

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, 20th December, 1957

The House met at Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Proceedings on any Motion for the Adjournment of the House moved by a Minister of the Crown exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of Standing Order No. 1 (Sittings of the House) for One hour after Four o'clock.—[Mr. Heath.]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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

11.5 a.m.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd): I regret very much the necessity to delay this debate until today. I realise that it has been inconvenient to many right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on all sides of the House. There are also certain problems of time for those of us who have to speak for the Government today. In the circumstances, I do not propose to try to cover the whole field of foreign affairs. I shall confine myself to the recent Ministerial meetings in Paris.

I myself went to Paris a week last Thursday for a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and for that of the Joint Committee of Ministers and Representatives of the Assembly. We succeeded in dealing with a number of points of concern to the Assembly which have produced some friction. I put forward a resolution on behalf of the United Kingdom Government with regard to the rationalisation of European organisations, which was accepted by the other Ministers.

On Saturday afternoon I attended a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Western European Union, and on Sunday morning a joint meeting between the Council of Ministers and Representatives of the Western European Union

Assembly. My hon. Friend the Member for Scotstoun (Sir J. Hutchison), the President of the Assembly, led the delegation from the Assembly.

With regard to these meetings, I simply want to make one or two general points. First of all, I think it is very important that the Committees of Ministers keep in touch with the Parliamentarians; otherwise we shall fail to make the most of these European institutions.

Secondly, I am afraid it has to be realised that the burden upon the time of Foreign Ministers is such that if it is expected that they should attend meetings of the Assemblies either of the Council of Europe or of W.E.U., these meetings need to be carefully planned.

Thirdly, the whole business of co-operation would be made very much easier if a single place could be agreed upon for the meetings of these bodies, and, even better, if we could achieve a single assembly.

Fourthly, I know that all this raises difficult problems, but, taking the immediate future, it is of paramount importance that the institutions of the Common Market and of the Free Trade Area should be situated in the same place.

With regard to the N.A.T.O. Conference of Heads of Government, the first matter for consideration was the nature of the threat affecting the Free World, the aims of the Soviet Union and the methods they are likely to adopt in order to achieve them.

As we see it, there has emerged a consistent record of Soviet deeds since the war all pointing to a policy of expansion. I will not dwell on the history of the post-war period because it is familiar to all of us, but if there has been any doubt as to whether the Soviet Government are still pursuing their policy of expansion, I think that must have been dispelled by the Declaration signed in Moscow in November by the representatives of the Communist parties of twelve so-called Socialist countries.

In that Declaration the Communist Party is referred to as a militant revolutionary organisation. The goals of Marxism and Leninism are still to be worked for. In a number of capitalist countries, we are told, the working class has the opportunity to win power without civil war, to transform Parliament as an

instrument to serve the working people, to launch a non-parliamentary mass struggle, and to create the necessary conditions for the organisation of the Socialist revolution. I need hardly add that in this context the word "Socialist" means "Communist," and there is a condemnation of Right-wing Socialist leaders.

We are also told what must happen if this peaceful realisation of the Socialist revolution cannot be achieved. It is put rather delicately—"The possibility of non-peaceful transition to Socialism must be borne in mind." This is a clear indication of the intention to use force if necessary.

I think that any reasonable person would draw the conclusion that the Kremlin has never departed from the belief that Communism should be imposed upon the world, if necessary, by violence. That is the Communist doctrine. I think the tactics of the Soviet Government at the present time are quite clear. They want to freeze the *status quo* in Eastern Europe. They want to split off Western Germany from other N.A.T.O. countries. They want to divide Europe from the United Kingdom and the United States, and to divide the United Kingdom from the United States. Their whole effort is to diminish the effectiveness of the deterrent, and their attack by every propaganda means is upon the possession by the West of the nuclear deterrent, because that is the only thing which they fear. They pretend that it is only the manufacture of armaments which keeps capitalist economies in good shape—that is an extraordinary distortion of the truth.

Mr. R. T. Paget (Northampton) rose—

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Lloyd: I have indicated before to the House that the actions of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and elsewhere are completely inconsistent with their professed desire not to interfere with the internal affairs of other nations.

Hon. Members: We all know this.

Mr. Lloyd: They do not conceal their desire for the dissolution of every alliance which opposes the collective will of free countries to their intentions. The threat

against us is international Communism mixed with classic Russian Imperialism.

Mr. Emrys Hughes (South Ayrshire): Suez.

Mr. A. Fenner Brockway (Eton and Slough): Suez.

Hon. Members: We know all this.

Mr. Lloyd: I am glad to hear some hon. Members saying that they know all this.

That is the threat and when considering how policy should be developed, it is not a bad thing to consider first the nature of the threat which it is designed to meet. I believe that there is a tiny minority in the country to whom most of these Soviet ideas are not distasteful, but I believe that the great majority of the British people are still determined to resist this process and are prepared to make great sacrifices to avoid this fate overtaking them.

In that situation, the policies open to us seem to me to be three-fold. One policy would be to abandon our alliances and to decide that each of us should take his chance with the Soviet Union country by country. The Soviet Declaration of a ban on nuclear weapons would be accepted at its face value, but with the knowledge that it could not be enforced or even controlled. The only weapons available against Soviet aggression would be conventional. I think that that policy would mean the piecemeal absorption into the Soviet system of one free country after another, and that any subsequent attempt to break away would be dealt with by the Soviet Union as was done in Hungary last year.

The next policy would be to maintain the alliances and keep nuclear weapons, but to work for what is called disengagement in Europe and a neutralised Germany. What are the arguments against that policy. In the first place, I find it impossible to believe that a Power of the size and geographical situation of Germany could remain neutral or could be detached from the East-West struggle. A neutral uncontrolled Germany would be an element of instability in Europe. One has only to look at the history books to understand the truth of that. We remember the Bismarck reinsurance policy, the situation which led to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. The House is very familiar

[Mr. Lloyd.] with the way in which the question was posed by Sir Anthony Eden: "If Germany is to be neutral and armed, who is to keep her neutral; if neutral and disarmed, who is to keep her disarmed?"

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East) rose—

Mr. Lloyd: I said that there was a second line of policy, and I will give way to the hon. Member after I have dealt with that.

It is quite unrealistic to think that in the present situation there could be some kind of control machinery to keep Germany down. Without such machinery, what guarantee could there be as to the course which Germany would take? I cannot conceive of a situation more likely to lead to chronic instability in Central Europe.

