitions against an Order His Majesty may annul it. There is not one word "shall" from the beginning to the end of this Bill. There is no security there, even if the House petitions. What is the general constructive answer to this Bill? We all agree, except the Leader of the Opposition (Sir D. Maclean), that it is a vital and pressing national problem. We agree that it is part of the great scheme of reconstruction which was to follow the making of peace. Why could not the Government have brought into the Bill one comprehensive scheme for dealing with the whole alien problem? Why cannot we incorporate our naturalisation laws in the Bill? Why cannot we say that aliens should be restricted from being so easily naturalised? Why cannot we say that aliens shall not be eligible to sit on British juries—one of the most idiotic anomalies of our constitution? Why should aliens be allowed to sit on the magisterial bench, the judicial bench, or the Treasury Bench? Why should they be allowed to change their name? Why should they be allowed to hold land in this country? In other words, why on earth will not the Home Secretary rise to the occasion and grapple with this problem in the same comprehensive manner as some of his colleagues are endeavouring to do with the other question in the Bills to which I have referred?

I am sorry to move the rejection of the Bill, and I do not do it because I want aliens to be unrestricted. I move it because this Bill is unworkable and stupid. When the two years have elapsed in which these Orders in Council may be made—and two years soon pass in a Parliamentary life—the whole of the alien laws may have gone. You will have no 1905 Act, no 1914 Act, and no 1919 Act, so that, unless we keep a very watchful eye on the Treasury Bench, and a very careful diary is kept, we may arrive at a time when there is not even permissive legisla-

[Mr. Bottomley.]

tion dealing with this problem. I want the right hon. Gentleman to say to us that there is no great emergency to-day for continuing these Orders in Council. The hon. and learned Gentleman who sits on this bench (Sir J. Butcher) has shown interest in the Bill by putting on the Paper a reasoned Amendment. I cannot speak for him, but I can say for myself, in the way of compromise, that if the Home Secretary says he is too busy with his manifold duties, and he is too busy learning the duties of his new office—I do not say this offensively, because changes are quite wonderful, and it is remarkable how these supermen really grapple with their new duties—and if he says that he is so full up with other things at the moment that he cannot bring in a more comprehensive measure of alien restriction, and he asks us to continue these emergency powers for a few months until a new measure can be introduced, that would be a reasonable suggestion which I should be very happy to commend to the hon. and learned Gentleman sitting beside me. But if the right hon. Gentleman says that he is going on with this Bill for two years and that he is going to continue this system of Orders in Council, and making these orders without anyone being the wiser, then, with great regret but with every desire to see every alien, except in the most special cases, kept out of our country, I do not see any alternative but to press my Motion to a Division.

Sir JOHN BUTCHER: I beg to second the Motion. I confess that I should have preferred, if I had been in order, to move the reasoned Amendment which stands in my name. But as that cannot be done and as the object of the hon. Member (Mr. Bottomley) is exactly the same as my own, namely, to get a real live Bill dealing with this matter, and not a shadow and a simulation of a Bill, and inasmuch as our objects are the same in that we desire to bring pressure upon the Government to do their duty, I have pleasure in seconding the Motion. I listened with disappointment to the speech of the Home Secretary. He told us that he could not produce a comprehensive Bill at the present time. He said that we must have more experience and must wait a little longer. That is a reversion to the old and discredited policy of almost criminal dilatoriness which nearly lost us the War, and which I

thought had disappeared from our legislation. This is an urgent matter. It does not brook delay and we call upon the Home Secretary to deal with it promptly. What we are contending for in this matter is a question of principle—a big principle. Our contention is that in this large question of policy it is the duty of the Legislature to legislate and it is the duty of the Minister to obey the directions of the Legislature. It is not the duty or the right of the Minister to legislate.

What does this Bill do? The vice of the Bill is that it throws the whole duty and right of legislation by Order in Council upon the Minister, and Parliament stands by and hands over its duties to the Minister and leaves entirely to the discretion of the Minister whether or not he should carry out these duties. Legislation by Orders in Council in war-time is absolutely essential. In war-time urgent and numerous questions arise which cannot be dealt with by legislation, and it is absolutely essential for the safety of the country to leave a wide discretion to Ministers as to what Regulations they should make and leave them to carry them into execution. But when we come to peace-time—and this Bill deals with peace, because it deals with a period of two years after the passing of the Act—I suggest that it is a vicious and unconstitutional principle that the Legislature is asked to abnegate its duties of legislation and to hand them over to a Minister. That is unconstitutional. Why are we here? I presume we are here, and I think we admit, that we are here to pass legislation. We are the trustees for the nation, and to pass through the House legislation which is necessary for the nation, and if we as trustees chose to delegate our duties to any Minister, however much we may trust him in his private capacity, we are guilty of a serious breach of our duty to the nation, and we ought not to accept the advice of a Minister who encourages us to commit that breach of our trust. This is no stigma upon the Minister of the day. It is not the right hon. Gentleman that I object to. It is the system I object to. The right hon. Gentleman may be here to-day and we may trust him, but has he any guarantee that he will be here to-morrow or in six months or a year, or the day after to-morrow? Have we any absolute guarantee that his successor will have sound opinions on this subject? I

can mention many hon. Members in this House—I do not see many of them here at the moment—whom I should be very sorry to see in the position of Home Secretary and whom I should be exceedingly sorry to see vested with absolute discretion as to whether they should do their duty in protecting us against these alien dangers. Therefore, when we come to deal with this question of aliens, it is not relevant for us to consider the holder of the office at the moment; our business is to see whether we are legislating upon a sound system or not.

Let me suggest what this Bill ought to be, and then point out what it is. I think this Bill ought to include legislative proposals upon such large questions of policy as repatriation, emigration, registration of aliens, and the holding of land by enemy aliens. I grant—and probably the Home Secretary will agree with me—that in connection with this legislation you could issue Orders in Council on matters of detail, and for the purpose of carrying out the general principles laid down in the House, but on the question of policy we must perform our duty and say what must be done. We have been told that we have 26,000 enemy aliens in this country, and that that does not include the British wives of Germans and others. The right hon. Member for Peebles (Sir D. Maclean) gave us a recital of the sort of persons who are included in these 26,000 aliens, but he did not tell us that amongst these 26,000 uninterned enemy aliens are a very considerable number of young Germans of military age, capable young men, who were not interned because it was thought they would be more usefully employed upon national work, such as mending roads and in the national factories.

Sir D. MACLEAN: That was a purely war measure. The only reason that weighed with the Committee in not interned them was that they were of more use as a purely war measure in doing the work they were doing than in putting them in an internment camp.

Sir J. BUTCHER: That is so, but that is not the point. The point is, what are you going to do with these young men now? Are we going to be foolish enough to abnegate the right of saying what is to be done with these young interned Germans and to leave it to someone on the Treasury Bench to say what shall or shall not be done? I think even my right hon. Friend (Sir D. Maclean), whose merciful heart I

admire and to a small extent sympathise with, would be disposed to send them home to Germany, where they would be less likely to do harm than they would be here. Those are the figures that we are given—26,000 uninterned enemy aliens.

Mr. SHORTT: No; 21,000 who are not interned.

Sir J. BUTCHER: And 5,000 still interned?

Mr. SHORTT: Yes.

Sir J. BUTCHER: That makes 26,000 in all to be dealt with. I suggest that the only way of dealing with these enemy aliens in our midst is for this House to lay down as a general principle that all enemy aliens in this country should be repatriated, subject to exemptions in proper cases to be decided by an Advisory Committee. My right hon. Friend (Sir D. Maclean) gave some interesting accounts of the Advisory Committee, on which I had the honour of sitting as one of his colleagues. We had a very admirable and experienced chairman in Mr. Justice Sankey, but I do say, from my experience on that Committee, and knowing as I do the great difficulties we had in dealing with many of these cases, and if I may add the certain differences of opinion that did exist from time to time, I think it would be right for this House to lay down some general principles for that Advisory Committee to act upon in regard to exemptions.

Sir D. MACLEAN: My hon. Friend will remember that I came to his rescue on more than one occasion.

Sir J. BUTCHER: I am glad to recognise that he helped me very much, but I thought I saw a tendency in his speech of a certain departure from righteousness and a lapse from grace; but may I be allowed to correct any wrong impression, because I quite agree that in many cases he helped me against certain others in doing what was quite right. My right hon. Friend said he would like to see all German ministers of religion left in this country. He, at any rate, was in favour of their exemption from internment. [An Hon. Member: "They are none of them religious."] Well, that is their courtesy title, and knowing what German ministers of religion, so-called, did in their own country during the War, how they advised their own followers during the War, knowing what they did in China and

[Sir J. Butcher.]

India to stir up intrigue and to stab us in the back, I should be very sorry to leave any German ministers of religion in this country now or hereafter. [An Hon. MEMBER: "They ought to be in Heaven."] That is a pious aspiration which they probably share with my hon. Friend, but whether it will ever be realised it is not for me to say. If my memory serves me right, there was a certain colony of young German priests between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five, or a little more, whom we did order to be interned, and I hope to goodness they are interned. But when my right hon. Friend says they ought to be left here, I think he perhaps forgot that order for their internment. I confess that when I was asked automatically to exempt from internment Germans who had come here perhaps at eighteen years of age, to evade military service and for no other purpose, who had lived here it may be for twenty-five years, many of them wealthy men, and to exempt them because they have lived here for a long time, I confess I had very grave doubts as to whether we ought to do it or not. They had never taken the trouble to be naturalised, they had never identified themselves with the public life of this country, and yet some thought we must not intern these men because they had been successful in getting some foolish British woman to marry them, and because so far they had evaded the investigations of the police to detect them. So much for repatriation, and I say that this is an urgent matter. The time when this becomes urgent is after the Declaration of Peace. We shall have to act then and act at once, and if we show slackness, or cowardice, or indifference in dealing with this matter in the first year after peace has been declared, we shall go back into the old rut, and we shall be harassed, and hampered, and intrigued against and undermined by these Germans as we were in the years before the War, and we may live to regret it.

Then I turn to another matter which, I think, ought to be dealt with by the Bill, and that is the question of immigration of enemy aliens. We are told that to-day there are a million of people in this country out of employment. It has cost us £16,000,000 in order to pay out-of-work donation to these people in the last three or four months. Knowing these facts, are we going to leave it to the sole discretion of the Home Secretary to say whether we

are to have hordes of German aliens dumped into this country, to interfere with our own people, to set up the same system of intrigue in our midst, the same system of interference with British labour, the same system of undermining British business that we had before the War? Personally, I should be glad to see very stringent methods adopted by this House and embodied in the Bill in order to prevent such a disaster as that. This is all the more important because we are asked by this Bill to repeal the sole shred of legislation we have in order to restrain this tide of immigration, and if we are going to repeal the Aliens Act of 1905, for Heaven's sake let us put something better in its place! On not one of those important questions of policy to which I have referred is there any shred of legislation at all in the Bill. Everything is left to the Home Secretary. I call that a complete abnegation of our authority. It is reverting to the "Dora" system, which is not beloved in this country, which is necessary in time of war, but which many hon. Gentlemen in all parts of the House desire to see abolished. Yet now, on the first opportunity, when there is no reason for continuing the "Dora" system, but every reason for reversing it, the Home Secretary asks us, and puts it in his Bill, that we shall continue the "Dora" system for two years. The Government have had time enough to deal with this. The Home Secretary made a certain apology for having brought in the Bill in this form, and, as I understood him, his excuse was that this is only a temporary measure calculated to tide us over a difficulty. There is great uncertainty lest we should do right, but there would be no uncertainty at all if the right hon. Gentleman left it to the House. We should know pretty well how to do right! He asked for time for experiment, but at whose expense are we to experiment? Are we going to experiment at the expense of the Germans? No! The Home Secretary says, "Let us experiment at an expense which will be our own." I should have thought the Home Secretary had had ample experience. He has had four and a half years' experience of war, and I should have thought he would have learned something in that time. He said, "War experience is valuable, but it is not complete." He has had five months of peace to help him along, and he has had a good many years before the War, which I think might have given him experience,

although, unfortunately, it did not. But the War has taught us a good deal, and not merely as to the actual conduct of enemy aliens in this country during the War. The War was a revelation of German character and methods which disillusioned many kindly-intentioned people, and which opened our eyes, and ought to have opened the eyes of the Home Secretary and stimulated him into vigorous action.

This Bill has been promised a long time. It has been delayed too long. The Home Office has had it under consideration for many, many months. Mountains have been in labour, and we hoped that we should not have had the traditional mouse. We expected and we hoped that we should have seen the product of this long labour in the form of a real live child worthy of the Home Secretary. [An Hon. Member: "Call it Dora!"] We think of the peace, and what do we find? We find that the Home Secretary produces an abortion of a war baby. We want something better than that, and, what is more, I believe the Members of this House insist upon getting something better than that. If there is any matter of legislation which we are not justified in dealing with by Orders in Council, it is this question of aliens. My hon. Friend spoke to-day of the declaration of the Prime Minister. We all know that at this last election almost every hon. Member of this House, I do not say gave pledges, but made voluntary declarations, as to the necessity for drastic legislation on the subject of aliens, and are we to go back to our constituents and say, "We are too indifferent, or too lazy, or too cowardly, or too false, to insist that the Government shall make good the declarations of themselves and of the party that supports them"? What would our constituents say if we went to them, and said, "We think this matter does not require very serious treatment. Let us trust the Home Secretary and give him a blank cheque, and with the blessing of goodness or of good luck all will go right"? I say that if this House treated their constituents to such a gross breach of faith, I think we should receive, and we should richly deserve, their condemnation. Let me make a final appeal to the Government. If they can amend this Bill by introducing into it proper provisions which the House can consider, which the House can if necessary amend, then let them give that undertaking, and let them carry out that

undertaking, and the House will help them in carrying through a proper Bill. These Orders in Council are useless. They can only be rejected or accepted; they cannot be amended. If the right hon. Gentleman says that the scope of the Bill is such that he cannot introduce the necessary provision into it, then let him take his courage in both hands, let him withdraw this Bill and let him introduce a real Bill which would be satisfactory to this House, and which would be satisfactory to the vast majority of the electors of the country.

Sir ERNEST WILD: I crave the courtesy of the House for a new Member, particularly because I did not come into this House to make speeches, but in order to try to do my best to support the Coalition Government in redeeming its election pledges. An event has happened in the course of the last few days which has given great jubilation to my hon. and right hon. Friends on the benches opposite, and that is the Hull election. Referring to the "Daily News," to which one always goes to find the opinion of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, I find that that paper said the reason was obvious,

"It is a natural explosion of indignation at the impudent breach of a most every pledge given by the Government at the election four months ago."

Therefore, I ventured to hope that we should have had a very different speech from my right hon. Friend the Member for Peebles (Sir D. Maclean), because he has been very busy in blaming the Government for refusing to fulfil their election pledges. This Bill endeavours, at all events, to some extent, to fulfil one of the election pledges, not only of the Prime Minister, but of every one of his supporters on the Coalition side. The pledge was perfectly distinct with regard to the Germans for whom my right hon. Friend had so many kindly things to say. The pledge was given at Bristol three nights before the election, and the Prime Minister said this:

"I am glad the programme is accepted. We mean to go through with it. [A Voice: 'What about the Germans in this country?'] Oh, they will not be long in this country; they are going to be fired out. [Cheers.] You cannot go to men who have been spying, plotting, and intriguing against the country which has entertained them, and say, 'Come back, gentlemen, we are glad to see you; make yourselves at home.'"

That was a pledge with regard to the Germans. I, in my Constituency, and I

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think I can speak on behalf of practically every Member of the Coalition majority, told the people that we were going to support the Government in getting rid of aliens from this country. That being so, one would have hoped for the support of every Member of this House in this most beneficent policy. The stages of the aliens question have already been gone through by speakers who preceded me. We started in the days before 1905—in those halcyon days when the policy was, "Let them all come." The policy then was for these parasites to come to prey upon the body politic, the complaisant people of this country, and we, being that asylum about which we have heard such eloquent language from the right hon. Gentleman, said, "We will stick to our great traditions and we will be the asylum of the world." Then, in the year 1905, the Aliens Act was passed. It was passed, as the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) has reminded us, after a great party fight in the House, and, according to the impeccable authority of the "Daily News" at that time,

"The measure is one of the most offensive and dangerous ever introduced into the House of Commons."

The only thing I have to say about that measure, which we are asked to repeal by this Bill, is that it was rather in the nature of class legislation. It dealt with alien immigrants, and described them as the alien steerage passengers. There was too much about the steerage passenger and not enough about the first-class passenger. We want a measure which will embrace the whole of the alien question. That Act was administered in not a very satisfactory way. Before a magistrate or judge could recommend an expulsion order, he had to be satisfied the man was an alien. That was not too easy, because he had to depend largely on the man's own answers to certain questions put to him. Then, upon recommendation being made, the Home Secretary had to be satisfied that the man ought to be expelled, and we may describe the period from 1905 to 1914 as a period of weak administration by a series of weak Home Secretaries.

That was the case when the War broke out. What happened? The day after the War broke out, this House did what this country has been accustomed to do for generations—it shut the stable door after the steed was stolen, and it passed emer-

gency legislation and passed the Aliens Restriction Act, giving the Home Secretary power, or rather His Majesty in Council power, to make Orders. A number of Orders were made, and everybody remembers the great public dissatisfaction with the way in which the enemy alien question was dealt with during the earlier period of the War. It was nothing more or less than a gross public scandal. The Home Secretary says that during that period it was only experimental. All I venture to say is, I do not congratulate my right hon. Friend's predecessors upon the success of that experiment. But you did eventually get a series of Orders which, if they had been carried out in their entirety, would very largely have delivered us from this alien peril during the period of the War. Now the House is asked to consider what is to be done now, and I was astonished by the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Peebles—if anything he said could possibly astonish me. Speaking with tenderness, and admitting, almost as if the words were dragged out of him, that during the first year of the War there really were Germans in this country who were hostile to this country, he talked about the poor little children of Fritz, who married an unfortunate Englishwoman, who ought to have known better than to marry him. They attended our schools, were public assets, and we did not want to get rid of them. He spoke about the movement in this country as a passing passion, as panic and prejudice. Let me tell my right hon. Friend and his followers—and I congratulate him upon being in the position of a domestic advertisement that followers are at last allowed—that it is not a passing prejudice or a panic, but that it is the settled determination of the electors of this country to adopt the policy of "Never again." He finished up by saying that you cannot suddenly revert to pre-war conditions; it must be done gradually. What must be done gradually? What has got to be done gradually is to allow these Orders in Council for two years, and then, according to the idea of my right hon. Friend, we shall have forgotten it all, there will be a perfectly clean slate, he will be upon the Treasury Bench, and then they may all come back, and we shall have to learn the lesson all over again. That is what Free Liberalism means. It means that the Free Liberals are incapable of learning anything—though one rose from the dead.

Now, what about the necessities of this Bill? I will briefly summarise why I want this Bill. I will give a reason which, if I were not a very new Member, I would not give, and that is that it is an election pledge. I am not a sufficiently old Member of the House to be able to look upon my election pledges as so much wasted breath in order to capture votes. I said to my Constituents, "I will do everything I can to turn these people out. I am going to support this Government in any measure they bring forward for the purpose of redeeming our pledges." Our industries—tailoring, carpentry, cabinet-making, boot-making—all these industries are penetrated by aliens who undersell our own people. Walk along Whitechapel Road and Mile End Road, and you see names, not one of them an English name, and advertisements, very few of which are in the English language. Then there is the question of the breach of hospitality. These alien enemies—I do not care whether highly-placed or lowly-placed—have forfeited the right to remain upon our soil, or ever to come back to our soil. Another Free Liberal in the House of Lords, in a speech to which my right hon. Friend has alluded—a Free Liberal who once used to occupy, happily, for a short time, the Woolsack—said this only the other day on Lord Lambourne's Motion:

"According to the view enunciated on the other side, we should be doing out duty if we turned every German out of this country to-morrow. Such a view was one of which this country ought to be profoundly ashamed."

I am glad to know that that is the point of view of my political opponents. I am not glad because I want them to hold that point of view, because I hoped the War, at all events, would have taught us that that point of view is absurd; but, now that we know their point of view, all we can say is that we cannot argue with them. If it is their view that they want Germans back in this country, and want to bury the hatchet, and—in the words of their great Leader at the Runciman revels the other night—they want to leave no open wounds, that is not arguable. It is not the view of this House, and my hon. and gallant Friend, whom I congratulate on his election, certainly did not win Hull on any such view as that.

Just let me say one word upon a subject with which I am, more or less, qualified to deal. Sepaking of these alien enemies from the point of view of crime and vice, it is part of my duty to spend a good deal

of my time in the criminal Courts. You cannot be in the criminal courts without realising what an enormous amount of the work of our Courts is caused by the aliens and by their crimes. I ask the House to draw no distinction between the crimes for which they are directly and indirectly responsible. It is very difficult to get figures. But figures were given in the Royal Commission of 1902, which were quoted in the Debate when the Aliens Bill was passed. Figures were given that between 1899 and 1903, there were 1,731 offences against the person, 3,189 against property, 62 of forgery and coining, and 8,132 of other offences, including indecency, disorderly houses, and matters of that kind, all committed by aliens. That is a total of 13,114 offences committed by aliens in the period of this four or five years. I do not know whether the Home Office has statistics for the intervening period, but it is very difficult to get them. You can, however, say this: you cannot go into the Central Criminal Court, or into the London or the Middlesex Sessions, or into any Police Court, you cannot speak to any magistrate or alderman of experience, who will not tell you that a very great portion of the difficulties with which he has to deal is in dealing with aliens and crimes promoted by aliens.

Vice! why they are at the bottom of one-half, at least, of the vice of this Metropolitan and of this country. The white slave traffic, unnatural vice, the exploitation of English girls whom they marry, and then live upon the proceeds of their prostitution; the brothel keepers who are too clever to be caught, because they keep in the background; the people with gambling hells who lead young men to destruction, and who bring in such horrible practices as doping and unnatural offences—that is the sort of atmosphere that has been introduced into this country by these people. Of course the House will acquit me of any selfish motive in this matter. My professional interests are all in keeping them here. But I am trying to think more of the country than I am of my profession. We have heard a good deal lately that the aliens who keep just within the law are the dangerous people. What I want to do, or to see done, whether by Order in Council or by constructive legislation—which I think the better—is for the police of this country to be in a position, if they suspect an alien of being an undesirable person, to go to him and turn him out; to give our own country, for once in a way,

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the benefit of the doubt. The enemy alien has been spoken about a good deal. I am not sure the neutral alien is not as dangerous as the enemy alien. The House may say, "Holding those views, why are you going to support this Bill?" I am going to support it because I will support anything I can get which deals with the question.

