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This volume contains a wide selection from the speeches made by Mr. Attlee during the 1945 General Election campaign and during the first fifteen months of his Premiership. There are some in which he speaks primarily as the head of the British Government—when welcoming the General Assembly of UNO to London, when opening the Imperial Press Conference; there are others in which he is first and foremost the Leader of the Labour Party—when delivering an election broadcast, when replying, in the House of Commons, to a Vote of Censure moved by Mr. Churchill; there is a third category in which he speaks primarily as an individual—talking of the work of boys' clubs, stressing the value of tolerance in the world of today.

These and many other speeches constitute a statement of Britain's position in the world, a commentary on the work of the Labour Government and an insight into the

*[Continued on back flap*

*Continued from front flap]*

beliefs and methods of thought of the Prime Minister. They are full of the clear reasoning and quiet effectiveness to which Mr. Attlee owes so much of his strength.

Twenty-nine speeches, delivered to a wide variety of audiences, enable us to see again, through the eyes of the Prime Minister, the major political questions with which the British Government had to deal during the first difficult and decisive eighteen months of peace.

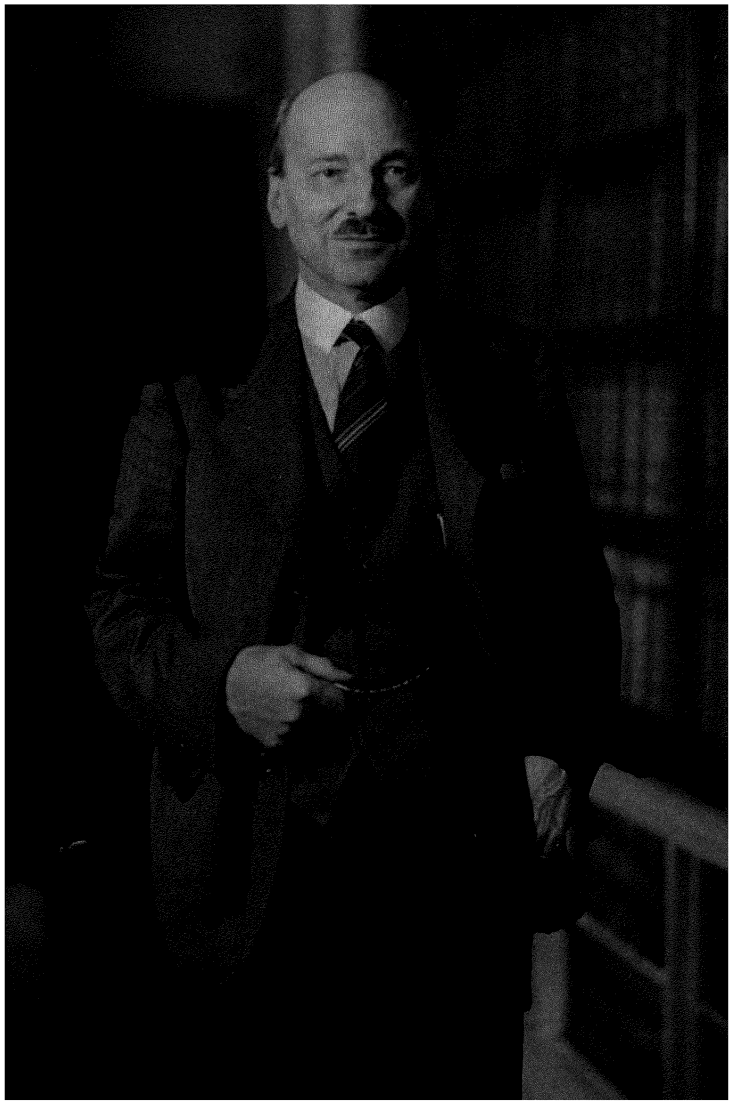
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The Rt Hon C. R. ATTLEE, CH MP

# PURPOSE *and* POLICY

*Selected Speeches*

*by*

The Rt. Hon. C. R. ATTLEE
C.H., M.P.

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# INTRODUCTION

THIS volume contains twenty-nine selected speeches delivered by Mr. Attlee during the past eighteen months. They are not arranged in chronological order but are divided into eight groups according to the main subject with which each speech is concerned.

The first speech, in point of time, is that addressed to the Annual Conference of the Labour Party in May, 1945. At that time the war coalition was still in being, although in the last days of its life, and Mr. Attlee was Lord President of the Council and Deputy Prime Minister. The last speech is that made by him, as Prime Minister, at the Lord Mayor's banquet in November, 1946, immediately after the close of the Labour Government's first Parliamentary session.

The intervening period started with the break-up of Mr. Churchill's "famous coalition" and the formation of the so-called Caretaker Government. Mr. Attlee led his party out of the Government intact and resumed his position as Leader of the Opposition. The impending General Election was already looming large, and as the next few weeks went by an intensive political campaign developed. Polling day was 5th July, but because of the Service men's votes which were cast all over the world the counting of the papers was delayed for three weeks.

During this period the Potsdam Conference took place. In order to ensure a degree of continuity, should the result of the voting entail a change in the British Government, Mr. Attlee accompanied Mr. Churchill to this gathering. They both left an unfinished conference to return to London for the election results, which were declared on 26th July. The Labour Party gained an overwhelming victory, and on the evening of that day Mr. Attlee took office as Prime Minister in the first majority Labour Government in the history of Great Britain.

The next few weeks were busy ones. A Cabinet had to be formed, the Potsdam deliberations concluded and a great legislative programme prepared. In the midst of this the launching of the atomic bomb and the sudden ending of the war against Japan brought added problems as well as great relief.

Parliament met in the middle of August, and Mr. Attlee presented his Government and his programme to the House. It was the beginning

of a year of most intense legislative activity. The Labour Party had gone to the country on a programme of social reform coupled with specific measures of nationalisation. This programme the Government proceeded to implement. During the session which began in August, 1945, and ended in November, 1946, Bills for the nationalisation of the Bank of England, the coal mines, civil aviation and the Cable and Wireless organisation were carried through both Houses of Parliament. In the same period the National Insurance, Industrial Injuries, National Health and Family Allowance Bills followed the same road to the statute book.

All this had to be done in the midst of many pressing short-term problems. The re-establishment of British economy on a peace-time footing was the major administrative task. One facet of this—demobilisation—became an important political issue in the autumn of 1945. The urgent need of rapidly building up Britain's export trade to a level considerably in excess of the pre-war one was only temporarily eased by the granting of the American Loan. This task was tackled with a great degree of success, but it necessarily delayed the re-stocking of the home market with consumer goods, particularly of the better quality, and thereby attracted a certain amount of criticism.

World food shortages added further complications. The cessation of Lend-Lease and the needs of the newly liberated and ex-enemy countries meant that, while it was possible to introduce a little more variety into the diet, the end of the war brought in its train an actual worsening in the supply position of certain basic foodstuffs—particularly wheat and rice. By July, 1946, dwindling stocks had forced the Government to take the radical step of rationing bread.

From all sides there arose problems to which increased production was the only effective solution. The Government was faced with the not easy task of bringing home to a nation wearied by war and still slightly cynical from its experience of mass unemployment in peace-time the fact that great efforts were no less necessary in the aftermath than they had been in the war itself. In the spring of 1946 a great production drive was launched. The Prime Minister opened the campaign with a broadcast appeal, and there were numerous meetings with trade unions and employers' organisations. "The Dunkirk spirit" had to be recaptured.

The period was marked by considerable achievement in the field of imperial affairs. The problem of giving freedom to India was approached by the imaginative step of sending out a Cabinet mission,

composed of three high-ranking Ministers and armed with far-reaching powers to find a solution that would give India full independence, either within or outside the Commonwealth. The difficulty of getting agreement amongst the Indians themselves proved the greatest obstacle; but this was not allowed seriously to impede progress, and an Indian Cabinet was formed carrying real responsibility and power and containing representatives of both the Congress Party and the Muslim League. In the Middle East, negotiations, fraught with difficulties, for the evacuation of British troops from Egypt were set in train.

In the field of foreign affairs it was a period of great events and constant hard endeavour, rather than of obvious achievement. There was the task of launching the United Nations Organisation; one of Mr. Attlee's first duties as Prime Minister was to move the ratification of its Charter, drawn up at San Francisco, in the House of Commons. In January the first meeting of the Assembly was held in London, and in October the second meeting opened in New York.

The control of atomic knowledge was the subject of much controversy. In November, 1945, Mr. Attlee paid a visit to the United States and Canada in order to discuss this and other questions with President Truman and Mr. Mackenzie King. The war-time habit of periodic meetings of the "Big Three" was not continued, but the Foreign Secretaries of the Great Powers met together on several occasions, in the Council of Foreign Ministers and at the Peace Conference in Paris.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers remained far from satisfactory. There was deep misunderstanding and suspicion on questions associated with quadripartite control in Germany, on Trieste, on Greece and on what constituted "free elections" in Eastern Europe. The British Government set its face firmly against the view that political democracy was a luxury to be enjoyed only by its own and a few other chosen peoples. Mr. Bevin would not recognise that terrorism and oppression were different things when they came from the Left than when they came from the Right. This attitude, in which he was strongly backed by the Prime Minister, exposed him to a certain amount of criticism from some sections of his own Party; but there was no evidence that the "social-democratic" attitude of the Government to external affairs did not command the general support of the Labour Movement and of the nation.

The period closed with the Government about to face its second

session in the House of Commons. Its stock stood fairly high. In over fifteen months of office it had not lost a single by-election, a record unequalled by any previous Government since that of 1874. There were still many difficulties to be overcome, but there was a widespread feeling that the Government had shown itself well capable of tackling them.

It was against this background that these and many other speeches were delivered by the Prime Minister. The selection has not been easy to make; many important and interesting statements have necessarily been excluded. My endeavour has been to include primarily speeches which illustrate and exemplify the style and methods of thought of the Prime Minister, as well as the policy and outlook of the Party of which he is the leader. The volume is not a detailed exposition of the work of the Labour Government; rather is it a commentary on certain aspects of this work.

ROY JENKINS.

*November*, 1946.

CHAPTER I

# THE LABOUR PARTY APPROACH

*The Election Broadcast* (*5th June*, 1945)

*A Speech to the House of Commons during the Debate on the Address* (*16th August*, 1945)

*A Speech to the House of Commons in reply to a Vote of Censure* (*6th December*, 1945)

*A Speech to the Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (*11th June*, 1946)

*A Speech to the Trades Union Congress* (*24th October*, 1946)

# THE ELECTION BROADCAST

*5th June, 1945*

*Broadcast addresses from the leaders of the different political parties were a prominent feature of the 1945 General Election campaign. The first of these speeches was delivered by Mr. Churchill a month before Polling Day. This was his famous "Gestapo Broadcast," in which he told his listeners that a Socialist policy was abhorrent to British ideas of freedom. He devoted much time to the claim that, unlike their opponents, who, he said, had precipitated the election, the Conservative Party put the interests of the nation first; and he then attempted to paint a frightening picture of the fate of small savings under a Socialist financial policy.*

*Many people were surprised at the note of bitter controversy on which the Prime Minister had spoken, and it was in a heightened political atmosphere that Mr. Attlee's reply, which was broadcast on the following evening, was awaited.*

WHEN I listened to the Prime Minister's speech last night, in which he gave such a travesty of the policy of the Labour Party, I realised at once what was his object. He wanted the electors to understand how great was the difference between Winston Churchill, the great leader in war of a united nation, and Mr. Churchill, the Party Leader of the Conservatives. He feared lest those who had accepted his leadership in war might be tempted out of gratitude to follow him further. I thank him for having disillusioned them so thoroughly. The voice we heard last night was that of Mr. Churchill, but the mind was that of Lord Beaverbrook.

I am also addressing you to-night on the wireless for the first time for five years as a Party Leader. But before turning to the issues that divide Parties, I would like to pay my tribute to my colleagues in the late Government, of all Parties or of none, with whom I have had the privilege of serving under a great leader in war, the Prime Minister. No political differences will efface the memory of our comradeship in this tremendous adventure, of the anxieties shared, of the tasks undertaken together and of the spirit of friendly co-operation in a

great cause which prevailed. I know well the contributions made by one and all to the achievement of victory.

The fact that men of diverse political views, backed by the continuous support of Parliament and the country, were able to work together for five years is a great testimony to British democracy and to the political maturity of this country. We concentrated our energies on the supreme need of winning the war and were able to agree on all the practical measures required. To plan for the immediate post-war period was more difficult, but here again, on such matters as social insurance, we were able to submit to the country proposals supported by us all.

It was, however, inevitable that when an approach was made to long-term policy in relation to the economic organisation of the country, there would be a divergence of view on the principles to be applied, which necessitated an appeal to the country. The issues involved had sooner or later to be put to the people by the rival Parties in order that they might be decided.

I should like to deal for a minute or two with the reason for having this election, because I notice that there is some misunderstanding and some deliberate misrepresentation. We have fought a great war for democracy. It is of the essence of the democratic system that the people should, from time to time, have the opportunity of deciding by what persons and on what principles they should be governed. In the U.S.A., for instance, there must be an election of a President, war or no war, every four years. In this country the system is more elastic, but five years is the fixed limit for the continuance of a Parliament. The life of the present House of Commons has lasted nearly ten years. Parliament has again and again extended its own life. Here, fortunately, our elastic system allowed it to be done, because we could not have had a proper election in the conditions of the war against Germany. But it would be contrary to the spirit of the constitution for Parliament to extend its life unless there was some compelling reason. The point was very well put by the Prime Minister in introducing the Prolongation of Parliament Bill in 1944. He said "I could not blame anyone who claimed that there should be an appeal to the people once the German peril is removed. I have myself a clear view that it would be wrong (note that word 'wrong') to continue this Parliament beyond the period of the German War. I can assure the House that in the absence of most earnest representations from the Labour and Liberal Parties I could not refrain from making a submission to the Crown in respect

of a dissolution after the German War is effectively and officially finished." Well, the Labour Party did not make a representation, but I received from the Prime Minister a proposal that we should continue until the war with Japan was ended, a period that might last a long time. I could not accept, because I agreed with the Prime Minister that it would be wrong to continue this Parliament, and I could not accept his suggestion that instead of an election we should have a referendum. It would have been quite contrary to the spirit of our constitution for a ten-years-old Parliament to have introduced such an exotic novelty in order to prolong its own life.

The Labour Ministers offered to continue until the end of the session in the autumn, when the life of Parliament ended. An election then would have provided for a more accurate register and would have given to the fighting men a fairer opportunity of voting. The Prime Minister, however, refused our offer and under heavy pressure from his Party and the Party Press decided to have an election now.

I am sorry that the Prime Minister, who after all owed his position as Prime Minister to the Labour Party, should have accused us of putting Party before country. His proposal to carry on for another year would have meant a Conservative majority in the House during the crucial period of reconstruction.

The calling of a General Election involved the break-up of the Government, but has not in any way altered the firm resolve of the Labour Party to do its utmost to win the war against Japan. While Labour Ministers were still in office all preparations had been made to ensure that the men and materials necessary for this purpose should be made available. Equally we are resolved to maintain as long as it is necessary the Forces required elsewhere to deal with the aftermath of war.

Everyone wants the fighting men home again as soon as possible, and I know that some have been away a very long time, but the job has got to be finished. The plans for the re-allocation and ultimate demobilisation of the forces have been carefully worked out to be as fair as possible. Hard cases are inevitable, but it is essential that the general plan should not be disturbed.

There are many other matters which the late Government dealt with in order to provide for the immediate situation after the ending of the war against Germany on which there is no difference between Parties. They are not in issue at this election. I hope, too, that there may be continued agreement among us all on the main lines of foreign policy. After the last war the League of Nations was formed to

maintain peace and the rule of law and to prevent aggression. My generation that fought in the last war hoped much from it. It failed, but the idea was right. The development of modern long-range weapons has made still more cogent the reasons for creating a world organisation charged with the maintenance of peace.

The Labour Party, unlike the majority of the Conservatives, gave wholehearted support to the League throughout the inter-war period, and it welcomes the attempt now being made at San Francisco to create a world organisation armed with the power to deter the aggressor. It is, we believe, vital to world peace that the close co-operation of the British Commonwealth, the United States and Russia should continue, and that with the other peace-loving Powers they should take measures to prevent any would-be aggressor from disturbing the peace of the world. Germany and Japan must be deprived of the power to make war again.

We must all recognise that if we wish for peace we must take our share in providing the armed forces necessary to give power to the new organisation. Only when world security is fully established and war has become a thing of the past can we be rid of the burden of armaments. But it is not enough to prevent war. There must be constructive action to remove the causes of war. World economic anarchy between the wars gave Hitler his chance. I hold that it should be a principal object of the United Nations to wage war on hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance and to promote the greatest measure of economic co-operation between all nations, in order to raise the standards of life of the masses of the people.

I welcome the conferences that have been held with this object and particularly the general acceptance now of the view always held by the Labour Party, though derided by our opponents, that the interests of this country and of the world demand the utilisation of abundance and not the artificial creation of scarcity. Holding strongly these views, a Labour Government will bring to the task of world economic co-operation an enthusiasm and drive impossible to those who are so closely bound to private interests. Especially will we seek to advance the standards of life of the less developed peoples of the world, holding that economic progress, education and increasing self-government must go forward together. It is in the light of these world problems that we must consider our domestic policy, for our prosperity depends on the prosperity of other nations.

It is here on domestic policy that we get the main clash between Parties. The Prime Minister spent a lot of time painting to you a

lurid picture of what would happen under a Labour Government in pursuit of what he called a "Continental conception." He has forgotten that Socialist theory was developed in Britain long before Karl Marx, by Robert Owen. He has forgotten that Australia and New Zealand, whose peoples have played so great a part in the war, and the Scandinavian countries have had Socialist Governments for years, to the great benefit of their peoples, with none of these dreadful consequences. There are no countries in the world more free and democratic. When he talks of the danger of a secret police and all the rest of it, he forgets that these things were actually experienced in this country only under the Tory Government of Lord Liverpool, in the years of repression when the British people who had saved Europe from Napoleon were suffering deep distress. He has forgotten many things, including when he talks of the danger of Labour mismanaging finance, his own disastrous record at the Exchequer over the Gold Standard.

I shall not waste time on this theoretical stuff which is merely a secondhand version of the academic views of an Austrian—Professor Friedrich August von Hayek—who is very popular just now with the Conservative Party. Any system can be reduced to absurdity by this kind of theoretical reasoning, just as German professors showed theoretically that British democracy must be beaten by German dictatorship. It was not.

The men and women of this country who have endured great hardships in the war are asking what kind of life awaits them in peace. They seek for the opportunity of leading reasonably secure and happy lives and they deserve to have it. They need good homes, sufficient food, clothing and the amenities of life, employment and leisure and social provision for accident, sickness and old age. For their children they desire an educational system that will give them the chance to develop all their faculties. How are we to provide our people with what they deserve? Here arises the disagreement between Parties.

The Conservative Party believes that the basis of our economic activities must be what they call private enterprise, inspired by the motive of private profit. They would reduce direction by and for the nation to the minimum. They seem to hold that if every individual seeks his own interest somehow or other the interests of all will be served. It is a pathetic faith resting on no foundation of experience. The country has been run on these principles, though with inevitable modifications, for years. Yet a great number of people in this country

have always been badly housed, badly fed and clothed and denied very often the opportunity of working, while our agriculture has languished, finance has been misdirected and many of our most vital industries have, as recent inquiries have shown, been inefficiently and wastefully managed.

The Labour Party on the contrary, believes that if you want certain results you must plan to secure them; that in peace as in war the public interest must come first, and that if in war, despite the diversion of most of our energies to making instruments of destruction and despite the shortage of supply imposed by war conditions, we were able to provide food, clothing and employment for all our people, it is not impossible to do the same in peace, provided the Government has the will and the power to act.

During the war the Government in the national interest imposed many restrictions on the right of the individual to do as he pleased. Some of these, though necessary, were very irksome. They should be removed as soon as the necessity for them has passed away, but others are still vitally needed to protect the public from profiteers and monopolists. Yet strong elements in the Conservative Party clamour, as their predecessors did successfully in 1918, for their abolition.

There is a world shortage of many kinds of food and of most consumable goods, while there is in the hands of the public a large volume of purchasing power. If controls are removed there would be a rush for the available commodities. Prices would soar. Profiteers would have a good time while the general public would lose. Wage and salary earners, pensioners and investors in War Savings would find that their money would purchase much less than they expected.

The late Government wisely and firmly by strict control maintained prices fairly steady. The Labour Party is determined not to countenance inflation. We want a stable price level. Inflation is no imaginary danger. It is just what happened after the last war, when in a hurried election the country was rushed into returning a huge reactionary majority at the instance of the war leader, Mr. Lloyd George.

Similarly, if controls were removed from rents, the present shortage would mean that the community would pay an immense toll to the landlords. I am sure that the wiser Conservatives would agree with this. So, no doubt, did their predecessors in 1918, but they yielded to the clamour of private interests. We believe that it is essential to maintain the economic controls necessary to give direction to the national life.

We must ensure that the natural resources of the country are

fully utilised. Private interest must not be allowed to stand in the way of national welfare. For some time to come raw materials will be scarce and they must be used to the best advantage. The savings of the nation must be directed into those channels where they will produce the things that are most needed, not those that will give the most immediate profit. It is obvious to all that building materials and labour must be employed on providing for the urgently needed houses, schools and factories and not on luxury buildings and non-essentials.

But the same principle of first things first should be applied to other things than building. We cannot afford to waste the land of the country. We need a prosperous agriculture. We need well-planned, well-built cities with parks and playing fields, homes and schools, factories and shops in their right relationship. We do not want our beautiful country spoilt by haphazard development dictated only by hope of gain. Enough damage has already been done in the past. Therefore we must control the use of the land and have power to acquire what the nation or the local council need, paying a fair price, but not an extravagant ransom extorted on account of the needs of the community.

We need a planned location of industry to give a balance to the country and to preserve social capital. We must have no more distressed areas. Not one of these things can be effected without giving power to the Government. The Prime Minister made much play last night with the rights of the individual and the danger of people being ordered about by officials. I entirely agree that people should have the greatest freedom compatible with the freedom of others. There was a time when employers were free to work little children for sixteen hours a day. I remember when employers were free to employ sweated women workers on finishing trousers at a penny halfpenny a pair. There was a time when people were free to neglect sanitation so that thousands died of preventable diseases. For years every attempt to remedy these crying evils was blocked by the same plea of freedom for the individual. It was in fact freedom for the rich and slavery for the poor. Make no mistake, it has only been through the power of the State, given to it by Parliament, that the general public has been protected against the greed of ruthless profit makers and property owners.

No one supposes that all the industries of this country can or should be socialised forthwith, but there are certain great basic industries which from their nature are ripe for conversion into public

services. Inland transport is tending more and more towards monopoly, and it is unsafe to leave a monopoly in private hands. A Conservative Government has bought out the owners of coal but proposes to leave the getting and distributing of it in the hands of the same people whose inefficiency has been condemned by every impartial inquiry. Much of the production of gas and electricity is in public hands to the great advantage of the consumers. Labour's policy is to transform the whole business of providing fuel, power and light into a public service. A similar policy would be pursued in relation to iron and steel. In every case there must be a suitable organisation which, while protecting the public interest, will give scope for business organisation and the application of scientific methods. There will be plenty of scope for the technician and for that enterprise which is so often lacking in private industry to-day. Fair, but not excessive, compensation will be paid. Wherever there is the danger of monopolies and cartels, there must be public supervision to prevent exploitation.

Those who cry out against State control are generally the loudest in demanding subsidies, tariffs, and other State aids for themselves. It is Labour's policy to stimulate industry and especially to help our export trade, but that help will only be given on condition that industry and trade are efficient.

I have not time to-night to deal with other points in Labour's programme, in particular our proposals for the social services, for health and education and for the application of science to the problems that face us. My colleagues who will be speaking later in the campaign will deal in more detail with subjects to which I have referred in passing. It has been my purpose to give you the general principles of Labour's policy with some illustrations of particular points.

You may ask "Can these things be done?" "Can we give to our returned fighting men and to all our people the kind of life which they so richly deserve?" "Can we have the Britain we desire?" My answer is that in the war we accomplished far harder tasks than this. I speak on the eve of the anniversary of D-Day. The people who planned and carried through the Normandy landings will not be daunted by any difficulties. The British people can do these things if they will them and work for them.

In the ranks of the Labour Party are men with vision, enthusiasm and varied experience. My Labour colleagues have shown that they can administer great departments, accept heavy responsibilities and plan and carry out far-reaching policies. We are confident that if you give Labour the power, it can and will lead this country through the

dangers and difficulties of the time into a happier and securer future. Forty years ago the Labour Party might, with some justice, have been called a class Party, representing almost exclusively the wage earners. It is still based on organised labour, but has steadily become more and more inclusive. In the ranks of the Parliamentary Party and among our candidates you will find numbers of men and women drawn from every class and occupation in the community. Wage and salary earners form the majority, but there are many from other walks of life, from the professions and from the business world, giving a wide range of experience. More than 120 of our candidates come from the Fighting Services, so that youth is well represented.

The present Government is Conservative. I do not suppose that the Prime Minister expected anyone to take seriously his claim that the addition to the Conservative majority of a few Independents who are staying on as temporary caretakers and some tame Liberals who owe their seats to Tory votes and obey strictly the Tory Whip really makes his Government National. It is Conservative. The Conservative Party remains as always a class Party. In twenty-three years in the House of Commons I cannot recall more than half a dozen from the ranks of the wage earners. It represents to-day, as in the past, the forces of property and privilege. The Labour Party is, in fact, the one Party which most nearly reflects in its representation and composition all the main streams which flow into the great river of our national life.

Our appeal to you, therefore, is not narrow or sectional. We are proud of the fact that our country in the hours of its greatest danger stood firm and united, setting an example to the world of how a great democratic people rose to the height of the occasion and saved democracy and liberty. We are proud of the self-sacrifice and devotion displayed by men and women in every walk of life in this great adventure. We call you to another great adventure which will demand the same high qualities as those shown in the war: the adventure of civilisation.

We have seen a great and powerful nation return to barbarism. We have seen European civilisation almost destroyed and an attempt made to set aside the moral principles upon which it has been built. It is for us to help to re-knit the fabric of civilised life woven through the centuries, and with the other nations to seek to create a world in which free peoples living their own distinctive lives in a society of nations co-operate together, free from the fear of war.

We have to plan the broad lines of our national life so that all

may have the duty and the opportunity of rendering service to the nation, everyone in his or her sphere, and that all may help to create and share in an increasing material prosperity free from the fear of want. We have to preserve and enhance the beauty of our country to make it a place where men and women may live finely and happily, free to worship God in their own way, free to speak their minds, free citizens of a great country.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DURING THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS

*16th August*, 1945

*At the opening of each session of Parliament there is a King's Speech in which the programme of the Government for the ensuing months is announced. This is followed by a debate in the House of Commons on the motion "that a humble Address be presented to His Majesty" offering thanks for the "Gracious Speech." Two back-benchers belonging to the Party in office are invited to move and second this motion.*

*In August, 1945, at the beginning of the Labour Government's first session, this duty was performed by Major John Freeman, and Mr. F. J. Willey. When Mr. Willey had sat down Mr. Churchill rose from the Front Opposition Bench. He was in a conciliatory mood although he raised again his election bogy of Professor Harold Laski, chided the Government with their eagerness to repeal the Trade Disputes Act and expressed himself dissatisfied with demobilisation prospects. Mr. Attlee, making his first major House of Commons appearance as Prime Minister, spoke immediately afterwards.*

I have had the privilege on many occasions of congratulating the Mover and the Seconder of the Address from the other side, but this is the first time on which I do so from the Treasury Bench. I echo what was said by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition. All through the years I have been in the House there has been an astonishingly high standard kept in these speeches, and I entirely agree that the hon. and gallant Member for Watford (Major Freeman) and the hon. and gallant Member for Sunderland (Mr. F. J. Willey) have well sustained the old traditions. I think they are two very worthy representatives of the great number of the younger generation who have come into this House to help to solve these problems of the post-war period. I am sure that the Government will bear in mind the advice of the hon. and gallant Member for Watford that it is essential, as anyone who has served in the Forces knows, to let the fighting troops have the facts. There is nothing worse for men, wherever they are fighting or after demobilisation, than not to know the facts. We will try to keep them fully informed.

Yesterday we gave thanks for the final victory over all our enemies, and the world is once more at peace. For the first time for almost six years the Prime Minister can speak in this House without referring to war operations. Later we shall be taking an opportunity of thanking the Fighting Forces, but I think that before I deal with the general policy contained in the Gracious Speech from the Throne and with the speech of my right hon. Friend opposite, which I thought showed him to be in most excellent form, there is a duty which I ought to take the earliest opportunity of performing. It may be that I shall be setting a precedent in doing so, but I have been looking through the speeches of Prime Ministers on these occasions, and I find there are many varieties. The surrender of Japan has brought to an end the greatest war in history, and a General Election, which took place at a time which was not of our seeking, has resulted in the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) being on the Opposition benches at a time when the fruits of his long leadership of the nation in war are being garnered.

I think it is fitting that to-day I should pay a tribute to one of the main architects of our victory. However we may be divided politically in this House I believe I shall be expressing the views of the whole House in making acknowledgment here of the transcendent services rendered by the right hon. Gentleman to this country, to the Commonwealth and Empire, and to the world during his tenure of office as Prime Minister. During those years he was the leader of the country in war. We have seen in Fascist countries a detestable cult of leadership which has only been a cover for dictatorship, but there is a true leadership which means the expression by one man of the soul of a nation, and the translation of the common will into action. In the darkest and most dangerous hour of our history this nation found in my right hon. Friend the man who expressed supremely the courage and determination never to yield which animated all the men and women of this country. In undying phrases he crystallised the unspoken feeling of all. "Words only," it might be said, but words at great moments of history are deeds. We had more than words from the right hon. Gentleman. He radiated a stream of energy throughout the machinery of Government, indeed throughout the life of the nation. Many others shared in the work of organising and inspiring the nation in its great effort, but he set the pace. He was able to bring into co-operation men of very different political views and to win from them loyal service. At critical times, by his personal relationship with the heads of Allied States, he promoted the harmony

and co-operation of all, and in the sphere of strategy his wide experience, grasp of essentials, his willingness to take necessary risks, were of the utmost value.

I had the honour to serve with the right hon. Gentleman in the War Cabinet throughout the whole of the Coalition Government from the days of Dunkirk to the surrender of Germany. There are many things on which we disagree, but I think it right to take this early occasion, before we turn to controversy, to express the gratitude and admiration for his leadership in war which we feel. His place in history is secure, and although he was no longer at the head of affairs when the Japanese surrendered and final victory came, this really was the outcome of plans made long before under his leadership.

History will link with the name of Winston Churchill that of another great leader of democracy, the late President Roosevelt. The one is present with us here to-day; the other did not live to see victory, but his service to the cause of freedom this country can never forget. I should also wish at this hour to acknowledge the great contribution made by all the peoples of the British Commonwealth and Empire to this great victory, by all our Allies, the people of the United States of America, of Russia, of China, and by all others who fought against the common enemy. And perhaps above all I should like to emphasise that victory has come through the contributions of thousands and millions of ordinary men and women. In all the various spheres of activity it has been the steadfastness, courage, and sense of duty of the ordinary citizen that saved civilisation. Speaking to-day in this House, a new House of Commons, I should like to pay a tribute to the House of Commons that has passed away, which sustained and fortified the Government through all the trials of war. Throughout it set an example of democracy in action which I am sure will inspire the new Members. I thought it right to say these things.

I now turn to deal with the Gracious Speech from the Throne. During the past few days great events have been taking place. I think that perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will agree that the preparation of the King's Speech, with events moving at the pace they have been, has been somewhat difficult. I thought he rather expected us to have adjusted our statements and plans with regard to demobilisation in the light of the surrender of Japan. I am sure he will realise that the time for that was somewhat short. We have been living through great events, and we have got to realise we are living in a new world. We have seen in action a new force, the result of scientific discovery, the far-reaching consequences of which, I think, we find it difficult

to grasp; but I think we can all realise we shall have to make a re-valuation of the whole situation, especially in the sphere of international relations. It is easy to have the habit of looking at things in the light of the past and failing to make readjustment, and I think it is perhaps fitting that we should look at these new problems, or old problems, in a new light, with a new House of Commons in which there is such a large number of young Members, and for the first time in our history with a Labour Government in power supported by a great majority.

Perhaps this would be a convenient point for me to deal with a matter that is still troubling my right hon. Friend opposite, and that is the question of Professor Laski. My right hon. Friend has known Professor Laski for many years, although I am afraid he has not sat under him in the school of political science; but he knows that in common with himself Professor Laski has a somewhat ebullient phraseology and at times is apt to be a little impulsive. He claims for himself, as my right hon. Friend so eloquently claimed just now for all people, the right of individual action, and as a citizen of this country he has the right to express his views. Whether or not he is expressing the views of some particular outside body is another matter; it is a matter between him and any body to which he may belong; but I am glad of the opportunity, if it is necessary at all, to say that Government policy is laid down by Ministers, and therefore any newspaper or any foreign Power or any politician who thinks that the policy of this Government is laid down by anybody but the Labour Ministers is making a great mistake.

The Speech from the Throne sets out the programme and policy which the Labour Party believes to be best in the interests of this country and the policy it intends to carry out. Details will be explained more fully by other speakers later in the Debate, but I want to try this afternoon to bring before the House the gravity of the issues which confront us at home and abroad. It is vital to realise that we have come through difficult years and we are going to face difficult years, and to get through them will require no less effort, no less unselfishness and no less hard work, than was needed to bring us through the war. I know this is a hard saying to people who have worked so much and so hard and suffered so much, but it would be entirely wrong not to represent the facts perfectly plainly before the whole people of this country.

I want to say a few words, first of all, on the international situation. Although the war has been brought to an end, it has left behind it a

great aftermath of difficult problems, some of which my right hon. Friend referred to in his speech. I do not want to deal at great length with them because I understand one of the days of this Debate will be devoted to foreign affairs, and I would rather that a full statement was made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary; but no one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman opposite how difficult foreign affairs are to-day and how careful we should be not to give false impressions. Almost the whole of Europe has been ravaged and overset. I am not replying just now to the points that my right hon. Friend put to me with regard to the exchanges of population in Central Europe. I would rather have a considered statement made by the Foreign Secretary. But I assure the House that that was one of the matters we considered very carefully at Potsdam, because we all of us wish to avoid some of those terrible things that have been happening over the past few years in Europe.

We were in conference only a few days ago, the Foreign Secretary and myself, with President Truman and Marshal Stalin, and we took up the work that had been done by the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. I would like fully to echo what the right hon. Gentleman said about the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) and the services he did at Potsdam. We were there dealing mainly with the immediate problems that have arisen out of the defeat of Germany. We did get agreement on many subjects. Others will be considered, and I hope solved, at the meetings of Foreign Ministers, but there are a number of others that must remain over for settlement at the Peace Conference. We have to realise that in all the countries of Europe which have been overrun by Nazi Germany, and in the satellite countries, there are very difficult political problems to be settled. There are many governments to-day in Europe that rest on no sure foundation of popular election. It is really optimistic to expect the political life in those countries to settle down easily, quickly and smoothly. In many of them political life has never been easy and smooth even in the best of times of peace. It is our intention everywhere to help to secure that the will of the people shall prevail. We look forward with hope to the emergence of democratic governments based on free elections to take a part in building up the shattered framework of the European polity. In this task we shall seek to render all the assistance in our power, in co-operation with our Allies, especially with our great Allies, the United States of America and Russia.

But it is necessary to realise that it is not only the political and

social life of Europe that has been shattered. The economic situation is very grave. I fear there are many people in Europe who are going to be both cold and hungry this winter despite all that can be done. The reasons are obvious. While the damage done to the industries of the liberated countries has not been as great, I think, as we first feared, the damage to means of communications has been tremendous. Ports, railways, roads and bridges have been destroyed. There is a great shortage of railway rolling stock, a great shortage of lorries, and we have to remember that in countries of advanced industrialisation accustomed to the free movement of supplies from one district to another, there are bound to be local shortages and the general situation will be very difficult. Some of these difficulties are being overcome, but I ought to mention to the House some of the gravest. One is that of coal. All the liberated countries in Western Europe need coal, and without it there is bound to be unemployment. If industry cannot work, railways cannot function, and badly needed food will be lost for want of processing facilities. We must get coal. But it is not easy. Economic difficulties have their repercussions on political stability and all the governments concerned are doing their utmost to try to improve matters, to try to get an equitable sharing of what there is. We and our Allies are doing our best to increase the production of coal in Germany. There again, time must elapse before we can get anything like back to the pre-war level.

Next in importance to coal is the shortage of transport. Here we will try to do all we can with the release of military vehicles. Thirdly, there is the shortage of food, particularly meat, fats and sugar. It must be realised that there is a world shortage of these due to a number of different causes, and you cannot overtake the shortages, because the food is not there. Owing to the extent of the shipping employed in meeting the needs of the Forces in the Pacific—and it takes time to unravel that—the amounts of raw material that can be moved within Europe and from outside into Europe are very limited. Therefore, these shortages of coal, transport, food and raw materials tend to aggravate each other. We will do our best to help to remedy them, but as the right hon. Gentleman opposite said so well, we have been and still are cut to the bone at home. It is no use thinking this country has some great surplus it can pour into other countries. It cannot. We have cut ourselves very close indeed. While the end of the war with Japan will bring some assistance, it would be unwise to expect it will materially affect the position for some months.

I would like here to make a particular reference to U.N.R.R.A.,

whose Council is now meeting in London. As the Foreign Secretary has said we stand by U.N.R.R.A. This organisation has had great difficulties, but it is doing work of the greatest value in those countries that are receiving its aid, and we hope that at this Council meeting arrangements can be made which will enable U.N.R.R.A. to complete its work in the countries where it is now operating and also to extend its full facilities to Italy and Austria, which are at present maintained through military channels.

There is the economic condition of Europe. I am not going to speak of conditions outside Europe, but there is a danger in the Eastern countries as well, and it is in the light of these grave world economic conditions that we must view our own situation. Before the House rises for the autumn recess, we are to have a Debate on San Francisco. I do not think that the people of this country have realised sufficiently the importance of this conference. It may be because it was held a long way away. I think there is a much more vivid realisation in the United States of what is meant, and yet, surely, its purpose—the prevention of a repetition of the horrors of war—ought to appeal to us all; and, to-day, I think, in the light of recent events, we can say that the achievement of this purpose is not only desirable but vital for the survival of civilisation. Unless the forces of destruction now set loose in the world are brought under control, it is vain to plan for the future. I do not propose to make any statement at the moment with regard to plans for controlling those forces. The thing is new upon us, but it is quite obvious—and statements made by the President of the United States and myself have, I think, made it clear—that this thing must be controlled in the interests of all the people of the world and not exploited for the interests of only one.

The Gracious Speech from the Throne expressed in very few words the policy of the Government in international affairs. As the right hon. Gentleman said, I believe it is a policy on which we can all unite. We sought no advantage for ourselves out of this war. Our desire is to heal the wounds of war, to ensure all peoples the right to live their own lives in peace and security. We want freedom. I entirely agree with what the right hon. Gentleman said about the abomination of police rule and our desire to see freedom, but I equally agree with him when he said that there are limitations on what you can do in interference with the internal affairs of other states. It is our desire that nations should be free and that the citizens of those nations should be free, but the extent of what we can effect may be more limited. We seek to prevent aggression, to promote an increase of

prosperity for all peoples throughout the world by peaceful co-operation, and we seek ourselves, as a free democratic people, to live with all nations, respecting the rights of others and claiming no more from others than what we are prepared to concede to them. As I say, we shall have an opportunity of discussing foreign affairs at more length and in more detail.

I now turn to affairs at home, and, here again, I would like to say something on the general economic position that faces us. I do not think anybody is ignorant of the gravity of the problem. During these last six years, we have deliberately transformed our whole economic system for the single purpose of defeating the enemy in battle. The battle has been won, but the result of the means we had to adopt remains. On the one hand, the machinery of our economic life has been diverted from peace to war, and it is true that, since the end of the war with Germany, we have been making some start in the process of reconversion. The right hon. Gentleman said we were in a difficult position with the continuance of the Japanese war, for how long we did not know—a kind of twilight of reconstruction. Well, it is true that we can now move ahead without that war hanging over us, but it does not alter the fact that the transition is very difficult. We were organised as a war machine to fight the Japanese. That has come to an end, thank Heaven, much earlier than any had expected, but it will take time before the effects can be felt.

That brings me to the point that the right hon. Gentleman mentioned about demobilisation. Everybody knows, and nobody better than the right hon. Gentleman, what happens if you do not have orderly demobilisation. We were looking ahead at the time, and we were not talking of demobilisation, but of the re-allocation of our Forces, and we have stated that we would continue the orderly release of men and women from the Armed Forces, on the basis of the plans announced in the autumn of last year. Although the actual fighting is over, we have not come to the time of full demobilisation. We have to keep the strength of our Armed Forces at a high level to meet our military commitments. Japan's surrender will not affect our commitments in Europe, and, in the East, we shall still need substantial forces to make our contribution to the occupation of Japan and the recovery of our Colonial possessions and to help in restoring order.

