

Volume 322
No. 88



Monday
12th Apr., 1937

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORT

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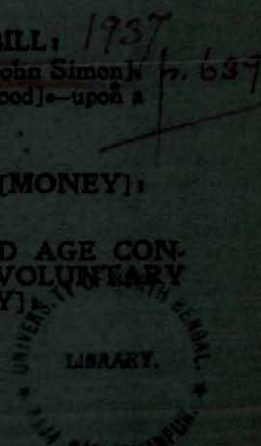
Resolution reported, and agreed to.

LONDON:

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Ref. 328.4202

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 12th April, 1937.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

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

MEMBER SWORN.

A Member took and subscribed the Oath.

NEW WRITS.

For Borough of Birmingham (West Birmingham Division), in the room of right hon. Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain, K.G., deceased.

For County of Chester (Stalybridge and Hyde Division), in the room of Philip Dunne, Esquire (Chiltern Hundreds).

For Borough of Wandsworth (Central Division), in the room of Sir Henry Jackson, Baronet, deceased.—[*Captain Margesson.*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

London and North Eastern Railway Bill,
London Midland and Scottish Railway Bill,

Southern Railway Bill,

Read the Third time, and passed.

London Passenger Transport Board Bill (by Order),

Consideration, as amended, deferred till To-morrow.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

INDIA.

BRITISH TROOPS (RATIONS).

1 and 2. **Captain Macnamara** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India (1) whether four meals a day will now be given to soldiers in India;

(2) whether soldiers in India still pay money out of their own pockets in order that they may be provided with three meals a day?

The Under-Secretary of State for India (Mr. Butler): I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the answer I gave him on 9th November last in regard to the present position. As regards the future, it has been accepted in principle that the decision of His Majesty's Government that the State should bear the cost of a fourth meal for the soldier shall be applicable to British troops on the Indian Establishment. The exact method of giving effect to this decision under Indian conditions will be announced shortly.

Mr. George Griffiths: Is it a fact that there are soldiers in India with 3½ years service, who have not any salary at all because they have been buying their own "chow"?

Mr. Butler: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Griffiths: I got a letter to-day to that effect.

COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA.

3. **Captain Ramsay** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that a number of free courses at universities in Moscow have been given to Indian students on the understanding that they return to India as Communist missionaries; and how many of these students have returned to India during the last 10 years?

Mr. Butler: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, I am unable to give exact figures, but I understand that between 40 and 50 of these students have returned within the last two years. The number who returned during the previous eight years was very small.

Captain Ramsay: Are students still going to Moscow and taking part in these courses; and if so, is the hon. Gentleman taking steps to make it clear that His Majesty's Government in India do not appreciate this procedure?

Mr. Butler: The majority of these students have been traced by the authorities since their return. Some have been arrested and others kept under strict

[Mr. Butler.] surveillance. As regards making representations, I do not think at the present time any useful purpose would be served by doing so.

Mr. Paling: Has not Tory propaganda been going on in India for generations; and why be so squeamish in this case?

Mr. Butler: I sincerely hope there has been such propaganda.

Major-General Sir Alfred Knox: Is this action by the Soviet Government to be considered a friendly action?

Mr. Gallacher: Why are these people being arrested?

Mr. Butler: They have not been treated in a friendly manner on their return, and the Government do not approve of the propaganda in which they indulge.

FEDERAL CONSTITUTION.

4. **Sir Nairne Stewart Sandeman** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India when the replies of the Indian States in respect of accession to the proposed federation are expected?

Mr. Butler: As a preliminary to the initiation of negotiations for accession to the Federation the States have been asked to specify any limitations on the exercise of the legislative and executive authority of the Federation to which, if they should decide at a later stage to execute an Instrument of Accession, they would wish their accession to be subject. Their replies are now being received and studied along with the report referred to in my reply to the hon. Member for East Birkenhead (Mr. Graham White) on 15th March.

Sir N. Stewart Sandeman: When does the hon. Gentleman expect a statement to be made?

Mr. Butler: The Secretary of State expects to hear shortly from the Government of India as to any points of difficulty which have emerged from the discussions with the States, on which his decision is needed.

BUDGET.

5. **Sir N. Stewart Sandeman** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the deficit in the Indian Budget of 1937-38, he contemplates making any suggestions to the Government of India on this matter?

Mr. Butler: I think that my hon. and gallant Friend must be under a misapprehension since the Indian Budget for 1937-38 provides for a small surplus.

POLITICAL SITUATION.

6. **Mr. David Grenfell** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether any further developments have taken place in the situation in India; and whether any communication has passed between the Provincial Governors and the Secretary of State regarding the political deadlock which has arisen?

Mr. Butler: I have no further developments to report in the political situation.

Mr. Grenfell: Are the Government taking note of the declarations of Mr. Gandhi, and especially the offer which is published in the Press to-day?

Mr. Butler: Yes, Sir; the Government are taking this into consideration.

BOOKS (SEIZURE).

7. **Miss Rathbone** asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Indian students educated in England, and others, have had their books, including sometimes books used as text books for university examinations, confiscated by the Customs officers on their return to India; what is the authorised practice in this matter; and with whom the decision rests as to what books shall be excluded from circulation in India?

Mr. Butler: I presume that the hon. Lady is referring to the search of the baggage of an Indian student by the Bombay Customs of 14th January last. Fifty-two books were seized; 41 of these were Communist books proscribed under the general notification banning such literature and five others were copies of a publication specifically prohibited under the Sea Customs Act. I am informed that none of the seized books can properly be regarded as text books. The decision for excluding books from India rests with the Central Government and Customs officers are authorised to seize books whose entry into India is prohibited.

Miss Rathbone: Are we to understand then that the instance referred to by the Under-Secretary is the only instance of the kind and that there is no justification

for, the complaint that this has been done in the case of accepted university text books?

Mr. Butler: Communist literature has been seized in the past, but not what are commonly regarded as university text books.

Mr. J. J. Davidson: Were any of the books confiscated written by ex-Socialists who now adorn the Government Front Bench?

Mr. Gallacher: Can the Minister submit to the House a list of the names that are "on the index" as far as India is concerned, so that Members may understand what is taking place?

Mr. Butler: I should be glad to look into any case which arises, and also to send the hon. Gentleman an idea of the books which we have in mind, though no doubt they are quite familiar to him.

ABYSSINIA.

8. **Sir Nicholas Grattan-Doyle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is in a position to make a statement respecting the expulsion from Abyssinia of the British-Indian firm of Mohammed Ali?

13. **Lieut.-Commander Fletcher** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any inquiries are being made by His Majesty's Government as to why the Abyssinian branches of the firm of Mohammed Ali have been closed down by order of the Italian Government; and what reasons have been given for this action?

15. **Mr. Graham White** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the compulsory closing down of the firm of Mohammed Ali in Abyssinia on the alleged ground that this firm had been employed by the British secret service; and whether he can make any statement on this matter?

Mr. Arthur Henderson: On a point of Order. Before these questions are answered, may I ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, whether there is any special reason why the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is not in his place, in view of the fact that there are 28 questions

on the Order Paper addressed to his Department?

Mr. Speaker: That, of course, is not a question for me to answer.

Mr. Shinwell: May I say whether the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, as Deputy-Leader of the House, will reply to the question of my hon. Friend?

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Viscount Cranborne): I should explain that my right hon. Friend has a very important engagement in the North of England. Otherwise, he would certainly be here.

On 6th March Messrs Mohammed Ali were ordered by the Italian authorities in Addis Ababa to close their premises and cease from all form of commercial activity. A similar order, coupled with an intimation that the firm were being expelled and that their employes must leave the country, was given a week or so later to the branches at Harrar, Direwawa, Jijiga and Jimma. Representations have been made by the Acting British Consul-General at Addis Ababa and, on instructions by His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome, with a view to ascertaining the reason for the action of the Italian authorities and to securing an extension of the period within which the firm had been summoned to leave Abyssinia. The firm, who during the past year have been suffering severely from the effect of the Italian exchange restrictions in Abyssinia, had for some time been contemplating entering into partnership with Italian interests. The representations as to the time limit have already, I am glad to say, resulted in an extension being granted; but this extension cannot be regarded as adequate, and His Majesty's Government are making further representations to ensure that the firm are in fact given a reasonable time in which to arrange their affairs. The result of these representations is awaited. I can state at once that there is no foundation whatever for any suggestion that the firm, or any members of it, have been employed for intelligence purposes by His Majesty's Government.

Mr. T. Williams: In view of the revelations contained in the book written by General De Bono, did not His Majesty's Government anticipate such action as the one embodied in this question, and have

[Mr. Williams.]

the Government any statement to make either accepting the statements of General De Bono as a fact or denying them?

Viscount Cranborne: Perhaps the hon. Member will put that question down.

Mr. A. V. Alexander: Is it not time, in view of the revelations now appearing in cold print in Italy, that His Majesty's Government ceased its policy of vacillation and running away from Mussolini?

Mr. H. G. Williams: And have a war?

Viscount Cranborne: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstands me. I am quite ready to answer the question asked, but it does not arise on this question. Perhaps he will put it down.

Sir Archibald Sinclair: When the Noble Lord says that the Government are asking for reasonable time for this firm to arrange its affairs, does he mean that the Government acquiesce in the expulsion of this firm?

Viscount Cranborne: The right hon. Gentleman might await the answer which we are now awaiting from Rome and which we are expecting at any moment. The Government do not regard the situation as satisfactory; they regard it as most unsatisfactory.

Mr. Shinwell: Do we understand that His Majesty's Government will not in any circumstances tolerate the removal of any British firm from Abyssinia?

Hon. Members: Answer!

14. **Lieut.-Commander Fletcher** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received any information concerning the circumstances under which three sons of His Excellency the Ethiopian representative in London were recently executed in Addis Ababa by order of the Italian authorities there, and particularly if any form of trial took place prior to the executions?

Viscount Cranborne: The report received on this subject stated that the two younger sons of Dr. Martin had been arrested and subsequently executed, but contained no further details.

Mr. Shinwell: Can the Noble Lord say whether the British Consul-General in Addis Ababa protested against these executions?

Hon. Members: Answer!

Mr. Shinwell: Is there any special reason why the Noble Lord is unable to say whether our representative on the spot made any comment on these executions?

Viscount Cranborne: There is no reason except that it is not the same question. If the hon. Member will put it down, I will see whether I can answer it.

Mr. T. Williams: Can the Noble Lord say whether His Majesty's Government approve of these executions?

Viscount Cranborne: No. I think that nobody in this country approves of the executions, and my right hon. Friend has already sent an expression of his deep sympathy to Dr. Martin.

Commander Locker-Lampson: Is there any chance of compensation?

Lieut.-Commander Fletcher: Will the Noble Lord specifically call for a report whether any trial took place before these executions were carried out?

Viscount Cranborne: I will certainly consider that, but I would point out to the hon. and gallant Member that the circumstances are so abnormal that it is very difficult to get accurate information.

Sir Percy Harris: Does the Noble Lord realise that the public conscience of this country is thoroughly shocked?

30. **Mr. A. Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware of the recent expulsion from Abyssinia of six British missionaries; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

35. **Commander Locker-Lampson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the expulsion of English missionaries from Abyssinia; and what steps will be taken in the matter?

Viscount Cranborne: As soon as His Majesty's Consul-General in Addis Ababa heard that certain British missionaries had been ordered to leave the country, he took the matter up with the local authorities and asked for an extension of the time limit. At the same time, His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome made representations to the Italian Government, inquiring the reasons for expulsion. The missionaries had already left Addis

Ababa before a reply had been received. His Majesty's Ambassador has, however, since, on instructions, made further strong representations as to the treatment accorded to these missionaries, a reply to which is expected shortly.

Mr. Bellenger: Are the Government prepared to acquiesce in this *fait accompli*?

Viscount Cranborne: I have already said that the Government regard the situation as most unsatisfactory, but we had better await the reply of the Italian Government.

Mr. Alexander: If the Government have not recognised the Italian occupation of Abyssinia, are they going to accept the expulsion of British citizens?

Viscount Cranborne: We had better await the answer of the Italian Government.

Mr. Macquisten: Is not the Italian occupation of Abyssinia a fact?

Commander Locker-Lampson: Was the occupation of Belgium by Germany a fact?

CHINA.

BRITISH CREDITORS.

10. **Mr. Moreing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, for the protection of British investors, he will represent to the Chinese Government that, in proceedings in the Chinese courts for the recovery of mortgage debts due to British subjects, the defendant mortgagors shall not be allowed the right of appeal to a higher court without first providing full security for the costs of the appeal?

Viscount Cranborne: I am informed that an international petition for presentation to the Chinese Government is being prepared by the Property Owners Association in Shanghai, and I assume that this point will be covered in the petition. No action can usefully be taken by His Majesty's Ambassador until the petition has been drawn up and presented.

11. **Mr. Moreing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received from His Majesty's Ambassador in China the expected report on the recent case in which a British subject, as the result of successive proceedings in the

Chinese courts, suffered a loss of 30,000 dollars on the capital sum of 75,000 dollars advanced on mortgage to a Chinese merchant?

Viscount Cranborne: No, Sir. But it should be in my hands within the next few days.

SMUGGLING.

31. **Lieut.-Commander Agnew** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has yet received any information from His Majesty's Ambassador in China showing that the Chinese preventive services are allowed freedom to operate effectively in the execution of their duty to stop the entrance of smuggled goods into China?

Viscount Cranborne: The only limitation of which I am aware is that, as was explained in the answer which my right hon. Friend gave on this subject on 20th May of last year, the Japanese military authorities have made it a condition that Customs vessels operating in the coastal waters of the demilitarised zone set up by the Tangku truce of 1933 may not carry arms.

Lieut.-Commander Agnew: Are we to understand that there has been no change in the situation?

Viscount Cranborne: My information is that from a report recently received there are grounds for hoping that there is an improvement.

EGYPT (BRITISH POLICE).

12. **Sir John Mellor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any further statement to make with regard to the position and prospects of the British officers and constables of the Egyptian City Police whose services have been, or shortly will be, terminated in consequence of the provisions of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty; and whether he is satisfied that the terms offered to these men for service in the British section of the Palestine Police and the Malta Dockyard Police are reasonable having regard to their experience?

Viscount Cranborne: I regret that I am at present unable to supplement the very full statement which my right hon. Friend made on 10th March. It will be realised that in many cases it is impossible for the British officers and constables

[Viscount Cranborne.]

of the Egyptian Police to secure fresh employment while they are still in the service of the Egyptian Government, since they are not available for interviews outside Egypt and may, in any case, require some time in which to consider the merits of such offers as they may receive. I can, however, assure my hon. Friend that everything possible is being done to secure fresh and suitable employment for these men. As regards the second part of the question, it will be realised that to offer to the ex-constables more favourable rates of pay than those offered to other candidates for a service in the British section of the Palestine Police and the Malta Dockyard Police would entail discrimination. I understand that there is no lack of suitable candidates for these forces, and the terms offered must, therefore, be considered as reasonable.

Sir J. Mellor: Is it not a fact that the lowest-paid British constable in Egypt has been receiving 18 Egyptian pounds a month and that the offers in Palestine have been mainly in a temporary force at 11 Palestine pounds a month and, in the case of the Malta Dockyard Police, £8 a month; and in view of these circumstances, does not the Noble Lord think it would be a great pity if the services of these men were lost to the Empire in view of their exceptional experience in handling difficult situations?

Viscount Cranborne: My hon. Friend will understand that if you have various applicants for particular posts, they must all be offered the same remuneration. You could not offer one man more than another man, so that in these particular cases they must be on the same basis.

SPAIN.

16. **Mr. Arthur Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is now in a position to make a statement on the Spanish Government Note alleging the presence in Spain of four Italian divisions?

Viscount Cranborne: Yes, Sir. In the view of His Majesty's Government the best way of meeting such a situation as that which is described in the Note of the Spanish Ambassador is to make progress with the evacuation of volunteers. His Excellency has been informed

to this effect. Should, however, it not be found possible to make progress with this subject in the Non-Intervention Committee in the near future, a new situation would be created, which His Majesty's Government will at once examine with other interested Governments.

Mr. Henderson: Do the Government accept the allegation that there are four Italian divisions in Spain? Have they made any inquiries on that subject?

Viscount Cranborne: That is a matter primarily for the Non-Intervention Committee.

Vice-Admiral Taylor: Does that refer to the Italians fighting on the side of the Government in Spain or on that of General Franco?

18. **Lieut.-Commander Fletcher** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has been furnished by the Spanish Ambassador with the evidence upon which His Excellency has publicly stated that 10,000 Italian troops landed at Cadiz on 22nd, 23rd, and 24th March?

Viscount Cranborne: No, Sir. My right hon. Friend has received no such communication from the Spanish Ambassador.

Lieut.-Commander Fletcher: Will the Noble Lord ask the Spanish Ambassador for this evidence, with a view to its being laid before the Non-Intervention Committee?

Viscount Cranborne: I think that if the Spanish Ambassador wishes to give this evidence, he will bring it to the notice of the Government.

21. **Mr. Woods** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Non-Intervention Committee is meeting regularly; what was the date of the last meeting, and whether the date of the next meeting has been fixed?

Viscount Cranborne: The answer to the first part of the question is, Yes, Sir. The last full meeting of the committee was held on 24th March. A meeting of the Chairman's sub-committee will take place as soon as possible this week, and I hope it may be to-morrow.

22. **Mr. Woods** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the control board established in connection with the Non-Intervention Committee has yet

begin functioning; and is he able to report on its operations or the reasons if it is not yet functioning, and the difficulties delaying its satisfactory operation?

Viscount Cranborne: The International Board for Non-Intervention in Spain has been in existence since 8th March, and it has since that date almost completed the elaborate organisation required for the establishment of the scheme of observation of the Spanish frontiers. I understand that the functioning of the board has been entirely satisfactory.

Mr. Woods: Do I understand that the statement means that the arrangement made is actually functioning at the present time?

Viscount Cranborne: No, I said that the elaborate organisation has been almost completed. It is hoped that it will be put into force in the course of the next few days.

Mr. Cocks: Have the Italian Government passed the necessary legislation to implement their side of the agreement?

Viscount Cranborne: I understand that it will be possible for the scheme to come into force in the next few days.

28. **Duchess of Atholl** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the scheme for the prevention of volunteers going to Spain is to come into operation; and, if so, on what date?

Viscount Cranborne: The Non-Intervention Agreement was extended, as from midnight 20th-21st February to cover the recruitment in, the transit through, or the departure from their respective countries of persons of non-Spanish nationality proposing to proceed to Spain for the purpose of taking part in the present conflict, and this prohibition has been in force since that date.

32. **Mr. Windsor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is now in a position to state what progress, if any, has been made by the Non-Intervention Committee respecting the withdrawal of foreign combatants from Spain?

Viscount Cranborne: I would refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend on 6th April, to which I have at present nothing to add.

33. **Mr. T. Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has anything to report in connection with the work of the Control Board appointed by the Non-Intervention Committee; whether that board has now appointed all the observers and assistant observers; and on what date the board is likely to begin its work?

Viscount Cranborne: I understand that the board have now appointed all the observers and assistant observers required for the operation of the scheme in its initial stages. Some of these officers have already reached their posts and others are expected to arrive shortly. I am not yet in a position to give a date for the entry into force of the scheme itself. I have, however, every hope that it will enter into force in a few days.

34. **Mr. Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the date of the last meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee and on what date the Committee will next meet; and whether he has anything to report in connection with the last meeting of that Committee?

Viscount Cranborne: The last meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee was held on 24th March. Since that date certain conversations have been taking place and I hope that a further meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee will be held as soon as possible this week. It is hoped that this may be to-morrow. As regards the last part of the question, I am not in a position to add anything to the communique issued by the Committee itself.

36. **Miss Rathbone** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received evidence of any further entries into Spain of Italian or German bodies of armed combatants since the undertaking given by Germany and Italy to the Non-Intervention Committee on 20th February not to permit such intervention?

Viscount Cranborne: No, Sir.

Miss Rathbone: If the Non-Intervention Committee meets to-morrow, will it investigate the allegation of the Spanish Government that 10,000 Italian volunteers landed in Spain on 24th March? I gather that the Committee has not met since the landing of the Italian volunteers was reported by the Spanish Government; are

[Miss Rathbone.]

we to understand that the allegations of the Spanish Government have not been inquired into?

Viscount Cranborne: I have already explained that there has been a rumour to this effect, but the Spanish Government have not brought it to the notice of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Attlee: Can the Noble Lord explain why the Government are always ignorant of facts which seem to be known by all other countries and all other agencies?

Viscount Cranborne: What I have said already is that the Spanish Government have not brought this matter to the notice of His Majesty's Government. They certainly have not.

Mr. Attlee: Have our Government no sources of information whatever, as the Noble Lord always says he has no information?

Viscount Cranborne: The right hon. Gentleman believes everything he sees.

Mr. Attlee: Will the Noble Lord explain why, after repeated denials of any knowledge, it always turns out subsequently that these rumours are correct?

Sir A. Sinclair (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister what measures the Government propose to take to prevent interference with peaceful British shipping endeavouring to enter the Spanish port of Bilbao?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Baldwin): His Majesty's Government have had under consideration, during the week-end the present situation for shipping in the neighbourhood of Bilbao. It has been necessary to take into account the practical aspect of the problem arising out of the efforts of the insurgent forces to invest Bilbao by sea and land. Bilbao is in close proximity to the war zone, and there is constant and serious risk to shipping in Bilbao harbour from bombing by aircraft. In addition, on account of the laying of mines by both sides in the approaches to Bilbao, there is now grave risk to any ship seeking to enter the harbour, unless mine-sweeping is first carried out within Spanish territorial waters. His Majesty's Government have come to the following decision. They cannot recognise or concede belligerent rights, and

they cannot tolerate any interference with British shipping at sea. They are, however, warning British shipping that, in view of conditions at present prevailing in the neighbourhood of Bilbao, they should not, for practical reasons, and in view of risks against which it is at present impossible to protect them, go into that area so long as those conditions prevail.

The Vice-Admiral commanding Battle Cruiser Squadron, in His Majesty's Ship "Hood," has been sent to the north coast of Spain. It is the desire of His Majesty's Government that, having regard to the difficult position which has arisen in those waters, an adequate naval force under the direct command of an officer of flag rank shall be available.

Sir A. Sinclair: Will the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that no interference with British shipping entering the port of Bilbao, or any other port of Spain, by General Franco's cruisers and armed trawlers, will be allowed, and that our ships will have orders to give them full protection, not only on the high seas but in territorial waters?

The Prime Minister: I have told the House that no blockade is recognised. The difficulty is that this situation is a comparatively new one. It is possible now to sow harbours, and the approaches to harbours, with mines. That is a comparatively new problem, and what I have said about mines, in my answer to the question, stands good.

Mr. Attlee: Is it not a fact that the Spanish Government are prepared to guarantee the safety of vessels in the territorial waters of Bilbao, and that no rebel ship has gone there; and is it not for this Government to protest if mines are sown by the rebels which prevent the merchant ships of this country from proceeding on their ordinary course for a peaceful purpose?

The Prime Minister: The situation is constantly changing, and this is a matter of the last few days. I can only speak of the present situation; I cannot say how long it will last. The right hon. Gentleman must remember that these mines have been sown by both sides.

Mr. Attlee: Does not this position in effect amount to a blockade of Bilbao?

The Prime Minister: No. I do not think it amounts to a blockade.

Vice-Admiral Taylor: Would it not be a breach of the non-intervention Pact if ships were allowed to proceed to Bilbao for the assistance of the National Government in Spain?

Mr. Sandys: In view of the fact that we as a sea Power have often in the past claimed for ourselves the right of blockade and search, can the Prime Minister assure us that the policy of denying belligerent status to the combatants will not create an international precedent which might prejudice our rights on some future occasion?

The Prime Minister: We do not admit belligerent rights now. As I said in the answer, His Majesty's Government cannot recognise or concede belligerent rights, and they cannot tolerate any interference with British shipping at sea.

Mr. Shinwell: What would be the position of the Government if these British vessels were prepared to undertake the risks involved?

The Prime Minister: I do not propose to answer at this moment any hypothetical question. They have been warned of the danger, and I cannot imagine that there are any owners in this country who, knowing the danger, would disregard it, and expose their ships and men to it.

Mr. Attlee: In view of the right hon. Gentleman's very unsatisfactory statement, I beg to give notice that I will ask for a day in order to discuss the failure of His Majesty's Government to give protection to British merchantmen.

BRAZIL (BRITISH BONDHOLDERS).

17. **Rear-Admiral Sir Murray Sueter** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will obtain from Rio de Janeiro official details of the Boucas proposals about continuing the default on pre-war loans borrowed by the Brazilian Government from British nationals; and will he take steps so that the unilateral Aranha arrangement with the flotation houses, imposed by the Brazilian Government upon British creditors of Brazil, may not be extended for more than one year without consultation with His Majesty's Government representing the

general body of British investors as apart from the houses which floated the loans?

25. **Mr. Liddall** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the widely-distributed British holdings of public obligations upon which the Brazilian Government has several times defaulted, he will propose co-operation with the United States, the French and the Dutch Governments, calculated to prevent any renewal, in September next, of the Aranha scheme being presented, without the creditors' acquiescence, as an accomplished fact?

Viscount Cranborne: I would refer my hon. Friends to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to my hon. Friend the Member for North Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sir N. Grattan-Doyle) on 6th April, to which I have nothing to add.

BOLIVIA (BRITISH SUBJECTS' IMPRISONMENT).

20. **Sir N. Grattan-Doyle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information concerning the case of Messrs. Edward Anthony Ashton and J. W. Webster, two British subjects, who are now in custody in Bolivia; how long have they been in prison; what are the charges against them; and why they have not been admitted to bail?

Viscount Cranborne: I understand that Mr. Ashton and Mr. Webster were arrested on 28th January, since when they have been in custody on the charge of intention to defraud the Bolivian Government in certain sales made during the Chaco war. Their difficulty in securing bail appears to be due to the fact that it involves the sureties not only pledging their own persons but also accepting responsibility for all financial liabilities should the accused leave the country. My right hon. Friend hopes to receive further information on the case from His Majesty's Minister at La Paz at an early date. In the meantime, the Minister has received instructions to ask the Bolivian Government for a detailed statement of the offences with which the two gentlemen are charged. I can assure my hon. Friend that His Majesty's Government will continue to keep a close watch on this matter.

Sir N. Grattan-Doyle: Will my Noble Friend see that His Majesty's Government are sufficiently active in this matter, in view of the fact that these British subjects have been in custody so long under such extraordinary conditions that no time should elapse before the Government take definite steps?

Viscount Cranborne: I can assure my hon. Friend of that.

UNITED STATES (BRITISH VISITORS' INCOME TAX).

19. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the demands made by United States Customs officers upon British citizens leaving that country after short visits for the payment of Income Tax in cases where, in fact, no salary from any American source has been paid; and whether he will make representations to the United States Government with a view to a more reasonable attitude being adopted by the Customs authorities?

Viscount Cranborne: I understand that the position which the right hon. Gentleman has in mind has recently been modified by Sections 119 and 211 of the United States Revenue Act of 1936, of which I am arranging to have copies sent to him.

Mr. Alexander: Is the Under-Secretary of State aware that there have been recent examples of this imposition upon visitors to the United States of America, and will he undertake to inquire into the question?

Viscount Cranborne: I will certainly make inquiries, but my information is that there have been no further complaints since the Act to which I have referred came into force.

GERMANY AND RUSSIA.

24. **Brigadier-General Spears** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that Germany signed a pact of friendship and mutual assistance with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 24th April, 1926, and that this pact was renewed on 24th January, 1931, and ratified on 5th May, 1933, by the present head of the German Government; and whether this pact is still in force, in view of the fact that neither Germany nor

the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have exercised their right to denounce it on giving a year's notice?

Viscount Cranborne: The facts are as stated by my hon. and gallant Friend, with the exception that, according to my information, the signature of the Protocol renewing the German-Soviet Pact of 1926 took place not on 24th January, 1931, but on 24th June, 1931. As far as I am aware, neither of the contracting parties have so far availed themselves of the right of denouncing this treaty.

Brigadier-General Spears: Is the pact still in force?

Viscount Cranborne: Yes, as far as I am aware.

Mr. Macquisten: Do either of these people attach the slightest importance to each other's signatures?

POLAND (FOREIGN BOND-HOLDERS).

26. **Sir J. Mellor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any further information to give as to the delegation which the Polish Government have promised to send to London in the course of April, 1937, to confer with the Council of Foreign Bondholders, in consequence of the partial default impending upon the service of the Republic of Poland 7 per cent. stabilisation loan, sterling issue; and whether the British Government will be represented at the conference?

Viscount Cranborne: I understand from the Council of Foreign Bondholders that the Polish delegates are expected at the end of April, but that the exact date of their visit has not yet been fixed. The answer to the second part of the question is, No, Sir.

Sir J. Mellor: In view of the balance of trade between this country and Poland being heavily in favour of Poland, will my Noble Friend point out to the Polish Government that there can be no conceivable reason why the bondholders should not receive payment punctually and in full?

Viscount Cranborne: My hon. Friend must recognise that in the first place negotiations must be between the Polish

Government and the Council of Foreign Bondholders which represents the interests of the bondholders.

DANZIG.

27. **Mr. Vyvyan Adams** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the legal date by which the new election in Danzig must be held?

Viscount Cranborne: According to the Danzig Constitution, the Popular Assembly is elected for a period of four years, but may in certain circumstances be dissolved before the end of that period. Elections for a new Popular Assembly must be held in the last month but one before the expiration of the four-year period. The term of office of the present Assembly expires in April, 1939, and the latest date on which a fresh election can constitutionally be held is, therefore, in February, 1939.

Mr. Adams: What body decides whether dissolution is to take place earlier?

Viscount Cranborne: The Popular Assembly puts an end to its term of office by its own decision or by a referendum.

Mr. Adams: Has the Council of the League anything to do with that decision?

Viscount Cranborne: No, I have said that it is by its own decision or by a referendum.

BELGIUM (LOCARNO OBLIGATIONS).

29. **Mr. A. Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government propose to concur in releasing Belgium from her provisional Locarno obligations of 19th March, 1936; and whether he will make a statement on the matter?

Viscount Cranborne: This matter is under active consideration, and my right hon. Friend hopes to be able to make a statement shortly.

Mr. Henderson: May we take it that a statement to this effect contained in some of the Government papers last week merely constituted intelligent anticipation?

Viscount Cranborne: It is a very delicate situation, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not ask me to anticipate the statement.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

BRITISH INDUSTRIES FAIR, BIRMINGHAM.

37. **Sir Patrick Hannon** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether he will make a statement on the success of the hardware and engineering section of the British Industries Fair at Birmingham, in February last; the number of visitors who attended the Fair; the number of foreign countries and Dominions and Colonies of the British Empire represented; and whether any estimate has been made of the value of export orders placed during the exhibition?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Dr. Burgin): I am informed by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, by whom the engineering and hardware section of the British Industries Fair is organised, that in their opinion the 1937 Fair was one of the most successful yet held. The number of visitors to the Birmingham section was 152,668. I regret that I cannot say precisely the number of foreign countries and Dominions and Colonies of the British Empire represented by the overseas visitors to the section in question, but the overseas visitors to the Fair as a whole came from 23 Dominions, Colonies, and Dependencies of the Empire, and 51 foreign countries. My hon. Friend will, I hope, appreciate that the number and diversity of the factors involved renders it impossible for the Chamber of Commerce to make any reliable estimate of the value of the export orders placed.

Sir P. Hannon: While thanking my hon. Friend for that reply, may I ask whether the Board of Trade are now satisfied that this Fair is a very important factor in the development of our overseas and inter-Imperial trade?

Dr. Burgin: Yes, Sir, that is the case.

STEEL SUPPLIES.

74. **Mr. V. Adams** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the serious difficulties encountered by the steel users in this country in procuring an adequate supply of steel and

[Mr. Adams.] so maintaining their normal level of activity and employment; and whether, to further our own industries, he will discourage excessive exports of steel during the present shortage?

Dr. Burgin: It is, of course, of great importance to maintain our export connections, and I do not think there is a danger of our exports becoming excessive.

Mr. Adams: Is not the Parliamentary Secretary aware that in certain areas in the North of England there is so little steel available that a number of men are threatened immediately with unemployment?

Dr. Burgin: I am aware of the world shortage of steel, and I am aware that entrance to the export markets is one of the great advantages which this country acquires from the Cartel. I have the figures for exports, and my answer stands, that there is no danger of our exports becoming excessive.

Mr. Adams: Should we not use our own steel for our own factories?

AGRICULTURE.

ALLOTMENTS.

38. **Mr. Lyons** asked the Minister of Agriculture the total acreage of land let for the purposes of allotment holdings and the number of allotment holders at 1st March, 1937, or the nearest convenient date; and the acreage owned by allotment societies for the use of their members at a similar date?

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. W. S. Morrison): The latest date for which returns for the whole of England and Wales are available is 31st December, 1934. The estimated total acreage of land let for allotments at that date was 134,000 acres, and the number of allotment holders, 936,000. Land owned by allotment societies is not distinguished in the returns, but I am informed that the acreage of land owned by societies registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts and let as allotments in England and Wales was, in 1935, 8,200 acres.

Mr. Lyons: In view of the great importance of this question to allotment holders, can my right hon. Friend try

to obtain some figures for a more recent date than the ones he has given us to-day?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, Sir, if my hon. Friend will let me know precisely the figures which he wants I will see whether any are available, but these are the latest reliable figures which I have. I can assure him that I do appreciate the importance of keeping the situation under review.

WORKERS.

39. **Mr. Drewe** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he is aware that there is a serious shortage of skilled agricultural labour in the country; and whether he has any proposal to make to improve the economic condition of the industry to enable a sufficient wage to be paid to attract labour back to the land?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: I would refer my hon. Friend to the replies given on 9th March and 10th January, respectively, to questions by the hon. Member for Consett (Mr. David Adams) and my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for South Salford (Major Stourton).

Mr. T. Williams: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell the House of any period in history when agriculture was prosperous or less prosperous when agricultural labourers received a reasonable wage?

Mr. Paling: Do we understand that in spite of all the millions poured into the agricultural industry it is still in an uneconomic condition?

Mr. Morrison: The policy of His Majesty's Government is directed towards making the industry economic and able to pay good wages.

FAT CATTLE (PRICE).

40. **Brigadier-General Clifton Brown** asked the Minister of Agriculture what was the average price per live hundred-weight for fat cattle during last week; and how does this price compare with the corresponding week last year?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: The average price of first and second quality fat cattle at representative markets in England and Wales in the week ended 7th April was 40s. 2d. per live cwt., compared with 35s. 9d. in the corresponding week of 1936, an increase of 4s. 5d. per cwt.

Mr. T. Williams: Can the right hon. Gentleman say at what price fat cattle will be sold when the Government feel disposed to withdraw the existing subsidy?

Mr. Morrison: The Bill embodying the subsidy is not yet law.

Mr. Williams: As a subsidy is now being paid, have the Government fixed upon any figure which they will regard as a standard figure at which the subsidy will no longer be required?