There is a second point. Western Germany has always been within N.A.T.O. It is true that before West German independence was accepted by the whole House and our allies, it was the occupied zones which formed part of the N.A.T.O. area. Since the Bonn Agreement, it has been a free Western Germany which has chosen to ally herself with the West. We have taken a risk, I think rightly, in stating that a Germany reunited as a result of free elections should have the right of self-determination, both with regard to her internal affairs and foreign policies.

But we have to face the fact that if Germany were subtracted from the N.A.T.O. area it would have a most damaging effect upon the N.A.T.O. Alliance. Western Europe is a much more coherent strategic entity if Germany is within it and much safer for the other countries of Western Europe if Western Germany is bound to them by economic and military ties.

Mr. Healey rose—

Mr. Lloyd: I will give way when I have dealt with this part of the subject.

Thirdly—I am putting the arguments against the policy of what is called disengagement—I believe that the use of the word "disengagement" in this connection is quite inappropriate. With long range aircraft and missiles with ranges

of 1,500 miles and more, it is impossible to disengage in the sense that may have been possible in the age of conventional weapons.

We have to face up to the problem as to whether it is more secure to have a clearly defined line with troops deployed along it, it being known on both sides that to cross that line means war, or whether it is more secure to have a kind of no-man's-land between the two opposing sides, an area into which it may be tempting to infiltrate to try some kind of coup in the belief that undefended territory can be taken without the risk of war. That is an argument which has to be balanced. There are pros and cons, but in my view the disengagement theory in present circumstances on the present demarcation lines might well lead to a greater insecurity and a greater risk of war.

What we have to avoid is a situation in which the Russians would believe that an attack could be made without the risk of the deterrent being used. To attempt this kind of solution with a divided Germany would seem to add to the danger, not to decrease it.

Mr. Healey: I am much obliged to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for giving way. Is it not the case that Sir Anthony Eden, on behalf of the British Government of which the right hon. and learned Gentleman was a member, in 1955, put forward proposals for a zone free of all armaments in the centre of Europe and flanked by a zone of limited armaments on either side? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is right about the physical impossibility of establishing controls in such an area, he should have resigned at that stage rather than now.

Mr. Lloyd: Sir Anthony Eden was putting his proposal with regard to a reunited Germany. That was to be the basis for it, and, as I have said, I think that in the case of a reunited Germany we have conceded that certain risks should be taken.

The third policy, therefore, is that which is favoured by the Government. We have to seek to strengthen the effectiveness of the Alliance. If we remain collectively strong, the Soviet is not likely

to attack. Therefore, at the recent meeting in Paris we sought to strengthen the Alliance in a number of specific ways. First, on the political side, we gained general agreement for our thesis that the Alliance must have regard to what is happening outside the actual N.A.T.O. area. It is no good sitting behind a secure defence in one sector of the line if one's flanks are being turned. For the last nine years we have had security in Europe, but today the danger of Soviet penetration round the flanks of the N.A.T.O. area has greatly increased. One has only to consider the situation in the Middle East to realise the truth of that. It was agreed in Paris that the Alliance should have a much greater regard to what is happening in the rest of the world.

Secondly, the effectiveness of resistance to international Communism must depend upon the capacity and willingness of the countries of the Free World to help to provide rising standards of living in non-Communist countries. We welcomed the statement by President Eisenhower that the United States Congress would be asked to increase the Development Loan Fund from its present figure of 300 million dollars to 925 million dollars, and to increase the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank by an additional 2 billion dollars. A sustained and increased dollar outflow is essential for the economic health of the free world.

Militarily, it was decided to strengthen the effectiveness of N.A.T.O. by accepting the American offer to stock nuclear warheads and nuclear weapons in Europe, and also to strengthen the nuclear deterrent by the introduction of an intermediate range of ballistic missiles. These will be deployed in accordance with N.A.T.O. military plans and in agreement with the countries concerned. The decision of N.A.T.O. to accept these weapons in Europe was unanimous. There is no new feature in these proposals so far as the United Kingdom is concerned, because the House was told after the Bermuda Conference that Her Majesty's Government had accepted the deployment of these missiles in Britain. Of course, nobody likes, any more than we like, the situation which requires them, and I would like to quote to the House some striking words of that

veteran Socialist Foreign Minister Dr. Udden of Sweden, whom no one could accuse of bias or bellicosity. He said:

"We are face to face with a paradox. The balance of terror has brought the world to the brink of disaster. At the same time, it is at present the strongest guarantee of peace."

That is the fact.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and Colne): Why did he do nothing about it?

Mr. Lloyd: We are also seeking to apply the doctrine of interdependence in the military field. There is nothing novel in this conception. To give an example, the First Canadian Army and the Second British Army during the last war were to a considerable extent interdependent. Each could not perform certain tasks without drawing on the force of the other. We could not have mounted the attack across the Rhine in 1945 unless large numbers of American engineers had been made available over a period of weeks beforehand for the maintenance of our communications.

What interdependence means is that each country should not try to do everything in the military field. An example given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in the course of our discussions, was that our naval effort should be concentrated primarily upon the anti-submarine rôle instead of seeking to provide in the Atlantic a completely balanced and self-contained British naval force.

In the field of research and development, there is obvious scope for the merging of effort; in production, it is again a question of everybody not trying to do everything.

These principles were approved by the Heads of Governments. The United States Government offered a considerable contribution towards the successful carrying out of this policy by indicating that they were prepared to buy from European countries items of equipment for use by United States forces. These were decisions in principle, and the staffs were instructed to work out plans to be submitted at later meetings. It was also agreed to set up a scientific committee and to appoint a scientific adviser, in order that there should be greater co-operation between the N.A.T.O. countries in scientific and technical fields. I believe that the Conference showed the

[MR. LLOYD.] determination of the N.A.T.O. countries to stand together and to improve the efficiency of their co-operation. I am sure that that is the right policy for this country at the present time.

I read with interest an account of what was said by the Leader of the Opposition recently in Delhi. Answering the various objections to the N.A.T.O. Alliance, the right hon. Gentleman said that he did not believe that the Gandhian idea of non-violence and of unilateral disarmament would ever stop one country from attacking another. In view of the avowedly expansionist nature of Communist doctrine, it would simply mean the end of free Europe. To advocates of armed non-alignment, the right hon. Gentleman replied that this had not saved Norway, Denmark, Belgium or Holland in the last war. The dissolution of N.A.T.O. would either mean West European countries sheltering behind the power of America without making any contribution themselves or, if America withdrew, leaving them helpless before Soviet pressure. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that the idea of a third force was quite impracticable. It was little more than a reflection of anti-American prejudice. I hope that those views will be endorsed by his followers today.