It would be folly to think that you can at once disband your Forces. It was one of the weaknesses of the last war. There were no Forces in hand to prevent disturbances all over Europe. Therefore, the

problem remains one of orderly reduction from the peak strength of total war, to the lower level of this occupational phase, and it was to meet this particular problem that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, when Minister of Labour, devised the demobilisation scheme which was announced last autumn and which met with very general approval. I think it is essential that demobilisation should continue to be regulated in accordance with those principles. It does not mean that everything is exactly the same, but the broad principles laid down then and accepted by those concerned should be continued: the release in Class A by group based on age and length of service, coupled with limited release under Class B of men whose special skills are needed for the urgent tasks of reconstruction at home.

We propose one addition to the scheme—a Class B release for women, in order to secure the earlier release from the Forces of a limited number of women formerly engaged in key occupations, where lack of labour is seriously delaying the restoration of civil production. Although those general principles remain, and the system of demobilisation remains, the surrender of Japan will make it possible, when plans have been recast, to accelerate the rate at which men and women are being released. Demobilisation will be speeded up, and while there may be necessarily some variation in the rate of demobilisation between the three Services, we shall see to it that during the next few months we return to civil life as many men and women as can be released from the Forces, consistent with meeting our military commitments and preserving fair dealing between man and man and woman and woman, on which the whole demobilisation scheme is based.

The call-up of young men must continue. It has always been a part of the demobilisation plan that the compulsory recruitment of young men should continue in order to bring relief to the older men who bore the burden, and to enable some of them to return to their homes, and the call-up will include numbers of young men at present deferred in the munitions industry. To ensure the speediest possible rate of release, the Government propose that the age at which men may be called up should be retained for the present at 30. There is, of course, a vast demand for labour for the urgent tasks of reconstruction at home, the restoration of civil industries and services to meet the needs both of home markets and the export trade. In the coming months, we shall begin to meet that demand, in part by the release from the Armed Forces, but still more by releases from the munition industry. It is from these sources that we shall provide the

early relief for the labour shortage in civil industries. We estimate within the next eight weeks well over 1,000,000 people will be released from munitions. That is a big readjustment. It is bound to bring a number of difficulties, and, while the total demand for labour will, for some time to come, exceed the supply, some local and temporary unemployment is unavoidable, particularly where factories cannot quickly be reconverted from war-time uses to peace-time production, and in areas where new industries have to be introduced. I think we shall all do a service if we explain to our constituents that they must expect some of these local difficulties.

From demobilisation and man power I turn to some other problems. The industries serving the civilian population have not really got under way yet, and our export trade is only a fraction of what it was in pre-war days, and it follows, therefore, that the stocks of consumable goods are still very low, and that to produce them in any great quantities must take time. On the other hand, we are faced with an immense demand for goods and services, which could only be filled by a fully efficient peace-time organisation of all the resources that we can employ. We need a vast increase in homes, in the quantity of household goods, clothing, fuel and everything else. At the same time, there is banked up a great mass of purchasing power in the hands of private individuals and businesses, and people will be anxious to spend it in the satisfaction of their needs.

We therefore face two distinct dangers. The first is inflation. No one can doubt what would happen if scarce goods were allowed to go to the highest bidder. Prices would rise. Our limited, precious resources would be wasted without any regard to the order of priority which the national interest demands. The Government are resolved that there shall be no inflation. We are determined that the great principle of the fair and equitable sharing of resources, which has been the basis of our very national existence and our effort during this war, shall not be abandoned, but I would emphasise that, whatever steps may be taken by the Government, we shall require the backing of all the people. I would emphasise again, that whatever controls they abandon people must not abandon self-control. It is a matter of every individual realising that what he does matters, and not assuming that everything is all right for him and that the other man can do the refraining.

There is another danger—unemployment. Much as we rejoice at the sudden victory in the East, it does enhance that danger, and we are trying to release the greatest possible number of men and women

with the least possible delay. But the adaptation of war industries cannot be effected in a day or two. The places where labour is available may not be those where it is needed for new purposes, and there is the possibility of pockets of unemployment developing. Great efforts will be needed not only by the Government but by employers and workers to reduce to a minimum the waste and wretchedness which would result from delay in fitting those released from war work into peace-time occupations. And there is a further point. The needs of our people at home are very great, but it is as well to face the fact that we shall have to start paying our way for the essential food and raw materials we have to import from abroad. However successful our efforts in the production of food on our own land—and we will do our utmost—we must continue to import a very substantial proportion of our needs if the people are to be properly fed.

A great many of these things have been met by Lend-Lease, by mutual aid, and by increasing our overseas obligation in sterling, and that is a situation which cannot go on indefinitely. Sooner or later, we have to face the fact that we can only buy abroad, if we can pay for imports in goods and services. Therefore, we must set ourselves resolutely to the task of increasing our exports. I have already called the attention of the House and the Government to the shortage of many prominent needs of the community and it is quite idle to suppose that, after all the wastage of the war, we can overtake those shortages rapidly. During the General Election there was some loose talk about the continuance of controls, and some very loose talk about the abolition of all controls by a few irresponsible people, but in the existing conditions, which I have tried to describe to the House, it would be absolute madness to abandoned those financial and economic controls which have served us well during the war. There will have to be considerable adjustments, of course. It was precisely because of these conditions of scarcity, and of the need for industry being active in the national interest, that controls had to be imposed, and while those conditions exist, and those requirements continue, controls of one kind or another must remain.

I would like to refer to two of the major problems which face the Government and this country. The first is that of housing. I do not suppose that there is anything that is more in the minds of the people. Within the limits open to us, we shall do our utmost to increase and accelerate the erection of houses, but there is a tremendous leeway to be made up. The production and erection of temporary houses has not kept pace with the programme laid down by the late Government,

and it must be recognised that nothing we can do in the way of new reconstruction can substantially alleviate the serious position which will arise this winter. We have all had to face that. There was no building, there was the blitz. A start was made and everybody must have realised that we could not recreate those houses in the time at our disposal. It will have to be dealt with by using all our sources of accommodation, by requisitioning empty houses, perhaps by the better use of houses partly occupied through adaptation and conversion. I have been giving consideration to the organisation necessary to ensure the vigorous direction and the concentration of effort in dealing with this urgent need. Any drastic reorganisation of Ministries would require legislation and would cause delay and I have therefore decided, at all events for the present, that responsibility for directing the housing campaign will rest with the Minister of Health, in England and Wales, and in Scotland with the Secretary of State.

The second problem is the very serious coal situation. Last year we only got through by drawing very heavily on our stocks. We face the coming winter with reduced stocks. Output, from causes which have been discussed and are well known, has been declining, and I would make a most earnest appeal to all those concerned in the industry to do their utmost to increase production, and to all coal users to use the utmost economy in fuel, light and power. And that again is a case where it is no good leaving it to the "other man." It is the mass of individual saving that affects the people. The Government's policy of nationalising the coalmining industry will bring great advantages in the long run. [Hon. Members: "How long?"] Wait a moment. I was going to tell hon. Members, but it cannot affect the position this winter. A Bill which could not be introduced until October, would hardly be likely to affect the production of coal this winter, and I must emphasise that, on coming into office, we found a serious situation, and the co-operation of all will be needed if hardships are to be avoided.

Those are the two main anxieties that beset us, but there are many others. We will apply ourselves with vigour to overcoming these difficulties, but we cannot alter the basic facts of the situation. We have the inevitable consequences of a six years' war to grapple with, but it would be a great mistake for a Government to concern themselves only with short-term problems, pressing as these are. Before the war there was, in our view, much that was wrong in the economic and social conditions in this country. A new start is being made under new conditions. We must look ahead to the future and not be for ever casting lingering glances back to a past which cannot be recap-

tured. We have to set about reconditioning the fabric of the economic life of the nation, in order that our economic resources can be fully utilised in the common interest. We cannot afford to have ill-managed, ill-equipped, unprogressive industries.

It is our policy that the industries and services of this country shall make their maximum contribution to the public good. At the General Election we set very plainly before the electors our policy of bringing under public ownership some of the main factors in the economic life of this country. As has been pointed out in the Gracious Speech, we intend to bring the Bank of England under public ownership and to deal with the problem of the great basic industry of coal. During the whole of the interval between the two world wars, and many years before that, we have heard of the trouble in the coal industry, year by year, and it has had widespread repercussions on our national prosperity and on other industries. Commission after commission, committee after committee has reported adversely on the structure and organisation. We intend, therefore, to bring this industry under public ownership as part of a wider scheme of converting the provision of fuel, light and power to a public service.

My right hon. Friend opposite referred to the Trade Disputes Act of 1927, which was imposed for the first time in the history of trade union legislation without any discussion with the trade unions. That has long rankled as an act of injustice in the minds of trade unionists. I rather thought my right hon. Friend was going to cite that in another part of his speech where he was talking about freedom. This has lain as an imposition on the right of free association, and has deprived great bodies of citizens of their rights of free association which they had enjoyed for many years without any abuse, so I shall enlist his support as a libertarian, when we introduce the Bill in favour of this repeal. It may well be that we shall have to consider, after the lapse of years, other matters in connection with the relations of these great bodies to the State, but the first thing is to clear away this thing which has to a large extent poisoned the industrial life of this country. There is one other cogent reason, that if, as we suppose, we have large numbers of citizens entering the service of the State we have to look again at these provisions which were enforced quite unnecessarily on civil servants when this Act was passed.

We also intend to deal with the problem of compensation and betterment, the solution of which is essential for the proper planning of the countryside and the full utilisation of the land in the interests of the people. They are extremely difficult problems. Finally, we intend

to introduce legislation which will complete and, I believe, improve the results of the post-war planning carried out in the Coalition Government, providing for a comprehensive scheme of industrial insurance, to extend and improve the existing insurance as part of the system of social security, and to expedite the setting up of a National Health Service.

I freely admit that the programme of work we have laid before this Parliament is heavy, but we are living in a time when great changes are due. The country will expect much from this House. I do not think it will be disappointed. We shall have controversy and keen debate and that is inevitable and right—it is the method of Parliamentary democracy. I have sat too long on the Opposition benches not to be sensitive of the rights of the Opposition and of the rights of private Members. It is the right and duty of the Opposition to criticise the administration and to oppose and seek to amend the legislation of the Government, but it is none the less the right and duty of the Government to govern and to pass into law the programme which it has been elected to carry out. The successful working of our Parliamentary institutions depends on harmonising these conflicting rights and duties. It will be the object of the Government to preserve the rights of minorities as an essential feature of democracy while, at the same time, ensuring that democratic institutions are not wrecked by a failure to carry out and implement the will of the majority.

I am not asking for any indulgence for this Government—all Governments deserve criticism and should profit by it—but I would like to emphasise again before I sit down, that the situation in which we find ourselves at the end of these six years of war is very difficult. To win through this critical period in our history will require, I think, the continuance of something of the spirit which won the war, a spirit which did not allow private or sectional interests to obscure the common interests of us all and the love which we all have for our native land and for our people.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN REPLY TO AN OPPOSITION MOTION OF CENSURE

*6th December, 1945*

*When the Labour Government had been in office for a little over four months the Conservative Opposition launched its first major offensive in the House of Commons and tabled a Motion of Censure in the following terms:*

> *"That this House regrets that His Majesty's Government are neglecting their first duty, namely, to concentrate with full energy upon the most essential tasks of the reconversion of our industries from war-time production to that of peace, the provision of houses, the speedy release of men and women from the Forces to industry, and the drastic curtailment of our swollen national expenditure, and deplores the pre-occupation of His Majesty's Ministers, impelled by Socialist theory, with the formulation of long-term schemes for nationalisation creating uncertainty over the whole field of industrial and economic activity, in direct opposition to the best interest of the nation, which demands food, work and homes."*

*After a two-day debate in which many prominent figures from both sides of the House took part, the Motion was defeated by 381 votes to 197.*

*On the second day, 6th December, Mr. Churchill spoke first and delivered a long frontal attack on the whole of the Government's domestic policy. "I charge the Government" he said "with deliberately trying to exalt their partisan and faction interests at the cost not only of the national unity but of our recovery and of our vital interest. There is the foundation and the gravamen of this Motion of Censure." Mr. Attlee spoke immediately afterwards.*

THE right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition opened to-day on a quiet note of injured innocence. We were the people, according to him, who had driven this public-spirited Opposition into putting down a Motion of Censure, we were the people who had driven a wedge between the Parties in the State. I have not forgotten

the right hon. Gentleman's broadcast at the beginning of the Election, nor have the people of this country. That was when any partisan tone was introduced, and I have also had the pleasure of reading the right hon. Gentleman's speech the other day to his Party. It was a very different style of speech from that which we have had this afternoon. The burden of the right hon. Gentleman's speech is this: He said: Why, when you were elected to carry out a Socialist programme did you not carry out a Conservative programme? To the right hon. Gentleman everything that is Conservative is normal, anything that sees the changing world and wishes to change it must be wrong. We are always asked to rally round, to be patriotic and keep things as they are. We were not returned for that purpose.

The right hon. Gentleman earned, rightly, the respect of this country as a great man who inspired our Fighting Forces. To-day, quite rightly, on a Vote of Censure, he is coming forward as a partisan, and his speech, although studiously couched in terms to suggest that he was only considering the good of the country, was, in fact, an entirely partisan speech. Anybody who differed from him was following some fetish, but whenever he spoke and whenever he suggested we should carry on the good old Conservative policies, he was speaking for the nation. We do not accept that.

I have seen a number of Motions of Censure in this House and I have moved a good number myself, but this is a very peculiar one, when one looks at its origin, because the right hon. Gentleman seemed to suggest that the Opposition had been stung to action by the attitude of my right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council (Mr. Herbert Morrison), and stung to action by the Government having extended certain necessary Regulations, after a great many other Regulations had been swept away, from two years to five years. The Motion of Censure did not arise out of that at all. As a matter of fact, its inception was due to an incident in this House when the bowling on the Opposition side had been temporarily entrusted to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Lyttelton). Unfortunately, the occasion was a statement, not announcing a new and extended programme of Socialism—that we have already had in the King's Speech—but stating exactly where the limits of that programme were to be, and reassuring private enterprise that it could go ahead because they were not being taken over. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot bowled a few wides; he was then no-balled by Mr. Speaker for trying to deal with matters of legislation upon the Adjournment, and he got a severer reproof from

the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Hogg). Thereafter, it became quite a critical position. The young Conservatives were followed up by a Member of light and leading, the hon. Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter) who passed some very unpleasant comments, I understand, at the Conservative Conference. He is, as we know, a faithful exponent of one who has been described as the conscience of the Conservative Party, though himself not exactly a still small voice—Lord Beaverbrook—and, faced with this problem obviously something had to be done. There was discontent. I have known it before in my time, the criticism of the back benches against the front benches.

The first idea was to follow up the line of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot and have an attack on nationalisation, but it was thought better to deck this rather academic sentiment with a few references to general discontent which would give all Members of the Opposition some talking points. Meantime, the right hon. Gentleman had, at the Conservative Party meeting, given the key note. We all agree that it is a good thing to have an active and well-knit Opposition and, therefore, I am not the least surprised that this opportunity has been taken, and no one will grudge the Opposition a couple of days to get together.

The main attack has been delivered against the Socialist policy on which we stood at the Election, but, before dealing with that issue, I would like to say a word or two about some of the trimmings. The right hon. Gentleman gave us a great survey. He dealt with a number of subjects. My only regret is that he was not there dealing with those subjects at the proper time. He dealt with finance. We have just had a Finance Bill. We have had a Budget, and all those points could have been made most effectively there. There have been many Debates on housing. Why could not these points have been made then? There have been Debates on trade and industry, and plenty of Debates on demobilisation. It would be better if these points were made on the regular Debates which come along in the House, and the followers could have done their cheering not just once a fortnight but every day in the fight in the House, and the appropriate Minister would then have got up and answered it. But we have had this kind of omnibus Motion. I do not intend to deal at any length with the Board of Trade questions. I think—and I think most people think—that my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade dealt very effectively with them.

I would like to turn, therefore, first of all, to a matter which the right hon. Gentleman has made the basis of his whole position, and

that is, demobilisation—a very difficult and dangerous question, and no one knows more of its dangers and difficulties than the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I heard him half a dozen times describe the scenes which took place at the end of the first world war. What he told me then made a deep impression on me. I and my colleagues in the General Election campaign took every opportunity to stress the need for sticking closely to an agreed scheme. Take any speech I made and hon. Members will find that I said that. In his book, *The Aftermath*, the right hon. Gentleman described graphically how fatal was the cost of yielding to the clamour of interested persons to release particular categories of men. The House of Commons was then full of representatives of big business interests and they clamoured for the men they wanted but, unfortunately, the scheme was based mainly on what? On just what the right hon. Gentleman has been putting up: do not worry about the feelings of the men, you must get on with trade and industry. The right hon. Gentleman said that the prime object was, naturally, the restarting of industry, and questions of the feelings and discipline of the troops themselves were not accorded proper weight. What was the result? Chaos, mutiny, dangerous scenes everywhere. The right hon. Gentleman had to face them, and he did face them, and he did meet them. Let us just see how he met them. He adopted certain proposals. He sets them out in his book. First of all:

> "Soldiers as a general rule should only be released from the Front in accordance with age and length of service. Everyone must take their turn in accordance with this order."

That is precisely what we are doing; that is precisely the plan that was adopted, with the strong support of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, by the Coalition Government. I have not heard—I have listened to a number of speeches—any experienced ex-Serviceman in this House, from either side of the House, suggest that it is wise to depart from it. And yet the complaint against it is that you must not stick to that plan. If you have people idle in any way, then rush them out, no matter what the feelings of the men. The second point of the right hon. Gentleman was that the pay of the Army must be increased. Fortunately, the Government of which we were both Members took steps to increase pay, without waiting for a mutiny. Thirdly:

> "Young lads must be retained compulsorily and sent abroad, to release the men who have fought."

Again, precisely the policy we are following. The right hon.

Gentleman claims, with justice, that those measures restored the situation. We pledged our word to the troops. Now we are urged to depart from it. I say that if the right hon. Gentleman were in office and if he had the responsibilities of troops overseas in many parts of the world—in pretty critical and unpleasant situations many of them—he would be quite certain that he would do nothing to suggest that the Government were breaking their word. He would be the very first to insist upon sticking to the plan. I know, from abundant letters from men overseas and from others, that they demand not just immediate return; they demand a just and equitable scheme of demobilisation. The right hon. Gentleman was responsible. He laid down that scheme. Let us see what he accomplished. He took, I think, a justifiable pride in his achievements. He says that, for a period of nearly six months we managed an average of 10,000 a day discharged to civil life. A very good record. Seventy thousand men a week. Yet this despised Government that is said to lag so far behind, well, we are doing 12,000 a day, 100,000 a week, and that is going to continue, I tell the right hon. Gentleman. It is not ending at the end of the year. It is being carried on. On his own showing——

MR. CHURCHILL: We are glad to hear that quite clearly. We do not drop from 12,000 to 9,000 at the end of the year?

THE PRIME MINISTER: We are carrying on, on the rate.

MR. CHURCHILL: The 12,000?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes. I am pointing out to the House that at the present we are doing better, very much better, 12,000 against 10,000, than what he said he did. What was the position at the end of the last war?

MR. CHURCHILL: I think I was responsible for the Army alone.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I do not think so. The men there were much more easily brought across. They were only just across on the Continent. The difficulties of shipping were nothing like what they are to-day. I claim, therefore, that this is very largely a stunt. In the same way, Class B releases were difficult. The right hon. Gentleman found at the end of the last war how difficult it is to have special releases for special men without upsetting the rest. We have been working on that principle, which has been improved. The right hon. Gentleman rather sneered that we had managed to alter things. After all, we have to watch events and see how they move, shipping changes and the like. There has been a constant acceleration of the demobilisation programme; it has been stepped up, and it is being

stepped up again to-day. In the same way, Class B releases were largely held back through the unwillingness of the men to accept it, but conditions have now been made better, and the releases are actually to-day between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the Class A.

I claim that just here is one of the points where I should like to have more of the spirit of which the right hon. Gentleman talked, that is of all trying to help in this difficult situation. In a matter of this kind there are thousands of people with their family feelings, thousands of troops longing to get home. It does not rest with anybody to make vague statements about "incredible slowness" and all the rest of it. It is not merely a matter of home policy, either. The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that one of the things that hampered the Government immediately after the last war was that they had not any troops to send anywhere. The whole thing was in a state of flux. We have to be very careful in dealing with these things, and look at the foreign situation as well as the home situation. These releases are being done on a carefully-thought-out plan, I must say a much better plan than at the end of the first world war, and a great deal more consideration is being shown to the men who fought. At the end of the last war they were thrown out with a fortnight's pay and the key of the street, and endless bitterness arose from the way in which they were dismissed. We have our record: 1,500,000 will be discharged by the end of the year. I ask the right hon. Gentleman: Does he want us to scrap this plan? Does he want us to keep this plan on nominally but sap it away so that it becomes nugatory by allowing all kinds of exceptions?—[Hon. Members: "Answer."]—Does the right hon. Gentleman want us to scrap the basis of the Bevin plan of age and length of service?

MR. CHURCHILL: It is difficult to answer in a few words. There is great difference in the situation now and one which we had after the last war. After the last war we had no people east of Suez, but we had great problems too in one sphere. What has come to be a great difficulty in the present situation is that we have a comparatively small number of men far off beyond Suez in the East, and that is holding up an otherwise perfectly normal rate of discharge which would be possible in all the other theatres. [Hon. Members: "Answer."] The new question is, how far is it possible to release those from the nearer theatres—[Hon. Members: "Answer"]—and how long must great numbers be kept waiting about, because of the great difficulty of releasing a very few from the distance.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The right hon. Gentleman has pointed out

that conditions have changed, because the Japanese war has come to an end, but this position, which was adopted by the late Government, was under the general idea that the Japanese war would continue and that you would have people there and you would have people at home; yet that position was strongly put by the right hon. Gentleman about the morale of the men, and that we must maintain it. Believe me, the need for keeping up the morale of men who are scattered all over Asia and elsewhere is just as strong.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is all a question of proportion.

THE PRIME MINISTER: And then the question is as to shipping. It is easy to say there are ships. We have scoured the place for ships. We have managed to speed it up. The right hon. Gentleman knows that demobilisation is not just a question of pulling out men here and there. You have to think of the efficiency of the units when rapidly taking away all the older men and all the rest of it. I do not need to tell the right hon. Gentleman that it is not an easy process and therefore people should not talk lightly about it.

The next point I would like to take up with the right hon. Gentleman is one which—I hope I have the quotation correct, I only depended on *The Times*—occurs in part of his speech when he was speaking among friends. He said:

> "Every effort is being made by the Socialist Government to restrain and diminish the purchasing or consuming power of the public; spending must be damped down or there might be the danger of inflation."

The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think this was very wrong of us. I would like to stress the words of the right hon. Member for the Scottish Universities (Sir J. Anderson) on the Budget:

> "I entirely agree that it is right, prudent and proper to hold back purchasing power as far as possible until supplies of goods are more freely available."

A Paper was issued by the late Government. I am sure that it is familiar to the right hon. Gentleman. It was called "Employment Policy." It said:

> "The danger will come when people relax from the discipline and strain of war and look round for opportunities to spend the money they have saved. If there were then a scramble to buy while there was still a shortage of goods prices would rise. This would mean an inflation boom bringing with it social injustices and economic disturbances."

The right hon. Gentleman suggested that all of this was due to a fad of the Socialists for austerity. He said:

> "It is not the speedy recovery of our country's trade and industry. According to the Government, when we have got all this austerity, we do not get a revival, we only get to the half-baked nationalisation plans of the Socialist doctrinaires."

Well, it was not "according to the Government." There is not a word of truth in the statement. The right hon. Gentleman says, quite rightly, that the remedy is increased production. It is all very well to throw that out at a Party meeting or in this House on a Motion of Censure, but let us see the more considered language of the right hon. Gentleman's colleagues in the White Paper:

> "Peace-time production like war production will necessarily take some time to get into its stride. . . . Civilian production when it is resumed may concentrate on the wrong things, from the point of view of national needs."

The right hon. Gentleman says, in that breezy way of his, "Look at the United States of America,

> "a mighty evolution taking place in a violent, convulsive, passionate manner, which causes great commotion and disturbance, but which has already led to an enormous increase in output of necessary things for the home market with an immense, ever-growing overspill for foreign exports."

But has it? This is what a woman reporter of the *Sunday Times* says—and this is from New York—

> "Purchasers are pushing notes across the counters for luxury items ranging from ruby-tipped hat-pins costing £150 to Piper Cub aeroplanes. . . . Women run their hands lovingly over the sensuous smoothness of mink-lined mink coats—reversible fur—with the equally fanciful price-tag of £3,000. At a nearby salon a tiny perfume ampule, set with sapphires, was selling for £75. . . . Despite the 'get it at any price' psychology"—

and despite the right hon. Gentleman's confidence, I might add—

> "of the first peace-time Christmas since 1940, real shortages exist in many fields. Would-be buyers of men's clothing, children's toys and household appliances are met by harassed store-owners' vague talk of slowed reconversion, and bare shelves."

In every industry in this country catering for the ordinary simple people's wants, there has been a steady increase of labour and of output. I freely admit that we have not done anything about mink coats or

sapphire ampules. It is so easy to suggest that nothing is being done. The furniture industry: a rise in the labour force of 4,000 in two months; production of utility units to-day is over 50 per cent above the monthly average in the first half of the year. In the carpet industry the labour increase was more than 50 per cent between May and October, and production for the present quarter is 40 per cent up on the last quarter. What is the picture we get from the other side? And let me say that that kind of thing does not do us any good abroad, and I should suggest that right hon. Gentlemen who believe in and want to support the foreign policy of this country should not cry "stinking fish" all the time. In the linoleum industry, the labour force is 25 per cent higher. So I might go on the whole way—clothing, hosiery, cotton, all those things which are just the simple things that people want.

I give another fact not quite realised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot. He complained that the labour force in the heavy electrical industry had fallen since the end of the Japanese war. I know he has only recently taken over, but he must realise that this fall is the measure of the cut the Government has made in munitions production. It completely contradicts the complaint he made of the slowness in cutting munitions production. The hard fact is that the labour force in the munitions industries is going rapidly and steadily down, and the labour force in civilian industries is going rapidly and steadily up. The right hon. Gentleman spoke about factory building. My right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade dealt with all those hampering restrictions invented by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. [Hon. Members: "No."] Oh, yes. I am quite aware that in the war we were not erecting factories, but this was provision for the post-war period. He appears to be unaware that 80 new factories are being built at this moment in the development areas.

Let me turn for a moment to finance, a subject on which I move with some delicacy—I am not even as much at ease perhaps as the right hon. Gentleman opposite. He said that at least £800,000,000 could have been saved this year by sensible, vigorous administration of our finances.

MR. CHURCHILL: This financial year, up to 31st March.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes—by setting free at an early date millions of men and women now kept in employment. I should like to know whether there is any basis for that figure. Any one can say

£800,000,000, or even £1,600,000,000, but where does it come from, was it given to him by the distinguished physicist who supplies him with economic information? I would ask whether, in rendering that figure, he has taken into account all the additional expenditure which arises on the termination of a war? Let us look at the facts. Demobilisation charges do not stop directly men are demobilised. There is leave of eight weeks, plus foreign service leave, during which they draw pay and allowances. They are paid their war gratuities. Does he want to cut that off, out of the £800,000,000? This is actually an increase in expenditure, and for the Army alone this amounts to £100,000,000 in the current year. You cannot escape that. As regards munitions, despite substantial progress payments, when a contract is terminated, arrears of payment fall due, and that is a very large item. Then we have the cost of a very large haul of prisoners—he has forgotten that. There is requisitioned property, which when vacated involves heavy compensation. There is Lend-Lease, which ceased at the end of the war. For food alone there is an additional charge of £150,000,000, as the direct consequence of the termination of hostilities. This is not all, as the right hon. Gentleman said, paying people for doing nothing. They are putting up houses and factories in the development areas, for returning Servicemen. All those things are of the nature of capital investment by the community. I dare say these were not noticed.

Estimates will be presented next year in the House and we shall be able to take them in detail. But, as a matter of fact, reductions in expenditure are being tackled vigorously. Let me say here that I do not believe anybody would imagine that directly a war stops you can stop all munition making. Certain supplies have to go on; you cannot close the whole thing straight away, and it is not always worth while closing it straight away. In spite of that, Ministry of Supply expenditure in August, September and October was 40 per cent lower than for the corresponding months in 1944. Eleven thousand five hundred Ministry of Supply contracts were immediately terminated and 16,000 were allowed to run out. From the picture that is painted, one would think everything was going on as before. On our naval construction, mainly owing to cancellation since VJ Day, a saving of over £70,000,000 will be achieved. At the end of the war the Treasury immediately issued instructions for a strict review of expenditure. Why should the right hon. Gentleman imagine that because my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer prudently took a Vote of Credit to cover the whole period, that necessarily means that it will be spent?

Having dealt with that, I do not think I need say very much about

the housing position, which has been very fully expounded in Debates in this House. My right hon. Friend the Minister of Health (Mr. Aneurin Bevan) has replied to these points over and over again, and it is not true that when we came in everything was fit for a start. There were grave difficulties, in particular there were key men who were not out of the Forces, and you have to have some key men, architects and the rest. Also let me say that it is not easy to start getting a vast number of houses up when you are coming on into the winter season. You cannot expect to see them all finished. But this point has been dealt with so often in so many housing Debates that I do not want to keep the House on it.

I must turn now to the right hon. Gentleman's main indictment:

> "these gloomy vultures of nationalisation hovering over our basic industries."

I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman knows all about vultures. The vultures never fed on him because he kept alive, fortunately for us all; vultures feed on rotten carrion. Is it his view that our basic industries are so rotten that they attract the vultures? Is that his view of private enterprise? He talks about growing uncertainty. There is no growing uncertainty whatever. [Hon. Members: "Oh."] Well, really, if hon. Members are uncertain, they have been asleep for a long time. Our party has stood for nationalisation programmes for 40 years or more, and even an hon. Member opposite might have realised that when we got a majority we should naturally go in for nationalisation. At the same time, we put it quite clearly in the King's Speech that we intended to nationalise certain industries. Reassurances were given to others by Ministers, and particularly by my right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council, and really there is no growing uncertainty. [Hon. Members: "No, no."] If hon. Members, instead of shouting "no, no," would read the speeches of intelligent industrialists like the president of F.B.I., and many others, they would find that they know a great deal more about their business than he does. I noticed with interest the difference between the wild and whirling words of the right hon. Gentleman opposite at the Friends Meeting House and the speech of the right hon. Gentleman whom we are so glad to welcome back to the House, the Member for Bromley (Mr. H. Macmillan). Characteristically, he continues to tread the middle way, while the right hon. Gentleman right back in the Conservative Party goes down the primrose path which, everybody remembers, leads to the eternal bonfire.

The right hon. Gentleman says that our proposals on nationalisation

divert the Government from the immediate task. That is an example of a static mind. The idea is that private enterprise is the only way in which our economic affairs can be managed. The right hon. Gentleman has grown up with that idea and he cannot get it out of his head. I am quite sure, had he been born in one of those countries where the railways had, from the start, belonged to the State, he would have thought it a perfectly natural thing. [An Hon. Member: "Which countries?"] A great many countries. Any handbook will show which they are. The right hon. Gentleman's general proposition seems to be that things should be left as they are. Is he satisfied with the coal industry? Has he been satisfied at any time in the last 25 years with the organisation of the coal industry? Whatever happens, something has to be done with the coal industry, on the admission of the people who run it. It is a question as to which is the best way to deal with that particular piece of economic machinery, our way or their way. We have had 20 years and more of fiddling about with their way, and in consonance with the view of every authoritative commission, we now intend to take our way. I think we hardly need mention the Bank of England, because it has gone through so quietly. Electricity—that was half done by a Conservative Government. I very well remember that Bill going through; there were no cries about this "wicked Socialist Measure."

MR. CHURCHILL: I was Chancellor.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I know. It was introduced by the chairman of the Anti-Socialist Union. I may say he got it through with the help of a Socialist who was leading the Labour side of the Committee upstairs, and myself. And now gas; here we have the report of the Heyworth Committee on gas. The people who were on that committee, I may say, were not Socialist nominees. The Minister was not a Socialist. Here you have a report not based on any theories or ideologies but on the plain facts as they presented themselves to common-sense men.

As a matter of fact, although this Motion of Censure is nominally directed against the Government, it seems really to be more a Motion of Censure on the electors for returning Socialists. It seems to be a terrible shock—quite naturally perhaps for people who remember 1935—that a Government should come in prepared to carry out its policy. We all remember 1935, the great victory for collective security and sanctions—followed by Hoare-Laval. Now we have a wonderful cry which the Party opposite are putting forward—"the people *versus* the Socialists." This is right in line with the right hon. Gentleman's

propaganda at the time of the General Election. Then the Tory Party was the nation—"truly, ye are the people." They are now the people. I am quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman's mind, when he was thinking of "the people *versus* the Socialists," must have gone back to an earlier epoch, to the epoch of the people's Budget, when he and Mr. Lloyd George were standing for the people, against the Tory Party.

Only a few years back the right hon. Gentleman was telling us that the Conservative Party was ruining the country. He was himself called to the Premiership, not by the Tory Party, by whom he was despised and rejected, but by the action and with the support of the doctrinaire Socialists, the vultures, the people who are not really allowed to belong to the nation now. As a matter of fact, no one who does not believe in the right hon. Gentleman is any part of the people. No one who does not belong to the Party which, for the time being, he has selected really belongs to the people. We were all of the people for five years, but I am afraid we are out of it now. The right hon. Gentleman said that the vote at the General Election was

> "one of the greatest disasters that has smitten us in our long and chequered history."

Here I am not quite sure that I have the correct report. *The Times* said:

> "Our long and chequered history."

That might have meant either the Conservative Party or even, in a regal mood, the right hon. Gentleman himself. I checked it up with something that was nearer and dearer, the *Daily Express*, and it reported that it was

> "one of the greatest disasters which have smitten this country."

That was because the electors did not accept the right hon. Gentleman, because the alternative to Labour and a Socialist programme was the right hon. Gentleman. Throughout the Election he had the spotlight. All those able and experienced Front Benchers, and those who have fallen by the wayside, were, after all, mere chorus girls; the *prima donna* held the stage. The very candidates, hon. Gentlemen opposite, were commended to the electors not on their individual merits, but as the chosen supporters of the right hon. Gentleman. The whole thing was epitomised by a witty man in the City of Oxford who wrote of one of them "Love me, love my Hogg." I am sure the right hon. Gentleman knows by now that that was not good tactics at the General Election, that this country does not like one-man shows, and therefore, will not accept this Motion of Censure as anything more than a Party

move of a politician in difficulties and will not accept the cry of the people against the Socialists. We shall go forward with our policy, the policy on which we were returned to power by the votes of the electors. We intend to carry out both our short-term programme, dealing with immediate problems, and our long-term programme of reconstruction, and I believe in doing that we shall have the steady support of the vast majority of the people of this country, workers and employers alike.

# A SPEECH TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

*11th June*, 1946.

*The 1946 Labour Party Conference met at Bournemouth at Whitsuntide. It was the forty-fifth in the history of the Party and the first to be held with a majority Labour Government in power. Inevitably it took on some of the features of a victory demonstration. Almost all the major Ministers were present and addressed the Conference. Mr. Harold Laski, at the close of his year of office, was in the Chair.*

*The Prime Minister's speech came at the beginning of the second day's proceedings. He rose to present to the Conference the Parliamentary Report and used the opportunity to give a general review of the work of the Government in its ten months of office.*

I HAVE heard many Parliamentary Reports moved in Conference. I myself have been responsible for a number of them, but this Parliamentary Report differs in character from any of those that have come before Conference hitherto. For the first time we have a Report of the work of a Labour Government in power, a Labour Government supported by a great majority in the House of Commons, a Labour Government carrying out the policies of the Socialist Movement.

I have been nearly 24 years in the House of Commons, years of struggle, years of being in a minority, with two short frustrated periods of office. It was not without emotion that I rose for the first time in the House of Commons with the consciousness of the backing of nearly 400 Members. To-day my mind goes back, first of all, to the last Bournemouth Conference in that fateful year, 1940. I remember how this Conference took its great decision. It did not take that decision lightly, but it resolved that in the crisis of the nation the Labour Movement would take its full share of responsibility. We went into the Government as a united Party. Through those difficult years we worked as a united Party, and we came out as a united Party. Those decisions were taken democratically by the Labour Party in conference. We did not have to wait to be told the party line from elsewhere.

Those five years of responsibility were of inestimable value to us

when the time came for us to take over the responsibilities of government. We had much experience. We had much knowledge of the problems that we had to face, but before we took over the Government we went to an election, and we fought that General Election honestly. I have known skilful tacticians in the political world who have told me that it was always advisable to go to the country on negatives, on criticism, on grievances and vague promises. I have known Governments that have got in through a subterfuge. I have known Governments that have got in through stunts of one kind and another. We went in setting out our full programme, and as a result we were returned—as our opponents admit—with a mandate for our full policy. That is democracy in action.

What has been our course of action since we obtained power? How have we approached our problems? I recall very well meeting the new Labour Parliamentary Party in the Beaver Hall in the City of London, and I stated then that our intention was to carry out our full programme. I said: "We have to deal with the problems arising from the war and the aftermath of war, very heavy problems that will put a burden on any Government. We have schemes of social reform, schemes prepared during the war Government, in the preparation of which your Labour Ministers took a very full share. We are resolved to carry through those great schemes." But, I said, "We also are resolved to carry out as rapidly and as energetically as we can the distinctive side of Labour's programme: our Socialist policy, our policy of nationalisation." That was the line of action laid down then. It was embodied in the King's Speech, and this Report shows you how faithfully it has been carried out.

This vigorous and forceful action rather upset our opponents, for some of them seemed to be rather scandalised that, having gone to the country with a clear and definite programme, we should proceed to carry it out. It was always their pretence that programmes of nationalisation were theoretical, ideological fads, drawing the Government's attention from its proper duties. Indeed, they went so far as to embody that view in a Vote of Censure which, as you will see from this Report, was well and truly defeated. The fact is that these measures of ours are not theoretical trimmings. They are an essential part of a planned economy that we are introducing into this country. They are designed to help in promoting full employment, economic prosperity and justice for all. They are vital to the efficient working of the industrial and political machine of this country. They are the embodiment of our Socialist principle of placing the welfare of the

nation before that of any section and of dealing with every problem in a practical and businesslike way. We have been able to show how essential our proposals are to the needs of the existing situation, and so, when it came to bringing our measures on to the floor of the House, our Ministers and our Members in the House had no difficulty in putting their case across. Let me say that I have never known a Parliamentary Labour Party with so many Members so capable of putting Labour's case across.

We had secured a clear mandate from the people, and so, when we introduced the nationalisation of the Bank of England—which some of us can remember as a subject of such violent storms in Parliament and the Press, which was regarded by some people as the end of all things—it went through with hardly a ripple on the surface of either House, and when we came to the nationalisation of the mines, although there was criticism in detail, it was quite clear that the Opposition had no alternative. I recall very well, after the Second Reading Debate, talking to an American statesman. He does not belong to our Party. The last thing he would like would be to be accused of being a Socialist, but when he came away from that Debate he said: "Your man Shinwell convinced me." The case on the mines was unanserable. Those two have already become law, but others are marching on. The Cable and Wireless Bill is in Committee, and so is the Civil Aviation Bill. Others are in preparation, and the process will continue. These measures are not the result of some *a priori* theorising. They come out of hard and practical experience and close study of the problems involved.

I think that that is a pretty good start. You must not overload the political machine. I believe that quite a number of our Members in the House of Commons are realising that we have made our policy of full employment begin with them. You must not overload the administrative machine either, because the civil servants are also experiencing full employment. In all these things we must observe the priorities and I can assure you that we are planning ahead. We are planning ahead for the work of the next session after this one and the next after that. It is generally agreed that this legislative activity is unexampled. It is attributable to the energies of Ministers, of the Civil Service and of the House of Commons. Seventy-three Bills have been introduced. Fifty-five have already received the Royal Assent. There are a lot of fish in the basket, and they are not just minnows. There are pretty big salmon among them. Look at those three great measures of social reform: National Insurance, National Insurance Injuries and

the National Health Services. In previous Parliaments any one of those would have been thought to have provided a full meal for a whole year. We worked on the basis of what was done under the war Government, but Parliament and this Government have improved on those first drafts submitted during the war years. We have produced them in the first ten months of our Government.

Our opponents had some kind of a vague programme, not very clearly put across at the General Election, which was called the five-year plan. As far as I can see they would have proceeded very leisurely to do in five years what we have done in ten months. We are in great measures of social reform, to vary my metaphor, two up and one to play, two on the Statute Book and one which is just going through Committee. We have had a wonderful spirit and wonderfully loyal support from all our Members in the House. Of course, they have criticised because we are trained in criticism, but their criticism has been constructive.