Mr. Morrison: As I have frequently stated, the subsidy arrangements will be reviewed from time to time in the light of the marketing situation.

POTATOES.

43. **Mr. R. Acland** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been drawn to the statement in the annual report of the Food Council that the potato crop has been reduced in three years by 81,000 acres; and what action he proposes to take?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 8th April to questions on this subject.

Mr. Macquisten: How does the right hon. Gentlemen expect people to take the trouble to grow potatoes if they are to be harassed by the Marketing Board, and if the only people who get any benefit are the people who work for the board?

Mr. Morrison: That is not the fact. The fact remains that they are growing potatoes.

TOMATOES.

44. **Mr. Acland** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been drawn to the effect of the civil war in Spain and the new duty on the supply of tomatoes to the poorer classes of the community; and what action he proposes to take?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: I am aware that imports of tomatoes from the Canary Islands this season have been less than in recent years. The new duty to which the hon. Member refers will not come into operation until 15th May, and will do no more than advance by two weeks the commencing date of the duty of 2d. per lb.

FENS (DRAINAGE AND RECLAMATION SCHEMES).

41. **Mr. de Rothschild** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Director-General of Inland Waterways of the Netherlands and Director of Navigation on the Rhine has recently made a tour of the drainage works of the Great Ouse catchment area; whether, in view of his experience and authority on questions of land drainage, he has been in touch with any representative of the Ministry; and whether the Ministry have been informed of his observations and opinions with reference to the improvement of the drainage of the Fens?

46. **Mr. Markham** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been drawn to Dr. Schoenfeld's suggestions on the Fens and the possible reclamation of the Wash; and whether, in view of their importance, he will have them considered by the responsible authorities?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: I myself met Dr. Schoenfeld in the course of a recent visit to the Great Ouse catchment area and I have seen the three articles which he contributed to recent issues of the "Daily Telegraph." Dr. Schoenfeld's second article proposed that a barrage should be erected across the River Ouse at King's Lynn to keep out the tidal water. A proposal of this nature has been before my Department on several occasions, and has provoked great opposition in the district and among land drainage engineers generally. Dr. Schoenfeld's third article, however, rejects this proposal in favour of a dam being built across the whole southern half of the Wash, but he admits that there would be considerable difficulties in the way of such a proposal. Apart from the fact that he estimates the cost of the dam at nearly three times that of schemes already partially being carried out by the Ouse Catchment Board, I have considerable doubt whether his proposals would be practicable or economic.

Mr. de Rothschild: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his personal visit to the Fens was received with much satisfaction by the people there, and that they are all very anxious that some tangible result should be the outcome of it; and if he will not consider the proposals of

[Mr. de Rothschild.]
Dr. Schoenfeld, will he give further consideration to the proposals which are at present before the Ministry and give them adequate financial help?

Mr. Morrison: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the situation is very present to my mind, and that anything I can do to help the Great Ouse Catchment Board in their difficult duties will be done with good will.

RIVER OGMORE, GLAMORGANSHIRE (POLLUTION AND FLOODING).

42. **Mr. E. J. Williams** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he is aware of the serious condition of pollution and flooding of the Ogmore River, Glamorganshire; and what steps he proposes to take to financially help the appropriate authority to abate a nuisance which menaces the health of the inhabitants of Bridgend and district?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: I am aware that there has been sewage pollution of the Llyafi, one of the main tributaries of the River Ogmore, for some time, of which the chief source is said to be the sewage disposal works of the Maesteg Urban District Council. I understand that the urban council have applied to the Commissioner for the Special Areas for a grant for new sewage disposal works, and for reconditioning their main sewer, and that this application is at present under consideration. I have myself no power and no funds to make grants for sewerage schemes, which come within the purview of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health. With regard to flooding, the responsible local authority is the Mid-Glamorgan Rivers Catchment Board, who are aware that they can obtain a grant from the funds at my disposal for any approved land drainage scheme which they submit.

Mr. Short: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to consult the Minister of Health on this matter?

Mr. Morrison: This is primarily a matter for my right hon. Friend. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. E. J. Williams) will approach my right hon. Friend in the matter, and any help which I can give will be given.

Mr. Short: But the right hon. Gentleman having had his attention called to the matter, does he not propose to consult the Minister of Health about the pollution of this river?

Mr. Morrison: I hope I have explained to the House that the pollution of rivers and sewerage schemes do not fall within my purview. The proper course is to approach my right hon. Friend.

POST OFFICE.

CIRCULARS.

47. **Mr. Mathers** asked the Postmaster-General whether he will cause the rule allowing 20 or more similar circulars produced by mechanical process to be posted at one time bearing $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps to be amended, so that in the case of type-written circulars the original as well as carbon copies will be covered by the arrangement?

The Postmaster-General (Major Tryon): Under the statutory regulations the original copies are inadmissible. I will examine the hon. Member's suggestion and communicate with him.

Mr. Mathers: Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that this particular rule involves a very great deal of work to many voluntary workers working for small organisations, and will he keep that fact in mind when he is examining the question?

Mr. Thurtle: Is the Postmaster-General aware that this matter is arousing passionate interest in Scotland?

TELEPHONE SERVICE (GREENOCK).

48. **Mr. R. Gibson** asked the Postmaster-General when it is proposed to introduce an automatic system of telephones for Greenock; and whether he will take steps to ensure that, when automatic telephones are installed, all Greenock subscribers will be given Greenock numbers and thus end the present practice whereby Greenock subscribers in the Fort Matilda district are inconvenienced through having been given Gourock numbers?

Major Tryon: Arrangements for the installation of automatic telephone service in the Greenock area are in their preliminary stages. The question of allocation of Greenock numbers to the whole area will be discussed with the town councils

of Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow at a later stage.

Mr. Gibson: What is the approximate date when the system of automatic telephones will be brought into operation?

Major Tryon: I do not think that the conversion to automatic working will be made much before the end of 1940.

NEW CENTRAL OFFICE, STOKE-ON-TRENT.

50. **Mr. Ellis Smith** asked the Postmaster-General when it is proposed to make a start on the new central post office for Stoke-on-Trent; has consideration been given to the sites suggested by the city council; and, if so, which site has been decided upon?

Major Tryon: The question of providing a new central post office for Stoke-on-Trent is under active consideration. The sites suggested by the city council are being considered with others, but it may be some little time before a decision can be reached.

TELEGRAMS (PORTERAGE FEES).

54. **Mr. Maxwell** asked the Postmaster-General whether he will consider the abolition of the fee payable on telegrams delivered to places over a certain distance from telegraph offices, particularly in view of the fact that the majority of those called upon to pay this fee are in poor circumstances?

Major Tryon: Telegrams are delivered free of charge up to a distance of three miles from the nearest telegraph delivery office. Beyond that distance portorage is charged only on the additional mileage beyond the free delivery boundary. In view of the high cost of telegraph delivery I regret that I could not agree to abolish portorage fees.

Mr. Maxwell: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that well-to-do people who have telephones can get their telegrams delivered free, and does he not think that that is rather hard upon the people who cannot afford telephones?

Major Tryon: Yes, Sir, but there is a continual loss on telegrams, and the present arrangement is more generous in the matter of distance than is the case in any other country.

SUB-POSTMASTERS (REMUNERATION).

55. **Sir N. Grattan-Doyle** asked the Postmaster-General the rates of remuneration of sub-postmasters for the

various classes of Post Office work which they are required to undertake; whether he has received any representations to the effect that such rates are too low having regard to the class and volume of work; and, if so, what reply has been made to such representations?

Major Tryon: Sub-postmasters are remunerated on the basis of a somewhat elaborate scale of unit valuations for the various types of work, which formed the subject of an agreement with the National Federation of Sub-postmasters in November, 1935. This recent agreement was intended to remain in force for some time. No representations have been received from the Federation with regard to the agreement except on minor points. I will send the hon. Member a copy of the unit scale.

AIR MAILS (ORKNEY AND SHETLAND).

56 and 57. **Major Neven-Spence** asked the Postmaster-General (1) whether a decision has yet been reached on the question of extending the air-mail service to the North Isles of Orkney;

(2) whether he has come to a decision as to sending the Shetland mail by air; and whether he can arrange for this service to be started forthwith, in view of the near approach of the herring-fishing season?

Major Tryon: In these cases the matter is being actively pursued, and I hope to let the hon. Member have definite information shortly.

UNLICENSED WIRELESS
APPARATUS (PROSECUTIONS).

49. **Mr. Day** asked the Postmaster-General the number of persons who were prosecuted and convicted during the 12 months ended to the last convenient date for working wireless apparatus without the appropriate licence; were any of these prosecutions instituted against persons who had receiving apparatus fitted to, and installed on, their motor cars without the necessary licence; and will he give particulars?

Major Tryon: During the 12 months ended 28th February, 1937, 4,168 persons were prosecuted for the use of wireless apparatus without a licence, and convictions were obtained in all but seven cases. None of the prosecutions related to wireless sets fitted in motor cars.

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LIBRARY.

Mr. Day: Are licences issued in respect of motor cars?

Major Tryon: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Day: Is the Minister not aware that post offices refuse to issue special licences for wireless apparatus on motor cars unless it is licensed originally in respect of a house?

BROADCASTING (EMPIRE SERVICE).

51. **Mr. Viant** asked the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the projected improvement in the Empire broadcasting service, the British Broadcasting Corporation is to receive any financial assistance from the Colonial Governments to meet the increased costs?

Major Tryon: The Broadcasting Committee, 1935, under the chairmanship of Lord Ullswater, recommended that the Empire broadcasting service should be expressly authorised in the new Charter of the British Broadcasting Corporation and that the additional funds required for its development should be provided by the Corporation from its increased share of licence receipts. In the White Paper on the Broadcasting Committee's report the Government announced their acceptance of this recommendation. In the circumstances the question of financial assistance from the Colonial Governments is not being considered.

Mr. Viant: Have any representations been made to Colonial Governments?

Major Tryon: No, Sir, we are not making any representations on the matter to Colonial Governments.

OFFICE OF WORKS.

58. **Mr. Viant** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, as representing the first Commissioner of Works, whether he will reconsider the practice at present adopted by his Department, namely, the discharge of men when they reach the age of 65 years, as the old age pension of 10s. per week is quite inadequate for their maintenance and many of them, despite their age, are quite capable of rendering efficient service?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Mr. R. S. Hudson) (for the First Commissioner of Works): The regulation which provides that members of the industrial staff of the Office of Works shall normally retire on attaining the age of 65 years, was introduced by agreement on the Whitley Council with the employes' trade union representatives, and my Noble Friend does not consider that there is justification for reconsidering the matter.

59. **Mr. Viant** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he has come to a decision as regards the inauguration of a pension scheme for those engaged on maintenance and constructional work in connection with his Department?

Mr. Hudson: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. and gallant Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield (Mr. Bull) on 24th March last.

THE CORONATION.

60. **Mr. Boulton** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will favourably consider granting permission for the sale of alcoholic drinks in refreshment places on the processional route on 12th May?

Mr. R. S. Hudson: At the buffets attached to the stands erected by the Government, the occupants will be able to buy sandwiches, buns, tea, coffee, soft drinks, and so on, but after careful consideration my Noble Friend is not prepared to authorise the catering contractor in the Royal parks to apply for an occasional licence to serve intoxicating liquors. He has, of course, himself no power to grant this permission, even in respect of premises under his control.

Mr. Macquisten: Does not the hon. Gentleman realise that we need to make provision for dealing with the broken glass from the bottles that people will carry with them?

62. **Rear-Admiral Beamish** asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, as representing the First

Commissioner of Works, in what buildings Government receptions concerned with the Coronation and the great number of distinguished visitors and guests of the State will take place?

Mr. Hudson: Government receptions concerned with the Coronation will take place at Lancaster House, 10, Downing Street, the Foreign Office, India Office and Colonial Office.

Read-Admiral Beamish: Has it not been found necessary to hold receptions of this type in such places as museums, and is not the space available worthy of this country on such an occasion?

Mr. Hudson: That is another question.

DEFENCE (FIGHTING SERVICES, LEAVE).

64. **Captain Macnamara** asked the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence whether, in view of the modern danger of sudden attack, he has asked the Defence Ministries to take more precautions than hitherto has been usual at such periods as Easter, Whitsun, and Christmas, when such a large proportion of our fighting Services is on leave?

The Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence (Sir Thomas Inskip): My hon. and gallant Friend may be assured that all necessary steps are taken for the proper discharge of duties in cases of absence on leave.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE, GLASGOW.

65. **Mr. Stephen** asked the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence whether his attention has been called to the industrial dispute at Parkhead Forge, Glasgow; whether this dispute is holding up the production of Government work; and whether he has considered whether the action of the employers in refusing the request for an increase of wages is resulting in a contravention of his assurance that workers would receive adequate wages for work on the new programme?

Sir T. Inskip: I am aware of the circumstances of the dispute and am satisfied that it is in the interests of the workers in the industry generally and also in the interests of the Defence programme that

changes in wages should be discussed and settled in accordance with the constitutional joint procedure. I hope therefore that the hon. Member will use his influence to persuade the workers concerned to be guided by the advice given to them by the organisation, of which they are members.

Mr. Stephen: Is the Minister aware that the local district committee of the organisation is backing the men and is he also aware that this firm, when they were in negotiation, joined the Federation in order to try to prevent a settlement being arrived at at an early date?

Sir T. Inskip: Those are different questions, but even though the hon. Gentleman's statements be correct, they do not affect my suggestion that the organisation of which the men are members should have given the advice and that it should be accepted.

Mr. McGovern: You had better come down and give it to them. They will chase you.

Mr. Maxton: You give some advice to the employers.

78. **Mr. Stephen** asked the Minister of Labour whether he has now decided to take any steps to bring about negotiations between the employers at Parkhead Forge, Glasgow, and the engineers who are on strike to secure a satisfactory settlement of the dispute?

Sir James Blindell (Lord of the Treasury): I have been asked to reply. My right hon. Friend would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for the Shettleston Division (Mr. McGovern) on 8th April, to which he has nothing to add.

Mr. Stephen: Will the hon. Gentleman convey to the Minister the need for action, in view of the very hard circumstances of the people concerned?

Sir J. Blindell: I will convey the hon. Member's observation to my right hon. Friend.

NURSING HOMES.

69 and 70. **Miss Rathbone** asked the Minister of Health (1) whether he will institute an inquiry into nursing homes all over the country, in view of the many

[Miss Rathbone.]

complaints as to the inadequate and insufficiently qualified nursing staffs and the insufficient precaution taken in regard to the prevention of infection;

(2) whether he has reason to believe that nursing homes are adequately inspected from the point of view of the sufficiency and qualifications of the nursing staff, and also that adequate care is given to the prevention of infection, particularly when maternity patients are taken in addition to general medical and surgical cases?

Mr. R. S. Hudson: The attention of local authorities has recently been called to the importance of the adequate supervision of nursing homes in a circular letter of 30th September last, of which I will send the hon. Member a copy. As at present advised my right hon. Friend sees no necessity for a special inquiry, but he will look into any case which the hon. Member may have in mind, if she will communicate the particulars to him.

ROYAL DOCKYARDS (DISMISSALS).

75. **Mr. Paling** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the names of the five men dismissed from the dockyards have been circulated to other Government works and dockyards with a view to preventing them obtaining employment at such places?

The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Kenneth Lindsay): Steps were taken, as would always be the case in similar circumstances, to inform other Government Departments of the circumstances of these discharges, in case these men might apply for entry into other Government industrial establishments.

Mr. Paling: In view of the fact that, when this question has been discussed in the House, there seemed to be no evidence available as to why these men should have been discharged, why should they be pursued vindictively in this manner?

Mr. Kelly: Were the other Government Departments informed of the charge which the Admiralty has levelled against these five men?

Mr. Lindsay: In answer to the first supplementary question, in view of the

first step this was inevitable. With regard to the second, the main charge has been shown, of course, to the other Government Departments.

Mr. Kelly: Why are not the men informed?

Mr. Paling: Can we have the terms of the notice that was circulated to the other Departments?

Mr. Thorne: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, as a consequence of the statements about some of these men that have appeared in the papers, one of them in particular has applied to a number of employers and they have refused to employ him, and he is now receiving public assistance?

Vice-Admiral Taylor: Is it not a fact that it is not in the interest of the State to make these disclosures?

MALAYA (RUBBER ESTATES, WAGES).

76. **Mr. Paling** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the rates of wages of rs. 2d. per day for Indian males, and 11½d. per day for Indian females, working on the rubber estates in Malaya have been fixed for a definite period; and whether when such rates were fixed consideration was given to the rise in the price of rubber?

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Ormsby-Gore): The standard rates mentioned were fixed in the last few weeks, to come into effect on 1st April. They represent an increase from 11½d. and 9d. respectively for the last half of 1936, and rs. 0½d. and 10d. respectively for the first quarter of 1937, and may be taken to reflect the improved capacity of the rubber industry. The present rates remain in force unless and until they are revised.

Mr. Paling: Do I understand that it is due to the fact that there has been a rise in the price of rubber that the natives' wages have risen?

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: Yes, Sir; undoubtedly the increase in wages this quarter as compared with last quarter has been due to the increased price of rubber.

Mr. Paling: If the price of rubber keeps rising, will these people be able to make

further application almost immediately for another increase in wages?

Mr. Ormsby-Gore: As I understand it, wages are fixed quarterly.

ARMY RESERVISTS (UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE).

77. **Mr. Shinwell** asked the Minister of Labour whether the assurance given by the War Office that Army reservists, when unemployed, should not have their reserve pay deducted from their unemployment allowance, is now being given effect to by the Unemployment Board?

Sir J. Blindell: I have been asked to reply. The arrangement which is being followed—in accordance with undertakings which have been given—is that, if the reservist is not himself an applicant for an allowance, no part of his reserve pay is regarded as available to meet the needs of any other member of the household who is applying for an allowance. If the reservist himself is applying for an allowance, 50 per cent. of his reserve pay is regarded as a resource available for meeting the needs of the household.

Mr. Shinwell: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to make representations to the Secretary of State for War in order to clear up the difficulty that appears to have arisen out of the statement made by the Financial Secretary to the War Office in a previous Debate?

Sir J. Blindell: I shall be pleased to pass on that suggestion to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour.

TEXTILE INDUSTRY (40-HOUR WEEK).

79. **Mr. Thorne** asked the Minister of Labour what were the instructions given to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry in connection with the 40-hour week for the textile industry at the Washington Conference?

Sir J. Blindell: I have been asked to reply. These instructions were in accordance with the policy of His Majesty's Government, which is to assist in every possible way in the examination of the facts in the various countries in order to see whether it is practicable to reach any international arrangement on the subject to which the hon. Member refers. I may add that it is accepted by His Majesty's

Government that the textile trade unions in this country are not prepared to agree to the reduction of hours except on the condition that wages are not reduced, and it was necessary, therefore, to make this position clear to the Conference.

Mr. Thorne: Can we be told what the instructions were? If not, I propose to put another question down for Thursday, in order to get a proper answer.

Sir J. Blindell: If the hon. Member desires any further information, perhaps he will put a question down.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS.

Mr. Attlee: May I ask whether it is possible to arrange that the Foreign Secretary could be here to answer questions on a day when there are a large number of questions on very important matters put down to him?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend has had a long standing engagement, as all of us have at times, to speak at Liverpool to-night. In the course of this morning, I stopped him from going to Liverpool so that we might discuss these questions and that he might be here. He was prepared to cancel the meeting—always a difficult business as hon. and right hon. Gentlemen know, in view of the numbers that attend these large meetings—had the Adjournment been moved and not a day asked for. He had arranged that these questions should be taken to-day by the Under-Secretary, who has devoted great care and attention to them. My right hon. Friend had work to do in connection with preparing his answers and discussing the question that has arisen. Whatever responsibility there may be for his absence is just as much mine as his.

Mr. Attlee: We had no notification of any reason for the absence of the Foreign Secretary to-day. One always realises that the Foreign Secretary is naturally liable to be called away on Foreign Office business, but we had no notice whatever of any reason why he should not be present.

The Prime Minister: I should like to say in answer to that, that while I appreciate the point, I do not think that is an invariable rule, because I know when I have been in a position to make that inquiry if I find that the Minister is not in his place I have assumed that there are good and satisfactory reasons.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. Attlee: May I ask for what purpose it is proposed to suspend the Eleven o'Clock Rule to-night?

The Prime Minister: We are suspending it in order to obtain the Second Reading of the Ministers of the Crown Bill and the necessary Money Resolution in Committee. As the House is aware, the Army (Annual) Bill is exempted business, and it must be passed into law by 30th April. We should like to obtain the Committee and remaining stages of the Bill to-day, but we do not intend to enter upon the consideration of the Bill if we cannot do

so by 9 o'clock. If we are unable to obtain the Bill to-night, we shall take it to-morrow after Mr. Speaker has been moved out of the Chair on the Civil Estimates. The only other business that we propose to take to-night is the Report stage of the Voluntary Pensions [Money] Resolution which is exempted business.

Motion made, and Question put,

"That the Proceedings on Government Business be exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—[*The Prime Minister.*]

The House divided: Ayes, 230; Noes, 101.

Division No. 131.]

AYES.

[3.55 p.m.]

Acland, R. T. D. (Barnstaple)
 Adams, S. V. T. (Leeds, W.)
 Agnew, Lieut.-Comdr. P. G.
 Albany, Sir Irving
 Aillon, Lt.-Col. Sir W. J. (Armagh)
 Assheton, R.
 Astor, Hon. W. W. (Fulham, E.)
 Baldwin, Rt. Hon. Stanley
 Balfour, Capt. H. H. (Isle of Thanet)
 Baillo, Sir A. W. M.
 Barclay-Harvey, Sir G. M.
 Barrie, Sir G. C.
 Baxter, A. Beverley
 Beamish, Rear-Admiral T. P. H.
 Beaumont, M. W. (Aylesbury)
 Beaumont, Hon. R. E. B. (Portsmouth)
 Beit, Sir A. L.
 Bennett, Sir E. N.
 Bernays, R. H.
 Bird, Sir R. B.
 Blair, Sir R.
 Blindell, Sir J.
 Bessom, A. C.
 Boulton, W. W.
 Bowater, Col. Sir T. Vansittart
 Bowar, Comdr. R. T.
 Bowyer, Capt. Sir G. E. W.
 Boyce, H. Leslie
 Brass, Sir W.
 Brisbane, Capt. R. G.
 Brown, Brig.-Gen. H. C. (Newbury)
 Bull, B. B.
 Burgin, Dr. E. L.
 Burton, Col. H. W.
 Butler, R. A.
 Campbell, Sir E. T.
 Cartland, J. R. H.
 Castleknagh, Viscount
 Cazalet, Tholma (Islington, E.)
 Cazalet, Capt. V. A. (Chippinham)
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. N. (Edgb't'n)
 Channon, H.
 Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
 Clarke, Lt.-Col. R. S. (E. Grinstead)
 Clarry, Sir Reginald
 Cobb, Captain E. C. (Preston)
 Colman, N. C. D.
 Colville, Lt.-Col. Rt. Hon. D. J.
 Cooke, J. D. (Hammersmith, S.)
 Cooper, Rt. Hon. A. Duff (W'st'r S. G'ss)
 Cooper, Rt. Hon. T. M. (E'nburgh, W.)
 Cranborne, Viscount
 Croft, Brig.-Gen. Sir H. Page
 Crooke, J. S.
 Crookshank, Capt. H. F. C.
 Crowder, J. F. E.
 Davies, Major Sir G. F. (Yeovil)
 Davison, Sir W. H.
 De la Bère, R.

Denman, Hon. R. D.
 Doland, G. F.
 Dorman-Smith, Major R. H.
 Drews, C.
 Duckworth, Arthur (Shrewsbury)
 Duckworth, W. R. (Moss Side)
 Dugdale, Major T. L.
 Duggan, H. J.
 Duncan, J. A. L.
 Dunglass, Lord
 Elliot, Rt. Hon. W. E.
 Ellis, Sir G.
 Emmott, C. E. G. C.
 Emrys-Evans, P. V.
 Entwistle, Sir C. F.
 Erskine-Hill, A. G.
 Evans, Capt. A. (Cardiff, S.)
 Evans, D. O. (Gardigan)
 Everard, W. L.
 Findlay, Sir E.
 Furness, S. N.
 Ganzoni, Sir J.
 Cluckstein, L. H.
 Glyn, Major Sir R. G. C.
 Goodman, Col. A. W.
 Graham, Captain A. C. (Wirral)
 Grant-Ferris, R.
 Granville, E. L.
 Grattan-Doyle, Sir N.
 Gridley, Sir A. B.
 Griffith, F. Kingsley (M'dd'lsbro, W.)
 Griggs, Sir E. W. M.
 Guest, Hon. I. (Brecon and Radnor)
 Guinness, T. L. E. B.
 Gunston, Capt. D. W.
 Hamilton, Sir G. C.
 Hannah, I. C.
 Hannon, Sir P. J. H.
 Harbord, A.
 Harris, Sir P. A.
 Hartington, Marquess of
 Harvey, Sir G.
 Haslam, H. C. (Horncastle)
 Heiglers, Captain F. F. A.
 Heneage, Lieut.-Colonel A. P.
 Hepworth, J.
 Herbert, Major J. A. (Monmouth)
 Hills, Major Rt. Hon. J. W. (Ripon)
 Holmes, J. S.
 Hope, Captain Hon. A. O. J.
 Hore-Belisha, Rt. Hon. L.
 Horsburgh, Florence
 Howitt, Dr. A. B.
 Hudson, R. S. (Southport)
 Hulbert, N. J.
 Hunter, T.
 Inskip, Rt. Hon. Sir T. W. H.
 Koeling, E. H.
 Kerr, H. W. (Oldham)
 Korr, J. Graham (Scottish Univs.)

Knox, Major-General Sir A. W. F.
 Lambert, Rt. Hon. G.
 Lennox-Boyd, A. T. L.
 Levy, T.
 Lewis, O.
 Liddall, W. S.
 Lindsay, K. M.
 Llewellyn, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
 Lloyd, G. W.
 Locker-Lampson, Comdr. O. S.
 Lyons, A. M.
 Mabane, W. (Huddersfield)
 MacAndrew, Colonel Sir G. G.
 MacDonald, Rt. Hon. J. R. (Scot. U.)
 McEwen, Capt. J. H. F.
 McKie, J. H.
 MacIay, Hon. J. P.
 Macmillan, H. (Stockton-on-Tees)
 Maonamara, Capt. J. R. J.
 Macquisten, F. A.
 Magnay, T.
 Maitland, A.
 Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.
 Manningham-Buller, Sir M.
 Margesson, Capt. Rt. Hon. H. D. R.
 Markham, S. F.
 Maxwell, Hon. S. A.
 Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.
 Mellor, Sir J. S. P. (Tamworth)
 Mitchell, Sir W. Lane (Streatham)
 Moore, Lieut.-Col. T. G. R.
 Morsing, A. G.
 Morris-Jones, Sir Henry
 Morrison, G. A. (Scottish Univ's.)
 Morrison, Rt. Hon. W. S. (Herecester)
 Neven-Spence, Major B. H. H.
 Nicholson, G. (Farnham)
 Nielson, Hon. H. G.
 O'Neill, Major Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh
 Orr-Ewing, I. L.
 Patriek, C. M.
 Peake, O.
 Peffy, Rt. Hon. Lord E.
 Peters, Dr. S. J.
 Pickthorn, K. W. M.
 Pilkington, R.
 Plugge, Capt. L. F.
 Ponsonby, Col. C. E.
 Pownall, Lt.-Col. Sir Assheton
 Ramsay, Captain A. H. M.
 Ramsbotham, H.
 Rathbone, Eleanor (English Univ's.)
 Rathbone, J. R. (Bodmin)
 Rawson, Sir Cooper
 Rayner, Major R. H.
 Reid, Captain A. Cunningham
 Rickards, G. W. (Skipton)
 Roberts, W. (Cumberland, N.)
 Robinson, J. R. (Blackpool)

Ropner, Colonel L.
 Rothschild, J. A. de
 Rowlands, G.
 Rowman, Rt. Hon. W.
 Russell, A. West (Tynemouth)
 Salmon, Sir I.
 Salt, E. W.
 Samuel, M. R. A.
 Sandeman, Sir N. S.
 Sandys, E. D.
 Savery, Sir Servington
 Seely, Sir H. M.
 Selley, H. R.
 Shakespeare, G. H.
 Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir J. A.
 Sinclair, Rt. Hon. Sir A. (C'thn's)
 Sinclair, Col. T. (Queen's U. B'f'st)
 Smiles, Lieut.-Colonel Sir W. D.
 Smith, Braacewell (Dulwich)

Somerville, A. A. (Windsor)
 Spears, Brigadier-General E. L.
 Spens, W. P.
 Stanley, Rt. Hon. Oliver (W'm'ld)
 Stewart, William J. (Belfast, S.)
 Stourton, Major Hon. J. J.
 Strauss, E. A. (Southwark, N.)
 Strauss, H. G. (Norwich)
 Stuart, Hon. J. (Moray and Nairn)
 Suerer, Rear-Admiral Sir M. F.
 Tasker, Sir R. I.
 Tate, Mavis C.
 Taylor, Vice-Adm. E. A. (Padd., S.)
 Thomson, Sir J. D. W.
 Touche, G. C.
 Tryon, Major Rt. Hon. G. C.
 Tufnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
 Turton, R. H.
 Ward, Irene W. B. (Wallsend)

Warrender, Sir V.
 Waterhouse, Captain G.
 Watt, G. S. H.
 Weyland, Sir W. A.
 Wedderburn, H. J. S.
 Wickham, Lt.-Col. E. T. R.
 Williams, C. (Torquay)
 Williams, H. G. (Croydon, S.)
 Wilson, Lt.-Col. Sir A. T. (Hitchin)
 Wolmer, Rt. Hon. Viscount
 Womersley, Sir W. J.
 Wood, Rt. Hon. Sir Kingsley
 Wright, Squadron-Leader J. A. C.
 Young, A. S. L. (Partick)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—

Sir George Penny and Lieut.-Colonel Sir A. Lambert-Ward.

NOES.

Adams, D. M. (Poplar, S.)
 Adamson, W. M.
 Alexander, Rt. Hon. A. V. (H'lsbr.)
 Ammon, C. G.
 Anderson, F. (Whitehaven)
 Attles, Rt. Hon. C. R.
 Banfield, J. W.
 Barnes, A. J.
 Barr, J.
 Batey, J.
 Bellenger, F. J.
 Benn, Rt. Hon. W. W.
 Burke, W. A.
 Chater, D.
 Cluse, W. S.
 Cocks, F. S.
 Daggar, G.
 Dalton, H.
 Davidson, J. J. (Maryhill)
 Davies, S. O. (Merthyr)
 Day, H.
 Dobbie, W.
 Dunn, E. (Rother Valley)
 Ede, J. C.
 Edwards, A. (Middlesbrough E.)
 Edwards, Sir C. (Bedwellty)
 Fletcher, Lt.-Comdr. R. T. H.
 Frankel, D.
 Gallacher, W.
 Gardner, B. W.
 George, Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd (Carn'v'n)
 Gibbins, J.
 Gibson, R. (Greenock)
 Green, W. H. (Deptford)
 Greenwood, Rt. Hon. A.

Grenfell, D. R.
 Griffiths, G. A. (Hemsworth)
 Griffiths, J. (Llanelli)
 Hall, G. H. (Aberdare)
 Hall, J. H. (Whitechapel)
 Hardie, G. D.
 Henderson, A. (Kingswinford)
 Henderson, T. (Tradeson)
 Hopkin, D.
 Jagger, J.
 Jenkins, A. (Pontypool)
 John, W.
 Jones, A. C. (Shipley)
 Jones, Morgan (Caerphilly)
 Kelly, W. T.
 Kennedy, Rt. Hon. T.
 Lansbury, Rt. Hon. G.
 Lathan, G.
 Lawson, J. J.
 Lee, F.
 Leslie, J. R.
 Logan, D. G.
 Lunh, W.
 McEntee, V. La T.
 McGhee, H. G.
 McGovern, J.
 MacNeill, Weir, L.
 Mathers, G.
 Maxton, J.
 Messer, F.
 Milner, Major J.
 Montague, F.
 Paling, W.
 Parker, J.
 Potts, J.

Ridley, G.
 Ritson, J.
 Robinson, W. A. (St. Helens)
 Sanders, W. S.
 Sexton, T. M.
 Shinwell, E.
 Short, A.
 Silverman, S. S.
 Simpson, F. B.
 Smith, Ben (Rotherhithe)
 Smith, E. (Stoke)
 Smith, Rt. Hon. H. B. Lees- (K'ly)
 Smith, T. (Normanton)
 Sorensen, R. W.
 Stephen, C.
 Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-le-Sp'ng)
 Taylor, R. J. (Morpeth)
 Thorne, W.
 Thurtle, E.
 Tinker, J. J.
 Viant, S. P.
 Walker, J.
 Watkins, F. C.
 Wedgwood, Rt. Hon. J. C.
 Whiteley, W.
 Williams, E. J. (Ogmore)
 Williams, T. (Don Valley)
 Wilson, C. H. (Attercliffe)
 Windsor, W. (Hull, G.)
 Woods, G. S. (Finsbury)
 Young, Sir R. (Newton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—

Mr. Groves and Mr. Charleton.

BILL PRESENTED.

RELIGIOUS PROSECUTIONS (ABOLITION)
BILL,

"to amend the laws relating to blasphemy and to abolish prosecutions for the holding or expressing of opinions on matters of religion," presented by Mr. Thurtle; supported by Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Ede, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Lansbury, and Colonel Wedgwood; to be read a Second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 114.]

AGRICULTURAL WAGES (REGULATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL [Lords].

Read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 113.]

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

TRANSPORT.

ROAD SIGNS.

Mr. Remer asked the Minister of Transport whether his attention has been called to the many cases where the major-road-ahead halt signs are disobeyed; and whether he will take steps to see that these signs are rigidly adhered to?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: If my hon. Friend will specify the points which he has in mind, I will have immediate inquiries made.

VEHICLES FOR HIRE (EXAMINATION).

Sir W. Davison asked the Minister of Transport whether, in view of the strict periodical examination of taximeter-cabs which is made by the police, and the high standard of fitness required on the grounds of public interest, he will consider whether it is also desirable in the public interest that vehicles used for the purpose of private hire should be brought under a similar control?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: I will consider this in connection with future legislation.

PUBLIC HIGHWAYS (VEHICLES STORAGE).

Mr. Liddall asked the Minister of Transport what progress he has made, under his existing powers, in preventing public highways in the residential squares and streets in the West End of London from being still used as storage places for motor-vehicles to the annoyance of adjacent occupiers of premises?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: I trust that rate-payers suffering from the annoyance referred to will receive consideration from their local authorities on whom the necessary powers have been conferred.

LONDON SUBURBAN RAILWAYS
(OVERCROWDING).

Mr. Kelly asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware of the danger to health and the liability to injury arising from the overcrowding which takes place each day on the Hampstead, Edgware railway; and whether he will take steps to have the matter remedied?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: I understand from the board that certain steps have been taken.

OMNIBUS STOPPING PLACES (SHELTERS).