HON. MEMBERS: It does not deal with it!

Sir E. WILD: My view is this—with great respect to the House—that this Bill is an attempt to deal with the question, and that under the ægis of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary the Order in Council that he will propose will be an Order that will deal with this matter. I do not profess to like it. I regard the whole principle of Orders in Council as Star Chamber proceedings, as archaic proceedings, entirely undemocratic and entirely robbing the House of the right that Members should have of expressing their views upon these various matters. No better illustration could be given than the one given by the hon. Member for Hackney (Mr. Bottomley), an illustration which I myself intended to quote. That is that by some little obscure Order, of which I have no knowledge—because to try and qualify myself for what the House understands is a very, very difficult task, that of addressing it for the first time—I tried to get all the Orders. These leaflets were collected, but my Friends forgot to give me the leaflet as my hon. Friend has called it, of 19th December of last year. I am astonished to find, to my regret, that under this very Home Office, that the whole of paragraph 22c of this Aliens Restriction Order, which is one which enables, as my hon. Friend has said, some restriction to be put upon the employment of aliens—just in one little paragraph, in the Order which I only knew by accident, and which you could not understand unless you had before you the volume I hold in my hand—I went into the library to get it—I looked at it, and if I had not had this in my pocket I would not have known. That is not the way to legislate.

Brigadier-General CROFT: That is the Home Office you are backing up.

Sir E. WILD: I am not backing up the Home Office. I am trying to get something. I am not going to vote against

the Government, because I regard this purely as an empirical measure. Somebody has spoken of it with a mixture of metaphor. I think it was the hon. and learned Member for York, who was talking now about the Home Secretary's baby and now about an abortion, and who rather forgot himself in the stress of his peroration when he said: "This cannot be the fulfilment of the pledges that we gave; I cannot go back to my Constituents and say, 'This is what we have done.'"

An HON. MEMBER: It is all we shall get.

Sir E. WILD: My hon. Friend says it is all we shall get. We will try to get something more. I rejoice in Clause 3, which gives power to deal with aliens who excite trouble in industry, although I shall vote for the elimination of some of the words. The words of the present time are:

"(2) If any alien promotes or attempts to promote industrial unrest in any industry in which he is not *bonâ fide* engaged. . . ."

Surely those words are to be deleted! We should say that if we allow any alien—I do not think we should—to be engaged in any industry, if he attempts to promote industrial unrest that alien should be subject to the penalties specified. It would be a very great help to members on the Labour Benches. We rejoice that the Labour Benches are now entirely free from the Bolsheviks. Let me, in conclusion, after thanking the House for having given me so patient a hearing, say that this is a measure by which the Government may be judged. We know perfectly well the sort of political capital that is made by the party of Free Liberals, who always put party before country. We know the capital they have made out of the difficulties of the Paris Conference, difficulties in regard to matters in which our Prime Minister and our representative have not got a free hand. Of course they made party capital. They may call it legitimate. But there may be two opinions on that. I hope this Bill will be read a second time. I hope it will be strongly amended in Committee. I hope that when my hon. and gallant Friend (General Croft), who has had great experience in this House, tells me we shall not get any more, that it will prove not to be so. I trust that such pressure will be brought to bear from all quarters of the House upon the Government that they will bring in a strong Aliens Bill which

shall not only deal with butchers, bakers, and cobblers, but shall deal with highly-placed and privileged aliens in Park Lane and Belgravia as with Whitechapel and Mile End. I hope that we shall be able, in spite of these benedictions of my right hon. Friend, to have learnt from the War. If this Government can do anything more I hope that it will pass an Aliens Bill which shall deal with the denaturalisation of the people who have been naturalised for several years past, and shall deal altogether with the real alien question. If that Bill is proposed, and that pressure comes, even a strong Government must yield to such pressure. I am perfectly certain if a Bill like that is proposed it will be a better measure than the present, and one more worthy of support.

Mr. TILLET: I want the silent sanctuary that this country has afforded some of the greatest intellectuals who have ever lived here still to be maintained. I do not want to see any spirit of panic or vindictiveness. I do ask that the traditions that this House has built up shall run on. I want our country to be a really free country, open to honest men of all nationalities. I am hoping that in connection with the League of Nations, in embryo stage now, that nothing will be done in this House to cripple the efforts of the enthusiasts for bringing together the ends of the earth, bringing about international comity and good will, and giving the same free interchange between all the countries. Because of the dignity, the grandeur, and the nobility of asylum, I want us to realise that, having offered it to the world, we have only done it in the interest of humanity. On the other hand, there are countries and persons outside our own who availed themselves of our generosity and then took advantage of it. I think, surely, we have the right to ask the Home Secretary and the Government to say to-day that we shall not forget our past experiences, and that in any new measure no possible loophole shall be given to the enemy of this country if we give him private sanctuary from another. It may be that the criminal ousted from his own country and seeking an asylum here, and finding it, may be utilised by the very country that sent him away as a refugee. Germany did that, Austria did that. Some of the worst criminals coming from Germany and Austria have been the best and greatest of German spies in this country. When you remember how stringent the Germans have been in pre-

venting the asylum, occupation, and habitation in Germany of our own countrymen and women, that when the War broke out, including traders, tourists, sick, and students, there were less than 5,000 Britishers in Germany—if you were to get out all the Jones's and Davis's and such like names—I do not know why the aliens adopt Welsh names—

Mr. STANTON: Because they are the names of honest men!

Mr. TILLET: It may be because the names are difficult to pronounce. When you compare the number of aliens in this country and those that would be aliens in Germany, then you can see, I think, a very forcible argument why the Home Office should be very careful not to allow the introduction of outsiders. I want to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Peebles, when he speaks of a lovable disposition. I have been a sailor. I have been associated with the maritime marine for a number of years. Remember that the British Seamen's Union gave asylum and privilege to the members of their own profession who were Germans, and gave it in a spirit of generosity and freedom. Think of that terrible tragedy the wreck of the "Lusitania." Instead of having sympathy with their shipmates, the men who had braved the perils of the sea with them, the whole of the camp of interned Germans, interned under the happiest possible conditions and circumstances, turned the camp into a condition of hysterical saturnalia rejoicing that their one-time fellow sailors had been sunk—that the "Lusitania" was at the bottom of the sea.

Some of these men have been in the British service for twenty, thirty, and even forty years. I want us to remember that after all we are British.

6.0 P.M. I have always done my level best to bring about a good feeling between the German democracy and our own, and I have found that, after all, the German is a better German than the Britisher is a Britisher, and that he is much more loyal and intelligently conservative and anxious for his own country, and he is better trained in the knowledge of other countries than our own people. I hope the Press of this country will realise what that means. In these matters I do not say that Liberals are any worse than Conservatives, and in my opinion they are equally good. I know that in Bradford I was met by a Liberal who said that the

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young men of Germany were quite willing and capable. They could speak French and English and typewrite, and they were shorthand-note takers, and they worked for 14s. a week. I know that they worked in the offices of the Bradford merchants, where they took down every possible item and every possible order, and they gave every detail of manufacture, and the result is that the richest men in Bradford at the present moment are Germans. That is one way of promoting the interests of your country. But when it comes to men like myself realising what it means, I say there have been introduced into this country men who practically blacklegged the country, men who have been sold in Petticoat Lane like sheep to take the place of others as cheap labourers in our tailoring and boot-making shops. I have worked myself as a bootmaker, and our trade was taken from us by a number of gentlemen from foreign parts, who often had no bed to lie on, and they used to lie head-to-toe on the floor of the house.

I want the Home Office to support every measure that maintains a standard of living, and make this Bill so definite that no industrial chaos will arise out of it. If the Home Secretary had attended the great meeting in the Coliseum in Leeds he would have seen over 600 young aliens, none of them over twenty-six, and if he would go to the Albert Hall he would find 6,000 more of the same type. I sympathise with the Home Secretary in his task because it is very difficult to keep out the Park Lane alien. I deny the capacity of the Home Office to accept the responsibility, and if such a responsibility is put upon any one man, whether it is the present Home Secretary or any that may succeed him, it is far too onerous for one man to carry out these duties. He is not really concerned with the destinies of this particular country, for, after all, the world is in a cauldron and we do not know where we are. The world is in such a conflict and tumult that, while I want to see every measure allowing for the citizens of every country to be leagued together in a mighty league of union, I do not want our country to revert back to the old conditions, where spies were in every officers' club and every barbers' shop, every machine shop, and all over the country. At least I want honest British labour protected, and I want the interests of this country to stand amongst all the nations.

Mr. PEMBERTON BILLING: The hon. Member who has just spoken is anxious to see a League of Nations, and he has just told us that in Germany there is more patriotism than in England. But surely a League of Nations can never go hand-in-hand with patriotism. It may be possible for a man from a desert to join with a man from the seas to overcome a common enemy, but once that enemy has been subdued I suggest that the men from the desert and the sea will most probably fight each other for a division of the spoil. I am deeply and sincerely anxious that the country should be reserved for our own countrymen and women. I have for many years, both in this House and outside of it, done all in my power by public speech and writing to call the attention of the public to the fact that our Government were unfortunately too lenient in dealing not only with aliens but more particularly with alien enemies. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, who made such an excellent maiden speech, need not have told us that he was a member of the legal profession. He told us that he had been in this House not long enough to forget election pledges, and that he was still prepared to vote against a bad Bill sooner than fight it. The compliment which he paid to the right hon. Gentleman belonging to his own profession, who is piloting this Bill, shows that he is learning to keep to the weather of the Treasury Bench.

It is most unfortunate that the Home Secretary should be called upon to pilot this Bill through the House at all. I do not want to make any statements which any hon. Members would think rash or violent, but I can say without fear of contradiction, and I think with pretty general approval, that the Home Office is suspect. I remember that Mr. McKenna during the first two months of the War stated here that it was not his intention to intern any enemies or any Germans or Austrians unless there was an absolute fear of invasion. How, then, can we trust the Home Office when one of its late occupants commits himself to such a policy as that? I suggest to the Home Secretary that we are now in even greater danger of invasion than we were in 1914. The late Lord Chancellor quite recently stated that there were 20,000 aliens waiting in Holland ready to swarm into England directly the opportunity presented itself, and not only to swarm but to spawn in this country and produce all those little alien

children whom the Leader of one-tenth part of the Opposition tells us we must protect and give an asylum. The Leader of the Opposition has two important duties to fulfil. The first is that because he is in opposition he has to oppose. He did this in a very unfortunate speech, and had that speech of his been made before the recent Hull election the seat would have been lost. Had that speech been placed before the electors of Hull, no personality, however dominating, could have snatched that seat from the Government.

There has just been introduced a Housing Bill and we are asking the Government to provide us millions of money—and quite rightly—in order that people who cannot find homes to live in and who live under conditions so well described by the Labour Members may have satisfactory housing accommodation, and all this while there are 200,000 aliens in this country. Where do they sleep? Where are their houses? [An HON. MEMBER: "In Park Lane!"] If we could get rid of those 200,000 aliens probably we might relieve very considerably the housing difficulty in this country. I may be narrow-minded and hold views not generally held by those people who wish to make this country an asylum for all the ne'er-do-wells and parasites of the world. Nevertheless, I hold that view, and nothing will cause me to alter it. I have a very healthy regard for my countrymen, and I feel that if Labour were to take more that view and try to preserve British industries for British labour, they would not be running with the hares and hunting with the hounds. They should say point-blank that they intend to preserve British industry for British labour, and not say that they are anxious to share it with all the scum of the earth who come into this country. The Home Office is the last of our Government Departments to which I would give one inch more power or discretion. Whole-heartedly I mistrust it, and there is nothing in their recent action to change my view. Consider the record of the Home Office during the War, and how they proceeded through thick and thin all those highly-placed German aliens, how denounced every hon. Member here who dared to get up and criticise their administration or call attention to their grave errors. I should like to know whether the Leader of the Liberal party outside this House was one of the guarantors of Caroline Hanneman, of 10, Downing Street. That is something which the Home Secre-

tary might enlighten himself upon. Election pledges are so numerous that one might almost be justified in hanging the sign of a pledge outside this House, but whether they will be redeemed as rapidly as some other pledges I do not know. There is, however, this about it, that as long as we have Prime Ministers of this country harbouring German spies, not only in their own family, but at their official residence, when this country is at war, we cannot expect the Home Office to deal very severely with the general question of the "harmless" German.

It is not only the German; it is the whole alien problem, and I submit, with respect, that there are many things that this Bill might well include. Why not have badges? If I were going to America or to Germany to-morrow, I would not be ashamed to wear the Union Jack, with the word "Britain" or "England" upon it. We badge every soldier who has served in the War, and proud enough he is of his silver badge. We badge him on his right arm every time that he is wounded, and we badge him on his left arm for every year of service. We badge him on the chest whenever he does anything brave. Why not badge these aliens, so that at least people may say, "This fellow is a German; I will have nothing to do with him." "This fellow is a Frenchman; I will employ him." If we imposed a severe penalty we should be able to judge to some extent the type of people in this country, who were encouraging and employing the alien. It would be a very healthy thing for the nation if His Majesty imposed a tax on all employers of foreign labour and devoted it to helping to build homes fit for heroes to live in. This Bill is dishonest in the extreme. It is a bad Bill; it is a dishonest Bill; it keeps bad faith with the electors, and this is an attempt to slip it through the House just before the Adjournment because the Government know full well that the majority of Members, having had a very heavy time, are drifting away for the Easter Recess. It is not an honest Bill in any sense, and it is not a Bill for which any decent Englishman could vote. I have surprised many of my friends both inside and outside this House by supporting some Government measures that have been introduced in this new Parliament, but I am here to support all that is good in them and to attack to the utmost of my strength all that is bad in them. Here is a Bill which gives evidence of bad faith or

[Mr. Billing.]

great and grave ignorance of the true position. The Government have so many highly-placed German friends that they cannot be ignorant of the true position, and therefore I suggest that it is bad faith with the electors and bad faith with the Members of this House. I hope the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) will take us into the Lobby so that we may at least put on record our opinion of this Bill, and the fact that we are whole-heartedly in support of the most active—

Colonel WEDGWOOD: Persecution.

Mr. BILLING: My hon. and gallant Friend calls it persecution. It is just the sort of thing that I should call British justice, but anything in the nature of putting the British foot down in this country always seems to be regarded by the hon. and gallant Member as persecution. I am not forgetful of the circumstance which led to my leaving the last Parliament. It was the fight that I had with the Home Secretary on the enemy and alien problem that caused my suspension from this House. I feel no less keenly to-day. My methods are not quite as strenuous as they were. It may be owing to the fact that the Government have met us at least with a Bill and that we have something to criticise. At that time we were not allowed to discuss the matter. To-day we are given the opportunity of criticising a Bill. Finally, I suggest to the Home Secretary that the Bill should provide that no land or property in this country should be owned by aliens. We can make this country an asylum, but the day may come when the inmates will take charge of the authorities, and that is just about what is likely to happen. Wherever we go we find almost a new feeling in the country, and unless we are very careful all that is best in our national character will gradually depart from us. I am not over-painting the picture or exaggerating in the least when I say that all that is clean in the British character has been debased by the type of alien that has invaded us. They have debased our morals in the lower standard, and they have debased our morals in the higher standard, and I make bold to say that they have debased that Treasury Bench.

Lieutenant-Colonel W. GREENE: My hon. and learned Friend who sits beside me (Sir E. Wild), and who made such an

excellent speech this afternoon, prefaced it with the usual plea for indulgence which is made by Members who address this House for the first time. I am unable to urge that plea, but I think I can make this claim, that no Member has sat so many years in this House and at the same time has made such modest claims upon the time and indulgence of it. That confession or boast—you can have it which way you like—will probably be looked upon with pity, if not with contempt, by those hon. Members who week after week take part in that competition to score the highest number of paragraphs of spoken words in the OFFICIAL REPORT. With due deference to them, I think that there is still something to be said in this House in favour of economy of speech. I have been goaded into breaking silence this afternoon, not because I have any personal or bitter feeling against the alien or the stranger as some Members seem to have, but because I have some personal knowledge of the very intense and great evils which have been the result of unrestricted alien immigration in the past. I represent a part of a borough where this question is a very acute problem indeed. In that borough there are no less than 11,000 aliens registered—11,000 is a large number in one borough—and I think the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) will bear me out when I say that there we could show some practical results of the evils of the congregation of large numbers of aliens who have different standards of life, different standards of health, and different standards of decency from those which exist and which we want to exist among our own people.

We have got to face facts, and perhaps some of my hon. Friends below the Gangway opposite will not agree with me when I say that we cannot really advocate a hard and fast and unyielding law that no aliens or foreigners of any kind shall be admitted within our shores. There is, however, one test which ought to be applied to all aliens who are at present within this country and to all those who wish to come and reside here in the future. That test is whether or not they are likely in every respect to make really satisfactory citizens of the United Kingdom. I know that it is difficult, perhaps, to draw up regulations which ensure that, but that is the idea which the Home Secretary should keep in his mind when he is proceeding to make regulations under

this Bill. I hope that he will do that in a very stringent manner, and, if he errs, that it will be on the side of strictness rather than on the side of leniency. If you examine this Bill from beginning to end and study it very carefully, it is impossible to make any estimate of the value of it. It may be a good Bill or it may not be worth a single moment of the time and attention of this House. The whole thing depends on the spirit in which it is going to be administered. Under this Bill, the Home Secretary may make the most admirable scheme which will deal with all the difficulties in regard to this alien question. On the other hand, under this Bill he may perfectly well welcome with open arms all the undesirable riff-raff of every country in the world.

I remember quite well the introduction of the Aliens Act of 1895. It was a very modest effort; too modest an effort to deal with the subject. It met with violent opposition from a certain party in this House. Most of the value of it was whittled away in Committee, and what little value remained was entirely destroyed by the manner in which it was administered by the Home Secretary of the day. I do not wish to occupy another moment of the time of the House, except to make the plea that the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill, or whoever is going to speak on his behalf, should give us some more definite information as to the policy which they are going to adopt under it. We should like to know exactly what is to be their attitude with regard to any enemy aliens now in this country, and with regard to enemy aliens who wish to come into this country in the future. We should also like to know what test they are going to apply to aliens who are not enemy aliens, and who wish to come into this country, and what regulations they have in mind with regard to preventing those who are undesirable from coming here. If the right hon. Gentleman can see his way to do that, I think he will go very far to allay the very great anxiety which exists evidently inside the House, from the speeches we have heard this afternoon, and also outside this House, with regard to the vital question of the unrestricted immigration of undesirable people into this country.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: I think the House is generally seen at a disadvantage when it is discussing this question of enemy alien immigration. There seem to

be a number of Members who are always anxious to voice the principle that we should keep to ourselves and destroy any taint of foreign blood. There are also those with a passion for persecuting a minority and for inflicting the most conservative reactionary views upon this House. I have never been so ashamed of this House of Commons as I have been to-day. I have some regard for the traditions of my country. We have never seen such a unanimous spirit of persecution in this House since the time of the Popish Plot in 1678. It is a case of people who are strong coming together to persecute the weak. That was the point of view expressed by the speech of the hon. and learned Member for York (Sir J. Butcher) to-day, and it was the point of view he also expressed in the last Parliament on the occasion of a similar Debate. "As long as the majority can get the minority on the ground, let us trample on them." That is the spirit of the hon. and learned Gentleman, and of nearly everyone who has addressed the House this afternoon. I would observe that nearly everyone who has spoken has not fought in this War, but have been anxious to show their patriotism by denouncing the enemy alien.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Do you suggest we were eligible to fight in the War?

Colonel WEDGWOOD: Many hon. Members who have spoken on these benches are younger than myself, and had an opportunity of fighting in the War.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Name them!

Colonel WEDGWOOD: I am not going to give any names.

Mr. STANTON: I was here fighting some of you people, and I fought you alone.

Colonel WEDGWOOD: The real reason why no people who did fight have got up to persecute these aliens is that fighting men bear no malice. They feel that, having won the War, we should treat the people whom we have got down with decency and like gentlemen. Let me say a word for the unfortunate aliens who are to be urged on by this Bill to destruction. Who are they? In many cases those who have suffered most are the British wives of German subjects. Their husbands have been put into internment camps. They themselves and their children, bearing unfortunately German names, have been known to all their neighbours; they have

[Colonel Wedgwood.]

been persecuted, they have been deprived of the opportunity of getting work, they have been sneered at, they have found it difficult even to purchase things in shops on account of their names, and now we are to go further and drive them out of the country. That is the cry of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen. I knew the wife of a German who was connected with the hotel trade in this country. He was interned. She and her children, all English-born, have been sent back to Germany. They were glad enough to go, because their lives here had been made intolerable. In Germany they were well treated.

Why cannot we practice the same sort of policy? Why cannot we try and turn enemy aliens into friendly aliens? Why cannot we show them that England is now, as she has been in the past, a country which always welcomes foreigners, and turns them into good citizens? There are many Members who have French and Dutch blood in them. There are many such men on the Conservative benches today; there are many of foreign descent, whose ancestors have created glorious names, and added glorious records to English history. Why cannot we do the same as our forefathers? Why cannot we carry on the policy of our ancestors of assimilating this foreign element, and teaching it that England is something worth living for, something worth fighting for, something worth loving, instead of persecuting them and making their lives a hell, as hon. and right hon. Gentlemen insist on doing. I am glad to have had an opportunity of putting in a few words this afternoon in favour of the old British traditions of fair play, justice and liberty. It seemed to me it was necessary that someone should get up and put that point of view. I will conclude by thanking the Home Secretary, and above all the Home Office, for making this Bill—which I should have opposed in any case, just as all my predecessors of Liberal views have in the past opposed alien Bills—I thank them for making it at least as little objectionable as possible, for not being controlled by the Press of the country or by the persecutors of aliens, for not being persuaded by them to move a little further in the direction they want them to go. I hope the Home Secretary will withdraw the Bill in view of the opposition to it. If he does not I hope that, if the Bill goes to a Committee, there will be on that Committee some

Members of his House who will be able to put forward the case of the oppressed and to stand up in this country for the persecuted.