Let us look a little further into the fish basket. Here is another large one: the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act. At long last that unjust stigma on the Trade Union Movement, that injustice to civil servants, has been removed. The late Prime Minister invited us to go to the country on this issue, to appeal to Cæsar. We appealed, Cæsar gave his verdict, and the Trade Disputes Act is no more.

We have had two successful Budgets. It is a remarkable thing that confidence in our British financial system has risen steadily with the work of the Socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer. Besides these Budgets he has introduced other measures designed to make money the servant and not the master, designed to cause capital to flow into those channels where it will bring forth most fruit for the benefit of the whole people.

Among the lesser measures there are some which are of vital importance dealing with questions applicable to the miners, questions dealing with dockers, dealing with special sections of the people and dealing with the whole people. Besides these there are a number of measures which are absolutely needed in the stern conditions under which we are living.

I would like you for a moment to consider just what the conditions have been in which this great volume of legislation has been placed on the Statute Book; not the easy times of peace, not a time of settled conditions, not a time of leisure for Ministers or for civil servants, but the most difficult time of all, the period of reconstruction after a great war. I say, the fact that we have been able to pass these measures

with full discussion is a great vindication of the democratic system of government.

But legislation is one thing and administration is another. Let us have a look at administration. No one, I think, would deny the magnitude of the administrative tasks that have faced this Government. People used to say to me before the election: "Don't you hope you will not win? Look at the difficulty of your task." We did not take that line. Take one or two of our major questions. Demobilisation is an enormous problem. Our policy was to maintain with reasonable flexibility the principles which had been laid down by a great Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin, during the war. Nothing throws up more difficult cases than demobilisation. Nowhere is it more easy to get prejudice, but I claim, looking back over these ten months, that our policy has been vindicated, and, considering the difficulties, that great change-over has worked wonderfully smoothly, thanks not just to the Government machine but to the temper and patience of the fighting men and women, and to the full co-operation of organised labour.

We then had the problem of the change-over from a war to a peace economy. Inevitably you will get some pockets of unemployment, but we have seen a wonderful and orderly absorption of labour into industry where it was most needed. Again, how much we owe to co-operation with the Trade Unions. We have seen a remarkable expansion of our export trade. You can see here, too, plans working out to direct industry to where it is most needed, to see that never again are we left with those special areas which we had before the war, and that we do not over-congest areas like London and other centres.

We have been giving freedom to develop where restrictions are not necessary, but we have kept on restrictions which are needed to prevent exploitation and inflation.

Take another problem: housing. It is an enormous problem that cannot be solved quickly. Some people seem to think that one could build all the houses that one wants in the winter. They do not belong to the building trades. There is a lot of criticism by ignoramuses, but now, week by week, work is going forward. Houses are being built, houses are in building, houses are being completed. We shall carry out the programme set us, not to solve the problem in twelve months, but, with the resources available, to go steadily ahead on our policy of providing houses for the people.

In conditions of shortage of labour, shortage of materials, difficulties as regards food and transport, to talk of the complete removal of controls is folly. We do not try to keep any controls that are not essential. I think the steadiness of the nation is remarkable, and the demand for the abolition of controls is practically confined to the lunatic fringe, but, actually, we do not want all the time to emphasise restrictions. Actually a new impulse has been given by the Labour Government over the whole field of governmental activity. In every sphere administration has been given a definite objective. Besides the work of the Cabinet and its Committees in co-ordinating work, there is a wonderful effect from having Ministers who are animated by the same ideals. It helps them to make a co-operative effort. It helps them to take the broad view.

You see, therefore, the Movement going forward, in agriculture, education and every department, and you see it, too, in the Fighting Services. There has been a new start. For the first time the remuneration of the Fighting Services has been deliberately equated with that of civilian workers. It is a bigger change, perhaps, than everybody realises.

We are facing difficulties, but difficulties are made to be overcome. Our home problems are affected all the time by the world situation. Our home food troubles have been vastly accentuated by the responsibilities that we have for others. We are holding a firm balance between our responsibilities to our own people and our responsibilities to peoples of the world, and we are striving, and with success, to get the world food problem viewed not as that of a scramble for every country to get its own, but for all of us to overcome these years of dearth and, in the future, to have a world that is free from want.

Coal shortages and transport shortages again are not just home problems. They are foreign problems. I need not tell you what energetic leads have been given by our representatives at international conferences. There are economic matters, monetary matters and social matters. This Labour Movement of ours has never been a narrow insular movement. It has always recognised that the cause of the workers all over the world was one. We have always realised that you cannot build up a little safety zone for yourselves and leave misery in the rest of the world.

In this problem of foreign politics, in the implementation of the great responsibilities that fall on this country—because we were one of the great victors in the war—the Labour Government is resolved to carry out its responsibilities. I am not going to say much this morning

on foreign affairs because you are going to have a full debate, and you will hear our great Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. We are carrying out, in foreign affairs, our Party policy, and we bring to foreign affairs, as to other spheres, the touchstone of our Socialist faith. We are seeking to promote world peace by collective security. For many years we have been faithful to that doctrine when others fell away. At the time of the late Arthur Henderson we did our utmost.

We have taken up again the work that fell from the hands of that great man. We support democracy and freedom everywhere. Let me say that we know what democracy means and we know what freedom means, because we have it ourselves. We know, too, that political world settlement is not enough. We must base the peace on economic prosperity and social justice. I say that we know what democracy and freedom mean. We do not seek to force our ideas on other countries. We recognise that we live in a world of variously organised states, some Socialist, some capitalist, some Communist, and many with mixed economies. We have to live and work in the world with states of diverse characteristics, just as here in this country we live and work with our fellow citizens of diverse characteristics. We believe in the co-operation between peoples of different outlooks, and not the attempt to force a dull uniformity on the world. We ask for others the freedom that we claim for ourselves.

We proclaim this freedom, but we do more than proclaim it. We seek to put it into effect. Witness India. We have invited the people of India to decide their own destiny. If they will stay with us in the British Commonwealth we shall welcome them. If they desire to go outside, we shall stretch out the hand of friendship to them. Meanwhile, my three colleagues have been labouring over there, not to force something on India, but to help the Indians to solve their own problems.

We have set an example in UNO, where we were the first to proclaim our readiness to hand over our possessions from the last war under a system of trusteeship. In the Colonial Empire also self-government marches on. No Government has given more complete proof of its desire to follow the path of democracy and freedom. We hear a few voices now and again mumbling the old shibboleths about imperialism. I must say they seem to me rather secondhand voices.

Well, here is our work at home and abroad. We set this record before you, and this, after all, is but the beginning of things. We have had only just over ten months of Government. The work of a Prime

Minister in these days is very heavy. The content of Government has expanded immensely in the last thirty or forty years, and no man can carry the burden of the Premiership without the loyal support and co-operation of his colleagues in the Government and without the loyal backing of the Party in Parliament and in the country. Let me say how fortunate I am in having such good and loyal comrades—a team of able colleagues working each in his own sphere and co-operating together in the general work of Government. If you look around to-day you will not see any easy jobs in the Government. Every department has its hard problems. Every department needs an active and hard-working Minister, and every department has got one to-day. There are Ministers who hold what are called sinecure offices where there is not much to do in the way of a department, but I am not sure that they are not the most hard-worked of all Ministers. Let me refer to the Lord President of the Council, Herbert Morrison. He does a great work in leading the House of Commons. That is where you see him, on the floor of the House. What you do not see is the mass of work he is doing behind the scenes in co-ordinating the work of Ministers. Take the Lord Privy Seal, Arthur Greenwood. Our social measures owe an immense debt to his knowledge and hard work. Then, of course, there is the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Generally you come up against a Chancellor of the Exchequer whenever you want something, and he says "No," but we have a constructive Chancellor: he is not a "Yes" man and he will say "No" on occasions, but not on every occasion, and that is what you want in a Chancellor of the Exchequer. And, of course, we have got the Foreign Secretary. I cannot run through the list of all my colleagues, but I specially mention another one—Lord Addison, in the House of Lords. It is not an easy job to be in a permanent minority, but there are in that House what I used to call the thin red line of heroes—rather more of them now—and they are doing a very good work. The work of a Government is team work, and I want to give my thanks to my colleagues, whether as Ministers or as Under-Secretaries or as Whips; the last-named are people not always popular, but we have a very good team of Whips. One other Minister I must mention. I once thought of the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster as being filled by dear old gentlemen—I filled it myself once—but I should like to pay a tribute to the present Chancellor, John Hynd, and the difficult work that he has done which lies behind the occupation of Germany.

I wish I could mention all my colleagues, but they know we

appreciate their work. We are backed by the finest House of Commons, I think, within living memory. I do not know what the House was like in the nineteenth century, but certainly it is the finest in our time, and much as I love and admire my colleagues of the past, I think that we have now in the House certainly the ablest and youngest, as well as the largest, Parliamentary Party we have ever had.

If you look at this Report you will see how active they are, not only on the floor of the House but in Committees of every kind, in which they prepare themselves for work in the House and for bringing to bear that constructive criticism which all Governments need.

After all, this is only a beginning. I stand here with this experience of Government to reaffirm my faith in democratic Socialism. We will never sacrifice the liberties won by our forefathers. It is social democracy which can set us free from the tyranny of economic power and preserve us, too, from the dangers of the absolute power of the State. The inspiring vigour of Parliament, with its free and open criticism, is the source of strength of this Government, as of all British Governments. We rejoice in the co-operation of the people with the Government. We rejoice in the fact that great organisations like the Trade Unions co-operate with us, as well as scores of voluntary agencies, national and local, bringing to the governmental machine the surge of individual enthusiasm. That is a mark of the British way of life.

No one realises more clearly than I do that we have a long way to go yet to reach the Britain of our dreams and the world of our desires, and we believe that we shall get from all the people of this land hard work and courage to take us through the years ahead. For that hard work men and women need the inspiration of a great ideal. We are not ashamed to proclaim ourselves a party of idealists inspired by a living faith in freedom, democracy and social justice. Through many years of adversity we have kept our faith, we have striven for the opportunity to translate our Socialist policy into action. That opportunity has now come to us in full measure. We have, I believe, made a good beginning. We shall not falter. With faith in the justice of our cause and our ability to serve the nation we confidently face the future.

# A SPEECH TO THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

*24th October*, 1946

*In* 1946 *the Trades Union Congress met at Brighton under the chairmanship of Mr. Charles Dukes of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. On the fourth day Mr. Attlee was present as fraternal delegate from the Labour Party and addressed the Conference. His arrival was greeted with great enthusiasm by the delegates, but his speech was far from being a mere acknowledgment of this applause. He was fresh from a major foreign policy Debate in the House of Commons and many of the most notable parts of his speech were devoted to a defence of the Government's record in this field where, in the eyes of an important minority of the delegates, it was most open to criticism.*

WHEN I had the privilege of addressing the Blackpool Conference last year the Labour Government had only been in power a few weeks. I told you frankly of the difficulties which it was inevitable that the Government and the country would have to meet in the coming year and of the spirit in which we intended to meet these difficulties. I knew that the country could count on the leaders of organised labour and on the workers for their full co-operation.

More than a year has passed. Many difficulties remain although great progress in reconstruction has been achieved. I should like to say at the outset how much the nation owes to the steadiness and endurance of the workers, men and women alike; and how greatly the leaders of organised labour have contributed to getting through this trying year of transition. I know very well that foreign observers have been much impressed by the way men and women in every walk of life have faced the many inconveniences and hardships inevitably arising from the continued shortages of many desirable things, and by the fact that the difficult adjustments of the post-war period have been attended by so few stoppages of work.

The Minister of Labour recounted in detail to you on Tuesday many of the matters which are of immediate concern to you as representatives of the wage-earners of this country. He has himself,

as all who knew him expected that he would, brought to the arduous tasks of his department energy, common sense and imagination backed by his long experience of the Trade Union Movement. He has on the basis of the plans worked out by another great trade unionist, Ernest Bevin, carried through demobilisation—the reverse process to that which his predecessor so brilliantly directed during the war.

The change-over from a war to a peace economy in this country has been a very remarkable achievement, reflecting credit on all participants, the civil and military authorities, the workers and the employers. But what has been accomplished so far in reconstruction is only a beginning. We still have great problems to solve. George Isaacs has spoken to you of the shortage of manpower. There are also world shortages of food, timber and raw materials, while the flow of consumer goods largely as it has increased during the past year cannot yet overtake the deficiencies due to six years of war. While a good start has been made in rehousing, the task is immense and cannot be accomplished in a few months.

I have read with great interest and admiration the speeches by the President and Lord Citrine. They were full of wisdom and breadth of view. They were speeches of men of long experience who have, nevertheless, kept their minds young. They showed a vivid appreciation of the changed conditions in which we are living in the present age, of the practical problems that result from this and of the need for us all to adjust our minds and actions in order to solve them. There was more practical statesmanship in these two speeches than in all the orations delivered at the Conservative Conference at Blackpool.

There is to-day in this country a far wider appreciation of economic truth than ever before. I think that everyone realises now that our standard of life depends on what we can produce. Labour is the source of our well-being. It must be applied intelligently, economically and energetically if we are to produce for all our people the material basis of a good life. I can remember not so long ago when our rulers told us that it was more economical to keep men idle than to find work for them. No one says that to-day. We are living in a period when there is a pronounced shortage of labour. Full employment is a policy not only socially desirable but economically necessary. This fact requires a new outlook from those engaged in industry, employers and employed alike.

To match the economics of full employment we need the ethics of full employment. Employers have to realise that those they employ

are a national asset that must not be wasted. Labour must not be misdirected owing to failure to use up-to-date methods. On the other side workers also must realise that whether they work for the State or for a private employer they are producing the stock of goods and services from which we all derive the necessities and amenities of life. Restrictive practices on either side, which often had a justification in the conditions of a past economy, are out of place to-day. The provision of houses, coal, capital and consumer goods to the extent which the nation requires depends on the earnest efforts of all those engaged in production and distribution. Unless they give of their best the nation will go short.

It is, therefore, natural that I as the head of the Government should ask you as leaders of labour to do your utmost to impress on all the simple truth that every worker is concerned not just with his own wage, still less with somebody's profit, but with the standard of life of the nation and indeed the very life of our country.

When I addressed you last we had just had the King's Speech setting out Labour's programme. You know how the promise of that Speech has been implemented. Great social reform measures have been passed. Labour's policy of nationalisation has been applied to the coal industry, to the Bank of England, to Cables and Wireless. The Trade Disputes Act has been repealed. The session now coming to an end will be memorable in history for the extent of its achievements and for its having seen the first great acts of socialisation passed into law.

We have in this been faithful to the pledges which we gave at the General Election, though for some reason unknown to me our opponents seem to think this very dreadful and that we ought to have carried out a Conservative policy.

We have also in bringing forward our measures, legislative and administrative, consulted as fully as possible with the Trade Union Movement, just as we have also consulted with other organisations such as the medical profession over the Health Bill and local authorities and Friendly Societies over National Insurance. It is, of course, a thing any sane Government would do, yet here again we have not escaped criticism. The less responsible organs of the Conservative Press seek to discover a sinister conspiracy, while even papers of some weight talk of the dangers of a State within a State. We shall not be deterred by this kind of talk from continuing the close co-operation of the State with organised labour which is not less essential in peace than in war when it met with no such strictures.

I cannot tell you to-day of our future legislative programme

because the new session has not yet begun, but you may be assured that Labour's programme, based on a well-thought-out plan, will be steadily implemented. It is no hasty improvisation of measures designed to appeal to sectional interests, nor is it a collection of platitudes such as was recently served up instead of a programme to the Conservatives at Blackpool, where the hungry sheep looked up but were not fed. It is a coherent plan for adapting our economic and social structure to the needs of this nation in the modern world. I stress the point in the modern world. We have a double task, the one to deal with our internal problems, the other to play our part in establishing the political and economic conditions in the world whereby we and other nations may advance in peace and prosperity.

I would like to say a few words on the international situation. As I stated in the House we shall continue to do our utmost to make the United Nations Organisation a success. Our objective is to establish peace on sure foundations, but we cannot ignore disturbing features in the world to-day. We must, until we have made greater progress in building up a world organisation, maintain the Armed Forces necessary to fulfil our obligations. It is never easy to do this in the years that follow a great war, but I would ask all of you to do your utmost to help us in these difficult times to get the men which we must have for the Navy, the Army and the Air Force. We have already done much, despite the stringencies of the present time, to make conditions for the Fighting Forces more attractive. We have the lessons of two great wars to take to heart. We cannot afford to run risks.

We have just had a two days' Debate in the House of Commons opened by a very notable speech by the Foreign Secretary. There is not very much left to add to what has already been said. But there is a small but vociferous section in this country that seeks on every occasion to attack the policy of this Government, and which seems resolved to declare that whatever is done, Britain is always wrong. I claim that we are carrying out the principles of Labour's international policy. That policy is based on our belief in freedom and democracy and the right of nations to decide freely for themselves the kind of Government and society they desire. Let me say democracy is becoming a much abused word. It is often used by those who have never understood or practised democratic principles to mean the achievement of power by hook, or more often by crook, by the Communist Party, while freedom means the denial of liberty to all those who refuse to accept the Communist philosophy. Everyone who does not take his orders

from the Communists is described as a Fascist. The criterion by which these people judge their action is a simple one. If in any part of the world the Communist Party by no matter what means is in power, that is democracy. If anywhere the Communists fail, then, however fair the conditions, it is regarded as Fascism. Thus, an election in Greece, supervised internationally, which results in an anti-Communist majority is at once denounced. On the other hand, a plebiscite taken where the Communist Party is in power is regarded as the sacred voice of the people. We, as democrats, are not concerned to decide for other people how they should vote. We are concerned to see that the method of arriving at the conclusion should be just and fair.

During this past year we have put our principles into practice. In the Colonial Empire new constitutions giving wider powers of self-government have been introduced in Ceylon and in other Colonies. In Transjordania we have given complete independence in place of the Mandate. In Burma, even prior to the Elections, a Government which is designed to be more in harmony in its composition with the aspirations of the people has been formed. In India we have formed a Government, after great difficulties, in which two great rival communities are represented. We have invited the elected representatives of the people to choose freely the kind of Government they desire, and to decide whether they will continue in association with Britain or not. The action of the Government in this regard was received with approval throughout the whole world, except in those areas where the people were not allowed to hear of it.

And yet there are still people, including some in this country, who continue with their shrill cries of denunciation of Britain. I say that no country has given greater and more practical proof of its desire to put these principles into practice than has Britain. No great Power has any record comparable to it. I notice on your agenda that the only resolution on foreign affairs is one which is filled with the kind of misrepresentation to which we have become accustomed from the members of the Communist Party, their dupes and fellow travellers.

As the Foreign Secretary said in the House on Tuesday, no one can expect that all the difficulties of a tortured world can be straightened out in fifteen months. Nor is it possible that we should pass from the disorders of the past decade to a complete and orderly international structure. But we have set ourselves to try to work with all other nations in building up the authority of the United Nations Organisation. We are not following selfish and imperialistic aims, but that

does not mean that at every point we should concede the claims of others.

Sir, you may be sure that the Government will do its utmost to try to promote harmony in the world, but the task of building on secure foundations the fabric of peace cannot be accomplished by the actions of Governments alone. There must also be a union of hearts between peoples. It is one of the tragedies of the world situation that the Soviet Government appears deliberately to prevent intercourse between the Russian people and the rest of the world. They are not allowed to know what is being done and thought by their fellows in other parts of the world. The growth of personal friendship between individuals is frowned upon. The Russian newspapers give fantastic misrepresentation of the world outside Soviet Russia. A wall of ignorance and suspicion is built up between the nations. One would have thought that the rulers of Russia, proud of their achievements in peace and war, believing that their system is the best for the workers, would have welcomed every opportunity of closer intercourse between the workers, but a contrary course is followed. I deeply regret this policy, as I am sure you do. We must hope for a change.

In the meantime wherever it is possible we must do our utmost to promote understanding. Here is one of the ways in which in the present as in the past the great world Trade Union Movement can be a powerful instrument for promoting peace. The discussion with men and women of other countries of matters of common interest, the giving and receiving of hospitality, the joining in games and competitions and the visits paid to foreign countries all serve to bring home to us the great truth that in the simple things of life there is far more to unite than to separate the members of the human family.

In this Trade Union Movement we address each other as brothers. This is no meaningless phrase but a continual reminder of the basic principle of the Movement, that the cause of one worker is the cause of all. I look forward in the years ahead of us to a continuation of the fruitful co-operation between the two sides of the Labour Movement which are united in a common cause—the service of our fellow men and women.

CHAPTER II

# THE PRODUCTION DRIVE

*A Speech to the House of Commons in a Debate on* **Manpower** (*27th February*, 1946)

*A Broadcast Speech on the Need for Increased Production* (*3rd March*, 1946)

*A Speech at the Annual Dinner of the Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association* (*23rd March*, 1946)

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN A DEBATE ON MANPOWER

*27th February*, 1946

*Seven months after the end of the Japanese War the House of Commons devoted two days to a Debate on the problems of reconverting industry to peace-time production, with special reference to the re-allocation of manpower. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton opened the Debate from the Front Opposition Bench and drew a dismal picture of industry still "preparing for the last war," of initiative crippled by lack of incentives, and of an export trade recovering with disappointing slowness. The Prime Minister spoke immediately afterwards. He replied to Mr. Lyttelton's points and concluded with an appeal to all sections of the community to play their part in the battle for production. In the course of his speech he said:*

I am glad the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Lyttelton) opened on broad lines, because we want everybody to look at the major difficulties that face this country. This Debate gives us an opportunity to review the economic outlook, not with wild optimism—and certainly not with deep pessimism—but with realism. The first thing we all have to remember is that our prospects and our plans for the future stand against a background of international stress and strain, of war-time destruction and dislocation, that the shadows that were over the world have been lifted, but have not entirely departed, and that, after all, we are only some six or seven months from the ending of the war. Therefore, we have to see what faces us and consider the spirit in which to face our difficulties. I think that we have to face what I have never concealed—and what I do not think any of my colleagues has ever concealed—the immediate difficulties of the post-war period.

It is a mistake for hon. Members to suggest that either I, or my Party, at the Election suggested that immediately after the war there was going to be a wonderful paradise. I made about 50 to 60 speeches, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that in every one of them I stressed the fact that the period was going to be a very difficult one,

and I believe my colleagues did the same. We have to rebuild our physically battered homes, our schools and our factories. We have to restore the normal peacetime life of industry. We have to refill our shops and our homes which have been depleted of their reserves. We have to create an export trade on a greater scale than ever before. We have to fulfil essential requirements abroad, and it is just as well, looking at all these matters, to remember that we have those responsibilities abroad which we cannot avoid. We have to play our part, as well as we can, in restoring the shattered economy of other countries, and we intend to make a good beginning towards the achieving of all this in the year 1946. No one suggests that all this ruin of six years of war and of many years of neglect before the war can be retrieved in six or twelve months, or even in two years. To-day we were asked to concentrate particularly on the manpower problem. Our immediate problem is to try to allocate our limited resources of manpower, materials, finance and foreign exchange so as to try and meet these claims as far as we can. Just as we had to plan in the war to secure the maximum impact against the enemy, so we have to plan in the transition, while shortages continue, in order to make the best use of the supplies we have.

In any review of what is actually happening at the present time, we must remember that we are in a period of transition, a period in which the process of demobilisation is going on all the time. During this winter we have carried out a programme of demobilisation while working on our plans for the future. We have carried out the promises we made with regard to demobilisation. Thanks, I think, are due to all those responsible, the Service Departments and others, that demobilisation is proceeding smoothly. Nearly 100,000 a week are being demobilised, and during January 470,000 were released. Those are very big numbers. Think of the process of demobilisation, of providing for all those people. It is a very remarkable achievement for which we ought to take credit, not for a Government but for our own people who worked out this scheme. We can see in other countries that it has not always worked as well as here. That rate will necessarily decline during the coming months because we tried to speed up in the earlier time, but I think the success of our efforts give a reasonable hope of reaching a target of reduction by December, 1946, provided—one has to mention that proviso—we do not get external disturbances.

At the same time, there has been a great reduction in the number of people working on supplies for the Forces. Between June and

December the drop here was to 2,100,000. That is a very big change-over, and I may say that the figure my right hon. Friend gave me for December—not the most recent figure—was 1,790,000 engaged on equipment, but that figure has come down during the last two months fairly quickly. I would say a word on that, because the right hon. Gentleman made it rather a point. It is quite true that it is a very difficult thing to switch over to civilian work from war work all at once. We had to estimate in all cases where there was a great deal of work in hand, whether it was better to finish off that work or scrap it. A great deal was scrapped. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman is serious in suggesting that we should scrap all armaments because of the atomic bomb. While we have armies in the field we have to keep them supplied. We have to have a certain output of aircraft so long as we have an Air Force. We have to keep a potential running while the world is in its present condition and, although I would like to have seen a speedier run off of munitions, there has, nevertheless, been a very heavy run off of munitions.

We are bringing it down still further to the numbers which were given in the White Paper. With regard to the number of war vessels, I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that, again and again, these were cut. They were looked at in the closest possible way in order that we might not be producing obsolete craft and wasting our resources. There has, therefore, been a great switch over. Between the end of June and December the total number of workers engaged in working for export has risen from 435,000 to 920,000—that is, nearly a 100 per cent increase—and those engaged in manufacturing civilian consumers' goods from 2,624,000 to 3,684,000, which is an increase of about 40 per cent. That is an unprecedented rate of growth in the many sections of industry, and no one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman how long it takes to switch over from one process to another—the process of retooling and all the rest of it.

During this change-over it is worth while noticing that in the insured population unemployment has risen from only .75 per cent to under 2.5 per cent in January. One has to remember—and I grant it—that there is a lag in the time between men coming out of the Forces and their entering industry. That is due to the deliberate policy of this Government and the Government before it, that people coming back from the Forces should have a period of leave. There is, therefore, a lag, but in all our industries there has been an increase except—and I grant the exception—that of coal. I do not think the House will expect me to-day to go into the whys and wherefores of the difficulty

in the coal industry. We all know what was the position of the coal industry before the war. We know the enormous difficulties through the war of keeping up our labour force. We know that the miners are becoming, comparatively, an aged part of our population, and there is the difficulty of getting young men in. One has to face these facts. If the workers in a particular industry, with heavy work like this, are getting older, we cannot expect to get the same out of them. At the same time, I am not going to suggest that I am satisfied with the output which we are getting now. There has been elsewhere an encouraging intake. My right hon. Friends the Lord President of the Council and the President of the Board of Trade will later on give details of individual industries and their particular intakes.

There is one point which is sometimes omitted and which is worth making. I know how hard pressed people are for getting clothing It is sometimes forgotten how much clothing is rightly and necessarily going to the men who fought in the war. We have this great body of people coming out week by week and month by month, receiving clothing and a not ungenerous allowance of coupons, and if one looks at that in the ordinary course of events, away from the war, one will see that a considerable proportion of the population are getting big outfits. That necessarily means less for the rest. That demand, of course, will tail off as we proceed with the process of demobilisation. There is one misconception I would like to remove. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman made it, but it has been made sometimes, and I know it causes a great deal of trouble. It is the suggestion that we are taking a great deal of the goods which people might be enjoying, and sending them off for the export trade. I do not think that is true. We are not holding back consumer goods. As a matter of fact, out of the very encouraging total of £57 million in January, the biggest items came from iron and steel—over £5 million; machinery—over £6 million; chemicals—nearly £5 million; vehicles and aircraft —nearly £5 million. But I know it has been suggested to the hard-pressed people that they could have everything they liked if we were not so strong on the export trade.

The right hon. Gentleman quite rightly stressed the importance of the export trade. But the export trade and our home trade have, at the present time, to count on a depleted manpower in a period of transition, when the right hon. Gentleman knows there must be a lag from the time when we get the people back to the time when we get the production of goods. The Government set itself to formulating a working plan for 1946. The right hon. Gentleman had something to

say about plans and controls, but, although one may have to plan without having all the data, it is better than having no plan at all. We must make some kind of economic forecast. We cannot get certainties, but we can get targets to work to. We can get estimates, but they cannot be quite as precise as in war-time for the reason which the right hon. Gentleman pointed out, and that is why there are controls. We have relaxed a great number of controls and, in particular, we are not directing labour except in certain instances. Over the whole field of labour there has been a great relaxation of controls. I do not believe anybody suggests that the Government should endeavour to control labour in exactly the same way as it was controlled in the war, but we can make our forecasts and guide, as far as we can, industry into the channels which are most necessary in the national interest.

I was glad to see the right hon. Gentleman refer to the Statistical Digest which we have issued, and I think it will be realised that the Government are trying to give this House and the people of this country as much information as possible. I believe hon. Members will find it is a mine of information. It was suggested that it might be a brickfield for the Opposition, who might pick out from it things to throw at us. I do not mind that; they are perfectly entitled to do so, but it is just as well that people should have full information. I remember very well when I entered the War Cabinet that we found there was not, at that time, an adequate statistical survey so that we could see how our munitions and labour and everything were going. The Statistical Office did very fine work. A number of people took part in it. We gradually got such a publication that we could see at a glance how we were progressing. It was a valuable yardstick, and we are trying to do the same for peace time. This first venture, I hope, as the right hon. Gentleman suggested, will be improved and added to, as our war-time yardstick was added to, and I think it brings together a great many tables and facts which formerly have been scattered in various publications.

We set about reviewing the whole situation, and the first job we had to do was to try to see what our total resources of manpower were; we embarked on this project in what is really a new way of attacking the problem. We attacked it from the point of view of manpower rather than of finance—our human resources rather than our financial resources. The forecast was that by the end of 1946, through the gradual process of demobilisation and change-over, the total manpower in the United Kingdom able and willing to work—men and women,

civilians and Servicemen—would amount to 20,000,000. That compares with 20,970,000 in December, 1945, and some 19,750,000 in 1939. The fall in 1946, compared with 1945 is due to the retirement from industry of women and old people.

The next step was for all the departments, representing defence, exports, building, home consumption, transport and new industrial development to estimate and state what their requirements would be in manpower for 1946. There again requirements are not so rigid as during the war. Some could give exact figures, or practically exact figures, others only estimates and targets. Then we had to put together the figure of available manpower and the demands of departments which represent the various activities of the national life and see how they fitted. What we found, of course, was that for what we wanted to do our manpower was insufficient. We then had to set about to see how to cover this deficit. In fact, seeing the amount of cloth available we had to see what kind of a coat we could produce.

The Defence White Paper is an example of what we had to do. Everybody who knows anything of Service Ministries will know that what they get eventually, is never what they ask. There had to be a cutting down, a consideration of what our responsibilities were, and then some drastic cutting down, and that now appears, the December figure being 1,100,000 trained men, and a figure of 500,000 men still working on production for the Services. We should like to get the figures lower, but these have been worked over with the greatest economy, and, as I have said before, it is not a very easy world in many places just at the moment. The number we leave in munitions is the number that is necessary to provide for war potential. It cannot be run down to nothing. We learned that lesson after the last war. After providing for the Fighting Services there remained the forecast of 18,300,000 men and women available at the end of 1946 for all our civil work and for the export industry. That was our manpower. I should say there is a temporary alleviation—it can only be temporary —of which we are making as much use as we can, namely in the use of prisoners of war from Germany in agriculture and so forth.

Then we had to decide on the allocation. We had to adopt certain principles. The first thing was that many desirable projects put forward, desirable in themselves, desired perhaps by some section, had to be postponed because they had a lower degree of priority than others. They were examined very carefully. Our general principle was, first of all to hold back the less essential schemes; secondly, to push on with those essential to ordinary life or the recovery of industry;

thirdly, to hold back in areas of labour shortage; and fourthly, to push on rapidly in areas showing unemployment, that includes particularly those areas that were called "depressed areas" before the war. In those areas, a great deal of war-work was put in, but inevitably with the cessation of war-work pockets of unemployment are beginning to show themselves, and schemes are already completed or approved to provide new work for about 178,000 in those areas, and further proposed schemes will provide work for another 102,500 in those areas. As a consequence of new labour going into those areas, subsidiary occupations will naturally get more busy. Already, 190 new factory schemes for those areas have been licensed, and 110 are already built or building to-day. That is an example of the putting into operation of the principles I have laid down.

On certain economic fronts there could be no cut. Housing is to get a very big share of the building labour force. Some of the building force is needed for factories, in addition to which there is civil engineering work. Our target, which we hope to reach by the end of 1946, is 1,400,000 in the building and civil engineering industries. It is a very high target. We may not reach it, but we have had to climb from 722,000 in June, 1945, and already it has been raised to nearly 900,000. The second place in which there could be no cut was the export trade. The right hon. Gentleman emphasised that, in the White Paper on full employment, the export trade was put in the forefront. In making our plans we have assumed the ratification by the legislature of the United States loan. One has to make some working assumption. We all must realise that if we do not get that loan, the position will be even more difficult than it is to-day, and we shall have to press on even harder with our export drive. We planned on the basis of the loan. Even when we get the loan, it is not a loan to make us lie back and take things easy. The loan is to enable us to work all the harder.

Our target for the labour force directly engaged on exports is 1,285,000 for mid-1946 and 1,555,000 at the end of 1946. That last figure is 405,000 more than in mid-1939. Already to-day, as many persons are at work on exports as there were in June, 1939. I will say a word later about the need for increased productivity. It is not just numbers that count. Our target for the total value of exports in 1946, £750,000,000, is again a high one and we may not reach it. Owing to the time-lag we shall not get payment for more than £600,000,000. That £750,000,000 target compares with £258,000,000 in 1944, and £471,000,000 in 1938. We have worked exports up to the figure of £57,000,000 recorded in January, to which the right hon. Gentleman

referred, and that is not a static figure. We are hoping to increase that month by month as we get more releases of labour and as we get more releases of factories, as changing over industries get into their stride.

Even when we have done this there is a heavy deficit on our balance of payment. The figure, which I think the right hon. Gentleman used, is that of £750,000,000, which was used during the Washington negotiations. It is enormous even on that basis. That should only mean that everyone must realise the intensity of the effort if we are to get through this difficult time. The natural inclination of us all was to believe that what we considered normal economic life would return automatically at the ending of the war, but the fact is that this country is paying, economically as well as humanly, very dearly for our victory, particularly in the loss of our foreign investment income of which a big share was paid for our food. We therefore have to work harder to import the same amount, and it is no use blinking the fact that the foreign exchange position is grim and difficult. Importation from dollar countries will be very hard without the most energetic efforts. Nevertheless, ordinary everyday consumption must be encouraged to rise materially in 1946. It is perfectly true that you cannot ask people to work harder if they have not got something coming in as a result of their extra work. That applies not only to people here; we have had constant difficulties in the realm of food, where increased food supplies might be available from some areas if we could only get the consumption goods in. We have had to make special efforts to get consumption goods across to the producers.

We have none of us, nor has the President of the Board of Trade, ever taken this grim austerity line. On the contrary, we have merely informed people of the grim facts of the situation, namely, that you cannot get all the things you want immediately. We hope, during 1946, to increase the provision of consumption goods to a point very much above 1945, though certainly below 1938. Figures would be misleading, but our hope is that, on the average, consumption goods will be somewhere about half-way back to pre-war standards in 1946. That is an all-over estimate, because it will be found that there are shortages here and there. It is well to remember, too, that there is a better distribution to-day than there was in 1938. The poorest people in pre-war unemployment areas are certainly consuming more than they did in 1938.

That is the picture. It is a difficult one; we have a hard time to get through. I have described the plans by which the Government are trying to bring together the manpower resources and the requirements

of the nation. I have not attempted to conceal the difficulties. They are difficulties we foresaw when we were in the middle of the war; in the last Government we were already planning for reconstruction. The broad fact remains that, whatever we do, there is bound to be a gap between what is desirable and what is possible. However well and carefully the estimates are made, however skilfully plans are made by the Government, our ultimate success in getting through the next two years depends on the active co-operation, vigour and energy of all our people.

We are faced with a shortage of manpower. We must see to it that it is used to the best advantage, and that means a changed attitude of mind. For years before the war we were accustomed to having surplus labour on the market, to having a large amount of unemployment, and the existence of that surplus labour bred in all classes an attitude of mind which must be changed. Less enlightened employers used labour wastefully; they disregarded modern conceptions of labour management and the provision of amenities. Cheap labour has often been the enemy of technical advance. Historically it is true that it has often been the action of trade unions, in combining and pressing for better conditions, that has made for technical advance. In an era of full employment employers will have to realise that there are not a lot of people waiting for jobs, and those who do not accept proper standards of wages and conditions will go short of labour. The workers have also been affected by the existence of unemployment. Everybody knows that in certain jobs a man is tempted to say, "When I have finished this job I shall be unemployed." That does not make for full service and work. Therefore, all classes must get away from the old ideas, and realise that we are now going to live in a world of full employment. We must face the tasks of the present era in a new spirit. During the war we all realised the value of every unit of labour. How often in the War Cabinet did we look most anxiously at the very last people who could be pulled out for some form of war service. All that labour was valuable—it is valuable to-day.

I think we all realise also that the nation can only be saved if we all do the best we can. If to-day we want houses, clothes, coal, food, the necessities and amenities of life, we have to realise that we cannot depend on other people doing their best to provide for us unless we are ourselves rendering the best service we can. It was easier to realise our inter-dependence during the war, and to realise the importance of our job to other people. The complexity of modern society puts us so far away from other people that it is probably difficult for the

industrial worker to realise the importance of the clerk's work, the clerk of the industrial worker's, or the farm worker of the town worker's. Many people do not realise the work done in a Government office, but these people have worked very hard.

I think our motto should be to look first of all to see that we are all doing our own job well, and not always thinking that it is the other fellow who is slacking. My appeal to-day to all men and women, is to do their best to serve the country in this difficult time of reconstruction just as they did during the war. I am not making any sectional appeal. I ask employers to make the most economical use of the men and women available. Some people still show a tendency to think that only one sort of man can possibly work for them, but in the war we found that all kinds of people who had been rejected were able to do fine work. There must be a changed attitude on that. We must appeal also to employers to do their utmost in organisation—to use their brains, and to use modern science. If we are short of labour, we must use what is available to the best advantage, and we must also use science to save labour. In the past many people—perhaps quite kindly people—thought it was wrong to introduce improvements because they threw people out of work. I do not think that is true to-day. We are moving towards a society which makes full use of all its improvements.

I ask the workers of every kind, whether employed in production, distribution or clerical labour, to give of their best. I shall not single out one particular lot of people. There are some whose labour it is easy to measure, to say whether they are doing good work or not. Other people one cannot measure quite so easily. Some are, perhaps, held up as examples of slacking just because they happen to be in the public eye. I also make an appeal to older people to stay in industry during this difficult time. We do not want to think too much in terms of "output per man-hour." There is much work which cannot be measured by that yardstick. I would much rather think of "production per nation-year." I would like this volume to be studied by people as a record of the progress of the nation towards recovery and as showing their share in it. I should like everybody, whether engaged in State or private enterprise, employer or worker, to regard himself or herself as directly concerned in this task of reconstruction and, as these figures for production come out, to regard them as the score which is being put up by the team to which they belong. I should like them to understand that every individual effort has contributed towards reviving our prosperity, just as the efforts of the humblest worker contributed to our victory in war.

National recovery does not depend just upon the numbers of workers; it depends upon securing continuity of work. I am well aware that many people are tired. I know very well the hardships that many are enduring. I know, particularly, how tired and worried many women are, particularly housewives. They have done a great job in the war, troubled with food anxieties, housing difficulties, shortage of clothing and of household goods; but the removal of the material basis of their troubles can only be effected by the work of the people of this country. I also appeal to everyone not to increase those troubles by suggesting that they are easily remediable, and that they are just the faults of the Government, the employers or the workers. I have no doubt that all three—Government, employers and workers—could do much better; but if they were all perfect, they could not alter the broad facts of the situation as we find them at the end of this tremendous struggle. I am confident that that appeal will not be made in vain.

I thought the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot was a little gloomy. I am sometimes inclined to be gloomy myself, but I have complete faith in the steadfastness, vitality and resolution of our people. We have great resources—industrial capacity, machinery, plant, skill—adaptability and enterprise. Just as, in the war, it took time to mobilise our full strength, so, in this period of reconstruction, the development of our resources to the full cannot be effected in a few months. I want us all to realise, without distinction of political creed—the restoration of the prosperity of this country is not a Party matter at all—that we are all engaged in a campaign for prosperity and that it will mean a tremendous amount for this country, but not for this country alone. It will mean a great deal to the world.

I believe that this country did an immense service to the world by its example in war-time. I believe we can do the same in reconstruction. We can show that this old country of ours, with our methods, which you can criticise if you like, the methods of a free democracy, can produce results. I ask everyone to join in a campaign for prosperity.

# A BROADCAST SPEECH ON THE NEED FOR INCREASED PRODUCTION

*3rd March*, 1946

*A few days after his House of Commons speech in the Manpower Debate Mr. Attlee went to the microphone to inaugurate a Government campaign for increased production.*

I WANT to speak to you this evening about the task which we the people of Britain have to accomplish, and to ask all of you to do your utmost to help your country and yourselves to get successfully through a very difficult period.