Mr. Bull asked the Minister of Transport whether he will consider recommending to the London Passenger Transport Board the institution of seats and/or shelters at all Green Line omnibus stopping places where such seats would be practicable?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: I will bring my hon. Friend's suggestion to the notice of the board.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY
(OVERHEAD LINES).

Mr. Drew asked the Minister of Transport whether he will use his influence

to prevent the erection of overhead electric lines except in places where they may be provided without detriment to property or amenities?

Mr. Hore-Belisha: My consent is only given with regard to such considerations and the further considerations of technical factors and cost.

DEFENCE.

SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (PAY).

Mr. Parker asked the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence whether he is aware that the difficulty of His Majesty's Government in obtaining the services of an adequate number of skilled draughtsmen in connection with the armament programme is largely accounted for by the fact that the rates of wages offered are considerably below the minimum rates prescribed by the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen; and whether he will take steps to increase the rates of wages referred to?

Sir T. Inskip: As regards the first part of the question, I am advised that the shortage of skilled draughtsmen is general. As regards the second part, I am advised that questions as to the wages of the class have been under consideration by the Service Departments with appropriate bodies and that certain adjustments have already been made.

ECONOMIC LEAGUE REPORT.

Sir W. Smithers asked the Home Secretary whether he has considered the report issued by the Economic League, which has been submitted to him, concerning the activities of organisations and individuals seeking to obstruct rearmament, hinder recruiting, and carry on subversive activities in the Services; and what action is the Government taking to counter and to suppress these activities?

Mr. Lloyd: Yes Sir; I have read this report with much interest and can assure my hon. Friend that a careful watch is kept by the responsible authorities on subversive activities.

COASTGUARDS.

Mr. T. Morris asked the Secretary of State for War whether in view of the increased programme for the defence of our shores, he will consider restoring all coastguards to their former strength?

Dr. Burgin: I have been asked to reply. If at any time it should be considered desirable in the national interest to increase the strength of His Majesty's Coastguard, this would, of course, be done, but I know of no reason at present for any such increase.

POST OFFICE.

AIR MAILS.

Mr. Hall-Caine asked the Postmaster-General whether, in connection with the inauguration of the new Empire air mail scheme during the current year, any steps will be taken to increase the provision of boxes in which air mail letters may be posted?

Major Tryon: No, Sir. Air mail boxes are provided in order to keep separate from other letters correspondence marked for air transmission and prepaid with an air mail surcharge. Letters and post-cards that come within the scope of the Empire Air Mail scheme will, however, be carried by air, without surcharge or special marking; and no advantage will result from posting such letters or post-cards in air mail boxes.

TELEPHONE SERVICE (HOUSE OF COMMONS).

Sir J. Nall asked the Postmaster-General whether he is aware of the inability of the Victoria Telephone Exchange to cope efficiently with trunk calls from the Members' telephone room, and of the frequent inaccuracy of the time charges reported to the attendants by the operators; and whether a proportion of the call boxes can be fitted with prepayment coin-boxes to facilitate traffic?

Major Tryon: The question of improving the arrangements for dealing with trunk calls from the Members' telephone room has been under consideration for some time and, as a result, the lines from call boxes No. 9, 10 and 11 have been connected direct to the London Trunk Exchange. I think this will overcome the difficulties that have occurred. I am not aware that charges reported to the attendants by the operators are frequently inaccurate, and if the hon. Member will let me have details of any particular cases I will have inquiry made. I do not think that the fitting of prepayment coin-boxes would facilitate traffic.

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION.

Mr. Hall-Caine asked the Postmaster-General what has been the approximate cost of the television service up to date; what has been the approximate revenue in respect of licences granted to owners of television sets; what is the prospective annual revenue from this source based on the number of sets now in operation; and whether it is proposed that this service shall be subsidised indefinitely out of the licence fees paid by the owners of ordinary broadcasting sets?

Major Tryon: I am informed by the British Broadcasting Corporation that the capital expenditure incurred on the television service up to the 31st December, 1936—which is the latest date for which figures are available—was £116,546, and that the revenue expenditure up to the same date, including programme, engineering and staff costs, was £128,266. In accordance with the recommendation of the Television Committee, the reception of television is, for the present, regarded as covered by the ordinary wireless receiving licence and no special television licence is required. The committee recommended that the question of introducing a special licence should be reviewed when sufficient experience has been obtained concerning the cost of the television service and of its user. This matter will be considered in due course by the Television Advisory Committee.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES, ENGLAND AND WALES.

Mr. Rhys Davies asked the Minister of Health whether he will state the number of local authorities in England and Wales, respectively, dividing them into the several categories of county councils, county boroughs, etc.?

Sir K. Wood: I am sending the hon. Member a statement giving the desired information.

RENT RESTRICTIONS ACTS.

Mr. Parker asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of the continued housing shortage and the anxiety of numerous tenants of small houses, particularly in the neighbourhood of London, he will make a statement with

regard to the intentions of His Majesty's Government to modify the existing law on the expiration of the Rent Restrictions Acts at present in force?

Mr. R. S. Hudson: As my right hon. Friend has already announced, it is the Government's intention to set up forthwith a Departmental Committee to inquire into the operation of the Rent Restrictions Acts.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LIVERPOOL (EX-SERVICE MEN).

Mr. Kirby asked the Minister of Health whether he will state the number of disabled ex-service men who were drawing sick relief from the Liverpool public assistance committee during the month of March, 1937; also the number of dependants of such men for whom relief was also granted?

Mr. Hudson: I regret that the statistical information in my Department does not distinguish ex-service men from other recipients of relief.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (REFEREES).

Mr. White asked the Minister of Health how many referees have been appointed under Section 90 of the National Health Insurance Act, 1924, and the rates of their remuneration?

Mr. Hudson: The number of referees in England and Wales is eight, and their remuneration is a fee not exceeding 10 guineas a day or 12 guineas where a hearing extends beyond seven hours.

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL POLICY.

Mr. De la Bère asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether it is the intention of the Government to keep money cheap by various methods and at the same time to attempt to curb speculation;

(2) whether he can give some assurance to the House that the Government's finance policy, which tends to make cheap money for speculators in commodities, will not entail a rise in the price of food for the people and the cost of living?

Lieut.-Colonel Colville: My hon. Friend appears to misapprehend the purpose of the Government's policy; cheap

money is not an object in itself, but a means adopted for securing the improvement of trade activity and employment. My right hon. Friend is satisfied that the policy actually followed has given a maximum stimulus to economic recovery in the United Kingdom and the Empire with a minimum of undesirable repercussions. I cannot make any statement as to the future, since the measures to be taken at any time will depend on the course of events, but I can assure my hon. Friend that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will continue to follow developments with close attention as he has hitherto done.

Mr. De la Bère asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give an assurance that the Government's policy of restriction of the use of money in this country will not lead to a sudden and uncontrolled rise in money rates; and whether, as a free money market provides the best and most constant check, he will aim at maintaining a free money market in the best interests of this country?

Lieut.-Colonel Colville: There is no restriction on the use of money in this country by the Government. If my hon. Friend has in mind the restriction on the raising of capital for investment abroad, there is no reason why that should lead to a sudden rise in interest rates. The restriction has always been applied with a careful regard to circumstances.

UNEMPLOYMENT (MINERS, TRANSFERENCE).

Mr. T. Morris asked the Minister of Labour whether his attention has been called to the shortage of skilled miners in different parts of the country; and whether, in view of the fact that in certain depressed areas there is a surplus, he has considered the possibility of assisted transference?

Mr. E. Brown: I am aware that statements have been made to the effect that there is difficulty in securing skilled miners in certain parts of the country. With regard to the latter part of the question, the facilities of the Industrial Transference Scheme are available to assist unemployed miners in the depressed areas to take up any suitable vacancies away from their home districts which cannot be filled by local workpeople.

* AGRICULTURE (CEREALS PRODUCTION).

Major Carver asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his information shows that in view of the higher prices for wheat British farmers are increasing the cultivation of cereals: and whether he can give any statistics on the subject?

Mr. W. S. Morrison: According to reports furnished by the Crop Reporters of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the area sown to wheat by the 1st January was estimated as approximately 3 per cent. greater than in the preceding year. I regret that no later or more precise information is available as to the area under cereals this year.

LICENSING STATISTICS.

Mr. C. Wilson asked the Home Secretary whether he will undertake to re-include in the next publication of the annual licensing statistics a statement showing the conditions in respect of monopoly, value, etc., under which licences are granted, with a description of licences from the point of view of their partial or annual currency?

Mr. Lloyd: As I explained in reply to a previous question on this subject, it is thought that the licensing statistics in their abridged form retain all the information which is of general interest and importance, and my right hon. Friend is aware of no sufficient ground for restoring the detailed information in respect of individual licences to which the hon. Member refers. As regards the question of the currency of licences, the hon. Member will see that additional information on this subject has been inserted in Table IVA of the Licensing Statistics, 1935.

" DAILY WORKER " NEWSPAPER (STREET SALES).

Mr. Gallacher asked the Home Secretary by what authority, on 3rd and 4th April, policemen of the S Division prevented the sale of the "Daily Worker" newspaper in High Street, Camden Town, and outside Regent's Park, in both of which places it has been sold regularly for several years, by threatening to arrest the salesmen unless they went away; whether he has any information about the refusal of police of the N Division to allow a

Communist party meeting to be held in Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town, on 4th April, on the ground that prior notice of intention to hold a meeting had been given by a Fascist organisation; whether there are any regulations providing for the booking of street-corner meeting pitches in London; and under what authority this police action was taken?

Mr. Lloyd: It is an offence under the Highway Act, 1835, to obstruct the highway or footway. I understand that on two occasions between 7 and 7.30 p.m. on the 3rd instant the police, in pursuance of their duty to prevent obstruction, found it necessary to call the attention of persons selling newspapers in High Street, Camden Town, to the obstruction they were causing; and suggested that they should move to a less crowded part of the High Street, which is very congested at that hour of the evening. Similar action was taken by the police in respect of a person selling literature at Gloucester Bridge, Regent's Park, on the 4th instant, who was causing obstruction of the footway with the result that many pedestrians had to walk in the roadway in order to pass. In all these cases the persons spoken to by the police moved on as requested, and none of them were threatened with arrest.

As regards the second part of the question, I presume that the hon. Member refers to an incident which took place on the 3rd instant. It had been announced that the Fascists intended to hold a meeting at the site in question at 8 p.m. on that date. On the arrival of the police about 7.45 they found that no preparations had been made for a meeting, but subsequently about 8.5 p.m. Fascist speakers arrived and set up their platform. The police observed a man with a red flag who said that he was going to hold a meeting if his speakers arrived, but I am informed that in fact no attempt was made by the Communists to hold a separate meeting and the question of police refusing to allow such a meeting did not arise. There is no right to reserve in advance sites for meetings in the public thoroughfares, and the Commissioner of Police has given instructions that in cases where two or more parties desire to hold meetings on the same site the principle should be followed of "first come, first served." The Commissioner is satisfied that this principle is thoroughly understood by the police and was not departed from on this occasion.

CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS ACT.

Mr. Day asked the Home Secretary whether the Advisory Committee to be set up by his Department and the Secretary of State for Scotland to consider the Cinematograph Films Act of 1909 has yet been constituted; and will he give particulars of the same and their terms of reference?

Mr. Lloyd: The terms of reference will be:—"To be an Advisory Committee for the purposes of the administration of the Cinematograph Act, 1909." I hope it will be possible shortly to announce the constitution of the committee.

Mr. Day asked the Home Secretary whether, in view of the varying decisions that are arrived at by local licensing authorities throughout the country with regard to films that have in the first instance been refused an exhibition certificate by the British Board of Film Censors, he will consider arranging, when the amendments to the Cinematograph Films Act, 1927, are introduced by the Government, to provide for film producers or renters to have the right to appeal to his Department against the British Board of Film Censors' decisions instead of having to apply separately to the local licensing authorities of each town?

Mr. Lloyd: As at present advised, my right hon. Friend would not be disposed to arrange for legislation to this effect.

PRISONS (CORPORAL PUNISHMENT).

Mr. David Adams asked the Home Secretary the number of cases of flogging in the prisons of the country during the years 1934, 1935, and 1936, respectively?

Mr. Lloyd: I presume that the hon. Member is referring to corporal punishment for prison offences. If so the figures for which he asks are as follows: in 1934, two, in 1935, none, and in 1936, six.

PUBLIC ORDER ACT.

Mr. Kelly asked the Home Secretary what reports have been made as to the wearing of uniforms and their provocative display in parts of London; and what action was taken to deal with this danger to peace which such exhibitions gave?

Mr. Lloyd: On the passing of the Public Order Act, 1936, the Commissioner of Police drew the attention of those political organisations whose members were known to wear uniform to the provisions of Section 1 of the Act. The Commissioner of Police informs me that since the 1st January the wearing of the political uniforms previously in use has been discontinued.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS (NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE).

Sir N. Grattan-Doyle asked the Home Secretary the amount of the grant to be given to the city of Newcastle-on-Tyne towards the cost of air raid precautions?

Mr. Lloyd: No, Sir: I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave last Thursday to a number of questions on this subject.

EDUCATION.

MILK FOR SCHOOLS.

Sir N. Stewart Sandeman asked the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the straws provided in schools for the drinking of milk by children are of German origin, because there is no British supply available; and whether steps could be taken to provide bleached and sterilised straws of British manufacture, since they are purchased in million lots?

Mr. Shakespeare: I am aware that the straws provided for the drinking of milk by school children are in many cases rye straws of German origin, but I am informed that a regular supply of natural straws suitable for this purpose cannot be obtained in sufficient quantity in this country.

NURSERY SCHOOLS.

Mr. Lyons asked the President of the Board of Education what is the latest progress in the development of nursery schools; and what proposals are in immediate contemplation?

Mr. Shakespeare: The present position is that 86 nursery schools are recognised by the Board of Education, of which 83 are recognised for purposes of grant, and three as efficient but not in receipt of grant. In addition 34 proposals for new nursery schools have been approved in

principle and in a number of these cases final plans have been approved by the board, and seven proposals are at present under consideration.

SCHOOL CLINICS.

Mr. Riley asked the President of the Board of Education what was the total amount expended in the year ended the 31st March, 1936, by the Board of Education and by local authorities, respectively, on clinical treatment for minor ailments, including dental treatment and visual defects, treatment in hospitals, sanatoria, special schools, etc., for major ailments and convalescence; and the total number of children in each of the above categories?

Mr. Stanley: It is not possible to separate the expenditure of local education authorities on the medical treatment of school children from their expenditure on medical inspection. The net expenditure on the medical inspection and treatment of public elementary school children during the year ended on 31st March, 1936, was £2,188,462, of which 50 per cent. was met by grants from the Board of Education. Similarly it is not possible to separate the expenditure of local education authorities on the provision of treatment in special schools, including hospital schools, from the expenditure on education in such schools. The net expenditure of local education authorities on the education and treatment of children in special schools during the year ended on 31st March, 1936, was £2,110,693, of which 50 per cent. was met by grants from the Board of Education, who also paid grants amounting to £38,034 directly to certain special schools provided by voluntary bodies. These figures, however, include expenditure on schools for blind, deaf, and mentally defective children where the expenditure on medical treatment is comparatively small. Expenditure on sanatorium schools for children suffering from tuberculosis is not included, as such expenditure is incurred by the tuberculosis authority, and not by the local education authority, and grant in respect of it is not paid by the Board of Education.

Figures showing the number of defects of various types treated by local education authorities under their school medical service during the calendar year 1935 will be found in Tables VII, VIII, IX and

XI of Appendix C to the Annual Report for 1935 of the board's chief medical officer. During the year ended on 31st March, 1936, the average attendance of children sent to special schools by local education authorities was 38,939. In schools for physically defective children as distinguished from schools for blind, deaf, mentally defective, or epileptic children, the average attendance of children sent by local education authorities was 19,769.

EX-SERVICE MEN (EMPLOYMENT).

Sir W. Davison asked the President of the Board of Education what are the numbers of ex-service men and those who have not served in the armed forces of the Crown, respectively, employed in minor grade posts in the Victoria and Albert Museum and other museums in South Kensington; and whether it is contemplated to find employment in these museums during the next two years for more ex-service men, in accordance with the recent statement of the Secretary of State for War, and to what extent?

Mr. Shakespeare: In the museums for which my right hon. Friend is responsible, namely, the Victoria and Albert Museum (including the Bethnal Green Museum) and the Science Museum, there are in the minor grades 419 ex-service men and 115 non-service men. So far as practicable, recruitment to these grades is reserved for ex-service men, and vacancies occurring during the next two years will, in the main, be filled from this source.

COAL INDUSTRY (OIL EXTRACTION).

Mr. David Adams asked the Secretary for Mines whether he has any statement to make as to the attitude of the Government towards schemes for the production of oil from coal; and whether, in view of the public interest and growing urgency of this matter, he proposes to issue a White Paper for the information of the House?

Captain Crookshank: The answer to both parts of the question is in the negative, but I hope to make an announcement on the subject of the production of oil from coal in the course of the next few days.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

LANCASHIRE COTTON INDUSTRY.

Dr. Leech asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that finance houses are seeking to obtain control of Lancashire cotton mills by purchase of their paper securities; and whether he will ask his economic advisers to watch such operations so that speculative resale, or re-capitalisation, or amalgamation, or re-financing of mills or factories may not be allowed to bring to those employed in industry disasters such as those which followed upon speculations in the ownership of mills or factories after the War?

Dr. Burgin: My right hon. Friend has received no information on this subject, but he would, of course, be glad to consider any information which my hon. Friend may care to give him.

CONDENSED MILK (IMPORTS).

Sir J. Lamb asked the President of the Board of Trade whether there was any relaxation in the restriction on imports of condensed milk during the month of March; and, if so, what was the additional quantity admitted?

Dr. Burgin: In order to relieve a temporary shortage of home supplies, arrangements were made for the principal foreign exporting countries to increase their exports of condensed skimmed milk and condensed whole milk to the United

Kingdom by 14,800 cwts. and 5,200 cwts. respectively during March.

THE CORONATION.

Mr. Denville asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the names of the representatives of the present Spanish Government who are invited to attend the Coronation?

Viscount Cranborne: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Kingswinford (Mr. A. Henderson) on 1st March, to which I am unable at present to add.

INTERNATIONAL SUGAR CONFERENCE.

Mr. Hall-Caine asked the Lord President of the Council for what reasons the Italian Government refused to attend the present International Sugar Conference now sitting in London; and what is the present approximate annual sugar production of the Italian empire?

Mr. R. MacDonald: No official reply was received; but I understand unofficially that the Italian Government felt that the conference was not of sufficient interest to the Italian sugar industry, which is not concerned with exports to the free market. As regards the latter part of the question, the average production of sugar in Italy during the last three years was about 350,000 tons.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

4.6 p.m.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir John Simon): I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

The main purposes of the Bill, as is stated in the explanatory Memorandum, are to remove the anomalies in the present standing of certain administrative officers of State by adjustments and alterations in their salaries, and in the second place to revise the existing rules as to the distribution of Ministers between the two Houses of Parliament. It is within the knowledge of the House that this question of the remuneration of Ministers has been considered more than once in recent years. There have been two Select Committees of this House which have dealt with the question, one which reported in December, 1920, and a second Committee which reported in July, 1930. Both those Committees of the House came to very much the same conclusions. We in this Bill have proceeded upon their general lines, though we have not slavishly followed their recommendations.

I would begin by putting it to the House that if we take a broad view of the recommendations of those two Committees, which examined the whole subject in detail and with evidence before them, we may claim that the present Bill is following out the general recommendations they made in their reports. Both those Committees in their unanimous reports recognised that there were anomalies in the status and remuneration of Ministers which should be corrected, anomalies which, the House will see, are largely due to the fact that at different times different new offices have been created—they have been created as it were piecemeal, without any uniform system as to Cabinet remuneration—and anomalies also which in some cases are due to the fact that when a new Department has been created it has more than once been treated at first as of minor importance, whereas in fact, as the work expanded and new problems came to the front, it was plain that it was just as important a Department as any other Department of State.

Let me give a single illustration. It is a curious fact to which to look back now, that when Mr. Gladstone formed his Government in the year 1880 and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain for the first time became a Cabinet Minister, he was appointed to the office of President of the Board of Trade at a salary of £2,000. In the same way there are modern offices like the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Agriculture, which from the point of view of hard work, from the point of view of their importance to the country as a whole, can hardly be thought to be suitably remunerated by less than half the normal Cabinet salary.

So much for the two Committees and their general recommendations. There is one part of the recommendations of those Committees which has been carried into effect—the recommendation of the 1920 Committee that there should be a reduction in the salaries of the English Law Officers to the present figures of £5,000 and £4,000 respectively, with the addition, as the Committee recommended, of the fees for contentious business. I think it is right that the House should observe that that topic, which was gone into in detail by the Committees, is a matter on which they made these recommendations, and that these recommendations have been put into effect. In no other respect have the proposals of the House of Commons Committees either of 1920 or 1930 been carried out hitherto.

Last year, almost exactly a year ago, on a day set aside for private Member's Motions, my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley (Mr. Maclay) used the opportunity of the Ballot to propose a Resolution which urged that anomalies in the existing scale of ministerial salaries should be removed as soon as possible. The Resolution also suggested that all members of the Cabinet, with the exception of the Prime Minister, should receive the same salary irrespective of the offices held, and that the salary of the Prime Minister should be increased, and, finally, that there should be a reclassification of Ministerial offices on the lines recommended by the Committee of 1920. That was the Resolution very usefully brought before the House by my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley just over a year ago. There was a full Debate on the Resolution and as a result the Resolution was adopted by a free vote of the House. I recall that

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an Amendment was moved to the Resolution by the hon. Member for the Park division of Sheffield (Mr. Lathan) in which he sought to introduce the following qualification:

"But without incurring any addition to the present agreed expenditure."

The hon. Member suggested that we were strictly limited to the sum at present being distributed and that if anything was to be gained by one set of Ministers it must be at the expense of another set of Ministers. I see that an Amendment on the Paper to-day makes the same point. I would anticipate it by this observation if I may. We are all, I suppose, opposed to unnecessary expenditure, but if the normal Cabinet salary is proper, not too high, it seems to me that there can be no real justification for insisting upon lowering it merely in order that other members of the Cabinet not equally paid shall receive more. There seems to be no principle in that. Therefore the question really comes to be whether, in the judgment of the House, the normal Cabinet salary is or is not too high. The Resolution passed by the House last year was the more significant and instructive because it was passed on a private Member's day and every one voted exactly as the spirit moved him, without external aid. The Amendment to the Resolution was heavily defeated and the Resolution was inscribed upon the journals of the House.

There is one more preliminary matter to which I shall refer before I ask the House to turn to the Bill itself. The House will remember that in the King's Speech last November there was a paragraph which indicated the intention of the Government to produce this Bill and described it as:

"A Bill to remove certain anomalies in the present standing of Ministers by adjustments and alterations in their salaries, and for other purposes."

That is exactly what the Bill does. Hon. Members will recall that on the first day of the Session there were remarks from two sides of the House on that section of the King's Speech. Let me quote a passage from what was then said by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition:

"I welcome the fact that the question of Ministerial salaries is to be reviewed. We have waited a long time for that Measure, and in the past Governments have un-

doubtedly been hampered by the need for the rigid allocation of Ministers to seats due to their historic status or the particular salaries which they carry. If that matter is dealt with, I hope that there may be reform on another matter at the same time—the allocation of Ministers between the two Houses. I think that the rigid rules which apply in the case of the Secretaries of State and the Under-Secretaries of State often hamper the more convenient arrangement of Ministers."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 3rd November, 1936; col. 23, Vol. 317.]

I am entitled to say that at any rate this is a Bill which is drawn to deal with both of these matters. The Prime Minister, who, according to custom, followed the right hon. Gentleman opposite on the first day of the Session on the Debate on the Address, took a similar view. He referred, I remember, to what he described as the oddities of the present system, and, really, nobody who looks at the list of Ministerial salaries can doubt that there are some very odd provisions to be found there. The Prime Minister added that

"it is an altogether wrong principle that there should be Members of the Cabinet receiving a certain sum as their salary and that there should be other Members receiving 40 per cent. of that sum. In theory all Cabinet tasks are equal. We are a body of equals in every sense of the word, but inevitably there are associations attached to various grades of salary."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 3rd November, 1936; col. 38, Vol. 317.]

He went on to point out, with all the more authority because of the experience which he and ex-Prime Ministers must have to the exclusion of the rest of us, that when a Ministerial and Cabinet position carries a higher salary, it is naturally regarded as a more important position. That is the way of the world, and it is not in the interest of the best administration of the country that that should continue.

Therefore, we invite the co-operation of the whole House in putting this matter right, and that is one of the objects of this Bill. If it is put right, it will be much fairer for all Governments that come in the future. Many a Government before to-day has handled this question in its thoughts and considered whether it could promote a change. It is rather an invidious thing to do. It exposes any Government to a certain measure of reproach, but, at the same time, His Majesty's Government feel that all parties will benefit from it, and we hope that, if this is now undertaken in the proper spirit, no party in the House will throw

stonés at another party for having brought about a change which in itself is necessary and desirable.

The Cabinet invite the assistance of the House, and I now ask hon. Members to turn to the Bill. Firstly, I call attention to Clause 1, reading with it the First and Second Schedules. This part of the Bill is the part which provides a scheme for the classification of offices. The first-class salaries will be found in Part I of the First Schedule on page 8, and by the terms of Clause 1 of the Bill, the holder of any one of these offices would, in connection with that office, be the recipient of a salary of £5,000. That, the House will appreciate, is subject to a later Clause in the Bill, which preserves our traditional right to move reductions in the salary put down in the Estimate, but, subject to that, the offices that are referred to in Part I of the First Schedule will be the first-class offices of £5,000. If I may now go into a little enumeration, the House will see that in Part I of the Schedule after "Chancellor of the Exchequer" comes the line "Secretaries of State." There are at present eight holders of a Secretaryship of State. If, therefore, we count that line as representing eight, we get altogether 17 individuals in that first part.

Perhaps the House will like to have indicated, while the case is before them, which of these offices would, if the Bill passes, have an increase of salary. They will be the offices of Minister of Agriculture, the President of the Board of Education, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transport, which, at present, are all £2,000 offices. These four, therefore, would move into the first category of £5,000. There are two other changes to be mentioned. One of the eight Secretaries of State does not receive at present the normal £5,000 a year salary. It is astonishing that it should be so, but I suppose that the parsimony which is proverbially attributed to the inhabitants of the northern part of this Kingdom here receives a most curious illustration. The Secretary of State for Scotland receives £2,000, and all the other Secretaries of State receive £5,000. Always subject to the approval of hon. Gentlemen who come from Scotland, and reminding them that these sums come from the general resources of the taxpayer and are not from Scotland only, there must be general

agreement that the Secretary of State for Scotland should be put in this respect exactly in the same position as other Secretaries of State. There is another very small point to be made in order to observe the full extent of the changes. The First Lord of the Admiralty gets £4,500 and the occupation of a house or an allowance of £500 in lieu. The Committees that went into this matter were completely satisfied that the occupation of the house cannot be regarded as an addition to his salary, and consequently it is proposed that he also should come into the flat rate of £5,000.

The House will see that in Part II of the Schedule there are four further offices which, by the terms of the Bill, will be £3,000 offices. At present they are £2,000, £2,000, £2,500 and £2,000. In Part III, the office there mentioned will be a £2,000 office. All that is subject to the overriding provision that a Minister, whatever be the special salary attributed to his office, who sits in the Cabinet, shall have his salary made up to the normal Cabinet figure of £5,000. That the House will see, is provided in Clause 3. From the drafting point of view, and what is more important, from the Constitutional point of view, this is a very interesting Clause, because it is the first time in the history of our Constitution that the word "Cabinet" and the phrase "Cabinet Minister" have ever appeared in the Statute Book at all. Hitherto, there has been no means within the law of ascertaining who is a Cabinet Minister and who is not. Of course, a Member of the Cabinet is a Member of the Privy Council, and if an individual has not previously been sworn of the Privy Council, he will be sworn of the Privy Council when he is made a Member of the Cabinet. It is the solemn pledge by which he binds himself to guard Cabinet secrets.

Mr. Ellis Smith: Mr. Thomas.

Sir J. Simon: But you cannot say that you can identify a Cabinet Minister in that way. There are Ministers who may be Privy Councillors without being in the Cabinet, and there are people who are not Ministers in the Privy Council. It is literally the case that, down to the present moment, there is no provision in the law of our land which either defines a Cabinet Minister or explains what he is. It has been necessary, therefore, to include in Clause 3 something which will

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help to a definition, and the House will see that the proposal in future is that the list of Cabinet Ministers shall appear in the "London Gazette," and that the dates between which an individual is a Cabinet Minister will thus be ascertained. I think that I am right in saying that up to the present all that has happened is that, when the Prime Minister accepts from the Sovereign a Commission to form a Government and in due course submits his list of Ministers, he submits a list, at the top of which appear those he proposes to have as his Cabinet colleagues, and lower down a list of those who will be outside the Cabinet. The only way in which the dividing line is drawn is when you open the paper you read the next morning a list, and at the bottom, "The above form the Cabinet." It is, therefore, a very interesting moment in the historical and constitutional sense that Parliament this year, for the first time takes upon itself to define what a Cabinet Minister is. It is necessary to provide also for bringing up the salaries of certain other persons who might be in the Cabinet. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, for example, is not paid out of public funds, but is paid a certain salary from the funds of the Duchy, and also Ministers without portfolio who, under the present law, may be as many as three.

The House will see that we also make provision in the Second Schedule for other Ministers of the Crown. The position generally will be as follows: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury will receive £3,000, and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Secretary for Mines, and the Secretary for Overseas Trade will each receive £2,000. As regards the remainder, there will be no distinction between Parliamentary Under-Secretaries and Parliamentary Secretaries, but each of those mentioned in the Second Schedule will receive £1,500, and the Assistant Postmaster-General £1,200. That is the scheme. Some of the details may be discussed hereafter, but I hope that I have said enough to make the plan plain to the House.

Now I come to Clause 4, and here again, if Clause 4 receives the approval of Parliament and goes on to the Statute Book, we shall have done what is historically and constitutionally a very interesting thing. We shall have included

in the normal law of the land provisions about the Prime Minister which at present are not to be found in any form, because one might also say, as in the matter of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister himself is equally unknown to the law. We are, therefore, again touching upon one of those interesting questions which combine practical everyday considerations with ancient constitutional origins which often seem to be topics of very special interest. May I correct a common misapprehension, not a misapprehension in this House, but a very common mistake which is made outside. People often talk about the Prime Minister receiving a salary, but under the present system there is no salary at all attached to the position of Prime Minister—none. We are not engaged in increasing the Prime Minister's salary, but in giving him one, because at present the Prime Minister, as such, does not receive any salary, and the salary which he receives is due to the fact that he holds another office as well. I would remind the House that not only is the word "Prime Minister," a phrase which is almost unknown to the law, but originally the phrase "Prime Minister" was a term of political and Parliamentary vituperation. It was used about 200 years ago with regard to Sir Robert Walpole, who was always being accused of having introduced and arrogated to himself a position which was absolutely unknown to the Constitution. Sir Robert Walpole very vigorously denied that. I have provided myself with an extract from a speech which he made on 13th February, 1741, when he described his opponents in these terms:

"Having first invested me with a kind of mock dignity and styled me a Prime Minister, they impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority which they only have erected and conferred."

Perhaps the explanation is to be found in something that Sir Robert Walpole went on to say. He said:

"I unequivocally deny that I am sole and Prime Minister."

Undoubtedly, when the phrase originally came to be used it was one of abuse, namely, the suggestion that there was one member of the Cabinet claiming to exercise full authority and to override his colleagues, which is a thing no Prime Minister ever does. If hon. Members are interested in this subject, might I say that nowhere is this matter treated with more

interest and charm than in a little book which is to be found in the House of Commons Library, from the "Gleanings" of Mr. Gladstone? When Mr. Gladstone set to work to write English prose he did it pretty well, and if anyone wishes to see and read a most admirably written and interesting essay on this subject they will find it in one of the volumes of Mr. Gladstone's "Gleanings," entitled "Kin beyond Sea." He wrote it for the "North American Review" many years ago, and, incidentally, it shows a wonderful anticipation of what was likely to be the development of the United States.

In the second half of the article he gives the best description in the English language of the undefined elements of the British Constitution. Amongst other things he discusses the nature of the Cabinet, the position of the Prime Minister, the relation between the Prime Minister and his colleagues, the relation between the Prime Minister and the Crown. There is no better work in English literature where these things are recorded than in this particular article.

The article is referred to in one chapter of Morley's "Walpole," and I think Mr. Morley declared that he owed that chapter to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone describes the position of the Prime Minister, how he is entirely outside our formal Constitution, and gives a number of historical instances, which I will not quote. He describes the Prime Minister in these words:

"The Prime Minister has no title to override any one of his colleagues in any one of the Departments. But upon the whole, nowhere in the wide world does so great a substance cause so much a shadow; nowhere is there a man who has so much power with so little to show for it in the way of formal title or prerogative."

This is the office which Mr. Asquith declared many years ago imposed upon the shoulders of the man who bore it an intolerable burden. It was that quotation which the Prime Minister recalled in the speech last Saturday which we all read with so much sympathy and admiration. There is one trifling exception from my general proposition that you cannot find the phrase "Prime Minister" on the Statute Book. It occurs in the Chequers Estate Act, 1917. Even there the draftsman seems to have hesitated to put the phrase in the body of the Act. The Act gave authority to the very generous provision of a public spirited

private citizen, and the Act describes the gift as being for the official country residence of the British Prime Minister. With that exception there is up to this moment no single case in which the Statute Book contains the phrase, although my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Education the other day succeeded in getting through the House the Second Reading of the Physical Training and Recreation Bill, which uses the words "Prime Minister."

There is one part of Clause 4 to which I would call attention, where we refer to the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Treasury. We there mark the association of the position of Prime Minister with the ministerial office of First Lord of the Treasury. Why do we do that? That has been the association almost invariably for certainly the last 100 years. If you go to Downing Street and ring the bell at No. 10 and look at the front door you will see a brass plate on it, but it does not contain the words "Prime Minister," but the words "First Lord of the Treasury." The Government Bench in this House is called the "Treasury Bench." There are many purposes for which the larger view of the Treasury has to be kept in mind. Originally, there was the Lord High Treasurer. At one time he was called the King's Treasurer. At the time of Henry VIII he was the Lord High Treasurer. A single individual then held the office, as was the case with the Lord High Admiral. Towards the beginning of the 18th century the position of Lord High Treasurer was put into commission, and from that time forward we have always had the First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Junior Lords. It is a curious circumstance that in the old days the Prime Minister was not only First Lord of the Treasury but Chancellor of the Exchequer into the bargain. Pitt held those two offices, and so did other Prime Ministers of that period. Canning was also First Lord and Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it is correct to say that in those days they drew remuneration in respect of both offices.