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS: My hon. and gallant Friend, if I may say so with very great respect, is a chartered libertine in this House. We really value the great work he did in the War, although I think it was a little unkind and unfair that my hon. Friends should have been taunted with not having gone out to fight. Each man decides this question for himself. My hon. and gallant Friend decided it his own way, and we appreciated his decision, and the effort he made in the War. But that does not *per se* entitle him to lecture the House on patriotism. His views are well known. It is not fair to suggest that hon. Members who have spoken this afternoon are people who would in any case persecute the German alien. What we are in favour of is the preservation of this country for the English people, and of assisting the German enemy aliens by Order in Council if necessary to go back to their own country, where they will find fellow countrymen more inclined to their own views than they can find here. I want the House to realise that we are not asking the Home Secretary to merely increase his powers given under this Bill. Hon. Members who were Members of the last Parliament will remember I spoke very often on this subject. The hon. and gallant Member for North Hackney (Lieutenant - Colonel Greene), whose speech this afternoon convinces me how much the House has lost by not hearing him more frequently, will remember that what we wanted in the last Parliament was that the Home Office should put more strength into their dealings with this question. We were not actuated by any desire to persecute individual alien enemies, but we wanted to clear the country of the possibility of danger, because we believed the Germans, as was said by our own Prime Minister, are a criminal nation who fought this War by criminal methods. Believing that we did not want to have them in our midst, and I am sure that working people also do not want to see 20,000 or 30,000 German people in their midst, walking, riding, and eating with them. Let them go back to their own country. That is the object of the opposition to this Bill.

Further, we want to force a declaration from the Government of their policy. Has

one ever heard of a Minister coming down to the House and proposing the Second Reading of a measure of this kind without even outlining to the House what he proposes to do if the House supports him in the provisions of this Bill? All he said was that he wanted us to give him plenary powers for two years to make what Orders in Council he likes regarding aliens generally. It is quite true it is provided that the Orders shall be laid on the Table of the House of Commons for twenty-one days, but everybody knows that that is utterly illusive. The real power is put in the hands of the Home Secretary to make any Orders he likes, and I say quite frankly those of us who were in the last House of Commons know that the Home Office is taboo and suspect in this matter. If hon. Members will go through the Debates for the last two years, they will find a long series censuring the Home Office for not administering the law in this regard more strictly. After each Debate there has been a panic in the Home Office, and a certain number of alien enemies have been interned. If it was right they should be interned, surely they ought to have been interned before, and not merely because of the Debate. I do not want that kind of thing to occur again. I want the Home Secretary to come down here and justify the pledges which the Prime Minister and others gave to the country before the General Election of 1918. These pledges were clear. One or two have been referred to, and for the life of me I cannot understand if this Bill is administered as similar Bills have been administered by the Home Office in the past, what reply any hon. Member can give to the question, "Have you fulfilled your pledge with regard to getting rid of the aliens in this country?" He may say that he voted for the Home Office Bill believing and hoping that the necessary Orders in Council would be effective. But he has no possible authority for that hope. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary has not told us what he is going to do. I should like to read the pledge which the Prime Minister, as everybody knows, gave. It is a pledge which should be put into an Act of Parliament without waiting for an Order in Council to be issued by the Home Secretary. Let me read a part of it. He said,

"They (the Germans) have abused our hospitality; they spied and they plotted, they have assisted Germany in the forging of plans for the destruction of the country which has offered them hospitality, and if opportunity had offered

they would have assisted in the execution of those plans to the ruin of the land which had given them shelter. They have, therefore, forfeited any claim to remain."

That applies to those who are interned and uninterned. The speech of the Prime Minister in Queen's Hall was interrupted by a lady, who wanted to know what he was going to do with regard to getting rid of these alien enemies. He assured her that the men would see to that, and he went on—

"I have repeatedly said that in my judgment these people, having abused our hospitality, must not get another opportunity to do so."

There is another Member of the Government who gave a pledge which the Home Secretary should support this afternoon, and that is the present Lord Chancellor, who said:

"I tell you here, as a Minister and a Member of the Coalition Government, that it is the declared policy of that Government to send back to Germany every Boche in this country."

I am reminded that the present Lord Chancellor was Attorney-General at the moment he used those words. He was a member of the Cabinet, and I am sure, if the pledge is not fulfilled, he will no longer wish to remain a member of that Cabinet. He is a man of great ability and of great courage, and if the pledge is falsified he will, no doubt, at once go to the Cabinet and say: "Unless you are going to fulfil that pledge, and turn every Boche out of the country, I at least will no longer remain a Member of the Government." Again, the Leader of the House went nearly as far as that on the 4th December. Speaking for the Government, he said:

"Did they think the people we had to lock up in our time of trial were good citizens of this country? If the present Government were returned to power they would send them back to their own country at once. So far as the present Government were concerned, if it came to pass, they would not only send back those whom they had interned but they would also not allow others to come in."

We have had not a word from the Home Secretary as to the fulfilment of these pledges. It is true as the hon. and gallant Member for North Hackney said, they can be carried out under the provisions of an Order in Council, but it is equally true that none of them may be carried out. The Order may be made, but it may be administered so badly that Germans may be allowed to remain in this country, as we have allowed 21,000 of them to remain here uninterned during the War.

[Mr. Joynson-Hicks.]

Those 21,000, as the Leader of the Opposition was forced to admit, were not the wives of British men but were young Germans who were allowed to remain here because they were useful in some of the industries carried on during the War. The War is over. We no longer want these stalwart young Germans to carry on the industries. We want the work to be done by our own men who fought the Germans, and we want these thousands of young Germans to be sent back to their own country.

I want to ask the Government a question with regard to their policy before we give them this blank cheque. Who is going to decide—we have not yet heard—under the Orders in Council, the special reasons which are to enable a German to remain in this country? Is it going to be a Committee of this House, or a judge? The Government set up three Committees just before the Armistice to deal with these very questions, presided over by Mr. Justice Sankey, Mr. Justice Atkin, and Lord Justice Eldon Bankes. The Sankey Committee has allowed a large number of these people to remain in internment. What about the Atkin Committee, which was to deal with denaturalisation of enemy aliens who had been naturalised? I was able to find out by questions quite recently that 187 cases had been dealt with. How many there are remaining to be dealt with we have not yet been able to get from the Government. Out of those 187 cases only fifteen certificates of naturalisation have been revoked. The House will be astonished to hear that there have been fifty-six naturalised Germans interned during the War under special conditions, because they were a danger to this country, yet only fifteen of them have been denaturalised. If a naturalised German was such a danger to the country—remember that he is a British subject, with all the rights of a British subject, and he could only be interned under particular Clauses of the Defence of the Realm Act without trial—if he was such a danger that in the opinion of the Government he ought to be interned, is it reasonable that we should be asked to allow him to remain a naturalised British subject? What about the Bankes Committee? That was appointed specially to deal with men of German extraction in our public offices, the Civil Service, and various other Departments of the country. That Committee has reported. We found that out the other

day. It has not reported to this House. We do not know what the Report is; we cannot get the Report. I have asked the Government whether they have considered the Report, and I have been told that it is being considered. What are the Government going to do with regard to these men of German birth and German connection who are in our public offices? Why should they remain there at all? Why should these men, even after the War, remain in our Civil Service? Have we not enough Britons born and bred to take their places? What will the people of this country think when they see such names in our Civil Service to-day as [*list of names read*]. Those are all names of people in our Civil Service to-day. Has the Committee dealt with them? It was appointed over nine months ago to deal with these cases and to report to the Prime Minister. I do not want to deal with any particular case. There are names of many other people besides these.

I would ask the Home Secretary what the Government is going to do with regard to these cases? I ask him for a policy. We do not want to oppose; we want every Act we can secure passed for dealing with these alien enemies. The great difficulty in which I and others stand is to know whether we should support the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) in his Amendment for the rejection of the Bill. If the Home Secretary can outline a policy and say to the House of Commons that that is the policy of the Government, and those are the plans they propose to carry out by Order in Council, that would go a long way to satisfy a good many of us. To ask us to pass this Bill and give a blank cheque to the Home Secretary, without any indication whatever of the kind of policy the Government intend to pursue, is asking too much from the House which, for the last four years, has seen the Home Office very dilatory and slack in regard to this matter.

Mr. STANTON: I have listened with very much interest to the varied speeches made this afternoon, and I rejoiced exceedingly to discover that the majority were the speeches of Britishers. I do not in any way share the feelings or enter into the spirit of the hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood), who declared that the supporters of this Bill were villainous in their expres-

sions or wicked, vile, merciless, and pitiless to the poor aliens who happen to have found a harbourage and comfort in this country. I marvel to think that a man who has seen things for himself, and who, I understand, has done gallant deeds in the field, should come back to this House and from time to time, in addition to the great things that have been done by the beatings of the pacifists, should attack everybody and anybody who was striving to win the War and stand up for this country. I listened with disgust to the hon. and gallant Member standing up against anybody who thinks he is doing anything for his own country. We have heard for the thirteenth or fourteenth time what he has had to say in regard to hon. Members who have not been out fighting. Although my age was just on the mark that I could not go, I was willing, and I volunteered to go. Both my boys went. One is buried there; he was killed going over the top. The other has come back with wounds stripes, a credit to his dad and not a "Conchy." His dad has been doing his little bit, believing that the Government were in earnest, and that we were going to have a new England after the War was over. No doubt I derived my inspiration from the paper run by the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley), a paper which has done so much during the War, and other papers. I believed that we were out to do great things after the War, without being unjust to those people who discovered that this was a safe place, who were not criminals, who had fled from places where they might have done some little wrong politically and who had found a harbour of refuge in this country. While we should still be prepared to extend freedom to honest people who come to this country, who merely hold political views which diverge from those of the people of their own country, it is quite a different matter to allow all the muck, the rubbish, and the refuse of the Continent and other places to drift into this country. We have heard of Sidney Street. The other day down in Wales we had a glorious Bolshevik, a man who went round playing a violin, and who pretended he could not speak the English language, who got his Independent Labour party comrades to do the speaking for him, and who wrote out one of the most treacherous and vindictive speeches with a view to getting the miners to down tools. [An HON. MEMBER: "He has been deported!"] That is so, but there are others still remaining in this country.

We can well understand why there have been so many strikes and so much trouble and agitation.

I have played a prominent part in the Labour world, and there were people who would have called me a "Bolsky" years ago but for the fact that we did not use that term then. I admit that I was a rebel; that I used to bring about strikes and to agitate. Things were different then, but on many a platform in those days we pointed out the peril to British industry of aliens being at liberty in this country. We know that in Wales (German firms were sending engineers to put up the plant. Tramway lines, refuse destructors, and all up-to-date machinery were always put up by Germans. I am one who believes that nothing they have been able to do for us in times past compares with what we can do for ourselves in future. The Home Office is not offering us anything, and I for one am not satisfied. I have stood up for the Government on every occasion when I thought they were right, but I will only stand up for them while I think they are British. When there is weakness shown, I shall oppose them. There is weakness shown to-day. There is no square and fair mapped-out British policy in regard to aliens, and I shall be ready to go into the Lobby to vote with those who are going to hammer the Government if we discover that the Home Office is not going to play up to the promises and pledges of the Prime Minister. My majority—16,000—was a fairly reasonable one, and it was secured by my telling the electors that we were going to have a new country after the War, that it would be Britain for the British, without our being spiteful or vindictive. Am I to go back and plead guilty of sneaking into the Lobby behind the Government in support of a weak, measly, wretched measure such as this? I will not do that; I prefer to lose my seat. I will go into the Lobby at all times against the Government rather than disgrace myself by being so un-British as to support a sham measure which is going to lead us nowhere and to play into the hands of our enemies. I can understand our pacifist friends who are inclined to sympathise with the poor Germans. The whole bunch of them have neither fought in the War nor done anything to help. They have not put any money into the War Funds. They have not helped, but have sought to retard in

[Mr. Stanton.] every way they could. Their friends sat in this House. Sometimes you found them in the ranks of our Labour friends. These people have a sneaking regard for the Germans, but when it is brought home to them they know very well they are wrong.

We must not give way and pander to the pacifists or to those people who are friends of every country but their own, whose great ideals are International Brotherhood, the League of Nations, and so on. Those things are not going to fill our bellies or safeguard the future of our little children in this country. Let us play the game and say that we are not going to take half measures. Our boys have fought and died on the various fronts for us and for the British flag, and we are not going to whittle away what has been won at so heavy a cost. Surely we are not going to allow the aliens to come back or the Germans to make a new start in our midst. They proved before the War and demonstrated to the satisfaction of every Briton that a German is always a German. One hon. Member suggested that we should label them. In mercy to them I do not suggest that we should do that. God knows that if I were a German the one thing I would plead against would be being labelled a German. The majority of our people are still British enough to appreciate what we are contending for, namely, Britain for the British, without being vindictive, vicious or spiteful to people who are honest and respectable and who seek a refuge in this country. I suppose some distinction would have to be drawn, perhaps at the age of forty years or at some greater age,

7.0 P.M. and perhaps in the cases of men whose sons have fought in the War on our side. Perhaps, also, in the case of a British woman who married a Hun in this country, but who, fortunately, has now become a widow, that woman and her English children might be allowed to stay here. But the others should not. It would be a stain upon our British stock. We do not want German blood any more in this country. We have had it in high places, and we want no more. Let England be a new England; let us stand up for what is fair; let us be just. It is not too much to ask Germans to go back to their own Fatherland, and then the woman, if she has become the wife of a German, knows her duty. Her lord is a Hun, and if she likes him let her go with him to his own country, and there they can

look after themselves. This country is for Britishers and for the glorious British line who stood by it, people who did the right thing at the right time. Therefore, I say that Members of this House will really be traitors to their constituencies, to the pledges which they gave, if they dare to support anything less than what went forth during the election, and particularly the pledge of the Prime Minister, that after the War Britain shall be British, and that we shall have the enemy aliens as far as possible sent out of this country and cast adrift. We owe it to our constituents to do that. We shall have to do it, and I appeal to the Labour party to play the game. Remember that the War is over and the boys will be coming back, and when they are demobilised we want to find them employment at good wages—not sweated wages. We do not want the competition of Germans. We have had it in the tailoring trade, in the textile industry, around the mines, and round the docks. Wherever they have been they have always been traitors to the British workers as well as traitors to the British cause, and therefore I hope that Members of this House will, if necessary, go into the Lobby and vote against the Government unless they can offer us a British measure instead of the shabby thing they have offered us to-day.

Mr. R. CARTER: Speaking for the first time in this House, rather late in the Debate, I think that almost everything that can be said has been said, but I do not think I should be right if I did not voice here the expressions that I gave six months before the election, and long before I ever expected to be among hon. Members in this House. The gist of my speech has already been given by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil, but I may mention that I was one of the founders of the movement called "Britain for the British," and worked for it, as we all worked, non-politically. I was present on the platforms at no less than five meetings, three of them large mass meetings, long before this measure was thought of. I am sorry that the Bill now before us is such a weak one. Undoubtedly, in my opinion, it does not carry behind it what I should have liked to see behind it, that is, the will of the people. Feeling in this country is very strong indeed, and when the hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyne (Colonel Wedgwood), who has done his little bit, talks about

all soldiers and sailors, when they have once fought an enemy, having no antagonistic feelings towards him, all I can say is that no soldier or sailor I have ever met since this War has evinced any particular love for the Hun. I hope the Government will strengthen this Bill in such a way that it will please the people of this country. The people expect something very much stronger. The only Clause in it which in any way approaches an attempt to grapple with the question is Clause 3, and even that, to my idea, does not go one half the distance to which it ought to go. It says that if any alien attempts or is likely to cause sedition or disaffection, he shall be liable to penal servitude for a period not exceeding ten years, or he may be imprisoned on summary conviction for three months. I was very glad to hear the Home Secretary say that that would very probably carry with it deportation. I think it ought to. Any alien who has come here and created unrest in the country, and then is convicted, ought never to be allowed to come into this country again. I hope that the Home Secretary will take that into consideration. He said that he would be glad to hear any suggestions with regard to any particular Clauses in this Bill, and I certainly think that that Clause might very well be added to. My opinion with regard to the enemy alien is, in the first place, that he should certainly hold no office, should own no land, and, above all, that he should have no vote. I believe that an alien never comes to this country for our good, but only for his own. If he comes here to live with us, there is no reason why he should come here to rule us. If we allow him ordinary civil rights, he, at any rate, should not have the power to vote, because he would be able to turn that to the detriment of the country. I have no particular love for the individual alien, but it is the breed that we particularly object to, man, woman, and child. A five-year-old child of a German father is a German in my eyes, and it is just as well that he should go back to his father's country and be brought up under the humane tenets of which we have heard a good deal this afternoon. The unrest that at present is prevailing in this country has a very great deal to do, to my mind, with the alien enemy. You never hear of any disturbance, rioting, or anything of that kind without a fair sprinkling of aliens. Bolshevism, of course, is introduced in England almost entirely by aliens. I

should like to ask the Home Secretary to see if he cannot make this Bill stronger, particularly in the direction of strengthening the rights of the local authorities, and especially the police, who know a great deal more about individual cases than could possibly be known by a Government Department. More drastic authority should be given in cases of this sort. At the present time we have not the authority that we ought to have, or if we have it we have no power to put it into effect. The Act of 1905 has up to the present time done little or no good, and if a new Bill is brought in to replace it, it ought to be very much stronger than the one before us to-day.

Colonel BURN: I feel that I am able to express the views of my Constituents who returned me to the House of Commons. It is perhaps in my Constituency more than any other that the feeling on this matter is strongest, because we have had a considerable number of ships sunk, and that has been entirely due to enemy aliens who have been living in that part of the country. I welcome this attempt on the part of the Government to deal with this very pressing question, and I am glad to see that they realise the general feeling in the country. But this Bill as it stands is quite inadequate. It is unconstitutional, and it is of a temporary nature. I do not see that any good can come to this country from the giving of power by means of Orders in Council, the exercise of that power depending upon the caprice of the Home Secretary for the time being. How are you going to prevent the decisions given by one Home Secretary being entirely reversed when he vacates his office and is succeeded by someone whose feeling may perhaps be very much more tender to the Boche? I say that does not do for this country, and I do not believe that the electors of this country will stand it. In my opinion, this is nothing more or less than the continuation of the Defence of the Realm Act. Nobody has liked the Defence of the Realm Act. It has been necessary as a war measure, but we want something now of a much more permanent nature. Parliament, in any measure that they bring forward, must lay down definitely the rules and restrictions, and must do this by legislative enactment. The conditions must be laid down upon which enemy aliens are permitted to enter and leave this country. I have travelled in most parts of the world, and I think I know the effects of the bane-

[Colonel Burn.]

ful influence of the Boche wherever he has settled down. We in this country have suffered probably more than any other from the influx of the Boche, and I would ask, Why do they come to this country? They certainly do not come here for the good of this country. Perhaps a small percentage come here entirely on business grounds, but I care not whether it is on business or any other grounds. They are, in the first place, enemy agents, and the whole time they are here they are considering the interests of their own country. I know of Germans having come here ostensibly because they wished to spend the winter in a good climate. I do not think that any Member of this House will imagine for one moment that any foreigner is coming to Great Britain in order to enjoy the salubrious climate in winter.

An HON. MEMBER: We might go to Torquay!

Colonel BURN: My hon. Friend mentions Torquay, and I certainly think that anyone would show a very wise judgment in going to the most beautiful constituency in the country. The Kaiser was Colonel-in-Chief of my regiment, and from the nature of the staff appointment I held at the time when he was a frequent visitor to this country, I had the privilege, or shall I say the misfortune, to meet him. When he came to England his one aim and object was to find out what was going on in the military department as well as in the Navy. He came posing as a friend of this country and loving the British, but he always took care to be invited to Portsmouth in order that he might see what was going on in the ship-building line, or the latest type of battleships. No German has ever come to this country for the good of the British, and I am wholly in favour of those who are here being sent back to their own country. I would make special exceptions in the case of men who have sufficient guarantees as shown by their behaviour, and whose sons have fought and fallen for this country in the War. Those men have some right to be considered British subjects, and to be allowed to live here, but every case must be gone into most carefully, and we must have a surety that a man who is allowed to live here means to be a respectable citizen of this country and to behave as a British citizen. We know the sort of enemy alien we have here, and when we know

that men and women of enemy origin are the instigators of crime, and have proved themselves again and again to be some of our greatest criminals, now is the time to get rid of them. Men have been brought up in the Courts in connection with the White Slave Traffic, and they were nearly always Germans.

Again, why are we in our public offices to have to employ Germans, and why in the War Office, of all the Government Offices, have we allowed two Germans, men of military age, to be employed during the War? A question was asked in the House, and I was told these men were indispensable. I cannot believe there is any office in this country in which a Britisher is not infinitely superior to any German, and it is a scandal that Germans of military age should be allowed to evade service when our own gallant men were giving their lives for their country. I have recently seen British officers who have come back from the Army of Occupation and I am told by all of them that the attitude of the Germans towards our officers and men is quite orthodox and that they are even subservient. We know exactly why that is done. They want to show that they are poor harmless men and that they would make the best of British citizens. It is commonly being said by German prisoners that they are only waiting for the War to be over in order to come back again to undermine our people, to take the employment that our own people ought to have and generally in some way to injure our country and at the same time to work for their own country, to learn what is going on and to report to their own Government what is being done in Great Britain. I hope the Government will withdraw this Bill. I wish wholeheartedly to support the programme of the Government. I do not want to be forced into the Lobby to vote against them, but I want something better than this milk-and-water Bill. I want to see it replaced by one which will deal drastically and effectively with this burning question and which will not leave discretionary power in the hands of the Home Secretary, but which will lay down in distinct terms the conditions under which enemy aliens are allowed to enter and live in our country.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Colonel Sir H. Greenwood): As an old member of the Aliens Watch Committee, I have

thoroughly enjoyed hearing again the views of many of my hon. Friends. I have not changed my view one iota, but it is my good fortune to be a very humble member of the Government, and in the Home Office I have had the opportunity of bringing to the test of fact many of the speeches I have myself made in days gone by. The hon. Member (Mr. Bottomley) urged the Home Secretary to grapple with the problem. I shall try to grapple with the problem, and first of all to grapple with some of the statements of the hon. Member himself. He talked about scores of Orders in Council made under the Act of 1914. There have, in fact, been only five such Orders, as was stated in answer to a question the other day. Let me clear up another misconception very widely held and urged again to-day by the hon. Member, namely, that under Article 22 c, and under the Order in Council revoking that Order, encouragement was given to aliens in employment in this country. That is simply not the fact. The facts are, as explained in an answer the other day, that Article 22 c was needed during the critical times of the War when it was necessary to divert to certain industries certain aliens in unessential trades in this country. When the necessity for this diversion to some of our essential trades was over, the Order to which the hon. Member referred was issued, so that aliens were actually withdrawn from essential industries and allowed to go back to industries which were not so essential.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY made an observation which was not heard in the Reporters' Gallery.