I want first of all to remind you of the year 1940 when we found ourselves standing alone against the might of Germany with very scanty means of defence. You remember how we all got down to it, how every man and woman determined that they would ensure that we were not defeated. I remember so well seeing week after week our strength growing, our output of arms mounting and the numbers of people engaged in training for war and making munitions increasing. That was a critical time, and it was many months before we could feel that at sea, in the air and on land we were fully prepared to meet the enemy.

We succeeded because every man and woman was enlisted in one way or another in the service of the nation and because all knew where their duty lay and gave of their best. To-day we face a situation not so critical, but not entirely different. The clear duty of all is to give their services fully and continuously to maintain and increase our standard of life.

During the war we had to stop producing the everyday things which we need in peace-time. We had to concentrate on war production and the bare necessities of existence. The natural result is that to-day we are short of the things which we need. You know how it is with most families. Our stock of clothes, household equipment, such as curtains, carpets, crockery, pots and pans and the rest is very low. We have not been able to replace them during the war. The nation

is in much the same position; it is short of goods of all kinds, and just as was the case with munitions, it will take time to replace them. It took time to turn, say, a gas-cooker factory over to making parts of a machine-gun. It takes time to turn it back again.

That is why, although we are beginning to get more things in the shops, we are a long way yet from getting our normal supplies. Every week sees an increase, but there is a lot of leeway to make up. You may ask why can't we get what we want from abroad? The answer is that we can only get it if we can pay for it. Before the war many of the things which we got from abroad—food and raw materials—were paid for by the interest on foreign investments and by services rendered by us to people in other countries. During the war we had to sell our foreign investments to pay for the arms, food and other things we needed. Apart from any temporary relief we may get by loan from our friends across the Atlantic, we can only buy from abroad now if we can pay by exporting goods or rendering services.

You see, therefore, that in addition to making good our war losses and providing the things which we need at home, we must produce enough to buy the food and raw materials which we must get from overseas. We must export much more than we did before the war. Here we come to the critical question. Have we enough man and woman power to do this double job?

Before the war we had large numbers unemployed. There were not enough jobs for the workers. To-day there are not enough workers for the jobs. Why is this? First, because as I have said, we have to export more; secondly, because although the war is over, we have obligations, particularly the occupation of Germany, which require us to keep, until the world is more settled, more men in the Armed Forces than we normally should; and thirdly, because we have to make up the great arrears of work which had to be left undone during the war.

We want more houses, clothes, household goods, coal, machinery —in fact every kind of thing. There is only one way to get these things. That is by work. We have a shortage of labour. We can only get over it by using our labour effectively, by utilising every resource of inventiveness, organisation and scientific knowledge and by all, whether managers or wage and salary earners, doing our best.

You remember how during the war we had a wonderful team-spirit in the nation. The men and women in the Fighting Services, in the munition shops, in the civil defence services, in the mines, on the docks or on board ship, in offices, or on the land, whether in private or public service, and besides them the women in the home,

realised their unity of purpose. Each one recognised the importance to the nation of doing his or her particular job as well as possible. I want everyone to know that the same is true to-day and to recapture the spirit that brought us through the war. Don't think just in terms of the particular business in which you are working, but realise that you are producing the houses, the coal, the food, the clothing or the machinery which your friends need, just as they are producing what you need. If you are working in the export trade you are buying with your labour the food and raw materials essential to you and the nation. You are not just working for wages or profit, you are working for the nation.

I know very well that most people are feeling the long strain of the last six years. I know how many things there are which irritate and worry you. I know how trying it is not to be able to get the goods which you want in the shops and to have to wait in queues for them, but there is only one way to fill the shops and get back to plenty, and that is to produce more.

Faced with this shortage the Government have had to make decisions as to how best to use the labour available. We have to see that our factories are re-equipped. We have to provide for our export trade. We have to build the houses. We have had to decide that necessaries must come before luxuries. This does not mean that we should have no pleasures, but that we must concentrate on seeing that all our people have food, clothing and shelter and the necessaries of life first. Less essential things will come later as times get easier. We may not always succeed, but do not let a single instance of what you consider is unnecessary use of labour make you think that the main object is not being pursued. I have told you that we want to use our labour force to the full.

This does not mean that we believe in excessive hours or overworking. That is uneconomic and wasteful. What we want is to use labour intelligently and for everyone to give a full output. While there must always be some temporary unemployment, due to changing over jobs, we are all resolved never to return to the bad old days of mass unemployment.

But the effect of the old days still remains. There were some employers who were wasteful of labour because they have been used to a surplus. A minority of them were careless about conditions because if one man left they could get another. There were workers who were reluctant, not unnaturally, to go all out on a job because they feared that when it was done they would be unemployed. They sometimes

tried to spin out the work. Those attitudes of mind are out of place in this new era of full employment.

I know there are some people who do not go all out because they think that if they make or earn more it will be taken in taxation, but they forget that it is only by greater production increasing the wealth of the nation that we shall be able to reduce taxation. It is the production of goods which will provide the things on which additional earnings can be spent.

I have spoken to you mainly about production, but the same need for economy of labour and for good work applies equally to distribution and to office work. I am appealing to-night to the whole nation, but I should like to address a few words to particular sections of the community. Nothing was more remarkable during the war than the great services rendered to the nation by women and by those who might in other circumstances have retired from work through age. I appeal then to women to remain at or to go back to work during this difficult period. I am not asking anyone to neglect that most important national service of work in the home, but I hope those who can will continue as they did in the war to help in industry and agriculture.

I appeal to the older people who may well feel that they have earned a rest to carry on a bit longer if they can. I appeal to employers of labour to use the services of the older people and women wherever possible. It is of course quite natural for many employers to try to get back to a labour force composed just as it was before the war, but there are not enough of the younger men to go round. I would ask them also to recall how many people with some physical defect, which formerly debarred them from employment, were found capable of most effective service during the war. I appeal to employers to seek to organise their work so as to make use of these.

Next I ask employers and workers to remember how much depends on continuity of effort. We have in this country set an example to the whole world in the machinery which we have set up, for the most part voluntarily, for the settlement of disputes. I ask employers to deal quickly with grievances and workers to use the machinery of settlement and not resort to unnecessary strikes.

I ask my fellow trade unionists to look carefully to see whether there are not customs and rules established for the protection of the worker before the days of full employment, which are to-day unnecessary and hampering to full production. I remember how splendidly the trade unions rose to the occasion in this respect during

the war. I ask employers to throw aside any restrictions of output calculated to create artificial shortages.

I have spoken very frankly to you of our difficulties because in a democracy the people are entitled to know the truth about the situation and the Government asks and does not ask in vain for the willing co-operation of the people, but I would not like to leave you with a dark and unrelieved picture of gloom.

On the contrary, despite all our difficulties and the existence of critical shortages such as food and coal, there is a bright side to the picture. The enormous task of demobilisation has proceeded smoothly. The process of reconverting industry from war to peace is being accomplished with great credit to all concerned. The flow of goods into the shops is steadily increasing and will increase week by week. Our export trade is growing month by month. A great work has been done in repairing war-damaged houses, and as the year proceeds and fine weather comes, the erection of new houses will get under way.

We have in this country great resources in factories, machinery and plant of every kind, a fertile soil, above all a people second to none in energy, skill, adaptability and resolution, a people which is always at its greatest when difficulties have to be faced.

I have not the slightest doubt that we shall come triumphantly through this testing time of 1946, just as we came through 1940. We shall come through now just as we did then by the team-spirit of our people and by close co-operation between the Government and the nation. I assure you that every one of us in the Government will do our utmost to guide the energies of the nation along the road that leads to prosperity. I ask confidently for the help of all who are listening to-night.

Let us all march forward together cheerfully, strong and resolute to win the war against want as we conquered in the fight for freedom. Let all resolve to do their duty each in his or her particular sphere serving the common cause, in the sure knowledge that the British people will, under God, show that in peace as in war democracy can be combined with strength, tradition with progress, liberty with self-discipline and prosperity with social justice.

## A SPEECH AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE BIRMINGHAM JEWELLERS' AND SILVERSMITHS' ASSOCIATION

*23rd March*, 1946

*Mr. Attlee was the principal guest at the first annual dinner of this Association to be held since* 1939. *His audience was largely composed of Midland business men, and he used the opportunity to follow up some of the points he had put forward in his Production Broadcast a few weeks before. He stressed the importance of the export drive and called attention to the need for enterprise, adaptability and the removal of suspicion in industry.*

Mr. Chairman, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great privilege to me to be the guest this evening of your Association. I recall how often in the past men of the highest distinction have been entertained by you. The revival of this function is one of the many signs that we are moving once again into the orderly ways of peace. I am glad also to be once again in this great City of Birmingham, the heart of this immense industrial region of the Midlands.

I know well how Birmingham stood up to enemy attack in the war. I recall visiting your city after a blitz and seeing a man and wife and their children looking at the remains of what once had been their home. I recall how struck I was by the matter-of-fact way in which he courageously took the disaster and how confidently he looked forward to re-establishing his home. This was the true British spirit, typical of our fellow countrymen in war-time. I believe, too, it will be exhibited no less in these difficult days, when we look around and see so much of our former trade and industry in urgent need of reconstruction after the ravages of war.

I know, too, the good fighting quality of the men of the Midlands, for in the first World War I served in a division in which there were battalions of the Warwickshires, the Worcestershires and the South Staffordshires. In the second, as in the first World War, the tough fibre of the man from the heart of England proved as firm as ever.

But there was another contribution which Birmingham and the Midlands made to winning the war, which was of incomparable value. The whole vast range of metal-working industries for which this area is renowned was devoted to one form or another of munitions production. There was almost no type of weapon or war-like store which was not made in Birmingham, ranging from fuses and delicate instruments to armoured fighting vehicles, heavy guns, and aircraft of all descriptions.

In this effort, the trades which are represented in your Association bore their full part. It was necessary for workers and plant to be diverted to production of more lethal products. Some parts of your industry were employed on badges, titles and buttons for the Services. I know how well in 1939 the Jewellers responded to an appeal made by Lord Woolton at your Annual Banquet and how your Association organised for him a whole scheme of production. I know too that many jewellery firms undertook work on precision instruments for aircraft and radar, Sten, Bofors and Oerlikon guns, and on engineering gauges and a whole range of work that required high skill and precision. Considering that that production was spread over a very large number of small firms, the Industry's war achievement was most impressive. But there is another service that Birmingham performed in the war, which deserves to be recorded. Numbers of skilled men went from this city to start new munitions factories in all parts of the country. Without these key workers the task of getting into effective operation these great new works, with their masses of unskilled workers, could not have been accomplished. While Birmingham has its great industrial units, it is perhaps most remarkable for the large number of small and medium sized firms in the metal-working trades. Birmingham has very wisely not put all its industrial eggs into one basket. You have here a diversified industry and a great fund of energy and inventiveness. It is, therefore, to Birmingham that we shall look for a great contribution to the rebuilding of the economic life of our country.

I do not need to stress to the present company the need which this country has, as never before, of increasing its export trade. We need an export trade almost double that which we had in pre-war years. We must not only gain it in this time of transition, when there is throughout the world a great shortage of consumable goods, but we must maintain it steadily in the years to come.

If I had been speaking on this subject fifty or sixty years ago, I should have been correct in referring to overseas trade as consisting

to a large extent of a few great items, which accounted for the bulk of our exports—coal, cotton goods, woollen goods and machinery. There were, of course, in addition, quantities of smaller items, but these were then the foundation of our overseas trade. Since those days, we have seen the growth of secondary industries in many parts of the world. We have inevitably lost much of the demand for the less highly finished products as indigenous manufactures grew.

In the modern world, we must rely on a great variety of products and especially on those products which demand a high degree of skill. Perhaps our greatest asset to-day is the inventiveness of our scientists and technicians, the skill of our workers and managements and the adaptability of our people. In this drive for export, we shall rely particularly on the engineering and metal industries. I have stressed the point of the need for enterprise and adaptability because these qualities are essential if we are to maintain our standard of life. They are particularly necessary at the present time. I know well how brilliantly the change-over of production from peace to war was effected. We shall need no less drive and energy in carrying out the reverse process.

I know how often in the war we had to improvise. We had to economise manpower and materials. We had to depart from old methods and old customs. The same is true in these critical days. We are faced with a serious shortage of manpower. Just as in the war, we shall have to reinforce with female labour. We shall have to use the older and less fit sections of our population.

I would especially urge those who are listening to me this evening to do their utmost to fit into work the men and women who in past days they might have regarded as not fully coming up to the standards of physical fitness which they would desire. I believe that in your industries especially there are opportunities for those, who through war wounds are not capable of heavy physical labour, but can with training do the delicate work in which your craftsmen excel.

We must get away from looking back to a past which can never return. We must be constantly on the look-out for new wants to be supplied. We must use skilled brains. I recall very well how during the war there was a contest between our scientists and those of the enemy. Again and again the enemy would produce some new device. Our scientists never failed to counter it, nor did they stop at this. We also got ahead of the enemy by many devices. We always saw a difficulty as a thing to be overcome. We rejected over and over again the plea that something or other was impossible. In the war

against want, in which we are now engaged, those responsible for the management of industry must make as full use of the scientists as did the War Cabinet in the fight for freedom.

We shall need imagination and daring in peace as in war, but there is another factor that must be taken into full account, and that is the human factor. It is not enough in war to have good weapons. You must also have the discipline and morale which enables them to be used with effect. I know that when I was an officer in the first World War it was impressed upon me that the essential quality required from an officer was ability to get the best out of his men, so that a unit became, not just a collection of men with technical training, but an effective unit with a spirit and a soul of its own. We shall need in our industry the same kind of *esprit de corps* that was found in the Fighting Forces.

We shall require discipline from the workers, particularly that highest form of discipline—self-discipline—but we shall also require the right kind of leadership in the managements. We cannot afford to waste our strength in quarrels over wages, hours and conditions. We cannot afford stoppages in industry. We want the industrial machine to go forward with a steady rhythm. This requires qualities on both sides. There is something seriously wrong with an industry where there are frequent strikes and lock-outs. We are rightly proud that in this country we have built up a great machinery for settlement of disputes. I think that in this we have set an example to the world. Having set up this machinery, it is folly not to use it. The most efficient industries in this country are those wherein there is a mutual trust between the employers and employed alike.

We must realise that what is at stake is our standard of life, and that we cannot afford unnecessary stoppages in our work. We have come through a very difficult period this first winter after the war. From now on we may expect a steady increase in the flow of consumer goods. We are by no means at the end of our difficulties, but there are many heartening signs. Our export trade is steadily expanding. The February figure of sixty million pounds, three million pounds greater than the January figure, which was inflated by recovery from the dock strike, is most encouraging. Our coal production, which is a great anxiety, has been improving. As the fine weather comes along we shall see the houses going up, and I am glad to know that Birmingham has already made a good start. If we can get over the next twelve months without industrial difficulties at home or disturbances abroad, we shall be well on the way to recovery.

As you all know, we are now passing through Parliament great plans on social security. We are out to achieve prosperity, a prosperity that will reflect itself in the lives, not of one section, but of all our people. We are going to provide a comprehensive system of security in order that the standard of life of everyone may be maintained in sickness, as well as in health, in times of employment and in periods of temporary unemployment. These schemes have met with widespread support in this country and have, I know, struck the imagination of many people in other lands. But I need not emphasise to you to-day that the whole of our plans for education, a National Health Service, social security and a fuller life for all depend ultimately on the level of productivity in this country. These benefits, in which we want all our people to share, can only come from one source and that is from the work of our men and women applied to our natural resources.

Sir, as I drive into Birmingham and seek to reach my goal, the Town Hall, I am conscious that the way is difficult. I can see my objective, but I can only reach it if I follow the one-way route laid down by your civic authorities. If I try a short cut, I soon find myself getting further and further away.

It is the same with our endeavour to reach prosperity and a full life for all. I can see the objective, but to reach it I must follow the one-way street of hard work. Incidentally, Sir, as we all know, safety lies in keeping to the Left.

But hard work must be applied in the right direction. Almost everyone recognises that we must have in these days a planned economy, but the existence of a plan does not mean that there is not ample scope for enterprise and imagination on the part of the individual, indeed the exhibition of these qualities is essential to its success. In the conquest of North Africa and in the invasion of Normandy an all-over strategic concept was vital, but success was due to the initiative and vigour of every officer and man in those splendid Fighting Forces which destroyed Hitler's dream of world domination.

I have this evening spoken to you of the need for material production, the economic foundation of this country, but I should gravely err did I not at the same time stress the need for the idealism and inspiration which should inform our material efforts. It is for us to show that the British way of life, with its freedom and democracy, with its kindliness and with its acceptance of the moral values on which alone true civilisation can be founded, can in peace as in war be an example to the whole world. You here in Birmingham have not only your great industries, but your university, your art gallery and

your cathedral. You have your conception of Birmingham as a fine city in which men can live fine lives. I hope and believe that in the years ahead Birmingham will set an example to the other cities of Britain.

Sir, I remember only too well how after the last war this country failed to rise to the height of the occasion. There was inevitable war weariness, but to this was added a mood of cynicism, of selfishness and of hedonism. The ignoble slogan of "Safety First" was preached and practised.

This must not happen again. I do not think that it will. I discern to-day in this country the flame of high endeavour, especially among the young men and women of the Fighting Forces. I see a realisation that the freedom of the spirit for which we fought in the war must be striven for all the time. The defeat of Nazism was a great victory which ended the military war, but it was only an episode in the unending warfare of the human spirit.

Despite the many difficulties which beset us I look forward with confidence to the future. I face all tasks cheerfully and hopefully because of my profound faith in the people of this country.

CHAPTER III

# SOCIAL SERVICE — NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL

*A Speech at the Harveian Dinner of the Royal College of Physicians* (18*th October*, 1945)

*A Speech at a Luncheon of the National Association of Boys' Clubs* (30*th November*, 1945)

*A Speech to the House of Commons on the Second Reading of the National Insurance Bill* (7*th February*, 1946)

*A Speech to a National Savings Rally* (2*nd April*, 1946)

# A SPEECH AT THE HARVEIAN DINNER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

*18th October*, 1945

*In October, 1945, the Royal College of Physicians resumed a series of dinners, broken by the war, in commemoration of the work of William Harvey. Mr. Attlee was the principal guest and speaking to a distinguished gathering of doctors and others at the Dorchester Hotel he outlined in general terms the aims that the Government sought to achieve by the introduction of a national health service. Lord Moran, the President of the College and Mr. Churchill's personal physician during the war, was in the chair.*

MR. PRESIDENT: I rise to propose the toast of the health of the Royal College of Physicians. It is, perhaps, a reversal of the usual roles that I, a layman, should express solicitude for the health of the members of the medical profession. It is usually the other way. Although I have many doctors both collaterals and ancestors in my family tree, I speak to-night as one unacquainted with your mysteries except as a sometime patient. I am not, I hope, in immediate need of treatment, though for aught I know keen professional eyes are even now observing symptoms of which I am still unconscious. I am very appreciative of the honour of being present on this very delightful and special occasion, the first Harveian dinner since before the war. These dinners are an occasion for celebrating the memory of a great servant of humanity, William Harvey, and of bearing witness to the service of medicine and medical men to mankind. Since the foundation of the Royal College by King Henry VIII four hundred and twenty-seven years ago, it has played a notable part in contributing to the health and happiness of mankind. It is well in these days of change when so many monuments of the past have been swept away to consider for a moment the continuity of effort directed to a single aim, that the Royal College represents. At a time when more effective, far-reaching and terrible instruments are being produced in order to kill, it is well to remember that at the same time there is this steady and constant endeavour to preserve life.

During the last six of those four hundred and twenty-seven years

of the Royal College's life, we have lived under the menace of sudden death. In the past when war has broken out, we in this country have been anxious only for our friends and relatives overseas. But in varying degrees in these war years we in this country have ourselves walked in the valley of the shadow of death. There are in the great disaster of war always some gains to be set against losses. During war the inventive genius of man is stimulated not only towards destruction but also towards preservation. In particular, scientific advances that in peace-time might have taken many years to develop, receive an immense acceleration. This is especially true of the art of healing. It would take a long time, and it would draw me into a discussion of subjects of which I am but little informed, to deal with all the notable advances that have been made during the war, but I should like to mention two.

The first which would have been of special interest to Harvey himself is the development of the Blood Transfusion Service. The technique of transfusion was of course known and practised before the war, but, as soon as it began, immense strides were made at once both in research and administration. There was a great response by the people of this country in giving their blood to save their fellows. The country was covered by a system of transfusion centres and mobile teams ready to meet any emergency. This service backed by much fine research into the types of blood and their compatibilities and incompatibilities has saved countless lives in the Services, among civilian casualties and among the ordinary sick. I was immensely struck myself when visiting hospitals in Normandy to contrast the condition of the patients who had had the advantage of this service with what I remember we experienced in the last war.

The other great discovery is of special interest to us to-night; that of penicillin at the President's hospital, St. Mary's. I need not, I think, do more than mention it for everybody to-day knows the reduction in the loss of life, particularly in battle casualties, attributable to penicillin. But in giving these two instances out of many of the beneficent works which we owe to the research workers, I should not like on this occasion to omit a tribute to the work of the medical profession in other fields. We are all familiar with the many instances of deeds of great gallantry performed in the face of the enemy, remembering always that in the field there is not only the human enemy to be overcome but the forces of nature. Nothing is more remarkable to one whose memory goes back to the South African War than to contrast the proportion of casualties caused by enemy action and by disease in past and present wars.

The physicians and surgeons who served in the Fighting Forces deserve our highest admiration. But one of our great anxieties, and a continuing anxiety, was and is the shortage of doctors, and I think it well to recall here how many men well entitled to an honourable retirement after years of service in civilian practice carried on with an ever-increasing burden as the younger men were drawn away to the war.

There is a special service I wish to mention. That is the one rendered by Lord Moran during the war years when the War Cabinet was often anxious because of the vigorous travelling habits of the war Prime Minister. It was a great comfort to us to know that in those expeditions he was in the care of Lord Moran.

I have dwelt for some time on the immediate past, and it is time now to look to the future. We have to see to it that the benefit of all these great advances is made available to the whole of our people.

I know that you are eagerly awaiting the Government's proposals for a National Health Service, but I am afraid I cannot give them to you to-night. Far be it from me to enter into the dangerous paths of discussion as to how the ends which we have set before us can be best achieved.

That is a task which is at present still in the hands of my Ministerial colleagues, the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland, the latter of whom is at the present time gaining practical experience of hospital treatment, which will I hope before long restore him to active participation in our endeavours. Whatever may be the difficulties of arriving at agreement on the practical means for attaining these ends, the ends themselves are I believe approved by the whole country.

What is it we seek? A service which will be comprehensive in the double sense of being available to every member of the population and of covering every form of medical allied activity. We intend to have a service in which no patient shall be without the treatment he needs through lack of money, and no patient shall be without the treatment he needs through deficiency in or lack of organisation of the necessary facilities. We need, too, a service in which professional men and women will be able to devote themselves to their great calling without financial anxiety and without in any way feeling cramped and over-controlled by regulations.

We need a great improvement in our hospital service, in the facilities for diagnosis and treatment outside hospitals, in the number and distribution of medical men, both consultants and general

practitioners, and perhaps above all in the planning and organisation of all the different branches into what must in fact be a single integrated whole, a real National Health Service. The task is not easy, but we are going to do it. Above all we realise, no one more keenly than my friend the Minister of Health who is here this evening, that for this to be successful we must have the help and co-operation of the profession itself. The profession is I know as eager as the Government to see that we have a really good service.

I give you the toast of the Royal College of Physicians of London, in the confidence that that help and co-operation will in the future, as in the past, be fully and unstintingly given to the great causes which challenge us.

# A SPEECH AT A LUNCHEON OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOYS' CLUBS

*30th November, 1945*

*The Prime Minister was well-qualified to deliver an address to a gathering of people brought together by their association with Boys' Clubs. It was his interest in Haileybury House, a Boys' Club in Stepney run by his old school, that took him to the East End, first as a frequent visitor and later as a resident. For two years he was manager of the club and lived on the premises. Many more years were spent in the same district in close association with this and other clubs. It was therefore a subject of great personal interest that brought him to this luncheon at Grocers' Hall in the City of London.*

I HAVE been asked by Lord Aberdare if I would begin my address by telling the story of Brunswick Prisoners of War Camp. I am delighted to do so, because it gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to those who, through no fault of their own, endured the misery of captivity. I can well realise how they longed to be again in the fighting line and how much they suffered from boredom, frustration and privation. It is to their lasting credit that, though captive, they maintained their dignity, their honour and their courage.

There are many different stories which reflect this spirit, and perhaps the story of Brunswick may be taken as typical although in its results it was exceptional. In honouring the prisoners of Brunswick I am honouring all those prisoners who kept their faith through a test which was perhaps the most bitter of all war experiences.

To some of the men in Brunswick there came the idea that it might be possible to bring good out of evil. They saw in their captivity the symbol of another captivity, they realised that many of the boys of this country were held captive by the circumstance of their environment and were denied many of the opportunities of a rich and vigorous youth; they were cabined and confined by poor housing conditions, by lack of opportunity for recreation. These Brunswick prisoners sought to give practical expression to their desire to make life finer and happier and better, at any rate for a few boys. The plan to found a boys' club on their release began to take shape. But a Prisoners of

War Camp is a democracy of a very critical kind; it was necessary to win the assent of the whole camp.

A camp meeting was called. I have been given a vivid picture of this meeting. It was held on a winter's day, in an upstairs room without windows and with holes in the roof. The audience consisted of officers and men, some still in the threadbare battledress in which they were captured at Dunkirk, some in khaki drill; there were Australians and Canadians, Poles and Belgians, Gurkhas and New Zealanders. All were hungry because the Red Cross parcels had stopped. The scheme for the foundation of a boys' club was put forward by Colonel Dunnill, who is with us to-day; there was some opposition. But a private in the Parachute Regiment—a Red Devil captured at Arnhem —Private Flanberg, M.M., said that he himself had been a member of a boys' club and that he owed more than he could express to a boy's club. He said: "There is nothing finer you can do in this world than start a boys' club." The simple speech of this Cockney parachutist was cheered to the echo. This critical, hungry audience decided unanimously that the boys' club should be founded. They collected among themselves £13,000 in donations and £700 a year in annual subscriptions. The club will be founded; it will be the living memorial of the heroic spirit of a Prisoners of War Camp.

But it will surely be something more. It will be a challenge to every one of us. There are difficult times ahead; youth will need all the leadership, the friendship and the example which we can give to them. I believe that in the Club movement, and in other voluntary youth movements there is a great opportunity for fostering democratic principles of understanding, co-operation and free association.

I am particularly glad to be here this afternoon because I am an old club manager. Forty years ago, as a very shy youth, I began to work in a boys' club in Stepney and continued to do so almost every night in the week until the first World War. I was fortunate in serving my apprenticeship under a great club manager, a man of fine character and of great unselfishness, and I had a number of good colleagues, most of whom fell in the first World War. In helping to run this boys' club I learned more practical economics and practical sociology than I ever learned from books.

I stress the point that I served under a great club manager. You may have every variety of club. It may be connected with a church or be completely lay. It may be run in connection with Boy Scouts or a Cadet Corps, as was mine. It may have splendid up-to-date premises, or may be in an improvised building, such as an old barn.

But fundamentally the success or failure of a club depends on the manager. Everything really rests on personality rather than on set rules.

I remember very well in my own club that there was a tradition which had been built up as to what was right and wrong conduct. It had not grown from any preaching, but from the impression made by the personality and practice of the club leader. I remember that during all the nine years I worked there, in what was then a very rough district in Limehouse, I never heard a boy use bad language in the club, and yet there was no notice or rule that forbade it. It was simply not done. I remember that when at a later stage a number of boys met together and wrote out an admirable code of principles, which were designed to express what they thought the club stood for, these were not drawn from any specific teaching, but just what these boys had individually realised was the conception of conduct held by the club leader.

A boys' club is a good school of citizenship. You can develop there the right kind of discipline, which is self-discipline, and you can also develop the spirit of service. I remember that I started a club for younger boys, mostly barefoot and ragged. I had no club leaders available from the helpers in the club, for they did not come back from work early enough, but I had some boys, whose work happened to end early, from the senior club, and they volunteered to help. They came after a very hurried tea and looked after small boys, not an easy job at all, because they understood the idea of service. I have known boys from that club who in after life have started clubs themselves because of the realisation of the benefits they themselves had received. Therefore, I very warmly support the appeal which is made to-day for service in boys' clubs. It is a rewarding service, it is a two-way traffic, which benefits not only the boys but the club managers. I remember very well how much I learned of the spirit of self-sacrifice in poor homes in Limehouse, which made me often ashamed that one did not do more oneself.

Things have changed a good deal in the last forty years. State and municipal social services have developed tremendously. There have been big advances. The boys of to-day are bigger, healthier and better clad than those with whom I worked forty years ago, but these things are not enough. One must constantly be multiplying the opportunities for social intercourse, for the development of the right kind of leadership and of community consciousness.

I would therefore appeal to the young men of this generation, most of whom have come through the arduous experience of a great war, to give their services in boys' clubs as part of the essential work which needs to be done in this nation in order that we may continue to play our full part in the modern world. They will be amply rewarded by friendships made which will last their whole lives.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE SECOND READING OF THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BILL

*7th February*, 1946

*The National Insurance Bill, based largely on the recommendations of the Beveridge Report, came up for its Second Reading in February*, 1946, *and two days were devoted to the Debate. Mr. James Griffiths, the Minister in charge of the Measure, opened for the Government on the first day, and Mr. R. A. Butler was the principal speaker for the Opposition. On the second day Mr. Attlee spoke first. Speaking with the experience of one who had campaigned for measures of social security since the days when the Poor Law Minority Report was published in* 1909, *he sought to see the Bill in perspective—as an important chapter in the long story of the fight against want and insecurity.*

I would like for a brief time this afternoon, to deal with some of the general considerations appropriate to a Second Reading Debate. My right hon. Friend the Minister of National Insurance, stated that this is the third instalment of a great scheme of social security. Family allowances are already on the Statute Book; the Industrial Injuries Bill has passed through Committee, a comprehensive health service is yet to come, but now we have this great Measure which not only embodies great changes and new proposals, but gathers up into one scheme a whole mass of Statutes passed over many years. I think hon. Members looking at this Bill will realise that it contains a number of difficult points, and I am bound to say, as a member of the war-time Coalition Government, that perhaps they now understand why it was necessary to devote a considerable amount of time to examination of the Beveridge Report before the Government's White Paper could be produced. As one who did not take as much part in those deliberations as some of my colleagues, I would like to pay a tribute to the work that was done then by hon. Members of all Parties, and of none. I would particularly mention a man who has, perhaps, as wide a knowledge of this subject as anyone in the country, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for

the Scottish Universities (Sir J. Anderson), and also the Lord Chancellor, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Since then, after the White Paper, there has been a change of Government and the scheme has had to be looked at again. Then came the long and difficult work of reducing general terms and general decisions to the form of a Bill to be placed before this House. I think the fact that we have pressed forward with those big schemes, that we have brought them in legislative form before the House, disproves some of the statements that have been made which suggested that the Government were neglecting the concerns of the ordinary common man in favour of ideological schemes of nationalisation.

It is quite true that we have pushed on with nationalisation schemes. We have also, I suggest, in six short and crowded months made a progress with schemes of social reform which is an unsurpassed record for any Government. As is natural, I think, in a Debate of this sort, many Members have looked back to the struggles of the past and have remembered with gratitude the pioneers, such as Keir Hardie and Lloyd George, who were mentioned yesterday. They have rightly hailed this Bill as the culminating point of exertions extending over many years to substitute collective security for the partial, ill-regulated insufficient efforts of individuals and groups of individuals, to protect themselves from the changes and chances of this mortal life. I think it is right to stress this, because this Bill, to which, as I say, all Parties have contributed, does express a tremendous change in our conceptions of social obligations.

I myself have seen the operation of this change during the last forty years, since I first, from practical experience, began to learn something of the problems of poverty, slums and unemployment. I remember then that the only thing, apart from charity from voluntary societies, on which the person in distress could fall back, was the Poor Law. I remember at that time the principles of the Poor Law of 1834 still reigned supreme. They represented orthodoxy in the field of social service, and when one looks at the wonderful change that has come over the conceptions of the people in this country in this respect it is worth while paying tribute to some of the early pioneers. I remember my old friend Mr. Rogers, one of the first fighters for old age pensions. I remember Will Crooks and I recall, later, Sir William Beveridge's monumental work on unemployment, and I remember Mr. Lloyd George's Insurance Bill.

The first breach in that fortress of 1834 was the Old Age Pensions Act, but the battle was really joined, as I remember very well, over

the representations of the Minority Report on the Poor Law. I myself took a small part with Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb and George Lansbury in that propaganda fight. There followed the Insurance Act, and step by step we have seen the principles of that Report carried out and year by year, almost every year, some advance has been made. There has only been one serious set-back, and that was in 1931 when the old conception gained a short victory. I think it is worth while recalling to the younger generation who have grown up, with the conception of social services provided by the community—sickness insurance, unemployment insurance, and the rest—that those things were not got without struggle, and that we all owe a tremendous debt to the people who fought for those things years ago.

This Bill is founded on the Beveridge Report. I would like here to pay a tribute to my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal, who set Sir William Beveridge to work on this, to Sir William Beveridge himself, and, as I have already said, to members of all Parties who worked on it. The White Paper produced by the war-time Coalition Government, accepted by all Parties, and by the country, is different in kind from all its predecessors. The earlier schemes were, to a very large extent, actuated by what I might call eleemosynary considerations. First efforts were really concessions to misery. They were the provision for Lazarus of some crumbs from the rich man's table. The setting of this Bill is quite different. It is designed not for one class but for all, and it is a point to be noted how the emphasis of social provision by the State has rightly moved from the conception of doing something just for one class—the class which in our economic conditions was right at the bottom of the ladder—and making provision for such things as workingmen's houses and elementary education, to the conception of homes for the people and education for all. Again, the Bill is not directed to the mitigation of one specific hardship, such as sickness, old age, or unemployment. It seeks to provide for the loss of income which these various incidents, or accidents, of life entail. It seeks to provide security for all. It seeks to provide equal benefits in exchange for equal payments. It seeks to remove those numerous anomalies that were quite inevitable when piecemeal legislation, extending over a long period of years, was passed through this House. The Bill brings before us a really comprehensive scheme which seeks to provide for the citizen some security from his birth right to the time of his death and, indeed, even a death benefit after death.

The second great change in the set-up of this Bill is this. It takes its place as part of a policy of full employment put forward originally

by the Coalition Government. In that Government's White Paper on employment policy, there was set forth, I think, almost for the first time in a State document, the vital importance to the economy of the country of maintaining a high standard of purchasing power among the masses of the people. We now recognise that to allow, through mass unemployment, or through sickness, great numbers of people to be ineffective as consumers is an economic loss to the country. We all now hold the view that we must maintain purchasing power and must have a proper distribution of purchasing power among the masses of the people. The old idea that this could only be done through wages and profits, and not by collective provisions of this sort, is now, I think, dying. We on this side have put forward that view for many years.

I can remember hearing it put from the other side of the House so ably in one Debate by Lord Eustace Percy, but it has now become accepted, and it is interesting to see how far, in quite a short time, we have travelled from the conception of the panic cutting-down of the purchasing power of the masses, which was employed as a means of dealing with the abundance crisis of 1931. We now realise, and we have the backing of experienced administrators and of the economists, that it is necessary in this matter to have a degree of planning.

I would like, in this connection, to call attention to an interesting provision in Clause 3 of the Bill, whereby, subject to the specific approval of Parliament, the rates of contribution may be varied upwards or downwards. This proposal appeared in the White Paper on full employment issued in 1944, and there we have the conception, which I can remember being put forward thirty years ago by Mr. Sidney Webb, that it was the duty of the State, by trying to increase purchasing power in times of threatened slump, to iron out the irregularities in our economy. The endeavour here is, to some extent, to try to vary the purchasing power in the pockets of the masses in accordance with the state of employment. It is a piece of long-term policy. We do not claim that it is suitable for a transition period. The power has been taken, but an exact scheme has not been laid down in detail, and I should mention here that it does not affect the essential insurance basis of the scheme, because the proposal is that a lessening of contributions in a slump year should be offset by an increase in a full year. The power is there, though it may take a lot of working out, but it is an interesting and, I think, helpful proposal.

I should like to say a word now on the finances of the scheme. I agree that we are dealing with very large sums. I do not know what

would have happened to Mr. Gladstone if he had seen sums like this come along, but I noted that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Butler) rather suggested that I should give a general survey of the Budgetary situation as it appears to-day and the exact place of this expenditure in it. It would be a delightful thing to do, but it is the wrong occasion, and I am encouraged in thinking that because the right hon. Gentleman said it should be given, not in meaningless symbols, but in concrete figures. I must say that I have not got an exact image of what a concrete figure is, as compared with a meaningless symbol, but it is a very good phrase. I take it to mean that we must look, not only at real figures, but at what those figures represent. We must not look just at the money income of the country, but at the products of our workers and our services, and I can assure the House that, in due course, we shall be very glad to give a survey of that kind.

The present Bill, and the Industrial Injuries Bill will involve a very big sum. The total cost borne partly by the contributors and the employers is £540 million at the outset, and family allowances, provided entirely by the taxpayer, will cost a further £60 million a year. I might mention, in passing, that that is one of the cases of redress against what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Saffron Walden thought was bias in favour of age against youth in this Bill. Let us remember, first, that ordinary men and women, as contributors, pay a substantial part of the annual cost. Some of my hon. Friends yesterday were pointing out that the sum now paid weekly by the average worker is certainly not less, and is sometimes more, than the contributions under this Bill. The cost to be borne by the Exchequer is some £240 million. That is a large sum, but, large though it is, it is less than 3 per cent of the aggregate taxable income of the people of this country to-day. I do not know whether 3 per cent is a concrete figure or just one of those symbols, but it is an important point that it is only 3 per cent. I do not think it is unfairly large, and let us remember that the total of our national money income is now twice what it was at the beginning of the war, and that, all over the world, currencies are diminished in value. I think we must bear this standard of value in mind when we look at the figures in this Bill.

The question is asked—can we afford it? Supposing the answer is "No"? What does that mean? It really means that the sum total of the goods produced and the services rendered by the people of this country is not sufficient to provide for all our people at all times, in sickness, in health, in youth and in age, the very modest standard of

life that is represented by the sums of money set out in the Second Schedule to this Bill. I cannot believe that our national productivity is so slow, that our willingness to work is so feeble or that we can submit to the world that the masses of our people must be condemned to penury. After all, this is really the payment into a pool of contributions from employers and workers and the products of taxation, and the payment thereout of benefits to various categories of persons. It is a method of distributing purchasing power, and the only validity for the claim that we cannot afford it must rest either on there not being enough in the pool, or on the claim that some sections of society have a priority to take out so much that others must suffer want.

I am not prepared to admit either of those propositions. Where I do entirely agree is that we can only afford it if we are prepared to utilise to the full our resources in labour and materials, our skill, our scientific inventions and our power of organisation. Therefore, this is only a part of Government policy. There is the complementary side, the reorganisation and the reinvigoration of our economic life, and the increase of our overseas trade. We must secure and maintain a high level of national production. We must eliminate waste, both in production and distribution. But I entirely agree that the benefits of this Bill can only be secured if the people of this country recognise the obligation to work hard for them.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Saffron Walden asked whether it is expected that the savings movement will be carried on with equal vigour after the introduction of schemes of this kind, and whether account is being taken of the need for the savings movement in relation to the national Budget. My answer is that, of course, it is necessary for the savings movement to be carried on with equal vigour, both from a short-term and long-term view. We have not got—we cannot yet have so soon after the war—the amount of consumable goods to satisfy the potential demand. We must have the savings, and I have already said so publicly, and so has the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at meetings in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere. On a short-term view, savings are essential to finance national reconstruction and to support price control and other measures against inflation. The answer is, therefore: go on saving all you can. But I have heard so often the suggestion made—I do not think it came from the right hon. Gentleman—more in the past than in the present, that if anything is done in this way by means of State provision, you will stop people saving. I can remember that suggestion being made at the time of the introduction of the old age pension of 5s. a week at 70.

Of course, it did not happen, but, as a matter of fact, one's own experience proves that if you have something, at all events, to build on, it is easier to add to it, than if you are in the precarious position that you cannot get the first little bit. As I am told, in more elevated sections of society, it is easier to become a millionaire if you have the first £100,000 to start with. It is certainly easier to provide something extra for your old age, if you have something to start with.

Our experience in this country has shown that State provision does not kill private savings any more than—one of the most remarkable things—heavy war taxation prevented giving to the community. Therefore, I am not afraid on that score, but there is the other side to be considered. I believe the benefits of this Bill and the provisions of the National Health Service—which are our next instalment—will save the immense loss which the country suffers through ill-health. If we calculated, in the number of hours and days lost, the loss of wealth of production, or of the rendering of services, year in and year out, we should find it a terrible total of waste, just as continuous unemployment shows an enormous waste of what might be produced, but a far more serious waste in the deterioration of the human capital of this country. Therefore, this Bill, from the long-term point of view, is a true economy and a true addition to the national wealth. It may be said this Bill may take away the incentive to work. That was certainly urged forty years ago. It was then held that the hope of gain, or the fear of poverty, was the only way to keep people at work. As a matter of fact, in those days the hope of gain was too thin a hope for the vast masses of the people to be effective, and the inevitability of poverty was present for most people, if not for all their lives, certainly in their old age. But I believe experience has shown that unmerited misfortune is not a spur to effort. I think it would be a disaster—which I am sure will not occur—if people should regard the provision of social security as something to lie back upon, and not make any effort. I do not think that will be the effect. I do not think it will damp down adventure and enterprise.