In the '30s of the last century a committee went into this matter and recommended that in future when the position of the First Lord of the Treasury and the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were held by the same person

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he should receive not two salaries but a salary and a half. That was the position of Sir Robert Peel in the Government of 1834. In more recent times it was the position of Mr. Gladstone. At the end of Mr. Gladstone's first Premiership and at the beginning of his second Premiership in 1888, he was First Lord of the Treasury, Prime Minister, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Very soon afterwards the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer was put into different hands. Up to that period the Prime Minister in respect of these two offices drew a salary and a half, namely, £7,500. There has been no later case except I think that the present Prime Minister for a month or two held the position of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. No one suggests that these offices can be effectively combined for any length of time, and held by one individual.

The House will, therefore, see that there is every justification for speaking of the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Treasury. There have only been two instances in the last 100 years when these two positions have not gone together. Lord Salisbury when he was Prime Minister was also Foreign Secretary. He preferred, I do not know for what reason, not to take the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and I think he did not live at 10, Downing Street. In that first Government of Lord Salisbury Mr. W. H. Smith was First Lord of the Treasury, and in his next Government the position was held by Mr. Arthur Balfour. With these exceptions there has always been this association between the position of Prime Minister and that of First Lord of the Treasury. We recognise that fact in the Bill, but the House will appreciate that that does not prejudice the question whether the Prime Minister is a Member of the House of Commons or a Member of the House of Lords. In many instances Members of the House of Lords have also been First Lord of the Treasury. Lord Rosebery and the Duke of Wellington may be cited. After these observations the House will not expect me to offer any lengthy argument about the proposal to provide an increased salary for the Prime Minister. Having carefully considered the matter the Government are satisfied that the figure proposed is a proper one. It is, as the House will under-

stand, subject to Income Tax and Sur-tax. If the holder of the office has no other income the £10,000 will be reduced to £6,241. If he has other income it will be reduced further. Therefore, without saying anything further on the point, I commend this proposal to the House.

We next propose that in the case of ex-Prime Ministers there should be the provision of a pension of £2,000 a year, chargeable to the Consolidated Fund. It seems to us that the position of ex-Prime Ministers is quite by itself. A man who has been Prime Minister in this country is sure to have had a long public career. He has borne far the greatest burden in the State. There are many possible sources of income which are open to lesser men which he cannot suitably exploit. If these considerations are duly weighed, then we put forward this proposal with the greatest confidence.

There is a further Clause which has interested many who have examined the Bill. We propose that there shall be provided out of the Consolidated Fund a salary of £2,000 a year for the Leader of the Official Opposition. There will be cases in which the Leader of the Opposition may be an ex-Prime Minister, in which case he will not draw both his pension and his salary. It would seem to me a very curious position that if the Leader of the Opposition, giving his full time to the daily work of the House, is to receive a pension when he is an ex-Prime Minister, we should refuse to consider making proper provision when the Leader of the Opposition is not an ex-Prime Minister. I am told that some people think that there is an objection in principle to this proposal. I cannot see it. If we had not payment of Members I could understand the question arising as to whether or not it was suitable that this amount should be paid to any member of the Opposition, but when we have payment of Members which is equally shared by Members of the House, except Ministers of the Crown who do not get salary as Members of Parliament and salary as Ministers, it cannot be a wrong principle that the Member of the Opposition who has the heaviest duties, who gives the most constant attendance and is absolutely essential to the working of the House, should receive a higher salary. That is the proposal which we make.

I am not presuming on this occasion to describe the position as the Leader of "His Majesty's" Opposition. It is an office more than 100 years old and it is quite certain that the daily work of the House could not go on unless the individual leader of the Official Opposition was in this House. I hope that the proposal in regard to the Leader of the Opposition will commend itself to the general sense of the House. Some commentators have suggested that it will be great fun to give the Leader of the official Opposition his salary and then move to reduce it. We avoid that conclusion by the proper method. If it is right to put the pensions of ex-Prime Ministers on the Consolidated Fund then it is right to put the salary of the Leader of the Opposition also on the Consolidated Fund. He will not then enjoy the exciting experience of finding his own friends trying by a vote to deprive him of what may seem to be his due.

There is only one other matter I desire to explain. It is rather complicated. It has to do with the second general purpose of the Bill—namely to simplify and improve the existing arrangements by which Ministers are distributed between the two Houses, what I think the Leader of the Opposition at the beginning of the Session called the allocation of Ministers between the two Houses, and which he rightly said very often hampers the formation of a Ministry. I remember the hon. Member for Leigh (Mr. Tinker) raising this question in Debate some time ago and I had the duty of replying. I found then what a complicated thing it was to explain. Long ago in the time of Queen Anne one of the principal concerns of the House of Commons was to secure that there should not be in the House after an election too many people who could be regarded as placemen receiving pay as Ministers of the Crown. Therefore an Act of Parliament was passed which drew a distinction between what were called old offices before the Act and new offices. The provision was that if any new office was created which had a salary attached to it and no special arrangements were made to the contrary, then the holder of that office was incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. That is still the law. Therefore if we make some new position which is to have a salary attached to it and we want it to be held by a Member of the House of Commons we

have to make an express exception from the Act of Queen Anne.

What we are now doing in the Bill will get rid of all that complicated and antiquated network of Statutes which really do not correspond to any modern principle at all. There is a second difficulty. One of the old offices was called the office of Secretary of State and you could have Secretaries of State sitting in the Commons without any special statutory provision. Not only so, but the position of Secretary of State could be divided up between as many individuals as you liked. It can be so at the moment. The consequence was that you could have an unlimited number of Ministers in this House called Secretaries of State without offending against the Act of Queen Anne. To get rid of that difficulty Parliament has had again and again when authorising any new Secretary of State to pass special legislation saying that not more than so many Secretaries of State shall sit in the House of Commons. At present there are eight holders of the office of Secretary of State but not more than six can sit in the House of Commons. Therefore two can and do sit in the House of Lords. In the same way with Under-Secretaries of State. There are only so many Under-Secretaries who can lawfully sit in the House of Commons. I have known of at least two occasions when the advisers of the Prime Minister, his legal colleagues, have for the moment overlooked this obligation and the Government have nearly got tripped up. There has been at least one occasion when we had to pass a special Act to cover up the mistake, and it is high time that we swept all this away.

We propose to do it in this way. The House of Lords should have its fair allowance of Ministers. We propose to have a pool of Ministers, 17 Ministers, as given in the first part of the First Schedule, and we propose to provide that out of that 17 not more than 14 can sit in the House of Commons. That means that three will be available for the House of Lords. As regards Ministers of second rank we propose to get rid altogether of the quite unnecessary distinction between Under-Secretary of State and Parliamentary Secretary; there is virtually no difference between them. We propose to make a larger total of Parliamentary Secretaries and to provide that out of the 23 not

[Sir J. Simon.]

more than 21 can sit in the House of Commons.

I have done my best to explain to the House the provisions of the Bill, and I ask that we shall have an indication of large approval from the House for its Second Reading. We are engaged in carrying through a Bill which will remove anomalies and make adjustments in a field which has long called for revision. It is a commonplace to say that our Constitution is a living growth, in which developments take place from time to time by the gradual establishment of conventions which in course of time receive statutory recognition. That is what we are doing by putting the Cabinet in the Bill and the provisions relating to the Prime Minister. I have quoted words of Mr. Gladstone. Let me conclude with a phrase which he used in the same article. He described the British Constitution as

"a machine so subtly balanced that it seems as though it were moved by something not less delicate and slight than the mainspring of a watch."

That is a profound historical truth, but, after all, watches occasionally need to be overhauled and, may be, repaired. This Bill, so far from departing from the essentials of our British system, really gives them a deeper foundation and I believe can be completely justified by those who feel, as I do, most deeply concerned to preserve the essentials of our constitutional position. We are not only the inheritors of a long tradition, not only the occupants of the present; we are also the guardians and trustees for the future, and we believe that we are legislating for the future in moving the Second Reading of this Bill.

4-54 p.m.

Mr. Arthur Greenwood: I beg to move, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the question, and to add instead thereof:

"this House, whilst in favour of the removal of anomalies in Ministerial salaries provided that the aggregate charge is not increased, is of opinion that a reconsideration of the machinery of government and of the allocation of Ministers to Departments should precede legislation on Ministerial remuneration."

We have listened with great interest to the speech in which, with his usual clarity, the right hon. Gentleman has explained the Bill. He has enlightened us on the history which lies behind it, but

has said very little to guide the House about the change which is now to take place with regard to the position of the Cabinet. I am not sure that the Cabinet is like a delicate watch. I do not know; it may be true. I have been a member of only one Cabinet, but it is perfectly true that all watches ought to be overhauled sometimes, and possibly a good deal more frequently than they are. But the right hon. Gentleman has admitted the case put forward in our Amendment. Whilst we accept the idea of removing anomalies in the salaries of Ministers, within limits, we believe that this step should not have been taken apart from a reconstruction of the machinery of government and the allocation of Ministers. The right hon. Gentleman has given us our case this afternoon. He has told us that never before in an Act of Parliament has the word "Cabinet" been mentioned. He has described with great exactitude of detail, which we rarely get from other Ministers on the Front Bench, the changes which are to be made in regard to Ministers in the House of Commons and Ministers in the House of Lords.

Surely, having said that, there is a wider case to be considered. Our Amendment, which does not cover all our objections to the Bill, concentrates on what seems to be the primary issue. The whole structure of government in this country is the result of a very haphazard growth. I do not complain about that; it is perfectly natural. As new duties and responsibilities arise new Departments are set up by the Government, and there are times when, as a result of this haphazard growth, you arrive at a stage when the whole system should be rationalised. The right hon. Gentleman has explained that he is trying to rationalise a very ancient Constitution, by recognising the Prime Minister, by recognising the Cabinet and by re-organising the relations of Ministers as between House of Lords and the House of Commons. But surely in these days, when we have inherited Departments which go back into the far distant past and new Departments which have been created because of the insistent needs of the moment, the time has arrived when we should not merely rationalise Ministers' salaries but try to rationalise the whole process of government. There have been inquiries on this matter. The late Lord Haldane was the Chairman of a Committee which reported as long ago

as 1918, but the process of government is such that that report may well be out of date to-day. I am not committing myself to the proposals which were made, because nearly 20 years have elapsed, and it is undoubtedly true that from the time when the late Lord Haldane's Committee reported to the present we have added Ministry after Ministry by legislative process, and we are faced to-day with a system under which a number of Ministers derive their authority from mysterious sources a long way back, without the sanction of this House, and a number of Ministers whose salaries have been regulated by this House.

If we are to regulate and rationalise the salaries of Ministers and the Cabinet, and other Ministers whom the right hon. Gentleman called second-rate, then it seems to me that the prior consideration should be to rationalise the functions which these Ministers have to carry out. I am concerned with the process of government, which is, after all, the primary consideration of hon. Members. I do not propose to go into any details now, but the Government have precipitated the problem of the organisation of the fighting Services. It may well be that at this time and in this situation the right method of government is to have a Ministry of Defence, but although the Government have given consideration to the minor question of rationalising salaries, they appear to have given no consideration to what is a great question of national policy, the co-ordination of those Ministries which are concerned with the Defence of the country. I am certain that time will prove the rightness of my remarks in the case of the various Departments concerned with economic development. The economic development of our nation is now becoming a national problem; it is becoming a problem of national planning. At the present time economic development is split up among a number of Departments without there being any kind of co-ordination. One might go on illustrating the fact that our system of government, which has its roots far back in the past, is one which has no close relationship to the problems which face us to-day.

The Home Secretary has not said anything about the size of the Cabinet, and I do not intend to say much on that point. The Cabinet is rather a slipshod body, and it always has been; but under this Bill

there is a power which I think ought not to be given to the Prime Minister after this process of rationalisation, the power to raise a Minister outside the Cabinet to Cabinet rank, with an increase in salary. The way out of that might well be to fix the number of Members of the Cabinet. As far as I could ascertain from the Home Secretary's speech, that is a matter which was not considered by the Government before they undertook the responsibility of increasing their aggregate salaries. In my view, there is something to be said for a somewhat smaller Cabinet. One would have thought that the Government might have given consideration to that question before they introduced the proposals contained in this Bill.

The Home Secretary referred to certain Ministers without Portfolio. I do not know why it seems to be assumed that we on this side of the House have no use for Ministers without Portfolio. We are not taking any line against the continuance of those Ministers who are not burdened with heavy Departmental responsibilities. I will not cite their names, but there are at least three Ministers, two of whom are generally in the Cabinet and all of whom have been, who are not burdened with the details of running great Departments. In future Governments, however, Ministers without Portfolio might be responsible for a more general direction of policy than could be undertaken by those persons who are charged with the responsibility for great Departments. Therefore, we are not against the recognition of those Ministers whose responsibilities appear in this Government to be trifling, but who might in future Governments be very important to the success of those Governments.

Having regard to those considerations, our view is that it is unfortunate that the Government have not given their mind to the whole problem of the organisation of government before dealing with the question of Ministers' salaries. It is the more unfortunate in that this step legalises part of our Constitution, which up to now has been unwritten, and will therefore tend to stabilise a condition of affairs as regards the machinery of government which most hon. Members on this side of the House regard as being unfortunate. In our Amendment we suggest that there should be no increase in the aggregate cost arising from this Bill. I am prepared to admit that in a sense that is arbitrary.

[Mr. Greenwood.]

There is no special sanctity about the exact amount which is now spent on Ministers of the Crown. The country has borne it for many years and it has been accepted; but we believe, although it may be quoted against us—it is not given to all parties to be absolutely consistent, and I have no apology to make in this matter—that in 1937 there is no real justification for placing on the taxpayer an increased burden for carrying on the responsibilities of office. I understand the view of the Prime Minister. I realise that he has had a very long term of office. I hope he will accept it without any offence when I say that he has lived in a different station of life from that in which most of us on this side of the House have lived, and that I can understand his thinking that Ministers of the Crown ought to be better paid.

But I ask the House, On what standard is it going to proceed? Is it to be on the standard of the old landed aristocracy, or is to be on the standard of our commercial life to-day? If that were so, there is no salary that could be offered to a Prime Minister which would attract certain Members of the House to accept the job. We cannot determine our standards here either by the old landed aristocracy or by the payments which are made in commerce. It is important in the interests of our system of democratic government that we should not widen the wide chasm which already divides Ministers of the Crown from the rank and file of the people. The standards which predominate to-day are standards which were defined when the machinery of government was invariably in the hands of the well-to-do, the Liberal party or the Conservative party. It is true that some were poorer than others, but none was absolutely poor. In these days, when democracy is becoming a reality for which we may have to fight, it seems to me to be a great mistake to put a high price on the services of those officers of State who are called to office because it is the view of the people that they have the people's interests at heart. Politics to-day cannot be left to those who are rich or to those who have other means of subsistence. The future of democracy in this country depends upon the ultimate disappearance of social and economic distinctions.

If the House of Commons not merely rationalises its salaries, but increases

them in the aggregate, it is giving a handle to those people who believe that politicians are persons who are "on the make." I never mind being called a politician, although I am bound to say that I feel a little hurt when the "Daily Mail" calls me a "mere politician." The term "politician" is not one of which anybody need be ashamed, but if it can be interpreted by interests in this country as meaning that people care more for their personal advancement than they do for the public well-being, the House will have struck a blow at the democratic system of government. It is for that reason that hon. Members on this side of the House, after very careful consideration, have come to the conclusion that the best thing the Government could do would be to stabilise the idea of a kitty in which everybody would properly share. [AN HON. MEMBER: "A kitty?"] The term "kitty" is a colloquial term which some hon. Members may not understand; I will use the term "pool." We have come to the conclusion that there should be a pool from which all responsible Members of the Government would draw equally.

The Home Secretary referred to the Law Officers of the Crown. Speaking as a layman, I see no reason why a lawyer, when he becomes a Member of the Government, should receive fees in addition to his salary. It appears to me to be reasonable that if a man goes on to the Government Front Bench, having reached a high position of industrial or commercial responsibility and having sacrificed what he could have got, the Law Officers of the Crown have no right to get piece-rate fees in addition to their salaries. It may be that the Lord Chancellor is worth more than the Prime Minister. That is a matter for the right hon. Gentleman to settle with the Lord Chancellor. It may be that the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General are worth more than the Secretaries of State but whether they should, in addition to their salaries, draw fees—which I think in this democratic age might well be abolished—is another matter. I should have thought that when people became Members of the Government, whatever their profession or calling, they ought to throw all their knowledge and experience into the balance on behalf of the State and ought not to be in what I regard as the very invidious position of drawing fees in addition to their official

salaries. It would be possible to do something for the somewhat crestfallen and poorer comrades of the Prime Minister if the right hon. Gentleman were to bring the Law Officers down to the general trade union level for Cabinet Ministers of the second rank instead of giving them most-favoured-nation treatment. That would release a certain amount of money which might be used to help the right hon. Gentleman's poorer colleagues.

On this side of the House we accept the principle of collective responsibility for Cabinet Ministers. After all, the members of the Cabinet must share the responsibility for the decisions which they take. Therefore, we accept in principle the view that all Cabinet Ministers should receive equal salaries, but that, I think, ought to follow on a rationalisation—I am sorry to have to use that word again—of the machinery of government. It is well known that in a Cabinet of 21 all do not share equal administrative responsibility but we believe that, as members of the Cabinet, responsible for primary policy, they ought to receive the same salaries. There is another point which is not referred to in the Bill but which is one of substance. Indeed it involves what is perhaps a more important question than that of salaries, that is, the question of the necessary expenses of office. The expenses which fall to be provided by Ministers in carrying out their duties vary from Department to Department. No doubt the heaviest responsibility falls upon the Prime Minister, and our view is that it would be preferable to provide the Prime Minister with an adequate allowance to enable him to bear, with dignity and honour, all the expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of his office. That, I think, should also apply to other Ministers of State. It is very difficult, even if you accept the principle of collective responsibility, to allocate on a salary basis the expenses necessarily incurred by Ministers of the Crown. I am not dealing now with the figures. That is a matter for the Committee stage, but if we could agree to some standardisation of Ministers' salaries, with adequate subsistence and expenses allowances, I think it would be the proper way of dealing with this problem.

Then there is the question of ex-Prime Ministers' pensions. Ex-Prime Ministers

may vary in quality and in length of service as Prime Ministers, but my hon. Friends and I think that the principle of providing what we on this side of the House would call "adequate maintenance" for ex-Prime Ministers should be accepted. We are not accepting any particular figure, but it is no doubt right that an ex-Prime Minister, having borne the weight of responsibility as Prime Minister, should be relieved of the temptation of writing for the Hearst Press in America or seeking to make adventitious gains by other means. Therefore it seems to us right, apart from the question of the figure, that this House should honour the services, irrespective of party, of one who has achieved the very high rank and carried out the very arduous duties of Prime Minister.

I now come to a matter which is of particular difficulty and delicacy to us on this side of the House. I refer to the position of Leader of the Opposition. I agree with what the Home Secretary said when he referred to the payment of Members. Members of the House are not paid their allowances by His Majesty's Government. They are paid by the State, and the fact that a Member, whether on this side or the other side of the House, receives £400 a year, in no way affects his freedom as a Member of this House. I have never noticed that it does—not even on the other side of the House. We are prepared to accept the principle of some allowance being paid to the Leader of the Opposition to meet expenses necessarily incurred in the carrying out of his duties as Leader of the Opposition. That would not mean that he would be the slave of the right hon. Gentleman opposite or his successor. It would not impair his freedom in any way, because the appointment of the Leader of the Opposition does not reside on the Government side of the House. It resides here. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Like Mr. Speaker's."] Except that the Leader of the Opposition is not appointed by the whole House, as Mr. Speaker is appointed. But he is appointed by the Members who, for the time being, sit on this side of the House.

I am sure the right hon. Gentleman opposite will realise the difficulty in which we are placed in dealing with this matter. As I say, I accept the principle, and I speak for myself and I think for a good many of my hon. Friends when I say

[Mr. Greenwood.]

that the acceptance of this principle is a challenge to the totalitarian States. It is a challenge to Fascism and not the first that we have had in this House. It is very difficult for me to pay any kind of tribute to right hon. Gentlemen opposite. I do it with the gravest misgiving and the gravest reluctance, because these things may be used against me. But at least, on the question of Fascism, in the last Parliament this House made a gesture to the Fascist States of Europe which meant, to use a colloquialism, "You can't do that there here," when we said, "No Fascist uniforms, no semi-military demonstrations, no militarisation of politics." That was a gesture to the other democracies of the world.

Sir J. Simon: It was in this Parliament.

Mr. Greenwood: I am sorry. It was in this Parliament, but I think it was in last Session. When we had certain constitutional difficulties just before Christmas, difficulties which in many other countries might have led to a constitutional revolution, we rode the storm without great disturbance, with this Parliament representing the views of the vast majority of our people. This is another occasion of the same kind. This Parliament—and I must put on record how much I dislike its composition—is now, for the first time, apart from recognising the Prime Minister and the Cabinet recognising the Opposition as an integral part of this House. It is a gesture of some importance. The Prime Minister would probably agree with me that whatever Government is in office, the Opposition in this House is always the bulwark of free democracy. The Opposition stand for free speech, for freedom of thought, for freedom in the expression of opinion, and for that reason alone the gesture which is made in this Bill is to be noted. We have not been consulted. I do not want it to be thought that this is a plot between the two Front Benches and that we are acting as "yes-men" to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Mr. Maxton: They have been very good to you, anyhow.

Mr. Greenwood: And there has always been very good feeling between the hon. Member and them.

Mr. Maxton: The votes do not show that.

Mr. Greenwood: I am saying as I always will in this House what I believe to be true, and I am very much concerned about the maintenance of our free democratic institutions. The fact that it is now recognised and embedded in our Constitution that the Leader of the Opposition is there, whatever the Government may say about it, is something of which I think we may be proud. But there is another question allied to this, a question to which I think the Government might have given prior consideration. Having deliberately, as it seems to me, ignored the major issue on which the question of Ministerial salaries depends, they might have thought about the common stock of this body of the House of Commons. The primary consideration of Members of this House clearly is the efficiency of our system of Parliamentary government, and it is not alone on Members of the Government or of the Front Opposition Bench that the responsibility for the efficiency of the House of Commons depends.

Parliament is a very vast network. There are people who are called back-benchers, people who are called front-benchers, people who are high officers of the House but cannot speak in it, people who are humbler officers of the House, and servants of this House, some of them relatively well paid, some of them, unfortunately, ill paid, but all of whom make their contribution to the success and the efficiency of the House of Commons. They are part of the general structure of government. Whether it be the police, whether it be the messengers, whether it be the higher officers of the House, they are all part and parcel of the machinery whereby this House works and achieves the results which redound to the credit of the Prime Minister. Therefore, they should also be considered, and, I think, the Government—I know that this is not an easy question on which to speak—might have thought about the salaries which are paid to certain of the servants of this House, those who sit here in this Chamber, those who are elected here, those who have to carry on the burden of legislation. It may well be that Members of Parliament are not worth any salary at all, but that question has been settled. It was settled years ago, not by a Government of my political complexion, but by the general approval of Members, a good many of whom were

in no substantially better financial position because of it.

I believe I am right in saying that in this House to-day there are many Members of all parties who feel that this is a problem which ought to-day to be reconsidered. I am not going, because I do not think it would be in the public interest, to recite the kind of life that the hard-working Member of Parliament lives; I am not going to recount the deprivations which many Members of this House, because of their membership, have to suffer, but I am concerned that Members of this House should be able to carry on their responsibilities with efficiency and with dignity. I do not wish to quote the salaries of Members of other Parliaments, but in other democratic assemblies the salaries of members are higher than they are here. It is true that since the salary was first established the cost of living has increased and, if I may say so, the pressure in political life has also increased, and I should hope that the Prime Minister and His Majesty's Government will consider that.

This, like the question of an allowance to the Leader of the Opposition, is a very delicate question. I am not a rich man. I have a very small salary outside that for my Parliamentary duties, but I should not have liked any of my hon. Friends—indeed, they would not have done it—who were dependent upon it to come cap in hand to this House. It is a question of the dignity of this House, and I raise it not in any narrow, party, controversial spirit, as the right hon. Gentleman will understand, but in order, now that we are considering a revision of the salaries of members of the Government, that this matter should be taken into their consideration. I think I may say—so I am informed—that Members to whom it would mean nothing feel that this is a matter which ought to be dealt with, and dealt with at this time. I am convinced, myself, that if this golden opportunity goes by, there will be no opportunity for a long time of dealing with this general problem of the salaries of Members of this House and of the other servants of the House who are not well paid.

My final word is this, that on this side of the House our primary concern is to make the democratic system work, to make it work efficiently, and to make it work as swiftly as possible, and I believe

that one way to do that is to get somewhat nearer to the equalitarian state, to reduce the gap between the governed and the governors. I see no reason why a Minister of the Crown, during his somewhat temporary period of office—because nobody remains there for ever, not even the right hon. Gentleman—should be so far removed from the ordinary rank and file, and I think that the great pride of our Government in this country ought to be that those who come to this House do it, not because of emoluments, not because of maintaining some standard which, after all, is purely fictitious and arbitrary, but out of a spirit of public service; and if we can, in this Bill, prove to the country that we are not squandering its resources by giving people £5,000 a year, but that we are trying to make our system of government effective, so that we can return to the governed those priceless blessings which we are sent here to give them, the better I think it will be for democracy. This is not an ordinary, political, party Debate. This has not been an easy speech for me to make, because I am naturally, or unnaturally as the case may be very controversial, but I have tried to put what my hon. Friends think is a reasoned and reasonable case, without bitterness, without any kind of venom, but with a desire to improve the quality of our system of government in defence of our democratic principles.

5.41 p.m.

Sir Archibald Sinclair: The right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood), who has just sat down, said in the opening part of his speech that he would not trouble the House with very much detail in discussing this Bill. I shall crave the indulgence of the House to be allowed to enter into rather more detail than he did, and I cannot help thinking that, interesting as his speech was, it might have carried more conviction if he had given us rather more of the details of the scheme which apparently he had in his mind. I found it difficult, I must say, to reconcile his speech with the terms of the Amendment which is on the Paper, and I found it difficult to reconcile the almost apologetic spirit in which he addressed the House towards the conclusion of his remarks with an Amendment which, if carried, would undoubtedly have the effect, which I presume he and

[Sir A. Sinclair.]
 his friends intend, of killing the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman, for example, said that he was in favour of the payment of a salary to the Leader of the Opposition; he is in favour of increasing the salary of the Prime Minister; he is in favour of giving allowances to the Prime Minister, and not only to the Prime Minister, but also to other Ministers of the Crown; he is in favour, I understood, of a pension for the Prime Minister; and how he is going to make all this provision within the terms of an Amendment which calls upon the House to make such arrangements that the aggregate charge is not increased, passes my powers of comprehension.

The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in introducing this Bill, naturally started by relating its discussion to the private Member's Motion which was passed during the last Session. I, unfortunately, was not able to be in the House that evening, but if I had been, I should have voted for that Motion. I thought that that Motion was well framed, and I was convinced by the speeches which I read and which were made on its behalf; and I shall make that Motion the starting point of the remarks which I propose to offer to the House this evening. But the Bill that we have before us now goes far beyond the terms of that Motion. It embodies a policy which is far more generous, and indeed lavish, than the House of Commons approved when it passed that Motion, and this Bill seems to me to have been framed without any regard for the importance, and I would say the increased importance since that Motion was passed, of public economy. The Home Secretary, in his opening remarks, referred to the Select Committees of 1920 and 1930, but this Bill goes far beyond the proposals which were made by those Select Committees. Take, for example, the number of Ministers who will come on the £5,000 level of salary. That level was fixed by the 1920 Committee as the normal level of salary at a time when prices were a great deal higher than they are now. According to the report of the 1920 Committee, there were 12 ministers to be remunerated at that level, but, according to the proposal now before the House, there are to be no fewer than 17, an increase of nearly 50 per cent.

Let me come to some of the important points of detail which are raised in this Bill. I will take first the case of the Prime Minister. The proposal is to increase his salary by 100 per cent., from £5,000 to £10,000, and, when his Government is defeated and he crosses the Floor to become Leader of the Opposition, he is to receive a salary of £2,000 or, if he retires into private life, a pension of £2,000. I should be in favour of some of these proposals, but all of them together certainly seem to be excessive. I do not think there was anything in the evidence which was tendered to the Select Committees of 1920 and 1930 which justified proposals of this magnitude. Indeed, the Committee of 1920 reported only in favour of a salary of £8,000. It did not report in favour of a pension or of a salary to the Leader of the Opposition. The Committee of 1930 reported in favour of a salary of only £7,000 a year. The proposal which is now before the House is, therefore, an increase of roughly 50 per cent. on the proposal which was made by the Select Committee of 1930.

I say, therefore, that this increase is greater than is required in the public interest. I agree that a Prime Minister ought to receive a pension, but if he receives a pension I do not think there is a strong case for doubling his present salary and for raising it to so high a figure as £10,000 a year. I should say that £7,000, a figure recommended by the 1930 Select Committee, would be ample for his current needs if he is to receive a pension of £2,000 on retirement. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield favoured allowances to the Prime Minister. I assume he meant allowances instead of any increase of salary. That is a proposal which is well worth consideration, but we must remember, before we embrace it too quickly, that a great deal of evidence against the payment of allowances was given before the Select Committees, including the evidence of past Prime Ministers, who said they did not like the idea and would prefer to have the increase of salary. On the whole, therefore, I am inclined to believe that the best plan would be to increase the salary to £7,000 and to give a pension of £2,000.

As regards the other Ministers, the Government have adopted the principle of classification of offices which was recommended by the Select Committees of 1920

and 1930. Here again, the classification is on a generous, and, I do not think it extravagant to say, on a lavish scale. I agree that Ministers such as the Minister of Labour, the Secretary of State for Scotland,*the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Education, are underpaid at the present salary of £2,000. It is unfair to pay the Minister of Labour £2,000 while the Minister of Health is paid £5,000. It represents a false sense of values to pay the Minister of Education £2,000 while the Secretary of State for War is paid £5,000. In addition to that, it makes a difficulty for the Prime Minister in filling these vitally important but less well paid offices like the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture. It is wrong that Ministers with heavy departmental responsibilities should not be freed from all sense of financial worry and anxiety by a salary greater than the £2,000 which they now receive; but double it and bring it up to £4,000 a year, and it seems to me that the difficulties will be amply met. No party has found it impossible in practical experience to persuade good men to accept these less well paid offices. Double the salaries of the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland, and put them on a level with all the other great offices, and the difficulties would disappear.

When I say that, I mean that the salaries of all Cabinet offices should, in my opinion, with certain exceptions, be equalised at £4,000 instead of £5,000 as in this Bill. I do not believe that difficulty would be found in obtaining men with the highest qualifications to accept great offices at that salary, nor that acceptance of office at that salary could be regarded as a sacrifice. To some men, of course, acceptance of office at anything like £4,000 or £5,000 would be a sacrifice, but that difficulty would not be got over by raising their salary by £1,000 a year. On a salary of £4,000 Cabinet Ministers would be amply remunerated.

I would place in the first category of £5,000 a year offices only three Ministers. I would pay the Prime Minister £7,000, and I would have only three in my category of £5,000 a year Ministers. The first would be the Chancellor of the Exchequer because of his position in the Cabinet. Although it is true that Members of the Cabinet sitting round a table

have equal responsibility and an equal voice in policy, it is equally true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has an exceptional position. He is the man who has to be consulted and carried along by any Minister who wants to do anything in his Department. He is in a position of exceptional authority, and he carries an exceptionally heavy burden of responsibility.

Then, I think, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should have £5,000, partly on account of his exceptional burden of responsibility and partly because of the entertainment which he has to do as part of the duties of his office. There will be a case, if the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield, of paying allowances to certain Ministers, is taken up, for paying an allowance to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. If he were paid an allowance, there would be no case for paying him more salary than the normal, which I would regard as £4,000; but if he is not to be paid an allowance, and if it is agreed to be generally preferable to increase salaries, I would put him on the £5,000 a year level. The third Minister who, in my view, should receive £5,000 is the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, assuming that he will in future really discharge the functions of a co-ordinator of Defence. When the House pressed for the appointment of the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, we all thought he was really going to co-ordinate Defence, that he was really going to combine the doctrines of the three great Services into one strategic whole. We have been disappointed. It might help in that direction and would certainly be a natural result of any move to attain that goal, if that Minister received a higher salary than the three Service Ministers.

There is one office in Part I of the First Schedule to the present Bill which would find no place in Part I or II of my schedule, and that is the Ministry of Transport. I agree that in these days it is an anomaly that the Minister of Transport should be paid £500 a year less than the Postmaster-General, but I cannot see why he should be paid £2,000 a year more. I would, therefore, put him in Part III of my schedule with the Postmaster-General at £2,500. I would leave the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal and the First Commissioner of Works with their present

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salaries of £2,000, unless they were Members of the Cabinet, in which case, along with the Minister of Transport and the Postmaster-General if either or both were also Cabinet Ministers, they would receive the normal salary of a Cabinet Minister, which, according to my proposals, would be £4,000.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield dealt with the case of the Law Officers of the Crown, and I must say that I agree with what he said. I do not see why the members of this one profession should, on entering the great offices of responsibility in the public service, be the people to receive a salary far exceeding that of any of their colleagues in the Cabinet. I have never been able to understand why, when a journalist or a business man is expected to sacrifice his fees on entering the Cabinet, lawyers who become Law Officers and who, when they resign their posts in the public service return to the Bar with greatly enhanced prestige, should continue to draw these immense salaries.

Now it cannot be said that such a salary as £4,000 would be parsimonious or unfair or that it would be so small as to repel men who are qualified by character, ability and a real sense of a vocation for public service from entering public life and aspiring to positions in the Government. It is surely relevant in this discussion to compare the salaries which it is proposed to pay to British Cabinet Ministers with those paid to Cabinet Ministers in other countries. In France the average salary of Cabinet Ministers is £1,000, plus the salary as a Member of Parliament, making it only £1,500 a year. It is true that a Minister gets a motor car and, in many cases, a private residence, and that he gets things kept up, but the difference between £1,500 and £5,000 is unbridgeable, even taking into account things of that kind. In my judgment the difference is far too great. In the United States of America a Cabinet Minister has £3,000 a year. Cabinet Ministers there are not members of Congress and receive no other salary, and they pay tax on their salaries, just as do Ministers in this country. If £3,000 a year is enough for Cabinet Ministers in the United States of America, surely £4,000 a year is enough for a British Cabinet Minister. It

would, in fact, be an ample provision, and if it is ample we should be failing in our public duty by approving the lavish proposals which are before us.

Nor, quite frankly, do I like the proposal to pay a salary to the Leader of the Opposition. I do not see any analogy between the payment of a salary to the Leader of the Opposition and the payment of Members, an analogy which the Home Secretary suggested. The sum of money which Members receive is not, in fact, a salary at all, but a payment for allowances in respect of the necessary expenditure which a Member of Parliament incurs in the course of his duty, and it is a wholly different proposal to pay a salary of £2,000 a year to one Member who happens to be the Leader of the Opposition. I must say that I was astonished that the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood) regarded this as a gesture to Hitler, as a gesture of defiance to the Fascist and authoritarian forces in Europe. I would say that the proper gesture for a democratic country to make to those Governments is to say to its Government "Hands off the Opposition." Neither put our Opposition leaders in concentration camps nor coddle them and pay them such a salary as the Government propose to do.