On the other hand, it would be a complete misrepresentation of our purpose to suggest that we seek to achieve simply a military deadlock. The purpose of our policy is to create conditions under which it may be possible to achieve a relaxation of tension and what is described as peaceful co-existence. That was the thought in the minds of all of us. We have no wish to impose our will upon the Soviet Union, or to try to extract concessions from them by threats. We see this collective effort as a means to protect ourselves from the threats of the Soviet Union—and there have been some of those in recent weeks—and as a means to work towards a reduction of tension and towards world-wide peace. We believe that it is our duty to use, in concert with our allies, every opportunity open to us to probe Soviet intentions and to negotiate with them whenever there is the slightest prospect of such negotiations being fruitful.

We have demonstrated that intention by our statement in the Communiqué

with regard to disarmament, when we have said that we are prepared to examine any proposals for comprehensive or partial disarmament. There is at present a deadlock in the disarmament negotiations. We and our associates in the Disarmament Sub-Committee put forward certain proposals with regard to a partial disarmament agreement. I have expounded them repeatedly to this House. They were turned down flat by the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, they were endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the countries of the United Nations.

The Soviet Union have expressed their dissatisfaction with the United Nations machinery for discussing these matters. To meet their point of view the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations has been increased to a membership of twenty-five, including India and other countries who could not possibly be described as sharing our views on these matters. The Soviet Union was included in the membership of this Commission, but they have announced their intention not to co-operate in its work. We regret that fact, and we hope that that decision will be changed. However that may be, the N.A.T.O. Conference approved the idea that if deadlock persists an attempt should be made, by a meeting at Foreign Minister level, to resolve it.

We intend to persevere in our attempt to achieve a disarmament agreement. All these measures of defence—these collective efforts—are means to an end. We do not rule out any method of negotiating with the Soviet Union which seems likely to produce results.

Mr. Arthur Henderson (Rowley Regis and Tipton): Will the Foreign Secretary clear up what is, I think, an ambiguity in paragraph 16 of the Communiqué? The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that Her Majesty's Government and the other Western Governments are prepared to enter into discussions at Foreign Minister level. But the first sentence of paragraph 16 states that the Western Governments are prepared

“to promote . . . negotiations with the U.S.S.R. likely to lead to the implementation of the proposals recalled above”

—the Western disarmament proposals. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has said nothing this morning about direct negotiations with the Soviet Union

on the problem of disarmament. Is it intended that Her Majesty's Government and the other Western Governments should enter into direct negotiations with the Soviet Union on disarmament, and, in any such negotiations, would the Soviet Union have every right to put forward its own disarmament proposals?

Mr. Lloyd: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will look at paragraphs 16 and 17 of the Communiqué, he will see that in the first sentence of paragraph 16 we say that we are willing “to promote, preferably within the framework of the United Nations, any negotiations with the U.S.S.R. likely to lead to the implementation of the proposals recalled above”

—which is the Western Plan. We then say:

“We are also prepared to examine any proposal, from whatever source, for general or partial disarmament, and any proposal enabling agreement to be reached on the controlled reduction of armaments of all types.”

We then go on to say that we prefer to do that within the Disarmament Sub-Committee. If the Soviet Union persists in the deadlock, in a situation where no negotiations are taking place, then we would like a meeting of Foreign Ministers in order to try to resolve the deadlock.

So far as a Summit Meeting is concerned, we have stated our position. A Summit Meeting which is an abject failure would increase tension rather than diminish it. But if there has been adequate preparation and if there seems to be any chance that such a meeting would produce results, then we are very ready to be a party to it. We do not believe that the building up of armaments of either side will produce the final answer. [HON. MEMBERS: “Hear, hear.”] On the other hand, we are not prepared to be intimidated or to be induced to give ground under threats. We do not regard strength as an end in itself. It is a means to achieve a permanent peace.

We want to avoid, on the one hand, the danger of submersion by the flood of international Communism and, on the other hand, the disaster of global war. I believe that is the view of an overwhelming majority of the British people. I believe it is right to state these facts and this position absolutely plainly. Because that is the view of the overwhelming majority of our people, I believe that

they will make the necessary sacrifices. We have to be resolute and strong. That was the unanimous view of our N.A.T.O. allies. In that way, and only in that way, shall we achieve peace.

11.34 a.m.

Mr. Aneurin Bevan (Ebbw Vale): I expect that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Foreign Secretary feels rather tired after so many meetings in Paris, so perhaps that is the main explanation of the very unsatisfactory speech that we have had this morning. I believe that the speech will disappoint the country as it has already, I am convinced, disappointed his followers.

We had been hoping—I want to state this to the House quite frankly—that there would have emerged from Paris a statement of N.A.T.O. policy which we on this side could support. It is surely obvious to everybody that the maintenance of peace is of paramount interest and stands above any party ambitions. In fact, we have been accused in recent weeks of maintaining a degree of what some people have considered to be undesirable inactivity in foreign affairs because we have wanted to give the Government and the meeting in Paris a free opportunity to make up their minds and to try to place before the nation a policy that would unite the country as a whole.

But it is quite clear from what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said this morning that the observations which we have made from time to time have been entirely ignored. There has been no disposition on the part of the Government to make the slightest concession to the Opposition view on these matters—not the least. It is apparent to everybody who looks at the facts objectively that, to put it on a conservative estimate, if I might use the term advisedly, the nation is fairly evenly divided between the parties. Therefore, one would expect that in such grave matters as these there would be some disposition on the part of the Government to consider the Opposition's point of view. Actually, no concession whatsoever has been made.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman's speech this morning is a flat rejection of every proposition put forward from this side of the House. Therefore, the responsibility for dividing the

[MR. BEVAN.] country on the matter of international relations rests fairly upon the Government.

I want, if I may, to add to that point. The right hon. and learned Gentleman ended his speech by stating that the Government are always prepared to consider approaches to the Soviet Union to find out how far the Soviet Union is prepared to go in any particular matter. That conclusion did not match with the opening sentences of the Minister's speech. On the contrary, I have never listened to a more amateurish denunciation of another country. The right hon. and learned Gentleman even had to go back to the Soviet declarations of 1st November. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What is wrong with that?"] The hon. Member must control himself, because he will have plenty of cause for emotion soon.