Sir H. GREENWOOD: The answer I have given is the authoritative answer of the office I represent. When the hon. Member suggests that under this Bill there is any danger of a flood of alien labour to interfere with the rightful aspirations of British labour, he is making a suggestion in which there is no substance. For a considerable time past, indeed almost daily since the Armistice, a large number of alien labourers, whom we begged and prayed to come to this country and help us in the critical times of the War, for making munitions and for other war purposes, have been sent back to their respective countries, and to the last man they will be sent back under the powers we now enjoy, which under this Bill and the Orders in Council I hope we shall still

be able to enjoy. Another statement of the hon. Member is that the enemy colony is ever increasing. As far as enemy aliens are concerned, the population of this country in 1914 was 66,000. It is now 26,000, including children, and it is rapidly decreasing. Hon. Members, and especially the hon. Member (Mr. Bottomley), have made great play with the Act of 1905. I am with them in thinking that Act was not a success, but the hon. Member quoted figures which I must correct. He spoke of over 600,000 immigrants landing in this country year by year prior to the War, and as a bald statement of figures that was right, but he must have known that the great majority of these immigrants were transmigrants brought on tickets, which were for the benefit of British shipping companies in the great majority of cases, which conveyed them from European countries to the uttermost parts of the world. Does the hon. Member suggest that that great and remunerative trade, which was part of our great industry of shipping, should be stopped by this or any Bill? These transmigrants are men who must get out of the country on their tickets. The shipping company is held responsible for their conveyance across this country to remote parts of the world.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: I distinctly stated that no doubt in many cases their stay here was short, but quite long enough to do mischief.

Sir H. GREENWOOD: Their stay here was according to the schedule of the ships and the trains that carried them across the country. Not only many cases but the overwhelming majority of cases. The hon. Member referred to over 600,000 coming to this country year by year. There are not more than 200,000 aliens of all kinds in the country to-day, and the 600,000 per annum who came in pre-war times came to the great benefit of British shipping and went to different parts of the world.

I want to refer to one other argument of the hon. Gentleman and that was the "welcome back little stranger" argument. The little stranger is not welcomed back under this Bill. There are no little strangers coming back from enemy countries.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: We do not know that. The Lord Chancellor said that there were 20,000 coming back immediately.

Sir H. GREENWOOD: I have made inquiries as to the statement that people are rendezvousing in Holland in order to come back in shoals to this country as soon as peace is signed. The great port of Holland is Rotterdam and the British Consul there says there were some aliens there who wanted to come back to this country, but not a single German had asked for a passport or got a *visa*. I do not know where the suggestion comes from that there are armies of aliens waiting to flood these shores. If so, it is impossible for them to come back. None can come back, and, under this Bill and the Order in Council that goes with it, none can come back without the specific knowledge and permission of the Home Secretary and the officers that will be established under this Bill to carry out the measure. I am endeavouring to justify the Bill.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY made a remark which was not audible in the Reporters' Gallery.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order, order! I must object to the way in which the hon. Member for South Hackney makes interruptions without rising in his seat.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: On a point of Order. Would the hon. Member desist from cross-examining me every moment?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member for South Hackney should learn to take thrusts as well as to give them.

Sir H. GREENWOOD: I am not endeavouring for a moment to cross-examine my hon. Friend. In the art of cross-examination he is a great master. I was applying the mild corrective of the facts of my Department to his statements. I am endeavouring to get, if I may say so, the proper perspective in this matter, and to assure hon. Members that there is not the slightest laxity in carrying out the law as it now stands in regard to aliens, or that there will be under this Bill and the Orders in Council any deflection from the pledges of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House given before the last General Election. Here I would refer to the maiden speech of the hon. Member for the Upton Division (Sir E. Wild). His speech was characteristic of him, and he will always be welcomed here; but when he talks about gross scandal in the administration of Orders in Council under the Act of 1914, I think he is rather wide of the mark. To give him credit, he said

finally that the administration of the Aliens Restriction Act and the Orders under it was efficient. I want to emphasise that. In the last year of the War the administration of the Aliens Act and the Orders under it were so efficient that no alien could possibly land on these shores and no alien can land now without knowledge of his port of origin, without knowledge of his arrival, without knowledge of every hour of his existence in this country. These aliens are not always checked, for obvious reasons. The number that come are negligible, but not one can come—I repeat myself here because I want there to be no misconception on this point—without the fullest knowledge of his antecedents, of his business, or the dangerous effect which his visit might have. I do not want to go into the argument about the failure of the 1905 Act. I will make the House a present of that fact, if it has been a failure. I think it has been a failure. I am going on the experience of the War. An Act was passed the day after the War broke out, called the Aliens Restriction Act, 1914, and with it was issued an Order in Council which was prepared by the Committee of Imperial Defence. It was hoped that that Order in Council would close every loophole for dangerous aliens within and dangerous aliens without the realm who wished to come in. I wish to draw the attention of the House to this fact, that during the War over twenty subsequent Orders in Council had to be issued, owing to the changing circumstances of the War. If these Orders in Council had not been issued, the aliens would have benefited. It is obviously impossible that we could have come to the House over twenty times for fresh legislation.

We are living in very similar times now, and, for the next year or two, we shall be living in times similar to the times we have passed through during the War. Circumstances change almost daily. While the Peace Conference is sitting and whilst the terms of peace are unsettled with large numbers of the nations of the world it is impossible to rigidly define how you will treat every subject of foreign countries. It is impossible to say which are enemy alien countries at the moment or which may be enemy alien countries next week or next month or next year. The experience, the successful experience, of the Orders in Council system under the 1914 Act justifies us in applying the same principle to this Act of 1919. The Gov-

ernment prefer this principle, not in the interests of the alien, but in the interests of this country as against the aliens. You never can tell a month in advance who may be your next enemy alien, and to make our laws dealing with aliens rigid in the Statute at the moment when the whole world is, as one hon. Member said, in a cauldron, is not facing the great realities of the moment. The Order in Council which goes with this Bill, and which is a great part of the Bill, is now in draft. My right hon. Friend and myself regret profoundly that this draft Order in Council is not in the hands of Members.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Sir H. GREENWOOD: I said that we regret profoundly, because if that draft order were in the hands of hon. and right hon. Members a good many of the speeches made this afternoon would never have been made.

Sir J. BUTCHER: When shall we get it?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: As soon as possible. The Order in Council is the best and most effective way of dealing with the alien problem. Until the terms of peace are settled and published many points cannot be definitely stated, and we want the Bill now, without delay. The experience of the War proves the need of the elastic system provided by Orders in Council. The Orders in Council as set up in the Bill are laid on the Table of the House and I do not think it can be seriously said that the House has no control over these Orders in Council. The House has absolute control over the Government of the day and can show it in reference to an Order in Council of which they do not approve as easily as they can in reference to many other questions. An Order in Council enables us to meet difficulties which are constantly arising, and which arose during the War, owing to the decisions on various points. Whilst the Order in Council does give great power to the Home Secretary for the time being it does not, I submit with all respect, take from the House any of its control over the Government.

May I congratulate another hon. Member, the hon. Member for North Hackney (Lieutenant-Colonel Green) on a speech for which he need not apologise. I wish he would intervene more frequently. He

referred to this Bill, differing from any other hon. Members, as an alien Bill. He is quite right. It is not restricted to enemy aliens; it is an aliens Bill. It is a Bill for the restriction of aliens, and I would like the House to be possessed of the facts in regard to that. The total alien population, excluding Belgian refugees, who are going back as quickly as possible, is now about 200,000. Russians number about 92,000, and I think about half the Russians are in London and no doubt some of them are in the constituency represented by the hon. Member for Hackney. As I have said, the problem is not confined to enemy aliens: it is an alien problem. I would respectfully urge many hon. Members to remember that it is one thing to deal with enemy aliens—we are dealing with them as rapidly as they can possibly be dealt with—but it is a much more difficult problem to deal with the aliens that are left, especially those of doubtful or double nationality. In the Bill and under the Orders in Council we deal with them, if anything, more stringently than they have been dealt with in time of war.

Sir D. MACLEAN: Can the hon. Member tell the House approximately what are the numbers of aliens in this country of our War Allies—the French, the Italians, and the Americans?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: The Russians number 92,000, the Italians 19,000, the French 16,000, the Americans a little over 11,000, and the Swiss about 9,000. In addition there are 63,000 Scandinavians and Chinese, who for the most part are seamen having no permanent residence in the United Kingdom, but coming here at intervals in pursuance of their calling.

An HON. MEMBER: What about the Japanese?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: There are very few Japanese. They are a negligible quantity. The point I want to impress upon the House is that this alien question is now being drastically dealt with, and the alien population of this country—not only enemy aliens, but all aliens—is a decreasing quantity, and not an increasing quantity, and that the immigration of aliens has practically ceased under the present law, and we in this Bill simply continue that law and strengthen it. The alien population cannot increase, if this Bill and the Orders

[Sir H. Greenwood.]

in Council in connection with it are properly carried out. I would ask the House to give us the Second Reading of the Bill for several other reasons. The Bill is urgently required. We want to perfect the peace organisation before the end of the War, and to establish a permanent Department of the Home Office to deal with the alien question. This will include alien officers in many parts, and clerical staffs, and until we can get the Second Reading of this Bill the whole of these preliminary and essential arrangements are held up.

Sir R. COOPER: Can the hon. Member say which part of the Bill deals with that?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: You cannot start setting up a permanent Department unless you get the principle of the Bill adopted, and you can only have that done by the Second Reading. Once that is done we start establishing a permanent Department with all necessary officers at the ports and with a clerical staff, and we continue in the time of peace the drastic and successful Regulations under the law that have been so effective, especially during the last year.

Mr. BILLING: May we take it that the Government undertake that they will do that if this Bill gets Second Reading?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: That is the Government undertaking. When peace is declared an interned enemy alien may be entitled to his immediate release. This Bill enables the Government to retain such person until he is deported, or, if he appeals, until his case has been decided by the tribunal which is set up to hear it. Unless we get this Bill, the worst enemy alien you have got will be entitled to his freedom immediately peace is signed. I would ask hon. Members below the Gangway seriously to consider the responsibility of voting against a Bill with that excellent object in view.

Sir H. DALZIEL: What happens to the many hundreds of enemy aliens who have been released since the Armistice was signed and who are now at liberty?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: I am not aware of that. One has to be careful in this House of making statements without authority, but I am not aware that there are hundreds of enemy aliens who have been released since the Armistice. I shall

take the earliest opportunity of informing myself as to the fact, and I hope that I shall be able to let the right hon. Gentleman know later in the day.

Sir H. DALZIEL: I will put a question on the Paper.

Sir H. GREENWOOD: The Bill enables us to deal in a drastic manner with any act calculated to cause sedition or disaffection among our soldiers or sailors or those of our Allies, or among our civilian population. That is a real danger, and it is a danger which will be brought to an end the more quickly we get this Bill. It has been asked, Why does not the Government declare its policy? The policy of the Government is to continue during the troublous years immediately following the signing of peace the drastic and successful Regulations dealing with alien restrictions that have characterised the last year or so of the War. As the law now stands, there is a Regulation against any alien landing on these shores unless there is specific reason for his coming here—a reason in the interests of this country and not primarily in the interest of the alien. I am very glad to be able now to answer the question of my right hon. Friend (Sir H. Dalziel). Since the Armistice was signed there have been about thirty interned aliens released, any every one of them on the ground of ill-health.

Sir H. DALZIEL: More than that!

Sir H. GREENWOOD: When the doctors say that a man will die if we do not let him go, however we loathe the enemy, we must yield to the advice of the doctors and give him a chance. The power to act quickly contained in this Bill is essential if we are to deal effectively with aliens, and is just as essential in time of peace as in time of war. I submit that having regard to the fact that the policy of the Government is to be incorporated in Orders in Council, which are always open to the criticism of this House, and as to which questions can be put to the Front Bench, this Bill, and the Order in Council, which I can assure the House is more drastic than the Orders in Council now in existence, ought to satisfy every Member of this House. I hope that the hon. Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) will not press his Motion to a Division. If he wants to help to deal properly with the alien question he will support the Government.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Would you limit the operation of this Bill say to one year?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: If the European situation will justify incorporation in the Statute of the Orders in Council necessary to carry out this policy of the Government, the Bill will be produced in this House as soon as the European situation justifies it. After all the European situation is the overpowering consideration in this and all matters. It is not quite worthy of this great Imperial House that we should think only of our own country in reference to this matter. Surely the hon. Member for South Hackney who, like myself, is an Imperialist, would think of the Empire, as a whole, and of the most difficult deliberations that are going on in Paris. The European situation governs. As soon as that situation allows, the Government would be glad to incorporate in a Bill the drastic Regulations now under Orders in Council and will submit them to the House as a permanent matter of legislation. With that assurance I hope the House will give us a Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. BILLING: Are we to accept it as an undertaking that whatever Orders in Council have been made will be put in a Bill and submitted to this House when peace is ratified?

Sir H. GREENWOOD: It would be humiliating to make a statement like that. On the face of it you cannot put into a Bill every Order in Council. My assurance, I think, was fair. This Bill will go to a Committee and can be amended if the Committee so wish, but the principle underlying it should be accepted now by giving us a Second Reading. Speaking with a long experience of the alien question I submit that the Bill before the House and the Order in Council which I have read will be just to every patriotic citizen within the Empire.

Sir F. HALL: Is the Home Secretary going to adopt the same position in the Committee stage of this measure as in the case of the Ways and Communications Bill, or is he going to allow such Amendments to be taken as are not brought in by the Government?

Sir R. COOPER: In spite of the speeches to which we have listened I cordially support the rejection of this Bill. As I understand, both the Mover and Seconder of the Motion for rejection feel

like myself that, next to the terms of peace, this alien problem is one of the most serious and important problems with which the Government has got to deal, affecting the future welfare of the people of this country. I was dissatisfied with the speech which we heard this afternoon from the Home Secretary, and for this reason. It is now five months since hostilities were concluded, and we were told this afternoon by the Government that in spite of all their experience during the War and since the Armistice they must ask the House for a further two years in order that the Government may get the experience necessary to determine what policy it would be wise for this country to adopt with regard to the status of aliens in every respect. That is not a view with which I and those with whom I am associated this afternoon in seeking to have this Bill rejected can possibly agree. We hold this country has already had ample experience of what is wrong and what is right, and it is our opinion that, after all, the vast experience that it has had it is profoundly unsatisfactory for the Government to come to the House and say here to-day on the eve of the declaration of peace, "We cannot for two years yet tell you what are to be the broad lines on which we shall settle the future birthright and citizenship of the people of this country." We are opposing this Bill not because we of necessity object to the actual terms of the Bill, which might be required to tide over a few more weeks or months. It is because we feel that it is wrong and dishonest, in view of the pledges given at the last General Election, that we should be asked to give this blank cheque, these powers under Order in Council of which no one in this House has the slightest conception. The House and the country should be told what are the principles on which the Government intend to draw up these Orders in Council.

My hon. Friend has really given the whole Government case away, because he said, "What a pity it is we have got this great and important Order in Council now in the Press. If only it were in the hands of Members of the House, they would not dream of opposing this Bill." That may be perfectly true. My complaint is that it is thoroughly wrong to press this measure through the House of Commons when the Government deliberately deny the very information to which every Member of the House has a right before giving this blank cheque to

[Sir R. Cooper.]

the Government. That is a reason for opposition. A vote for this Bill is nothing else than a vote of confidence in the Government. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary spoke of the drastic, and successful alien legislation of His Majesty's Government during the last four years. I personally am, and I know very many other Members of this House are, profoundly dissatisfied with the administration of the alien problem, and I do suggest that practically nothing effective was ever done by the Home Office during the whole course of the War until pressure was put upon it by the majority of Members of this House. This House is asked

8.0 P.M. to-night to say we are satisfied with that drastic and successful legislation of the last four years and we do not want to know what you will base your policy on with regard to aliens, and here is a blank cheque in this Bill. For my part that is a course which I certainly cannot adopt in the light of the experience which I have had during the War of the administration of the alien problem, and I venture to suggest it is one which is going to find infinitely less favour outside this House than apparently amongst Members of the House. The Government is not delivering the goods it promised faithfully at the last General Election. This Bill coming in, at present I honestly cannot describe as anything else but eye-wash for the people, so that when Peace is likely to be declared the public can feel that the Government is trying to do something in this matter as it will be said there was an Alien Bill last week, and they will think they are doing something. In reality, they are not doing anything effective so far as we are allowed to know. That is our complaint. We ought to know what they are going to do with these powers. There is only one feature in this Bill which is in any sense a declaration of policy. It is a new feature, and the principle underlying it is one with which I think every Member of the House must agree—I refer to Clause 3, relating to aliens who are guilty of incitement to sedition or industrial unrest. But Sub-section (2) provides that aliens can only be dealt with by the Home Office when the alien incites to industrial unrest in an industry in which he is not *bonâ fide* engaged. It seems to me that those words are really nothing else than a Government licence to every alien in an industry in which he is *bonâ fide* engaged to freely explore all his

powers of sedition and incitement to industrial unrest. That is, of course, a point that can be, and I hope will be, dealt with in Committee, but the principle is one with which we all agree. Our complaint is that there is not one single policy mentioned. We have the right to know in this Bill what are the general lines of policy the Government is going to adopt, and the manner in which it would make use of these Orders in Council under the powers given in the Bill. A moment ago I made a remark to the effect that there was no justification for this Bill being brought forward at this present moment. Last week the Home Secretary was asked a question about the naturalisation and status of aliens, and the reply that was given on the 10th of April was that the urgent questions with regard to naturalisation were dealt with in the Act passed last Session, and that the points which remained are not urgent. If that is so, I cannot understand how the right hon. Gentleman can bring in this extraordinary Bill the following week. Several Members have made references and given quotations as to the pledges which the Government gave at the General Election. I have got them here, but I do not propose to repeat them, but I do feel that the majority of the Members of the House were really pledged up to the hilt at the election to take every opportunity of pressing upon the Government for a strong and definite alien policy, and I think to-night, apart from the powers of party, that hon. Members should give a little thought to the pledges made to the constituents on this matter, and which I venture to think might be awkwardly raised against them. I can assure the House that the public are profoundly distrustful of the Home Office and administration by the Home Office during the War up to the present moment. I have had the opportunity of talking to a great many people, and I know what sentiment there is on this question.

At the last election the alien question even more than the indemnity question roused the temper of every audience throughout the length and breadth of the land when practically no other subject did so. It was not until the Prime Minister made his express promise and the Leader of the House made a similar promise at Glasgow that that wave of great patriotic enthusiasm suddenly swept over the country, changing the minds of the majority of the voters from doubt into the

immediate determination, "Now we have got a definite statement about aliens and about the indemnities, and now we must all give our support to the man who alone has carried us satisfactorily through the War." That was the whole sentiment at the last General Election. I should be very interested to hear what some members of the Government will say to their constituents when they have to try and show them that the powers asked for in this Bill are really a full and honest and faithful fulfilment of the promises they made. There are two reasons why those of us who are opposing this Bill feel that at least a declaration of policy on the part of the Government is necessary. That is based on the fact that we hold, rightly or wrongly, that a very much stronger sentiment and purpose has got to underlie the action of the State in the future than it has done in the past in connection with all alien legislation. Your first consideration should be the security of the State itself, and, secondly, the protection of the rights of individual citizens. With regard to the first of those, my hon. Friend the Member for South Hackney (Mr. Bottomley) reminded the House of the extraordinary case of de Laszlo. I was sorry he did not remind the House also of this peculiar fact, that de Laszlo was caught by the Government, in spite of the backing he had, from a letter which came from Hungary from his brother, in which his brother said he was instructed by the authorities to thank him for his fortieth report on the military situation in Great Britain. [AN HON. MEMBER: "And he was not deported?"] No, he was not deported. What I ask is, Why was he not shot? If he had been a Britisher, and if it had been discovered that he had made a fortieth report on the military situation, I venture to think that he would have been shot by the most weak-minded Government that we could conceive. Why, then, was de Laszlo, who got the protection of persons in high places at the outset, when he was found guilty, not shot? There are several other aspects of this matter with which I should have liked to have dealt to-night, but I desire to consult the convenience of the House and the Government. Therefore I will not continue any further, but on the definite understanding that if at a later stage I desire to advance some more arguments on this question I will have the right to do so on the Third Reading if I am fortunate enough to be called upon.

Mr. SHORTT: With the permission of the House I would like to make a suggestion. I have listened to the Debate the whole of this afternoon, and to the very keen and at the same time very proper and very moderate criticism which this Bill has received. I have done so with the desire, as far as possible, to meet the desires and the wishes of the House. It occurs to me that probably the House is not so much adverse to waiting until the European position is clear as it is to giving for a period of two years free scope to any Department. I suggest, therefore, if I undertake to accept in Committee an Amendment reducing the period from two years to one year, and if the European situation were not clear then, I am sure the House would bear with me, or with any successor, if I had to come to ask for an extension of the period, but I am prepared to make that suggestion that we would accept an Amendment reducing the period from two years to one.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: By leave of the House may I say I am personally very reluctant to stand in the way of any proposal which the right hon. Gentleman, with the knowledge which he has, says is necessary having regard to the present European situation? Therefore, after the concession he has made and subject to the leave of the House and with the consent of the Seconder the hon. Member for York, I shall be happy to withdraw the Amendment.

Sir J. BUTCHER: I am much obliged to the Home Secretary for his assurance, and with the promise of the Under-Secretary that we shall be at liberty in Committee to introduce Amendments of the kind we want, I entirely concur in the Amendment being withdrawn.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

ACQUISITION OF LAND (ASSESSMENT OF COMPENSATION) [SALARIES].

Resolution reported,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of salaries or remuneration to official valuers appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend the Law as to the Assessment

of Compensation in respect of land acquired compulsorily for public purposes and the costs in proceedings thereon."