The right hon. Gentleman talked of recognising the Opposition. Recognising them! Does an Opposition need to get the countenance of the Government before it can be recognised as an Opposition? No wonder the Opposition at present is weak, if that is the view it takes of its functions. The function of an Opposition is to gain recognition from the electors of the country and to force it from the Government, not to receive it from the Government as a gift. I, therefore, think this proposal is wholly misconstrued. I cannot think that the payment of a salary to the Leader of the Opposition will add to the respect in which he is held, in which the office is held, and rightly held, in this House and in the country.

The effect of my proposals would be two-fold. In the first place it would remove the anomalies and unfairnesses which undoubtedly disfigure the present schedule of salaries, and, on the other hand, it would save, as compared with the proposals of the Government, no less than £21,500 a year, in addition to the savings which would be effected by the

corresponding adjustment in the salaries of Under-Secretaries. Public economy is an issue of the first importance. It is our duty in this House to safeguard the public purse, and surely that duty was never more important than now, when the Government are proposing to throw away the gains of the first National Government of 1931-32 and to embark again upon a series of unbalanced Budgets. Surely this is the time of all recent times when considerations of public economy ought to weigh with us most seriously. The call for sacrifice in the face of foreign danger which is being made by Ministers to the country, and rightly made, and which meets with a great deal of support from the Opposition, both above and below the Gangway, will not come with quite the same loud unflinching clarion notes from a Government which is asking for the salaries of its own Ministers to be raised substantially above the very minimum demanded by the dictates of justice and the requirements of personal efficiency. The Select Committee which sat on this subject in 1930 thought that that was a wrong moment at which to act, except as regards the salary of the Prime Minister, which they suggested should be raised to £7,000 a year. This is a worse moment, because now the country has been called upon to face great sacrifices and immense expenditure on unproductive objects, an expenditure which we and our children will have to pay for by greatly increased taxation in the future. At such a moment the House of Commons ought, in the public interest, to be very zealous to see that there is no unnecessary expenditure. I would not say that we should do nothing at all at this moment. On the contrary, I have ventured to give in some detail the proposals which I should be prepared to support. I would support a Bill which was framed with rigid regard to economy and was on the lines which I have explained to the House, but this is a bad moment for the lavish expenditure which the Government is now proposing.

I have, of course, read the Amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, and I have a great deal of sympathy with its spirit, as I think I have shown in some of the remarks I have made, notably with regard to the review of the functions of Ministers. I agree that there is great need for an

adjustment of the relationship between the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence and the other Defence Ministers, and for a consequent adjustment of the salary, but I was not attracted by the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion to rationalise all the functions of the Ministers and their salaries and, as he said, to fix, apparently in perpetuity, or more or less in perpetuity, the number of members in the Cabinet. In another part of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said that even the proposals of the Haldane Committee might now be out of date. I do not believe that you can fix and rationalise for all time the size of the Cabinet and the duties of Departments which are matters of constitutional growth; I believe the number of members of the Cabinet must be flexible, and that there must be a certain amount of flexibility about the functions of the different Ministers; but, apart from that, I have a great sympathy with the zeal for economy which animates the Labour Amendment, and I agree with the proposal that the functions of Ministers should be carefully considered and their salaries related to those functions. Certainly, I cannot approve of and shall vote against the Bill, which is lavish, untimely and framed without due regard to the interests of public economy.

6.10 p.m.

Viscount Wolmer: We have had some "hot air" from my right hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Sir A. Sinclair), if I may use that expression without offence.

Sir Percy Harris: It is very offensive.

Viscount Wolmer: It was very eloquent "hot air." I recognise that it is the duty of both sections of the Opposition to criticise the Government's proposal, but I think they will be doing a bad service to democracy if they use words which may give the public the impression that politics is a lucrative profession and that a great many people go into it to see what they can make out of it. That is a gibe which probably everyone of us has heard in the course of his political career, and a gibe which everyone of us knows to be absolutely untrue, and I do beg hon. Members opposite when they are exercising their legitimate and very necessary functions of scrutinising and criticising the proposals of His Majesty's

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Government not to use phrases or to speak in a temper which lends colour to that theory, because I know perfectly well that they do not themselves subscribe to it. I suggest that the Opposition would be rendering a public service if they told the public the truth in this respect which is that politics is an exceedingly unlucrative profession, that in 99 cases out of 100 men who spend long years on the Treasury Bench do so at enormous personal sacrifice, and that if they were not serving their country they would generally earn far more money elsewhere.

Sir A. Sinclair: As the Noble Lord has referred to me personally, and, if I may say so, offensively, would he allow me to ask to what part of my speech his homily relates? I expressly said that men could be found to serve the Government and the public faithfully at salaries less than those which the present Government are proposing.

Viscount Wolmer: I used the expression I did in a chaffing and bantering way, and I did not mean it offensively, and if my right hon. Friend thinks it is offensive, of course, I will withdraw it. What I referred to was that his homily about economy was really irrelevant and absolutely out of proportion to the facts of the case. The salaries of £5,000 a year which Ministers of the Crown are paid were, in many cases, fixed more than 100 years ago, and the value of money has altered enormously since then. In the eighteenth century £5,000 a year was a very different sum from £5,000 a year in the twentieth century. Further, that figure was fixed at a time when there was no Income Tax. That is what I mean by my criticism of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Though the figure of £10,000 a year for the Prime Minister may seem a big figure to someone who has never enjoyed £10,000 a year, yet when the Home Secretary points out that it really means no more than £6,000 a year, he puts an entirely different complexion on the matter, and that is the sort of point to which hon. Members opposite ought to give recognition in their remarks. Then, again, in the nineteenth century Cabinet Ministers of all parties accepted directorships and were in receipt of considerable fees as directors while they were still in

office. There was no secret about it, and no dishonourable motive was imputed. In those days Parliament interfered very little with the commercial life of the nation, but in the last 25 years that practice has gone out. Therefore, the real salaries of Cabinet Ministers, so far from increasing, have been constantly diminishing; they have been diminished by the lower purchasing power of money, increased Income Tax and Super-tax, and the sterner standards which we have adopted in the matter of these outside directorships.

Those are the facts which I suggest in the interests of democracy and of the good name of British public life, should be explained by hon. Members to the country, just as much as by hon. Members on this side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood) asked what justification there was for putting an increased burden on the taxpayer in 1937 in respect of Government administration. Surely there is every justification, in the first place simply on the standard of work done. A Government of to-day does vastly more than a Government of 50 years ago, and the duties of a Minister are far more exacting and onerous than they were then. To represent the sum of money involved as an important fraction of our national Budget is to give a wholly exaggerated and disproportionate analysis of the case.

It is a reproach to our public life that men like Arthur Balfour and Henry Asquith should spend the whole of their lives in the service of the State and be many thousands of pounds poorer at the end than they were at the beginning, or than they would have been if they had worked for themselves instead of for the country. There is a great deal in the suggestion which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield that some of these payments should be in the form of allowances. Expenses are forced upon Ministers and upon the Leader of the Opposition. They cannot avoid them, and it would be appropriate that those expenses should be recognised in the form of an allowance rather than in the form of an increase in salary. That would have the great advantage that it would correspond to the facts. In a democracy we must frame our legislation in a manner which is understood of the public, and that arrangement would make

the public realise that these large sums were not entirely for the personal enjoyment of Ministers, and that a portion of them has to be paid out in expenses they would not otherwise incur.

When the Bill comes to its Committee stage I hope that the Government will consider an amendment that every salary should be divided into salary and expense allowance, but I hope the Government will resist the sort of attack or criticism to which we listened in the first two speeches this afternoon, containing the suggestion that Ministers were taking too large a helping for themselves and for their successors. That suggestion was thoroughly unjust, and will carry no weight with the public. In days when Charlie Chaplin can earn £100,000 a year the public realise that big salaries are much more common to-day than they were 50 years ago. We want to secure that our Ministers can live in reasonable comfort without personal anxiety, and that they shall be able to save a little money so that if they go out of office they shall not be immediately stranded without means when they have no remuneration.

One feature of the matter which is important and has not been stressed is the putting of Cabinet Ministers on an equality of salary. It has been a real injury to our public life that posts like the Minister of Agriculture or the Postmaster-General should be paid at a lower level than other Ministries. Whenever you have had a Minister of Agriculture or a Postmaster-General who did particularly well, he was generally promoted to another more lucrative and so-called more important Department. If he did badly, he was not promoted, and the result was that such Ministries got stuck with Ministers who were not promoted. All Cabinet offices ought to be on the same rank. This Bill recognises that principle. Very few Ministers can pull their weight in their Departments until they have been there for a couple of years. The average tenure of office of a Postmaster-General was, until quite recently, under two years, and I am sure that that has been a real drawback and an evil to the Department. We do not want to make it necessary for a Prime Minister to show recognition of good service in one Department by taking the

Minister away. Under the Bill, that recognition can be shown by admitting the Minister into the Cabinet. He gets his recognition, and the Department will not suffer from the inconvenience of a change.

A great tirade against the salaries of the Law Officers was delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Liberal party. I remember congratulating a Member of this House upon having become a Law Officer and his answer was: "That is all very well, but I have halved my salary." When he became Lord Chancellor I congratulated him again, and he replied in the same terms: "It is all very well, but I have halved my salary." Thus, promotion in the service of the State had meant dividing his salary by four. There are limits to the sacrifices which you can demand from these great legal experts—that is what the Law Officers of the Crown are. They are great technical experts who are employed by the State. I submit that it is an economy to get the very best men you can for the purpose, and if you ask the best brains to come forward I do not see why the State should not pay something corresponding to what the best brains can command. The right hon. Gentleman spoke as though those who take the view which I am trying to expound were casting a slur upon the patriotism of the legal profession. If lawyers are to be patriotic, why should not the State meet them half way? Why should men who are earning £30,000 or £40,000 per year at the Bar be expected to make a disproportionate sacrifice in order to serve a State whose income is in the neighbourhood of £800,000,000 a year?

That is not even economy; it is false economy to try to pay much less than the market rates. We all know that the patriotism of Englishmen induces them to serve the State for less money than they could get outside, but we should not presume too much upon that patriotism. That is another fact which we ought to have the courage to tell the public. It has always been one of the failings and difficulties of Democracy that it is unwilling to pay its officials salaries which they would get under other forms of control. The English Democracy is capable of facing facts and realising when it is told the truth and

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every Member of the House ought to present this side of the case to the public in order to prevent a wrong impression going out. The truth is that this matter has been a great deal too long delayed. For many years Ministers have been accepting salaries upon which they have been unable to live and they have been drawing heavily upon their private resources. Owing to the national exigencies of the last 30 years no administration has liked to bring in a Bill of this kind and I am glad that the Government have now had the courage and the sense to do so. They are doing a good work for the country and for Democracy, and they ought to be supported by all sections of the House.

I am particularly glad that the office of Leader of the Opposition has been recognised. It is an essential office in the functioning of our Parliamentary institutions. Without an active Opposition it is impossible for the House of Commons to do its work. The leadership of the Opposition is a whole-time job. The work of a Member of Parliament is not a whole-time job and is not supposed to be. The House of Commons is a body of laymen and amateurs who have other occupations in which they are engaged before they come to the House of Commons; but that position is not open to the Leader of the Opposition. He has to put in an amount of work which precludes him from engaging in any other profession, and apart from that, it is exceedingly undesirable that he should engage in any other profession. The same sort of standard of aloofness that is necessary to a Prime Minister is to a large extent necessary for the Leader of the Opposition. I can also well imagine that there are many personal expenses which fall upon the Leader of the Opposition and which he has to meet. It is, therefore, only right that he should receive more salary than the average Member of Parliament. The Leader of the Liberal Party has been making researches into what is paid in other countries; they must have revealed to him, if he did not know it already, that the Leader of the Opposition in Canada and, I believe, in other Dominions, already receive a salary. We are therefore creating no precedent in this respect. I am glad that it has been included, and I hope that it will remain a feature of the Bill when it passes its Third Reading.

6.30 p.m.

Mr. Maxton: I rise to oppose this Measure. Looked at from a certain angle, everything that the Noble Lord has just said is justifiable. In a short time we shall be asked to pass a Civil List to meet the expenses of another department of the complete State machine, and we shall be asked to spend three times as much on what I may call the decorative part of the Government institution as we are being asked in this Measure to spend for what is, after all, the working part of the governmental machine, and, if one looks at it from that angle, a defence may be put up for this Measure. But one has to look at it from the point of view of the position of the general community in which we are living. The Noble Lord and others who have spoken have talked about the position of the man who, having occupied one of these posts, loses his post. What is the tragedy that happens to him? The tragedy that happens to him is that he has to go out and face life on the same terms as the citizens for whom he has been legislating in the past, and I have not the faintest feeling of worry in my heart about an ex-Prime Minister if he finishes in the workhouse or on the means test, because, if it is degrading for anyone to be in the position of being in the workhouse or on the means test, it is the ex-Prime Minister who has the primary responsibility for the fact that they are there. The Noble Lord talks about the patriotism that has urged men to take high governmental offices at a remuneration much less than they could have obtained if they had followed other walks of life. But we have always been able to find patriotism that would produce men of that sort. I hope that that is true, and I hope that it will continue; I hope that the chief attraction of public service of any description will not be the monetary reward that attaches to it.

I made a curious mistake when the right hon. Gentleman was presenting the Bill to the House in his usual clear, lucid and detailed manner. He said, "Look now at Clause 1, which is the effective Clause, and take it in conjunction with Schedule I." I turned over my papers and came to Schedule I, but, unfortunately, I had two Bills in my hand, and the Schedule I to which I came was Schedule I of the Army and Air Force (Annual) Bill, and there I saw:

<p>“Lodging and attendance for a soldier where meals furnished,</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Supper as so specified</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Stable room and ten pounds of oats, twelve pounds of hay, and eight pounds of straw a day, for each horse.</p>	<p>Tenpence a night.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Fourpence.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Two shillings and threepence a day.”</p>
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That is how, at a later stage of our proceedings this evening, we are to consider how the patriotism of another necessary citizen is to be rewarded, but here we are talking in terms of £5,000 and £3,000 as being sums that are too limited.

I hear a lot about the necessary expenses attaching to the office, and the huge sums that are expended in hospitality by men who occupy Ministries of the Crown. I do not know, but I seem to have been missing something during my 15 years' membership of the House of Commons. I must wake up and look around. I have had invitations to receive hospitality at the Palace on occasions; I have had certain invitations to receive your hospitality, Mr. Speaker, out of what, I think, are more limited resources than are being proposed for a Cabinet Minister, and I know that that hospitality is extended by you to every Member of the House. But I cannot remember any occasion, except one, when I was ever offered hospitality by a Minister of the Crown. I was once invited by the Secretary of State for Scotland to go over to the Scottish Office and look out of the window at the Trooping of the Colour. I am told that cigarettes were handed round to those who went there, and I am also told that the box of cigarettes that was handed round had been collected by the Secretary of State for Scotland from banquets that he had attended previously. I see that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman who was recently Under-Secretary of State for Scotland recognises that what I am saying is absolutely true.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lieut.-Colonel Colville): The hon. Gentleman has greatly understated the extent of the hospitality provided.

Mr. Maxton: I am quite sure that every hon. Member with any length of service in the House of Commons knows that

this question of hospitality and the costs of office is very greatly exaggerated. Every Member of the House sometimes stands someone a cup of tea down in the Tea Room, and that is all that the ordinary Cabinet Minister outside the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer ever does. I know that the First Lord of the Admiralty sometimes takes a Member for a sail in the Admiralty yacht, but the cost of that is borne on the Navy Votes, and not by the Minister himself. Then there is the question of keeping up the dignity of the position. Not one of us knows anything about the private life of any Cabinet Minister. [Laughter.] I do not mean anything of the kind that appears to be passing through hon. Members' minds. As a matter of fact, any member of a Cabinet can live in any little obscure corner of London, and nobody worries anything about him. Thank Heaven that that is so; we are concerned with the personalities of men and the work that they do here, not with the kind of mansion that they live in or the kind of food that they eat; and it is rubbish to talk about its being necessary for them to have £5,000 a year either for the maintenance of the social duties connected with the office or for the maintenance of an establishment of a dignity corresponding with the office, because none of us here have ever worried our heads about how and on what standard or on what scale they live. To say that it is necessary in these days for a man to have £100 a week before he can lead a full, decent, respectable and respected life, is just nonsense.

During the past week we have had several industrial disputes in Scotland, and some of them are still going on. The Government do not think it is worth while to intervene to do anything to assist the men in any way. Those men, essential workers in the whole social structure, would be delighted if they could have a secure salary of £100 a year. Yesterday I was among the cotton operatives in Lancashire. If the cotton operatives in Lancashire could have a sure £100 a year, they would be delighted. When we are discussing unemployment and the means test and depressed areas, we have long debates as to whether the nation can afford to pay the unemployed man a standard of 17s. a week, and, when we hear these speeches to-day about how necessary and how long overdue is this Measure to give

[Mr. Maxton.]

people £100 a week, I think it is just nonsense. To put it in another way, I do not believe that there is one man on the Front Government Bench who gets any more out of life with his £5,000 a year than I get with my Parliamentary salary of £400. If I wanted to be egotistical, I would say that I do not believe that any one of them gets as much out of life as I do with my Parliamentary salary of £400. Everyone who has been a Member of the House for any length of time knows that the intellectual gulf between the man who is a Cabinet Minister and the man in his own party who is not a Cabinet Minister is a very narrow one. We know, of course, that it is always the best men in any particular party who go to form a Cabinet; I am not attempting to deny that; but their superiority is not so very marked that it needs to be represented by the financial difference between £5,000 and £400.

Our opposition to this Measure is frontal, and not on details, though there is one point of detail on which I would ask the right hon. Gentleman for information. The right hon. Gentleman who spoke for the official Opposition resented a remark of mine about the good feeling that exists between the two Front Benches. I thought it was a piece of not very harmful chaff. It is a well known fact that among Privy Councillors and Front Benchers generally there is a something that they have in common, just as back benchers have something in common between them, and I do not think that that need be resented. I also have a good feeling towards the Front Government Bench. I have never done my work here on the basis of personal enmities, not even as regards the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. But, if there are any two officers on the Front Bench for whom I have a distinctly warm feeling, they are the two Household Officers who come in here, dressed in purple and fine raiment, to carry various messages. I have a warm respect in my heart for those two gentlemen, but they are the ones that are not mentioned in this Bill. Something is to be done about the junior Lords of the Treasury; something is to be done about the Prime Minister; something is to be done about the Leader of the Opposition; largesse is being doled out all round; but the two Household Officers who do so much to brighten our lives, and who are

almost invariably the two most gentlemanly and approachable Members of the Government, are not mentioned at all in the whole of the pages of this Bill. It may be that their incomes are arranged at the Palace, but I hope that some influence will be brought to bear there to see that those two officers are not put in an invidious position as compared with their colleagues. I hope that my speech will be reported to them, since neither of them is here to hear my kind references.

Our opposition to this Measure is simply on the basic principle that, until we extend tolerable working conditions and tolerable living conditions to the mass of the population that we are here to represent, we have no right to vote what in the eyes of the poorest section of the community are lavish sums. They may seem trivial to men who have been used to incomes of £10,000, or £20,000, or £30,000 a year, but to the overwhelming mass of the population of this country they are lavish sums of money, and we have no right to vote them until we have made a better attempt than we have up to the present to relieve the necessities of the poorest section of the community.

6.45 p.m.

Sir Assheton Pownall: I base my view of this Measure, in entire contradiction to the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton), on what I venture to think is also a basic principle. My basic principle is that in this House salaries for those bearing heavy responsibilities must bear some proportion to those paid to individuals who bear heavy responsibilities outside the House. Figures could easily be given showing that outside the House salaries have greatly increased in recent years, while inside the House it is common knowledge that they have remained constantly the same for the last 100 years.

As an actual case in point, measures of public utility which have passed this House in recent years have provided for salaries far in excess of those given to Cabinet Ministers. I have not had time to refresh my memory, but I am almost sure that the chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board, under an Act passed four or five years ago, draws a salary not of £5,000 or of £10,000 but of £15,000 a year, and the general manager draws a salary of some £7,000. I remember a distinguished civil servant being appointed to an important post with regard to coal reorganisation. I rather think

that hon. Members opposite were in power. He was put up from whatever he drew as a civil servant to £7,000 a year. That was actually voted by the party opposite to a distinguished civil servant, giving him in that way more than was given to the then Prime Minister, and it was presumably supported by the great majority of those who sit on the benches opposite. In all parts of the House, therefore, except possibly for the four hon. Members opposite, it is generally recognised that the salaries in this House are really on an early Victorian level, and we know the difference in spending power between now and then. As an actual case in point the Prime Minister's salary is being put up to £10,000, which has a net value of £6,200. That is actually less in spending power than was the case 30 years ago when the Income Tax was 1s. and when everything cost two-thirds of what it does now. The £4,500 net drawn by Lord Salisbury was appreciably more in spending power than will be drawn by future Prime Ministers of this country. That shows that we have not put the figure too high. Those who read the evidence of the Lord President of the Council, given when Prime Minister in 1930, will see the heavy expense which falls upon the occupant of No. 10, Downing Street. From that point of view the proposals are unassailable, and my only criticism is that they have not come soon enough.

There is another point in regard to the salary of £2,000 a year to Cabinet Ministers. A great friend of mine, now gone, who was the head of a big business affair, was drawing a salary of £5,000 or £10,000 a year. He was offered the position of Minister of Labour in a Conservative Administration at a salary of £2,000, less tax, something like £1,200 or £1,300. He had the public spirit and sufficient private means to enable him to take the position, which he held for four years. Those are the sacrifices made by men of ability in order to save the State. To my mind £2,000 a year for the Minister of Labour is absolutely unjustifiable. It is less than what was then being paid to the Permanent Secretary of his own Department, who had the security of tenure and a pension to which to look forward. There is one point on which I do not agree with these proposals, and that is with regard to the Minister of Transport. There was no Minister of

Transport in the Cabinet till the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Mr. H. Morrison) was appointed six years ago, I think largely for personal reasons. The present Minister was not in the Cabinet to start with, but has been put into the Cabinet since. I suggest that the position of Minister of Transport, important as it now is, does not justify a permanent place in the Cabinet. I should very much prefer to have it put in Part II where it depends on the incumbent of the office, his seniority and his personal qualities. If I may quote the evidence given by a very distinguished person, a Member of the House, to a Committee that sat seven years ago with regard to Ministers' salaries, he said:

"I should never contemplate having a Minister of Transport in the Cabinet. I do not think it is necessary."

I quite agree. The position has altered in those seven years and it is now more important, but I still think it might be put in the alternative group, and that the holder of the office should not necessarily be a member of the Cabinet.

There is a further point which is not directly connected with what we are discussing but comes into the question of machinery of government, and that is the question of Members' salaries. It is extremely difficult for Members to raise the question. People will immediately say, "You want to have your own salary increased." This figure was first fixed nearly 30 years ago, when the £400 that is now paid would have been equal to roughly £260, which would not be adequate when we remember that all those who are drawing lesser salaries from the State have been increased, when we remember that the Army, Navy and Air Force have all had appreciable increases, that the civil servants now draw £515 instead of the £400 that they then drew, when we remember that the only thing that has been done for Members in the last 20 years is the payment of fares. That, of course, is of very considerable value to those who live at a distance. The average value is, roughly, £50 per Member. A Scottish Member gets £100, but those near London get very small benefit indeed.

I know from personal knowledge of a good many cases, not confined to any one part of the House, where the fact

[Sir A. Pownall.]

that only £400 is paid leads to appreciable personal hardship. I feel that we all work here together, and when I find that, low as are the prices charged by the Kitchen Committee Members are not able to pay them and have to go outside for their meals, it is time that someone, preferably on this side of the House, raised the question and pressed the Government in the near future to reconsider the question. I am not going to suggest any particular figure, but the figure of £515 which I quoted in the case of the civil servant is obviously not an unfair one for the purpose of comparison. Whether it should be £500 or £600 I am not saying. To my mind, it should not be less than £500 or more than £600. It has been suggested that it would be possible to get round the difficulty by paying the salary free of Income Tax, but it would do nothing of the sort. The mere fact of paying free of Income Tax is of appreciable value to a man with a large income. You would help in that way the man you do not want to help, and you would not help the man you do want to help. I strongly urge the Government, now that they have had the courage to raise this question—whether it should be done by means of a committee or by conversations through the recognised channels I am not saying—to bring about a more satisfactory position. With these small exceptions, I most cordially welcome the Bill.

6.54 p.m.

Colonel Wedgwood: I should like, first of all, to correct the Home Secretary's facts. Historically, the Treasurer was a member of the Lords, and the head of the Treasury, and he had under him, generally in this House—I am talking of the fifteenth century—the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Under-Treasurer of England and two Chamberlains of the Exchequer, all paid 6d. a day. The Treasurer's Department, the Treasurer having not merely a portfolio but also a bureau, became a great office of State and had to be put into commission, whereas the contemporary Ministers of the Household, the unfortunate Treasurer, Controller and Stewards of the Household, all people then of equal importance with the great officers of State, owing to not having a bureau, owing to not having patronage, gradually sank to the unfortunate level of to-day

when they are omitted from this Bill which confers such great benefits upon placemen.

This Measure is of the first importance, because the respect in which this House is held by the public at large is our main asset and the main support of democracy to-day. If by passing it we do anything to lessen the respect for this House that is held by the public, we are injuring democracy far more than any prospective benefit by raising the salaries of officers of this House. We must remember that public work is done in very large circles outside this House. You have county councils, city councils, borough councils, urban district councils, all presided over, and their committees presided over, by people who are doing public service for nothing and who are giving up a great deal to do that public service. The reward of public service is not a financial reward. It is reward of quite another sort—the reward of the good opinion, not only of their neighbours. The good opinion of their own conscience must be taken into account when assessing the value of public service. It is not fair, as the last speaker suggested, to compare salaries here with salaries paid outside or salaries paid to civil servants. We are not here to compete either with Charlie Chaplin or with the City. Many of us have been giving up all our lives to this public service. Our reward is quite different. We cannot possibly ask this House to change its character and cease to be a body of gentlemen serving their country and convert it into a branch of the Civil Service.

The argument that the salaries are low compared with big salaries in the City, and that, therefore, the holders of those salaries will be looked down upon by those who get much larger salaries in private business is entirely false. It is hopeless in any case for our Ministers to seek to compete with the vulgar rich. What they have to do is to compete with other people who are giving equally self-sacrificing service in this House and elsewhere. It is not always true that the more you pay the better service you get, but it is a complete fallacy in the case of the public services. Here our reward is very different. I am certain of this: that you cannot have both the financial reward and the public rewards that we get. Here we get power, a certain amount of patronage, even honour, and

the respect of our fellow-countrymen. You can have that or you can have these large salaries. You cannot have both. The argument is often made that if we keep these salaries down we shall not be able to get the best people to take part. There has never been a single case of a man refusing office in the Cabinet because the reward was not large enough.

Mr. H. G. Williams: Yes.

Colonel Wedgwood: Never! It may have happened in other countries, but never in Britain. We have had striking cases of the reverse. We had only the other day the Attorney-General, drawing fees and salaries amounting to £17,000 a year, accepting a post at £5,000 a year. We had during the War the Financial Secretary to the Treasury handing over to the country £100,000 of his own. We had during the War the late Mr. Bonar Law, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, discovering that the profits on his shipping shares were becoming abnormally high and deliberately putting on an Excess Profits Duty in order that those profits should not be so inordinately great. That is the spirit in which hitherto we have dealt with the public service, and I deplore a Bill like this which reverses the process. If you make politics good business you step down from the pedestal in the eyes of the whole world. Not only the Government, but this House and democracy will suffer.

Our democracy has always been a nice balance between the Civil Service and the Houses of Parliament. This House and another place have been the framers of public opinion, the representatives of public opinion and the directors of the Civil Service. Parliament has been the master; the Civil Service have been the servants of Parliament. I see in this Measure a movement in Parliament towards the Civil Service. It is true that these salaries are not very extensive, but it is in the direction of considering the Ministers as though they were part of the Civil Service. In the last 30 years we have seen this process developing. The Departments have been multiplied; the power of the Civil Service is enormously increased; a good deal of legislation now is taken out of the hands of Parliament and enacted by the Civil Service. The number of Ministers of the Crown in the House when I came in here, excluding Ireland, was only 41. There are now more than 60.

If you add to these the enormous number of Members who are Parliamentary Private Secretaries unpaid you get a body of at least 100 Members who are more or less place men, who are different from the rest of the House. It is a development which, I think, extremely unfortunate, and concurrently I have seen the Ministers of the Crown becoming more and more the mouthpieces of the Civil Service. Ministers—even those in the Cabinet—have become the advocates for their civil servants to the Treasury, less and less the Cabinet Minister of the despised Victorian age and more and more part of the Civil Service.

We see now a National Government becoming almost a permanent Government. We see the Leader of the Opposition being brought into the permanent Government. What is that but the gradual infiltration into this House of the Civil Service, of those who should be the paid servants of this House? I sometimes imagine that I see the Secretary of State to-day standing up to attention before the Permanent Secretary seated in his arm-chair. The roles have been reversed. When the Minister speaks in this House he speaks far more from his brief, far more with an eye under the Gallery than with an eye to the Opposition. This is all part of the same drift, a drift not towards Communism or Fascism, but to an increase of power for the bureaucracy. As this develops, as the House becomes more and more divided into two between the placemen and the Members who do not matter, so the power of criticising the bureaucracy is reduced, so the voice of liberty is suppressed and so this House fails to fulfil that duty which for 300 years it has successfully performed—the direction of the policy of the Civil Service and the correction of that Civil Service. You are not only dividing the House of Commons by this gradual trend, but you are injuring it in other ways. The private Member no longer goes to the Minister or to the Under-Secretary; more and more he tends to go to the fountain head, the Civil Service. He becomes more and more a petitioner for benefits from the Civil Service, and the figure-head here matters less and less as he gets more and more money, and secures less and less respect.

Looked at from one point of view this Bill is the careerist's endowment Act or

[Colonel Wedgwood.]
 the placeman's paradise. We do not want in this House people who come into it for a career. We do not want people to come into this House or politics as they go into the banks or insurance companies. We want people to come in here not for the money to be got out of it, but for the service they can render. You raise all these salaries quite up to the level that the ordinary holder of these offices could have earned anywhere else. Naturally, people will come in in order to see what they can make out of politics. We all come into this House with some ambitions. Much better that all other ambitions should be encouraged than the fatal one of getting on financially. I received a letter the other day from Sir Alfred Hopkinson, one of the oldest Members of this House, who was here in the eighties. He said, "I would give a word of advice to all Members entering the House of Commons and that is: Never hope to get on. Never have a career. If you do you will always be miserable. The only way to have a happy life in the House of Commons is to have no ambitions for office whatever; then you are not torn by jealousy as other people get office, and you can keep a single-minded desire to serve your constituents." I thought that that was an extraordinarily true diagnosis of the position. Members who come into the House in order to get on, to get office or to get money do not enjoy life, and their fellow-Members do not enjoy them. You are not merely strengthening the Civil Service but you are spoiling the House of Commons by driving out of it men with the same conception of public service that we all had when young. You will get into it people who will make what they can, and will become the hated placemen in the future.

Everybody knows that the great advantage of this House is that we are all one, all one family. We are none of us paid. Members are not paid. They get an allowance to compensate them for the cost of living in Parliament; a very low compensation it is, too. Come to that, Ministers have not been paid salaries, for Ministers have the emoluments of their offices. Even that emolument was fixed 100 years ago; they knew what it was when they took office. They took the office with the emolument. If you are

going to divide the House and have some sitting at the high table and all those not in office below the salt—a different creature, a different class—that, too, will spoil Parliament. We have been built up on being joint governors of this country, with a committee—the Cabinet—which will help to govern the country as we desire. We do not want to change that and substitute for it a permanent Civil Service sitting here, carrying on the Government as hired men, efficient, powerful, but completely divorced from responsibility to the electorate and from the effect of the voice of the public.

There is one part of this Bill to which I would refer—this question of pensions. I agree entirely that the talk of expenses of Cabinet Ministers and the standard of living they have to keep up are entirely false. The most sensible Members of the Labour Government when they were in office continued to live exactly as they did before in perfect comfort. Those who tried to live up to a higher standard which they could not afford, were despised for trying to aim at it. The idea that there should be pensions for ex-Prime Ministers seems to me to be an extraordinarily partial idea. I am thinking of a number of colleagues of mine in the Labour party who have lost their seats. I know of two who were on the dole. Ex-Prime Ministers can obtain directorships and have every opportunity of writing very valuable memoirs. I would not give up the Memoirs of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) for anything. They do not suffer. But suppose they did, why should they get pensions and not other Cabinet Ministers. As everyone knows, there is to be £2,000 for the present Prime Minister when he retires. He will not take it. There will be £2,000 for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. He will not take it. The sum of £2,000 is going to the Lord President of the Council. The Bill is all to provide him with a salary. I think of other Cabinet Ministers. I think of my old friend, George Barnes, managing to live on £350 a year, being refused a pension by the Lord President of the Council. I think of Lord Snowden, hardly able to make both ends meet, also refused a pension. Why begin with the man who refused the others pensions? When I came into this House there were pensions for all Cabinet Ministers who were in need.

Mr. H. G. Williams: Not all.

Colonel Wedgwood: There were 14 pensions for ex-Ministers who were in need, and many of them had the decency to surrender those pensions when they were able to manage without them.

Mr. Stephen: Some did not.

Colonel Wedgwood: There were scandals connected with them, which I do not propose to go into now, but, at any rate, there was the system of a means test applied to Cabinet Ministers, and they got something to keep them going. Under that system, George Barnes would have been all right, and Willie Graham would not have died, and we should not have had the scandals we have to-day of Cabinet Ministers making a living in doubtful ways. It would have been infinitely better to restore that system rather than to have these pensions given to people who can well afford to do without them. Take the question of the salary of my right hon. colleague, the Leader of the Opposition. It will not make the slightest difference to his conduct in this House whether he gets that £2,000 a year or not, but it will make a great deal of difference in the way in which he is regarded by the party, by the country outside and by this House. Far be it from me as one who does not take meals in the Tea Room and can afford to have them in the Dining Room to say that anybody should refuse pay. But I had far rather it came from the party and from his friends than that it should come from the Government and the Consolidated Fund; from a source which, at any rate, would be used in public as showing a certain subservience and an influence upon the way in which he conducts affairs in this House. It would be more in accordance with the dignity of this House and with our desire to preserve democracy and with the wishes of this country as a whole that this Bill should die.

7.21 p.m.