The declarations of the Communist parties which are made from time to time are credulistic exercises. We are entirely familiar with them. They have been repeated from time to time ever since 1870. There is nothing new about them. What would be new would be if they did not keep repeating them. But they are bound to repeat them; as a matter of fact, if they did not they would feel rather naked, because this is the language in which they clothe themselves.

It really is an astonishing affair that the N.A.T.O. countries should try to base their whole foreign policy on this statement with which, as we say, we are perfectly familiar. The right hon. and learned Gentleman did not read the whole of the sentence at all. It starts this way. After having said a lot of other things with which we are also familiar—in fact, the whole document is almost as platitudinous as the one issued from Paris—it says:

"In the event of the ruling classes resorting to violence against the people, the possibility of the non-peaceful transition to socialism should be borne in mind."

So far as I can see, that is a statement of historical fact—

Hon. Members: Like Hungary?

Mr. Bevan: Like Spain, for example. I told an hon. Member just now that he would have cause for emotion.

Of course, it is perfectly true. I am not going to attempt for one moment to base my case upon the justification of a

document. I am merely pointing out that we have there a statement which has been made over and over again and ought not to be made the basis of the Government's foreign policy. What we are concerned about are the possibilities of the Russian situation, not the terminology in which the Soviet leaders dress their ideas. That declaration, which formed the whole basis of the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, forms the basis of the whole declaration on the international situation issued at Paris.

Let me repeat again a statement by Marshal Bulganin which is much more precise, and which deals with the contemporary situation:

"If we are to base ourselves on the interests of ensuring world peace, the situation that obtains in the world, in which there exist capitalist states and socialist states in our opinion must be recognised with all certainty. We must none of us fail to take into account that any attempt to change this situation by force from outside, to violate the *status quo*, any attempt to use force to bring about any territorial changes, would have catastrophic consequences."

Here we have from Marshal Bulganin a statement in which he himself agrees that there exists between the Soviet world and the rest of the world a common interest; and that common interest is to avoid a catastrophe. When we have had discussions with Soviet leaders we have pointed out to them that they must recognise the fact that today the situation is far different from what it was even quite recently. The Communists used to delude themselves into the belief that they would benefit by a war. They believed that the extension of the frontiers of the Communist revolution would be brought about as a consequence of war, and that the two last world wars justified their belief. The Russian revolution emerged from the First World War and the Chinese revolution emerged from the Second World War.

When I discussed this with Khrushchev recently, I pointed out to him that they could not rest any hopes of that sort on a third world war because it would wipe out both the capitalist and the Communist worlds. Therefore, there exists between us and the Soviet Union—whatever we may say against their politics, whatever we may say against their structure, whatever we may say against their ideas and principles and their practice—at least one common bond, that is to avoid a third world war breaking out.

But there is no implementation of that recognition—if it is a fact. Instead, there is the issuing of homilies such as Mr. Foster Dulles did immediately after the N.A.T.O. Conference in which he takes up an almost religious position. That is what I find so distasteful about so many of these speeches. They are all attitudinising and moralising about it. So we have an atmosphere charged with irrationality in which we cannot discuss the realities of the situation at all. Mr. Dulles said:

"This materialistic, atheistic despotism, aimed at dominating the world, is a formidable challenge"—

Hon. Members: Hear hear.

Mr. Bevan: Have we armed ourselves to fight atheism? Have we really armed ourselves to fight Communism? Have we? Let hon. Members be careful. Have we done it?

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. D. Ormsby-Gore) indicated dissent.

Mr. Bevan: The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. Yet the whole of that language is based on the assumption that the Western world has armed itself to fight Communism and atheism; in other words, it is the language of religious war.

Mr. Patrick Maitland (Lanark): Having described the Dulles element of this communiqué as "attitudinising"—with which I agree—would not the right hon. Gentleman also concede that the Moscow declaration was attitudinising? If it was mere ritualistic nonsense, why is it so important for Marshal Tito to refuse to sign it?

Mr. Bevan: The answer is because he is one of the most ritualistic of the lot. But I am not for one moment trying to justify the Communist point of view. On the contrary, we find both the theory and the practice of Communism entirely repugnant. In fact, we discover in the policies of the party opposite rather more friendly acts by way of assisting Communism than we would defend. But let me go on:

"One basic weakness was that the Soviet attempt to suppress what, in the long run, was not repressible, namely, the desire for freedom, the desire for family life . . ."

Every single distortion is imported into it. When this language is read by people

in the Communist world, it is, of course, deeply resented, as hon. Members resent the language of the Communist Party. This is precisely what I am trying to point out, and what we must strive to avoid is getting the world polarised by these two irrational attitudes.

The Government have responded to the Communist challenge in its own terms—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Yes. The Government are evoking the same emotional overtones. The statement from Paris is full of it. And so, of course, have been many of the declarations since. The speech this morning of the right hon. and learned Gentleman was not a speech devoted to finding out what rational bridges could be built between these two parts of the world, but stating our position in such a way as though there is no possibility of reconciliation at any point.

This was one of the things that depressed me in Washington, and it emerges in the document. Whenever you spoke to anybody who was a spokesman for the official point of view in Washington, you had exactly the same attitude. "It is no use trusting the Russians. What is the use of making a treaty with them? What is the use of meeting them? If you did meet them and make an arrangement, they would not keep it." In other words, you had an attitude of complete hopelessness.

I found it everywhere there. In fact, I did not find inspiration so much as obsession. They were just obsessed by the whole Communist idea. When, on top of that, there came the Sputniks there was a state of mind in the United States which, I am bound to say frankly, frightened me. It did not seem to me that the Americans were prepared to look realistically at the world situation at all, and they were determined that nothing should be done until they had a gadget to set against the Sputniks. That was accepted in Washington—and I could quote American opinion after American opinion—as the objective view of the position.

It has been brought out in this document. What emerges from this meeting at Paris is just this: in two years' time, it may be, the Americans will be able to provide N.A.T.O. with ballistic missiles which will put us up-sides with the Russian rockets.

Mr. Cyril Osborne (Louth): That is only one side of it.

Mr. Bevan: This is the international situation. I will come to the other one in a moment. This is the American reflection. The great thing, the one definite thing, that emerges from Paris is an increase in the supply of nuclear heads, under American control and provided by bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Powers prepared to take them; and missile bases, under United States' control.