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Lord EDMUND TALBOT (Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury): I beg to move, "That the Debate be now adjourned." I do so in pursuance of an undertaking which was given that the Report stage would not be taken to-day.

Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put, and agreed to.

Debate accordingly adjourned; to be resumed to-morrow.

LAND SETTLEMENT (FACILITIES) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. WHITLEY in the Chair.]

Resolved,

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any expenses that may be incurred by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in pursuance of any Act of the present Session to make further provision for the acquisition of land for the purposes of small holdings, reclamation, and drainage; and to authorise the issue of the Public Works Loans Commissioners out of the Consolidated Fund of sums not exceeding £20,000,000 for the purposes of such Act."—[*Lord Edmund Talbot.*]

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

The remaining Government Orders were read, and postponed.

WAR PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

Mr. TYSON WILSON: I beg to move,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the pensions and gratuities now awarded to men who have served in His Majesty's Forces, or their dependants, and the allowances granted to the wives and dependants of men serving in the forces are inadequate in view of the services rendered by these men and the present cost of living, and ought to be increased; and the present Regulations governing the payment of pensions, gratuities, and allowances ought to be amended."

The subject-matter of the Motion is one that has occupied the attention of the House and has taken up a considerable

amount of Members' time in bringing before Ministers complaints from the men who are entitled to pensions, or whose dependants are entitled to allowances, and whilst the subject is one that has been pretty well threshed out in this House, I am not going to apologise for introducing it to-night. We know that the Government propose to decentralise to some extent the granting of pensions, and that is all to the good, but I am afraid that it will not to any large extent improve the position of the man or woman with a family who are in receipt of a pension and whilst I do not quarrel very much with the maximum amount of pension allowed under the Royal Warrant, I suggest to the House that the amount of pension paid in one instance as compared with the amount paid in another instance is the cause of grave complaint among the people who are in receipt of pensions. We know that in some districts the reports of those who inquire into the rights of a person to a pension and the decisions given upon these cases differ very greatly. The amount of pension granted depends to a very large extent in the first instance on the report given by the person who inquires into any particular case, and the result is that you might have got a pensions officer with leanings in one direction, and if he takes a favourable view of a man's claims a decent pension may be allowed, but if there is a pensions officer who considers it his duty to recommend as low a pension as he possibly can, then justice is not done, and I suggest that the only way of getting over that difficulty is by making the pensions statutory, so that a man should be entitled to a pension as a right and not as an act of grace. In connection with the granting of pensions we also want definite instructions given with regard to the position of a man who is entitled to a pension, and I suggest that even when a man has been examined by a medical board the recommendations of the medical board differ in different areas. I am also told by those who know that when a medical referee has certified that a man is suffering from an 80 per cent. disability, somehow or other before the pension is granted to him it is found by somebody or other that there is only a 60 per cent. disability. This is causing a large amount of dissatisfaction and discontent in the country.

Let me give a case in point, that of a man who is a blacksmith by trade. He was examined by a medical board some twelve

months ago and assessed as having a 50 per cent. disability, but he was awarded a pension for a 30 per cent. disability. In this case, in my opinion, the person responsible for assessing the amount of pension did not take into consideration the fact that the man's trade or calling was one which called for strength and for a healthy man to follow it. A gardener and a blacksmith may suffer from exactly the same kind of wound, and their disablement may be certified as the same by a medical board, but when it comes to saying that the blacksmith has a 50 per cent. disablement, and that therefore the gardener has the same percentage of disablement, it is altogether wrong. Speaking from the physical standpoint it may be right, but from the standpoint of trade or calling—and that is what a man has to earn his living by—it is absolutely wrong. In my opinion, that is where great mistakes are made by the medical boards. I know the man, the blacksmith, whom I have mentioned, personally. He was certified as being able to do light work, and he got a situation as policeman in a munition factory, but he had to give it up within six weeks. Again he got a position in Liverpool as a sort of civilian policeman, but after three weeks' experience he had to give that up too. The only pension he receives is 11s. 9d. a week, and that man has five children under fourteen years of age. He cannot find any employment that he can follow, and, in spite of the applications he has made, the only sum he is receiving is 11s. 9d. a week. I might say he is entitled to a service pension as well, because he is an old soldier. I am told on very good authority that a soldier who has been granted a disablement pension in a previous war, if he enlisted in the present War and is granted a pension of 13s. 9d. or 27s. 6d. a week, plus the bonus, and if he has received a £50 gratuity, he has got to repay that. At any rate, if he is getting a pension of 7s. a week, a disablement pension, owing to wounds or disease contracted in a previous war, he is not allowed to receive 7s. a week pension for previous injuries plus the amount of pension he is awarded for any disablement that may have happened to him in the present War, and if that is so, it is not right. The man is entitled to his pension for injuries received in previous wars, or he is not, and any pension received previously ought not to be deducted from the amount of pension awarded for service rendered during the

present War. If I am wrong, some of the experts on pension questions are wrong, but men themselves have told me that they have had this pension deducted from the pension allowed for service rendered during the present War.

I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to another question connected with pensions. Will he tell the House what a separated wife is? I know legally what a separated wife is. She is the wife of a man who has obtained an order against him in the Court, and in that case she is entitled to a pension. But what about the woman whose husband went on tramp looking for work in 1914, and only sent home 5s. or 10s. a week, or a sovereign every now and again? That woman, if her husband enlisted, and was killed, is not entitled to a scale pension, but may be entitled to 5s. a week. I have a case in my mind now of a woman, the widow of a soldier killed in the War. She married, previously to the War breaking out, a time-expired man. For four or five months he could not get employment to maintain his wife, and he rejoined the Army and was killed. When the widow applied for the pension, to which she thought she was entitled, she was told, "No, your husband was not maintaining you when he enlisted the second time, and, therefore, you are not entitled to a pension." I pressed this case upon the Pensions Minister, with the result that this woman was allowed a pension of 5s. a week. In a case of that kind, where, it is true, the man was not in a position after he left the Army, or even before he joined the Army in the first instance, to maintain his wife, then I say the Pensions Ministry ought to take into consideration that this man would, in all probability, if the War had not come along, have obtained employment, and been able to maintain his wife in decency and comfort; instead of which the Pensions Ministry, or those responsible for advising them, seem to be almost anxious to evade the payment of pension when they possibly can. We shall probably be told that we must practise economy. If we have to practise economy, do not let us practise it upon those people who cannot maintain themselves. Let us recognise that these men, whether able to maintain their wives or not, came forward at the country's call, and have given their lives in the country's service. We ought to recognise that these men in a month, or a year, or two years would have been compelled by the magis-

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trates to maintain their wives, and, therefore, the Pensions Ministry and the Government ought not to attempt to evade their responsibilities in that connection.

There is another complaint I have to make, and that is with regard to the payment of pensions to mothers—very often widows—who have lost an only son who was earning a wage, or perhaps, did not commence to earn any wage, but whose parents had spent upon that son a considerable sum of money in educating him or having him trained for some profession. Simply because that son was not contributing anything to the upkeep of the household, simply because he was not maintaining himself, the parent is told, "You are not entitled to a pension, or, at any rate, you are simply entitled to the 5s a week parents' pension, and we do not take into consideration his earning capacity in the future." We say that that is not justice. It is only equitable, in a case of that kind, that it should be recognised that those boys had a prospective value from the parents' standpoint, and, therefore, the Government ought to consider their position from quite a different standpoint from what they do. Until pensions are a statutory right, and mothers have a legal right to a pension, they will not get justice. The right hon. Gentleman believes he is doing justice to these people, and if he were dealing with all these cases himself I believe justice would be done. But he has got to rely on others. I am told that in many cases the amount of pension to which a disabled soldier is entitled has been decided by a girl of seventeen years of age. I am told the Pensions Ministry has a staff of some 12,000. It may be necessary to have all those people, but I say that until there is some tribunal to which those people who are dissatisfied with the amount of pension awarded them can appeal, we shall not allay the discontent that exists in the country. Whilst I recognise that the division of the country into areas may do something to allay that feeling of discontent, and the feeling that the woman in the next street, or even next door, sometimes has been more fairly, more generously treated than she herself—until the feeling of discontent is removed, we shall have Members of Parliament bombarded with letters complaining of the pensions. I noticed some days ago that

a question was asked regarding Class Z. The reply of the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Sir J. Craig) was:

"Local committees have been instructed, in a Circular of which I am sending my hon. Friend a copy, that they can obtain treatment for men in Class Z in anticipation of the award of pension, on the certificate of their medical referee that the disability is due to service. Demobilised men cannot be given treatment at the expense of the Ministry for disabilities not connected with their service. Training is given under the Warrant only to men who have been pensioned for disabilities, and it would not be practicable to put a demobilised man into training until it is definitely settled that he is entitled to it."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd April, 1919, cols. 1217 and 1218, Vol. 114.]

I am informed that a man who is taken ill whilst in training is not entitled to the scale of pension. He is taken ill, and dies from his illness. His widow and dependants are not entitled to the scale pension. If that is correct something ought to be done to remedy it. I know this, that a man whose illness or disease has been very much aggravated by military service, has received an extremely small pension.

I am going to give my hon. Friend every credit I possibly can in this matter. In the cases that have been brought before him and before the Ministry he has made most careful inquiry and given them his best consideration. In many instances the pension has been increased. In this respect I want to be quite fair in the remarks I make. My complaint, however, is this: that in the case of a man who is in the sickening stage of consumption and who has gone into the Army that the disease has been aggravated in the Army. Some doctors have said, "No! You would have been in pretty much the same state if you had not gone into the Army." We ought, I suggest, in an instance of that kind, to put the most generous construction upon the Royal Warrant, and also upon the doctor's certificate or the recommendations of the Medical Board. We ought not to say: "We believe you would have been as ill as you are if you had not gone into the Army." Suppose a man has died, we ought not to have said to the widow and family: "he would not have lived above a year or two in any case and therefore we cannot recognise your claim to a pension," or say that a gratuity covers the case. We should recognise that many of these men, often physically unfit, joined the Army, or were compelled to join it, in the result that they died, and not on active service either.

When the hon. Gentleman replies I trust he will say that he is prepared to give the most generous and favourable consideration to cases of this kind. My claim is that these pensions should be statutory; that a competent tribunal should be set up that can judge what constitutes a man's real disabilities. This is what we want to get up. We do not want a man to be fobbed off with a pension of 6s. 9d. for himself and 5s. for four or five children if that is not a fair disposal of his case. We want a competent judgment upon these cases, not that merely of one man or two. Then, again, as to any incapacity on the part of a man to follow the employment he is best able to follow; that is a point which requires recognition. There is the case of the man who has been a blacksmith, a bricklayer, or a similar trade, who cannot accommodate himself to the present circumstances. There is something worse, too—it is becoming more difficult every day for the man who is suffering from a disability to get employment of any kind. I, therefore, suggest that this matter should receive the most careful consideration of the Government.

There is something more. Will the hon. Gentleman tell me why, when a man is discharged from the Army medically unfit, and is allotted a pension of 21s. 6d. per week plus the bonus, he does not receive it before six or eight weeks? Ultimately he may be awarded a pension of 38s. 9d., or even less per week. Any difference, if on the wrong side, he has to refund. Is that right? Is there any justification that the difference between a pension of 12s. ultimately awarded, and the 33s. temporary pension should require to be refunded by him? It is inflicting a great hardship and injustice upon a man. I, therefore, hope that the Government will in cases where the maximum pension is allowed until the percentage of disability has been decided and the man's award settled, that whatever the man has received up to the time of his permanent pension being settled shall be kept by him and not repaid.

I do not want to say a great deal in regard to allowances. These have been rectifying themselves during the last four and a-half years, but people who receive these allowances are not, I think, satisfied even yet. The letters that I and other hon. Members receive every day make us think that. I have had some curious and anomalous cases to put before my hon. Friend opposite and before

the Department. Let me give an illustration. There were two young miners living with their parents. They lived next door to each other. The wages of these young men were exactly the same. Their contributions to the family income were exactly the same. Their conditions and position in life were exactly similar. Their ages were the same. In one case the allowance made to the parent was 18s. and in the other 11s. It is extremely difficult to reconcile those cases. Why should there be this difference in the allowances made in these cases?

Sir MONTAGUE BARLOW: I do not want to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but I want to appreciate his argument. Was the dependency before the War the same?

Mr. WILSON: The contributions to the family income were exactly the same. Looked at from the standpoint of the ordinary individual, Mrs. Brown cannot understand why she should be only getting 11s. per week for the loss of her son whilst Mrs. Jones next door gets 18s. for hers. I suggest that a local tribunal going into these cases would have a better chance of preventing these anomalous cases or of clearing them up and get us to something like uniformity in the payment of allowances in similar cases. There is another point I should like to touch upon—I am afraid I am getting back to the pensions—and that is in the case of a mother whose son has been killed but whose husband for the time being is in receipt of a salary of £200 or £250 a year. There are quite a large number of these cases where the son had, perhaps, a wage of a couple of pounds a week, and the parents have been told that they were not entitled to a pension of more than 5s. a week. The sacrifice made by the boy was the same as the sacrifice made by the boy whose parents have a much smaller income. It may, of course, be said that the parents, in view of the reduction of income, can make a further application to the authorities. They think they are entitled to a pension for what they have lost. Many parents have denied themselves not the necessaries but at any rate the comforts of life in order to give their sons a good education, and put them into a good profession and they have spent hundreds of pounds in this way. If their sons are unfortunately killed, I think the money they expended in this way ought to be taken into consideration when awarding the pension. It may be

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done in some instances but not in every case. I think more discrimination is required in dealing with these cases, and if it is possible in certain areas to set up a tribunal to which these people could submit their cases in the hope and belief that they would be dealt with equitably, I am sure it would prevent a great deal of the discontent that exists now.

I want to say a word about the position of the Reserve Z, men who I am told are really Reserve W men. I have been told that there are no Reserve W men. I had a letter on Friday from a man who was sent to work in a mine from Reserve W and ever since he has been released to work in the mine he has not been able to do more than two or three days a week. His health has been undermined in the Army, and when he goes back to his former occupation he cannot work more than three days a week in the mine. That man is entitled to nothing. He has no allowance from the Army. Whilst he is working three days a week in the mine he is not entitled to insurance or sick benefit. I have a letter from a man who was released from the Army under these conditions. He has a wife and six children, one earning 10s. and five of them not working. The most this man has put in is three shifts in the mine, and he says that men released from the Army to work at their ordinary occupation, if it is found they are medically or physically unfit to follow their occupation, ought to be entitled to allowances from the Army, the same as if they were on active service. I submit that that is a fair proposition. These men are physically unfit to follow their occupation after being released in Reserve W or Reserve Z, and they ought to have the same allowance for their family which they had when they were in the Army.

With regard to Reserve W, I am told that automatically these men are discharged from the Army, and, when they have gone to the local pensions committee, they have been told they cannot do anything for them. I submit that the local pensions committee ought to be kept supplied with information to enable them to give intelligent replies to these people who come before them. One of these committees has told a man in one case brought to my notice that he is still in Reserve W and is not entitled to medical

board and this, that and the other, and they cannot give him any financial assistance. I submit that the local pensions committees and anybody who has anything to do with the administration of pensions or allowances ought to be fully supplied with what is the exact position of affairs, and the only possible way I can see of getting over this difficulty is by the Government setting up some tribunal which will command the confidence of the people whose cases are dealt with. I trust that the Government will see its way to set up some tribunal of this kind, and, above all, that the Government will make the payment of pensions to men who have served their country in time of trial and peril with the fullest possible recognition from the State.

Mr. CHARLES EDWARDS: I desire to second this Motion for two reasons. One of them is the urgent need for increasing this payment to the soldiers and their dependants, and the dependants of those who have died. We have just been through an election, and this question was put to every Member who was returned to this House, and they were asked whether they would support an increase of pension to these people or not, and I believe every hon. Member promised to do so. [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] At any rate, I am carrying out my promise tonight, and fulfilling my obligation to my Constituency, and after this the responsibility will be upon the Government. My other reason is out of consideration for the Government themselves, who are in such bad odour just at the moment. We have heard on more than one occasion that hon. Members boasted that they represented labour just as much as we did, and I have no quarrel with them, for my quarrel is with the labour men who voted for them. There has been so much change during the last three months that we hardly know whether the Government represent anybody at the present moment, and the Labour party is giving them this opportunity to rehabilitate themselves. If you add this sin of omission to the sins of commission already perpetrated by the Government, then they are past redemption, and even the Labour party cannot save them.

I will come now to the question of pensions. I am afraid when we speak of money we forget the different values of money, because we were brought up to feel that a shilling meant a shilling and

was worth so much. During the last four or five years that has all been changed, and when we speak of 13s. 9d. to the world it means about 6s. 6d., and the 27s. paid to a single man who is totally incapacitated, and also to a married man with two children, equals about 13s. at the present time. I have never known a time when a man and his wife could keep a home together and live on 13s. per week. Well, that is what they are expected to do with the pension that is already given. I am not going to dwell upon the disparity between certain pensions. There are certain factors which cause uneasiness and dissatisfaction, and the only plea I make is that when either pensions or allowances are considered again, they shall not be considered separately, but at one and the same time, so that these different payments and disparities shall cease altogether. There is a difference, of course, between the payment to wives and to widows. I do not know why there should be, because the harder case of the two is that of the widow. The wife looks forward with a large amount of hope to the time when her husband will be back home again able by his work to provide for his family. The widow has no such hope, and yet we find the widow's payment is 13s. 9d. per week plus 20 per cent., while the wife gets 12s. 6d. plus 6s. if she is not working, making 18s. 6d. That is unfair, and if there is any dissatisfaction on account of it there is very little wonder.

There is the same disparity with regard to children. The wife is in a better position than the widow, which, again, is unfair. I am not going to dwell upon this, because I am after a large increase in the payment, and I believe it is honourably due to the men who have fought to preserve the country. I am afraid that the alternative pensions are of very little good, and that there is very little to be got out of them, simply because they are based upon pre-war earnings. There are also very many complaints on account of the time taken in settling these alternative pensions. I am told that it takes from six to twelve months. The men who have been discharged and placed in Class Z receive their ordinary pay and allowances for one month, and after that, if they fail to get work, they have to fall back on the unemployment benefit. If they can get work, the Government make them a loan of £5 to procure working clothes, tools, etc. Many of their tools have been lost or have become rusty and useless, and their old

working clothes are now of no good to them. The Government ought to give these men a Grant of £5, so that they can start just where they left off. As a matter of fact, these loans were so discouraged by the pension committees that I am told they have entirely dropped out, and the men have to get in debt in order to start where they left off. That is also an unfair thing. There is another thing, and I think it is the hardest case of all. No Grant or allowance is made in respect of children that are born nine months after demobilisation. There are thousands of men who are totally incapacitated for work. Families will be born, and the nation ought to be responsible and ought to encourage that sort of thing. It is a real hardship, because many of these men are young. Some of them have married since the War commenced, and it is a distinct hardship that the children of these men are not to be provided for by the Government. It is a point that the Government ought seriously to consider.

There have been some comparisons made between the pensions and allowances paid in this country and in other countries.

The Prime Minister himself 9.0 P.M. some time ago drew a comparison between the pensions paid in this country and the pensions paid in other European countries. A Prime Minister even can do an unfair thing sometimes, and that comparison was unfair, because the standard of living in this country has always been higher than the standard of living in other European countries, and from that standpoint the pension ought to be higher in this country. Sometimes a comparison is made between what is done for these people to-day and what used to be done in the old wars. That was no credit to anybody, and it is something that we never ought to mention to-day. We have seen the men who have fought in previous wars on the streets singing or with barrel organs, and Saturday after Saturday they have been at the pay offices collecting odd pence on the pay ticket. That is how these people have had to live, and they have died in the workhouse. It is no credit to the nation to talk about it. Yet that comparison is made. We say that these people are at least entitled to the same standard of comfort as other people. There will be no objection to that from any part of the House. They are entitled to the same standard of living or comfort as other people. If it takes a

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man and his wife three or four pounds per week or whatever it may be to live in decency and comfort the man who has been totally incapacitated in this War and who is unable to work wants exactly the same amount and he ought to get it, because the standard of living should be the same. Indeed, if there is any difference it should be in favour of the man who went to fight for the preservation of these shores.

What is the standard of living? I represent a mining constituency in Monmouthshire, and the lower-paid man there, the labourer or the unskilled man in the colliery, receives 5s. per day, plus 25.83 per cent., plus 18s. war wage. The weekly wage of these men therefore is £3 4s. 9d. To-morrow at Southport the Sankey Report will probably be accepted, and it will add another 12s., so that the wages of these people will be £3 16s. 9d. That is the minimum wage. The higher-paid men, out of their generosity, and to enable these people to live somehow, have agreed to adopt a principle that has never been known in South Wales before—namely, to have a flat rate of advance. Our old system was one of percentages, so that the man who earned the most got more percentage. The standard paid men, however, not knowing how these people were to live, agreed to the flat-rate system, so that they should have some sort of standard of comfort. I would put that as the minimum standard of comfort in that constituency, and the same probably largely applies to the whole of the country. That standard for a man and his family would be at least £3 16s. 9d. There is a very big disparity between that and what is paid under the Government scheme. Yet that is the minimum standard of comfort that obtains there, and the man who has fought is certainly entitled to that.

We talk about equality of sacrifice. In my opinion, there has been equal sacrifice, and I am going to admit that the sons of the rich have gone as well as the sons of the poor, and have taken their place side by side with them. There has been no difference in the bravery of these men: in these matters, I believe, everything has been equal, and when a son of the rich has died there has been as much poignant grief on the part of the wife and relatives as is felt when a son of the poor has died. There, I repeat, there has been equality of sacrifice, and I am not disparaging the

sons of the rich at all. I hope what I am going to say about inequality of sacrifice will not be in any way thought to be offensive. When we speak of sorrow and death we do not do so in an offensive sense, but we try to speak with all charitableness of spirit. But although there are certain things in which the sacrifice has been equal, there is one aspect in which it has been unequal. The widow of the worker not only has the sorrow of having lost her husband, the children have not only the sorrow of having lost their father, but there is put upon them also a great care and anxiety which they are experiencing every hour of the day. The widow has to consider, and the point is constantly in her mind, what she is going to do and how she is going to rear her children, and in this sense I suggest there is no equality of sacrifice at all. It is very unequal indeed, and what we are asking in this Resolution is that the Government should rise to the occasion and make this unequal sacrifice as equal as it is possible to make it, so that this weight of care may be removed, and so that the future may have no anxiety for them.