At the time when the Beveridge Report came out, I was talking to a young and energetic business man who said, "This is just what I want. I can now go in for experiments and adventure, because there is something to fall back on." One of the clogs on adventure and enterprise is the clinging to safety, the fear of any change because of what might happen. It is just the comprehensiveness of this scheme which I think will make it, not a cushion, but a springboard. I hope the people of this country will work to secure everyone from want, in the same spirit as they worked to save all from defeat in the war. I hope, too,

that this House is going to pass this Bill, and, if it can, make it a better Bill. I hope we are going to get the same kind of co-operation as was extended to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Saffron Walden when he brought in his Education Bill. That was a great collective effort of the House. Of course, there will be differences on points of detail, but the broad principles of this Bill have been accepted. In recent talks with statesmen from our Dominions and statesmen from foreign countries I have been proud at the reception they have given to this Bill. They have realised that here was a country which had come through tremendous perils and was setting out to try to give security to all its people.

Finally, this is a great human question. It deals with very elemental things, the welfare of the father, the mother, the children and the old people. I never forget some of the things I saw forty years ago in Limehouse, things that happily have passed away, because we have made a great deal of progress in forty years. If we had not, it would have been a poor effort put forward by my Party. I hope that the operations of this scheme are going to lessen the sum of human misery and anxiety, and increase the sum of human happiness. Worry and anxiety are as inimical to health and happiness as the actual physical conditions of poverty. That is where the importance of the comprehensiveness of this scheme comes in. A man and woman and the home are free from this ever-present fear. If we can make everybody feel that hard work—we must work hard, all of us in this country—will be rewarded by a reasonable standard of life and security instead of, as in the past, so often being thrown out on the Poor Law, at the end of a long and hard working life, we shall have made an immense advance, and I believe that this House will be remembered for this Bill.

# A SPEECH TO A NATIONAL SAVINGS RALLY

*2nd April*, 1946

*The thirtieth anniversary of the National Savings Movement was the occasion of a mass rally in the Albert Hall. Over 5,000 voluntary workers and representatives of local authorities were present. The other speakers included Mr. Hugh Dalton, Mr. Eden and Lady Violet Bonham Carter. A target figure of £520,000,000 for the coming year had just been announced.*

I AM glad to be present this afternoon to welcome on behalf of the Government, you, the representatives of the great Savings Movement. I am glad to know that besides the representatives of England and Wales there are also those who come from Scotland and Northern Ireland and typify the Movements there. Every part of the country is represented in the hall, and besides that every institution and agency that plays a part in the Movement. I note particularly the Post Office and the Trustee Savings Bank. This is indeed a great democratic gathering illustrating that feature of our national life of which we have every right to be proud, the co-operation of voluntary workers with official agencies.

We celebrate this afternoon the 30th anniversary of the Movement. Born in 1916, in the midst of the strain and stress of the first World War, it continued throughout that period which we now see as an uneasy interval between wars and achieved new strength and magnitude in the second World War. Now when peace has been achieved we need the Movement as much as ever, to help us through the period of reconstruction and to endure in the days to come when we hope that war will have been banished from the world.

During these twenty-nine years, Lord Kindersley has been at the head of the National Savings Committee. His name has become almost a synonym for Savings. We all know how much the Movement and the nation owe to him. We also pay tribute to two other veteran leaders who are here with us to-day: Lord Mottistone and Sir Theodore Chambers. And finally, to your present chairman, Sir Harold Mackintosh, whose magnificent and untiring work is well known to every person in this hall.

These men are honoured and rightly honoured by their generation, but I greet this afternoon especially, that great army of workers whose fame does not extend perhaps beyond their own districts or even a single street, but who are, after all, the backbone of the Movement.

I know well how much is due to the managements and the paid staffs of the Savings Committees, the Post Office Savings Department and the Trustee Savings Banks. The more successful the Movement, the greater has been the strain on them. That strain has been intensified during the war when they, like the rest of the nation, have had to face shortness of staff, difficulties of accommodation, to say nothing of the blitz and all the other difficulties that the war brought to these islands. No mere salary payments could have produced such fine work under these conditions. Devotion to duty and the national interest alone made it possible. I should like, as a one-time Postmaster-General, to pay a special tribute to my old colleagues, the Post Office Staff.

But I am certain that all of those whom I have mentioned would themselves agree that our warmest tribute must be reserved for the voluntary workers, the majority of whom are women. They get no pay or reward, only the satisfaction of work well done for the community. They have done a great service on behalf of the nation.

I say the nation, for this Movement is essentially national. It brings to its service men and women of all classes and creeds. Witness the representative gathering on this platform. It is entirely non-party. We have here on the platform my friends, Mr. Eden and Lady Violet Bonham Carter, representing the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Every Government which has been in office in this period, whatever its political complexion, has maintained that partnership between the Government and the Movement. The credit of Britain is the common possession of us all. It is a national, not a Party interest.

It is worth while dwelling for a moment on this great army of voluntary workers. At the peak period of the war, its numbers reached 670,000. To-day, there are still 560,000. More than half a million is a good-sized army, yet these are only, so to speak, the non-commissioned officers. Under their guidance and inspiration are nearly twelve and a quarter million of members of groups—street groups, school groups, and groups in places of employment. The amount of the savings piled up by their activities runs into so many millions that it will be safer for me, unaccustomed to such large sums, to leave them to be dealt with by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

When we recall the wide extent of other voluntary work in this country, when we recall the intense effort put out by the people

of this country during the war, whether in industry or by women in the home, we may truly admire the devotion which has enabled so many to add to all their other work, service in the Savings Movement. What has been their inspiration? First of all, I think, service to the nation and a realisation, which one only gets in an educated democracy, of the vital necessity of their work, and secondly, interest in the work itself.

There is no doubt in my mind, that work in the Savings Movement has been a powerful factor in strengthening the corporate life of the community, and in promoting a spirit of neighbourliness. To those mainly concerned with the volume of savings, this may seem but a by-product, but to the student of social science, this enhancement of the bonds which link together the people of a locality, is an important corrective to the aloofness which modern conditions tend to create.

There is yet another service which the Movement has done. It has taught our people to understand the meaning of inflation and to understand the relationship between money and commodities better than could any poring over economic text-books. People understand, I think, the relationship of the savings campaign to the need for preventing an excess of purchasing power over available goods, just as they understood when the other day I pointed out the need for increased production of goods to match increased purchasing power. There is, too, another feature of the Savings Movement which is altogether characteristic of this country. There is the healthy sporting emulation between group and group which makes the periodical reports of Savings almost as exciting as the Football League tables.

This afternoon we are celebrating the thirtieth year of this campaign, but we are not laying down our arms. The need for the Savings Movement does not come to an end with the overthrow of the Nazis. It is a vital factor in the war against want, the war for prosperity in which we are all engaged. We need in our national economy a balance between expenditure on consumable and capital goods. This collective saving, besides postponing expenditure until goods are more plentiful and better worth the buying, provides money for the equipment of the nation with the capital goods, with the houses, schools, factories and other institutions which it needs for its economic and social development, and ensures that there will be money available where it is most required. Saving, too, goes with that hard work for which we are appealing to-day, as the essential basis for national prosperity.

Finally, the saver, in helping the community, also helps himself. Therefore, this afternoon I greet you and ask you to greet those whom you represent as people who have done a great work but who are not weary of well doing. I am confident that just as the nation saved for victory in time of war, so in time of peace it will save for prosperity.

CHAPTER IV

# MORAL VALUES IN LIFE AND POLITICS

*A Speech to the Trades Union Congress* (12*th September*, 1945)

*An Address to the Free Church Congress* (28*th March*, 1946)

*An Address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (25*th May*, 1946)

# A SPEECH TO THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

*12th September, 1945*

*Six weeks after the Labour Government had taken office, Mr. Attlee went to Blackpool to address the annual gathering of the Trades Union Congress. He made an important and wide-ranging survey of the tasks that confronted the Government and made no attempt to minimise the difficulties. Most of the points covered are dealt with in other speeches in this volume and there is included here only a short passage at the end of his speech, in which the Prime Minister stressed the vital importance of moral values as a basis for political action in the world of to-day.*

I HAVE spoken to you earlier of the great material losses which the war has brought to the peoples of the world, but I should fail in my duty if I did not stress that these material losses were the result of world-wide moral failure. We fought this war not mainly for self-preservation, not at all for any hope of material gain, but because the triumph of Nazism meant the destruction of the democratic way of life and of the whole basis of moral values on which our civilisation has been built up.

The war was a direct result, an inevitable result, of the acceptance by the German people of base and evil ideals and, no less important, of their acceptance of the doctrine that any means were right that appeared to them likely to achieve their ends. Hence there is to-day a great void in Europe where Germany was and a great void in the German mind. We have to fill that void in the German mind. There is always a danger in war lest the victor should accept the standards of the vanquished. After every war sensibilities are blunted. Moral standards are lowered. There is therefore a tremendous responsibility on the victors to rise above the standards of war and to raise again those of peace.

Our great Trade Union movement has never been a merely materialist one. It has throughout its history been informed with a high idealism. It has always been led by men and women of high character and lofty ideals. The world to-day more than ever needs the kind of

leadership which will lift people up from the contemplation of past misery and from a mere longing for material betterment to a sense of the high mission of mankind.

I would like to stress one or two points. First of all, liberty. The Trade Union movement found the workers enslaved by the economic system; it brought them freedom. The individual, helpless in the face of aggregated wealth, gained freedom by standing together with his fellows. I am glad that in this country Trade Unionism has always remained an independent force. It has known how to co-operate with Government. It has accepted a share of responsibility for industry, but it has never become a part of the machinery of the State. The existence of great independent movements such as Trade Unionism, representing men and women in respect of a particular function, is a powerful bulwark against any movement towards totalitarianism.

Secondly, democracy. I find this word used in some countries in a very peculiar way. Democracy is not just majority rule, but majority rule with due respect to the rights of minorities. It means that while the will of the majority must prevail there shall be a full opportunity for all points of view to find expression. It means toleration for opposition opinions. Wherever you find suppression of minority opinion, there is no real democracy.

Thirdly, there are moral values. Unless we have a conception of justice, not as the will of a section, but as something absolute, we shall not build our society on firm foundations. Unless we have a conception of human rights belonging to all human beings, not of our own race only, but of all people, we shall fail. Unless we mean what we say when we declare all men to be brothers, we shall fail to create the world we desire. You may say that all these things are an essential element in the conception of society held by Labour men and women. I think that they are, but they are not accepted in many countries and they are rejected by some who claim to be of our faith.

My final word to you is this. Remember that we are living in a new world. Scientific development in the field of war, as witness the atomic bomb, has outstripped the growth of the moral sense of mankind. Unless we can achieve a far higher sense of the corporate interests of the human race, destruction will come upon us and the painful advance of centuries will be thrown away.

We shall soon be embarking on a great adventure, an attempt, as was made after the last war, to bring all the peoples of the world under the rule of law, to banish war and to bring security to all. Rest assured that however perfect the machinery we may devise, it cannot be

worked without power of the spirit. A new world order cannot be made by Governments, but only by peoples.

My appeal to you to-day is to keep ever before you this fact, that it is the peoples and the peoples alone who can save civilisation from destruction. I appeal to you my comrades of the Trade Union movement, my fellow citizens of Britain, to rise in peace as in war to the height of the occasion. There is only one principle that can save the world, the principle that you practise in your great movement, the Christian principle that all men are brothers one of another.

# AN ADDRESS TO THE FREE CHURCH CONGRESS

*28th March*, 1946

*The Jubilee Congress of the Free Church Federal Council was the occasion of an address by Mr. Attlee in Westminster Chapel. His speech was mainly concerned with the value of tolerance in religion and in politics.*

I AM glad to be present with you at this your fiftieth Anniversary Meeting. I have rejoiced to see during my lifetime a steady decrease of sectarian bitterness both between the various denominations represented here and between Church and Chapel. I remember very clearly, when I was a young man, at the time of the controversy over the Balfour Education Bill, how the secular Press was filled with letters breathing out a very far from Christian spirit of bitterness from men who were all the professed followers of the same Master. It was an extremely unedifying exhibition to the ordinary layman and did the cause of religion no good.

I contrast it with the atmosphere which surrounded the great Education Bill for which my colleagues in the war Government—Mr. Butler and Mr. Chuter Ede—were mainly responsible. There was displayed mutual understanding, a far greater zeal for education and, to my mind, a far better sense of proportion in appreciating the value of Christian teaching as against values of rival denominational claims. I have no doubt at all that your Council has in its fifty years of work contributed very much to this growth of toleration. A younger body working in the same sphere, the British Council of the Churches, has an even wider aim. I recall a year or so ago speaking at a meeting in a Welsh Chapel. After my speech a vote of thanks was moved by a Bishop of the Welsh Church. Such a thing would not have been possible fifty or even forty years ago.

The longer I live the more I value toleration as being of the essence of civilisation and the foundation of democracy. Toleration does not mean that one should not hold one's own views strongly. I have not myself very much use for Laodiceans. It certainly does not mean that one should be tolerant of evil, cruelty, injustice and oppression; but

it does mean that one should recognise that truth has many facets, that no one of us can see them all and that one should respect the right of other people to their own opinions.

We have come through a terrible war in which freedom was challenged, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and the freedom of the individual to live his own life. We have won that war, but this fight for freedom and tolerance is never ending. We must be vigilant all the time.

But the war was more than a fight for freedom. Nazism sought to impugn and destroy the moral principles on which, however much we may have failed to apply them, our European civilisation has been founded. The cardinal virtues were set aside, the Christian ideal was rejected. In their place was set the conception of racial superiority, a standard of values based on what would be useful to the State, as conceived by the Nazis, and the idol of the Führer. To the worship of these false Gods the youth of Germany were for the most part perverted. Their idols have been overthrown, but there has been left a void which must be filled. Here is work to be done by the Churches of the free countries to help the remnants left in Germany to rebuild civilisation.

I think that we have in the youth of this country a very fine generation, especially in the young men and women of the Services. They are not in my opinion the slaves of materialism. On the contrary, I believe that they are seeking for inspiration. Here, too, you have a great opportunity.

We who have the responsibility of Government are seeking earnestly to establish peace on lasting foundations. We are seeking to banish war. We are seeking to establish social justice at home and abroad. We have a hard task, but we are resolved with God's aid to succeed despite the manifold difficulties that beset us.

We have the problem of a world shortage of food and are doing our utmost for all those for whom we have responsibility in the British Commonwealth and Empire, for our friends and allies and, as far as we can, for our late enemies. But you will, I am sure, realise that our own position, dependent as we are on imports from abroad, sets a severe limit on what we can do.

We are seeking everywhere to extend the freedom we enjoy to others. Witness the effort we are making to bring about a solution of the Indian problem. We are trying to rebuild our broken homes and rehouse our people at home, and to provide for all employment and social security.

But there is a limit to what a Government can do. We seek to set up the conditions in which men and women can live fine lives, but the fineness of those lives depends on the ideals and conceptions of the people themselves. I look therefore upon all of you as fellow workers in the same field though we have different tasks. Let us all resolve that:

*"I will not cease from mental fight*
*Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand*
*Till we have built Jerusalem*
*In England's green and pleasant land."*

# AN ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

*25th May*, 1946

*Mr. Attlee went to Edinburgh to deliver this address and used the opportunity to deal with subjects outside the general run of day-to-day politics.*

MODERATOR, Fathers and Brethren:

I am grateful for the privilege of addressing to-day your annual Assembly. I am sure that during this week you have been discussing matters of high importance not only to those of your own confession but to the general body of Christendom, not only to the Scottish people but to the whole world.

In the few words which I will speak to you this morning, as one who is charged with heavy responsibilities, I desire to emphasise one point only. When I was young we had a general idea that there was a continual progress in our civilisation. We took it as almost axiomatic that as generation followed generation there was a steady progress towards a higher standard of individual conduct and to a juster state of society. To-day I realise, as I am sure you do also, that the progress of the human race is very unequal; that in one part of the field there is advance, in another retreat. Only the historian can see in retrospect the balance of loss and gain.

In the particular fields in which I have worked, I have seen great changes of conception. I have seen many abuses removed. I have seen revolutionary changes in the conception of human relations and social obligations. I can remember when the view quite commonly held was that poverty in itself was *prima facie* evidence of moral failure on the part of the individual, a doctrine that has, I think, no warrant in Holy Scripture. I remember when the provision of employment was not considered to be a function of the community. I recall the times when conditions of labour were still held to be—except in extreme instances—matters to be left to what was called the free play of competition.

I can remember vividly the agitation for the regulation of sweated industries. I have seen in social matters a great change of attitude,

not confined to any one Party in the State, but permeating the whole nation with a far greater sense of social obligation than has ever existed in our country before.

I am thankful for the immense gains that I have seen. But there are to be set against these great losses. Two great wars and especially the coming of what is known as total war has resulted in what seems to me to be a great deterioration over a wide field of human activity. I can remember when the report of atrocities on what would seem to us to be a very small scale evoked widespread indignation against the perpetrators and practical sympathy with the sufferers. There was then a world conscience which was outraged by cruelty. But in the course of the last thirty years we have supped so full of horrors that our sensibilities have become blunted. The very magnitude of the cruelties inflicted seem to rob them of their poignancy. Where, in the nineteenth century, the death or torture of a score of people caused a thrill of horror to pass through the civilised world, the destruction of millions of Jews by the Nazis followed such a succession of abominable actions that the impact of the story made no stronger, and perhaps a less lasting, impression than the smaller tragedies of the past.

There is here a tremendous loss. We have seen arise Governments such as those of Hitler Germany that not only did not follow but professedly and openly disregarded all the moral precepts on which our Christian civilisation has been founded. These rulers did not profess to believe in truth or justice, pity or love. We see in the world of to-day the bitter fruit of this following of false gods. At San Francisco representatives of the nations met together to try to reknit the fabric of civilisation, and drew up the Charter of the United Nations which in its preamble sets out fine and lofty ideals, but we have a very long way to go before we can turn this idealism into reality.

It is here that I want to appeal for your help and your earnest endeavour. No international machinery will bring peace to the world unless it has the driving spiritual force of idealism behind it. No social system in any country will bring us happiness, health and prosperity unless it is inspired by something greater than materialism.

The Party to which I belong has never been materialistic. Many of our leaders have come from Scotland. They have been nurtured in the traditions of your country. When I was young I found my leader in Keir Hardie, a man who represented in himself the strength, the tenderness and the crusading zeal which have in so many walks of life in so many countries been displayed by men from the Highlands and

Lowlands, from the croft and the manse. I recall very clearly that fine man who was himself High Commissioner—James Brown.

The world to-day has need of spiritual leadership. We who seek to serve our generation in Government know well the need we have of you who serve in the Churches. Whatever may be the differences between the adherents of the various Churches, they are at one in holding before mankind absolute values, in setting standards of conduct beyond that of the self-interest of the individual, the group or the nation.

The world is, I believe, longing for peace, but peace will not come through fear of war or from a pacifism which is only a hedonistic dislike of taking responsibility. It will only come if men and women the world over are filled with a positive conception of what human life ought to be and with a devotion to the common service of mankind as great as that which inspired so many sacrifices in war.

My last words to you are these. You have a great past and a great tradition. Do not let the achievements of the past ever blunt your sense of urgency or cause you to think that the battle has been won and that you can afford to hold the ground already captured. Not to advance is to retreat. We are engaged in a spiritual warfare which is never ending. We are happy warriors. Let our trumpets give out no uncertain note.

CHAPTER V

# THE UNITED NATIONS

*A Speech to the House of Commons on the United Nations Charter* (22*nd August*, 1945)

*A Speech to the United Nations Association* (10*th October*, 1945)

*A Speech to the First Session of the General Assembly of UNO* (10*th January*, 1946)

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER

*22nd August, 1945*

*One of the new Prime Minister's first jobs in the House of Commons was to present the Charter of the United Nations to the House and ask for approval of its ratification. This was readily given; the question stood above Party divisions and, to quote* The Times, *was "discussed in the spirit of a Council of State." Mr. Attlee opened the Debate and devoted himself to a commentary on some of the salient points rather than a detailed exposition of all the provisions. He was well-qualified for the task. As a delegate to the San Francisco Conference, he had been present at the birth of the Charter and knew the circumstances in which principles had been agreed and conflicts of view resolved.*

ON 17th April last I opened the Debate in this House on the subject of the forthcoming Conference at San Francisco, and on the proposals generally called the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which were formulated as a basis for discussion by the sponsoring Powers. In that Debate, while there was criticism of certain provisions of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and, particularly, of the agreement come to at the Crimea Conference at Yalta with regard to the veto, there was general agreement in favour of the formation of an international organisation. That Debate took place shortly before we proceeded to San Francisco, and the House will remember that the delegation from Great Britain was lead by my right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden), and that members of the Labour Party, the Conservative Party and of both branches of the Liberal Party were included. This was in accord with the procedure adopted by many of the States represented at San Francisco, in particular by the United States and by the Dominions.

It was felt that in this new attempt for the setting up of an organisation for the prevention of war—a matter of such vital importance to all—it was desirable to lift the whole matter outside the range of party controversy, and try to mobilise behind it all shades of political opinion. It is, therefore, with confidence that I submit to this House the Charter which has been approved by representatives of fifty nations,

represented by men and women of various political views. This Charter was discussed in Conference, every paragraph was subjected to close examination and amendment in the technical committees on which all those nations were represented.

I would, at this point, like to pay tribute to my colleagues of the British delegation. My right hon. Friend opposite, who was then the Foreign Secretary, took a very leading part in the earlier, and, I think, perhaps the most difficult, stages of the Conference, which owed a great deal to his wise leadership. Of my other colleagues in this House, Mr. Mabane, Mr. Dingle Foot and Miss Horsbrugh have fallen by the wayside in the recent General Election but they, with those who are still with us, played their full part in committee work, as did, also, Lord Cranborne and Lord Halifax. I would specially mention the work of those two Noble Lords, because of the very heavy burden which fell upon them. The impending General Election caused the withdrawal, gradually, of the House of Commons representatives. They had to carry on, and right well they did so. Every one of my colleagues served on one or more of the twelve main committees, every one took charge of a special subject, every one made his or her contribution to the final Charter which emerged.

I would like, here, to say a word about the admirable work done by the very strong team of officials which accompanied us. I am sure the House would like to join with me in expressing our deep regret that some of these were lost in an aeroplane accident on returning to this country. I would specially refer to Sir William Malkin, a jurist of very great authority, who had done particularly distinguished work. I would also like to acknowledge the great service to the Conference which was rendered by Mr. Stettinius, who presided with so much understanding and tact over all our deliberations.

This Charter was voted and discussed in accordance with the best traditions of democracy, and it was ultimately signed by the representatives of all the fifty nations. Since then it has been ratified by the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by France, and by New Zealand. I now come to the House to ask for ratification here.

I do not think I should serve the House usefully this afternoon by discussing the Charter paragraph by paragraph, chapter by chapter, or line by line, nor do I think it would be particularly desirable that I should show in detail how the Charter emerged from these lengthy discussions, and how the original Dumbarton Oaks proposals were amended. I would rather call attention to some of the outstanding

points. It was realised in the Debate last April that there was bound to be much discussion on the allocation of power between the greater and the smaller States. Well, we in this House know very well the difficulty of seeing that constituencies are approximately equal in electoral strength, and this House has often heard long and eloquent speeches on the well-worn theme of "One vote, one value." Therefore, Members will understand the difficulty of combining in one organisation a number of States differing so widely in extent, population and power as those comprised in the fifty nations that were represented at San Francisco.

Undoubtedly the most critical debates and discussions turned on this very point, as to whether we could preserve the rights of small nations while seeing to it that the Great Powers were given a position commensurate with their importance and with the responsibilities they had to assume. In particular, there were questions as to what was called the veto, which, it was suggested, gave the Great Powers the right to be judges in their own cause. As I explained to the House in April, the exceptional position accorded to the Great Powers was due to the special obligations which they undertook. I think there was considerable agreement that this particular matter could not be settled by the simple method of putting all States completely on a level, oblivious of their population, extent and power. The doubts that were raised in this House were very fully expressed at San Francisco, and, indeed, they were hotly debated, but in the end, although there were modifications, to which I shall refer later, the small States ultimately accepted the broad lines of the Great Powers' proposals. And that, I think, was due to the fact that they appreciated that the basis of the Charter corresponded to the realities of the situation that exists in the world to-day.

I would like here to emphasise again a point I have made, perhaps rather too frequently, in discussions on this and kindred subjects. The success of the new organisation will not depend so much on the exact provisions as on the spirit in which they are worked. If a Great Power resolves not to carry out the principles laid down in the Charter no paper provisions will restrain it. Failure of the Great Powers to agree and act together would inevitably mean the ruin of the organisation, and I am sure that as the debates proceeded at San Francisco the truth of this was realised by the delegates, and I suggest to this House that the realisation of this truth is borne out by the writing into the Charter of the Preamble and the widening of the principles and purposes. That Preamble we owe largely to Field-Marshal

Smuts. His authoritative contributions to the discussions at San Francisco were the result of that union of lofty ideals and practical wisdom that we have come to expect of him. I remember there was a complaint that the Dumbarton Oaks proposals formed a rather frigid document. I pointed out at the time that it was the work of officials who were not expected to be eloquent, but I think it will be agreed that that defect had been cured at San Francisco. Field-Marshal Smuts brought before the Conference a draft which he had prepared in collaboration with the Foreign Office, and that Preamble was very carefully considered and amended. But although amendments were made the substance and spirit of the Preamble are derived from the Field-Marshal's draft. It is worth while, I think, that I should remind the House of the Preamble, and thus have it on record in this House:

> "We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined—
>
> to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
>
> to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
>
> to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
>
> to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends—
>
> to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
>
> to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
>
> to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
>
> to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,
>
> have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."

It is worth noting that this declaration does not start by saying "We, the Governments." It starts by saying "We, the peoples." This, I think, is right, because it expresses the fact that this Charter is an endeavour to put into practical form the deep feelings of all the

peoples, including the fighting men who have made it possible to have a Charter at all. Here, then, in this Preamble we have an expression of the desires of the peoples. I am aware that that Preamble is not binding, but it is an expression of intentions. Its purposes and principles are an integral part of the Charter, and in Article 24 the Security Council is charged with acting in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. That addition, I may say, was made at the instance of the United Kingdom Delegation. If you make a comparison between Chapter I of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals—and there has been issued a very useful document setting out in parallel what were the proposals of Dumbarton Oaks and what was done at San Francisco—you will see that there is a great advance in the statement of principles. For instance, where the original proposal only said that international disputes were to be adjusted or settled by peaceful means, in the Charter these are to be settled in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Again, friendly relations among nations are to be based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, while a new purpose altogether is introduced, that of promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Here we have a very notable extension from the consideration of the rights of nations to the rights of human beings within the nation. I am aware that there was provision under the League of Nations for the protection of minorities, but I do not think the League of Nations had anything quite as explicit as this, in that we are seeking not merely good relations between nation and nation but good relations between the human beings within the nations. It is true that the exact way in which this is to be secured is not specifically laid down, and I must admit there is a limitation as to the intervention of the United Nations in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, but can anyone deny that the kind of treatment that was meted out by Hitler and the Nazis to the Jews is a matter that far transcends a question of mere domestic jurisdiction? I am certain that if there should arise, which God forbid, anything like this persecution in other lands that the new organisation will take note of it and I believe take action. I have stressed the Preamble and the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter because it is precisely the acceptance of them which gives value to the machinery set up. Without the genuine acceptance of these principles mere machinery is almost valueless. There must be the spirit which quickens.

The next point I would call attention to is with regard to the functions of the General Assembly. It was, I know, felt by many delegates, particularly the delegates of the smaller Powers, that in the original proposals too much stress was laid on the Security Council and not enough on the Assembly. The functions of the General Assembly were expanded at San Francisco partly at the instance of the sponsoring Powers themselves and partly as the result of long debates in Committee. It is very easy to under-estimate the value of public opinion and of open discussions which lead public opinion. No Member of the House of Commons should make that mistake. The General Assembly has power to consider any matters affecting the peace of the world and to make recommendations about it, unless it is some subject which is just at that time in the charge of the Security Council. I am certain that the discussions in the Assembly, as the discussions in the Assembly of the League of Nations, can be of immense value in focusing public opinion on the great issues that arise between nations.

There was a good deal of discussion about the composition of the Security Council, but it was left almost in exactly the same position as in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. By Article 23 an endeavour was made to give guidance in the selection of the non-permanent members. The House will recall that there are five permanent members and six members that change from time to time. That was in two directions; first by consideration being given to the contribution of the members to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the organisation; and secondly, to equitable geographical distribution. In view of the heavy responsibilities which are placed on the Security Council I think it will be agreed that it would be a great advantage that the States represented thereon besides the Great Powers should include always some of those States which have shown not only their willingness but also their capacity to make a contribution to world security. Among those States one may mention the Dominions, which in two wars have shown tremendous willingness to come forward in the cause of peace. But it is equally obvious that if peace is indivisible—and we should recognise now that wars which begin at one end of the world may spread all over the world—there should be representatives who are concerned in all the various parts of the world in which danger may be thought to arise.

The final provisions of the Charter on these points owe much to the contribution made by the Canadian delegation. In the discussion of the powers of the Security Council the British delegation took a

foremost part in seeking to make the Security Council something more than a policeman who is called in only when there is already a danger of a breach of the peace. We sought, and sought successfully, to make it a place where the policies of the States, and especially the greater States, could be discussed and reconsidered for the time, especially when they showed signs of such divergencies as to threaten the harmony of international relations. Collective security is not merely a promise to act when an emergency occurs, but it is active co-operation to prevent emergencies occurring. In the past the League of Nations too often came into action at too late a stage, and I hope now that that error has been corrected. What, I think, is required is a continuous discussion of international affairs, not spasmodic action at times of crisis.

There are other points, on which I do not propose to speak at length, such as the setting up of a Military Staff Committee, and the provision that agreements by which States promise to keep special contingents of Armed Forces at the disposal of the Security Council should be made with the Security Council itself and not merely between the various States. On the other side encouragement was given to regional organisations to provide means for settling minor disputes between members and thus taking off part of the burden that rests on the Security Council. I have dwelt at some length on the machinery for dealing with disputes and the prevention of war, but while much of the time was taken up with that, the Conference was very conscious of the need for dealing with the economic and social causes of war through international co-operation. I think there was a general feeling that peace is not negative, but positive. I think a comparison of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals with those of the Charter will show hon. Members the extent of the expansion and elaboration of the original scheme which took place during the discussions. In this, I think, our delegates may clearly claim to have played a leading part with our friends from the Commonwealth and also from India. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, who many of us know, was the very able Chairman of the Committee which was responsible for this detailed work.

In the first place, the Economic and Social Council which had originally appeared only as a subsidiary part of the Organisation was made a principal organ of the United Nations. I may say, incidentally, that the principle that men and women were to be equally eligible to participate in the work of any part of the Organisation—a matter which this House may think perfectly clear to all of us—was made

explicit. I think this is important, especially in respect of the work of the Economic and Social Council. Let me recall to the House the purposes of the Economic and Social Council. It is charged with promoting higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development, as well as solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems, international cultural and educational co-operation and a universal respect for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without any discussions as to race, sex, language or religion. It will be seen, too, under Article 56, that all members pledged themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operating with the organisation for the achievement of those purposes. That is to say, the raising of standards is not a matter that must wait until there has been international agreement; it means that all can go forward, everyone in their own country and thus in co-operation try to get uniformity and a moving forward together. This, I may say, was inserted on the initiative of the Australian delegation.

I know many members of this House are interested in the I.L.O. and the British delegation fully demonstrated its belief in the I.L.O. as an instrument for raising standards and bettering conditions for the workers throughout the world. While it was eventually decided not to single out any one agency for mention in the Charter, a general provision was made for bringing those specialised agencies, of which there are of course a number, into relationship with the new organisation. There was widespread recognition that such bodies as the I.L.O. and the Food and Agricultural Organisation should come in under this provision.

So far, I have been dealing with extensions and expansions of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. There are two entirely new parts of the Charter which I would bring to the notice of hon. Members—the Statute of the International Court of Justice and the chapters concerning dependent territories. The Statute of the International Court of Justice follows, as was natural, very much the lines of the permanent court of International Justice that we knew under the League of Nations. The provisions relating to it were worked out by a very experienced body of international lawyers, prominent among whom was Sir William Malkin to whose loss I have already referred.

I would like to say a special word with regard to Chapter II which deals with Colonial problems. Here we have a declaration on Colonial policy. This declaration, as is most proper, arises from the initiative

of the representatives of the greatest Colonial Power—the United Kingdom. I would like here to pay a very special tribute to the diplomatic skill and patience of the former Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Lord Cranborne, and the present Minister of Works, the rt. hon. Member for Farnworth (Mr. Tomlinson), who were jointly responsible for handling this subject at San Francisco. The doctrine of trusteeship as a guiding principle in Colonial policy is nothing new. It has been our guiding policy in this country for many years, but the Declaration in Chapter II of the United Nations Charter is the first general international declaration of Colonial policy.

Let us look at it for a moment. The Colonial Powers who have signed this Charter recognise the principle that the interest of the inhabitants of non-self-governing territories are paramount and accept, as a sacred trust, the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories. They undertake to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses. They undertake also to develop self-government, that is to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples, and their various stages of advancement. Provision is made for the regular transmission to the Secretary-General of information relating to the economic, social and educational conditions in these territories. Here the delegates of the Government of Australia made a very substantial contribution in the adoption of this Article.

Chapter 12 deals with the International Trusteeship principle. Here, the United States and the United Kingdom took the lead in securing the adoption of this Chapter. Of course, its provisions are naturally based to some extent on the old mandatory system, but there are one or two differences to which I ought to call the attention of the House. The old systems of mandates laid down what was in effect a policy of neutralisation, forbidding fortifications, forbidding bases, and limiting the training of native troops to local defence purposes. I think the new system recognises the positive obligation that the inhabitants of the territories placed under the system should make their full contribution to defence, and there are also provisions designating parts of any trust territory as a strategic area under the supervision of the Security Council.

There is another important provision—I think still more important —relating to what was commonly known as "the open door." Under the mandate system there was an absolute requirement to guarantee equal treatment to all members of the League of Nations and their nationals in economic and social matters. In practice, this often operated to the disadvantage of the inhabitants of the territory. We see that in regard to some of our mandated territory in Africa, and I think one can say that the motives underlying these provisions, which incidentally were not reciprocal, were quite as much to protect the rival interest of the sovereign Powers as to promote the interests of the mandated territories themselves. This has now been modified. While there is still an obligation to ensure equal terms, this obligation is made definitely subordinate to the basic objectives of the Trusteeship System and these include the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants. No one would suggest that the State entrusted with the administration of these territories should apply discrimination in its own favour; but if it is to be a good trustee it must be free to apply measures of discrimination where necessary in the interests of the peoples whose welfare is entrusted to it.

There is one point I should like to make before I leave this part of my speech. The purpose of Chapter 12 is to create a system of international machinery. It does not itself place any territories under International Trusteeship or take any decision as to the future of such territories, nor by passing this Motion will the House be entering into any commitment. I may add that the Conference owed a great debt to Mr. Fraser, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, who presided over the Committee responsible for the drafting of these Chapters on Colonial policy and Trusteeship.

I have endeavoured to draw the attention of the House to the salient features of this Charter. Further points will be brought out in discussion, no doubt by my right hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Eden), who took such a leading part in our discussions, and by other Members, by the Minister of Education, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who will be speaking later in the Debate. But I would like to express my profound conviction of the supreme importance of this subject which we are discussing. It is easy, of course, to suggest amendments, but I believe the House will recognise that it is a great achievement that the delegates of fifty nations, while a great war was still raging, should have been able to come to agreement on a matter of such vital importance. Discussions and debates of this kind do mean a good deal of "sweet reasonableness" and willingness to accept majority views.

After long discussion and debate, the Charter was finally approved by all the delegates. I say that this is a great Charter which I am asking the House to ratify. It is a great instrument ready to be used in the interests of world peace and world prosperity. It is a step forward in international organisation. I do not claim for a moment that it is a final step. The Charter itself can be amended as a result of experience. We may, I hope we will, go much further towards international co-operation, but its existence is itself a sign that the nations of the world realise that without co-operation for peace there can be no security for any nation.

When I spoke in the House in April before leaving for San Francisco, I recalled to the House how we in these islands were familiar, as we had never been before in our history, with the horrors of war. I pointed out that grievous as were the wounds that had been inflicted on Europe, we should be very foolish if we imagined that the science of destruction had yet done its worst. I said that we had in the flying bomb and the long-range rocket only a foretaste of what was in store for mankind, unless world affairs could be managed more wisely than in the past. I said that we must realise that, unless we could get away from world anarchy, we and our children would know life only under an abiding menace of sudden devastating attack, launched from far away, without warning and perhaps without, for a long time at all events, any real possibility of defence. All I said then has been only too terribly reinforced. The coming of the atomic bomb has, in fact, brought into actuality what I described to the House then as only a possibility. I am certain that all of us in this House realise that we are now faced with a naked choice between world co-operation and world destruction, and it is, therefore, with the consciousness of six years of war behind us, and all the possibilities that hang over us in the future, that I commend this Charter to the House and confidently ask approval of its ratification.

# A SPEECH TO THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

*10th October, 1945*

*On this occasion Mr. Attlee was one of the speakers at the first national demonstration of the United Nations Association, at the Albert Hall in London. The Association is designed to carry on for the new world organisation the work of propaganda and explanation that was done for its predecessor by the League of Nations Union. In the days before the war Mr. Attlee, when Leader of the Opposition, had frequently addressed meetings organised by this latter body in the same hall, meetings then of protest against the lack of support for League principles shown by the British Government.*

*In October, 1945, the atmosphere was less controversial. There was a distinguished platform. Lord Lytton presided; Mr. Edward Stettinius, Mr. Anthony Eden, Mr. Philip Noel-Baker and Lord Cecil were the other speakers. The Prime Minister spoke first.*

I AM very glad to be here to-night, both as one of your Honorary Presidents and as Prime Minister.

As Honorary President, I am here to wish all success to your new venture, the United Nations Association. Under the inspiring leadership of Lord Cecil the League of Nations Union has done great work in the past. I was myself always a keen supporter of the Union. I recall having the privilege of representing it on one occasion at Geneva. There was nothing wrong with the principles of the League of Nations, the failure was in the application. The League of Nations Union existed to propagate those principles: would that it had been listened to more! The United Nations Association has still greater tasks before it. I hope it will be given unstinted support by all men and women of good will.

As Prime Minister, I wish to say quite simply that it is the firm intention of His Majesty's Government to make the success of the United Nations the primary object of their foreign policy. I say this with no object of Party advantage. I believe that my words would be endorsed by all the other Parties in Parliament.

The reason is obvious. We have come to a period in history when mankind must either set up an institution of this kind—and not only

set it up but make it work—or face consequences so appalling that the mind shrinks even from contemplating them.

Atomic energy has been liberated and that fact makes war merely a form of suicide for mankind. There are other weapons of war of whose devastating effect Europe bears the terrible marks. But fear of the consequences of disunity is not enough. What is needed is an active spirit of co-operation in constructive work for humanity.

If war is to be avoided, there must be in the world something to do in the future what war has often done in the past—to make the great decisions between the nations. And, in order that it may not become impossible to make these decisions, there must also be a means by which different countries can learn to work together for the benefit of all.

That is what the Charter has been made for—to maintain international peace and security and to promote the welfare of all peoples by international co-operation.

The security of the British Empire and Commonwealth is bound up with the success of the United Nations. If we accept this fact we must base our policy upon it and get rid of outworn conceptions. The Charter is our first line of defence. This country helped to lay its foundations and there is as much in it of our thinking and our traditions as of those of any other country in the world. I am glad to see here on the platform Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Eden, who both did so much at San Francisco to secure its acceptance.

The Charter is not perfect. Nothing made by human beings ever is; but there is only one way of improving it—to use it, use it to the full. That is how we shall learn to work it, to remove its imperfections and to develop its great possibilities.

For our part that is what we intend to do, but in order to do so effectively, we must have an informed and insistent public opinion behind us. Believe me, in peace as in war, Governments can only act with success when the people which they represent want them to do so. We have fought a great war for democracy: it is, in my view, of the essence of democracy that the people not only choose a Government, but themselves co-operate in furthering the common will of the nation. They act through and with the Government.

So I wish you God speed in your great task of helping to make the people of this country realise all the Charter means to them.