Let it not be said for a single moment that on this side of the House, we are prepared to stand on 100 per cent. sovereign rights. We have always been prepared to modify them; we have always been prepared to qualify them. In fact, we have done so. When we were the Government of the country we were responsible for making provision for American air bases in Britain. The circumstances are changing very rapidly and the nature of the weapons has altered tremendously. We say that we are prepared to abrogate British sovereignty for an over-riding international purpose, but that we are not prepared to do so merely to add to the sovereign power of another nation.

It is quite true that the air bases that were established in 1947 were established, in the first place, to assist the Berlin airlift. It is true, also, that in the meantime they have grown to be something else. Indeed, the nation is deeply disturbed by what it has now learned. It might not be news to hon. Members in this House, but it has certainly come as a shock to millions of British people that there are planes patrolling overhead for 24 hours a day carrying hydrogen bombs. The Prime Minister sniggers, but he did not know in what circumstances they were in the air. Neither he nor the Foreign Secretary could give a clear answer, so utterly irresponsible have they become. They did not know whether the bombs were alive and whether they could be detonated by the crews or from the ground.

We are now informed that the construction which had been placed upon the agreement that surrounded the establishment of the bases was that the Americans themselves would decide whether the planes were to be alerted. The bombs were supposed to be activated by joint

decision, but apparently not the plane alerted by joint decision; so that the bombs can be put on board and the planes can take to the air under the control of the American military command without any permission whatever from the British authorities.

We have been told this morning, with what accuracy I have not had time to test, that many of those crews are neither sufficiently trained nor sufficiently experienced. I hope that that is not correct. I saw it in the *Daily Express* this morning in a quotation from a speech made in America by an air authority. Who, I do not know. All I am saying is that it seems to me if these planes are in the air—there is no question at all about it now—and they carry hydrogen bombs, that it is a state of mobilisation only one step short of war itself. There cannot be a greater emergency than that, unless it is war itself. Does anybody seriously suggest that the international situation justifies that step?

Vice-Admiral John Hughes Hallett (Croydon, North-East): Can the right hon. Gentleman assure the House that this practice was not begun before 1951?

Mr. Bevan: I have said that there have been continuous changes in the techniques of war. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] There were no hydrogen bombs then. Government supporters really must address themselves to the actual situation and not attempt all the while to try to answer—

Mr. A. Henderson: As I am the only Member of the House who can answer that question—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I did have the responsibility to Parliament, as the Prime Minister would agree—may I be allowed to say that so far as I was informed—[HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."]—there is no truth in the suggestion that the American bombers were carrying atomic bombs in the days prior to 1951?

Mr. Bevan: The hon. and gallant Member for Croydon, North-East (Vice-Admiral Hughes Hallett) would apparently prefer the whole world to live in peril if he could score a little party debating point.

We realise the situation as it exists now and we have to ask ourselves whether it can be justified. Do Government supporters suggest that the international

situation is such that we ought to be in a state of readiness and preparedness only one step short of actual war? The whole nation, now that it understands the facts, will demand that this now stops. It will also demand that if any additional facilities are to be provided to any foreign Power in Great Britain they shall be under the complete political control of the British people, through the British Government.

It may be, although it is extremely doubtful, that there are technical arguments for this or that new method of discharging missiles, but there can be no argument whatever for abrogating British sovereign rights in this case to another sovereign Power. Therefore, we say to the Government that as far as we are concerned, as an Opposition, we do not acquiesce in the Americans' complete control or veto over the use of these bases. If such a veto is to be exercised it should be by the British people themselves, expressed through the Government. I believe that in that we carry very large numbers of Government supporters with us.

There does not seem to us to be any justification for it. Of course, we know that the United States labours under certain legislative difficulties, but their legislative difficulties are imposed by the exercise of American sovereign rights. So that the limitation on our sovereign rights here are a by-product of the exercise of American sovereign rights there. If we are to be on terms of strict equality the American Government should be relieved of those legislative restrictions in order to enable them to enter into arrangements with us under conditions which do not humiliate either of us. That seems to me to be a fair proposition.

One other reason why we consider that this state of affairs should be brought to an end, one of the things which frightens us about these weapons, is that if they go off there is no return at all, the war is on. It is a weapon of instantaneous action, it is not a weapon of reflection—[AN HON. MEMBER: "No weapon is."] Some weapons are. The hon. Member must reflect a little more about that. The great difficulty about this situation, as most people have said over and over again, is that the world may stumble into war. I do not believe that any body

of men would sit down and calmly decide to launch a hydrogen bomb attack on another part of the world. I do not believe that men of that type exist. I cannot see any interest that could be served in their minds which would justify such action.

Therefore, this condition of alertness seems to be aimed at a possibility that could not arise. There would seem to me to have been bound to be beforehand a number of different incidents, a number of circumstances, which would give rise to alarm which might justify that step then being taken, but that step could not be justified in the absence of any particular incidents in any part of the world giving rise to alarm. If those incidents did occur there is evidence that the great nations are particularly anxious to contain them, as happened in North Korea. It is one of the advantages—terrible though it is—about conventional warfare and the use of conventional troops and the exercise of police action that that fact itself does give an opportunity for reflection. It is because this state of preparedness provides no divine interval for reflection that it is so deadly dangerous.

It happened, also, recently, whether the alarm was false or true, about Turkey and Syria. A situation was being created there, or was thought to be created there, where the Russians felt they might have to back up or back down and so, eventually, the issue went to the United Nations and it was temporarily—I hope permanently—resolved. The point I am making is that where the great nations find themselves face to face with a situation in which they are likely to be embroiled in hydrogen war they draw back. Surely, that being the case, it is our duty to provide a cushion of time, an opportunity, a period, during which passions can be held in control, reflection take place, and mankind be able to see clearly where it is going. The reason why we say this situation ought to be brought to an end is because we cannot see how it can be said to be making a contribution to peace. It is merely making a contribution to fear and to the contagion of fear. So we think it ought to end.

Mr. Ronald Bell (Buckinghamshire, South): Before the right hon. Gentleman leaves that point, would he tell the House how he proposes to provide that cushion

[Mr. BELL.]
of time, because we would all like to know that?

Mr. Bevan : In the first place, I have said that if we do put hydrogen bombs in those planes it is only on the assumption, I gather—if I am wrong I stand to be corrected—that a hydrogen bomb attack might at any time be launched and they are there to give the massive reprisal.

Mr. Alan Green (Preston, South) : A weapon of supreme reflection.

Mr. Bevan : I think that that interruption answers itself.