Captain Harold Balfour: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has knowledge that this Bill has had a certain amount of criticism, even if the majority of hon. Members agree with its principle. I would like to endeavour to criticise it because I think that the right hon. Gentleman did not prolong some of his arguments to their logical conclusion although

those arguments were expressed with his usual lucidity and with a certain amount of brevity. The right hon. Gentleman said that it is a truism and commonplace to say that our constitution is flexible, but we are to-day attempting to legalise some of the customs which have grown up as a result of that flexibility and haphazard manner out of which our Constitution has come into being. Therefore the legislation which we are proposing in this House must, of necessity, be unsatisfactory to some degree, in that it is legislation based upon unsound foundations, and is incomplete. We are losing in one direction an opportunity of remedying anomalies which should be remedied at once, and also we are introducing legislation which may have dangerous effects in other directions.

The Bill legislates for a Cabinet for the first time. It is recognised officially, but it omits to include a provision which is just as logical to include, if you are going to legalise the Cabinet, and that is, that Members of the Cabinet should be Members of one or other of the legislative Houses. The Home Secretary dealt very briefly with the history of the Cabinet. I think that he will agree with me when I remind him that the Cabinet came about after the Elector of Hanover, George I, came to this country. He came to rule over us and could speak only little English, and certain of His Majesty's servants used to meet together and discuss affairs.

Sir J. Simon: That is not an accurate statement. Does the hon. and gallant Gentleman suggest that Queen Anne never presided over a Cabinet?

Captain Balfour: The right hon. Gentleman will agree that the Cabinet was first actually recognised as such in the time of George I. Two customs grew up with that Cabinet. One was that the members were sworn members of the Privy Council and the other was that they were members of the Legislature. To-day we are legislating to make the Cabinet legal, but we are not legislating to make the Members of the Cabinet members of one or other of the Houses of Parliament. The result is that the Inland Revenue authorities have been able to take advantage of the anomalous position that Ministers are classed as members of the Executive and not as members of the

[Captain Balfour.]
Legislature. That is to say that the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last or any other private Member can get £400 a year from which we deduct expenses according to what are accepted by the taxation authorities. Suppose an hon. Member opposite is made an Under-Secretary and receives a salary at once of £1,500 a year, his Parliamentary salary ceases and the Inland Revenue authorities refuse to allow any reduction whatever from that £1,500 in respect of Parliamentary expenses, their refuge being that the Under-Secretary is paid because he is a member of the Executive, and that constitutionally there is no need for him to be a member of the Legislature in order to hold his office.

That is the position to-day, but we know that, nevertheless, it is impossible in practice for anyone to hold for any length of time a Ministerial executive post without becoming a member of either House. There is only one present Member of the Administration who is not also a Member of the Legislature, and that is the Solicitor-General for Scotland. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if the Government could not incorporate in this Bill a provision that, within a certain length of time, say six months, a member of the Ministerial executive must become a member of one or other of the legislative Houses. This would conform to the practice in actuality to-day, and would have the effect of removing the tax authorities' legal but very unfair grounds for their present deductions against Ministers. I trust, when we hear the reply on behalf of the Government, we shall be told, firstly, whether this position is admitted as being unfair and, secondly, whether my proposal is an unpracticable one for some constitutional reason—why that should be so I cannot say considering we are legislating on an haphazard constitution—and, thirdly, if my proposal is impracticable, whether some other alternative could be put forward.

I want to speak upon another piece of what is rather tinkering with the Constitution, and that is, the proposal for the method of payment of the Leader of the Opposition. We know that there is no such official body in our Constitution as the Opposition, and I would like the Home Secretary at some later time to

correct me in this if I am wrong. He said that "His Majesty's Opposition" was a phrase dating back some hundred years. Am I wrong in thinking that the use of the phrase "His Majesty's Opposition" actually originated with Gilbert and Sullivan?

Sir J. Simon: There was a very famous Member of this House, Mr. John Hobhouse, who was a very prominent supporter of the Government of the day. It is believed that the first person to use that expression was Mr. Hobhouse. It was taken up and subsequently used by Mr. Canning, but my best researches state—and it will be found stated in the Oxford Dictionary—that the phrase "His Majesty's Opposition" must be attributed, first of all, to Mr. Hobhouse. •

Captain Balfour: I stand corrected, but I always understood that it was Gilbert and Sullivan who popularised "His Majesty's Opposition" in a way that few people have been able to do since. At any rate, we are on common ground in saying that there is no such official body as "His Majesty's Opposition." It is the custom of our haphazard Constitution which has brought the Opposition into being. It originated when the Whigs and the Tories changed with one another and each in turn became the recognised leaders of the Opposition to whom the Crown turned to form an alternative Government if the Government were defeated. We know that theoretically the Crown is at liberty to send for whom it likes to form an administration. Queen Victoria was expected to send for Harcourt or Spencer, but, somewhat to the surprise of everyone, sent for Lord Rosebery to form an administration.

The Bill legalises the Leader of the Opposition, and defines him as one who is leader of the party in Opposition with the greatest numerical strength. The Leader of the Opposition must be one of three in our powers. He must be a member of the Judiciary, which obviously he is not, or of the Legislature or of the Executive. If he is a member of the Executive, it is wrong that the discussion of the performance of his duties should be avoided by the methods of charging his salary to the Consolidated Fund. No Member of the Executive is allowed to take refuge from the Legislature, but all are made accountable to the Legislature for their Executive actions. It should

be so in this case. If, on the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition is a member of the Legislature, it is still anomalous that he is being paid for Executive duties. It does not matter whether those duties are by way of positive achievement or negative criticism. Nevertheless he is interfering in the executive administration of the country, and rightly so, but this proposal in the Bill is to put him on the same basis as Mr. Speaker, who is above any discussion, except by special Resolution and special procedure of the House, and also puts him in the position of servants of the House, or Members who are not executives. He is not to receive an allowance for expenses, but a salary for executive functions, and as such it is wrong to allow him to take refuge away from the Legislature.

There are two other dangerous possible effects of the payment of the Leader of the Opposition. One is in the event of Mr. Speaker having to exercise his powers of nomination of who is Leader of the Opposition as provided for in the Bill. If the possibility of Mr. Speaker having to exercise his powers of nomination and to say who is the Leader of the Opposition is admitted in the Bill, then logically it is fair to argue in Debate that this has occurred. In this House we have the constitutional and primary duty of voting supply. Assuming that Mr. Speaker has to exercise his powers, we still have means of stopping Supply to the Leader of the Opposition whether he be reckoned of the Executive or of the Legislature. If we use that power we should by inference be criticising the choice of Mr. Speaker, directly or indirectly, and so Mr. Speaker's actions, a position which this House has never been allowed to take.

Bearing in mind the theoretical freedom of the Crown to send for whosoever it likes, but usually for the Leader of the Opposition, to form a Government in the event of the defeat of the Government in office, then in the event of Mr. Speaker having exercised his powers and nominated the Leader of the Opposition, it would mean that, indirectly if not directly, the duty and responsibility of nominating who may be the next Prime Minister would devolve unfairly upon Mr. Speaker. This is always provided that the Leader of the Opposition in the event of a Government defeat is in a position to form an Administration.

I trust that we shall hear more details than were given by the Home Secretary as to whether the Leader of the Opposition is to be paid as a member of the Executive or as a member of the Legislature. If the former, why is he not to be answerable to this House like any other member of the Executive? If the latter, why should he be put into a position which other people who interfere in executive administration are not allowed to take? In the event of Mr. Speaker having to exercise his powers, we might indirectly find ourselves in the position of criticising Mr. Speaker, and in the event of the Leader of the Opposition being sent for by the Crown, would not Mr. Speaker by virtue of his nomination of the Leader of the Opposition be in effect nominating the next Prime Minister?

I agree with the proposed increase of salaries, I think that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and I do not think that the scale proposed is too high. But I think we are missing the opportunity of remedying the anomaly of the tax position which is taken advantage of unfairly by the Inland Revenue authorities, and at the same time we are passing a Bill which, if we are not very careful, may one day have repercussions which we may not think of to-day.

7.35 p.m.

Mr. G. Hardie: I do not propose to follow the technical details put forward by the last speaker, but I do agree that it is necessary that there should be a correct definition as to what is received by Members of Parliament. When payment of Members was initiated every one understood that it was an allowance for Members of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman who introduced the matter made it clear that it could not be called a salary, but on the first day when these allowances were paid the note accompanying the allowances bore the word "salary." I tried as an individual to get that matter rectified but failed, because there were not sufficient people interested. Now, they are becoming interested. The question of taxation on that sum of money has never been settled. If the Department had been properly informed the sum would never have been taxed. If it is to be taxed on the basis of allowances, how would that apply in regard to the ordinary business affairs of

[Mr. Hardie.]
life? If allowances in business were taxed there would be a great amount of complication.

I speak as one entirely opposed to the Bill in every detail. I am surprised at a Government which has failed so badly coming along and asking for rises in salaries. Ministers who have put us into difficulties throughout the world, until to-day we do not know the moment when it will be necessary to shed blood, are now asking for big increases in salaries. I should like to deal with the question of the relation of posts and salaries. I have witnessed the scramble for these posts and salaries. I have always been opposed to the Cabinet system, because I have never seen anything but the lowest type produced in that scramble. I have always suggested that there should be a salary for every Member of Parliament, that the payment for being a Minister should be the honour of the post, and that the expenses attached to the office should be met not by the Minister but by the office in which he performs his duties. Under such a system it would not be necessary to make assertions, true or untrue, such as we hear to-day of certain Ministers spending very little on entertaining while others always leave their posts in poverty. I make no deductions in regard to this matter, but since I have been a Member of this House there has never been a Minister who on leaving a post has done so in poverty. With regard to what is called entertaining I can say nothing, because I do not attend any entertainments for free teas. My suggestion would take away the scramble for jobs. Instead of the scramble being for money it would be a question of the most capable man getting the job for which he was suited.

We generally find in any walk of life that the man with the greatest capacity is the man who never asks for a job. In the workshop when you are dealing with engineers you will never find the best engineer saying that he can do this, that or the other; you have to go and get him. It is the same with a good singer. He never stands up in company and says that he will sing; he has to be asked. Under the system that I suggest you would have men coming forward for the posts really suited for them. It is said that we cannot have people appointed to ministerial posts who might be prejudiced, and be unfair and not honest. What about the legal

posts in the Government? They have to be occupied by trained lawyers. No one suggests that the Secretary for Mines should necessarily be some one who understands mining. We should be told that a miner would be too much in favour of the miners. Are not the lawyers prejudiced, or are they too highly educated to be prejudiced? I should like to have the business type of men to carry on the Government; men who understand something about their job. I always feel sorry for a Minister when he is asked a question and has to reply: "You must give me notice." In other words, he means: "I am absolutely ignorant of the subject and you must put the question down so that the permanent official can tell me what to say."

The word dignity has been used in relation to salaries. Several times it has been said that it was not dignified to have some Cabinet Ministers with £5,000 a year and others with less than that amount. Before I came to this House I remember a certain clerk who was always asking for an increase in his salary because of the dignity of his position and because somebody else had more salary. Of course, it was not the money he wanted, but he had to think of his dignity. If dignity is only to be represented by what you have in the bank, what about some people who are in prison and who are waiting to get out in order to lift the money in the bank? There is a great difference between dignity and honour in this House. Honour is pure and undefiled, but dignity is something that is represented by an amount of money.

While we are flinging thousands of pounds about, what about the men in the Navy, Army and Air Forces, and men in industry who are working day after day to try and make ends meet on £2 or £2 10s. per week? What about the tortures they have to go through? A great deal has been said to-day about responsibility. What about the responsibility of the housewife, who, from day to day, is worried in trying to eke out the small family income? Of course, Ministers of the Crown will say that it would take too large a sum to give all these people security, but that it does not mean very much to give Ministers £5,000 a year. Where is the dignity and honour of men who think like that? Why is there such

disparity? Degradation is creeping into the Cabinet. It is an absolute scandal to see the scramble that goes on. In fact, men who are not Members of the House are being taken on at a salary, and every dirty, filthy, political string is pulled as though they had some special brains for the job. Generally they have the most feeble mentality it is possible to find.

That is not the way to get the best work done by Parliament. No amount of money can improve the mentality of a man. If brains could be bought the poor would be left without any, but I know some people who are able to put their names to a cheque for six figures and I would not give two pence for their brain power. That is not the way in which you are going to get the best Parliament. It is not a question of money. There is a question of honour and dignity, and that takes you back to the hustings, to an election. What did you tell the electors? You said, "Just send me back and I will do anything to make this, that and the other thing secure." But, apparently, you will not do the job unless you get something extra for it. If hon. Members were sincere in their speeches to the electors they would say that they would do any job that was possible, that all expenses should be attached to the office and that they would just draw their salary. In that way there is hope. To-day, when our letter-bag is filled with letters from people who are pleading for the lowest possible existence, and when the usual reply is sent denying them that natural right, we are saying that Ministers have a right to an increase of salary. No. If I had a thousand votes I would vote against every kind of Bill which means increases to Members of this House as long as the people outside are suffering as they are to-day.

7.50 p.m.

Captain Cazalet: The right hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood) in his delightful speech seemed to make out that anyone supporting the Bill was doing something which would mean Parliament competing with the high salaries paid outside. To me it is not a question of competing with the big salaries paid in business to-day, but simply a question of giving extremely hardworking individuals an adequate and reasonable reward. That is the light in which I look upon the

Bill. It is almost exactly a year ago that I seconded a Motion by the hon. Member for Paisley (Mr. Maclay), which dealt with this question, and, of course, it is gratifying to find that within a year the Government have accepted nearly every proposal we made. That is not a fate which often falls to a private Member's Motion. Although I am grateful for the changes which the Bill will bring about, I am disappointed that the Government, having decided to deal with the matter, have not faced certain other issues which I think are cognate to the intentions of the present Bill.

It is always a delicate matter for Ministers to ask the House to vote them increases of salary. It is bound to be unpopular and bound to create a certain amount of opprobrium. Consequently, I should have liked them, while they were doing an unpopular thing, to have done it properly. Our minds have been financially debauched by the vast figures which have been talked about in the House recently, and the sum concerned to-day may be considered a trivial one. I believe that most hon. Members are pleased that the question of the Prime Minister's salary and his pension has been settled, and I only regret that the present holder of the office, who has exhibited an almost incredible indifference and self-sacrifice in this matter in the past, will not be the first to receive the benefits of the Bill. The leader of the Liberal party contested the wisdom of raising the Prime Minister's salary to £10,000, and quoted the report of 1930, which suggested £7,000. The report of 1920 proposed a figure of £8,000. It does not seem to me to matter very much. If £10,000 is considered the sum which, after Income Tax has been deducted, leaves a net figure of just over £6,000, and will enable the Prime Minister to leave No. 10, Downing Street without losing or making anything, then that is the figure which should be decided upon. There is the question whether this pension of the Prime Minister is to come into effect as soon as the Bill is passed, or whether it is to be retrospective and apply to past Prime Ministers, or whether it is to come into effect in the future.

I support the proposal to give the Leader of the Opposition a salary and I hope that the present holder of that office, although he may object to taking it, will not refuse to take it. At any rate I hope that we shall continue to include it

[Captain Cazalet.]

in the Bill, even if the right hon. Gentleman thinks fit to return it. The main point of the Bill is to equalise salaries paid to Cabinet Ministers. So far so good. When we talk about £5,000 and compare it with 17s. a week, naturally it sounds a large figure, but in this imperfect capitalist world you have to deal with facts as they are, however lamentable the condition of affairs may be. That figure of £5,000 comes to just over £3,000 when taxation is taken into account, and we must recognise that in the Victorian age £5,000 was considered the right salary. The question is whether a figure which is worth to-day £3,000 is an adequate and fair salary to pay to Cabinet Ministers to-day. What should be the standard for a Cabinet Minister's salary? Surely it should be a salary which will enable the occupant of the office to vacate his office neither richer nor poorer for the period of service he gives to the State. Further, it should be commensurate and compatible with the dignity and responsibilities of the office, and sufficient to meet his needs while he occupies it. On that basis is this figure sufficient or not? It is quite true that there are a few additional perquisites of office, certain secretarial advantages and occasionally the Government Hospitality Fund which is available for certain functions. There are also houses, but in the three cases in which they are given they are more a liability than an asset. I think it is important we should keep down what are known as the perquisites of office in this country. The leader of the Liberal party said that the Prime Minister of France had only £1,000, but we know that in France and in certain other countries there are perquisites of office which probably bring the salary up to the salary paid to the Prime Minister in this country, if not to considerably more.

In view of these facts I regret that the suggestion I made a year ago has not been carried into effect—namely, to apportion a certain percentage of a Cabinet Minister's salary and make it free of Income Tax, treat it as an allowance, such as is given to Ambassadors abroad. I suggested that £1,000 should be free of Income Tax, treated as is implied in the phrase "frais de representation." I regret that with regard to certain Cabinet Ministers provision has not been made for pensions. I think it is very hard on

a man—and perhaps more on his wife and family—who has been earning £3,000 or £5,000, as the case may be, suddenly to find himself without anything at all, especially if he has been occupying his position for a few months or a year or so. I suggest that a man who has occupied the position of Cabinet Minister for five years and more is deserving of some pension; otherwise he will be obliged to go and seek his means of livelihood either in the Press or in the City. Certain accusations have been made about the high salaries paid to the Law Officers. This was debated at great length before the Commissions in 1920 and 1930, and it emerged that the largest proportion of the sums which are paid to the Law Officers of the Crown are paid to them not out of money provided by the taxpayer but out of the fees which litigants who bring cases against the Government have to pay when they lose.

Mr. Silverman: What difference does that make?

Captain Cazalet: It means that the ability of the man concerned is of primary importance. If he wins his case the litigants have to pay.

Mr. Silverman: Surely the hon. and gallant Member knows that all over the country there are people in analogous offices to that of legal advisers to the Crown, town clerks in municipalities. In their case it is part of their contract for service that any fees they earn arising out of the office they hold shall be received by them in trust for the authority which employs them. Why should not the same principle apply to other legal officers in more responsible positions in this House, especially when their salaries are so high?

Captain Cazalet: I do not think the clerk of a town council, however big and important the town may be and however efficient the man may be, is a strict analogy to the Law Officers of the Crown. If the hon. Member will read the evidence given before the Committee, he will find that up to three or four years ago the average period during which a Law Officer of the Crown served in that position was not much more than 18 months.

Mr. MacLaren: Too long.

Captain Cazalet: I am ready to admit that at first sight the fees, which are in

the neighbourhood, not of £30,000, but of £15,000—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I have a great deal of evidence to support that statement. I admit that there have been in recent years cases in which the fees have been much more, but in general they are something like £15,000 a year, and although at first sight that may appear to be what the hon. Member would describe as rather a scandal, I do not believe there is any other method by which one could get the right type of man to occupy those important positions.

It seems to me that in this Bill the Under-Secretaries have not been very generously treated. Many of them may have to make relatively as great sacrifices as Cabinet Ministers, and in some cases they are the sole representatives of their Departments in the House of Commons. Their responsibilities and work are at any rate equal to half those of the Ministers under whom they serve. I would have liked the salaries of all Under-Secretaries to be fixed at not less than £2,000. Moreover, as my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Captain Balfour) said in his extremely interesting speech, the Under-Secretaries are not in a position to obtain the advantage which ordinary Members of Parliament have in claiming certain allowances in their returns for Income Tax. My own view is that if any individual Under-Secretary or Cabinet Minister were prepared to fight his case, he would win it, and that the expenses which he incurs, and which we are allowed to return, would be returnable by Cabinet Ministers or Under-Secretaries, since they are incurred in the course of carrying on their business—Cabinet Minister or Under-Secretary—upon which their livelihood depends. I understand that no individual Minister has yet had, I will not say the courage, but the lack of tact, to carry that matter to its final arbitration. As to the various Ministers who are not in the Cabinet, I agree with the hon. Member who said that he did not understand why the Minister of Transport should be included in the first category and not in the second. I know he is important, but is he more important than the Postmaster-General or the Secretary for Mines?

Mr. MacLaren: He thinks he is.

Captain Cazalet: My humble submission is that these three Ministers should be put in the same category, and that their salaries should be £3,000 a year.

One point I would like to ask is whether, if the Minister of Transport in some future Government is not in the Cabinet, his salary will be £5,000, because he is in the first category? [An HON. MEMBER: "He is in the Cabinet."] The Home Secretary said that the Government reserve to themselves the right, in proposing Estimates each year, to fix the salaries of Cabinet Ministers at whatever seems to be a suitable figure. Consequently, as I understood him, if in some future Government the Minister of Transport is not in the Cabinet, his salary may be fixed at £3,000 a year, or at some figure less than £5,000 a year. There seems to be a certain amount of doubt in connection with that matter. When this question was raised last year, the hon. Member who spoke for the Opposition referred to the anomaly between the salaries paid to the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Deputy-Chairman of Ways and Means. I mention this matter only because it has been raised before, and because I think that as the Government are considering the question of salaries, they ought to pay attention to that matter.

With regard to the arguments put forward by hon. Members opposite that the organisation of government should be reconsidered before any alterations are made in salaries, it is true that there are great anomalies. For instance, if one takes the subject of fuel, one finds that coal is under the Ministry of Mines, gas and oil under the Board of Trade, and electricity under the Minister of Transport. I think one would have to go very far among the Governments of different countries of the world to find such an anomalous state of things. I know it is always easier to let things be, but since the whole question of the position of Cabinet Ministers and other Ministers has been raised, it seems to me to be a fit and proper time to reconsider that matter.

I would like now to refer to private Members, and to endorse what has already been said about their salaries. It is much easier for a Member such as myself, who has private means, to talk about this than it is for one who has not private means. I believe there are one or two hon. Members who have always refused to take their salaries, and I would like one of them to propose some increase in the salaries paid to private

[Captain Cazalet.] Members. Members of Parliament are not supposed to be able to live on £400 a year, and that sum does not bear any real relationship to the expenses which most Members have to bear. One or two Members sitting near me have told me that they manage, but after all, every Member has to live, and most hon. Members have to support a family, either in their constituencies or out of them. If a Member lives in London, he has to go to his constituency, and has to maintain some standard of life there. I believe it is important, from the point of view of democracy, that a Member of Parliament should not always be worried as to whether he can do this or that. If a Member represents an agricultural constituency, he certainly has a great many expenses which he cannot avoid. He has to visit certain areas, he has to attend certain functions, and he cannot on some occasions avoid giving to charity, or extending hospitality to some of his constituents.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the figure of £400 a year, and I would like to see it raised to £600. Here again it is difficult to say what is the right figure, but if one examines the salaries paid to Members of Parliament in other countries—although I do not say we should necessarily follow their example—one finds that in almost every case the member gets between £600 and £2,000 a year. It is somewhat anomalous that in this democratic Assembly, which at any rate is as important as, if not more important than, any other democratic assembly in the world, the salary should be lower than it is anywhere else. I know that to increase the salaries of private Members would be unpopular, and some hon. Members might even feel that they had to vote against such a Measure, but I would be prepared to have all the unpopularity that such a Measure would cause to be thrown upon the Government and its supporters, for I believe that, from the point of view of the future, it would be the right thing to do. Now is the time to do it. There is another argument in favour of the proposal to increase the salaries of private Members. I speak subject to correction, but I believe there are hon. Members opposite who receive support from the trade unions and the co-operative societies, and there

may be hon. Members on this side who have support from other vested interests.

Mr. MacLaren: Hear, hear.

Captain Cazalet: I do not deny it. Surely that is a thing we wish to avoid as far as possible, and I believe the best means of avoiding it would be to pay Members of Parliament a salary on which with reasonable economy they could exist—I will not put it higher than that. [Interruption.] If hon. Members opposite would propose a higher figure than £600, I would be prepared to support it. I hope that the Government, realising that they are doing an unpopular thing in raising their own salaries, will look at the matter from a broader point of view, and realise that there are these other questions which they might just as well settle now, seeing that they are asking hon. Members to vote them some £30,000 to £40,000 a year extra for Ministers' salaries. This is not a question that can be raised more than once in a generation, and I think it would be a great pity, in the interests of democracy, if we did not take the opportunity now before us. After all, we wish to attract the best brains and the best characters into public life, and, having got them into public life, we ought to give them that standard of independence and dignity which the most exacting profession in the world demands of its members. I believe that if the Government would adopt the suggestions I have put forward, they would be giving effect to those ambitions.

8.14 p.m.

Mr. E. Dunn: I do not hesitate to offer the strongest possible objection to this Bill. I cannot understand the plea which has been put forward from various parts of the House that Ministers of the Crown are underpaid. With regard to the proposal to increase the salary of the Prime Minister from £5,000 to £10,000, with a pension of £2,000 at the end, I cannot understand how anybody can support such a proposal, although I do not in any way underestimate the importance of that position. I refuse to believe that the salaries now being paid to Ministers of the Crown are not adequate. I do not minimise the importance of those offices, and I realise the importance and heavy responsibilities of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, but for the life of me I cannot see how these salaries of £10,000 a

year and £5,000 a year can be justified, and I believe that the electors of the country will not appreciate the action which the Government are taking in this Measure. It is, however, perfectly consistent with the record of the National Government since I have been in this House. I have sat here for just over 12 months and I have been appalled at the manner in which the Government have made financial provision for their own friends of every type and character. I need not go through a list of the various classes of people in the country on whom the National Government have conferred benefits, and it is only consistent that they should now proceed to increase their own salaries.

I was intrigued by one or two of the remarks of the Home Secretary. He said that if prominent Ministers of the Crown were in other walks of life, they might be earning far more money than the salaries of their offices, or, if engaged in industry, that they might be in a better financial position than they were in by giving their services to the country. That may be true, but it does not necessarily apply to all Cabinet Ministers. There are some Cabinet Ministers who would be unable to earn their own living in the open market. I am perfectly frank about it. I have sat here, as I say, for over 12 months, and my own view is that if certain Cabinet Ministers were put into the open market and had to earn their living side by side with many professional men and men in industry, they would be left standing. I do not believe that Cabinet Ministers are entitled to the sums which are suggested here.

When I came to this House I did not do so with the intention of legalising poverty. But ever since I have been here, what we have been doing has amounted to that and now we are being asked to legalise affluence and riches. I am not prepared to vote for a Measure which would give £200 a week to one servant of the State while we are giving only 17s. a week to another servant of the State. We are asked by the National Government to support a Measure which would give £100 a week to each Cabinet Minister and £200 a week to the Prime Minister with a pension of £2,000 a year. We are asked to do so on the ground that these Ministers render great services. I do not belittle their services, but I am not prepared to agree to a proposal of

that kind when at the same time we are operating regulations under the Unemployment Acts which give 17s. a week to a single man and 10s. to a single woman. I have been engaged for many years in the administration of workmen's compensation, and I have dealt with thousands of cases. I think one is right to make this comparison, because the men concerned in those cases are also servants of the State. The man who is hewing coal in the pit gets less than £100 a year, and he is entitled to more reasonable consideration before we pay these exorbitant salaries to the higher servants of the State.

It may be said that Cabinet Ministers render service of a different kind. That is true, but Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers are dependent on the man working in the coal mine. I have dealt with hundreds of cases in which a man has been killed leaving a wife and family behind him. The average compensation in those cases is £200 for the loss of the life of a family's breadwinner. Yet £200 a week is suggested in this Bill for a Minister of State. I am not prepared to support that proposal. Further, I take the view that by such increases in salary you will not increase the intellectual capacity of Members of the House or of Cabinet Ministers. You will not add one cubit to their stature by that means. In fact it is questionable whether such salaries may not be too high. They may militate against efficiency. We come to this House to render service to the community as a whole, and I am not prepared to go into the Lobby in support of a Measure of this kind.

8.22 p.m.

Mr. Pickthorn: I am almost compelled by my professional habit to correct the correction of the Home Secretary's history which was given by the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood). But, if I may be forgiven a moment of autobiography, I would mention that I have been unwell during the last week and I have not prepared my knowledge of the matters with which this Bill is concerned as I usually try to do. Therefore, although I feel that the right hon. and gallant Gentleman's history could be improved, I do not propose to embark upon the task of improving it. Nor, for the same

[Mr. Pickthorn.]

reason, do I propose to embark upon a consideration of the Bill in general. But there are two points which, even on a hasty reading of the Bill such as I have been able to give, it seems impossible to leave without question. They are points which, as far as I have heard—and I have sat during almost the whole of this Debate—have not so far been questioned by any speaker. The first is the Home Secretary's point about the Constitutional innovation which we are making by using the word "Cabinet" in this Bill, and thus eventually putting it on the Statute Book, in a sense and in a way in which it has not hitherto appeared.

The right hon. Gentleman who opened the Debate for the Opposition objected to that proposal on the ground that we were legalising what had hitherto been an unwritten part of the Constitution, and that this tended to make the present arrangements permanent. I believe that to be a misunderstanding. I believe that when a part of the Constitution which has not been defined generally, which has not been put down in a Statute, reaches the point of being put into a Statute that usually marks, not the rendering permanent of that part of the Constitution, but, on the contrary, the beginning of the end of that part of the Constitution. If we look to the Cabinet's predecessors, to the various forms of the Council and the various committees of the Council and so on, we find that it was at the point at which they became stereotyped that they died.

I think it is a solemn and serious thing we are doing by putting the word "Cabinet," in this sense and form, on the Statute Book. Particularly is that so when you couple it with the defect, which this Bill seems to me to have, of tending to make the Cabinet even more numerous than it is at present. For the reason already stated, I have not had time to verify my references, but I think I am safe in saying that almost every nineteenth century Prime Minister complained of the way in which the Cabinet was growing in numbers and how the thing got less and less efficient. The reason why the Cabinet got so big originally was precisely that it was a reward to be in the Cabinet, and so you had to put in Mr. So-and-So because he spoke so well in the House, you had to put in Mr. Somebody Else because he had married

somebody's daughter, you had to put in Mr. Somebody Else again because 30 or 40 people generally voted with him; and that was precisely the way in which Cabinets grew in the nineteenth century and inner Cabinets got invented. It seems to me that the effect of saying that anyone who is in the Cabinet shall thereby qualify for the highest salary rate is likely to be a trend in the same direction.

The second point where at first sight it seems to me we may be doing much more than we think we are doing, and where I do not see the overwhelming argument in favour of what is proposed, is the proposed payment of the Leader of the Opposition. There may be very good reasons for paying the Leader of the Opposition, but I do not think we have yet had them put before us. The first arguments that we have had suggested to us is that it is a gesture against Fascism. Personally, I do not believe in gestures, and though I dislike Fascism more than does any Socialist, I think gestures against Fascism are a mistake, and I do not think it is worth paying £2,000 a year to make a gesture against Fascism. The other argument in favour of paying the Leader of the Opposition is that the machinery of Parliament cannot work without him, but this seems to me to provide the perfect occasion for using the argument which I hope everybody, if there was everybody, on this side would agree to be the best of all arguments, the thin-end-of-the-wedge argument. Surely there is nobody in this House who is not indispensable to the machinery of Parliament in one sense or another. The Leader of the Opposition is no more so than anybody else, and if the Leader of the Opposition, why not the Chief Opposition Whip, and why not somebody on his left or on his right? I see no point at which it is reasonable to stop.

It is quite clear that the Leader of the Opposition ought to be paid, but the question is, Who ought to pay him? It is illogical to suggest that it ought to be the general Government of the country. I quite agree that illogicality is not necessarily the irrefutable condemnation of a proposition, but neither is it necessarily an argument in favour of that proposition, and the logical expectation would be that the Leader of the Opposition should be paid by the Opposition. It is one thing or the other. Either the Leader of the

Opposition does represent something getting on for half the people of this country, or at any rate a very considerable proportion indeed of the people of this country, or he does not. If he does not, I see no reason why the general funds should pay him a salary, and if he does, then there is no reason why his own supporters should not themselves be able to pay him.

Mr. E. J. Williams: So that logically the Prime Minister ought to be paid by the Conservative party.

Mr. Pickthorn: The Prime Minister is not only the Leader of the majority in this House; he is also the Leader of the House and the Prime Minister of the country, but the Leader of the Opposition is in an entirely different category. There are all sorts of minor difficulties that seem to be concerned here, and I would like to ask one question about them. The Bill does not speak of the Leader of the Opposition sitting in the House, but the explanatory memorandum does. Is the Leader of the Opposition to be paid still if he loses his seat in an Election and is out of the House for some months, or is he not?

Mr. George Griffiths: How can he be Leader of the Opposition if he is not in?

8.31 p.m.

Mr. MacLaren: One would almost be carried away by the statement that anyone who becomes a Cabinet Minister is a person who has been placed in this awkward position, that an onerous task has been cast upon him by the State and that he must forswear all the advantages of a business career and otherwise sacrifice himself for the State. That is the kind of argument to which we have listened in this Debate. I have been connected with this House, inside and outside, since 1910, and that is a good while, and I have known a good deal of the life of this House. One of the things that always interests me, in a pathetic way, about politics is the way in which men, when they think there is a job to be got in the Cabinet or near the Cabinet, are prepared to eat their nearest friends in order to get it. I want to see the man in this country to-night who is prepared to say, "I will divest myself of everything, wealth, advantages, and anything that may be called social distinction, in order to serve the State." Who is he?

I have had two recent experiences in the Labour party when it was going to take office, and I will never forget it. People whom I used to see with red ties on, denouncing the other classes, crying, "Workers of the world, unite; with nothing to lose but your brains, and you never had any"—all this kind of stuff, and yet, when these gentlemen saw the prospect of office coming I saw their Socialist ties disappear, I saw the sycophants queuing up, and I saw no distinction, no difference between human nature within the Labour party and human nature elsewhere. Then why should I be told in this Debate that men who are to become Cabinet Ministers or to hold office in a Government are sacrificing themselves in some way or other? It is the most willing sacrifice that I have ever seen in my life. They are running up for it, saying, "Here I am; disseminate me for £5,000 a year."

We are told they are men of marked distinction. I have yet to see them. I would give any man who would go to the other side of the House as Prime Minister, or as a responsible Minister, not £10,000 a year, but £50,000, if he had the ability which is expected of him. Parliaments come and go, and the social problem remains. Poverty still dogs the steps of the average man and woman. The problem of poverty remains unsolved, but the Cabinet Ministers are always there. I have never known a Cabinet Minister yet who had either the sagacity or the courage to say he would attempt to challenge the vested interests and solve the problem of poverty. No, Sir. I have seen some of them coming very near it, and their names remain in the annals of the country. The last great Prime Minister to say that was Campbell-Bannerman, a man of character, a man who would have done things if life had been granted to him in which to do them; but when I have seen some of the things that have succeeded him, and when I hear to-night that they are to get £10,000 a year, well—We had one. Is there a man in this country to-day who would so forget the gauge of human capacity as to offer him £5,000 a year, or £2,000?

Let us have enough of this nonsense. In political life there is too much thought for the career hunters and too little consideration for the task which they are sent here to perform. The statesman, if he knew his task and was determined

[Mr. MacLaren.]

to carry it through, would see to it that every action which he performed in this House would be to make man-made law conform to the eternal laws of justice, instead of which he holds office not infrequently by ignoring natural laws, social justice, and all that they mean, and playing up to his particular party backing. Look at this Government here with its multifarious so-called representation of different parties. There is nothing more pathetic than this National Government. The Socialist and National Labour representatives in it make my heart weep. Greater hypocrisy could never have existed. It is only England that could tolerate such a hypocrisy as a National Government which is supposed to represent different political facets of the State. Just look at them. It is a Tory administration, and those who are not official Tories are lackeys and sycophants who are running after the offices they enjoy. There is one of them sitting there now.