# A SPEECH TO THE OPENING SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UNO

*10th January, 1946*

*The first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation, in accordance with the arrangement made at the San Francisco Conference, took place in London in the early part of* 1946. *As head of the British Government and host to the delegates of the fifty-one represented nations, Mr. Attlee addressed both the opening and closing sessions of the Assembly. At the opening session, in the Central Hall, Westminster, he was introduced by the acting president of the Assembly, Dr. Eduardo Zuleta Angel.*

I HAVE the honour to-day of welcoming to London this great Assembly of delegates of the United Nations. I should like in the first place to thank you, Mr. President, for your speech and also to place on record the appreciation which I am sure we all feel for the successful manner in which you have carried out the arduous and important duties of president of the Preparatory Commission. I know well from my colleagues how much that Commission has owed to your guidance. Without your sense of business, readiness to accept responsibility, and the influence which you have exerted on your colleagues, we might not have been able to meet at this time with the procedure and programme ready to hand.

I hope that the proceedings of this Conference will be animated by the same sense of urgency, the same practical spirit, and the same co-operative atmosphere as has characterised the work of the Preparatory Commission. I know that great questions were debated frankly and even passionately, but at the same time there was a lively spirit of conciliation and good will which led eventually to almost complete unanimity.

I have said that we welcome you here to London, and it will be our endeavour to make you feel at home in this our capital city so that you may speak as freely and frankly as if you were meeting in some special territory under international control. We shall do our best to make your stay here pleasant within the limit of our means. We wish we could do more, but I am sure that all of you in the course of your stay will realise that anything that is lacking in your entertainment is

not due to any absence of goodwill, but to the effect of the malice of our enemies wreaked upon this ancient city. The evidences of this you will see around you.

Last night we listened to an inspiring speech by His Majesty the King, in which he said before us in a few words the nature of the task which we have to accomplish, the vital importance of the issues at stake, and the keen desire of all the nations of the British Commonwealth, for whom he spoke, to make this first meeting of the United Nations Organisation a complete success.

I had the privilege of taking part in the discussions at San Francisco from which was evolved the Charter of the United Nations. The initiation of these discussions, while our enemies were still in the field against us, was at once an act of faith in our victory and an acknowledgment of the cause for which we were fighting. The purposes and principles set down in the Preamble and in Article I of the Charter have the wholehearted support of His Majesty's Government and, I believe, of the whole of the people of this country, to whatever political party they belong.

We realise that as perhaps never before a choice is offered to mankind. Twice in my lifetime a war has brought untold sorrow to mankind. Should there be a third world war the long upward progress towards civilisation may be halted for generations, and the work of myriads of men and women through the centuries be brought to naught.

The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations admirably sets out the ideals for which men and women laid down their lives during the war. But the affirmation of principles is easy; the translation into action, the making of a working reality out of an ideal is very difficult. In the stress and strain of war it is possible to fuse the ideal aim with practical effort. When in the summer of 1940, this country was left open to the imminent danger of invasion the whole of the people were animated by one single aim, and that aim was immediately translated into action. Every man and woman leaped forward to serve wherever needed, and the strength of that purpose endured through five years of war. During those five years, as nation after nation joined in the struggle, the efforts of the Fighting Forces, of the workers behind the line, of the resistance movements in so many countries, were all co-ordinated and directed to the single purpose of victory. Private interests and individual national aspirations were sunk in the common endeavour.

Now to-day when victory has crowned our arms we have to bring to the task of creating permanent conditions of peace the same sense of urgency, the same self-sacrifice and the same willingness to subordinate sectional interests to the common good as brought us through the crisis of war. We all, therefore, must approach our work with a realisation of its outstanding and vital importance.

The United Nations Organisation must become the overriding factor in foreign policy. After the First World War there was a tendency to regard the League of Nations as something outside the ordinary range of foreign policy. Governments continued on the old lines, pursuing individual aims and following the path of power politics, not understanding that the world has passed into a new epoch. In just such a spirit in times past in these islands great nobles and their retainers used to practise private war in disregard of the authority of the central government. The time came when private armies were abolished, when the rule of law was established throughout the length and breadth of this island. What has been done in Britain and in other countries on a small stage has now to be effected throughout the whole world. We must all now to-day recognise the truth proclaimed by the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. at Geneva: "Peace is indivisible." Looking back on past years we can trace the origins of the late war to acts of aggression, the significance of which was not realised at the time. Failure to deal with the Japanese adventure in the Far East and with the acts of aggression of the Fascist rulers of Germany and Italy led inevitably to the breakdown of the rule of law and to the Second World War. In the last five years the aggression of Hitler in Europe drew eventually into the contest men from all the continents and from the islands of the sea. It should make us all realise that the welfare of every one of us is bound up with the welfare of the world as a whole, and that we are all members one of another.

I am glad that the Charter of the United Nations does not deal only with Governments and States or with politics and war, but with the simple elemental needs of human beings whatever be their race, their colour, or their creed. In the Charter we reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights. We see the freedom of the individual in the State as an essential complement to the freedom of the State in the world community of nations. We stress, too, that social justice and the best possible standards of life for all are essential factors in promoting and maintaining the peace of the world.

I have said that the solution of the problem of establishing peace and preventing war is urgent and vital as never before. We perhaps

in these islands, which were for so long immune from attack behind the barrier of the sea, feel more than any others that we are living in a new age. The development of powerful weapons of destruction operating from distant bases has destroyed the illusion of isolationism. The coming of the atomic bomb was only the last of a series of warnings to mankind that unless the powers of destruction could be controlled immense ruin and almost annihilation would be the lot of the most highly civilised portions of mankind.

I welcome therefore the decision to remit the whole problem of the control of atomic energy to a commission of the United Nations Organisation. In this discovery we can see set clearly before us in tangible form the question that faces the modern world. Here is an invention fraught with immense possibilities, on the one hand of danger and on the other of advantage to the human race. It is for the peoples of the world, through their representatives, to make their choice between life and death.

I hope and believe that every delegate who is here to-day has come not only in a spirit of determination but in a spirit of hope. We have always with us the sceptics and the pessimists who will tell us that there always has been war and that there always will be war, who point to the failure of the League of Nations as a reason for scepticism as to the success of the United Nations Organisation. But the progress of civilisation has been one of continual failure and of learning by experience. To take an example, the history of the trade union movement is marked by failure after failure. After every defeat the sceptics and the timorous said, "You cannot get the workers to combine, the self-interest of the individual is too strong." But eventually unity was achieved.

I have intense faith that we shall make the United Nations Organisation a success. We have learnt from past mistakes. The old League of Nations suffered from many disabilities, most of all perhaps because two great nations, the United States of America and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, were not present in its formative stages. To-day as never before the world is united. Further, the constitution of the new organisation is essentially realist in that it provides for the sanction of force to support the rule of law.

I think, too, that at the present time the ordinary men and women in every nation have a greater realisation of what is at stake. To make this organisation a living reality we must enlist the support not only of Governments, but of the masses of the people throughout the world. They must understand that we are building a defence for the

common people. In the purposes of the United Nations Organisation we have, linked with the achievement of freedom from fear, the delivery of mankind from the peril of want. To the individual citizen the spectre of economic insecurity is more constant, more imminent than the shadow of war.

Every individual can be brought to realise that the things that are discussed in conference here are the concern of all and affect the home life of every man, woman and child. Without social justice and security there is no real foundation for peace, for it is among the socially disinherited and those who have nothing to lose that the gangster and aggressor recruit their supporters.

I believe, therefore, that important as is the work of the Security Council, no less vital is it to make the Economic and Social Council an effective international instrument. A police force is a necessary part of a civilised community, but the greater the social security and contentment of the population the less important is the police force.

Finally, let us be clear as to what is our ultimate aim. It is not just the negation of war, but the creation of a world of security and freedom, of a world which is governed by justice and the moral law. We desire to assert the pre-eminence of right over might and the general good against selfish and sectional aims. We who are gathered here to-day in this ancient home of liberty and order are able to meet together because thousands of brave men and women have suffered and died that we may live. It is for us to-day, bearing in mind the great sacrifices that have been made, to prove ourselves no less courageous in approaching our great task, no less patient, no less self-sacrificing. We must and will succeed.

CHAPTER VI

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

*A Speech to the Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (23rd *May*, 1945)

*A Speech to Congress* (13th *November*, 1945)

*A Speech to the House of Commons on the Atomic Bomb* (22nd *November*, 1945)

*A Speech on Anglo-American Understanding at a Pilgrims' Dinner* (5th *December*, 1945)

*A Speech to the Foreign Press Association* (7th *February*, 1946)

*A Speech to the House of Commons on the World Food Shortage* (4th *April*, 1946)

*A Speech to the House of Commons in a Foreign Affairs Debate* (23rd *October*, 1946)

# A SPEECH TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

*23rd May*, 1945

*The 1945 Labour Party Conference was held at Blackpool in May. During the first day of the Conference the contents of the letters publicly exchanged between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee made it clear to all delegates that the Coalition Government was at the end of its life and a General Election imminent. This naturally gave a heightened interest and importance to the proceedings. The platform of the Empress Ballroom in Blackpool became the temporary centre of British politics. The speeches delivered there by the Party leaders were the first blows in the election campaign.*

*Mr. Attlee spoke first on the morning of the second day. He had recently returned from the San Francisco Conference and he chose to deal entirely with foreign affairs. He rose to move the International Section of the Executive Committee's report.*

YESTERDAY we were discussing domestic affairs under the heading of "Let Us Face the Future." I ask you to-day to consider problems on the solution of which depends the question of whether we are to have any future worth while at all. Unless the human race can control its own destructive inventions, it cannot survive. We are meeting to-day at the close of the second great European war in the memories of all of us. We failed to take the warning of the last war. We must take the warning of this war, if our civilisation is to survive. Let me remind you that the aeroplane in the last war was in its infancy and it has grown to be the means whereby a very large proportion of the greatest cities in the world are lying in ruins. Just recently we had our first experience of the long-range rocket. That is as much in its infancy to-day as was the aeroplane in 1918. Who can say what its development will be? Who can say what possibilities there are of still more deadly and powerful instruments of destruction and explosives to be perfected in future years? I say that all our planning for a finer and nobler world, all our discussion on the reorganisation of industry, on housing, on

health, on standards of life, on education and leisure, are utterly vain unless we can deal with the problem of peace.

We believe—and it has always been our policy—that the problem of peace can only be solved by building up an international organisation for its maintenance. I have heard speeches sometimes that suggested that all international problems could be solved if we could only get a few people sitting round the table and discussing them. Believe me, the thing is not as easy as that. I have just come back from San Francisco, where the delegates of nearly fifty nations are seeking to get agreement on the Charter of a world organisation. Well, we find they have their own particular ideas. They do not always harmonise with our own. I am afraid sometimes people think that if only we get the nations together they will accept our ideas. What we have to do is to try to work out with them the greatest common measure of agreement. I am hopeful that success will crown the efforts of the delegates at San Francisco. I hope that, despite all the difficulties, agreement will be reached. I believe that we must get a world organisation. But remember that even if—and I believe it will be—agreement is reached at San Francisco, we shall have taken only the first step towards world peace. The constant attention of statemen, the continual support and vigilance of the peoples all over the world, will be necessary if we are to be freed from the fear of war.

In the past we have had many discussions on international organisation. They have all been looking forward to something in the future. I and our Chairman, and George Tomlinson, have been facing these actual problems. At San Francisco proposals put forward by ourselves, by the United States of America and by the U.S.S.R., have been put before the assembled nations. I cannot overstress the need, the utter vital importance, of these three great nations working together in harmony for the peace of the world. It is a condition precedent to any success, that the comradeship which has won the war should continue into the peace. Close continuous co-operation, an ever-increasing mutual understanding, is the first essential.

That is not so easy. You have three great nations. Different histories, different outlooks, perhaps different ideologies have got to be reconciled. All suspicions die hard. I would ask all my comrades to be very very careful in what they say, not to raise, needlessly, suspicion among these three great countries. It is the duty of all of us to try to promote unity in the world, not only among these great three but among all countries. These three nations, with China and France, are given a special position in the new world organisation.

I am not going to discuss the details of the proposals that have been put forward, but I would like to say that it is very very easy to criticise this arrangement. It is clear, however, that in trying to build a new world organisation we must keep a careful balance. We must see to it that while giving powers commensurate with their responsibilities to the Great Powers the smaller nations and the middle nations are given their rightful share of influence. This is a difficult problem. You know it is only an accident of history that the North American Continent is divided among three States, whereas Central and South America is divided into more than twenty States. You cannot give an equal weight in the world to Panama and the United States, any more than you can give the same vote in the House of Commons to Manchester and, say, Kendal. Nor, on the other hand, can you give voting power to States merely on a basis of population. You cannot run the world by a card vote. You have got to do your utmost to get a workable arrangement, and that arrangement will be improved as time goes on; but the vital thing is that we should take the first step, that we should get a world organisation and that we should keep in step with our great Allies.

We want a world organisation with the will and the power to prevent aggression. It must be armed with power. The history of the League shows that it must have power, but the history of the League also shows it must have the will. Let us remember that if we advocate a world organisation, if we advocate the rule of law in the world, if we advocate that there should be power to enforce the rule of law in the world, we ourselves must be prepared to make our contribution. That is inescapable. We hope that in due course of time the world will grow wiser, that less and less will there be need of Armed Forces. But you cannot get rid of them at present, and we shall have to take our share and put up with whatever is necessary if we are to do our share, in company with the great nations and the small nations.

We want a world of free and democratic States, good neighbours, co-operating together just as we and the Dominions co-operate together. And let us not be ashamed to say that we have shown the world an example of the co-operation of free nations. I need not say how glad we were at San Francisco to have alongside of us the representatives of the great Dominions, and especially our Labour comrades from Australia and New Zealand. I say that only under a world organisation can we progress towards reducing the burden of armaments, and only under this protection can we build up world prosperity.

We are all in this movement idealists, but we are realists too. Do not let us imagine that the problems which have either been settled or have not arisen in this little island of ours, this fortunate island, are unreal. In Europe and in other continents you have the clash of nationalities. It is quite easy to say they are all human beings and should be able to live together as brothers. They should, but they don't. Where, in parts of Europe, you have majorities that are not trusted by minorities, where you have distrustful minorities and majorities that have, in the past, abused their trust, where you have separate communities living in the same territory, you have a problem of immense difficulty.

We are accustomed to working out our problems in this little island of ours under the method of democracy. It is not so easy to apply that where there are several communities living together. That is the problem in South-East Europe; that is the problem, let me say also, in India. There is the great difficulty. When we strive, as we strive earnestly, to enable India to get full self-government, the trouble is the distrust of the various communities. It is no good blinking the fact.

It is quite easy to criticise other nations; it is easy to criticise the relations of great Powers to them. What is much more difficult is to deal with the actual facts. Democracy depends on tolerance. It is just as well to remember that all who shout for democracy are not democrats, and that both on the Right and on the Left in some of these countries are people who seek to enforce the will of the minority on the majority by force. It is no good ignoring these things. It is no good attributing them to economic forces. In Eastern and South-Eastern Europe you have had centuries of suspicion and old hatreds and bitter memories of the past. Problems of minorities are very real. You see to-day quarrels between Italy and Yugoslavia; quarrels between Hungary and Rumania; quarrels between Croats and Serbs. It is not always easy even to find out the facts.

Besides those, there are ideological differences. You know Right-wing politicians who tend to brand all their opponents as Communists, and Communists who tend to brand all those who do not agree with them as being Fascists. Well, neither are right. There are very many shades of colour between Black and Red on the Continent of Europe, and I would warn all comrades to beware of accepting and even putting forward in resolutions statements which they cannot check personally, and to beware of becoming the advocates of some particular country.

We have to have our own line and our own judgment as Socialists.

There is the intractable and difficult Polish problem. There again you have a legacy of the past. Do not imagine all the virtues are at Lublin and all the vices with the London Poles, or vice versa. There are plenty of Polish Democrats and Socialists. I do not want to say much about this problem. It is a very terrible one. I earnestly hope that agreement may yet be come to on the basis of the Yalta Agreement.

I would like to assure you that in all these tangled matters that come before us, we who have been in the Government have been trying to deal with them in a single-minded effort to ensure that everywhere the people's voice shall prevail; that they shall have an opportunity of deciding under fair conditions the form and nature of their Government. There is need realistically to appreciate that the establishment of democratic Governments in countries that have very little experience of the working of democracy is a very difficult thing. Let us be realists about Japan and Germany. We must realise that in Germany whole generations have been absolutely warped and twisted into barbarism. We cannot afford to give these people another opportunity of destroying civilisation. You cannot change these warped natures all at once. There must be great changes which will take a long time before the German people are regenerated and are fit to be fully admitted into the comity of nations. Meanwhile, you have a very grave and difficult question to deal with in Central Europe. You have a very grave and difficult question to deal with in Japan.

I have been talking mainly on the lines of security. The mere absence of war is not peace, any more than the existence of a police force can, by itself, make for all the happiness and prosperity of a city. Under the shelter of a world security organisation we must seek to build up a real world society of nations, positively co-operating for the common good.

The ambitions of predatory economic interests have, on occasions, been the cause of war, but I think much more dangerous to peace is world economic anarchy, the existence of masses of people in poverty and wretchedness which make them the ready prey of the gangsters. Far more dangerous is the disharmony that permits poverty in a world of plenty and allows the occurrence of world economic crises that are so often the prelude to war. We welcome the discussions that were held at Hot Springs and Bretton Woods. They are striking examples of how, though at a very respectful distance, the Governments follow the trail blazed by Socialist pioneers. We have always advocated, and we advocate to-day, that we must try to build up world prosperity,

that we must work for the utilisation of abundance and for full co-operation between all nations. I believe that that can be worked out. Remember there again you have to make provision for nations whose ways of life are different, for nations that believe in free enterprise, so called, for nations that believe entirely in State trading, for nations that combine free enterprise and State trading.

We want to co-operate, but in co-operating we must see that we do not surrender the power to plan here at home. Let us make no mistake, our prosperity depends on world prosperity. A great industrial nation like ours, producing high-class goods, has an interest, apart from an idealism, to promote an increased and a rising standard of life all over the world, particularly in the less developed parts of the world.

We all look forward to a steady increase in self-government in Colonial territories, but hand in hand with that must go economic advance. We want to see rising standards throughout the world. May I here say again how much we value the work of the I.L.O., and I would like to pay a tribute to the splendid work of our good comrade Hallsworth over so many years.

At San Francisco an attempt is being made to form, as an integral part of the new organisation, a Social and Economic Council which will, I believe, make an enormous contribution to peace. Some of its activities will be direct; others will be the co-ordination of the activities of all kinds of international organisations. I hope there will be a great building-up of actual international organisations, some on one basis, some on another.

There, it seems to me, is the positive work for peace which must be done. If the nations merely come together to discuss war and the prevention of war, they are thinking of war; if they come together to discuss peace and peaceful activities they are getting into the mind of peace. And let me say that besides these governmental organisations we require the support of all those organisations that link human beings together—world trade union organisations, world co-operation, world travel, every kind of association—because a peaceful world will depend on the unity of the hearts and minds of the people, and not just on the pacts of Governments.

In commending this section of our declaration to you to-day, I would like to stress that whatever machinery is created, whatever organisations are set up, the vital thing is that they should be energised by men and women who believe intensely in peace and the brotherhood of man. It is my profound conviction that in these coming years the

outstanding question is the survival of our civilisation. It is easy to criticise our civilisation, to call it capitalist or bourgeois or point to its many defects. But we have had a sight, and a pretty grim sight, of what it means when a nation returns to barbarism. Buchenwald is a terrible reminder of what human nature can sink to. How near we came to defeat four or five years ago. I rejoice that it was given to the people of this nation in a dark hour to shine before the world as the champions of freedom and democracy. Let us not fail to keep that lamp burning in time of peace.

It may be that we, before long, will be called upon in Government to deal with these great international problems. We shall not shrink from that task; on the contrary, we shall welcome the opportunity. It is not just an accident that the greatest British Foreign Secretary between the wars was Arthur Henderson. I believe that the British Labour Movement, nurtured in freedom, practised in democracy, devoted to the principles of Socialism, can give a lead to the world to free itself from slavery and fear and to establish peace on the sure basis of social justice.

# A SPEECH TO CONGRESS

*13th November*, 1945

*In November*, 1945, *Mr. Attlee paid his first visit, as Prime Minister, to the United States. He went primarily to discuss with President Truman and with Mr. Mackenzie King, who was present in Washington, questions relating to the atomic bomb. In the course of his visit he was invited to address a joint session of Congress. A considerable portion of his speech to the two Houses was devoted to explaining to his audience the policy and outlook of the British Labour Party. Mr. Attlee's Government had then been in office only a few months, and many Americans had rather hazy ideas as to what a "socialist" Britain would mean in practice. Without watering his principles the Prime Minister sought to allay some fears and remove some misunderstandings.*

I SHOULD wish first of all to thank you for the great honour you have done me in inviting me to address your Houses in joint session. During the war you were addressed on two occasions by my predecessor, Mr. Winston Churchill, a great war leader, whose words and actions in the most critical times of that long-drawn-out contest brought courage and hope to millions all over the world. For five years I had the privilege of serving under him as a colleague. No one knows better than I do the resplendent services which he rendered to the cause of freedom. Last week in the House of Commons, as Leader of the Opposition, in emphasising the importance of furthering in every way our friendly connections with your great country, he wished me on behalf of the whole House the utmost success in this visit.

In democracies great men are the possession of the whole people. Speaking here to-day, I cannot but remember that great statesman, President Roosevelt. I should be expressing, I know, the feelings not only of the people of Great Britain but of the Commonwealth and Empire in paying tribute to his great services, not only to his own country but to humanity. It was a sorrow to us that he was not able to visit Britain, where we should have given him a welcome that would have expressed all that was in our hearts. In the struggle against

the forces of tyranny the names of these two men, Churchill and Roosevelt, together with that of Generalissimo Stalin, will ever be linked in achievement.

I was glad to meet President Truman for a brief moment here in Washington when I was returning from the San Francisco Conference, and I had the advantage of observing and admiring his courage and statesmanship at Potsdam, where, with him and Generalissimo Stalin, we sought to deal with some of those problems which a great war produces.

In what spirit shall we approach these high matters? On Sunday at Arlington I stood with President Truman and the Prime Minister of Canada at that impressive ceremony of Armistice Day. I know that in the minds of the President and myself were remembrances of when we were both fighters in the First World War. We little thought then, on 11th November, 1918, that we should witness another world war. I do not think that either of us then thought that we, out of the millions of our fellow soldiers, would be called to shoulder the great responsibilities of high office. Yet I am sure there were present in our minds last Sunday the same thoughts as we had years ago—regret for lost comrades, gratitude for our deliverance, and the resolve to do what in us lay to spare others the ordeal which we had endured.

We have ended this Second World War, deadlier, longer and more terrible than its predecessor. We should none of us be here to-day unless all the Allies had done their part, unless the unequalled fighting forces and matchless industrial scientific resources of the United States had been thrown without reserve into the pool. We rightly to-day pay honour to all the Allies. There is honour enough for all, for those who fought in the west and in the east, in the air, on land and on the sea, for those who fought in the formed units of the great States, for those who served in the resistance movements in so many countries, and for those who stood firm when their homes were bombed. All contributed, but the greatest contribution was made by those with the greatest resources—the United States of America, Russia and the British Commonwealth and Empire.

Twice in a generation the countries of the British Commonwealth and Empire came instantly to the help of Great Britain, and none made a greater contribution than Canada, whose Prime Minister I am happy to see with us to-day. We were fortunate in finding great political leaders; we were fortunate, too, in the men of outstanding ability who planned our resources and our campaigns and who led our navies, armies and air fleets in battle. Standing here, I should

like to pay special tribute to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. I should like to recall many of the leaders in the field, but I must content myself to-day with three names of great men—one in the west, two in the east—General Eisenhower, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz.

Speaking here to-day, when all our enemies have been beaten down, my mind goes back over those five years in which I served in the British War Cabinet. I recall so vividly those critical days in 1940 after Dunkirk. How anxiously we awaited the arrival of ships carrying rifles and ammunition from America, which gave us at least something in our hands to fight the invader whose threat was so imminent. I recall that wise and generous provision of Lend-Lease. I recollect two years before the event General Marshall unfolding to us in the Cabinet room his conception of the invasion of Europe. Then I remember so well the tremendous strength of the United States of America, slowly at first, and then swiftly developing to take the weight from those who had borne the burden in the early years of the war. To-day the United States stands out as the mightiest Power on earth, and yet America is a threat to no one. All know that she will never use her power for selfish aims or territorial aggrandisement in the future any more than she has done in the past.

We look upon her Forces and our own Forces and those of other nations as instruments that must never be employed save in the interests of world security and for the repression of the aggressor.

When I was last here I was taking part in the San Francisco Conference, a Conference summoned with prescience, while war was still raging, by President Roosevelt in order that as soon as victory was secured we might have an instrument ready to hand for the prevention of all wars in the future. We have gone through a horrible, destructive war. You here have lost great numbers of the flower of your young men; so have we in Britain, and so have all the countries that have been engaged in this great struggle. But you have been spared the destruction of your great cities. You have not had in America the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of broken homes. You have not had great masses of people driven from their habitations, wandering about seeking somewhere to lay their heads. You have not had the work of centuries of human endeavour destroyed in a few short hours by attacks from the air. But I know that you are fully conscious of the tragic folly of war. There was a time which I remember when we in Britain enjoyed the same immunity; wars might devastate the Continent, but we were safe behind our moat, the inviolable sea.

Those days are past; defensive frontiers, mountain barriers, the seas, and even the oceans are no obstacle to attack. The old discontinuity of earth and sea has been replaced by the continuity of the air. In our atlases that show the division of land and water of the countries and States there should be a blank page which should represent the air, to make our children realise that these old and historic divisions do not exist in the element in which men now move. If not now, then in a few years, the devastating weapons which are at present being developed may menace every part of the world.

It is in the light of these facts, and in particular in the light—the terrible light—of the atomic bomb, that I have entered into discussion with your President, in order that we may get together with all the nations of the world and consider what kind of a world it is necessary to have if civilisation is to endure and if the common man in all lands is to feel secure. But in facing world problems, as we must, it is a great mistake, in my view, to think constantly of war and the prevention of war. We have to think rather of the best means of building up peace. Speaking last week in London, I said that the foundation of peace lay in the hearts of men, and I hold it true that the more the citizens of the world can get to know each other the less likely are we to have the emotional condition in which war is possible.

We have been fortunate in this war to have welcomed to our shores so many citizens of the United States of America. There have been many friendships made and many misunderstandings have been removed, which arise almost inevitably because knowing each other only from a distance we see each other in a distorted way. All the differences are emphasised, the underlying likeness is obscured. But the British soldier and the American soldier when they came to close quarters soon found how much they had in common.

I hold therefore that our United Nations Organisation, in which I profoundly believe, must be something more than an agreement between Governments; it must be an expression of the will of the common people in every country.

Perhaps I might assist to-day in removing some misapprehensions. I come before you as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, but, in accordance with our constitutional practice, I am also a party leader—the leader of a majority recently returned to power in the House of Commons. I wonder how much you know about the British Labour Party. We are not always very well-informed on the politics of other

countries. I doubt, in fact, whether very many British citizens know the exact difference between a Republican and a Democrat. You have heard that we are Socialists, but I wonder just what that means to you.

I think that some people over here imagine that the Socialists are out to destroy freedom, freedom of the individual, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the freedom of the Press. They are wrong; the Labour Party is in the tradition of freedom-loving movements which have always existed in our country, but freedom has to be striven for in every generation, and those who threaten it are not always the same. Sometimes the battle of freedom has had to be fought against kings, sometimes against religious tyranny, sometimes against the power of the owners of the land, sometimes against the overwhelming strength of moneyed interests. We in the Labour Party declare that we are in line with those who fought for Magna Carta and *habeas corpus*, with the Pilgrim Fathers, and with the signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

Let me clear your mind with regard to some of these freedoms that are thought to be in danger. In the ranks of our Party in the House of Commons are at least forty practising journalists; there are several clergymen, many local preachers, plenty of Protestants, some Catholics, and some Jews. We are not likely, therefore, to attack freedom of religion or the freedom of the Press. As to freedom of speech, believe me, as leader of our Party for ten years, I have never lacked candid critics in my own ranks, and I have been too long in the Opposition not to be a strong supporter of freedom of speech and freedom of the individual. We believe in the freedom of the individual to live his own life, but that freedom is conditioned by his not cramping and restricting the freedom of his fellow men.

There is, and always will be, scope for enterprise; but when big business gets too powerful, so that it becomes monopolistic, we hold it is not safe to leave it in private hands. Further, in the world to-day we believe, as do most people in Britain, that one must plan the economic activities of the country if we are to assure the common man a fair deal. One further word: you may think that the Labour Party consists solely of wage-earners. It is our pride that we draw the majority of our members from the ranks of wage-earners, and many of our Ministers have spent long years working with their hands in the coal mines, the factory, or in transportation. But our Party to-day is drawn from all classes of society—professional men, business men, and what are sometimes called the privileged classes. The Old School

Tie can still be seen on the Government benches. It is really a pretty good cross-section of the population.

You may ask why do people from the well-to-do classes belong to our Party. May I refer to my own experience? Forty years ago, as a young man studying law, just down from Oxford University, I visited for the first time my constituency, Limehouse, a very poor district in East London. I learned from it at first-hand the facts of poverty in our great cities. I became convinced that we must build our society on a juster foundation. The result was that I joined the Socialist movement, and eventually, after many years of striving, I find myself Prime Minister of Great Britain. The reasons that impelled me to join the Labour movement are the same that actuated so many of the members of my Party, especially the great number of young men from the Fighting Services.

What is our attitude towards foreign affairs? We believe that we cannot make a heaven in our own country and leave a hell outside. We believe this not only from the moral basis of our movement, which is based on the brotherhood of man, without distinction of race or creed, but also from an entirely practical standpoint. We seek to raise the standard of life of our people. We can only do so by trading with the rest of the world and as good traders.

We wish to have prosperous customers. The advance in methods of production so strongly exemplified in the United States has resulted in an immense output of goods and commodities of all kinds. We, in our turn, show the same results on a smaller scale; yet there are hundreds of millions of people living in the world at a standard of life which is the same as they have had for a thousand years. There is ample room in the world for the products of the great industrial nations like our own to raise the general levels throughout the world. We, like you, believe in an expansive economy, and we can see no reason why, the need being so great, there should be any rivalry between us. We believe that the foundations of peace must be world prosperity and good neighbourliness, that where science has placed such potential abundance before the human race we should collaborate to take advantage of it rather than scramble and fight for large individual shares, which only results in an immense increase in poverty.

We recognise that our immediate task is not easy. Many a man in Britain returning from the war finds his home blitzed and his business ruined. He has to start afresh, and it is a tough proposition. As a country we are just like that man. We all went out to win the war

and now have to start afresh. Like him we are facing the future with courage and a determination to win through. We have not stood up to our enemies for six years to be beaten by economics. I look forward to an era of increasing co-operation and friendship between the United States and Great Britain, not as being an exclusive friendship, but as a contribution to the knitting together of all peoples through the United Nations Organisation in the bonds of peace.

In our internal policies each will follow the course decided by the people's will. You will see us embarking on projects of nationalisation, on wide all-embracing schemes of social insurance designed to give security to the common man. We shall be working out a planned economy. You, it may be, will continue in your more individualistic methods. It is important that we should understand each other and other nations whose institutions differ from our own. It is essential, if we are to build up a peaceful world, that we should have the widest toleration, recognising that our aim is not uniformity, but unity in diversity. It would be a dull world if we were all alike.

In a town there may be a great diversity of character and habit among the townsfolk. To some of my neighbours I may be drawn closely by ties of relationship or by old memories. For others I may have more sympathy through sharing their religious convictions, although perhaps estranged by their political views. Yet I may be on good terms with them all and in close friendship with some. I hope to see a world as orderly as a well-run town, with citizens diverse in character but co-operating for the common good.

In the British Commonwealth and Empire we offer an example of many nations, some of which have reached and others of which are approaching full self-government. Even during the war India was given the opportunity of taking complete charge of her own affairs, and in the Colonial Empire we have eight or nine new constitutions which have been adopted or are being worked out, all based on the extension of democratic principles.

I hope that there will be ever closer friendship between our great democracies. We have much in common. We have the language of Milton and Shakespeare, of Burke and Chatham, of Lincoln and Jefferson. We have memories of comradeship in a great adventure. Above all things, we share the things of the spirit. Both of our nations hold dear the rule of law, the conception of freedom, and the principles and methods of democracy; and, most vital of all, we acknowledge the validity of the moral precepts upon which our whole civilisation is founded.

Man's material discoveries have outpaced his moral progress. The greatest task that faces us to-day is to bring home to all people before it is too late that our civilisation can only survive by the acceptance and practice in international relations and in our national life of the Christian principle that we are members one of another.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE ATOMIC BOMB

*22nd November*, 1945

*Two days after his return from America, Mr. Attlee took the opportunity of a foreign affairs Debate to give the House a brief report on his discussions with President Truman and Mr. Mackenzie King. It was, as he reminded the House, the third legislative assembly in which he had spoken in little more than a week. After giving an account of his experiences in the United States and Canada, he went on to deal with his main subject and said:*

I NOW turn to the principal matters which I discussed with the President and with Mr. Mackenzie King. I would like to say something first in regard to the approach which I made to this question of atomic energy applied to war. In my view, it is impossible to isolate the problem of the atomic bomb from that of the use of other weapons of destruction. There was a time when wars were local, fought out with weapons which to us seem extraordinarily primitive. In those days the losses and destruction caused by war could often be made up in a few years, and great as was the misery caused, the thing was measurable. Sometimes even the losses were slight. Men in authority might count the cost of a war as worth while, for the advantages gained, though those advantages seem to us to-day very often trifling. Such an attitude towards war is impossible to our generation. We have seen two world conflicts, and we know the cost—or at least we know some of the cost—in human suffering and the destruction of the work of generations of men. The practical obliteration of great cities which took place in the last war as the result of shelling and bombing was bad enough. We know only too well what the effect of bombing was in London, and in Coventry, Plymouth and other cities; but anyone who has seen Aachen, or Stalingrad or Warsaw, knows how infinitely greater is the ruin on the Continent of Europe.

It was with that object lesson in their minds that the representatives of the nations met at San Francisco. But since then we have had the

atomic bomb. Two only were dropped on Japan, but in each instance a large part of a great city and of its inhabitants was wiped out. The atom bomb is the latest word in destructiveness, but it may not be the last. It brought home, as nothing else had done, that if civilisation is to survive there must be no repetition of the first and second world wars. Therefore, when I addressed the President, when I spoke at the Mansion House, and in all my discussions, I have considered, not just the elimination of the atom bomb from the armoury of the nations, but what kind of a world order is necessary in an epoch in which science has placed in men's hands such terrible weapons.

I emphasise this because there have been attempts in the past to eliminate certain weapons and certain methods of warfare. There were some successes in the past; there have been wars in which the Geneva Convention has been pretty fairly observed on both sides; but, broadly speaking, the attempt to ban certain weapons has failed. Gas was banned before the war of 1914-18, but it was used; and I have no doubt that if the Nazis had thought it worth while they would have used gas again. The bombing of open cities once filled the world with horror, but it became the everyday experience of the citizens of London in the last war. I do not believe that in a warring world, except to a very limited extent, there can be a set of Queensberry Rules. I think an attempt on these lines is as futile as the attempt of the knightly combatants at the close of the Middle Ages to ban that unsporting method —gunpowder; and I think it is as well that we should make up our minds that if the world again lapses into war on a scale comparable to that from which we have just emerged, every weapon will be used, and we may confidently expect that full-scale atomic warfare will result in the destruction of great cities, in the deaths of millions, and the setting back of civilisation to an unimaginable extent. You will find this thought expressed in Section 3 of our Joint Declaration where we say:

> "The only complete protection for the civilised world from the destructive use of scientific knowledge lies in the prevention of war. No system of safeguards that can be devised will, of itself"—

I emphasise those words—

> "of itself, provide an effective guarantee against production of atomic weapons by a nation bent on aggression."

I stress again those words—

> "by a nation bent on aggression."

The Declaration reverts to the same theme in Section 9:

> "Faced with the terrible realities of the application of science to destruction, every nation will realise more urgently than before the overwhelming need to maintain the rule of law among nations and to banish the scourge of war from the earth."

We have in prospect the meeting of the United Nations Organisation, and there is the instrument which, if all the nations resolve to use it, can establish the rule of law to prevent war. I say "resolve to use it" because, to my mind, here is the essence of the problem. Just as no system of inspection or control of weapons will work without good will, so no international organisation, however carefully framed, will be of any avail unless the nations resolve to lay aside war and the threat of war as instruments of compulsion; unless they determine to establish between themselves such mutual confidence that war is unthinkable. While this is the only real solution, no safeguard offering any chance of success should be overlooked or ignored. I say mutual confidence is needed, but it is well to remember that over great areas of the earth's surface this confidence is already established. War between Britain and any one of the Dominions is unthinkable; war between Britain or Canada or any one of the Dominions and the United States of America is unthinkable. It seems to me that it is the task of statesmen to spread that confidence throughout the whole world, and the Declaration which we made at Washington was made with this object of increasing confidence, in order that we may press on with the great task of ridding the world of the fear of war.

Let me turn now to what we have actually done. First, we—the three countries concerned in the discovery and development of atomic energy, the countries which possess the knowledge—have already made available to the world the basic scientific information essential to its development for peaceful purposes. We declare our readiness to make available any further basic scientific information of this kind for the whole world. We desire to promote the use of advances in scientific knowledge for peaceful and humanitarian ends, and we declare our willingness to exchange fundamental knowledge and to arrange for the interchange of scientists with any nations that will fully reciprocate. I ask the House to note that desire for reciprocity. We cannot tell what other scientific discoveries may be made, or might be used for the purposes of warfare; therefore, we ask all nations that they should be prepared to do what we have done and what we are prepared to do.

I now turn to the question of the disclosure of detailed information

concerning the practical industrial application of atomic energy. Atomic energy has already been used for destruction. Its development for peaceful purposes—for helping, instead of destroying, the human race—is not likely to be perfected for many years, or for some years at all events. Meanwhile, the methods and the processes already developed can lead to either purpose. It has been urged in some quarters that knowledge of these processes should be broadcast to the world in the same way that the fundamental scientific information has been given. I cannot think that this would be wise.

In the first place, this knowledge cannot be given in a formula or a handbook or a blueprint. It can only be done by scientists and technicians being taken to the plant, everything being shown and explained to them in detail. Well, that is a matter which would take a long time, and to do this for all the nations would clearly be a matter of very great difficulty, and I can see no reason for singling out particular nations.

Secondly, this discovery can be used either for peace or war. Can it be wise, when the United Nations Organisation is only just born and is not out of its cradle, to broadcast to the world the methods of making such a destructive weapon? In our view this must await the growth of confidence and the development of safeguards. It may be said, "What safeguards are of any use?" I may be asked, "Have you not already said that no system of safeguards can be devised to provide an effective guarantee?" I ask the House to note the words "by itself," and the words "a nation bent on aggression" in Section 3 of the Joint Declaration. Where there is not mutual confidence, no system will be effective, but where it exists, there will be no difficulty. For instance, there is no difficulty between Britain, Canada and the United States; we trust each other, we are able to have free, full and frank discussions, we are working on plans for future co-operation between us in this field, and we wish to establish between all nations just such confidence. It is to be remembered that, although the processes for producing atomic energy are complicated and require great plants, the product itself is a small thing and the weight of the bomb on Hiroshima was not great. Clearly, there must be the most sedulous care taken in the control of this most dangerous substance.

The three signatories, however, declare their readiness to share with other nations on a reciprocal basis the practical industrial applications of this discovery just as soon as effective enforceable safeguards can be devised, and to this end they propose a Commission under the

United Nations Organisation. The House will have seen the duties which it is proposed to entrust to the Commission. It will be remembered that the United Nations Organisation is set up for the prevention of war and the establishment of the rule of law. It is, therefore, natural to entrust this work to a Commission which will make recommendations to the organisation. I would draw special attention to the provision that the work of this Commission should proceed by stages. It emphasises again the need for specific action to be based on confidence. Note, also, that it is not only atomic energy which is to be dealt with, but all weapons adaptable for mass destruction; no one of these weapons has any legitimate place in the armaments which are necessary for ordinary purposes of internal security, or for the protection of a Government against lawlessness. They are weapons of total war designed for mass destruction, and we must banish total war from the world if civilisation is to continue.

Well, here is our Declaration. I hope there will be a world-wide response to its principle, and that the proposals here made for the spreading of scientific information for peaceful purposes and the prevention of its perversion to war will be accepted by other nations. The next step will lie with the United Nations Organisation, which will soon be meeting, when this matter is brought before it. This is a matter which cannot be solved by Britain, Canada and the United States alone. It would have been a disservice to the cause which we have at heart if we tried to do so. We have set out our views, we have pointed out the immediate steps which are necessary, but this is a world question, and for its solution we need not merely the agreements of Governments, but the will and the faith of peoples.