I said earlier that it seemed to us that there exists between us and the Soviet Union now a common interest and that the common interest is to avoid a conflagration. That has been accepted, as I mentioned, by Marshal Bulganin; it was accepted, if I may be permitted to say so, when I spoke with Mr. Khrushchev, and it has been accepted by every high Communist official to whom I have ever spoken. Whatever they may say and swear, they themselves also agree that it is a common interest to avoid a war. Right. Let us make of that conclusion a principle of action.

Having said that, it is not enough to sit back and let affairs drift. Having reached that conclusion, it is then necessary to go on and find out what parts of the world and what situations might give rise to a conflict and to see whether we can deal with them. The two parts of the world where it is universally admitted such situations might arise are in Central Europe and in the Middle East, and on neither of those has the statement of the Government given any hope whatsoever. There is a flat rejection of every tentative overture, either from this side of the House or from the representatives of the Soviet Union. [Interruption.] An hon. Member opposite sniggers; a year ago, over Suez, we had exactly the same schoolboyish irresponsibility. I said "tentative overtures"; I did not put it any higher than that. I am not saying I am satisfied that definite and concrete understanding leading to arrangements can be arrived at with the Soviet Union. I am not saying that; I am saying we should try to find out.

Mr. Osborne rose—

Mr. Bevan : I am sorry, I cannot give way again. I am speaking for too long and I have been interrupted three or four times, and want to conclude.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that the suggestions which had been made for disengagement in Central Europe are impracticable. He did not go on to argue it; he did not say why. He asked: would there not be penetration? But would it not be a part of the disengagement that the area of disengagement would be guaranteed as part of the whole arrangement? It has been said that the German people would not accept this. I do not accept that. When I was in Bonn and Berlin recently I spoke to very large numbers of Germans and I put the proposition forward in the frankest possible way and had a very great measure of support, especially in Berlin. The attitude of the Government over Berlin is entirely arid, although they know very well that that is just the area where trouble might arise at any time. Why have they not tried it?

The right hon. and learned Gentleman keeps on repeating, parrot-like, that, of course, it must be laid down as a condition that a united Germany must be free to join the Western Alliance or any other alliance, knowing very well that that is a recipe for the continuation of the division of Germany. He knows that very well, of course. The Government have never departed from it. Of course, if one is asked, in an ideal situation, whether we would ourselves not want that solution, the answer is that, of course, we would. We should prefer to have a united free Germany.

But that not being a possibility in the existing situation, why can we not take advantage of the facts which exist and try to experiment between ourselves and the Soviet Union as to whether we can agree to having an area in Germany guaranteed by both of us? When I put it to Germans, "Do you regard this as an affront against your sovereignty?", they laughed and said, "We would rather be limited and alive than free and dead." To imagine that their *amour propre* would be offended is to imagine complete nonsense. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that we should be weaker. In what respect should we be really weaker?

I come now to my main point before I sit down. What is the final objective of the Government's foreign policy? What are they aiming at? Peace?

Mr. Osborne : What is the right hon. Gentleman's object, then?

Mr. Bevan : Have hon. Members considered whether there will be any set of circumstances in the near or distant future more likely to lead to peace negotiations than exists just now? The great Powers stalemate each other at the moment. They have the power to destroy each other. There would be no significant change in the power relations between the great Powers. The fact that the Russians have the inter-continental ballistic missile has not fundamentally changed the strategic situation. If it has done so fundamentally, and the Russians have these malign intentions, why do they not carry them out? If, as some of our American friends have said to me, the situation has been altered fundamentally, then, in that case, of course, the Russians are once more waiting for us to catch up—assuming all the while, of course, that they are as malign as the right hon. and learned Gentleman has painted them.

We know that the only difference which has been made to the international strategic situation is that American cities and towns will soon be in the front line, where we have been for the last six years. That is all. That has not really changed the strategic situation. I am not saying that it attracts the United States. I do say that it has not altered the power relations.

If, therefore, the power relations have not been altered, and if they are not likely to be significantly altered in the near future, how can the future be more propitious for discussions than the present? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman still believe that the Russians can be driven out of Europe by force? Do the Government really believe that any marginal superiority which we might have would be sufficient to cause these gentlemen, who are so belligerent, to surrender? Only marginal differences can now arise. There can be no fundamental change in the relations. The only difference may be that we shall be able to slaughter each other in a week instead of in a fortnight. No important addition to our armament can make any real

change to the international situation. "You cannot be deader than dead."

Mr. Philip Bell (Bolton, East) : Dishonoured.

Mr. Bevan : All those terms are ceasing to be meaningful in this relationship—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."]—because honour implies a relation between a man and his social code, but if society is itself destroyed, nothing either honourable or dishonourable will be left. It seems to me that what we must do is to try to see whether some arrangements can be made.

The British nation, I am quite certain, has been listening to this discussion this morning, as have people in other parts of the world, with very great interest. I wish to make it quite clear that we are not in favour of disbanding the N.A.T.O. Alliance. We never have been. What we are saying is that we do not consider that Her Majesty's Government are exerting the right influence within that alliance. We believe that there are people all over the world, and particularly in the United States, who would prefer that Great Britain should take a stronger and more independent line in foreign affairs. We believe—at least, I believe, and I think that I can speak for my hon. Friends in this—that American official opinion lags far behind the readiness of the American people themselves. We believe that Her Majesty's Government could put new heart into the whole world by taking a more independent lead.

We are profoundly depressed when representative after representative of the Government gets up and repeats over and over again this liturgy of hate, injecting into the international situation no element of buoyancy or optimism at all, having no advice to give to the nation except to pile one more tier of ridiculous armaments on the useless pile already created.

12.18 p.m.

Mr. I. J. Pitman (Bath) : I believe that the speech of the right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) would have made a far greater contribution had he made any positive proposal as to the direction in which he wishes this Government to lead. Also, it would have been very much more effective if he had taken note of the degree of insecurity which exists in the world today.

[MR. PITMAN.]

There is no mortal point in making the retaliation power less because of the great degree of insecurity in which we in this country, and the whole world, live rather we ought to make it more; because that is really our present situation. We have a situation of complete insecurity for every nation, including America and including Russia. In the old days the supposition was that a nation could achieve security by being able to repel invasion. That is no longer possible. We are incapable of repelling the unrepellable, and it is clear that all the nations of the world are sitting, not on their own powder barrels, but on those of the other fellow.