If that were done the lives of these people would be all the better and brighter. I remember one morning, not very long ago, reading in the newspapers a message which thrilled me through, and I venture to think everybody in the British Islands, if not in the civilised world, was thrilled in the same way. It was a message that had been left amongst the heights of snow in the wild North; a message from Captain Scott, that he did not believe that a grateful nation would allow their wives and children to starve because they had died there. We agreed, everyone of us, with that. I do not know that the men of whom this Resolution speaks have left any message on the battlefield. But they lived with the thought and died with the comfort, that the people left behind would surely look after those for whom they had been the bread-winners. They are a charge on us. These men served this nation well, and the nation ought to remember them. We are now giving the Government an opportunity to increase the pensions and allowances, and to do better for those who have been bereaved than has yet been done. I am hoping to see the time when this great load of care, gloom, and anxiety shall be lifted, the time when the villages, towns, cities, countryside, mountains, and valleys will

ring with the laughter of the children of the men who are gone and with the joyousness of the women when they speak with pride of their husbands, sons and brothers, and, more than that, when they speak of a grateful nation that has stood by them in their hour of night, in the hour when those who were dear to them were taken away. This is an opportunity of which we should avail ourselves. It is for every one of us left here to do that. These men gave their lives to put down militarism in the world and to save this land from invasion. It is up to us to see to their dependants, and I therefore hope that the Government will do something considerably more for them than has been done up till now.

[*At this point two women in the Strangers' Gallery shouted, "You are a gang of murderers, you have not only not settled this War, but you are dragging us into another," and "You are selling these men for the benefit of the capitalists." The interrupters were at once removed.*]

Mr. WALLACE: I wish to say a few words on this very important Motion. We are all aware that the Government are spending money in the most lavish manner in nearly every Department of the State. I happen to believe in economy, but if there is any one Department in which I would be glad to see a little less parsimony and economy I think it is in connection with these pensions. This question is one in which no niggard hand should be at work. The claims of our fighting men should be recognised in the frankest way. The words in the Motion which specially appeal to me are those which say that the allowances and pensions are inadequate in view of the services rendered by these men. I daresay there are very few of us who, at the election in December, did not come up against this subject in a very serious and concrete form. When a subject of this nature has to be debated in this House I should have expected that a larger number of Members would have been present. We have all more or less given very definite pledges on the subject. My first complaint is as to the inequality in the payments. There does not seem to be any standardised method at all of dealing with the various claims presented by the widows and dependants of those who have fallen. I do not wish to introduce into a business speech too much sentiment. I am quite aware that a great Department, such as that the right hon. Gentleman

presides over, is very vulnerable and open to criticism. But in speaking on the question of pension and allowances we should consider the subject, not from the point of view of the security of the country, but rather from the point of view of the time when the country was in very serious danger.

My mind goes back to the 21st March when the future of our Empire was trembling in the balance, and when those of us who knew what was going on in France knew how very near disaster we were. If at that time, in the presence of that crisis, we had had to consider the question of pensions I think the attitude of the average man would have been to promise our soldiers almost anything if they could stop the onrush of Germans who were crushing in overwhelming numbers through our battalions. I do not forget that awful Sunday, and the glorious way in which our men stood up to very superior forces. We should not forget to-day the men who are physically and mentally broken down as a result of the War. We should not forget the wives and dependants of those who can no longer support them, and we should treat this whole matter in the most generous and sympathetic way possible. I shall not go into individual cases, although I could furnish many which I have brought to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman. I have a difficulty in understanding some of the ways and methods of the Ministry of Pensions. Let me take the case of a mother who loses a son, say, in December, 1917, and that the mother is unaware that she is entitled to a pension until August or September of the following year. When she makes her claim she is only allowed a pension from the date of her application, not from the date of the death of her son. A decision of that kind is not only unsympathetic; it is grossly unfair and dishonest. The pension ought to be paid to the parent from the time that the son was actually lost, whether application was or was not made at that particular time. I commend that point to the attention of my right hon. Friend.

I am very glad to notice that we are to have some decentralisation in the administration of pensions. In Scotland they are very anxious indeed to have a central pensions organisation, either in Glasgow or Edinburgh, on the same lines as Chelsea in London. The demand for that is very strong, and I am very glad that the Pensions Department have seen their way to

[Mr. Wallace.]

adopt a forward policy of that nature. There is a very strong case why pensions should be paid on some standardised method under a system of statutory enactment, and that they should be taken altogether out of the realm of grace or good nature. It is not a question of gratitude at all; it is simply a question of elementary justice and the discharge of the debt which we all owe to these men. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will press the more generous view upon his officials who, unfortunately, vary very much—I am quite sure they vary very much against his will—in the administration of the Department and the payment of these pensions to those who so much deserve them.

Mr. L. JOHNSON: I rise for the purpose of reinforcing what has been said by the last speaker with regard to the case which arises when a pension in respect of a young soldier killed in the War is considered by the Pensions Minister when application is made by the dependants or persons in close relationship with the home. The present practice appears to be only to make the pension payable from the date when the application is made to the Pensions Minister. The true position should be, if it is recognised that the pension is to be granted as a right when asked for, that the point from which the pension should start should be the point at which the loss has been incurred. There is no principle involved, except that it might possibly give the Pensions Ministry some trouble if the pension were to commence earlier than the application. The Pensions Minister, in answer to a question I put to him in the House, stated by way of explanation why it would be difficult to pay the pension from the date of death rather than from the date of application, that it would involve many inquiries being made into the circumstances of the applicant. That is a matter which applicants would not resent or seek to avoid. With reference to the earlier part of the speech of the Seconder of the Motion, I wish to assure him and the House that sympathy with the men who have fallen in the War and their dependants, earnest, keen and with a desire to show the utmost generosity compatible with the interests of the taxpayers is not confined to the Labour benches or to these benches, but is general to the whole House. Every Member is desirous of seeing everything possible done on these lines.

Mr. J. BELL: In rising to address the House for the first time, I could not have chosen a subject which was of more interest to the voters at the last election. I do not care to what party in this House hon. Members may belong, they will agree that no question loomed so large during the election as the question of the treatment of our fighting men and their dependants. There cannot be two opinions in the House as to the inadequacy of the pensions. Nobody would be prepared to argue that the men or their dependants are treated generously when we remember the services they have rendered. We are asking that the payment shall be made adequate to those services. In asking for this and for more generous treatment we are asking for something to which these men are entitled. I do not forget that if it had not been for the services our men rendered, our country, with all that it has stood for, with all the honour on which we pride ourselves, and with all the wealth we talk about, might have gone, and we should not have been in a position to-day to talk about either the payment of our fighting men or maintaining the wealth of the country in any respect. These men have done so much, and some of them have received very little. I have in my hand the particulars of a case of a man who wrote to me. He was one of the "Old Contemptibles." He was in the retreat from Mons, he fought on the Somme and also in Italy, and he possesses the Military Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal for valuable services rendered, yet the total amount of money he has received during four and a half years' service is £153 7s. 11½d., with £27 10s. as war service gratuity and £5 service gratuity. He is a reservist in the Regular Army, and says that he is prepared to volunteer to go to Russia if the Government will treat the men a little more generously than they have done in the past. The next case is of a different character, that of a soldier who has been serving in India. He had been out there for three years and four months, and he came home to find his children barefooted. It was impossible for his wife to get boots for them out of her allowance. The only money he has received since the 22nd of January has been £2 at first, and then £3 14s. 4d., and now, when he writes on 9th April and asks that something may be done in order that he may get boots for his children, and although he has made application for

relief, he has been told that nothing more can be done until the accounts have come through from India. In the other case which I am about to mention, and which is perhaps the worst, I am hoping that the Minister will be able to use his influence with another Department. It is a case, sent to me from a war pensions committee, of an old woman who lost her boy in the War. She was in receipt of an old age pension of 6s. 6d. per week. After some trouble she was granted a pension of 7s. per week, as some slight recompense for the loss of her son, that being the amount for which they said she was dependent upon him. When she got the war pension of 7s. per week her old age pension was stopped altogether. Although appeals have been made to Government Departments that something may be done to alter this, the only remedy that she has got has been that she has received back 2s. per week of her old age pension, which was originally 6s. 6d.

These cases, and there are any number of them, form one of the chief causes why the Government appeal in vain to our men to volunteer for the Army. We hear men talking about the ungenerous treatment that they and their wives and children have had, and some of them go so far as to say that, if that is the kind of treatment the country is going to mete out to the soldiers, then the country is not worth fighting for. And we cannot blame them, because, after all, a man feels it the most when he knows that his wife and children are suffering whilst he is fighting for his country. During the last week we have been discussing another measure, and have been talking about the principle of market values. We have been saying that if we are going to take land or to take property of any kind it must be paid for at its full market value. I wish we could adopt the same principle when we are talking about the market value of labour. When a woman has lost her husband, and the children have lost their father, the man, if he had been alive and working, would perhaps have been able to earn £5 or £7 a week. I do not think it is too much to ask that the wife and family should be left as well off as they would have been if the father and husband had been earning his £5 or £7 a week. This is a matter on which I do not think we ought to preach economy. What we want in our treatment of our fighting men and their dependants is not economy, but generosity, and even if we treat them generously we

still shall not be paying them for the valuable services they have rendered. Many hon. Members on these benches and in different parts of the House, when the War commenced, went on the recruiting platform, and we then used as our text, "Your King and Country need you." When our men responded to that call they did not stop to count the sacrifices they were making. They did not stop always to think that their wives and children were going to be worse off because they responded to that call. They thought of the, perhaps, greater evil that would come to them if they did not respond to the call. But I want it to be remembered that there is something else; that although they responded to that call there was another call at home, and that that call at home is still there. Their mothers needed them, their wives needed them, and their children needed them, and according to that need it is the duty of this country and of the Government, in view of the sacrifice that was made for the country's cause in responding to that call, to see to it that we do not ask either the men who have fought or the dependants of the men who have fallen to make any further sacrifice. We must see to it that the country looks after not only the men who have fought and are still with us, but especially the dependants of the men who have fallen.

Mr. F. C. THOMSON: As more than one speaker has said, this subject was dealt with very much at the last election, and I am sure candidates, irrespective of the party to which they belonged, felt that more ought to be done in this matter. We felt that, considering the altered value of money, the scale of pensions, allowances, and gratuities was not high enough, and that a good deal must be done to improve them. We know now that there are many calls on the national purse, but it is felt in all quarters of the House that, whatever happens, it is a primary national obligation of honour to see that the men who came forward and fought our battles and preserved our country have the first claim upon us. We have all observed that men will suffer a great deal of hardship cheerfully, but that if they have a grievance, and feel that they are not fairly treated in comparison with others, their feelings change from those of general enthusiasm to feelings that are not so desirable. If the men who have fought come to feel that others who have not made the same sacrifice are in a better position than they are,

[Mr. Thomson.]

and if, after their sacrifices, they see their relatives in a worse position than those of others who have made no sacrifice, that will be a bad thing. We all feel that this subject is not of a party character at all, but that it is a primary national obligation of honour to see that these men who have so well served us are adequately and fully pensioned. I agree with the fine tribute paid by the second speaker to the unanimity of all classes at the beginning of the War, when all came forward irrespective of station. I do not see why the widow should be in a worse position than the wife of a soldier now serving. She still is able to look forward to the prospect of the breadwinner's return, while a widow has no such prospect. I fail to see any reason of logic for it. It is entirely one of finance, and I think it is one that must be faced. With regard to the gratuity it seems a bit hard on the old soldier who has served in a previous war that he should get a lower gratuity than others who have not so served. It seems to me that those who have served in previous wars should get their pensions all the same. That is over and done with, and is all to the good, and when such men leave the Army at the close of this War, I think they should get their full gratuity.

With regard to decentralisation, I should like to emphasise what fell from the hon. Member for Dunfermline Burghs (Mr. Wallace). There is a strong feeling in the country that we want more decentralisation, which means more rapid dealing in this matter of pensions. Like all new Members, one feels that everyone at the Ministry of Pensions is anxious to help one in every possible way, but the volume of work is enormous and there cannot be the smallest doubt, from the point of view of the Scottish soldier, that decentralisation would mean a great deal in rapidity, and rapidity we know means justice and fair dealing. With regard to alternative pensions, there is a good deal to be said for making these as from the date of death, and not as from the date of application. Here and there there is an idea abroad that things are not well enough advertised, and if they do not come to a particular person's notice the total sum is not such a large one. I do not say that enters into the heads of those at the Ministry of Pensions, but it is an unfortunate impression. The alternative pension should be brought home to every widow who is entitled to it. I had a letter

to-day from an officer's widow complaining of the present system rather bitterly. She had only heard the other day that she has any rights of this kind. We have to see that this change is brought about, and that every widow gets to know what her rights are as regards alternative pensions. The fact was brought home to me very much in my Constituency recently that there are many officers who would find it very convenient and desirable to have someone near where they live whom they could consult and who could make inquiries for them. At present everything has to be done by correspondence with the Ministry of Pensions, and that in many cases is difficult and undesirable. If the Minister of Pensions could adopt some machinery whereby officers could have advice and consultation as to their rights, a great advance would be made. I am sure the Minister, who has done so much to improve this matter, is fully alive to the importance of this question. All sections of opinion feel that everything is due to the efforts of our soldiers, and we all feel that, whatever be the national obligations, up to the limit of what is practicable and possible, justice must be done to those who have seen the War through.

Mr. G. THORNE: I am glad to be permitted to be associated with the Motion, particularly because I desire also to emphasise what has already been said, that in this particular, at any rate, there is not the slightest party feeling animating any of us. We are all entirely agreed that every possible consideration should be shown to our soldiers. We have amassed an enormous pecuniary debt. The nation has to fulfil its obligations, but to me, as to all others who have spoken, the supreme national debt which takes precedence of all others is the human debt we owe to the men who fought for us and who saved our country. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman tonight is in a very favourable position as compared with that occupied by many of his colleagues. He has heard from speaker after speaker in every part of the House that there is absolute unanimity in supporting him in practically any step he may find it possible to take to do justice and to show generosity to the men who saved our country. The first thing we ask from him, and we believe he desires to do it, is to secure greater simplicity. I have been

told, I do not know whether rightly or not, by those who have gone into the matter, that the Regulations affecting pensions amount practically to about 14,000. At all events, they are very numerous and are indeed pitfalls for the unwary. It seems to me that, above all, a soldier has a right to know what he is entitled to receive, and to know the way in which he can get it, and make sure he does get it, and consequently I most heartily support what has been urged from these benches, that there should be a statutory right for every person who is entitled to a pension to know exactly what is due and to know what steps have to be taken in order to obtain it. I am very glad to know that the right hon. Gentleman is most fully seized of that desire, and is trying to take steps in that direction. I hope, too, he will recognise that it is not expected of him to confine himself merely to the figures now declared, but that he will have the House behind him if he sees it possible to propose large extensions of pensions to those who have shown themselves to be entitled to them.

I understand the right hon. Gentleman is proposing a great system of decentralisation, and I invite him to take the opportunity which this Debate affords him of giving the House and the country full details of what that scheme is, and by what methods he proposes to carry it out. I will try to prove for a little the help which this scheme will render, and I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman in three or four instances how it will work. When a man is demobilised he gets his month's pay and allowance. The pension is assessed, but from all I can learn, in numerous cases from ten to fifteen weeks elapse before he hears anything at all about his pension, and consequently he and his family are placed in a very serious difficulty. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether in his plan of decentralisation that difficulty will be once and for all removed, and when the month expires the pension will go on and the man will understand exactly what he is entitled to receive. The next case I would put to him, to know whether his scheme will meet it, is that of the widow. She is entitled to her six months' separation allowance. It constantly happens that when the six months expires she hears nothing about the pension. I desire to know whether immediately that six months has expired, if not before, this new arrangement will enable

her to receive it and be sure that she will get it in due course. The third case I desire to put is in regard to parents who have lost their sons upon whom, whether they actually depended upon them before the War commenced or not, there was a potential dependence which ought to be taken into far greater consideration than it has been. I hope the scheme the right hon. Gentleman is providing does not confine itself to decentralisation, but takes this into consideration and that he will even give greater regard to potential values or will increase the flat rate which has already been provided. The matter to which I attach most importance, and I would ask him whether his scheme will make provision for it, is in regard to those very hard cases where a man has died and objection is raised to granting a pension to his widow on the ground that his death was not caused by his service or aggravated by his service. That is a case which is constantly occurring. We all know it by our correspondence, and it is one of the hardest cases that possibly can come up for consideration. Therefore, I should like the Pensions Minister to answer this question: What is the military service which justifies the grant of a pension? In many cases where the man has died he has been, as we understand it, in service, but the explanation has been given when the pension has not been granted that at the time he was not in military service. I submit that once a man has been taken by the Army, after having been examined by the Army doctors, he is under the control of the Army, and that we are entitled to presume that death would not have occurred unless he had been under Army control, and unless a man has been guilty of some wilful act whereby he himself has wilfully caused the illness which has resulted in death, it is a case in which the nation ought to come to the widow's relief. I submit to the Minister of Pensions that the decentralisation scheme which he is now putting before the country will not be regarded as in any way satisfactory unless it meets cases of this kind as well, and that those who are left without any means of support shall know exactly what they can depend upon in the directions I have indicated. I earnestly hope that his great scheme will meet, to a very large extent, the cases to which I have referred, and that also he will be able to give us some hope that the larger ideas put for-

[Mr. G. Thorne.]

ward to-night may be duly met, and that we may really as a nation pay the debt we owe to our gallant men.

Mr. G. W. JONES: I desire to associate myself very cordially with the Motion which has been proposed, and I want to put one or two points in regard to it. I desire to support very strongly the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last, that the whole system of the granting of pensions should be recast. We have had instances given to-night from all quarters of the House showing all sorts of anomalies, some of which are absolutely indefensible, and are causing great hardship to our wounded men and the dependants of the men. I think the proposal put forward in favour of a statutory tribunal to settle these cases, under rules definitely laid down in plain language, is one that ought to be granted, and I hope that the Minister of Pensions will give a right of appeal from this statutory tribunal to a higher tribunal, because if we want uniformity—and it is essential in all these cases—you can only have it by laying down rules which will bind all the tribunals. I am quite sure that if that is done, and there is a right of appeal there will be an absence of these abominable anomalies and hardships which we see under the present system. I know it may be said that if you lay down a system of that sort it is unduly rigid, and that it will cause hard cases, but I suggest it cannot cause a fraction of the hard cases which we get under the present system. If it is the desire of the Government to avoid hard cases, and I am sure it is, then I would urge that the Minister of Pensions should reserve to himself the right to make an extra payment if need be.

Another point requires attention, and that is the prospective value of dependency in the case of young men. Oftentimes a young man has gone into the Army at the age of eighteen, when he has contributed practically nothing to the support of his home. His earning capacity is just starting. If he falls at nineteen or twenty it may be said that the parents lose nothing, but we all know that in regard to earning power they have lost a great deal, and under the Workmen's Compensation Act the judge where the child is deceased, always allows for the potential increase of that child's earnings for the benefit of the parents. I hope that something of that sort will be done in the new scale of pensions. Another point deals with men who

have been invalided out of the Service. We all know men who have been invalided out. The doctor says that the decease is not due to service, but that there was a latent disease. The disease may be latent and may be latent for many years, but the germ of disease ceases to be latent when you expose the man to the hardship of active service. We ought to face this fact. We all know that a large number of these men have become invalids because they were passed for a higher category than they were really fit for. I can quote the case of one of my own relatives, a man who was passed C3, and who was over forty years of age. He was in indifferent health, and led a sedentary life. On one occasion when he went up they sent him home again. Then there came a big need for men, when one of the big pushes was on, and we know how patriotic the doctors became, and how they put men up three or four categories, and sent them to the front line whether they were fit or not. This man was put up to B1, and in three weeks he was in France. He was in delicate health, and of sedentary habits, and he was put to digging roads in France—navy's work. Within six weeks of joining up he was in the hospital, and within two months he was diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis. That is one of the class of cases in which they say that the disease was latent, and was not due to service. It is monstrous that when a man through the blundering of the doctors has been put into too high a category and given work for which he was not fitted, he has not any claim for pension.

I have had two complaints brought to my notice. I do not know the facts myself, but they are complaints of men who have lost limbs, and each tell me the same story. One wanted an artificial leg and the other an artificial arm, and each wanted one particular make of limb, because it was so much more suitable than other makes. In each case they were refused the make of limb they wanted because it was too expensive. I have a letter from one of the men, who was frankly told by the major or some other commanding officer, "You cannot have that limb, although I frankly admit it would be the best limb for you. It is too expensive." I do not know whether this statement is true, but if true it is a scandal. It is our duty to see that disabled men have the very best

mechanical appliance that money can buy in order to make good to them what they have suffered during the War. I have a little plan of my own in regard to what the scale of pensions ought to be. It may be that it would cost too much money, and that it would be turned down on that account. What I would like is that posterity should say of us that we did what we could to see that no child was worse off as a result of his father having laid down his life for his country, and that no child is worse off than he would have been if his father had stayed at home in a cushy job. I want to have the reproach taken away from this country that we have not done our duty to those who have suffered in the War or to the dependants of those who have fallen in the War. I hope the Minister of Pensions, for whose good service we have the highest appreciation, will see to these matters. We suggest that the machinery is antiquated. I hope he will give us a fresh standard and a more generous standard suitable to the increased cost of living, and that he will give an increased statutory right to pension.

Mr. BRIANT: Like many other hon. Members, I had considerable diffidence in going on platforms, and asking men to do something which I knew I could not do myself, but I thought it was my duty and I took part in a large amount of recruiting in London which was most successful. In addition to that, my own personal influence amongst young workpeople brought in another 500 men to the Army. For that reason I feel it to be my bounden duty whenever I have the opportunity to urge that those whom I personally asked to join the Army should not be neglected, and that the dependent relatives of those who laid down their lives should not be neglected. To-night we have heard about the inadequate rates of pensions. May I give one case from my own personal knowledge? I happen to be chairman of a board of guardians for ten years. Many people think that boards of guardians have no bowels of compassion, yet actually a widow, whose husband died through no cause connected with the War, received from the board of guardians more relief than she would have received as a pensioner from the Army if her husband had died in the War. I have actually had a case in which the relieving officer came to me and said, "If this woman would give up her pension and apply for out-relief she would actually be getting more."