The lost friends, the ruined homes of the last war are fresh in the memory of us all. We have been through so many horrors that perhaps it is difficult for most people to grasp the vista of still greater devastation which stretches before us unless men can so order their affairs as not to be destroyed by their own inventions. The atomic bomb is here present in the world; it is not something just to be noted, a newspaper sensation to be read about, tucked away comfortably at the back of our minds while we return to other things; it is the danger that hangs over every one of us, and over all the people of the world. The United Nations Organisation is here present in the world; it was born almost at the same time as the atomic bomb. It is not something vaguely heard of, something quite outside the range of our national life. It is the hope of the world. It is filled with immense possibilities. I want every man and woman in this country and in the world to feel a

vivid personal concern in the success of the United Nations Organisation.

I would like to end with some words I used on Monday in addressing the Canadian Parliament:

> "Unless we apply to the solution of these problems a moral enthusiasm as great as that which scientists bring to their research work, then our civilisation, built up over so many centuries, will surely perish."

# A SPEECH ON ANGLO-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING AT A PILGRIMS' DINNER

*5th December*, 1945

*Another speech arising out of his visit to America was made by the Prime Minister at a dinner, in the Savoy Hotel, given in his honour by the Pilgrims. In its forty-four years of life this society has worked to further the cause of Anglo-American friendship and understanding. There are two branches, one on either side of the Atlantic. Two-thirds of the members of the London branch are British and the remainder American; in the United States branch the proportions are reversed. The banquets of the Pilgrims have frequently been occasions for important pronouncements on Anglo-American relations.*

To be the guest of honour of the Pilgrims is to be enrolled in a very distinguished company. Three or four years ago, my old friend Harry Brittain sent me his book *Pilgrim Partners*. I read there the origin of the club, and saw how for more than forty years you, and your opposite numbers on the other side of the Atlantic, had honoured men of both nations, men of great distinction. Little did I think when I read that book that I should ever receive this high honour. Still less did I think it when, nearly forty years ago, I first visited the United States of America. I was then on a visit to Canada, and finding that I had a week-end to spare, I decided to have a look at the United States.

Perhaps a week-end was not very long, but I managed to get to Boston and Harvard University, and to New York, to go by steamer up the Hudson to Albany, and to see the Niagara Falls. I did not see America again until 1941. This was not due to any lack of appreciation, either of the country or of its people, but solely to the fact that as a man, in the immortal phrase of Sir William Beveridge, of discontinuous employment, when I had the time to go I never had the money, and when I had the money I never had the time. However, I have plucked out of the evils of war some advantages, in having been able to go to the United States at the expense of my country, and I have also had the advantage three times in the war of visiting the Dominion

of Canada. I went there last in the company of that good friend, Mr. Mackenzie King. A fortnight ago I returned from my first visit to America since the end of the war, and from my first visit as Prime Minister.

I had had the privilege of meeting President Truman last summer in Washington, and I had worked with him and with Mr. Byrnes in Potsdam; and it was a particular pleasure to me to be able to meet him and stay with him at the White House. I had felt for some time that with the ending of the Japanese War there were matters which I should like to discuss freely with him, not only the problem of the atomic bomb but the wider questions of world organisation, and in particular the future co-operation of our countries in the cause of peace and world prosperity.

I need hardly tell you with what kindness I was received by the President, by members of his Cabinet, by members of Congress, and indeed by all with whom I came in contact. I met again old comrades of the San Francisco Conference, some of them Democrats and some Republicans. I saw again amazing examples of the energy and vitality of the people of the United States, and I saw there too the same determination to fight through the difficulties of peace which an American editor reported to me as the dominant mood which he found in this country. I was invited to speak to Congress, and though I am sure very few were converted to my views, all were far too polite to show any disapprobation. This was the more kind as I am aware that a Socialist was an object if not of suspicion at least of curiosity to many! In any case no one could describe me as a long-haired revolutionary! I was able to assure them that whatever diversions of political outlook there might be in this country there were certain things that united us all, and among them was the sincere desire for complete understanding and friendship between our two people.

During the war all of us who believed in freedom and democracy found ourselves up against the stark reality of a conspiracy to destroy all that we held dear. Just as in this country danger faced in common swept away all barriers of class and creed, revealing to each other our fundamental agreement on essentials, so a comradeship in arms against mortal peril brought home to the British and American peoples the fact that, despite many differences, they too were linked by spiritual bonds based on our common heritage. We saw this over and over again in the war. I doubt whether there has ever before been between men of different nations such complete brotherhood and understanding as was manifested in the Staffs of those great leaders in war, General Eisenhower

and Field-Marshal Alexander. No one who visited their headquarters could fail to see at once that here was not a joint Staff but a single Staff, where all parts of the machine fitted in without the slightest friction.

It is just this agreement on fundamentals which must form the essential basis of understanding between our peoples. When I met and talked with President Truman, we were able to cut out a great many of the preliminaries, because we knew exactly where we stood on the really important matters with which we had to deal. It is the particular function of ambassadors to interpret the country from which they come to the country to which they are accredited. I believe that during these years of stress we have been fortunate on both sides of the Atlantic, in having in the United States Lord Halifax and in having here Mr. Winant. Few if any in the long roll of American Ambassadors to this country have established themselves so firmly in the hearts of the people of Britain. But it is my view that the interpretation of one country to another requires not one but many ambassadors. We have had with us hundreds of thousands of ambassadors from the United States in recent years in the person of the soldiers and sailors and airmen who have come across to these shores to take part with us in the common struggle. I wish that we had been able to send more of our men across the Atlantic. We should, I am sure, benefit by this reverse Lease-Lend.

We in this country have, I think, in these years grown to understand what a vital force Americanism is. It has assimilated and moulded men of diverse types and origins. All, whatever may be their name, from whatever country their ancestors came originally, have absorbed the essential American outlook. Well this is, of course, different in some respects from our own. Yet, if one looks back on the war, one sees as one of its most outstanding features the way in which it has been possible for British and Americans, whose methods necessarily differ, to work together both in war-like operations and in matters of civilian administration.

I am certain that when history comes to be written a tribute will be paid to the remarkable work done by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and also by the combined boards of one kind and another, which dealt with supplies, shipping and many other vital services. But even more, I think, the historian will discourse at length on those great expeditions to Italy and to Normandy, where in the three elements the Forces of two great nations planned and achieved enterprises of immense complexity and hazard, and where masses of detail had to be agreed to, and were agreed to, without any difficulty or disagreement.

There was developed a complete trust and confidence between these great national Forces; and this was achieved because we agreed on fundamentals and never allowed matters of detail or procedure or nomenclature to stand in our way.

We have now to see that the comradeship of war is not dissipated in peace. What was successfully achieved by common action must not become a memory of the past, but the first link in a continuous chain. There again I would emphasise the fact that the links in this chain must be forged from friendship—personal friendship—and mutual understanding. I hope that we shall welcome to these shores an ever-increasing stream of American visitors, and I hope that increased facilities for travel will enable many thousands from this country to visit America. In particular, I hope that the visitors to America will not be confined to those with long purses. It is after all the ordinary common people who must get to know each other. I know that many Americans will come here to visit our ancient cities and our quiet country landscapes, but I want many of our own people to go to America to see that tremendous sky line of New York, to see the gracious lay-out of Washington and the great cities of the Middle West, to go up into the Rockies by car, or over them by plane, as I did this year, and descend into the beautiful Californian country and see the proud city of San Francisco.

The friendship which we desire with our friends across the Atlantic is not exclusive, nor is it the result of any hostility to other nations. The desire to be on specially good terms with one's neighbour does not mean that one does not wish to know also the people in the next street.

We in this country had one experience which they did not have in the United States, and that was the black-out. We all knew its discomfort, how difficult it made our life. With what pleasure, when peace came, we took down the black-out curtains from our rooms. Now the war is over, but there are still too many black-out curtains in the world, curtains of ignorance and prejudice, curtains woven from old misunderstandings and memories of unhappy things of long ago, curtains of suspicion of the future. We want the full light of understanding to shine into the windows of both our houses and of all other houses, so that in that light men and women may see that others are like themselves, with the same hopes and fears, the same basic needs and the same human sympathies. My last visit across the Atlantic was to try to lift a little of the black-out of suspicion from the world. If it has accomplished this in any degree, I shall be very satisfied, and my brief pilgrimage will not have been in vain.

# A SPEECH TO THE FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION

*7th February, 1946*

*During the year following the end of the war, the Prime Minister was the principal guest at the first post-war gatherings of many societies and organisations that had been forced to suspend such activities since* 1939. *Such an occasion was the dinner of the Foreign Press Association, held at the Savoy Hotel in February,* 1946. *The guests included newspaper correspondents from all the allied countries in Europe and from the United States and China. The United Nations Assembly was still in session in London and many leading world statesmen were also present. M. Spaak, Dr. Wellington Koo and Senator Connally were among the other speakers. Dr. H. W. Egli, the London correspondent of the Swiss newspaper* Neue Zuercher Zeitung, *presided. Mr. Attlee rose to give the toast of "The Peace":*

I T is to me a great pleasure and honour to be your guest at this the first dinner held by the Foreign Press Association since the end of the war.

We are here to-night, men and women of many nations, but, as I understand, predominantly of two professions or callings, that of politics and that of the Press. Our two callings are sometimes regarded by the ordinary men and women of the world as bearing more than their fair share of the responsibility for the troubles that from time to time beset them. I do not doubt that sometimes we deserve the hard things that are said about us, but I am bound to confess that as I look around this evening, you, ladies and gentlemen of the Press, do not strike me as very sinister people, and I hope you will say as much about those of us who are politicians. Certainly, despite the harsh words that politicians sometimes say about pressmen, and the strong words I have no doubt all you members of the Foreign Press Association have from time to time written about politicians, we seem to be getting on very well together to-night. The lions and the lambs are not merely sitting down side by side, but are manifestly enjoying each other's company—but which are the lions and which are the lambs I leave to your own preference.

This is a noteworthy occasion in more ways than one. It marks, as I have said, the resumption of that series of notable dinners which distinguished the activities of the Foreign Press Association in the past, and at which from time to time many great figures in contemporary history were entertained. The last of these dinners was held only shortly before the war, and it was the cause of a certain amount of commotion.

It is the practice at these dinners, as you know, to have a menu card decorated with drawings of leading figures in world affairs as they appear in the eyes of an eminent cartoonist. This practice is followed to-night with the result that those of us who are so presented have to undergo the ordeal of seeing ourselves as others see us every time we take a look at the menu to find out what we are eating. However, politicians in the course of their dangerous trade develop strong digestions, and I notice no diminution in the appetites of my distinguished fellow guests.

But at the last of these dinners, if I remember aright, it was not so. Then there were empty chairs and a diplomatic crisis. The Foreign Press Association had dared to portray on its dinner menu certain of the leaders of Nazi Germany in a form less handsome, less noble and less pleasing than they regarded themselves. The German Embassy issued its ultimatum. Either the menu must be withdrawn and an apology made or no German diplomat should attend the dinner.

I am glad to think that the Foreign Press Association had no doubt as to its answer. It stood fast by the immemorial right of the Press to make fun of politicians. It did without the Nazis and kept its menu card.

And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that whatever may be my personal opinion of the drawing of myself I am forced to contemplate to-night, no suspension of diplomatic relations between the British Government and the Foreign Press Association will follow. And although Mr. Bevin may feel that your cartoonist has been somewhat excessively concerned to show that foreign affairs is a weighty business, I do not think he will make a Cabinet matter of it.

If I refer to that pre-war incident which has so small a stature when compared with the mighty and terrible events that bridge the gap between that evening and this, it is because, despite its smallness, it has a significance which is not unworthy of our consideration..

Nazidom threatened and nearly destroyed civilisation because it was the creed of men so obsessed with their own rightness, their own importance, their own superiority to the standards by which normal

men and women govern their lives, that any criticism, even any joke against them, became an unforgivable affront. They failed to understand the forces of civilisation that they arraigned against them, and that after a bitter and terrible struggle defeated them, because they had shut themselves off from all those resources of wit, of humour, of tolerance, of understanding, from which civilisation draws its strength. They imprisoned themselves and sought to imprison the world in a concentration camp in which the common human values should have no part, and they were defeated by men and women who knew instinctively that there is no man so great that it is not sometimes good for him to be laughed at, no situation so serious that it may not sometimes be improved by a joke.

The toast I am asked to give you to-night is "The Peace." There is no toast I would sooner give and none I am sure in which you would sooner share.

But I do not need to remind you that one swallow does not make a summer and that one dinner of the Foreign Press Association—delightful though it is—does not make a peace.

We shall not make an enduring peace unless we are prepared to work for it day in day out with all our energies, with all our minds and with all our hearts. We shall not achieve it unless we are all ready to put forward immense efforts to remove misunderstandings, to dissipate suspicions, to comprehend not only our own national interests but our common world interests, and to speak freely and openly to each other of what is in our minds.

We shall get nowhere by pretending there is agreement where no agreement exists. We shall progress only if where there are disagreements—and some there must always be—we recognise them, face them and discuss them bluntly without fear and see what we can do to remove them.

Here in this City of London, scarred by the ravages of war, but fortunate in that it has been free from the foot of a conqueror for nearly a thousand years, we, the men and women of the United Nations, have been trying during these last few weeks to lay some of the essential foundations of peace.

I think we have made good progress. Naturally we have not always agreed. Naturally there are conflicts of view on some important issues. What else should we expect? This is a meeting of the representatives of free nations—not, as might so easily have been the case if the result of the war had been different, the subservient nominees

of a conqueror called to endorse and applaud the dictates imposed by him.

When free men and free nations meet in conference we must expect that there will be differences of view and clashes of interest. Let us not seek to hide them. Where there are disputes let us acknowledge them and examine them in the light of world opinion. The United Nations will succeed or fail to the extent that it provides a medium whereby any dispute, however small or however large, can be honestly ventilated, and a solution honestly arrived at. The Government of the United Kingdom, for its part, is determined to do everything in its power to ensure that this is done.

This is a gathering of the Foreign Press Association and I would not wish to conclude without paying my tribute to your members and expressing my conviction of the part you have to play in helping on that international understanding upon which the world's future depends. Many of you served the cause of freedom—of which the freedom of the Press to which you give particular allegiance is so important a part—in one of the most dangerous and difficult ways in the years of war: helping to keep alive the forces of resistance in occupied Europe, producing under conditions of incredible difficulty the secret newspapers that would keep hope burning in the hearts of men and women enslaved. Others here in London helped to maintain, through newspapers published in exile until the day of liberation came, national ideals and national unities that it was essential should not die. Still others, whose countries were not themselves involved, sent day by day from London the news that told Europe in its darkest hours that despite every assault the enemy could bring against us Britain survived and that the forces of freedom were daily gathering strength. Your labours blunted the weapons of Goebbels and robbed his lies of their force.

Now in freedom and in peace you meet again. It is an occasion for rejoicing but an occasion also for reaffirming those values upon which the essential greatness of a free Press depends. There will be great need of honest reporting of events during these coming years, and of careful unbiased explanations of policies and problems. Britain and the world have been well served in the past by the corps of excellent foreign correspondents in London. I am confident that that service will be no less great in the future than in the past and that you can be relied upon to play your full part in helping to build out of the dangers and difficulties of war an abiding peace.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE WORLD FOOD SHORTAGE

*4th April*, 1946

*Food supply was one of the most difficult problems that the Government had to face in its first year of office. The realisation that owing to world conditions the ending of the war could bring no sudden improvement was a bitter pill to many people. A slow increase in variety was possible but some basic foods became in even shorter supply. In the spring of* 1946 *the world wheat position took on a very serious aspect. The publication by the Government of a White Paper on the subject, and the return of Sir Ben Smith, the Minister of Food, from a mission to Washington, set the stage for a House of Commons Debate which was opened by the Prime Minister.*

IN the White Paper which we issued this week, entitled "The World Food Shortage," we endeavoured to set out the plain facts of the world situation in relation to food supplies. This White Paper supplements and amplifies the previous White Paper on the world grain situation. There have been a number of statements by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Food, there was a statement by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary at U.N.O., there have been many useful articles in the Press, and the facts have been laid before the country and this House. I do not wish to burden the House this afternoon with a lot of figures that are already available, and I do not want to repeat what has been said in the White Paper. My task is to endeavour to place this problem in its correct perspective, and to invite the help of all Members of the House, and of all people in this country and wherever in the world my words may carry, to do what is possible to help in this critical time.

We are facing a world food shortage. It is the aftermath of war. It is a retribution which, as so often, falls on the innocent for the general follies of mankind. The plain fact is that millions of people to-day are faced with a scarcity of food, and some with absolute starvation. We in this country are not faced with starvation, but, necessarily, a country such as ours, which depends to a greater extent

than any other on imported food, has a very difficult position to face. It is quite impossible for us by any degree of sacrifice on our part to restore the world situation. We all know from our own experience that, during the war, we had to put up with a far less varied, and a far duller, diet than we were accustomed to in peace-time. We had to give up many pleasant forms of food; we had to depend on a narrower range. But throughout the war our people were fed. Whatever else was rationed, we were able to give our people bread. It is to-day precisely in the great staple foods, on which the greater part of the human race depends—wheat and rice—that the world shortage exists. I myself doubt whether, if distribution and transport were ideally perfect, there would even then be enough to go round. It is certain that that is not possible in the conditions obtaining to-day.

I think it right that we should look at the reasons. First, there is the destruction of war—the destruction of the fields, of transport, of plant —and the removal from production of millions of workers. There is the interruption of the normal movement of supply between producers and consumers, which, in the modern world, had become a very complicated interchange. Secondly, there was a series of disastrous losses due to natural causes, of which widely distributed drought was the chief. What was the normal cereal position in the world, in its broadest aspects, before the war?

While Europe supplied a great deal of its wheat requirements itself, it was the principal market for the great surplus areas of Canada, the United States, the Argentine and Australia. Asia supported itself partly in each country from local resources of wheat and rice, but India, Malaya, China and Japan depended for a proportion of their needs on the surplus produced in Burma, Siam and Indo-China.

There is a very close parallel between the events that happened in the war in both these great areas of supply and demand. The German war cut off the European market except for Britain, and the surplus countries accumulated very considerable reserves by that outlet being cut off. They also reduced their acreage, while an increased purchasing power, due to full employment and better wages among the poorer sections of the community, enhanced the home demand. Meanwhile, in Europe, the withdrawal of labour from the land, the actual destruction of crops and transport, and the shortage of fertilisers—all these things due to the operations of the war—reduced everywhere, except in Britain, the actual production. Parallel with this, in Asia the Japanese offensive severed the consuming from the producing areas. The result was that output in Siam and Indo-China was reduced—there was no

incentive to produce more than enough for subsistence—while the war in Burma upset the whole economy of that country, so that after the liberation there was only a very small exportable surplus. Meanwhile the increase of demand in Asia is due to the constant increase of the population of India by no less than five millions a year, with no comparable increase in production. Thus when the war came to an end, there was bound to be an increased demand for wheat and rice, but the effects of the war were rendered far more serious by the widespread failures of crops.

I need not relate in detail all that happened. There was drought in the Mediterranean countries, in North Africa, in South Africa, and in New Zealand; there was the failure of the rains both in Northern and Southern India, and there was also a tidal wave in Madras. These were all unforeseeable calamities, and, of course, the difficulties with regard to rice in Asia had their repercussions on the wheat situation, by setting up a new demand on the common wheat supplies of the world. How far was this critical situation foreseen? Some things were foreseeable and others could not have been anticipated, but it had always been realised that time would be needed for Europe and the Far East to recover from the ravages of war. It was contemplated, and indeed calculated, that the great stocks built up by the wheat exporting countries would tide the world over this difficult time until normal harvests, resumed. It was further anticipated that the Japanese War would continue for some twelve or eighteen months after the end of the European War.

It must be remembered that we could not estimate what would be the food position in the enemy countries, or the enemy-occupied countries, and of course we could have no foreknowledge of the drought. Therefore it was quite reasonable for the Coalition Government to decide that we could allow our own wheat production to fall from its war-time peak. We could anticipate that increased feeding-stuffs would be available for farmers in successive stages from the autumn of 1945, so that we could begin to build up our depleted livestock. We had probably reduced our livestock more than the vast majority of countries.

When the present Government assumed office the position was already different from that which obtained during the war. We had the claims of liberated Europe; Lend-Lease came to an end, and from this time on, supplies rather than shipping became the major consideration. By September, reports came in which showed that the wheat position was not as good as had been hoped. Stocks in the exporting

countries had been reduced—there was a good deal of feeding to livestock—and droughts had already occurred in the Mediterranean basin, but the best opinion was that we could still get through till the harvest of 1946. Nevertheless, the scene was already beginning to be overcast, and various steps were recommended in 1945 by us to the exporting countries. We suggested a reduction in the amount of wheat fed to stock, a maximum effort to move wheat from North America to Europe, and a reduction of the end-of-season stocks to a minimum. After further reviews in January and February, and the visit of the Minister to Washington in January, we ourselves in February raised our extraction rate, with the inevitable result of reducing the supply of feeding-stuffs for our livestock. That was a heavy sacrifice to make and it was particularly hard on our own farmers. We invited other countries to do the same.

The response by the great exporting countries was immediate and I doubt whether it is always sufficiently recognised how quickly came the response from those countries. Within a week of a cable that I sent to President Truman, he announced those far-reaching steps which were set out in the statement of 6th February. Action was taken by Canada and Australia, and it is thanks to the prompt action of those countries that the situation has not become entirely out of hand. We here also set on foot an increased wheat sowing and bread-saving campaign.

Meanwhile the Indian drought, which had begun in the autumn, continued through January to February, reducing the Indian wheat crop by as much as 25 per cent. This meant a great new demand by India on the common pool. The situation in Germany has been increasingly difficult. We have to occupy a zone which has never been self-sufficing in food, but we have from our own scanty stocks more than once helped the Germans of the British zone. At the beginning of the year a special delegation came from India to this country to represent the grievous position that was looming up there. At their request my right hon. Friend the Minister of Food went to Washington to help them to plead their cause. The amount required for India was tremendous considering the resources available, and in the result, although they got less than they sought, they did get an allocation three times greater than that which was allotted in January. The leader of the deputation, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, has expressed his gratitude to my right hon. Friend for his efforts on their behalf.

Meanwhile we have been setting on foot a whole series of measures to try to extract the utmost that can be made available of rice from

Siam and Burma. One has to remember what the position of those countries has been—Siam was practically under Japanese domination, and Burma had been overrun. Those were the great sources from which surplus rice in the past was available. Lord Killearn is now in Singapore co-ordinating these efforts. I would like to add here that no one must imagine that this is a very short-term problem. There is a short-term problem, but we also have to look ahead for the next year and see what the situation is going to be. We are trying to stimulate the greatest possible effort to get more cultivation and more production, because next year is not going to be easy at all.

I have stressed the cereal position because it is fundamental. Whenever the human race is driven away from other foods, it always comes down eventually to the question of cereals. But there is a world shortage of other foods; in particular, of fats. We have decided not to make immediately a further cut in the fats ration, but to intensify our efforts to increase supplies. Throughout all our Colonies, where there is anything that can be done, special efforts are being made, by sending out transport and so forth, to try to get greater supplies of fats made available. The whaling fleets, which unfortunately had a very poor season, have been instructed to stay out in the Antarctic beyond the normal date. Everywhere we are making these efforts, but I am bound to warn the country that I cannot guarantee that a further cut will not be necessary, though we shall do our utmost to avoid it. During these past six months, we have been trying, not merely to safeguard supplies for our own consumers here at home, but to bring to the notice of the great producing countries the reality of the situation, and to organise supplies for the world in general, and especially for those areas outside this country for which we have a responsibility.

I said earlier that whatever effort we make in this country we ourselves cannot deal with this situation, but we are doing what we can. We have raised our extraction rate. We had to cut down our feeding-stuffs to animals. We have encouraged the maximum sowing of spring wheat. We have reintroduced compulsory direction for a higher acreage of wheat in the 1947 harvest, and taken steps to increase the labour force, including prisoners of war. We have launched a campaign for saving. We have also summoned a Conference of Ministers of Food and Agriculture, which is sitting to-day and has been sitting since yesterday in London, in order to stimulate European food production and make the maximum use for human consumption of existing supplies. As the House knows, the Food and Agricultural Organisation is holding a Conference in May on the world shortage,

and we shall take our part in this. Mr. Hoover, whose great services after the last war are still fresh in our memory, is arriving here, I believe to-day, and will be consulting with the Foreign Secretary.

As a result of the efforts which are being made throughout the world, and especially the response of the great exporting countries, the position is rather better than it was a short time ago, but the outlook is still very uncertain and the outlook for next year is not satisfactory. By next June the world will have consumed all those abnormal stocks of wheat that were accumulating during the war at the time when the producing countries were cut off from their main markets. We ourselves shall have reduced our stocks to a level even below what was deemed to be the minimum in peace-time—and in peace-time our stocks had not got to be very heavy, because there were regular supplies and there were greater surpluses. We must all pray that the world harvests this year will not fall below the average, but we have to recognise that if they do the outlook will be black. Meanwhile, we must all, whether farmers, smallholders or allotment holders, do our utmost to increase production, and we must all use the greatest economy in our consumption.

We have endeavoured to set out the facts as well and fully as we can, but I am bound to say to the House that the standard of accuracy in the information given about different countries varies very considerably. Few countries have such accurate statistics as we have here. I think no other country has such an efficient system of rationing, such a complete system of administration, and, let me say, such complete co-operation on the part of the ordinary citizen. In looking at this question, one must always beware of the fallacy of averages. In many countries the conditions vary very much between town and country. Travellers coming back will give a completely different picture, and there is often, by averages, given an illusion of a uniform colour, that really covers a patchwork. We are trying to enable people to see this picture as a whole.

Many mistakes are made by trying to build up an argument on the basis of a simple figure. For instance, well-meaning people write to me sometimes calling attention to a figure of our stocks. They will suggest that because we have a stock of so much, we can therefore afford to disperse it and send it abroad. Stocks must be related to prospective supply and prospective demand, and people like that are really living in the past, because they have not got away from the idea that the normal flow which we had in peace-time of food coming

in, week by week, and day by day, from all over the world, will still be the fact in the future.

In estimating our stock position we have to watch very carefully not only what we have got here but what is coming in in the future. I know very well that all of us in this country feel acutely distressed at the thought of other people suffering want, and even starvation, while we can carry on. But a Government is charged with responsibility to its own people which it cannot shirk. It has no right to disregard its obligations. It cannot take unjustifiable risks. We have, as I believe the people of this country would have wished us to do, reduced our margin of safety to the limit to help others, but further we cannot go. We must maintain the strength of our people as a vital factor in the economic, political and social recovery of the world.

There is another matter which is sometimes pressed upon me. I am asked to allow schemes of voluntary collection of our food to be undertaken, so that food parcels may be sent abroad. I have not agreed to this; first, because the method is very wasteful of labour; secondly, because the distribution of food in countries suffering from shortages is far better and more fairly done by Government agencies than by some person here and there receiving a parcel, not perhaps the person who most needs it; thirdly, because I am not without fear of a kind of moral pressure being brought upon people to give up food which they really ought not to give up. After all, this people has been rationed for six years on standards which are only just enough to keep us in health, and one has to remember there are a great many people in this country who are living on the bare rations. I fear that individual gifts, while satisfying the conscience, do not make an effective contribution to the solution of the problem, and the less spectacular course of making, every one of us, as small a demand as possible on the common pool of food, is really far more effective.

It is our policy that consumption in this country should not fall further if it can possibly be avoided. We want to maintain our present standard. Our people have endured much over a very long period, longer than most other countries. Everything possible that can be done, will be done, to try to make our dietary more varied and more palatable within the limits that the world situation imposes. In the present world position it is inevitable there should be stringency. We shall do all we can to prevent our late enemies suffering starvation. Out of our own meagre resources we have done what we can, but I

am bound to point out that, if it is inevitable that some should suffer, I must rank the claims of those who, like the Indian people, have fought by our side, and the people of the liberated territories higher than the claims of the Germans and the Japanese who fought against us, people who, for the most part, accepted the leadership of the men who are responsible for the unhappy state of the world. If we could, we would provide all with food, but I say that if that choice comes, one is bound to help our friends before our late enemies.

I think we have no cause to be ashamed of the part our people have played in this as in other spheres. I doubt if any other people or Government has, while conscious of their own domestic needs, devoted more attention to trying to help others. There has never, I think, in the history of the world been a time when all the people, all the time, have been adequately fed, or have had a reasonable certainty for a reasonable period that that would be so. Only in more modern times have advances in the science of production and transport rendered that possible. The lesson of the war is that international, as well as national, planning and control are necessary if we are to get full nutrition for all.

The Combined Food Board is an experiment, the essential principle of which we should like to see continued. It has not any executive powers, because the executive power to decide this issue of exports naturally rests with the Governments of the exporting countries. But it is an international forum, in which information and arguments can be jointly examined, and recommendations forwarded to the sovereign Governments. In fact those Governments are, to-day, observing the recommendation made, and I think it is only by those means that large-scale famine has been avoided. We were wise in this country not to give in to those who wished to abandon rationing and price controls at an early stage. If we had done so, the present shortages might have caused starvation here. If the international system of allocation had been abandoned, there would have been starvation of millions in many countries. I think the moral is the same, internal or international: in times of scarcity, planning is the only means of providing fair shares for all and avoiding the coincidence of starvation on the one hand and lavish consumption on the other.

I hope that, when these present difficulties have been overcome, we shall be moving into an era in which, by utilising the resources of the world, we shall see that there is no starvation, no under-nourishment in any part of the world at all, but at present we have to go through a

grim period—a grim period in which we, as far as we can, will do our part with the other nations to try to save others. Our duty to-day, every one of us, is to have a full realisation of what this position is and, as far as we may, particularly by avoiding waste, to reduce to the utmost our demands, so that there may be a little more for others.

# A SPEECH TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN A FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATE

*23rd October*, 1946

*Within a few weeks of re-assembly after the summer recess the House of Commons devoted two days to a foreign affairs Debate. During the recess there had been the Peace Conference at Paris as well as several minor international gatherings; and the Debate coincided almost exactly with the opening of the second General Assembly of U.N.O. in the United States. But all this had produced no real improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. Mr. Bevin had opened the Debate on the first day and had given a sombre account of the difficulties with which he was grappling. An important part of his speech was devoted to defining the attitude of the Government to the revival and control of German industry. Mr. R. A. Butler had been the principal speaker from the Conservative benches.*

*On the second day the Prime Minister spoke first and was followed by Mr. Churchill.*

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary yesterday made a very extensive and detailed review of the international situation, and it was followed by an interesting Debate. I am quite sure that every hon. Member who listened to that speech will have realised the immensity of the problems which face the world, those problems with which the Foreign Secretary has to grapple. While there are, I am glad to say, areas in the world which offer no immediate problems, there are very many countries to-day which present disturbed conditions, and in many of them this country's interest is intimately concerned. I think everyone must sympathise with the Foreign Secretary in the magnitude of his task. Quite apart from the major problems of the future of Germany and Japan, there are adjustments in the relationship of the States of Europe. Old quarrels come up again which have been running for years. Some of these States were fighting for the Allies; some willingly, some of them more or less unwillingly, were the tools of the Nazis. There is in many parts of the world the clash of nationalities,

and while perhaps the most urgent problem that faces us is the future of Europe, the disorganisation of which has twice resulted from world war, there is the challenge of Asia, the Far East, India, Indonesia, and the Palestine problem.

My right hon. Friend has given an account of the many difficulties which attend efforts to bring about peace after a long war. I do not suppose that even the most optimistic of us thought that we could have cleared off these problems in fifteen months, but we have been having discussions at Paris, and the points of difference between the Great Powers have been brought out into the light of day owing to the publicity given to those discussions. After the first world war there were long debates, long discussions, there were differences that had to be adjusted.

But those discussions were mostly held in private. It is fair matter for argument how far full and public discussion of these matters is better than the adjustment of differences behind closed doors. For my part, I am certain that despite all the disadvantages of the method employed to-day, those debates have had an educative effect on the general body of citizens, and I think that the general body of citizens to-day are far more alive to the issues involved than were their predecessors twenty-seven years ago.

My right hon. Friend, towards the end of his speech, pointed out that what was taking place in Paris was really a preliminary. It was only the discussion of treaties with particular States, and not settling with the two major aggressor States; and he pointed out that beyond these matters lay the wider question of the organisation of the world in order to prevent a future world war. It is with that overriding problem I wish to deal this afternoon. Last week, in moving the Second Reading of the Bill for the memorial to President Roosevelt, I called attention to his prescience in calling the San Francisco Conference, from which has resulted the United Nations Organisation. To-day, even as we meet, the opening of the second part of the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations is taking place in New York. I am sure the House realises and I hope that everyone in the country realises its importance.

We have been reading week by week of discussions on the boundaries of particular European States, of the South Tyrol, Bratislava, the future status of Trieste. We have read a good many violent speeches. But all these matters, however important to the people most immediately concerned, are really very small issues compared with the major issue that confronts the world, that major task of

building peace on sure foundations. It is, after all, to this object that the United Nations Organisation is dedicated. We must remove from the peoples of the world this haunting fear of another war. There are many questions that can be settled and should be settled by agreement between neighbouring States. There are minor matters, and even large matters, that can be settled without the intervention of any international authority, but the matters that are to be discussed in New York can only be settled by international action.

Let me call the attention of the House to some of them. The General Assembly will be considering the report of the Economic and Social Council. They will have to deal with a world problem—the shortage of cereals. They will have to deal with the reconstruction of devastated areas. They will have to deal with the baffling problem of the refugees and displaced persons. These problems are quite beyond the scope of any one country to solve, inside or outside its own frontiers. Yet they must be solved if the world is to settle down to peace. My right hon. Friend pointed out in his speech yesterday that the background to the political difficulties of the world is the economic disorganisation resulting from the war. We are all very well aware of the extent to which the economic crisis of the years around 1930 contributed to the rise of Hitlerism and the degeneration of the world situation; and we must, if we are to establish peace, pay as much attention to economic as to political problems.

I thought that this was well brought out in some of the speeches which I either heard delivered yesterday or have read since then. In particular, I thought there was a very well-informed and able maiden speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Plaistow (Mr. Elwyn Jones), who brought this out well in dealing with the problem of Germany. It is easy and tempting to attribute all the troubles from which the world is suffering to the policy pursued by particular Powers. The fact remains that the economic conditions on which the statesmen of the world have to work were not created by those States. They were created by the action of the aggressors who plunged the world into war. There is, therefore, an absolute necessity for the existence of a world wide organisation to furnish means of discussion between nations, so that the solution of these problems can be worked out by a united effort.

I thought that in the speeches yesterday there was at times a note of pessimism. I think this was quite understandable, in view of the trends of the discussions at Paris, but we ought not to lose sight of the progress that has been made in developing common policies to deal with world

needs. While public attention has been mainly devoted, perhaps too much devoted, to the discussion of the peace treaties at Paris, there was an important conference at Copenhagen on food and agriculture. There is a forthcoming conference on world trade and industry. There has been a meeting of the Social and Economic Council that covered an immense range of subjects. There has been going on all the time, in fact, quite apart from political discussions, a steady development, under the United Nations, of many other social, economic and cultural instruments. There is a provisional civil aviation authority; there is an education authority known as U.N.E.S.C.O. There are important consultations dealing with matters such as human rights, transport and many other matters. We must try to-day to keep a just perspective in these matters. We must accept positive gain against the negations which sometimes seem perhaps to be the most prominent feature of some international gatherings.

There is another matter which is coming before the Assembly at its present meeting. Last January, His Majesty's Government took the lead in announcing their intention to place Tanganyika, Togoland, and the Cameroons, at present administered under mandate, under trusteeship. Negotiation of the draft terms of trusteeship has been completed, and these draft terms will be submitted to the General Assembly. This is just another instance of the many actions of His Majesty's Government which give the lie to the parrot call of "British Imperialism."

I would call attention this afternoon to another matter which is down for discussion and which is of vital importance to the very existence of the United Nations Organisation. That is the question of the veto in the Security Council. It raises the whole question of the value of the Security Council. I have in my mind very vivid recollections of the San Francisco Conference. I attended there with my right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden), my right hon. Friend the Minister of Works (Mr. Tomlinson), and other members of the Coalition Government. We worked as a team, and much hard work was done. There was a spirit in that meeting of hopefulness and good will. I cannot help expressing a feeling of disappointment at the recent performances in the Security Council. It has undoubtedly given an impression of disunity and ineffectiveness—such as to raise doubts about its value as an instrument for preserving international peace and security. This, I think, is not due to any fault in the machinery which was devised, but in the use to which it has been put.

After all, the underlying hypothesis that unless the five leading Powers were in general agreement on the policy to be pursued by the Security Council there was little hope for the preservation of peace was, I think, correct. I think it took account of the realities of the situation. But it all depends on what is meant by "in agreement," what is meant by "unanimity." If the Security Council is only going to be able to decide on a line of action in the case where the five Great Powers have all made up their minds in advance, and find themselves in agreement before discussion in the Security Council, the occasions on which the Council can reach positive decision will, I am afraid, be very few.

At San Francisco we agreed to the creation of the veto, but I am quite certain that we all regarded this as something to be used only in the last resort in extreme cases where the five Great Powers might be involved in conflict. We never conceived it as a device to be used constantly whenever a particular Power was not in full agreement with the others. Yet that is just what has happened recently. The veto was used for every trifling thing, and that is reducing to a nullity the usefulness of the Security Council. What is more, it is leading to disrespect, whereas the Security Council was created in order to create confidence, to command confidence as a quasi judicial body in matters of differences between States which involved the danger of war.

The use of the Security Council as a propaganda instrument is to be regretted. It is the desire of His Majesty's Government that this body should return to and fulfil its original intention so that the world may feel that there exists an instrument which, when matters cannot be settled by negotiation between countries, stands ready to intervene and bring impartial minds to bear upon the issues involved. Nothing will be so disastrous to the peace of the world as to allow the respect, dignity and power of the Security Council to be brought to naught.

While His Majesty's Government are not at the present time prepared to move that there should be any change in the Charter, we certainly are of the opinion that there should be a review of the use of the veto with a view to restraining it to its original intent. After all, what was our conception of the Security Council? Our conception was that the meetings of the Great Powers and their discussions in Council were for the purpose of exchanging points of view and making concessions where necessary, and of realising that it was more important that the Security Council should reach a corporate decision than that the viewpoint of individuals should be maintained through thick and

thin. In fact, if the Security Council is to be worked, it must be worked with a belief in the democratic method of arriving at results. There must be good will. There must be acceptance of the democratic principle of the rights and obligations of the majority and minority. We in this House over many years have worked on that principle. Broadly speaking, the will of the majority prevails, but the majority give full opportunity for the minority to put their views and both sides understand the point beyond which it is unwise to insist.

In the course of the Debate yesterday, I thought the vital principles of democracy were very well brought out in speeches from both sides of the House. I listened with particular interest to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Buckingham (Flight Lieutenant Crawley). I think he showed a just appreciation of this principle. I read the speech of the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. Platts-Mills). It was, I thought, entirely out of tune with the principles of democratic thought to which the Labour Party is attached. It was in fact not much more than a reproduction of the ordinary propaganda stuff of the Communist Party. I suggest to the hon. Member that he might leave this to the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) and the hon. Member for Mile End (Mr. Piratin) who are returned as professed Communists.

We reach here, in the consideration of this question, the central question that faces us to-day. If we are to achieve a peaceful world, States of diverse characters must be prepared to tolerate each other and work together. While we recognise all the difficulties involved, the Government are resolved to bring this about. While His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States share a common devotion to the principles of freedom and democracy on which the constitutions of both countries are founded, we have great differences in our economic outlook and yet we have every hope and belief that we can work together in seeking to solve some of the grave economic problems which the world has to face. We believe, with the Government of Soviet Russia, in the principles of the control of the economic life of the community by the people for the people, but we are deeply divided from them in the value we place on the liberty of the individual, freedom of speech, and our conception of democracy. Nevertheless, we believe that it is not only possible but essential for us to work together in order to prevent the calamity of another war which would overwhelm everyone, whatever may be their ideologies. We have shown in the British Commonwealth of Nations how Governments of different political views—Liberals, Conservatives, Socialists—can

work in the closest harmony for a common end, without in any way relinquishing their individual views.

There is another matter relating to the United Nations Organisation to which I would call attention. It was an essential purpose of the Charter that there should be available military sanctions in order that aggression might be halted. To this end, there is a provision in the Charter for the establishment of a Military Staff Committee. It is a matter of great regret that this Committee has not been allowed to function more effectively. Meanwhile, there has been a proposal in the Security Council demanding the return of the numbers of foreign troops in certain countries. This demand has not been accepted, and I think rightly, because there is no provision in the Charter for such return, and, in the form in which it was raised, it savoured of pure propaganda.

The danger to the world does not lie in the use of troops for police purposes. Indeed, they are so placed now in many parts of the world, but, in a very short time, they will be totally removed and the situation needing them will no longer arise, as, for instance, in Venezia Giuilia and Greece. In regard to Venezia Giuilia, I should like to answer a point which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Butler). I can assure him that British troops will remain on the Morgan Line until agreement in this matter has been reached in the peace treaty and the relevant portions of the treaty implemented. The general position abroad will, of course, be affected by a variety of changes in political development going on all over the world. What does constitute a danger is the presence of mobilised forces, and, while these mobilised forces may not be on other people's territory, they may still be a positive danger to peace.