I would say that what has been the cause of the unprecedented visit to Europe of Mr. Eisenhower, the President of the United States, is a recognition of the fact that the Russian fuse, by which the Russians can touch off the unrepellable weapons, is both short and reliable, whereas the fuse on the other side is not sufficiently reliable, and is definitely likely to take a greater time before it can be fired.

In fact, everything that the right hon. Gentleman has just been saying is clearly devoted to making the fuse on our side both less reliable and take very much longer to act. The democratic processes which he proposes are bound to be potentially uncertain and to take a very long time. We must recognise that, on the other side, the very fact that there is a completely authoritarian society does enable their fuse—or, if one likes, the electric button—to be pressed without the slightest delay, in complete ruthlessness and complete authoritarianism and, if the right hon. Gentleman likes, with the irretrievability and lack of reflection about which he made so much point.

If we are to have any chance, sitting on this powder barrel which has such a short fuse leading to Moscow, we must see that there is an equally reliable and an equally short fuse. In other words, Mr. Eisenhower and we must, as a condition of retaliation, compete also in an equal ruthlessness and an equal authoritarianism for the pressing of the return button.

It is in that situation that we do want a positive policy, and I would say that it is perfectly clear that the policy of the

right hon. Gentleman, which he has just propounded, for making that fuse take longer to act and to be less reliable is clearly no positive contribution. In other words, he is saying, in effect, "We are in the mud—badly in the mud. Come into my bit of mud." And, if I might say so, his bit of mud is even worse than the other.

What we want is, in accepting the facts as they are, a leadership towards a positive and new policy. Fortunately, the Government have disclosed a glimpse of that policy and a lead if only in abstract; I want it to come from that stage of abstraction into the stage of practice. Perhaps I may be allowed to read a few of the Government's official pronouncements in assembling the evidence of the existence of just such a brand-new policy. On 12th October, 1950, in Copenhagen, my right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) said:

"The creation of an authoritative all-powerful world order is the ultimate end towards which we must strive. Unless some effective world super-government can be set up and brought quickly into action, the prospects for peace and human progress are dark and doubtful."

The present Prime Minister, when Minister of Defence, said:

"On the whole question of disarmament our purpose is simple, and our record is clear. Genuine disarmament must be based on two simple but vital principles. It must be comprehensive and it must provide a proper system of control. . . . The control must provide effective international, or if we like supranational, authority invested with real power. Hon. Members may say that this is elevating the United Nations, or whatever may be the authority, into something like world government. Be it so, it is none the worse for that. In the long run this is the only way out for mankind."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd March, 1955; Vol. 537, c. 2181.]

Speaking on 3rd March, 1956, my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary said:

"Man has a higher destiny than to kill and to be killed. The cardinal point in British foreign policy is the belief that peace will not be permanently assured until there has been created a world instrument endowed with the necessary authority to maintain the rule of law. Our hope is that the United Nations should develop into such an instrument."

More recently, on 10th October, 1957, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Defence said:

"Furthermore, any agreement on disarmament must include effective international inspection and control to make sure that the agreement is really being observed. If once the Great Powers could agree to disarm and

to set up a system of international control, we should have gone a good way along the road, which I hope will lead us eventually to the establishment of a world authority with a world police force. You may think that is starchy-eyed idealism. All I would say to you is that as Minister of Defence, with my feet fairly well on the ground, I believe that, in the long run, nothing short of that will really work. I think that you will agree with me that in this age of inter-continental rockets, nuclear submarines and man-made moons, defence based upon national sovereignties and national frontiers alone does not any longer make very much sense. In disarmament we must I think set our sights high. We must aim at nothing less than total peace. For only in that way shall we ultimately remove the danger of total war."

Speaking as Minister in another place on 7th November, 1957, the Earl of Gosford said:

"The noble Lord, Lord Silkin, as did several other noble Lords, mentioned world government. Her Majesty's Government are fully in agreement with world government. We agree that this must be the goal, and that every step that is humanly possible must be taken to reach that goal."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, *House of Lords*, 7th November, 1957; Vol. 206, c. 192.]

Again, on 24th September, 1957, speaking in the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Foreign Secretary said:

"Britain believes that a world instrument endowed with the necessary authority, as Sir Winston Churchill had said, was necessary for permanent peace in the world. . . . We as a country have a greater vested interest in peace than almost any other country in the world."

Mr. Diefenbaker, Mr. Dulles, the Pope—they and many other great authorities of this world—are quite convinced that that is the ultimate aim, and the only way in which a new, positive policy can be achieved.

I have assembled only part of the evidence, but why is it that, with all that massive evidence of impressive statesmanship and experience clearly expounded in these intentions and aims of the Government, we, the British Government and the other Governments, do not advance towards any such policy? Why do we not explore that line while, at the same time, inevitably and as I think rightly, looking to the length of our fuses, the reliability of our fuses, the question of whether we can achieve an organisation for an equal ruthlessness and an equal authoritarianism with those who in that way threaten us?

The reality of the threat and the power to carry it out without reflection constitutes the gravamen of my charge against

the policy which the right hon. Gentleman has put forward. If one goes, as the Chicago police go, to see a Chicago gangster, and says, "I have left my machine guns behind, but I can get them in a couple of hours after I have got a resolution from the City Council," one will never keep down gangsterism in Chicago—or anywhere else. I would say that the nation as a whole knows quite well that we will never keep down Russian gangsterism by any system which creates unreliability and slowness in the fuse with which we can retaliate. There must be seen to be real effectiveness in the powder barrel which we and the right hon. Gentleman himself have deliberately put as a retaliatory instrument to give the protection we need.

Why, then, is it that Governments notwithstanding their belief in such a new policy should have made no advance towards it? I think the answer is that while Governments are playing, as they do, a balance of power game, it is quite impossible for Ministers at the same time to play also another game. They are playing the chess game of the balance of power, and if anybody comes along with any proposal of any kind, they have to examine it to see how it affects the balance of power game which they are playing. They must consider whether it is dangerous to them or not. Unless it helps their side of the balance they cannot afford the time to take it up: if it does then the other side is bound to seek to defeat it. I think it is only that that stops a practical step.

I urge the Government, having made all these individual pronouncements, to consider if they could not now make a formal and solemn pronouncement that it is the aim of Her Majesty's Government to work in this direction, and that they expect and invite other Governments to sit down with them and work out how this aim may be achieved. To do this will at the outset not commit them. May I also appeal to the right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale and the party opposite to join in such a declaration of intention, which ought to be in full accord with their principles, their traditions and their ideals?