On one particular day, when I was in the chair, a widow received—I suggested the amount—£2 5s. out-relief. I am well aware that the House would think that almost ridiculous, but I have endeavoured to make it the policy of my board to have the relief given adequate. The following week the widow of a man who died in the War was actually given a pension of 3s. less than had been given to a woman as out-relief in the previous week. It is monstrous that the standard of Army pension money should be less than that of boards of guardians. I know cases in which we have had to supplement with additional food or nourishment for the children the resource of the widow of a soldier. I ask that this at least should be put on a proper standard. Many widows of soldiers have to go out to work to supplement their pensions. There is no more false economy than to compel a woman whose duty it is to look after her children at home to go out and work so that when she comes home tired she is unfit to give proper attention to the children. There is no greater extravagance than to permit such a state of things. It is disastrous to leave women and children with insufficient nourishment, simply because the nation has not fully recognised its duties to the children of the man who died for the State.

Then we often have cases in which a medical board assess the pension of a man who appears before them at say 60 per cent. The man's case subsequently goes to some unknown persons—I believe the Pensions Department—and they, never having seen the man, may decide to give him 40 per cent. That seems to me a false attitude to take towards these men. If the medical board have decided 60 per cent. no other body should reduce that, without having the knowledge which the medical board alone possess. With regard to the tuberculous soldier, there is no more terrible disease than tubercular disease which is so often directly attributable to service under war conditions. I know that the Minister of Pensions is anxious to do everything he can. I know that the supply of places in sanatoria is inadequate, because there is always a long waiting list, but there are cases in which a man is absolutely unfit for
10.0 P.M. a sanatorium. He is beyond sanatorium treatment. Those familiar with the matter know that it is cruelty to send a man to a sanatorium

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unless it is likely to do him some permanent good. There is the case of the man who is simply dying. He may go to a home where he may spend the last few months of his life. There is a third section of tuberculous soldiers who will not probably gain much by sanatorium benefit. They are not bad enough to go to a place where there are only bad cases. They are able to go into the open air, and neither a hospital nor a sanatorium is a suitable place for them. Provision should be made for this particular class, not in the country, but, say, suppose it is in London, then on the outskirts of London, where visits from friends may be easily made at a small cost. Many a man refuses to go to any sort of home because he knows that if he goes the distance will be so great that his friends will be unable to see him, and I believe that there is great room for small homes that will accommodate, say, twenty or thirty men on the outskirts of a town, where relatives, by taking a twopenny tram ride, can go and see these men at a small cost. Many of these men are in the most infective stage. They are at home infecting their own children. They cannot be persuaded to go to a sanatorium. Very often they are not suitable cases. They are the between cases, and if provision were made in small homes dotted about the outskirts of a town near their relatives, it would be of an immense advantage not only to the men but to the next generation by saving immediate danger of infection.

I trust that the new methods will be more successful in speeding up whatever decisions are given. I have a letter from the secretary of one of the best-managed committees I know, complaining bitterly that it takes six months sometimes to get a decision on a case. That is not fair to the man! A good deal of that sense of grievance that exists among the men is accentuated by the waste of time. Too often the unfortunate Pensions Committee get all the blame, when the blame is due to the Pensions Department. I know that the Pensions Minister is doing everything he can to speed up, but a good deal of dissatisfaction is caused by the slowness with which cases are dealt with. I trust that the suggestions made to-night will not only meet with a sympathetic hearing by the Pensions Minister, but that he may see his way to put them into immediate operation.

Sir MONTAGUE BARLOW: I think that we may congratulate ourselves on the course of this Debate and the tone which it has taken. We are substantially agreed upon three main things. First, that no payment, however large, can be adequate compensation for the maiming and wounds which our soldiers and sailors endured in this War, and anything we can do can never in the nature of the case be adequate if you put it on the ground of compensation. We all feel that it is a debt which we owe and must discharge, to do the utmost we can to make the payments proper, adequate and fair. We are all agreed, also, that there is in this matter no political issue involved. We are agreed that pensions shall be kept free entirely from party politics. A third thing we are agreed about—here I think the Pensions Minister can take credit for himself—is the improvement which the present arrangements at the Pensions Ministry have inaugurated and carried out. That is not only so with regard to the decentralisation scheme, of which I hope much in the future, but with regard to other things. There was, for instance, the question of artificial limbs, with regard to which, I am afraid, we had to be rather insistent from time to time. There are even still in existence other matters. I do not want to go through them, as I do not think this is the occasion, and I will tell the House why before I conclude. But there are a good many things which are still calling for attention, and loudly. In many cases, I think, the 27s. 6d. full disability payment is not enough. The matter referred to by the last speaker is felt to be a real grievance—namely, where a man has been assessed by a medical board at 40 or 50 or 60 per cent., and the papers are sent on to Chelsea and quite a different assessment may be made out by people who did not see the man. It seems to the man a great hardship, after he has been assessed by a medical board that the assessment is not final.

There is the very general feeling, and I know it is difficult to combat and is a difficult question, that the arrangement which now exists may make it advisable for a man not to work, and that a man, if he be in receipt of a pension runs a risk if he accepts work of immediately having the pension cut down. I know there is a good deal to be said on the other side, and I realise the difficulty of the position. But it is a real grievance and it is a matter which exists in men's minds and is pre-

venting many of them from taking treatment, for instance, in sanatoria, to which the last speaker referred. Then there is the difficulty as to what is to happen with regard to training. I know that the present Minister has, fortunately for himself, devolved portion of the duties in respect of employment on the Labour Minister. But the difficulty is one which this House has got to face, and which arises under the Pensions Acts and is one which we cannot get away from. There was a point raised about widows, and that they should be put in a better position as compared with the case of the married woman with a separation allowance. I did not notice in many of the speeches stressing the position of the widows that any reference was made to alternative pensions. It is apparently very little known that a widow is entitled on a two-thirds basis to an alternative pension. I entirely endorse what has been said by a good many hon. Members, that at present one of the great difficulties is the general ignorance as to what people can claim under the Warrant, and are really entitled to. In no respect is this greater than with regard to alternative pensions. I think one of the difficulties about that is that it is a little elaborate in calculation, and I know a good many of the local war pensions committees do not seem to be fond of alternative pensions. Whether they find a difficulty of calculation or of information I do not know, but at any rate a good many of the local war pensions committees of which I have experience do not favour the alternative pension. There is then the great difficulty as to tuberculosis with the 35,000 or 40,000 men, so far as the figures can be ascertained, discharged from the Army and for whom there is at present no proper arrangement of residential colonies, which is I believe the solution we will have to come to. With regard to this, I understand the Committee is considering the best means of dealing with it. These are only some of the difficulties which are still in existence and of which this House is cognisant, and with which the Minister has got to deal. There has recently been set up a Select Committee, and I venture to hope that some of these difficulties will be laid before that Committee and dealt with in the Report. That Select Committee would afford an opportunity for Members to give chapter and verse, in a rather more definite way than is possible in a

discussion here, as to the difficulties which have arisen. The difficulties are there, and the House has got to find the solution. About that we are all agreed. I think the House may congratulate itself that we have had a Debate of this kind without acrimony, with information and a Debate from which I think nothing but good can result.

The MINISTER of PENSIONS (Sir Laming Worthington-Evans): I hope the House will allow me to reply now, because the discussion has covered a fairly wide ground, and unless I do so at this stage I can hardly hope to deal with the various points which have been made. Let me first say, I am extremely grateful to the House for the way in which this Motion has been handled. It has been handled with a real view of endeavouring to find means to help the discharged and disabled soldier, and I am glad there has been no attempt to make party capital out of it, but that there has been a real effort to bring to light places which want strengthening in the administration of the pensions. The Motion, of course, in terms condemns the present scale as inadequate, and in one sense no scale could be devised which would be adequate to recompense the men who have given such great service to the State and who have suffered in so doing. But this scale of pensions is not framed with a view to bringing monetary compensation for those great patriotic services rendered by the men; but what it is framed for is to give some compensation for the physical disability which has resulted from the services rendered by these men, and I want to emphasise the distinction that it is not a reward for their patriotic services, but it is a mere compensation, in part at least, for the physical damage which they have suffered.

Mr. A. DAVIES (Clitheroe): May I ask, as the right hon. Gentleman concedes that it is not an ample reward but a form of compensation, would he not agree that the compensation should equal any loss that may be sustained and incidental to the disability?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: If the hon. Member will allow me to proceed I will develop my speech in my own way. The compensation, as I observed, was intended to meet the disability which has arisen by injury suffered during the War. When hon. Members say that nothing can

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be too good and nothing can be too great for the men who have served us, I entirely agree. But when they bring cases before the House they, not unnaturally, bring cases where there seems to have been no compensation or compensation which is so slight that it does not fit in with the general desire of the House. Some of the cases which have been brought forward have shown considerable misapprehension of the actual provision of the Warrant and the actual scale, because some of them are quite clearly, if decisions have ever been given on them, wrong in accordance with the Warrant and the scale. My hon. Friend the Member for West-houghton (Mr. T. Wilson) at first complained that decisions differ, that a pension officer might give one decision in one case and a totally different decision in another case, and that widows would have one form of pension granted in one case and another form of pension in another, but the widows' scale, of course, is a fixed scale. It does not depend upon the degree of disability of the man or of the widow.

Mr. T. WILSON: I said the widows' scale was fixed.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: It is not a question of the discretion of an officer whether a widow shall have one rate of pension or another, and there is therefore some misapprehension.

Mr. WILSON: I said the widows' scale was fixed, but inadequate.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: The question of adequacy is another question altogether. In regard to the men, on the question of the amount of disablement, practically no two men are exactly alike, except where you get the loss of a limb, where you have a completely fixed scale, but as regards any other two men we have got to act upon the doctor's advice—that is what it comes to. We have got the medical boards, and there is a certain procedure for them, but the boards in the first instance say what degree of physical disability a would-be pensioner is suffering from, and of course the degree or disability differs in any two or three cases, and I quite understand that one case is given a 30 per cent. and another case a 50 per cent. pension. If I had to judge, or if the hon. Gentleman had to judge, without any evidence from the doctors at all, we should be wrong. We should very likely say: "They look both of them equally

disabled, and we will give them both 30 per cent. or 50 per cent."; but I can assure him that much more care is taken than that. The medical board examines the man and makes its report, and then, as the hon. Gentleman himself pointed out, and as another hon. Gentleman, the Member for Lambeth (Mr. Briant) pointed out, the decision of the medical board may be altered by someone who has never seen the pensioner. That is a very startling proposition. I remember that when I first discovered that, I looked into it carefully to see, first of all, what the results of these re-examinations were, and why they were necessary. Let me explain. It is said to be necessary in order that there should be uniformity in awarding pensions. With a great number of doctors all over the country, examining a great number of men, you may well find that one doctor would take different views of what another doctor would say was the same set of cases; and so, where there is an appearance of difference, highly skilled, highly trained medical officers at the centre in London do examine these awards, and in cases of necessity are entitled to alter them. Now what is the result of the alteration? The result in practice has been that in the majority of cases these awards have been increased by reason of the re-examination in London. But supposing in a case it is decreased, does the man necessarily suffer a hardship? He does not, because he can go to his local war pensions committee and say, "My pension is inadequate," and the local war pensions committee can refer him to a medical referee. If the medical referee says that the pension is inadequate, and instead of being 40 per cent. it ought to be 60 per cent., then the local war pensions committee is entitled immediately to make advances to that man on the 60 per cent. basis instead of on the 40 per cent. basis, and the referee's judgment is taken pending a further examination by another medical board.

We have got to rely very largely upon the medical evidence in these cases. Can you suggest a really fairer and more expeditious way of getting at the amount of the man's physical disability? He goes before a board, that board's decision is looked at carefully by experts, who are at it day by day, and all day long in London, and, if there is nothing apparently wrong, the first board stands; if, on the other hand, something does appear to be radically wrong, the amount may be increased,

and, as I say, in the majority of cases it is increased, but that, of course, denotes in some cases that it is reduced. Then if the man, when he gets his pension, is not satisfied with it, he is entitled to go to his local war pension committee, and get a medical referee, whereupon an advance can be made and another board held. I must say I have considered whether there ought to be any alteration in the method of revising or reconsidering the medical board's opinion in London, but so long as there is a completely decentralised system, I see no other way of carrying it out than the way now adopted.

Let me take the separated wife case. The case which the hon. Gentleman put was that of a husband on tramp for work since 1914, and who sent home money, sometimes a small amount—5s.—and sometimes a larger amount—£1—and yet when he joined up, and was killed in the War, his widow was not entitled to a pension. Is that the case?

Mr. T. WILSON indicated assent.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I wish my hon. Friend would give me that case, because that decision is wrong.

Mr. WILSON: It has been sent on twice.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: If the facts are as stated, the widow is entitled to a widow's pension. I am very glad the hon. Gentleman has raised the point, because it is just that sort of case which gets repeated from man to man and at the street-corner, and it does a lot of harm, because there is no one there who is able to say, "Give me that case. If those facts are right, then the widow is entitled to a pension. Come to the House of Commons with it, and we can deal with it." I am very much obliged to my hon. Friend for bringing it here.

Mr. WILSON: Assuming that a man has not contributed to the support of his wife at all for six months, and she has not got a separation order against him, what is her position?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: That is, of course, another matter. If a man has not recognised his wife, and has not been supporting his wife at all, that is a totally different matter. But that is not the case my hon. Friend put to me. If he has another case I will go into that, but I have to have the actual facts before I can say. Let me take the

question of the mother's pension. A great many hon. Members referred to the inadequacy of the mother's pension. They said—and quite truly—that great hardship arises where a son has gone to the War, perhaps during his apprenticeship, at a time when he had little or no money which could assist his mother, but with the hope and belief that in the future his mother would get some benefit for her sacrifice, and so forth, on his behalf. What are the facts? There is a flat pension of 5s. payable to any mother who applies for it in respect of the loss of a son, but the question of apprentices is in a different position—and I do not want to deal with their case in detail to-night. The other pension in excess of 5s. depends upon the dependence—that is to say, the mother can get up to 15s. a week provided she shows that she was dependent upon her son. The same rule applies in the case of apprentices. But in respect to that of sons, who are in work and living at home, if they have contributed to the mother to the extent of 15s. per week, she can get a 15s. pension. Note what it means, and let the House consider whether it is reasonable or adequate! The amount the mother receives from her son must always depend upon whether or not he is in work, and as to whether or not he is having other calls upon him to prevent that contribution to his mother's household. When he marries and goes forth into the world, it may be that he continues to make some allowance to his mother; but in the majority of cases that man goes forth and having a wife and home to maintain, and may be children, there is very little—or has been in the past at any rate—very little left out of his wages to contribute to his mother's household.

What does it mean? Instead of receiving some precarious contribution of the son, that contribution is turned into a permanent State pension for the rest of the mother's life. If she had depended upon her son, earning money, and not married, to the extent of 15s., this was something she might have enjoyed for, it might be, two or three years. Now it is turned into a permanent life pension of 15s. I do not in the least want to be ungrateful to the women of this country whose sons have been sacrificed. But I must ask hon. Members really to consider the difference between the contribution the son made and the

[Sir L. Worthington-Evans.] value of the life pension guaranteed by the State. Another case was given by my hon. Friend, that of a man suffering from tuberculosis. The man had gone into the Army, and the question was one that is known as a question of entitlement—whether the man's disability was due to his military service or aggravated by it. This question of entitlement to a pension is one of the most difficult questions with which we have to deal. Upon it depends not merely the amount of the pension, but whether the man is to have a pension at all. He may have a gratuity in various cases, but whether he is to have a pension at all is another point.

What has been done in that case is this—and I believe it is more satisfactory than the statutory right which my hon. Friend thinks is going to cure our difficulties. If a man is refused a pension on the ground that he is not entitled to it he can appeal to what is practically an independent tribunal. I say "practically" because nominally the presidents of these tribunals are appointed by me. I am no doubt responsible to the House for their decisions and for their actions. But what I have done is that I have appointed as president a gentleman who is a well known barrister, and who had had military service during the whole of the War. I accept his recommendations for the other chairmen of the rest of the tribunals. These tribunals are just as independent of being influenced by the Ministry of Pensions as if they were, in fact, set up by Act of Parliament. There are nine of those tribunals sitting now, and another will be sitting after Easter, and any man whose pension has been disallowed on the grounds I have stated is entitled to go before that tribunal, which perambulates the country and goes wherever it is required. It consists of one lawyer, a discharged sailor, a discharged soldier, and a medical assessor, and the decision of that tribunal is accepted by me as to whether a man is or is not entitled to a pension. That is not only a better security for the man than the so-called statutory right, but it is infinitely quicker, because the alternative would be that the man would have to find his remedy in the County Court, then the Divisional Court, and finally the Appeal Court, and thus you would have that paraphernalia of legal gentlemen instead of a tribunal such as I have described judging his claim. In my judg-

ment, the discharged man has a much better tribunal in this somewhat informal way than he would have with a statutory right.

There are several other points. The question of widows' pensions was raised by quite a number of hon. Members. I would like to say that not enough stress has been laid upon the fact that a widow can claim an alternative pension if her husband was earning 27s. 6d. a week or more. I do not think that is understood by hon. Members, because an hon. Member desired that the widow of a man earning £5 or more before the War should have her position brought up to the pre-war state. He seemed to think that the widow could only get 16s. 6d., which is 13s. 9d. with the 20 per cent. bonus if she was without children, but that is not the case at all. The present position is, in the case of the widow of a man who was earning £5 before the War, she need not take her 16s. 6d., even though she has no children, but she can take 50s. a week, which is the amount for her alternative pension.

Mr. CHARLES EDWARDS: The point I tried to make was of a man before the War earning 50s., and the present market value would be £5.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: That is the old question, whether £1 is worth £1, or whether it is worth only 10s. The hon. Member's argument left me under the impression that the widow he mentioned was not entitled to an alternative pension.

Mr. G. THORNE: Is this alternative pension largely granted?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: It is granted whenever application is made and it is due. I have no reason to believe that any difficulty is put in the way of getting this pension, but there are not enough of them granted. I believe the present number is about 15,000 for widows out of about 185,000 widows. I have had notice already sent to the widows who are entitled to know whether they should claim or should not claim, and since the question was asked about two days ago I have gone further into the matter, and given directions which I think now will prevent any widow from not having prominently brought before her the fact that in certain circumstances she is entitled to claim an alternative pension. It is my desire that it should be

recognised that that is nothing but the fixed, flat rate in the low wage cases, and that in the higher wage cases there is the alternative pension.

Mr. HARTSHORN: Could the right hon. Gentleman say what period is taken in order to ascertain the pre-war wage?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I am not quite sure what period it is. I rather think that it is the year.

Captain A. SMITH: Cases of hardship arise among large classes of people who have suffered through a depression of trade and whose earnings were, therefore, less than the normal rate. They are debarred from obtaining the alternative pension if their earnings were 6d. less than 27s. 6d.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I think that the principle of the alternative pension is a good one—we are agreed upon that—and if there is to be an alternative pension we have to take some period, pre-war, in order to ascertain what was the man's position in life. The year 1913 was not taken out of any desire to reduce it, and I do not think that the wages were lower in 1913 than in 1912 or 1911. I think that it is a fair sample year for the purpose of getting at the wage. Of course, when it is compared with war or present earnings then, having regard to the value of money, I agree that considerable discrepancies immediately appear. I am satisfied that the alternative pension is the right way to do it, but I am not satisfied that it is in its final form, and I hope that the Select Committee that has been appointed will go into this particular question of the scale of the widow's pension and the alternative pension. I know that there is a gap in it, but I think it could be made a perfectly fair instrument for the purpose. Let me remind the House that we are spending on the Estimates this year very nearly £73,000,000, and since the Estimates were in the pensions have been put up at least £3,000,000. I am hard at work on the Warrant—hon. Members may call it tinkering—trying to find places where it really wants what I call strengthening and supporting. Since January £2,100,000 has gone on the war bonus on the men's and widows' pensions, extending it from June to September next, a war bonus has been given on the pensions of officers and their dependants and on the alternative pensions, both of which were left out before, and funeral grants

have been increased from £5 to £7 10s. There was a deduction made for maintenance in institutions of 7s., instead of the actual cost, and that has been extended so that a man who cannot get into an institution, and has to go into a hospital, is treated in exactly the same way, no greater deduction than 7s. being made. Out-patient treatment has been extended in various cases, so that men have not to wait before the pension is fixed. Treatment in Ireland has been extended, underclothing has been provided for men undergoing treatment in institutions, and overcoats for those out-patients who need them. In regard to artificial limbs, officers have been put on the same footing as men; they are entitled to a second limb, and to have their artificial limb maintained. Thus about twelve strengthenings of the Warrant have been put in practice during the last three months at a cost of between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. When there are general proposals for an increase, I think the House would be wise to consider in what parts the Warrant wants patching most before they pledge themselves to any very large general increase.

Does the House realise, even now, what some of the disabled men are drawing in one form or another? It has been said over and over again to-night that 27s. 6d. is the total amount paid to disabled men. Let me give the House a case which is not a common or even an average case, but an extreme case. Just as, at one end of the scale, 27s. 6d. is an extreme case; so is this other case extreme at the other end. It is the case of a paralysed man in hospital. Assume he has three children. His wife, children, and himself will get £3 3s. a week. He is charged 7s. per week for his treatment in hospital, but that treatment costs the State up to £4 14s. 6d. per week, so that the actual cost to the State of that man for treatment, pension, and allowances to wife and children may amount to £7 10s. That is an extreme case. But do not let it be said that we do not give more than 27s. 6d.; that is the amount given at the very lowest end of the scale, and very few get it. Next let me take the case of a blind case out of hospital—a man with three children. He gets £3 12s. a week, and, in addition, whatever he earns—in some cases, very fortunately for themselves and for the State, men are able to earn considerable sums. Their earnings are, of course, not taken into account.

[Sir L. Worthington-Evans.]