We are told that these are the people who are really devoted to doing something for the State and offering their lives to the State. All I know is that there are men sitting on the Front Bench drawing a considerable sum at the end of the year who would not draw one-third of it if they were out of public life. If they were attending their own funerals to-morrow they would not be missed. We are told that we must do something to attract the greatest brains and the greatest ability. I would it were possible to attract honesty on to that bench, honesty that would attack the artificial causes of poverty. I see no difference between the parties in this House, for once you dangle the carrot of office before the snouts of the donkeys, they run after it no matter what coloured shirt they wear. I do not wish to see this corruption becoming more aggravated by this Bill. I never listen to Ministers, these men of great ability, at Question Time without likening them to so many B.B.C. announcers with little bits of paper put before them by the permanent officials. If you ask them a supplementary question, they do not know what the answer is.

Were it not for the permanent officials, heaven only knows where this country would be. If we were left to the sagacity, wisdom and statesmanship of the so-called statesmen who sit on that bench, I know where we would be. It

was said long ago that human advance meant that we should make three blades of grass grow where one used to grow; it would seem now as if we are producing three permanent officials where one used to be. Why all this talk about attracting to the Cabinet great brains and great ability if there is this steady growth of bureaucracy? It means that statesmen are fulfilling no useful function. They are pursuing the old course of looking to proximate causes for the problems that beset them, and swiftly devising expedients to deal with them with apparent success. The one thing you must not be in this House is fundamental. The one thing you can do with great success is to resort to expedients. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) were to pass out to-night, he would leave nothing behind him but the ruins of his great schemes on the horizon. He was a great success in political life because he was always ready with expedients. You never caught him out. When you have a Government or a series of gentlemen who call themselves statesmen and Cabinet Ministers who persistently look for political success by devising political expedients and making the taxpayers pay for them, while poverty remains and becomes more aggravated, it is essential that bureaucracy should grow.

Now we are told that we must give more money to the members of the Cabinet in order to maintain their services when the facts are all the other way round. The men who do the work are the permanent officials, and not infrequently many of the people who drop into jobs through wire-pulling and nepotism are hopelessly incompetent. I see one Member in the House, a man of marked ability whom one cannot but admire for his individual purpose in life in this House. He has had to walk out of this Government, and I do not wonder. Originality, sound thinking and good understanding are not usually cared about in any Government. You are a great success if you follow the leader. The permanent officials do the work of Governments. They are growing in volume and costing the State thousands more to-day than they cost in 1913.

I want to see a Government composed of men who are so determined to do something to change the social structure of society that they will be prepared to

sacrifice something for it rather than hope to gain monetarily out of it. I have not observed that in this House for many years. It is getting worse. I cannot look back over the years since I first came to the House and remember some of the men who used to be in the House, some of whom are here now, without feeling that there has been a general deterioration. I remember a prominent Socialist Member once saying that, while he was anxious that the payment of Members should take place so that poor men might occupy seats in the House, he yet feared that it might be the means of attracting all sorts of schemers into the House. It was the old question again of poverty handicapping men who might be useful to the State. I am still not hopeless that there is some man or body of men in this country who will see beyond mere monetary advantage and will seek the good of the citizens of the State. A Bill of this kind has its dangers. Once you fix fat salaries to offices, the competition will become more keen and the devices resorted to more despicable. Instead of attracting to the State such men as you want, the disinterested men—and how better can we measure the disinterestedness of a man than the fact that he is prepared to work for the State, irrespective of any monetary payment?—the policy embodied in this Bill will lead to the competition becoming more intense and the devices, the tricks, to get office becoming more despicable.

One wonders whether the day has gone when some men are willing to do something, not for the immediate advantage of their social state, but to do something to bring an unstable society back to the more stable form that natural law dictates. Is there not a man or a body of men who are still prepared to lay their hands to the task of constructing this State more on the lines of God's eternal justice, or are we to believe that the best brains and ability can only be attracted if they are to get £5,000 a year? If that is the estimate of statesmanship in 1937, God help the State. A Bill of this kind will not better the State. The electors will look even at honest men when they are willing to act for the State and charge them with having the same idea at the back of their minds as will be truthfully chargeable against others, namely, that they are only in the fight of politics to see what they can get out of it.

8.45 p.m.

Major Stourton: I do not propose to follow the hon. Member for Burslem (Mr. MacLaren), but rather to ask the House to confine its attention to the issues raised by this Bill. I would first of all express my personal regret that the Bill has been drawn up in its present form. It seems to me not unlike the famous curate's egg, good only in parts. Now, if I may, I would say a word or two on what I consider to be its best parts. I have listened to the Debate very carefully, and it occurs to me that there is almost complete unanimity in the view that the Prime Minister's salary should be raised, the only bone of contention being what the increase should be. It is true that the Select Committee of 1920 suggested a figure of £8,000, and that the Select Committee which sat in 1930 suggested £7,000. If I had to express a view myself, I would select the higher figure and turn down that proposed in the Bill, namely, £10,000, as being unnecessarily lavish. I think that few Members will quarrel with the point in the Bill regarding Prime Ministers' pensions. We have had a notorious case in which an ex-Prime Minister was tempted—and fell—to exploit his great position commercially, and I hope it will never happen again in our Parliamentary history.

There are two other Ministers who, in my view, are entitled to special consideration, and they are the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Admiralty who, like the Prime Minister, both have expensive official residences to maintain, and I think that a salary of £5,000 for each of them is fully justified. But I am opposed to increasing the salaries of the remainder of the Cabinet in the aggregate, and I maintain that the simplest way of getting over the existing anomalies is to pool those salaries and to add to them £9,000, which I suggest can be saved at the expense of the Law Officers of the Crown, in accordance with the findings of the Royal Commission of 1920, which suggested that the Lord Chancellor's salary should be reduced by half, to £5,000, that the Attorney-General should receive a similar sum, and the Solicitor-General should receive £4,000. If those plans were carried out, as I have indicated, and Ministers' salaries were pooled, less those I have mentioned as being in a special category, they would average out at something like £3,560,

[Major Stourton.]

which seems to me in all the circumstances perfectly adequate.

I desire to say a word or two about other matters raised in this Bill which I believe receive general approval. The proposal to increase the stipend of the Leader of the Opposition to £2,000 will be grudged by few. In my view he will, whoever he is, earn every penny of it. I think it is also only right that the five junior Lords of the Treasury should be placed on an equal footing financially. I propose to revert to the remuneration of the Law Officers of the Crown. As I have already mentioned a recommendation was put forward by the Select Committee of 1920 that the Lord Chancellor's salary should be reduced by half. Personally, I think that his remuneration at that figure would be adequate, in view of the fact that his duties are not too onerous, and he is entitled upon retirement to a pension of no less than £5,000 a year. The fees and the salaries of the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General I have studied in some detail, and I calculate that during the past 10 years they have averaged, in the case of the Attorney-General, £17,649 per annum, and in the case of the Solicitor-General £10,490, which in my view is an enormous and excessive figure. No wonder then that lawyers buzz round the House of Commons like flies round a honeypot. I do not hesitate to contend that these fees should be abolished altogether, notwithstanding the fact that, to quote the report of the Select Committee of 1930 once more:

"They are not wholly paid out of the Exchequer, a considerable portion being received from unsuccessful litigants."

As I said earlier in my speech, their salaries should be fixed at £5,000 and £4,000 respectively, in accordance with the findings of the Select Committee. The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General both receive, through their respective offices, other perquisites which are, perhaps, worth mentioning. On promotion to those offices they automatically receive knighthoods, whatever they may be worth, and in addition they accumulate an abundance of good will which they can turn to good account should they ever return to the Bar on leaving office. It is argued that these great legal pundits make enormous sacrifices to come to this House. I am inclined to dispute

that view and I have good authority for doing so. I believe I am correct in saying that there are, in fact, few leading counsel in this country who make an income at the Bar much in excess of £5,000 a year which is the salary suggested by the Select Committee of 1920 as being adequate for the Attorney-General. If I take it to be the assumption that the best lawyers will serve the State only on special terms, I suggest that that is a gross slur on the legal profession generally.

Broadly speaking, I can see no reason whatever why these salaries for Ministers should be increased by, in the aggregate, the substantial sum of £37,000. In my view this Bill will leave a nasty taste in the mouths of the people of this country. I believe, too, that the consequences of this Bill will be far-reaching, more far-reaching than any right hon. or hon. Member who has spoken this afternoon realises. In the first place, I believe that Ministers, being only human, will be more than ever tempted to cling to the fruits of office and to compromise with their principles. Again, if Ministers are going to vote themselves, or, anyhow, acquiesce in supplying themselves with, considerably enhanced salaries, obviously something will have to be done about the private Members of this House, who will expect proportionate increases for themselves, and with some justice in view of the fact that political life to-day is rapidly becoming a full-time job. Personally, I hold the view that it was better when Members of this House were unpaid, but I cannot see in my own mind on what grounds the Government could oppose any suggestion which might be brought forward in the future for a reasonable increase in the salaries of private Members if this Bill becomes law.

I do not like the idea of Members of Parliament being highly paid because high remuneration would tend to cause individual Members of Parliament to surrender that independence which I believe it is essential should be preserved to act as a check upon the powers of the Executive, if Democracy is to survive. If salaries were substantially increased, the standard of the average Member would, I believe, tend to deteriorate. Those of us who value our Parliamentary traditions can regard the Bill only with misgivings. In my humble opinion public

service is not to be compared with business managing directorship. We have been listening to some such comparisons, especially from the Noble Lord the Member for Aldershot (Viscount Wolmer), who made one of the most reactionary speeches I have ever heard in this House. Public service should be largely its own reward. If I am to understand from the Bill that the spirit of public service and patriotism is no longer required, or is dead, the outlook for this country is poor indeed.

8.57 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir William Allen: I have listened with very great interest to the points of view which have been put on this subject from different sides of the House, particularly when an hon. Member opposite was speaking with intense scorn. He omitted from his speech any reference to the proposals in regard to the Leader of the Opposition. After his description of the Government Front Bench I expected him to say that the Leader of the Opposition ought to receive £5,000 a year for being compelled to sit and look at the Government Front Bench. There has been loose talk about the Prime Minister getting £10,000 a year, but we know that he does not get anything of the kind. Somebody has said that as the result of getting £10,000 a year nominally, he will get only £6,400, returning all the rest of it in taxes, and that the same is true of other Ministers. While I agree with that statement, I have a great deal of sympathy with the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton). It is difficult to think of such salaries being paid to those responsible for looking after the social welfare of the country while knowing that a great many other people are neglected.

I asked a question the other day of the Home Secretary, and called attention to the fact that prior to 1918 police widows in Great Britain were receiving no pension. After 1918 pensions were granted. I asked whether he could not see his way to reconsider his decision as to giving pensions to those police widows who have nothing whatever, but the answer was a decided "No." Then I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the old warriors in the Royal Irish Constabulary who are receiving anything from £29 to £50 a year in pension, and whether he could reconsider that position. Again I got a decided "No." If the present Chancellor of the

Exchequer gets to the position of Prime Minister and his salary is correspondingly increased, perhaps he will think of the poor devils who are getting only £29 a year. I have a good deal of sympathy with hon. Gentlemen who have spoken on that aspect of the matter. The position of those people ought to be considered again, and I hope that the Home Secretary will not continue to give a decided "No" in the matter to which I have referred, because the present position is manifestly unfair.

Some hon. Members have suggested that we should get increases for ourselves. Some of those speeches came from hon. Members who did not need any increase, and all the more credit is due to them for speaking in that way. I happen to be one of those who try to keep out of the bankruptcy court on £400 a year. What are our responsibilities? We have an establishment to keep up where we live. When we come across here we have expenses for a flat or a hotel. Consider the position of a Member of Parliament like myself who represents an entire county. Hon. Members who have large constituencies know what that means and what expenses have to be met. I hope that the time will shortly come when those who are responsible for this expenditure will recognise the absolute necessity of giving Members a little to live on after they have paid all those expenses. I am glad that the question has been raised from this side of the House. I do not think that hon. Members opposite have mentioned it at all but I fancy that is due to their extreme modesty. We have no modesty on this side of the House. Some Members on the other side receive extra emoluments from their trade unions or perhaps from co-operative societies, but they are, I believe, few. I would press the absolute necessity of doing something for those who are trying to live on £400 a year.

An hon. Member said that there was no reason why a Minister should get an appointment merely because he had married somebody else's daughter, but that is not confined to this House. I believe that the same thing happens in Northern Ireland. I would emphasise the responsibility on this House of seeing that Ministers are appointed who are prepared to do their jobs. They know their job, and are prepared to give their whole time to it. If I were Prime Minister—though

[Sir W. Allen.]

I suppose I have no more chance of that than the Man in the Moon—I would appoint no one who was not prepared to give his whole time to the job. To take an example, the Minister of Labour does his job morning, noon and night, in the middle of the night, at lunch time and at dinner time, and he is a man who ought to be paid; but I believe there are other Ministers who just get off with as little as ever they can, and spend their time in other ways. The Prime Minister, or whoever is responsible in the Cabinet for the appointment of Ministers, ought to insist that they give their whole time to their jobs, and I think that that would be for the benefit of the country and a help to Members of this House who wish to ask them questions. On the whole I support the Measure, because I believe that the Bill will be doing what is right if you have the right men.

9.7 p.m.

Major Milner: The hon. and gallant Member for Armagh (Sir W. Allen) has mentioned that no one on this side of the House has dealt with the possibility of the consideration of the salaries of Members of Parliament in connection with this Bill. Perhaps I may also refer to that matter, because I can possibly do so with at any rate as much freedom as most of the Members on this side of the House. I take exception to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for South Salford (Major Stourton), who talked about high pay if the allowance for expenses at present made to Members of Parliament were increased. No one can consider that an increase of the figure of £400 to £500, or even £600, would bring those allowances within the range of the term "high pay." The hon. and gallant Gentleman went on to say that in his view all those who serve in this House should be sufficiently remunerated by the fact that we are doing public service. Unfortunately, however, it is not possible to live on public service; one has to have the means with which to carry out that public service; and, on one or two facts which I shall bring before the House, this is a matter which might very properly be taken into account by the Government in connection with the present Bill.

During the seven or eight years that I have been in this House, I have known

and I am sure that others must have known from time to time, of Members in all quarters of the House who have not been able, at any time during their membership of the House, to go into the Dining Room and afford a meal in that room. We all know that it is not possible to have a meal there under half-a-crown or 3s. at the least, and there are Members of the House to-day, and have been throughout the whole period of my membership, who have had to content themselves, for their evening meal, with a glass of milk, a bun, a pie, or some quite inadequate meal of that sort, in the Tea Room. I suggest that it is not possible for work to be done adequately and with dignity if Members are in financial difficulties, even if those difficulties are not very serious ones. They ought at any rate to have the means which would enable them to take advantage of all the facilities available in the House. There are men in this House whose children are not only deprived of the society of their fathers, but are also, to my knowledge, deprived of many things which they would have been able to enjoy had their father been able to use his ability in some business or other capacity—advantages of education and so on which they are not at present able to enjoy. It is greatly to the credit of those who come to this House and carry on with what I think is an inadequate allowance, that there are so few difficulties, and, I might almost say, scandals. I very much hope that the Government will take those cases into serious consideration.

I was present when my right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood) spoke on behalf of the Opposition and moved the Amendment in our name. I do not know what was the impression on the House, but I myself felt that, in his great anxiety to be fair in dealing with a comparatively non-controversial Measure of this sort, my right hon. Friend was really rather too kindly disposed towards the Bill. I feel, and I am sure that many on these benches must feel, some diffidence in discussing these increases, as for the most part they are, in salaries which, in comparison with the means of the mass of the people, are quite substantial salaries, when one knows that there are so many people in the country who at present have difficulty in obtaining even the necessities of

life. But we have also to bear in mind that you do not right one wrong by overlooking another, and, if we can dispose of some of the undoubtedly indefensible anomalies which exist, so that at any rate justice will be done in one direction, perhaps there may be more hope of its being done in the other direction. Unquestionably, the present position with regard to Ministers' salaries is indefensible. I had the honour, during the time of the Labour Government, to act as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the then Minister of Agriculture. His salary, of course, was £2,000 a year, and I venture to assert that during the time of the Labour Government there was no Minister who applied himself more consistently and industriously to his work, or spent more time and effort on it, than my chief at that time. Yet his remuneration was less than half that of others who occupied, I do not say less important offices, but offices which at any rate did not require the application, work and time that were required by his office.

Mr. Maxton: What did his Parliamentary Private Secretary get?

Major Milner: He got the thanks of his chief, and was amply rewarded. We all know that there are offices—it would be invidious to mention them—which do not involve a great deal of work or legislation, whereas other Ministries have to do a great deal of work and look after a great deal of legislation. I think that the only fair and reasonable and right way to deal with all these senior offices is to put them all on a level, and I see no reason why they should not all be increased to the sum of £5,000 a year, less, of course, Income Tax. The position of Parliamentary Under-Secretary comes into the same category. I am not sure, having regard to the work that some of them have to do, that they are not under rather than overpaid. Then, I think, there is justification for the provision with regard to Junior Lords of the Treasury. I could never see why one Whip should be paid £1,000 or £1,200, and another be unpaid for carrying out precisely the same duties. The Junior Lords of the Treasury are very much tied to the House. They have to be here at all hours, and it seems to me right and proper to put them on the same level.

When we come to the position of the Prime Minister, however, a very different

situation arises. I cannot see any justification for the payment of £10,000 a year to the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury. At least two Committees have sat on the subject, and neither has recommended a salary as large as that. If expense has to be incurred in keeping up the house in Downing Street or in entertaining, I should much prefer that the Prime Minister was paid £6,000 or £7,000 a year, or perhaps a little more, and was recouped for any extra expense that he had to incur in his office. That would be a more satisfactory way of dealing with the matter, particularly as the Prime Minister is now to receive a pension of £2,000. In my view, the payment to the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly proper. I rebut the argument which I have heard advanced, and which I read in one of the weekly papers, that if the Leader of the Opposition received £2,000 a year he must thereby be taken as being in the pay of the Government. It is an absolutely absurd argument. I cannot see that a Leader of the Opposition receiving £2,000 a year is in any different position, except that the sum is a larger one, than any ordinary Member in receipt of £400 from the State. Having in mind the responsibility of the position and the absolute necessity of some clerical or secretarial help which a leader without means is quite unable otherwise to obtain it seems to me that the provision that is made is perfectly proper.

There is one omission from the Bill, and that is the position of the Law Officers. I should like to put the hon. and gallant Member for South Salford (Major Stourton) right on one point. When he speaks about lawyers, he ought to make it clear that he is referring to the barristers' profession. I regret to say that the lower or solicitors' branch of the profession is not in the running for these high offices, or indeed for those gentlemen connected with the various Ministries who are termed solicitors. If he looks up the Treasury Solicitor or the Solicitor to the Ministry of Labour he will find that he is invariably not a solicitor but a barrister. The hon. and gallant Gentleman went on to say that he doubted very much whether those who occupied these high offices of Attorney-General and Solicitor-General in fact make the great sacrifice that has been suggested. Belonging, as I do, to the lower branch of the profession, and being from time to time

[Mr. Adams.] announce that the Government would reconsider them as the Bill proceeded through its various stages. We heard nothing of the sort from the right hon. Gentleman. Anomalies in the payment of Ministers have long persisted, and some are going to be created by the Bill. Some of the most glaring anomalies have not been mentioned to-day. For example, the Prime Minister's remuneration hitherto has been only one-half of that of the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor is entitled to a pension or the equivalent of a pension, but the Prime Minister has none. Up to date the Prime Minister, a man carrying an intolerable load of responsibility, has received about one-quarter of that which the Attorney-General is still to receive.

The Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Labour, whose task over the past few years has been progressively and increasingly more difficult, have received hitherto £2,000 a year, whereas the Secretary of State for War, who since the last international catastrophe has really had very little to do until quite recently, has been in fixed receipt of no less than £5,000 a year. These matters are to be adjusted, but, after all that has been done, there will remain various glaring instances, both of over-payment and under-payment. I will take the instances of under-payment first. I think that the worst instance of under-payment under this Bill is that of the Chief Whip, because nobody can be a successful Chief Whip unless he has some qualities of the superman. Indeed, he has to marry the superhuman qualities with various attributes which are usually peculiar to the brute creation. Like some incredible Proteus, he has from time to time to adopt the similitude of the fox, the ferret, the cat, the dog, the buzzard, the rhinoceros, the elephant, the ant and the owl. That is what has to be expected of a good Chief Whip, and yet this man who should be the world's best quick-change artist is to be remunerated at a rate no higher than a miserable £60 a week. Meanwhile, his lieutenants are to have £1,000 a year, when, whatever may be their natural abilities, their main duty is to practise severity, silence, and sobriety. The Home Secretary said that under the proposed legislation the Prime Ministers' salary would be a proper one, and, if that be so, the maintenance of the Lord Chancellor's salary is most im-

proper. It is not to be supposed that the Lord Chancellor has a comparison with that of the Prime Minister.

This matter has been discussed already, but if I am not exhibiting too much impatience of the House I would again say that the most scandalous payment of them all is the remuneration of the Law Officers. Here it was an opportunity, so it seems to me, to remove a monstrous inequality which is to be allowed to survive. I will give the figures that have been given to the hon. and gallant Friend the Member for South Salford (Major Stourton). The figures were given by the Secretary to the Treasury in an answer to a question from myself about the remuneration of the Law Officers of the Crown. "The total sums received by them have held the office of Attorney-General and Solicitor-General for England, during the period ended 31st March, 1936, the last figures at which figures are at present available are as follows: Attorney-General £176,493 19s. 0d.; Solicitor-General £104,984 9s. 8d." These figures, the House observe, include the acutest and deepest years of the financial depression, and also the cuts in salaries which were made after the crisis of 1931 and which have subsequently partially restored. It means that hitherto the Attorney-General has received four times as much as the Prime Minister, and still, under this dispensation, he is to receive about the same as much. As I hinted just now, the Prime Minister, year by year, he can save more than enough to enable him to retire. Any argument which is advanced in favour of this savours rather of excuse than of justice. To suggest, as has been constantly done, that only thus can be secured the best men to fill the Law Officers' places in England, is nothing less than an insult to the Bar, and it also implies that the profession is animated with a sense of public duty less than those of the other public professions and those professions which are continually shedding their best and most able men into politics.

What I would like to see done with regard to salaries is this: I am in favour of raising the payment of the Ministers of Parliament. I would like to see the Law Officers' fees cut out. I would like the Prime Minister to receive £6,000, the Lord Chancellor £6,000, and the remainder of the Cabinet Ministers

each. I agree that the payment of the Leader of the Opposition is a most admirable thing. I have long wanted that to be done. He has multifarious duties. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Sir A. Sinclair) made great play with the word "recognition." We are recognising something in doing this. We are not recognising, as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to imagine, the identity of the Leader of the Opposition, nor his good looks nor yet interesting opinions. We are recognising that the principle of government in this country is argument and not force. In many other countries the Leader of the Opposition is rewarded by the concentration camp and not by salary. For these reasons which I have ventured to give, and because the Government for reasons they are unable to divulge have been unwilling or unable to deal with the worst of all anomalies, I regret to-night having to vote against this Bill.

9.43 p.m.

Mr. Mander: I could not help wondering as the hon. and gallant Member for South East Leeds (Major Milner) was referring to the possibility of pensions for Members what effect, if any, such a provision might have had upon my distinguished predecessor, Mr. Villiers, who was for 63 years—a world's record—the Member for Wolverhampton, and who died at the age of 96. During the last 25 years of his life he never went near his constituency, and I think he rarely visited the House of Commons, and was always returned unopposed. I do not know whether he would have been disturbed by any pension to withdraw from this Assembly, but no doubt others might be affected differently. Some reference has been made to the question of the payment of Members which, of course, does not really arise. The whole point, therefore, is that somebody has to pay them, and is it not better rather that they should be paid and look for their financial support to outside organisations, whether employers or employed, or private individuals, than that they should look to payment by the State?

With regard to the general principle of the raising of the salaries of members of the Government, I am entirely in favour of the standard rate being paid, and from that point of view there is a

good deal to be said for certain increases. The trouble is to know what the standard rate is. I do not know whether the Government have thought out the matter and have compared their prospects with other occupations. I do not know whether they have considered, if they cannot get a proper rate, forming themselves into a trade union and deciding, if the House will not give them the rate they think is proper, to threaten to go on strike. I have no doubt that they think they are indispensable, but I very much doubt whether the country would take that view. On the other hand, they might think that a more effective way of obtaining their desire would be a stay-in strike, and to remain in office but do nothing. I do not know whether the country would notice much change even if they did that.

There is a difficulty between the payment of a proper rate to a Cabinet Minister and his Under-Secretary. In some cases the Under-Secretary is more competent than the Minister. That creates other difficulties when the Government are trying to estimate what is the proper rate to be paid. Quite apart from these considerations, it is regrettable that the Government have not taken this opportunity of dealing simultaneously with the growing number of Ministers. I have looked up the facts, and I estimate that there are 93 Members of this House who are in some way or other dependent on the Government for the position which they occupy. A number of them are not paid, such as Parliamentary Private Secretaries, but the fact that there are 93 Members under the influence of, or owing their position to, the Government is far too large a proportion, and steps ought to be taken in connection with this Bill substantially to cut down that number. Moreover, the position of the three Service Ministries ought to be considered. Those Ministries ought to be grouped together in one big Ministry of Defence. It is absurd that they should be represented in Parliament by eight Ministers, not all in this House. Two of those Ministers might be cut off before any increases in pay are granted. I cannot see that any case is made out for paying to two more Whips a salary of £1,000. I think that salaries of £1,000 a year for five Whips are unnecessary.

In regard to the payment of the Leader of the Opposition, I am not particularly attracted by that proposal, but if you are

[Mr. Mander.]
going to do it, I should have thought that there was a good deal to be said for the dividing of the salary of £2,000 by sharing it with the Deputy-Leader and the Chief Whip. I am not sure that the Chief Whips do not have a great deal more to do than the leaders. Whatever we may think it proper to give to Ministers, I think that with the state of affairs that exists in the country to-day, under the existing arrangement in different classes, if any Ministers would go away for, perhaps, an all-too-brief holiday no payment should be made to them during the holiday period. Nothing would bring home more to the people of this country, the House, and the Government the fact that there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people who have to take their holidays without pay. My feeling is that everybody in this respect ought to be treated alike. If we could come to an arrangement by which, whatever position we occupy, when we go away for our holiday we should have no pay for it, it might have a good effect. I think it would be a graceful act on the part of the Government if the Prime Minister announced to-night that that is a principle which the Government will accept. Nothing would do more to promote the passage of the little Bill that was destroyed upstairs a month or so ago, which would have given to the factory workers a holiday with pay.

Mr. Leslie Boyce: Does the hon. Member suggest that that should apply to Members of Parliament during the Recess?

Mr. Mander: Certainly, if they were away on holiday. We do not all spend the whole of our time on holiday. The suggestion would apply to everybody in the country as well as to Members of Parliament and Ministers. Mr. Speaker will be called upon, I am afraid, to exercise a rather difficult task at times under this Bill, because he will have to decide who is Leader of the Opposition. I suppose it will be the leader of the party which is numerically the strongest. I remember a time in 1931 when the Labour party were recognised as the official Opposition, but the largest party other than the Conservative party was the Liberal party. Unfortunately, however, it happened to be divided, but if it had been united it would have been larger than the Labour party. If the Home Secretary and the President

of the Board of Trade had felt their consciences outraged by the protective or other measures that they were being urged by the colleagues in the Government to carry into effect, and they had left the Government and taken their followers with them, the Liberal party would have been the official Opposition. In that case, perhaps, no great difficulties would have presented themselves, but certain difficulties may arise in the future. I regret that the Government in bringing forward the Measure, which has some merits in certain respects, have not made a good job of it, and done away with a number of wholly unnecessary and redundant offices.

9.53 p.m.

Mr. Lees-Smith: The broad nature of the Amendment is that while we acknowledge that there are very grave anomalies in the salaries of Ministers and that those anomalies ought to be corrected, we consider that that should be done within the total sum that is at present distributed among them. During the Debate several hon. Members have spoken as if in taking this action there was something niggling and cantankerous in the manner in which we are dealing with the subject. As a matter of fact we are dealing with the subject in the way recommended. The Bill, as was explained by the Home Secretary, is broadly based upon the recommendations of the Committee of 1920, ratified by the Committee of 1930. Both those Committees, the Committee of 1930 particularly, took the view that while there were anomalies to be corrected, those anomalies ought to be corrected within the total sum, so that if certain Members' salaries were increased others would be decreased, and there would be no increase of the aggregate sum.

The Government should be giving an explanation why they are ignoring this proposal of the Committee. In our Amendment we are proposing that the whole scheme should be carried out. It must be clear to hon. Members that it is quite impossible for us, with the views we take upon economic issues, to support at this stage an increase in the whole scale of Ministerial salaries. The whole heart of our creed is that we believe that society is at present debased by the grossest and most indefensible inequalities in the distribution of wealth. I cannot follow that up now, but I should much enjoy having that proposition discussed some

night on a private member's Motion. But that being the basis of our whole attitude it is impossible for us to accept the position that there should be these increases amongst this group of salaries which are a symbol of the whole national outlook. A scale of salaries which I have no doubt was very suitable to the holder in oligarchic days, when Cabinet Ministers were great social leaders, are not in any way necessary in our simple and more democratic times.

Another difficulty of this scheme is that by simply raising every ministerial salary to £5,000 a year at the end of it some of the main anomalies will still remain uncorrected; there will still remain very great inequalities even in the actual salaries of first-class Ministers. The fact is that there is an altogether different range of expenses connected with different offices. I have held two offices and so far as I was concerned I received far more hospitality than I gave. On a few occasions at the Board of Education I was called upon to distribute a few buns in order, I suppose, to help out the discussions on the religious controversy. But when you come to the Foreign Minister, he has expenses; and the President of the Board of Trade and the Service Departments have expenses. I notice that the Committee of 1930 suggest that there should be heavy expenses attached to the office of Minister of Labour. They suggest that he ought to be spending a fair amount of income in entertaining trade unionists. I have made inquiries among my hon. Friends and have not heard that any of this entertaining has come their way. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman is not present at the moment, because I was going to comment upon a picture which no doubt hon. Members may have seen of the right hon. Gentleman sitting in his drawing-room, on a spacious sofa like a sultan and surrounded by what looks like a harem, holding one or two babies in his arms.

The question of the position of the Law Officers of the Crown has been discussed, and those who have sat through the Debate will recognise that seldom has there been a case so destroyed in Debate as that for giving these enormous additional fees to the Law Officers of the Crown. I have no prepossessions on this subject; I know very little about lawyers. A long time ago I made up my mind as a poor man that I would suffer any injustice rather

than be drawn into the net of the lawyers, and when I am told that those who occupy the position of Attorney-General and Solicitor-General are in the habit of receiving incomes of £30,000 and £40,000 I can understand why the law is too expensive for persons like myself. But, in fact, I do not believe it. I have made inquiries in the last few days amongst lawyers in this House and outside, and they tell me that any such case would be most exceptional. They tell me that there is scarcely any practising lawyer who would not, if he were offered it, take one of these positions, and if you take the last half-dozen cases there is scarcely any one who has not actually increased his income by taking it.

But, quite apart from that, I am told that having once held these positions they have an enormous prestige which helps in their practice when they return; and they claim that by holding these positions they have a kind of traditional reversion to very highly paid positions like that of the Lord Chancellor and the Master of the Rolls, which they hold for life. I am sorry that this subject has been dealt with by itself. I think on the question of the Law Officers it would have been useful to have had an inquiry as to whether we need any longer to accept the general attitude of lawyers to membership of this House. I am really surprised at the attitude they take, and also surprised that we do not seem to resent that attitude. I am told that no Member of this House comes to this House for monetary reward. Take the case I have quoted. The Law Officers expect the reversion to highly paid positions like the Mastership of the Rolls. The President of the Board of Trade does not expect the reversion of Director of the Suez Canal. I do not know, as an ordinary Member, why we should take it for granted that lawyers should be in a different position to anybody else, and at the same time say that nobody is attracted by monetary reward. I find that county court judgeships and High Court judgeships in a large proportion of cases go to lawyers because they have been Members of this House, and I understand that they come here and, if they do not get the positions after a certain amount of time, begin to grumble because nothing has been done for them. They get recorder-ships while they are here. I do not know why we should accept that. It is a kind

[Mr. Lees-Smith.]
of bluff; it is a racket. Business men do not come here and, when they do not get directorships, go about grumbling that nothing has been done for them.

I am told that the only Prime Minister who took serious steps to diminish the number of places open for lawyers was Mr. Asquith, who was a member of the profession and I suppose knew more about it than I do. After all, surely a judge is in a position in which he holds our lives and fortunes in his hands. Why should that position be given to a man not on account of his merits, but because of his political pull through membership of this House? Why should we accept that? We do not accept it in the case of any other class of occupation. It would be a very useful piece of work if the next one or two Prime Ministers would put their foot down on this last remaining relic of the place hunting, wire pulling and nepotism of the eighteenth century.

I come now to a question which is one of some difficulty for those who sit on this side of the House, but is one on which I think it is right that we should plainly state our opinion. It is the question of the salary to be paid to the Leader of the Opposition. We support the proposal for an allowance to the Leader of the Opposition, although when I say that I hope the House will bear in mind the remarks I made as to our views on the whole general scale of payments of this sort. I will explain briefly why we have come to the conclusion that we ought to support this proposal. It is completely in line with that which we have always held to be the democratic doctrine. If a man gives the whole of his time to the public service, he ought to be paid for it. That enables us to reject the old idea that public service should be done for nothing. That is the old aristocratic doctrine which we reject because we believe, and experience has shown, that those who did it usually in the end got far more back in other directions than they got from their salaries. If one accepts the doctrine which I have stated, there is no doubt that it would apply in the case of the Leader of the Opposition. His is a completely and absolutely full-time occupation, and it involves very considerable expenses. I do not know how, in those conditions, we could lay

down the proposition that this work should be done without any allowance.

The right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment made some remarks about the relationship of this particular proposal to the attitude of mind of the dictatorship countries. Subsequent speeches have shown that his remarks were not fully followed, and as the argument did not seem to be fully appreciated, I will take the liberty of stating why that was in fact one of the arguments which brought us to the conclusion which I have stated. In our view, the proposed payment is the logical outcome of the whole conception of Government which we present as an alternative to the totalitarian States. In a totalitarian State, no opposition is allowed. Our whole conception is that an Opposition is necessary in order to represent the views of the minority which is inevitable in any nation of free men who are able to call their souls their own. If that be the case, the worth of the Opposition in Parliament, not in defeating Government legislation, for it cannot do that, but in modifying Government legislation so as to adapt and adjust it to the reasonable views of the minority, is just as much a part of the function of good government as that which is carried on by the Government itself.