I have seen in recent weeks and have heard sometimes criticism of the fact that a number of Ministers have been out of this country. The fact is, of course, that, if we are to play our part, and our part is a leading part in international affairs, we must provide for adequate representation at these conferences. I know that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary would far rather be here at home than in Paris or New York, but I am sure that everyone will agree that his presence abroad at these conferences is necessary in the interests of the country. In Paris, my right hon. Friend was very ably assisted by the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Alexander) and by several junior Ministers. As regards the meeting of the United Nations Organisation, my right hon. Friend will not be there for part of the time, but the Secretary of State for Air, the Attorney-General and the Minister of State will be

among our principal delegates, and some junior Ministers will also be attending for part of the time. Believe me, attendance at these conferences is not just a joy-ride and a holiday—and I have had some.

I would like here to refer to the very distinguished work which was done by Sir Alexander Cadogan in the Security Council. He has made it his endeavour to keep the Council to its proper purpose, namely, an organisation for the preservation of peace and security, and to prevent it from degenerating into a platform for national propaganda. I should like also to call attention to his vigorous defence of British policy and of the British Army in Greece, against quite unwarranted attacks. I hope that at the forthcoming meetings we shall see the United Nations Organisation put to its proper use. We must, of course, recall that it is still very young, that it is bound to have some teething troubles and that some of those attending it have been almost completely without experience of the functioning of democratic institutions. We must hope that they will learn. My right hon. Friend and his colleagues will go to New York fortified by this Debate, for I believe that the policy he is pursuing with such patience and ability has the general support of the vast majority of the people of this country.

The criticisms which are made, apart from those which seem to be based on the thesis that Soviet Russia is always right, have not been directed against the general policy of H.M. Government. They have been directed to particular points, on which it is thought by some that other tactics would have produced better results. It is, for instance, suggested that intervention in Spain, or direct action by economic sanctions or by the withdrawal of ambassadors, would bring about the result which we all desire—a change of regime. I suppose I have as much dislike for the Franco regime as anyone in the House, but, in my considered opinion, those views are mistaken. All the evidence at my disposal points to the opposite conclusion—that external intervention will only strengthen General Franco—a very deplorable result.

On the other hand, it is suggested by some that the Government should not have interfered in Greece, and that we have been working deliberately to create and foster reactionary Governments. Nothing could be further from the truth. We had one object and one only—to give the Greek people the opportunity of deciding freely on their own destiny. But it is really idle for anyone recalling the history of Greece in recent years, and with a knowledge of the realities of Greek political life, to suppose that, but for Great Britain, there would be political agreement in that country. There are extremists on both sides who are prepared to resort to methods of violence. There has been

little willingness among politicians, even among those whose views did not seem to differ very widely, to sink minor differences and personal considerations in the common interests of their country.

My. hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Buckingham rightly stressed the fact that the policy of this Government—internal and external policy—is that of democratic Socialism. We believe that men and women must be free, both from the excessive domination of Governments, and from the abuses of economic power. We do not seek to thrust our views upon other nations. We are seeking to set an example here of how individual freedom and the interests of the community can be harmonised, and, in our international relations, to afford to all peoples the greatest possible freedom to work out their own salvation, consistent with the overriding interests of all in the preservation of peace.

CHAPTER VII

# THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

*A Broadcast Speech on the Future of India* (19*th September*, 1945)

*A Speech to a Joint Session of the Canadian Parliament* (19*th November*, 1945)

*A Speech at the Opening Session of the Imperial Press Conference* (3*rd June*, 1946)

# A BROADCAST SPEECH ON THE FUTURE OF INDIA

*19th September, 1945*

*On coming into office the Labour Government quickly gave its attention to Indian problems. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, was called to London for consultations and on his return to New Delhi made an announcement of policy. Immediately following this the Prime Minister went to the microphone and made this statement showing that the full weight of the Government's authority was behind a policy of rapid constitutional progress for India.*

THE King's Speech at the opening of the new Parliament contained this passage:

> "In accordance with the promises already made to my Indian peoples my Government will do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India."

Immediately after assuming office the Government turned its attention to Indian affairs and invited the Viceroy to come home in order to review with him the whole situation, economic and political. These discussions have now concluded, the Viceroy has returned to India and has made an announcement of policy.

You will remember that in 1942 the Coalition Government made a draft declaration for discussion with Indian leaders, commonly known as the Cripps Offer. It was proposed that immediately upon the cessation of hostilities steps should be taken to set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India. Sir Stafford Cripps took that offer to India, but it was, unfortunately, not accepted by the leaders of the Indian political parties; the Government is, however, acting in accordance with its spirit and intention.

The first step necessary is to get as soon as may be as democratic a representation of the Indian peoples as possible. The war has in India, as in this country, prevented elections being held for a long time,

and the Central and Provincial Legislatures must now be renewed. Therefore, as has already been announced, elections will be held in India in the coming cold weather. The electoral rolls are being revised as completely as time permits, and everything possible will be done to ensure a free and fair election. The Viceroy has to-day made known our intention to follow these elections by positive steps to set up a constituent assembly of Indian elected representatives charged with the task of framing a new constitution. The Government has authorised Lord Wavell to undertake preliminary discussions with representatives of the new Provincial Legislatures as soon as they are elected to ascertain whether the proposals in the Cripps Offer are acceptable as they stand or whether some alternative or modified scheme would be preferable. Discussions will also take place with the representatives of the Indian States.

The Government has further authorised the Viceroy, as an interim measure, to take steps after the elections to bring into being an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties in order that India may deal herself with her own social and economic problems and may take her full part in working out the new world order.

The broad definition of British policy towards India contained in the Declaration of 1942, which had the support of all Parties in this country, stands in all its fullness and purpose. This Declaration envisaged the negotiation of a treaty between the British Government and the constitution-making body. The Government is giving immediate consideration to the contents of such a treaty. It can be said here that in that treaty we shall not seek to provide for anything incompatible with the interests of India. No one who has any acquaintance with Indian affairs will under-estimate the difficulties which will have to be surmounted in the setting up and smooth operation of a constitution-making body. Still greater is the difficulty which will face the elected representatives of the Indian people in seeking to frame a constitution for a great continent containing more than four hundred million human beings.

During the war Indian fighting men have, in Europe, Africa and Asia, played a splendid part in defeating the forces of tyranny and aggression. India has shared to the full with the rest of the United Nations the task of saving freedom and democracy. Victory came through unity and through the readiness of all to sink their differences in order to attain the supreme object.

I would ask all Indians to follow this great example and to join together in a united effort to work out a constitution which majority and minority communities will accept as just and fair, a constitution in which both States and Provinces can find their place. The British Government will do their utmost to give every assistance in their power and India can be assured of the sympathy of the British people.

# A SPEECH TO A JOINT SESSION OF THE CANADIAN HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

*19th November, 1945*

*In November, 1945, on his way back to London from Washington, Mr. Attlee paid a brief visit to Ottawa. In the course of this visit he accepted an invitation to address both Houses of the Canadian Parliament, assembled in a special joint session. He was introduced to a crowded gathering by Mr. Mackenzie King, who had been with him at the Washington talks. Part of Mr. Attlee's speech was delivered in French in recognition of the bi-lingual character of the Canadian nation.*

IT is a great pleasure to me to be in Ottawa again. It has been my privilege to visit Canada four times in the last five years. When I was last here I was Deputy Prime Minister in Mr. Churchill's Government, a post which I held until a few months ago. Now by a process well understood by all of us Parliamentarians, there has been a change of administration and I come before you as Prime Minister. I say that this is well understood by all of us, but the methods that are natural to democracies are not always understood in other parts of the world.

You will remember that we had a General Election in Britain and I then accompanied Mr. Churchill to Potsdam while the ballot boxes remained locked up and the votes from the men overseas were coming in. Some of our friends were surprised that immediately following a vigorous electoral contest Mr. Churchill and I could co-operate; some were even astonished that we showed no agitation while our political destinies remained hidden for three weeks. When we returned to London and the result of the ballot caused me to become Prime Minister, I went back to Potsdam with precisely the same civil servants as had accompanied Mr. Churchill. It was a striking example of how in countries where the rule of law obtains, we can effect change peaceably. It was also an illustration of the fact that political differences do not prevent co-operation between opponents where the interests of the country are at stake.

In London we have been delighted to welcome in recent years representatives of all your Parties, including my friend Mr. Bracken the leader of the Opposition and Mr. Coldwell the leader of the C.C.F.; and only a week or two ago we had the pleasure of receiving your Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, on his third visit since the war began. As the most junior of the Prime Ministers in the Commonwealth, it has been a pleasure to me to be with one who has had such a long and distinguished tenure of office. He and I have come to you from the United States of America where we have been in consultation with President Truman on a subject of most vital consequence, not only to the people of our own countries but to the peoples of the whole world.

I shall not venture on Mr. King's prerogatives by talking to you this afternoon about the problems which the discovery of the release of atomic energy has created. I have no doubt you will be debating these high matters in due course but I know that this problem has presented itself to all three of us as only one part of the great question which confronts us all to-day; that problem is—how can we secure peace? How can we prevent another devastating war, even worse than those which we have experienced, arising again in a few years, time? You will have seen that in considering this question we stressed the paramount importance of making the United Nations Organisation an effective instrument of world peace. You cannot deal with these matters by considering such a question as that of the atom bomb by itself. A very distinguished leader of my Party, Mr. Sidney Webb, now Lord Passfield, once described the process of trying to deal with the particular results of general causes as that of hammering on the bulge. It was a simile taken from dealing with pots and pans for in hammering on the bulge you merely caused the metal to raise itself in another place.

The particular problem of certain armaments must be considered in the light of the general question of securing world peace. It is just here, I believe, with all due humility, that the British Commonwealth and Empire offers the world an example which should be noted and followed. In our British Commonwealth, the units which compose it are equal. They are sovereign and independent States owing allegiance to the same King, freely co-operating for their mutual benefit, each one of them living its own life, having its own distinctive characteristics and, while avoiding slavish uniformity, being responsive to a larger unity. The bonds which unite this great company of nations are not material; they are spiritual. The strands which compose them

are the acceptance of the rule of law, a belief in and the practice of the principles of democracy and liberty, and the acknowledgment of a common standard of moral values.

It is in my view precisely these spiritual ties which must bind together all the nations of the world if we are to make the United Nations Organisation a living entity, if we are to establish peace on sure foundations. The work done at San Francisco was valuable, but the designing and perfecting of a machine is of little value unless there is the power to make it move. It is only an intense belief in the great principles of the inter-dependence of nations and the brotherhood of man that will provide the motive power to this great machine which has been constructed. I am certain that it was this unity in the British Commonwealth, based on the common conception of the right relationship between human beings and between nations, that was responsible for the remarkable spontaneity with which at the threat to civilisation the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations sprang to arms.

I urge each individual man and woman of every race, creed and language to understand the moral crisis that confronts the world.

Je me rappelle à ce moment ce qu'a dit un des grands esprits de la France, Rabelais: "Science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme." Voilà le problème qui confronte l'humanité-rapprocher la science et la moralité. A mon avis, il est évident que si nous n'apportons à ces problèmes un enthousiasme moral aussi grand que celui qu'apportent les savants à leurs recherches, la civilisation construite pendant des siècles sera détruite.

Speaking to you here to-day after the close of this long struggle, I should like to pay my tribute to what Canada and the Canadian people achieved. I recall so well in the dark days of 1940, when our Forces had to withdraw from Dunkirk and we were left with very scanty equipment to defend ourselves against the invasion that then seemed imminent, how heartened we were by the presence in ever growing numbers of the Canadian Forces. I know too what a strain it was for those gallant men to remain apparently inactive for many weary months, although in fact their presence was vital to the whole strategy of the war. In 1942, there took place the Canadian action at Dieppe which played a vital part in the preparations for the later invasions. It enabled us to perfect our amphibious technique; it taught us how to conduct air battles in support of a landing; and it made us realise the need for bringing with us our own harbours. Thus the men of Dieppe showed the way to North Africa, to Sicily, to Italy and to Normandy.

When the time came for the Canadian Armed Forces to cross the seas, in every theatre of war they more than sustained the high reputation which they had won in the first world war on the fields of France and Flanders. I recall how they were the spearhead of the attack on Sicily and how they fought their way north in 1944 and early 1945 along the Adriatic and across the Apennines. It was my privilege then to visit them in the front line. No less splendid were their feats in the invasion of Europe. Some of the hardest tasks were given to them; the clearing of the Channel Ports, of the Dutch Coast, and the opening of the Port of Antwerp. And since the defeat of Germany Canadian troops have been playing their part in the vital task of disarming the Germans and occupying their country. This task and similar tasks in Japan will make great demands on the resources of the Commonwealth and of the Allies, but it is one of the tasks which must be done fully and well if we are not to throw away the rewards of victory.

The whole world knows the achievements of the Royal Canadian Air Forces; their units played a distinguished part in every phase of our warfare, in every command of the United Kingdom and in every overseas theatre; they were second to none in their gallantry and in their skill. Perhaps their biggest single achievement was the provision of an entire group, the famous No. 6 Group of Bomber Command. Behind the whole air effort of the British Commonwealth lay that great Empire Air Training Scheme under which roughly one-third of the British, Dominion and Allied air crews were trained in this country. Perhaps it is not so generally known that the Dominion of Canada played a major part in the development of Radar and provided the R.A.F. with its main source of highly skilled mechanics and technicians. Finally, let me say that one of the most notable achievements of the war was the development from small beginnings of a great Canadian Navy. In all the strain of the long continued Battle of the Atlantic, Canadians took their full share with their British and American comrades.

Besides all this, just as in the old country, the workers in the fields, the factories and the shipyards, the scientists, technicians and research workers are entitled to a full share of credit for the successful outcome of the war. I should like here to refer particularly to the vast financial contribution of Canada, to the food supplies sent across the Atlantic and to the whole system of mutual aid. Canada has had not only firm leadership of her Fighting Forces, by sea, on land and in the air, but also at home by a far-seeing and wise Parliament and

Government, who understood just what was needed for the common effort. Everyone who realises fully what Canada did throughout the war must acknowledge that hers was a major contribution to the common cause.

You now, like ourselves, are facing the problems of peace. I count it a happy event that on the first visit which I have made overseas since the end of the Potsdam Conference, I should have had the comradeship of your Prime Minister visiting our great friend and ally, the United States of America. It seems to me to be a good augury for the future in which the problems of peace will need that same co-operation which brought us to final and complete victory.

I remember very well when I was over here in 1941, discussing with members of your Cabinet the problems of mobilising manpower and womanpower in both our countries for total war. We now are both engaged in the equally difficult task of demobilisation and of the turning-over from war to peace of our whole economic machine. I have no doubt that your difficulties are very present to your minds, but it might not be out of place for me to tell you something of ours. I suppose that in no country engaged in the war was a greater degree of austerity imposed upon the people than in the United Kingdom. I need not tell you that our food situation is still very difficult and that our rations are on a scale only barely sufficient to maintain health. Coal too is in short supply. But this is not all. During the war we have been unable to replenish our ordinary stores of domestic requirements, sheets, blankets, curtains, pots and pans and crockery. We have had as it were, in every phase of our life, to make and do and mend, with the inevitable consequence that we find ourselves to-day faced with every kind of shortage. If you go round our shops you will find that many of the ordinary requirements that the housewife wants are simply not there. We are still rationed very tightly for clothing and shoes. The men and women who come out of the Fighting Services and want to set up a home on marriage will find the greatest difficulty in furnishing it; we are endeavouring to provide utility furniture, but it takes a long time to get the industrial machine under way. And let me add that those who want to marry and settle down have an anxiety even more pressing than that of how to furnish a home—that is, to find a home to live in. It is perhaps not generally realised that three and a half million houses were to a greater or lesser extent damaged in the blitz and of these a great number were entirely destroyed. My own constituency in East London was formerly a dense mass of working-class houses with hardly any open space at all. But at the recent General

Election my constituents walked through the fields to vote for me—fields strewn with rubble, beginning to be covered by weeds that have grown up in the spaces created by German bombs. It will take years to catch up with the housing shortage. It will take a long time to get our industries fully at work and even then we shall not be able to devote all our energies to our domestic needs. We have the problem of paying for our food and raw materials. For that purpose it is essential that we should build up as soon as possible our export trade. We shall not have in the future those exports on which we used to depend before the war. Those resources built up by past prosperity were used up in the grim time when the British Commonwealth and Empire stood alone in the field against the barbarians and in the years which followed.

You may think I am painting you a somewhat dark picture. I do not minimise to you or to our own people our difficulties, but I should like you to know also the spirit in which we are tackling them. I was talking the other day to a distinguished American editor who had been visiting Britain, and he said to me that the thing that struck him most was the spirit of energy in our country. It recalls to me what Emerson said a hundred years ago about Britain—

> "So. . . . I feel in regard to this aged England . . . pressed upon by transitions of trade and . . . competing populations—I see her dispirited, not weak, but well remembering that she has seen dark days;—indeed, with a kind of instinct that she sees a little better in a cloudy day, and that, in storm of battle and calamity, she has a secret vigour and a pulse like a cannon."

I believe that that is true to-day. We have a new Parliament, very largely made up of young men and women, with a big proportion drawn from the Fighting Forces. I believe that this Parliament with its youthful energy, drive and idealism and its readiness to embark on new experiments fitly represents the spirit of our old country.

At the General Election the electors returned to power a Party which believes in a planned economy, which believes in developing to the full the resources of our country in the interests of all the people, which believes that every individual in the community should be given a fair share of the good things of this world in return for a fair contribution of effort. We are therefore embarking on new policies. We are putting forward complete schemes for social security designed to remove from the homes of our people the fear of want. But we

know well that our ability to provide this economic security will depend on the degree to which we are able to apply the skill of our workers and of our scientists and managers to our natural resources. That is why we are seeking to reorganise our basic industries such as coal, as services owned and controlled in the interests of the nation. We cannot afford to waste our resources. We cannot afford inefficiency. We are seeking to direct capital into those channels where it will fertilise trade and industry in the interest of the whole community. We have an agricultural policy designed to see that the workers on the land get a fair return in price for their efforts and that the food of the people shall be obtainable at a reasonable cost. We shall, of course, always have to import a large amount of our food supplies from abroad, but we believe that a prosperous agriculture at home is compatible with that exchange of food and raw materials from overseas in return for our manufactured goods which has for so long been the basis of our inter-Commonwealth trade. Therefore, while we follow no exclusive policy, we believe that in the future as in the past the general well-being of the countries of the Commonwealth will be enhanced by their economies being complementary. In saying this I do not lose sight of the fact that Canada, perhaps to an even greater extent than other countries in the Commonwealth, has become during the war an important manufacturing nation and that it will expect to see in post-war years an increasing export of its own manufactured products. But past experience has shown that the greatest volume of trade has been built up between highly industrialised countries, and I see no reason therefore to think that the development to which I have referred will place any obstacle upon a steady and increasing trade between our two countries.

We of the Labour Party believe in an expansionist economy; we affirm that if we all act wisely we shall never again see as we did in 1931 the tragedy of starvation and want in the midst of abundance. We hold that it is of vital importance that there should be a steadily increasing standard of life for the masses of the people throughout the world. In particular, we believe it to be essential that the producers of primary products all the world over should be assured of a fair reward for their labours and should not be at the mercy of the vagaries of uncontrolled prices.

Sir, we have emerged triumphant from the greatest crisis that ever faced the free peoples of the world. It is for us to see that that victory is not nullified by the failure to deal effectively with the problems of the peace. We owe it to the valiant dead that they shall

not have died in vain. I know well how in all our countries there is weariness after these six years of war, but we must not let it overcome us. There may be here and there some cynicism; we must meet it by redoubling our faith and hope. I sometimes hear talk of new nations and old nations. It has been suggested that we in Europe are old and effete. Do not believe it. You are the new shoot from the old stem; but the old stem is still alive and full of life and vigour. You in Canada draw your spiritual resources from two great nations; these nations in turn have in the past and will in the future derive their sustenance from the great heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors. I can see that you here in Canada are pulsating with life and vigour. You have a great part to play in the world, and I am certain that in peace as in war you will take your full share in bearing the burdens of the world.

Twice in my lifetime the aggressor has presumed to think that Britain was feeble and effete. Twice has he learned his error. Despite all our difficulties we face the future undismayed. We shall go forward into this new world, a world, it is true, of danger, but a world of great opportunity, strong in the faith expressed so clearly by Robert Burns:

> "It's coming yet for a' that
> That man to man the world o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that."

# A SPEECH AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE IMPERIAL PRESS CONFERENCE

*3rd June*, 1946

*The sixth Imperial Press Conference, and the first to be held in this country since* 1930, *met in London in June*, 1946. *Nearly a hundred delegates from the United Kingdom, India and many of the Dominions and Colonies attended the Conference. Mr. Attlee was present at the opening session, held at Grosvenor House, to welcome the delegates to London and declare the Conference open.*

I HAVE great pleasure in welcoming to London, on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the distinguished members of this, the sixth Imperial Press Conference. You have come together from all parts of the British Commonwealth and Empire; and for some of you that means coming a very long way. But you have come among friends and comrades linked to you by ties that grow ever stronger with the passage of the years.

I cannot welcome you to this, the first Imperial Press Conference since the war, without referring to the new bonds that war has forged. Behind the delegations from Australia and New Zealand, we see the far-travelled armies, who held the vital bridges between the eastern and the western worlds, who returned at a fresh challenge to defend their own countries and eventually to clear vast spaces of the Pacific Ocean of the invaders, and who could yet spare men to remain in the old world and sweep across the Mediterranean into Italy. We watched with admiration the dashing campaign in which the South African Forces liberated the eastern regions of their continent from Fascist despotism. As for the soldiers of Canada, we have learned to know them as never before; for it was their fortifying presence, sharing our danger at its most oppressive, that enabled us with resources then so slender not only to defy the enemy here but even to maintain the offensive spirit far away on the borders of Africa and Asia. From Dieppe to the Rhine and beyond they were always pioneers.

To the Indian delegation I would extend a specially warm welcome. We had abundant proof in this war, as in the last, of the fighting

qualities of the soldiers of India. They covered themselves with glory wherever they fought. Now that the tyrannies that sought in the West and in the East to dominate the world in an unholy partnership have been defeated we turn to the problems and opportunities of the future. The opportunity that now lies ahead of India is an immense one. Whether in the coming months the people of India choose to remain with us as a free and equal partner in the Commonwealth, or to work out their own destiny in complete separation, they are assured of our help and friendship. And I hope that the close ties that now link the Indian Press with that of Great Britain and the Dominions will never be relaxed.

In the presence of the delegation from the West Indies, I must mention, too, the debt we owe to the sons and daughters of the Caribbean, who from the very outset of the war flocked to the colours, and who won honour in every Service and in every theatre of the world-wide war. And let me pay tribute here, not only to the soldiers of the Commonwealth, but to the newspapermen who as war correspondents reported with superb skill and clarity the great campaigns which led to our victory. They were worthy of the men who fought.

We have just lately, as you know, had the opportunity of a most valuable exchange of views on many matters of common interest and importance with the Prime Ministers of three of the member nations of the Commonwealth, Canada, Australia and South Africa, and with the Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, at our meetings here in London. I need not tell you how important to the welfare of the Commonwealth it is that opportunities should be taken for personal contact between those who bear the chief responsibility in its several communities, and for intimate discussion, such as we have just been enjoying, on the many matters which affect us or on which it is good that we should inform each other.

In this Imperial Press Conference which begins to-day you are carrying on in your sphere—and a very influential sphere it is—precisely that same vital task of furthering understanding that is the reason for such consultations among Ministers of the Commonwealth as have just ended. This purpose was, indeed, I know, a conscious and very important object of the foundation of the Empire Press Union. And here I must interpose a word of greeting to Sir Harry Brittain, to whose initiative your Union owed its existence in 1909, who has served it with unflagging devotion ever since and who is still with you to-day.

At the first Imperial Press Conference in that year 1909, the delegates of the Empire Press heard a solemn warning from Lord Rosebery of the storms ahead. It was in the light of that warning that your Union was founded. It was the explicit hope of its founders that it would link the whole British Press in friendly co-operation throughout the Empire. That purpose it has impressively fulfilled, both in peace and in war; and in so doing it has rendered a service reaching far beyond the professional world of the Press. For this work of fostering mutual comprehension across the seas cannot be confined to Governments or restricted to the field of politics. What we must secure and preserve is the utmost possible understanding between our peoples, a day-to-day interest in one another's fortunes, a power to enter into one another's thoughts, a sense of neighbourliness that ten thousand miles of ocean cannot interrupt. We who sit in Cabinets and Parliaments will always do our best to help; but you on whom the people depend for their information about the living world have a part no less important to play.

In this great matter of maintaining that mutual understanding on which the unity of the Commonwealth is founded, politicians and journalists are natural allies—although like allies in other fields we may not always see eye to eye in every particular.

It would be too much to expect that we should. It would not, I think, be to the public interest if we always did agree. Democracy flourishes in the sharp clear air of controversy. Public opinion is not a simple but a complex thing. It is made up of many diverse currents flowing from many different experiences and sources of knowledge. No one political party and no one newspaper can alone interpret it.

What is important is that all those whose business it is to interpret and in some measure to lead public opinion should do so with a steadfast awareness of the responsibility they bear and of the obligation upon them to place all the facts before the public and not simply those which support one particular case.

Later this week you will be discussing the freedom of the Press. I hope your discussion will be full, frank and fruitful, as I am sure it will be. In the democratic approach to problems, which I believe to be the only approach which holds out real hope for the world, there is no freedom more important than this. For it is a freedom which belongs not to the Press but to the public whose agents in this matter the newspapers are—it is the freedom to be given the facts, national and international, on which sound judgment can be formed.

Sometimes the newspapers' appetite for facts may prove embarrassing to the politicians. As we see the political correspondents looming ahead of us in the Lobby, avid for news, we are sometimes, I dare say, tempted to mutter under our breaths like King Duncan: "What bloody man is this? He can report," knowing that he not only can but will, and nothing will stop him. But so long as you stick to facts we have no complaint. The opinions you express on the basis of those facts are your own affair. We can have no complaint if we do not agree with them—we only have a right to complain, and the public has a right to complain, when facts are twisted or invented, or when there are omissions which distort the whole picture.

Let us have more facts. Let us have the freest possible flow of information between the members of the British Commonwealth—let us work for the fullest flow of information between the peoples of all nations. No true interest of the ordinary people of the world was ever hampered by letting the truth be known. On understanding between peoples the advance of civilisation depends. You, gathered here from all parts of the Commonwealth and Empire, have at this moment in the world's history a vast opportunity and a vast responsibility. This Commonwealth and Empire has made immense contributions to the well-being of the world in the past. It can make still vaster contributions in the future, for the world has great need of the experience and knowledge of democratic institutions and of the balancing of individual and community rights and responsibilities upon which the best traditions of our British way of life are founded.

Let me in conclusion say this. The technical discussions which are to occupy a good deal of your time are not the sole purpose, perhaps not even the principal purpose, of your coming together here in Great Britain. You have come to meet one another, to make personal contacts and friendships which may link you all together, though widely separated in space, during the years to come. So the Imperial Press Conference and the Empire Press Union can help powerfully to provide a harmonising and co-ordinating force in the thought of the whole Commonwealth.

It has always been an object of the Conference to enable its members to study at first hand, in some detail, and with the many-sidedness that is possible when a number of friends embark on a joint enterprise, the life of the country in which they are assembled. Before the war, in five successive conferences your members travelled extensively in this country and in the four great Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Now a new cycle is beginning with a

second visit to the old country. An extensive programme of hospitality has been arranged for you, first here in London, and then along a carefully planned route that will lead you through some of the principal cities and most beautiful country in this island. Your time promises to be strenuous; but I hope you will think that pleasure bears a tolerably high proportion to business. You will find a battered land and a people weary after the labours and depredations of war, yet confident and strong. You will find a people in no doubt at all of their ability, having triumphed over so many dangers in war, to surmount all the problems that peace may bring. And you will find an unshakable resolve to build the national life anew, and to build it in nobler proportions than in the past.

I hope that when your Conference is over and you return to your own countries you will report on what you have seen, and in doing so will say that you found us full of energy, full of confidence, engaged with all our will on a great adventure. But whatever else you report, report this—that we in the United Kingdom look with deep and growing affection to our friends and comrades throughout the Commonwealth and feel ourselves constantly sustained and supported by the knowledge that we are members of a great companionship.

CHAPTER VIII

# THE SUMMING-UP

*A Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet (9th November, 1946)*

# A SPEECH AT THE LORD MAYOR'S BANQUET

*9th November, 1946*

*The Lord Mayor's banquet has long been the occasion for a major speech from the Prime Minister of the day. It falls immediately before the opening of the new session of Parliament, and thus provides a convenient opportunity for a review of the Government's work in the past year.*

*In November, 1945, when Mr. Attlee first attended as Prime Minister, the function took the form of a luncheon at the Mansion House; in 1946 however, there was a reversion to peace-time custom and a dinner at Guildhall. Mr. Attlee's speech was in reply to the toast of "His Majesty's Ministers," given by Sir Bracewell Smith, the new Lord Mayor.*

ON behalf of His Majesty's Government, I should like to thank you, my Lord Mayor, for the kind terms in which you have proposed our health and, on behalf of the whole assembled company, to thank you, my Lord Mayor, and the Sheriffs, for your hospitality this evening. The City of London has been famous throughout the ages for the generous entertainment that it gives. During the past year we have had many instances of this, and I would particularly recall the splendid way in which the retiring Lord Mayor, Sir Charles Davis, and the Corporation have honoured the foremost war leaders of the Allies and of this country.

It was the old tradition that at the Lord Mayor's Banquet the Prime Minister should give an extensive survey of home and foreign affairs. In those more leisurely days Parliament finished its work at the end of the summer and did not meet again until the late autumn or even the new year. But in these strenuous times the interval between sessions has been reduced to less than a week.

We have recently had in the House of Commons a two days' Debate on foreign affairs, in the course of which the Foreign Secretary dealt at great length with world problems. He would, of course, have liked to have been here this evening, but as we all know he is engaged on the other side of the Atlantic in the making of the peace treaties, work in which I know he has the good wishes of the whole country.

Let me deal briefly with some of the problems which we have had to face in the past year. Our first great problem was demobilisation. Out of the 5,100,000 men in our Armed Forces in June, 1945, 4,000,000 of these have been released or discharged, the great majority under the age and service scheme. This has been effected with astonishingly little friction and I think we should here pay our tribute to the civilian and military authorities for the efficient handling of this complicated problem; but above all to the men and women in the Fighting Services for the patience, discipline and good temper they have shown throughout.

The complementary process to demobilisation is the re-absorption of the men and women into industry. Although, in the course of fifteen months, 6,800,000 persons have been discharged from the Forces and from employment on the production of equipment and supplies, less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the insured population is unemployed. This reflects the very greatest credit on both sides in industry, employers and employed alike.

The result is seen in the steady increase in the volume of supplies for the home market and in the growth of our export trade. I am aware, of course, that all-round increases are but cold comfort to those who are still without the goods that they require. But, quite inevitably, however great an effort had been made, the gap caused by six years' devotion of all the energies of the country to war could not possibly have been filled in fifteen months.

The vitality of British industry and its skill in design and production has been strikingly exemplified in the Britain Can Make It Exhibition, which was opened by the King and Queen—a signal honour. I do not know how many of you are included in the 862,414 people who have visited it since 24th September. It takes some patience to get to it, but it made a deep impression on me as it has on others, including many foreign visitors. It is, of course, tantalising to see on so many articles the sad remark "available later." It just whets the appetite. But I am informed that one third of the goods are available now and that more than one-half will be so by the end of the year.

This exhibition will, I am sure, have helped us all, producers and consumers alike, to realise the importance of good design. This is vital to our industrial future, because it is quality which will sell our goods abroad and enable us to reach our export target.

I would like here to say something of our international trading position. The recovery of our export trade has been very much more

rapid than after the first world war, although our production difficulties have been much greater. After 1918 it was two years before the volume of British exports reached 71 per cent of the pre-war total. This time we have exceeded 100 per cent at the end of the first year. We have still a long way to go to achieve a permanent rate of export equal to about 175 per cent of the pre-war volume; yet that is what we need. We have to-day a seller's market, but we have to look to the future when world competition begins again.

I think to-day knowledge of economics is more widely distributed than ever before among our people. There is a general realisation that imports can only be paid for by exports, and that there is therefore a limit at the present time to the availability of consumer goods for our own population. These problems are, of course, well appreciated in this City, and you will realise that one of our greatest problems is that of the balance of payments. This will be a continuous source of concern to this country for many years ahead, until we have completed the adjustment of our international trade to the sacrifice of overseas income which we made in the war. But we have started well, and I believe that the vigour with which the nation is pressing the export drive is impressing on our friends abroad the determination with which we are tackling the problem of regaining our external economic stability.

We are, of course, greatly helped by the breathing space afforded by the Canadian and United States lines of credit. But I must remind you again that they provide only a breathing space. We have undertaken serious obligations to make sterling convertible, and these obligations must be carried out in the middle of next year, in a world which will still be far from economic stability. In international trade and finance, this country occupies a central balancing position between the Western Hemisphere on the one hand and the Eastern Hemisphere on the other. This will continue to put a strain on us until Europe and Asia have restored their productive power.

My Lord Mayor, we can most of us remember the days when the problem of procuring the simple elementary needs of human life seemed to be a matter of the possession of purchasing power by the individual. If one had money one could get food, clothing, fuel, shelter and the materials needed for their construction. I need not remind you that a large number of people went short for lack of money. But during the war we realised that there were absolute shortages in this country. There was no extra food, no more clothing,

no more houses. We had to ration our supplies to provide at least a minimum for all our people.

We are still living in a period of shortages. Many of these are world shortages. No amount of purchasing power will produce at once the required supplies. Even if the distribution of world supplies were ideal, which it is not, everyone could not be satisfied.

I need not emphasise to you the gravity of the food situation in many parts of the world. There is not enough of the great staple foods, cereals, fats and meat to satisfy world needs. We have our responsibilities to our own people both here and in other parts of the Empire. We are mindful of the needs of the people of other countries. We have therefore been obliged to continue and even extend rationing in order to ensure that there should be as just a distribution as possible. Events have shown the wisdom of this course.

But food is not the only commodity in short supply. For the immense work of reconstruction required in the world to make good the ravages of war and to overtake the deficiencies that have arisen owing to the devotion of so much human effort to destruction, there is not available the supply of essential requirements. Timber, coal, iron and steel, the primary products upon which the world depends for producing the material things of life, are either deficient in quantity or not available where they are needed.

As an importing country we are more exposed to the effects of these economic conditions than others which have great indigenous supplies. Some of those countries which previously used to have exportable surpluses have been so hard hit by the war that they cannot supply their former customers. These shortages, quite apart from the matter of payments of which I have spoken, put a severe limit on the rate of progress possible in reconstruction.

Another factor which causes anxiety, not only now but for the future, is our shortage of manpower. We are resolved to raise the standard of life of the people. We must never go back to the days when a very large section of the population lived stunted lives. But we have sustained great losses in the war. We are no longer a great creditor nation. We have to produce here the goods and services to pay for what we need from outside and to supply the wants of the people. This is bound to put a heavy strain on our manpower, which is necessarily reduced by the burden which we have to carry in the military sphere. We must play our part in dealing with the problems involved in settling down after a long war. In fulfilling these obligations our manpower is and will be less than we require.

We had this problem in the war. We met it then by direction and close control. Only so were we able to win the war, but Government orders would not have been effective had it not been for the whole-hearted support of all concerned and the will to victory.

Sir, we have rightly abandoned these war-time controls, but we must not abandon the will to victory in the fight for prosperity. We must see to it that we do not waste manpower or material. We must see to it that we use all our native inventiveness and powers of organisation to make effective use of these resources. We must all give of our best, remembering that the work which every one of us is called upon to do is not just for ourselves or for a particular employer, but is a contribution to the well-being of the nation. I have not the slightest doubt that we shall overcome these difficulties in peace just as we did in war.

I wish to say only a few words on international affairs. We accept the logic of events which accords with our long-held conviction that in world affairs, as in the affairs of individuals, we can gain our own safety and happiness only by seeking to secure the safety and happiness of others. The peace and prosperity of every nation in the modern world depends on the realisation that the saying that all men are brothers is a sublime truth that must be applied in practice.

We have accepted the Charter of the United Nations, the lofty preamble of which sets the course which the world must follow if it is to escape disaster. It is our intention to use the United Nations Organisation and all the other international agencies which are being created efficiently and effectively in all fields. They must be used not merely for the prevention of war, vital though that is, but for the positive building up of peaceful co-operation between nations to eliminate the causes of war and to destroy the conditions in which the seeds of war may grow.

But this new organisation cannot be built in a moment. If we are prepared gradually to transfer certain functions of sovereignty hitherto held to be national to a larger sovereignty, then we must move with great care. Confidence in the Organisation must first be developed. The Government has a great responsibility to the people of this country and to the peoples of the Commonwealth and Empire with whom we work so closely in peace and in war. We cannot relinquish any of these responsibilities until we are satisfied that we have achieved a greater security to replace what now exists.

My Lord Mayor, I know that we have all felt disappointment at the way in which the Organisation is being used. Instead of its

proceedings being objective and businesslike, there is obstruction, there are propaganda attacks on flimsy pretexts and a variety of episodes which have tended to bring the Organisation into disrepute instead of building up the confidence we so much desire. It is clear that if the United Nations Organisation is to be used as a forum for debating ideological differences it will fail. It can succeed only if it is to be used to secure to all nations the freedom to preserve their own ways of life while contributing to the common good of the world. We believe that the right line of approach to every problem is to ask ourselves the question "will this solution promote peace and understanding?"

I believe that all over the world the peoples have the same desire to realise this great vision of peace and disarmament. I am sure they would wish world problems to be settled on this basis. For this reason my friend the Foreign Secretary has exercised the greatest restraint in not indulging in polemics in reply to attacks made upon this country in speeches made at U.N.O., in sections of the foreign Press and in broadcasts. It is better to answer by deeds not words. Our action in India, in Burma, in the Colonial Empire and elsewhere refute the contentions that the British Commonwealth and Empire is animated by Imperialism.

We shall continue to strive for our ideals of peace and endeavour to lift the heavy burden of armaments from the people of the world. But I emphasise that disarmament cannot be unilateral, and that while general confidence and security are being established in the world we must maintain our defence forces and remain strong. The lesson of the inter-war period was that disarmament must march hand in hand with the establishment of a general system of security. But when such a system has been established we must make our contribution to the forces needed for its preservation. Meanwhile the basic policy of His Majesty's Government is now, as it always has been, to work for the restoration of the world and the establishment of prosperity, peace and tranquillity, in closest co-operation with all countries and particularly, I need hardly say, with the Soviet Union and the United States, who have it in their power to make so large a contribution to these great objectives.

In Europe the key to prosperity, peace and tranquillity will be the settlement of Germany, and I commend to you and the citizens of this country the careful study of the plan set out in the Commons Debate. It has two objectives. One is to allow the German people to use their great industrial ability so that they can maintain themselves and contribute to the standard of life of Europe and the world. We

cannot have a cesspool of cheap, underfed and exploited labour in the middle of Europe which may bring down our whole standard of life unless we act with great care. The second is to preserve our security and that of our Allies. These industries must not again be allowed to become an arsenal to be used by a new Germany to attack their neighbours or to promote another war. It is this fine balance that has to be so carefully worked out.

I have often felt that there was not sufficient cohesion between our financial policy and security matters between the two wars. This time anything we do in the realm of the reconstruction of Germany must take into account all the factors, but particularly, I repeat, security. Surely if ever there was a problem that merits the wise co-operation of Allied statesmen without bickering, without ideological considerations, excepting that we all agree that Germany must be democratic, this is one.

We have given consideration to all the possibilities. We have put forward our plan. We are willing that it should go on the anvil of discussion. We hope that there may result a European system which will give peace and confidence for generations to come. The creation of a Europe in which its many nations may henceforth live in peace together, enjoying together its matchless heritage of thought and culture, is essential to the peace of the world; and the settlement of the future of Germany is a crucial factor in the solution of the problem.

My Lord Mayor, I have spoken of some of our difficulties, frankly, as is my duty, but I would not have you think that we are in any way daunted or depressed. On the contrary this past year has been one of great encouragement. We are showing in peace as in war how mistaken are those who think that democracies are feeble and weak. We have seen our nation setting the world an example in the smooth and efficient turnover from war to peace. We have seen our employers and workers setting to work with extremely little industrial strife to build up again the structure of our peace economy. We have seen the people of this country showing a great understanding of the inevitability of the continuance of discomforts. We have seen a young and vigorous Parliament showing the world how under conditions of full and free discussion great projects of social reform and economic reconstruction can be passed into law.

We are an old civilisation with a great history. We remember the past, but our eyes are set on the future. We have shown throughout our history a great power of adapting ourselves to new conditions

and thus remaining young in spirit. We see new horizons opening before the human race, fraught with danger, but full of great possibilities for good.

We can draw from our great heritage of the past inspiration for the future. I would say with John Milton:

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam."

THE END