I think I had better now deal with the specific points raised by the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. G. Thorne) with regard to administration. Let me say at once that there are, of course, in a great office, such as the Pensions Ministry, delays of which justifiable complaint can from time to time be made. But in my contact with Members of the House, I have found they realise that there must be such delays in some cases, and I thank them for their kindly consideration in those cases. We are trying to reciprocate and see that justice is done. But there are some such cases. The cause has been the constant inrush of work and the constantly increasing rush of work, culminating in the demobilisation cases. That is bringing us in, in Z cases alone, 30,000 new claims for pensions per week. I am glad to say that we are now level. With our present machinery we can deal with 32,000 Z claims a week as they come along. There has been some delay. One hon. Member said that there had been as much as twelve weeks' delay. If that was so, it was either a very exceptional case or I am not going to take the whole of the burden. We all know that the congestion of demobilisation has necessarily affected record offices as well as the Pensions Ministry. I will say this, however, that the War Office have done their best with regard to record offices, and have improved the pace of the record offices immensely during the last three or four weeks. Although there may be some inevitable delay in Z cases, there has been no scandal in regard to those cases. If the men do not get the pension on the exact day they ought to get it, they can go to the local war pensions committee, and an advance can be made pending the grant of a pension. Hon. Members might like to know that we have had 220,000 claims from Z discharged men. That works out roughly at 11 per cent. of claims in respect of men who have been demobilised since the Armistice. I am not talking of the cases that came from hospital, but of cases that came through dispersal centres—that is, men who were demobilised after the Armistice.

The hon. Member for East Wolverhampton asked me whether there would be greater simplicity by decentralisation. He said what I often said from the other side of the House about the Insurance Regulations. The hon. Gentleman said that we had some 14,000 Regulations. I do not

think we are really so guilty as that. I am sure we have a good many Regulations. I am quite certain that it is necessary to have a great many, but I am having them overhauled now, with a view to seeing whether we cannot consolidate and index them, so that they can be more readily referred to by that noble army of volunteers the War Pensions Committees, who have to try to understand them. I believe we shall get the greatest simplicity, because we shall bring the machine nearer to the ultimate object of the Ministry—namely, the man. He will have the local war pensions committee in his neighbourhood, and the local war pensions committee will have an administrative centre which can give final decisions on administrative matters within telephoning distance or within an hour or an hour and a half by railway. In that way we shall get greater simplicity and greater celerity. The hon. Gentleman said that in one case there had been ten weeks' delay. If there was that delay it was either an exceptional case or it was not altogether the fault of the Ministry of Pensions. We are in these cases well ahead of our work. Even in that case the man should not have been ten weeks without assistance. All he had to do was to go to the local war pensions committee, who would have referred him immediately to a medical referee, and if the medical referee said he was suffering from anything which was due to his service he would immediately have got an advance to the amount the medical referee had certified. There was no need for that man to have waited, even if he did not get his pension.

Mr. G. THORNE: He will not have to wait now?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: No, he certainly will not. My hon. Friend said there was great delay in the case of widows. I am very surprised at that and shall be glad if he will give me any cases. Widows are entitled to draw separation allowance for six months, and so far as I know the flat-rate pension is easily obtainable within the six months. If she has applied for the alternative pension it may be delayed longer, because that depends when it started. It might be that evidence had to come from India or evidence of pre-war income had to come from South America, and you will always get cases of that sort which are prolonged. There has been some delay with widows' pensions, but that is well in hand. On entitlement

cases my hon. Friend said widows should be allowed a right of appeal. They are. Wherever a question arises of whether a man was entitled to a pension for incapacity due to or aggravated by service, wherever that question is the foundation of a dispute between a man or a widow and the Ministry the question of fact can go before the Appeal Tribunal. The Appeal Tribunals are doing excellent work, and I have had no complaints of the conduct of their work. I have had lots of complaints of delay in getting to the tribunal, and that I do not defend, but it will not occur again. After the next two or three months we shall be right on top of the work, but till then there will be delays from the appeals. We have about 3,000 awaiting hearing, and it will take time to get them over, but as soon as we have got them over there will be very little delay in a man being able to bring his case right through to the Appeal Tribunal. I believe that will cause greater content to the disabled man when he knows, and I hope it will be made known, that he has got that right, and that those who are judging him are of his own people, discharged soldiers and sailors and a lawyer, and that it is upon their decision alone that the final conclusions are come to, whether that man is or is not entitled to a pension. Then the hon. Gentleman asked what is military service. I think that is the question in another form, and whether a man is entitled to a pension after it is dismissed on the ground that his disability was not due to service. That, again, is a question that can be appealed.

With regard to decentralisation, I do not want to say too much about it until it has got further under way, but the Cabinet has approved of the setting up of thirteen Regulations, which will be self contained on administrative matters. Of course, policy must remain at the centre. The House of Commons must keep its hand or its Minister who is dealing with policy, but all administrative matters will be dealt with locally, and I believe not only shall we strengthen the war pensions committee but we shall obtain much quicker action and much more uniform action than we have been able to do in the past. I believe it is by obtaining the advice and assistance of the local people who have hitherto worked upon war pensions committees, so that they shall form an advisory body for the regional director that we shall keep in the locality in touch

with the machine, and so save a great many of the complaints which are not unnaturally heard when pensions are discussed in the House of Commons.

An HON. MEMBER: The right hon. Gentleman has not dealt with the question as to the date of the commencement of the mothers' pensions.

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS: I will consider that point if my hon. Friend raises it.

Sir J. BUTCHER: I think the House will have listened with interest to the comprehensive speech of the Minister of Pensions. He said he was glad this Debate had taken place, and I think that satisfaction was expressed by many hon. Members. As one of the members of the newly formed Select Committee, I think this Debate will be very helpful to us, because it indicates some of the points to which our attention must necessarily be called. I need hardly say—and I think I speak for my colleagues as well as myself—that there will be every desire on our part to meet the objections raised as soon as possible. The Minister also said that he welcomed the real effort made in this Debate on the part of Members to bring up real and legitimate grievances, apart from any party feeling or any desire to attack the weak parts of the system. I think we may say of the Minister that we welcome in him a real effort to remove these grievances. Those who have watched him since he entered upon this exceedingly difficult office has realised that his efforts have been directed towards strengthening the weak points in the pension scheme and towards remedying the delay which is the cause of great distress to persons entitled to pensions, and great distress to the Members whose attention has been called to these matters. Very sad and unfortunate cases have been brought to their notice. I am glad that these cases will be brought to an end, and are being brought to an end. There is another point in the Minister's speech which will be received with great satisfaction, and that is the announcement that he is going to simplify the regulations. There are few Members who know the regulations or understand them. I hope we shall have a chance of getting to understand them, of getting them into a form in which not only we, but the persons who are directly interested—the persons entitled to pensions—can understand them. I

[Sir J. Butcher.]

gathered that more effective attempts are to be made to bring to the notice of those entitled what their real rights are. He said he was bringing to the notice of the widows their rights to alternative pensions. These alternative pensions, I am glad to know, are being revised, and the right hon. Gentleman has told us that we have not reached the final stage yet.

Mr. T. WILSON: After sympathetic remarks of the Minister of Pensions, and in view of the fact that regional tribunals are being set up, I beg leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CRIMINAL INJURIES (IRELAND)

BILL.

Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

ESCAPE OF THE "GOEBEN."

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

Commander BELLAIRS: From time to time hon. Members of this House during the last four years have endeavoured to get information from the Admiralty as to the escape of the "Goeben." We have endeavoured to get the proceedings of the court-martial on Admiral Troubridge. We have failed. I draw a sharp distinction between the position when we were at war and the position since the Armistice. While we were at war the Admiralty were entitled to plead that the interests of the State prevented them from disclosing the information. They can no longer plead that now. I have asked five or six times for these records and failed to obtain them. Briefly, these are the facts. When war broke out, on 4th August, 1914, the "Goeben" was at Messina. A great French fleet was in readiness to defend the French transports, and their Admiralty offered four of their cruisers to the British Admiralty, to be used for offensive purposes. Under the British admiral there were three great battle cruisers. There were four armoured cruisers under Admiral Troubridge and four light cruisers and twelve destroyers capable of attacking the "Goeben" at night. Under

Admiralty orders I submit—the fact has never been revealed—the three great battle cruisers, each of which was capable of attacking the "Goeben," were placed in line of battle from Bizetta to Sardinia, 200 or 300 miles away from the "Goeben" at Messina. The distribution could have been changed, but two of the battle cruisers had chased the "Goeben" into Messina on 4th August and were then ordered away by Admiralty orders.

As far as I understand the matter, on 5th August, at four o'clock, it was known that the "Goeben" was at anchor in Messina, and the "Gloucester" reported her leaving at six o'clock next day. Therefore, in the twenty-six hours it was quite possible for the War staff of the Admiralty, knowing that the French Admiralty did not want these vessels of the line of patrol to protect the French transports, to have proceeded to blockade the "Goeben" in Messina, because they were only 200 miles away, and were capable of 23 or 24 knots. Now I come to the four armoured cruisers under Admiral Troubridge. Their conduct was entirely governed by what transpired at the court-martial, that they were acting under the Admiralty order. The Admiralty order was to this effect. It was of importance that the strength of the Mediterranean Fleet should not be reduced in the early stages of the War, and they were to avoid being brought to battle by a superior force of the enemy. That is an imperative order—not a mere instruction. The question arises whether the "Goeben" was a superior force within the meaning of those words. Had they met her in narrow waters she would not necessarily be a superior force. If Admiral Troubridge's force had met her at sea she might undoubtedly be considered a superior force. She had a 28-knot speed, as against the 20-knot speed of the four armoured cruisers. Her 11-inch guns had a range of 28,000 yards, while the ships of Admiral Troubridge had a range of 14,000 or 15,000 yards. With her 28-knot speed, so far as I can work it out, she could have steamed round Admiral Troubridge's squadron, kept at 16,000 yards range, and finished them off one by one. Consequently, if Admiral Troubridge was bound to meet the "Goeben" at sea by daylight in the open sea, carrying out the Admiralty orders, he was bound to regard the "Goeben" as a superior force.

I now come to the twelve destroyers. They were capable of attacking the "Goeben" at night, but they were suffering from the fatal disability that no colliers had been provided for coaling them and they were short of coal, and therefore unable to attack. That is an act for which the Admiralty were responsible. So we see that in all three cases, the battle-cruisers, Admiral Troubridge's Squadron and the destroyers, the Admiralty were responsible. When I say "the Admiralty," I do not quite know what interpretation is to be put upon "the Admiralty"—whether it was the Board, or whether it was the War Staff, or whether it was the First Lord acting with the First Sea Lord. I know that when the Dardanelles decisions were taken it transpired before the Dardanelles Committee that three of the Sea Lords had protested that they were never consulted on any single occasion with regard to the Dardanelles operations and, of course, the same thing may have happened in this case, and so I am not saying who exactly was responsible. But this I do say, that, in all War Staff work, orders are now sent to subordinates at distant stations because the best judge of what has to be done considers the orders. But in this particular case the British Admiral was acting under orders and this fact has never been revealed. Although it is of importance that justice should be done to individuals. I attach far greater importance to knowing the correct war doctrines in this country both for the public and the Navy, and that is why I think it is of importance that we should get all the facts in regard to this episode of Naval War in order that we should get the war doctrine both for the Navy and the public. The Navy has never had revealed to it any of these episodes of the War which have been investigated by courts-martial, and therefore all the lessons of them have been missed by the Navy as well as the public. There is also this in regard to the Admiralty. The late Lord Randolph Churchill, when he sent in his Report in connection with the "Hartington" in 1886, said with perfect truth:

"To a naval or military officer professional reputation is everything next to life itself and the loss of it means professional ruin."

If these distinguished Admirals were acting under orders issued from the Admiralty I think it reflects very badly on the Board of Admiralty that during the

last four years they have concealed this fact from the public and therefore injured the reputation of distinguished officers. The Admiralty's answer to me as far as I can make out is that they have no intention of revealing the finding of the Troubridge Court-martial. I think the Admiralty are acting illegally in that way. Courts-martial derive all their authority from our common law. Their method of procedure is based on our common law. The Admiralty Regulations say they shall be held in public, and the Order in Council, which enabled you to hold them in secret, as the Admiralty themselves have acknowledged, was only passed in the year 1916. The court-martial on Admiral Troubridge was in November, 1914. Therefore, a member of the public who gets hold of any of the proceedings of the Troubridge court-martial is fully entitled to reveal them and to use them as he thinks fit, now that the war is over, because you were bound to hold that court-martial in public, and I will not be violating any confidential document if I make use of these proceedings. Courts-martial are subject to revision by this House, and you will find that that was emphatically asserted in Parliamentary Debates in the year 1810, and Adey's work on court-martial says: "It is affirmed that the House of Commons is a Court of last resort." The Admiralty have deprived the House of Commons of an immemorial right by depriving it of all knowledge of this court-martial. It was the only court-martial which we held in the ten months of office of the present Secretary of State for War as First Lord of the Admiralty in regard to any naval miscarriage, and it was only held because Admiral Troubridge insisted on his honour being vindicated by being tried by his peers. He was tried by four Admirals and a number of Captains, the President of the Court being that very distinguished officer, Admiral Sir George Egerton. That Court entirely vindicated Admiral Troubridge. As regards the finding of the Court, that finding has been offered to me from several quarters, but I prefer to use the finding which was sent to me anonymously. I therefore do not involve any naval officer. The charge was failing to pursue the fleeing enemy. There were thirteen different paragraphs, and I will only read those which I consider have an important bearing on the escape of the "Goeben."

"The accused . . . was informed that should we become engaged in war, it will be important at first to husband the naval force in the

[Commander Bellairs.]

Mediterranean and in the earlier stages to avoid being brought to action against superior forces.'

He was also informed that "Goeben" must be shadowed by two battle-cruisers. Approach of the Adriatic must be watched by cruisers and destroyers. It is believed that Italy will remain neutral, but you cannot count absolutely on this.'

(6) That on 5th August, at 0.30 p.m., the accused received news that the Austrian Fleet was cruising outside Pola, and at 4 p.m. that 'Goeben' was at Messina.

(7) That at 6 p.m. on 6th August the accused received news that 'Goeben' had left Messina, steering East, shadowed by 'Gloucester.' That after then 'Goeben,' and possibly 'Breslau,' were steaming N. 50 E. towards Adriatic. The accused's action in proposing to arrive at Faro Island at daylight was justified.

(8) That at 11 p.m. on 6th August the accused was informed by 'Gloucester' that 'Goeben' was going to S.E.; that at the time his position was N. 86 E. 145' from 'Goeben' approximately. That at that time the battle-cruisers were disposed as follows: 'Inflexible' (flag) and 'Indefatigable' about thirty miles West of Marsala, Sicily, and 'Indomitable' had left for Bizerta at 8 p.m., and after coaling, steering eastward. That destroyers were at Valissa Bay seriously short of coal, and unable . . . to proceed at high speed to attack 'Goeben' at night.

(9) That it . . . appears the accused would get no support from the First Cruiser Squadron, and that from their position it was impossible for him to attack 'Goeben' before daylight.

(10) That in view of the instructions received the accused was justified in considering he must not abandon his watch on the Adriatic, having regard to the transportation of French troops between Algeria and France and the possibility of the Austrian Fleet coming out.

(11) That in view of the instructions received from the Admiralty by the Commander-in-Chief and repeated by him in his sailing orders to the accused, and also signal made on 4th August, viz., First Cruiser Squadron and 'Gloucester' are not to get seriously engaged with superior force, the Court are of opinion that under the particular circumstances of weather, time and position, the accused was justified in considering the 'Goeben' was a superior force to the First Cruiser Squadron at the time they would have met, viz., 6 a.m. on 7th August in full daylight on the open sea

(13) The Court . . . finds that the charge against the accused is not proved, and fully and honourably acquits him of the same."

I cannot conceive what reasons the Admiralty have for not disclosing that finding to the public and the House, except to prevent the public from knowing the bad arrangements they made at the outset of the War. That is the only explanation I can give. When the Prime Minister came into office he said that frankness was the beginning of all wise action. But we have never had frankness from the Admiralty. I do hope that under my right hon. Friend, who

is no way responsible for the past, we will get frankness in regard to all naval episodes of this War. We want it, as I have said, in order to get a correct body of doctrine formed in regard to the War generally, and we cannot hope to get a properly conducted War Staff, with public support for it, unless my hon. Friend will supply all the material for discussion. For four and a half years the Admiralty have used their Orders in Council to keep the secret in regard to the escape of the "Goeben," and the result has been anything but good for the Navy. The escape of the "Goeben" is of immense importance, because it led, I contend, to nearly all our disasters. It brought Turkey into the War, and subsequently Bulgaria, caused Greece to hesitate, and anybody can tell you how great was the influence which it exercised on the fortunes of this War. With regard to the Secretary of State for War, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, he seems to have been singularly unfortunate all along in his dealing with Turkey both in word and deed. I remember the day when he referred to Enver Bey as the Garibaldi of the Turkish Revolution. He has turned out to be probably one of the biggest scoundrels and cut-throats of this War, but in all the miserable story of Enver Bey in this War I contend there was nothing so big with fate as the orders issued by the Admiralty which opened the door wide for the escape of the "Goeben" from Messina to the Golden Horn. I do ask the First Lord of the Admiralty in his reply to take the responsibility on the Admiralty which has been largely shared between the two British Admirals in command on the Mediterranean Station in 1914.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. Long): I want at once to repudiate quite simply and without heat, and quite as plainly as Parliamentary custom permits, the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman that the action of my predecessors was due to any desire on their part to save their skins. I suppose there is no member of the present Government, or of the Government in 1914, with whom I personally was more often in conflict in this House or on the platform than the present Secretary of State for War. The real meaning of the hon. and gallant Gentleman was in the postscript of his speech, when he told us that what he really wanted was to bring home to the present Secretary for War the responsi-

bility for the action taken by the Board of Admiralty in 1914. I am not going to follow my hon. and gallant Friend into the actual history of the incidents of the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" and the failure to deal with these ships. I only propose to remind the House that the action of Admiral Troubridge was followed by a court-martial, which acquitted him of the charges brought against him. The action of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Berkeley Milne, was inquired into by the Board of Admiralty. The full and satisfactory statement which the Department issued as the result of the inquiry has been reissued since I have represented the Board. My hon. and gallant Friend made two statements which I at once contest. He stated that the Financial Secretary, in answering questions, said the Board of Admiralty had said they had no intention of revealing the proceedings of the court-martial. My right hon. Friend never said anything of the kind, or have the Board of Admiralty, since I have been responsible as First Lord, nor in the time of my predecessor, had said they never intended to publish these documents or some of them.

Commander BELLAIRS: May I—

Mr. LONG: I am afraid I cannot give way. My hon. and gallant Friend has chosen to raise this question when there is only half an hour, and he has himself occupied twenty minutes. Therefore he will forgive me if I do not give way to him. I have investigated the answers given by my right hon. Friend, and he confirms what I say, that the Board of Admiralty have never confined themselves to an absolute refusal to produce this information. Then I contest what he said regarding our action in respect to the Troubridge court-martial. He may have some reasons for his statements, but I contest them. He told us that the House of Commons is the great Court of Inquisition, and has a right to revise courts-martial. Of course everybody turns to the House of Commons as the last Court of Inquisition. Of course we have a right to investigate anything that any Member chooses to raise, and for which he can secure the attention of the House. But my right hon. and gallant Friend does not suggest that after a court-martial has been dealt with, all its complicated procedure that this House should review and revise, the decision. The most intelligent

Member of the House has been unable to devise a plan that would enable us to do that and to do our other work. Just think what it would mean! It would mean that thousands of courts-martial could be reviewed by this House, because some Member took exception to their findings. Of course, we have the power, but that does not alter the fact that the action of the Board of Admiralty at that time in regard to the court-martial on Admiral Troubridge was taken in what they believed to be the highest interests of the State. My hon. and gallant Friend said, and said quite truly, that I have no personal responsibility for what was done by the Board of Admiralty in 1914, and, as a matter of fact, there is not to-day on the Board of Admiralty one single member, except the right hon. Gentleman near me (Dr. Macnamara), who was a member of the Board in those days. Therefore, to suggest that we are keeping salient facts back in order to save the reputation of Boards of Admiralty is really a suggestion which I think ought not to be made. I will not put it any higher than that, of course, my hon. and gallant Friend is perfectly entitled to take the lowest view of civilian Members of this House who become Members of a Government. I have been long enough a Member of the House to know that if a man has got any character and any reputation and wants to lose them he cannot do better than become a Member of the Government. Therefore, I do not make the slightest complaint if my hon. and gallant Friend suggests that I and my predecessors—I am the fifth First Lord of the Admiralty since the War began—have entered into this conspiracy to protect our own and our friends' characters by concealing these salient facts. He forgot this fact: There are naval members on the Board. Are they included in this charge? My hon. and gallant Friend admitted that I have no personal responsibility, but I am sorry that the time at my disposal does not allow me to go more closely into this case. I will say why I, as the representative of the Board, in agreement with my colleagues, decline to publish the proceedings of this court-martial. The hon. and gallant Gentleman said that the Navy had suffered because this report had been suppressed. I am perfectly certain he does not speak for His Majesty's Navy when he makes that statement. What does my hon. and gallant Friend want? That the experiences

[Mr. Long.]

of this War on sea and land shall be used for the benefit of the Navies of the future and for the future strength of this Empire? That is an absolutely just and reasonable contention, and it is an attitude which the Admiralty intend to meet. I have read the proceedings of this court-martial, and I say without fear of hesitation that the reason why information is not published at this moment is not due to any desire on my part or on the part of the present Board of Admiralty to protect anybody, either naval officer or civilian. I will also say, having read it, as I have done, from a detached point of view, and having no responsibility, that to publish this report or anything like it, or to publish in detail statements of this kind, which are historical facts, without publishing a great deal more than is at present available, would be to run the gravest risk of doing injury to gallant men who ought not to be injured and who will not be injured if you can publish the proceedings of this court-martial and other information which is of vital importance if we are to be able to form our conclusions in future.

I have no time to say more. I honestly regret that my hon. and gallant Friend

should repeatedly suggest in this House that the non-publication of this court-martial is due to some bad influence in the Board of Admiralty. I can assure him there is nothing of the kind. I am sure he will accept that statement that I am not given to making assertions which are not absolutely true and to be relied upon. I have come to the case with an absolutely open mind. If I thought the production of this report would be advantageous to the country I would assent to its publication immediately. My reason for adhering to the decision already announced is the one I have given, namely, that it would be impossible to do this without running risk to gallant men through misconception. Until the right time comes for giving these facts I should not be fit for my place if I did not claim the right to decide when publication should be made and what shall be published.

It being half-past Eleven of the clock, Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER adjourned the House, without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at Half after Eleven o'clock.

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