The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, in a speech which he made the day before yesterday to his own people—a speech which I hope I may say was received with as much regret outside his constituency as in it—made some remarks which appeared to strike at the heart of the subject we are now discussing. He said that he was not only Prime Minister, but was leader of the party and Leader of the House. He is responsible for the arrangement of the business of the House. In that part of his duties, the Leader of the Opposition has a share. The Leader of the Opposition shares the responsibility for the arrangement of the business of the House, and in fact a large part of the arrangements is delegated to him, so that he has more complete responsibility over them than the Prime Minister himself. In one capacity he is leader of the party, which in some ways corresponds to that capacity of the Prime Minister; but in the other capacity, he is the servant of the whole House. Surely if that be so, he is entitled to compensation for the expenses of his office.

There is one more subject with which I wish to deal. It also is a difficult subject but one which it is important to raise definitely in this Debate. During the week-end I have been making researches into what happens in other countries in this respect and I think it is broadly true to say that already, and apart from this Bill, this country has a higher range of Ministerial salaries than any other country in a comparable position and it accompanies that with a lower range of salaries for Members of Parliament. The present scale was established in 1911 and the hon. Member for East Lewisham (Sir A. Pownall) put before the House to-day certain calculations which showed that £515 is to-day the equivalent of £400 in 1911. But that is not the only factor that has to be taken into account. The work of a Member of Parliament has enormously increased since 1911. I find that the whole of our social insurance system, even National Health Insurance, has come into operation since the step was taken of giving salaries to Members of Parliament and increased work has meant increased expenses. Furthermore, Autumn Sessions have become the practice of the House since those days and, apart from the additional work, an Autumn Session means increased expense for those Members who have to live in London during that time.

One or two hon. Members have referred to these salaries as being merely allowances in aid of our work. I think they were so regarded in 1911 and I suppose that every Member of the House then had other resources. But there has been a great change since, and I think all hon. Members would agree that it has been in many ways a healthy change, in the representative character of the House. Now there are many Members who have practically no other resources. Indeed there are many Members who have no other resources at all and in the speeches to-night we have heard evidence that those Members sit on both sides of the House. That is why I speak on this subject a little more freely than I might have done at the beginning of the Debate. It appears to me that as Members of this House we have to put to ourselves these questions. Remembering the facts which I have mentioned, is it possible on the present Parliamentary salary or allowance

or whatever you may call it, for a Member to maintain his home and his family out of London, to meet the expenses of living in London during the Session and to meet the other absolutely unescapable expenses of a Member of Parliament? Is it possible for him to do so without depriving himself of the necessities of life—I could go more deeply into what I mean by that if it were reasonable to do so at this time—and, unless he is a man who is phenomenally indifferent to the future, without constant anxiety which must detract from his work as a Member of this House?

When I put myself that question, my answer certainly is that it is not possible, and if it is not possible, is not that the greatest anomaly of all? I suppose I am speaking at the moment personally on this subject, because one must realise that this kind of change is a change in the hands of the House as a whole. It cannot be made by the Government. It can only be made by the general assent of the House, and one can only judge by the general attitude of the House in a Debate of this kind. I have listened to the Debate, and both in the speeches and in the reception of the speeches the attitude has certainly been most sympathetic and obviously desirous that this subject should be further inquired into. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister can take that as one of the results of this Debate. It is not part of the Bill, and certainly it is a subject that must be dealt with absolutely distinct from this Bill, but still the Prime Minister will realise that if it is not dealt with, it will still further increase the discrepancy between Ministers and the rest of the House and leave the position that, while the anomalies among Ministers have been dealt with, the anomalies among Members have been left where they were.

10.22 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Baldwin): This has been a very interesting discussion, though two subjects that have been mentioned by many Members are not subjects directly connected with the Bill. One is the remuneration of the Law Officers of the Crown, and the other is the question of Members' salaries. With regard to the latter point, I propose to say a few words before I have finished. With regard to the first point, I do not feel that this is an occasion on which to

[The Prime Minister.]
pronounce dogmatically on the merits of the existing system of the payment of Law Officers or whether it is possible to improve it. They are not mentioned in the Bill, and I imagine, though I would not for a moment, of course, anticipate any ruling that might be given, that it would be rather difficult to discuss the question in the form in which the Bill is at present. But I do rather take exception to an observation of the right hon. Gentleman about lawyers generally in this House and about the profession, because I have seen a great deal of them in my time, and I do think from my experience—I do not know whether every lawyer would agree with me—that an experience of Parliament and of the Executive at work is an experience of great value to be had by some of the men in the higher judicial appointments. The phrase that he used about place-hunting and wire-pulling reminded me of that little poem which, if I remember aright, runs something like this:

“The halls of fame are very wide,
And they are always full,
And some go in by the door called ‘Push,’
And some by the door called ‘Pull.’”

In my experience there are a good many pushers and pullers, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that they are not confined either to the legal or to any other profession.

I would like to say a few words on some of the divers points that have been raised during the Debate. I would like to say, first, a word on the Amendment which has been moved from the Opposition benches. In my view, if we were to combine this Bill with a Bill for what the Mover of the Amendment termed the rationalisation of Government, or if we were to wait until there had been such rationalisation before we introduced this Bill, then certainly the Bill would not be passed in my time, and I doubt whether it would be passed in the lifetime of any Member sitting in this House. We must remember that on this question of Ministerial salaries it is 17 years since the first Committee reported. The subject is long overdue, whether the House agrees with our proposals or not. It is a subject—and I freely confess this to the House—that I ought to have tackled myself in 1924. One or two hon. Members to-day, in speaking about salaries of Members of Parliament, said that they spoke with a

realisation of the difficulty of raising a subject which affected themselves personally. I understand that, but sometimes we have to do these things.

In the same way I have always felt a certain diffidence in bringing forward a Measure of this kind, and it may well be that I am a more seasoned vessel perhaps than I was 10 years ago, and that what I shrank from then I gladly do now for the sake of those who will come after me. I do not believe that you will get any kind of agreement, certainly in a measurable distance of time, on the subject of what is called rationalisation. I am certain that any Government which might be in office at this time would shrink from so complete a reorganisation of the fighting services in present circumstances as would be implied and involved in the creation of a Ministry of Defence controlling those services, and I do not believe that in practice you would find that you would get from the reconstruction the economies which many Members opposite believe would be possible to counterbalance the increases that in some cases have been asked for. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last has been looking carefully at the reports of committees which have examined this subject, but I cannot, nor could my right hon. Friend while he was speaking, find any suggestion in those reports that the aggregate sum of Ministers' salaries should not be increased by any change made in individual salaries.

We have to look at this problem as a whole, and we have done the best that we can with it. In answer to a question that was put by the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) as to what is the standard salary, I have always taken it that the standard salary is the old long-established salary for the majority of the greater Ministries, £5,000 a year. It was, of course, fixed at a time when Income Tax was either non-existent or nominal, and it has through the process of years been brought down to a sum of something like £3,400 or £3,500 for the man who has no private income, and is reduced very nearly by half for the man who has private means. When suggestions are made that all salaries might be pooled, and that this £5,000 a year, which has stood so long, should be reduced to £4,000, so that all might have an equal sum without

increasing the aggregate, I really can see no reason at all, having regard to the fact that salaries themselves are worth little more than half what they were when they were first instituted, why they should be still further cut down.

It is quite true that we have had raised in different parts of the House, as we always have had, the question as to whether that should be the kind of scale or whether we should have a very much reduced scale. I have not been present myself throughout the whole of the Debate, and I do not know whether any definite suggestions have been made as to a lower basis. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) gave any definite figures which would be satisfactory to him, but I have heard him on previous occasions putting the salaries of Ministers rather in the hundreds than in the thousands, and I assume that to be the case, though I was fortunate enough to hear only part of his speech to-day. But I hold very strongly the view that there should be no tampering, and I hope there never will be, with the scale of salaries for men who bear the responsibilities that fall upon His Majesty's Ministers in these present days and will continue to fall upon them for many years to come. We all want to see, as far as possible, the dignity and the security of all Members protected, and we want it very much with regard to Ministers.

I thought the right hon. Gentleman who preceded me generalised too much more than once in his speech. He said that many people in old days made ample provision for themselves apart from what their salaries were, and that the larger salary did not necessarily seem to be a protection. I am afraid that through all the ages people have helped themselves in this world, not only politicians, but that should not prevent us from examining this question of salary from the point of view of the independence and the security of the Minister. There is, of course, a certain amount of truth in what the right hon. Gentleman said, we all know that, but let us always remember that at present in this country—I can say it without fear—there is in our public life a high standard financially, and I believe that it exists throughout the House. It has not always been so, it may not always be so, and I think it is essential in the case of men in the country's service who

have enormous responsibilities to put them in a position where at least they may be free from temptation. I think that is right.

I was a little surprised at a Member holding the responsible position of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Caithness (Sir A. Sinclair) contrasting rather unfavourably to this country the rates of salaries paid here with salaries in some foreign countries. I do not mind what the country is, I will say nothing more about it than this: I think it would be wise in every democratic country if those who hold the great responsibility of Ministers were paid the same kind of salary as we in this House receive.

I would like to pass from that aspect of the matter to the question of the salary for the Leader of the Opposition. I want to say a few words about that, because I regard it as my own child. I suggested it 11 or 12 years ago to some of my colleagues when we were discussing this question. I had discussed the working of it with friends in public life in Canada and I will tell the House quite frankly how I regarded it when I first began to consider it. It seemed to me that the Labour party in this country, playing the part it does, and being the alternative Government, was very unlikely, from its constitution, to have many men in its ranks who could carry the responsibility of Leader of the Opposition and of the party in this House, without some kind of assistance or without undertaking some outside work, as I know has been done, to keep the home going while they devote themselves and their time to this task.

Times have changed very much. We are supposed to be the wealthy party. We have many men of means among us, both in the country and in this House, but it is not universally true, as might have been said many years ago. I can quite conceive to-day, and at no distant time, that the Leader of the Opposition, when we are in opposition, will be in the position that he might be unable to undertake the work of the Leader of the Opposition without sacrificing his profession or some other form of living. One of two things may result; he will either be placed in an impossible position, or he will have to sacrifice the whole of the living by which he was earning his bread and in which he hoped some day to succeed. It struck me that that state of

[The Prime Minister.] things was wrong. We have many men in our party who are connected with business and who are valuable members of important boards. Members of this House, if their abilities lie in that way, may get work of that kind outside the Government, but a Member cannot devote much time to that kind of work as the Leader of the Opposition. I do not find any fault with what the hon. Gentleman has said about his functions, but the Leader of the Opposition is the one man who must always be here. He is the one man who leads his party. It is he who consults with the Leader of the House. On him, too, rests the responsibility for maintaining the traditions of this House. He is probably a potential Prime Minister, or he may have been Prime Minister. In that case he cannot earn much money outside this House, and I think it is right, and, indeed, necessary, that that one man, as is done in Canada, and it may be—I am not sure—in other Dominions, should be made independent. Independence in politics is worth a great deal, and throughout my life I have always been very thankful that at any rate I have had the good fortune to be independent. The Leader of the Opposition ought to be in that same position. There is no question of handing out anything from the Government. I suggest it as one who holds the traditions of this House very dear, and who recognises and rejoices in the change that has come in the last generation. I shall refer to that point again later, when I speak of the payment of Members, but I am now speaking of the Leader of the Opposition.

The time was, when I was a boy, when people hardly dreamed that the day would come when there would be large numbers of Members in this House who could not afford to perform their duties here unless they had an allowance; but I think, looking at the whole Continent of Europe, that, the more the basis of our liberty and our Constitution is broadened, the better for our country. Would anyone who remembers the old days here go back to them and give up what we have gained? This Chamber, the most famous Chamber in democratic government in the world, is now open to all, and, once you admit that everybody has a right to be elected to this House if he can, you cannot logically create or

leave a financial bar. I am very glad indeed to find that responsible speakers on the benches opposite have realised something of what was in my mind when I first decided, if I were able, to get the remuneration of the Leader of the Opposition included in any Bill dealing with Ministers' salaries.

I do not know that it is necessary for me to say any word about what are called the sinecure offices, because the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood) made some observations that seemed to me to be full of common sense. I am sure, from my own experience, that one of the difficulties of government to-day is that in certain offices—not all, but certain offices—the work and the anxiety in anxious times are incessant and never stop; and, looking back, what impresses me is how rarely Ministers, either singly or in co-operation, have enough time to think—[AN HON. MEMBER: "Hear, hear."] The problems come far too closely one on another, and, for what it is worth, I might reassure the hon. Member who agreed so cordially. I have always when I have been in office made a point of getting one day in the week by myself and in the country, not staying with people and not being a member of a party, for this reason, that I do not believe any man can retain his proper, sane perspective unless he can get out of the crowd for 12 hours in the week.

The sinecure office, so called, is one of immense value to a Government, because to have one or two Members of the Cabinet who can preside over Committees, or take up special subjects for examination, free from departmental work, is in itself a very good thing, and it is sometimes the case that such a Minister, in the wider and bigger questions which have to be decided, from having no departmental interest, no pre-disposition of any departmental kind, is very often able to approach subjects with what I call a Cabinet mind and may be of the greatest assistance. I remember that for a short time during the Government, of which I was the head, which came into office in 1924, I had the great honour of having Lord Balfour for a short time as Lord President of the Council. It was of the greatest help to have an intellect like his and a man of the experience that he had, not to do hard detailed departmental

work, which no man can do after a certain age, but a man full of that wisdom to which some of us may hope to attain at his age but without which some of us pass on to another world.

I should now like to say a word about the Prime Minister's salary. I expect many Members remember what Mr. Asquith said before the Committee in 1920. It is very short. I will read it:

"I confess I think the Prime Minister is underpaid. I was in office myself continuously for 11 years, almost nine years as Prime Minister, and I do not suppose that my experience is in the least unique, but I was a much poorer man when I left office than when I entered it. The post of Prime Minister cannot, I think, be discharged properly at the present salary unless a man has private means of his own."

I do not think anyone who has had experience would disagree with that verdict of a singularly candid and honest man. Suggestions were made in different parts of the House—not novel—that the increase should be given by way of special allowance. That is an idea that has been played with a good deal over recent years, and I need hardly tell the House that in preparing this Bill we examined that question very thoroughly. We finally came down against it for various reasons. One or two Members thought it might be economical. I do not think so, though there is not very much in that. The £10,000 a year proposed, as was stated by the Home Secretary, leaves £6,240 in the pocket of a man who has no private income and a good deal less if he happens to have private income. If you gave him £5,000 for his salary, which would be £3,400 if he had no private means and less if he had, plus x , which would be the allowance, if that x came to about £2,700 that would be about the equivalent of giving him £10,000. The question is, What ought that x to be? What do we mean by an allowance? Are you to fix in the Statute the x or allowance? If so, I can assure you it would be a very difficult sum to attain. We should have very many views in this House. Or would you authorise payment in the Statute of "necessary expenses," or some such phrase? If you did that you would have to ask yourself what is necessary, and you would have to appoint some one to decide what is necessary. That someone, I imagine, would be the Treasury, and I should be sorry to have to wrestle with the Treasury. There really are very great

difficulties in the details of this and I could not help thinking, as I have mentioned Mr. Asquith more than once to-day, of a quotation he was very fond of giving this House which, I am sure, the leader of the Liberal party remembers very well:

"Give all thou canst: high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more."

I remember that on the lips of Mr. Asquith more than once in this House, and it seems extraordinarily applicable.

I want to say a word about a subject which has been mentioned by many Members. I quite agree with what the right hon. Gentleman says. It has nothing to do with this Bill. Secondly, I want to assure the Leader of the Liberal party, who seemed a little suspicious of our suggestion for payment of the Leader of the Opposition, that there is no question of any bargain, and no question of my making any offer to secure support for him or anybody else. I would remind the House, first, of what I said earlier on the subject of payment for the Leader of the Opposition. I would remind them also of what I said in answer to a question the other day—that I proposed to make inquiries. The very obvious supplementary was asked me as to what form the inquiries would take. I gave the very proper answer that they would be made in such a way as to attain the object I had in view. The matter of the payment of Members is a matter which I have always maintained is for the House as a whole. The Government have to act, but it is a matter for the House as a whole, and whatever is done in that regard must be done in such a way as to commend itself to the *communis sensus* of the whole House. I have been thinking over this matter and have changed my mind in one regard—I have changed not my answer, but what was in my mind when I gave the answer. I at first thought of having a committee. I talked it over with one or two of my colleagues, and I do see a great drawback to that. After all, we are all in one sense of the word equals as Members of Parliament, as all Members of the Cabinet are equals as the King's servants, and I should not like myself to be a member of a committee and have a brother Member of Parliament telling me various things about his own position, and a good many other hon. Members would not like it either.

[The Prime Minister.]

I am going to ask the House to trust me in this matter. I want, either by myself or possibly with one of my colleagues, to make my inquiries from one or two hon. or right hon. Members who can give me the information that I require to make up my mind as to whether there ought to be a change or not. I propose to do that as soon as I can. If I and whoever joins with me in these discussions are convinced that there is real reason and cause for some increase in the present amount, then I shall be prepared to recommend to my colleagues further action; if not convinced, then to drop it. But from what I have heard by making a few careful inquiries through the usual channels, I fancy that the general feeling of the House coincides very much with what I have indicated. I am quite convinced that, if the House as a whole believe and realise that there is a necessity for some increase, they will support me, and, after all, if anybody objects,

supposing the Government should recommend some increase, it is always open to hon. Members to do as I did when Members were first paid, and that is, not take the cheque.

I think that I have covered all the points that have been raised. This Bill has meant a good deal of investigation and a good deal of work, and we offer it to the House as the best solution in the circumstances that we can find to meet the state of things which almost all of us would admit need remedying. I hope that the House will give the Bill a Second Reading, and then it will come before a Committee of the Whole House, when, doubtless, many of the points upon which I have touched may be raised.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided: Ayes, 228; Noes, 136.

Division No. 132.]

AYES.

[11.0 p.m.]

Agnew, Lieut.-Comdr. P. G.	Cranborne, Viscount	Hannon, Sir P. J. H.
Albery, Sir Irving	Croft, Brig.-Gen. Sir H. Page	Harbord, A.
Allen, Lt.-Col. J. Sandeman (B'kn'hd)	Crooke, J. S.	Hartington, Marquess of
Allen, Lt.-Col. Sir W. J. (Armagh)	Crookshank, Capt. H. F. C.	Heilgers, Captain F. F. A.
Anderson, Sir A. Garrett (C. of Ldn.)	Droom-Johnson, R. P.	Heneage, Lieut.-Colonel A. P.
Aske, Sir R. W.	Crosley, A. C.	Hepworth, J.
Ashton, R.	Culverwell, C. T.	Herbert, Major J. A. (Monmouth)
Baldwin, Rt. Hon. Stanley	Davidson, Rt. Hon. Sir J. C. C.	Herbert, Capt. Sir S. (Abbey)
Balfour, Capt. H. H. (Isle of Thanet)	Davies, Major Sir G. F. (Yeovil)	Hills, Major Rt. Hon. J. W. (Ripon)
Balniel, Lord	Davison, Sir W. H.	Holmes, J. S.
Barclay-Harvey, Sir C. M.	Denman, Hon. R. D.	Hope, Captain Hon. A. D. J.
Beamish, Rear-Admiral T. P. H.	Doland, G. F.	Hopkinson, A.
Beaumont, M. W. (Aylesbury)	Dorman-Smith, Major R. H.	Hudson, R. S. (Southport)
Beaumont, Hon. R. E. B. (Portsmouth)	Dreffe, C.	Hulbert, N. J.
Belt, Sir A. L.	Duckworth, Arthur (Shrewsbury)	Hume, Sir G. H.
Bernays, R. H.	Duckworth, W. R. (Moss Side)	Hunter, T.
Bessom, A. C.	Dugdale, Major T. L.	Inskip, Rt. Hon. Sir T. W. H.
Boulton, W. W.	Duggan, H. J.	Jarvis, Sir J. J.
Bower, Comdr. R. T.	Dunglass, Lord	Jones, L. (Swansea W.)
Bowyer, Capt. Sir G. E. W.	Eastwood, J. F.	Keeling, E. H.
Boycroft, H. Leslie	Elliott, Rt. Hon. W. E.	Kerr, Colonel C. I. (Montrose)
Braithwaite, Major A. N.	Ellis, Sir G.	Kerr, H. W. (Oldham)
Brass, Sir W.	Elliston, Capt. G. S.	Kerr, J. Graham (Scottish Univs.)
Briseoe, Capt. R. G.	Elmley, Viscount	Lamb, Sir J. Q.
Bull, B. B.	Emery, J. F.	Latham, Sir P.
Burghley, Lord	Emmott, C. E. G. C.	Law, Sir A. J. (High Peak)
Butler, R. A.	Emrys-Evans, P. V.	Leighton, Major B. E. P.
Campbell, Sir E. T.	Entwistle, Sir C. P.	Lennox-Boyd, A. T. L.
Cartland, J. R. H.	Erskine-Hill, A. G.	Loft, T.
Carver, Major W. H.	Evans, Capt. A. (Cardiff, S.)	Liddall, W. S.
Castlereagh, Viscount	Fleming, E. L.	Lindsay, K. M.
Cazalet, Thelma (Islington, E.)	Fox, Sir G. W. G.	Llewellyn, Lieut.-Col. J. J.
Cazalet, Capt. V. A. (Chippingham)	Furness, S. N.	Lloyd, G. W.
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. N. (Edgb't'n)	Ganzoni, Sir J.	Loftus, P. C.
Channon, H.	Gilmour, Lt.-Col. Rt. Hon. Sir J.	Lyons, A. M.
Chorlton, A. E. L.	Gluckstein, L. H.	Mabane, W. (Huddersfield)
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.	Glyn, Major Sir R. G. C.	MacAndrew, Colonel Sir C. G.
Clarke, Lt.-Col. R. S. (E. Grinstead)	Grant-Ferris, R.	MacDonald, Rt. Hon. M. (Ross)
Cobb, Captain E. C. (Preston)	Griddle, Sir A. B.	Macdonald, Capt. P. (Isle of Wight)
Colman, N. C. D.	Crimston, R. V.	McEwen, Capt. J. H. F.
Colville, Lt.-Col. Rt. Hon. D. J.	Guest, Hon. I. (Breeon and Radnor)	McKie, J. H.
Cook, Sir T. R. A. M. (Norfolk, N.)	Guest, Maj. Hon. O. (C'mb'rw'II, N.W.)	Maolay, Hon. J. P.
Cooke, J. D. (Hammersmith, S.)	Guinness, T. L. E. B.	Macmillan, H. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Cooper, Rt. Hon. A. Duff (W'st'r S. G's)	Gunston, Capt. D. W.	Maenamara, Capt. J. R. J.
Cooper, Rt. Hon. T. M. (E'nburgh, W.)	Hamilton, Sir G. C.	Magnay, T.
Courthope, Col. Sir G. L.	Hannah, I. C.	Makins, Brig.-Gen. E.

Manningham-Buller, Sir M.
 Margesson, Capt. Rt. Hon. H. D. R.
 Markham, S. F.
 Mason, Lt.-Col. Hon. G. K. M.
 Maxwell, Hon. S. A.
 Mayhew, Lt.-Col. J.
 Meller, Sir R. J. (Mitcham)
 Mellor, Sir J. S. P. (Tamworth)
 Mills, Sir F. (Leyton, E.)
 Mills, Major J. D. (New Forest)
 Moore, Lieut.-Col. T. C. R.
 Moore-Brabazon, Lt.-Col. J. T. C.
 Moreing, A. C.
 Morris-Jones, Sir Henry
 Morrison, G. A. (Scottish Univ's.)
 Morrison, Rt. Hon. W. S. (Gloucester)
 Neven-Spence, Major E. H. H.
 Nicholson, G. (Farnham)
 Nicolson, Hon. H. C.
 O'Connor, Sir Terence J.
 O'Neill, Major Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh
 Orr-Ewing, I. L.
 Palmer, G. E. H.
 Patrick, C. M.
 Peako, O.
 Penny, Sir G.
 Percy, Rt. Hon. Lord E.
 Perkins, W. R. D.
 Petherick, M.
 Pickthorn, K. W. M.
 Pilkington, R.

Pluge, Capt. L. F.
 Ponsby, Col. C. E.
 Pownall, Lt.-Col. Sir Assheton
 Procter, Major H. A.
 Ramsbotham, H.
 Ramsden, Sir E.
 Rathbone, J. R. (Bodmin)
 Rayner, Major R. H.
 Reed, A. C. (Exeter)
 Rickards, G. W. (Skipton)
 Robinson, J. R. (Blackpool)
 Rogner, Colonel L.
 Ross, Major Sir R. D. (Londonderry)
 Rowlands, G.
 Runciman, Rt. Hon. W.
 Russell, A. West (Tynamouth)
 Salmon, Sir I.
 Salt, E. W.
 Sanderson, Sir F. B.
 Sassoon, Rt. Hon. Sir P.
 Shakespeare, G. H.
 Shaw, Captain W. T. (Forfar)
 Shepperson, Sir E. W.
 Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir J. A.
 Sinclair, Col. T. (Queen's U. B'f'rst)
 Smith, Bracewell (Dulwich)
 Somerville, Sir D. B. (Crewe)
 Somerville, A. A. (Windsor)
 Spears, Brigadier-General E. L.
 Spens, W. P.
 Stanley, Rt. Hon. Oliver (W'm't'd)

Stewart, J. Henderson (File, E.)
 Storey, S.
 Strauss, E. A. (Southwark, N.)
 Strauss, H. G. (Norwich)
 Stuart, Hon. J. (Moray and Nairn)
 Sueter, Rear-Admiral Sir M. F.
 Sutcliffe, H.
 Tate, Mavis C.
 Taylor, Vice-Adm. E. A. (Padd., S.)
 Thomas, J. P. L.
 Touche, G. C.
 Tree, A. R. L. F.
 Tryon, Major Rt. Hon. G. C.
 Tubnell, Lieut.-Commander R. L.
 Turton, R. H.
 Walker-Smith, Sir J.
 Ward, Lieut.-Col. Sir A. L. (Hull)
 Ward, Irene M. B. (Wallsend)
 Warrender, Sir V.
 Waterhouse, Captain C.
 Watt, G. S. H.
 Wedderburn, H. J. S.
 Wickham, Lt.-Col. E. T. R.
 Williams, H. G. (Croydon, S.)
 Wilson, Lt.-Col. Sir A. T. (Hitchin)
 Womersley, Sir W. J.
 Wright, Squadron-Leader J. A. G.
 Young, A. S. L. (Partick)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—
 Sir James Blindell and Commander
 Southby.

NOES.

Acland, Rt. Hon. Sir F. Dyke
 Adams, D. (Consett)
 Adams, D. M. (Poplar, S.)
 Adams, S. V. T. (Leeds, W.)
 Adamson, W. M.
 Alexander, Rt. Hon. A. V. (H'lsbr.)
 Ammon, C. G.
 Anderson, F. (Whitehaven)
 Attlee, Rt. Hon. G. R.
 Banfield, J. W.
 Barr, J.
 Batey, J.
 Bellenger, F. J.
 Benn, Rt. Hon. W. W.
 Bromfield, W.
 Brooke, W.
 Brown, Rt. Hon. J. (S. Ayrshire)
 Buchanan, G.
 Burke, W. A.
 Cape, T.
 Charleton, H. C.
 Chater, D.
 Cluse, W. S.
 Cooks, F. S.
 Cripps, Hon. Sir Stafford
 Dagger, G.
 Dalton, H.
 Davidson, J. J. (Maryhill)
 Davies, R. J. (Westhoughton)
 Davies, S. O. (Merthyr)
 Day, H.
 Dobbie, W.
 Dunn, E. (Rother Valley)
 Ede, J. C.
 Edwards, Sir C. (Bedwellty)
 Evans, D. O. (Cardigan)
 Fletcher, Lt.-Comdr. R. T. H.
 Foot, D. M.
 Frankel, D.
 Gallacher, W.
 Gardner, B. W.
 Garro Jones, G. M.
 Gibbins, J.
 Gibson, R. (Greenock)
 Green, W. H. (Dapiford)
 Greenwood, Rt. Hon. A.

Grenfell, D. R.
 Griffith, F. Kingsley (W'dd'sbro, W.)
 Griffiths, G. A. (Hemsworth)
 Griffiths, J. (Llanelli)
 Groves, T. E.
 Hall, G. H. (Aberdare)
 Hall, J. H. (Whitechapel)
 Hardie, G. D.
 Harris, Sir P. A.
 Henderson, A. (Kingswinford)
 Henderson, J. (Ardwick)
 Henderson, T. (Tradeston)
 Holdsworth, H.
 Hopkin, D.
 Jagger, J.
 Jenkins, A. (Pontypool)
 Jenkins, Sir W. (Neath)
 Johnston, Rt. Hon. T.
 Jones, A. C. (Shipley)
 Jones, H. Haydn (Merioneth)
 Jones, Morgan (Caerphilly)
 Kelly, W. T.
 Kennedy, Rt. Hon. T.
 Kirby, B. V.
 Lathan, G.
 Lawson, J. J.
 Lee, F.
 Leslie, J. R.
 Logan, D. G.
 Lunn, W.
 McIntee, V. La T.
 McGehe, H. G.
 McGovern, J.
 MacLaren, A.
 Maclean, N.
 MacMillan, M. (Western Isles)
 MacNeill, Weir, L.
 Mainwaring, W. H.
 Mander, G. le M.
 Marshall, F.
 Maxton, J.
 Messer, F.
 Milner, Major J.
 Morrison, R. C. (Tottenham, N.)
 Naylor, T. E.
 Oliver, G. H.

Owen, Major G.
 Paling, W.
 Parker, J.
 Parkinson, J. A.
 Potts, J.
 Price, M. P.
 Pritt, D. N.
 Richards, R. (Wrexham)
 Ridley, G.
 Riley, B.
 Ritson, J.
 Robinson, W. A. (St. Helens)
 Sanders, W. S.
 Seely, Sir H. M.
 Sexton, T. M.
 Shinwell, E.
 Short, A.
 Silverman, S. S.
 Simpson, F. B.
 Sinclair, Rt. Hon. Sir A. (C'hn's)
 Smith, Ben (Rotherhithe)
 Smith, E. (Stoke)
 Smith, Rt. Hon. H. B. Lees- (K'ly)
 Smith, T. (Normanton)
 Sorenson, R. W.
 Stephen, G.
 Stewart, W. J. (H'ght'n-Je-Sp'ng)
 Strauss, G. R. (Lambeth, N.)
 Taylor, R. J. (Morpath)
 Thurle, E.
 Tinker, J. J.
 Viant, S. P.
 Walkden, A. G.
 Walker, J.
 Watkins, F. C.
 Watson, W. Mol.
 Wedgwood, Rt. Hon. J. C.
 Welsh, J. C.
 White, H. Graham
 Whiteley, W.
 Williams, E. J. (Ogmore)
 Wilson, C. H. (Attercliffe)
 Windsor, W. (Hall, C.)
 Woods, G. S. (Finsbury)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—
 Mr. Mathers and Mr. John.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the
 Whole House for To-morrow.—[*Captain
 Margesson.*]

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN [MONEY].

Considered in Committee under Standing Order No. 69.

[Captain BOURNE in the Chair.]

Resolved,

"That, for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to regulate the salaries payable in respect of certain Administrative Offices of State; to provide for the payment of additional salaries to members of the Cabinet holding offices at salaries less than five thousand pounds a year, of a salary to any person being Prime Minister, of pensions to persons who have been Prime Minister, and of a salary to any person being Leader of the Opposition; to simplify the law as to the capacity of persons holding offices of profit to sit and vote in Parliament; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid, it is expedient to authorise:

(a) the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament to the holders of the offices named in the first column of the following table of annual salaries of the amounts respectively specified in the second column of that table:

Offices.	Amount of Annual Salary.
	£
Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury	10,000
Chancellor of the Exchequer, eight Secretaries of State, First Lord of the Admiralty, President of the Board of Trade, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, President of the Board of Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Labour, Minister of Transport, Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence. ...	each 5,000
Lord President of the Council, Lord Privy Seal, Postmaster-General, First Commissioner of Works	each 3,000
Minister of Pensions	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury	3,000
Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Secretary for Mines, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade	each 2,000
Two Parliamentary Under Secretaries to the Foreign Office in the aggregate	3,000
Two Parliamentary Under Secretaries to the Admiralty in the aggregate	3,000
Two Parliamentary Under Secretaries to the War Office in the aggregate	3,000

Offices.	Amount of Annual Salary.
One Parliamentary Under Secretary to each of the following Departments, that is to say: the Air Ministry, the Board of Education, the Board of Trade, the Burma Office, the Colonial Office, the Dominions Office, the Home Office, the India Office, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Transport, and the Scottish Office.	each 1,500
Assistant Postmaster-General	1,200
Five Junior Lords of the Treasury each	1,000

(b) the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of such sums as may be necessary to increase to £5,000 the annual salary of any Minister of the Crown in receipt of a salary of less amount, if and so long as he is a member of the Cabinet;

(c) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of a pension of £2,000 a year to any person who has been Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury and of an annual salary of £2,000 to the Leader of the Opposition."—(*King's Recommendation signified.*)—[*Lieut.-Colonel Colville.*]

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

WIDOWS', ORPHANS' AND OLD AGE CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS (VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORS) [MONEY].

Resolution reported,

"That for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to extend the classes of persons who can become insured as voluntary contributors for the purposes of widows', orphans' and old age contributory pensions, and otherwise to amend, in relation to voluntary contributors and women engaged in certain accepted employments, the enactments relating to such pensions and to health insurance, to amend Section thirty of the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1936, and Section four of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1932, and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid, it is expedient that—

(1) there shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament into any account constituted under the said Act—

(i) in the year ending on the thirty-first day of March, nineteen hundred and forty, and in each of the two succeeding years, a sum greater by one-third than the sum which, on an estimate made in accordance with directions given by the

Treasury, may be expected to be received in a contribution year in respect of the contributions of persons (hereinafter referred to as 'initial entrants') who by virtue of the said Act, and not later than twelve months after the commencement thereof, are admitted as special voluntary contributors to insurance for the purposes of the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1936 (hereinafter referred to as 'the principal Act'), such estimate being framed on the basis that every initial entrant is insured throughout the year;

(ii) in each of the next succeeding seven years, a sum so calculated that, if annual payments of that amount were made during a period of twenty-seven years, those payments together with the sums paid under the preceding paragraph would be equal in value to the capital amount (as estimated by the Government actuary in the year nineteen hundred and forty-one) of the loss to the said account arising from the admission to insurance of initial entrants; and

(iii) in subsequent years, such sums as Parliament may determine with a view to meeting the loss to the said account arising from persons, whether initial

entrants or not, being admitted to insurance for such purposes as aforesaid by virtue of the said Act of the present Session; and

(2) there shall be defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament any increased expenditure attributable to the said Act in respect of old age pensions payable under the Old Age Pensions Act, 1936, by virtue of the principal Act, and, to such extent as may be sanctioned by the Treasury, any other increased expenditure so attributable in respect of the administration of those Acts."

Resolution agreed to.

The remaining Orders were read, and postponed.

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Captain Margesson.*]

Adjourned accordingly at Fifteen Minutes after Eleven o'Clock.