Mr. Bevan: We are, in fact, in favour of world government, but we are working for it, and not against it.

Mr. Pitman: If we are all in favour of world government, then let us consider the first few practical steps which may be taken and taken simultaneously, in that direction.

We ought first to have that solemn declaration of our aims, and I think we ought next to think about a permanent United Nations force, if need be on a very small scale; for instance, in accordance with the proposals for such a permanent police force adumbrated by Federal Union, in a recent booklet about which the Foreign Secretary made some most encouraging remarks. Then, I think we might also consider the question whether the act of government by a new wing of the United Nations might not start in Antarctica.

I know there are difficulties, but let us all try to find out ways in which such functions of non-national Government may start anywhere, because to get it started even in a small and possibly irrelevant field allows those concerned to see the personnel and who the chaps are who will be governing. It is rather like joint stock banking. When banking first came about, the concept was clearly just as much idealistic nonsense as this might also appear. The idea that any of you gentlemen would part with your money and deposit it with me, so that I should lend it out to other people whom you did not know anything about, was clearly impracticable and unacceptable. It was only when you met Mr. Smith, whom you knew, and when you saw the building in which the security arrangements were made for the safe keeping of the money and knew the chief cashier—it was only under these conditions that you could consider the adoption, experimentally, mind you, of the idea, which is now accepted as a commonplace and a most beneficial commonplace.

Let us get something started in that way of non-national government even if it is on the question of Antarctica. We can see the people and will see what checks and constitutions there are. If we do not like them there will be no need to embark on the idea.

Again, a Common Market in Europe and elsewhere may be a means of developing some world authority; if only in part, on which can be built the next step forward. Again, quite possibly, a

new move by the United Nations might seek to negotiate the phased transfer of armaments of different countries to the central authority of a new wing of the United Nations. After all, disarmament is really no good unless arms can be transferred to a new institution, instead of just sitting pretty in the temporary economy of less armaments while reserving the right to resume the full range of armaments. Yet again, the "disengaged area" that we are talking about could be organised under some new permanent United Nations force, and we could get a beginning of the new policy in that way.

Anyway, I would say that once such a new policy has been propounded as the solemn aim of the Government, we could set in train a number of efforts. Some of them might fail, but others might work. If the bird gets up, I would fire the first barrel with the solemn declaration, and I would have lots of pellets in the second barrel, and some might easily hit it.

Let us at any rate announce our aims, because there really are past instances where the policy of a new approach has worked. It is the setting up of a new institution which will be needed as a step forward towards such a new policy. When England and Scotland gave up their bloody wars, it was because a new institution, the British Government, with a British Navy and British Army, had taken the place of the existing English and Scottish Governments and armies. In feudal times, the barons achieved their security, not by keeping the boiling oil hot in their castles and maintaining their standing armies paid every Friday, but by contributing to a central new authority, the Crown, which gave them their security. In renouncing their rights of self-defence and their sovereignty, they received their security, and got far more than they renounced.

Mr. Ede (South Shields): Is that the new history of the Wars of the Roses?

Mr. Pitman: It started before the Wars of the Roses, and that is one of the points we have to bear in mind, that such new policies evolve. After all, there are also two other ways in which we can have world government, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot) has said on another occasion. We could well get world govern-

ment if there were to be a major war between one or other of these nations, and one comes out on top—as sole dominator of all that remains.

Mr. Stan Awbery (Bristol, Central): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that in the United Nations organisation we already have an organisation in existence to cover all the problems which he has raised, but that it is dying because our Government and some of the others refuse to use it?

Mr. Pitman: I do not agree about the second half of that intervention, but I thank him very much for the first half. I have been talking about a permanent United Nations force, and I agree that any such movement should start inevitably and rightly round the existing United Nations, but this is an advisory body at present, and it needs vitalisation before it can take on what is a governmental job, not for a committee of advice. The point is that if it were to be by world domination, whether after a nuclear war or as the second possibility by unpreparedness or lack of courage, that way lies terrible tyranny.

Returning now to my main point, I think there should be a new central institution set up and made to function, whose sole duty should be to stop government-organised brawling. Today, if any of us brawl in the streets, even with you, Mr. Speaker, we should be both locked up, and I think that even you would be locked up for brawling. What we want is a new institution whose sole function—because each Government will wish to retain, as the residual, a continuing and complete Government—should be the right and the duty, with the power, to stop all governmental brawling in any place whatever.

12.38 p.m.

Mr. E. Shinwell (Easington): My right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan), in the course of his eloquent speech, expressed opinions which are, in general, shared by those who sit on these benches. But some of the phrases he used—scintillating, pregnant phrases—seem to require some elucidation, more particularly because it appeared to me that they had a pronounced bearing on what I regard as the focal point for our attention in this debate.

Towards the end of his speech, and I took down his words, my right hon. Friend said that a state of preparedness

is dangerous. Those are the words he used, following upon a reference to the presence of American bombers operating in the air. I am bound to say that words of that description evoke for me, at any rate, painful memories.

Mr. Bevan: If my right hon. Friend will look as HANSARD tomorrow, I think he will find that I used no such phrase. I said preparedness one step short of actual war.

Mr. Shinwell: I am extremely sorry, but the words I have mentioned were taken down immediately by my right hon. Friend uttered them. At any rate, if he disputes the accuracy of what I took down, that was the implication. [Interruption.] It is remarkable that other hon. Members can rise to their feet and seek to address the House without any unseemly interruption, but that if I venture to express an opinion, which I hold quite honestly and sincerely, even if other hon. Members disagree with it, they must indulge in interruptions which are neither relevant nor have any real purpose. I beg of them to allow me to state my point of view, even if they fundamentally disagree with it.

References to states of preparedness and the like and the danger of piling up arms—that, after all, was the point that was made in the course of my right hon. Friend's speech—remind me of what was said before the First World War and also before the Second World War. Then, we had an orgy of wishful thinking. Over and over again, in this assembly and elsewhere, right hon. Gentlemen and hon. Members declared that war was not inevitable and many sought to prevent any preparation for an emergency. Unfortunately, because of wishful thinking and appeals for disarmament—or, at least, a reduction in arms—war broke out and found us on both occasions in a complete and unhappy state of unpreparedness.

This, of course, relates to what has been happening in Paris during the N.A.T.O. conversations. I say at once that to my mind the most disappointing feature which emerges from the Paris conversations is that they have exposed the weakness of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, particularly—and this is its main function—in the military sphere.

[MR. SHINWELL.]

My right hon. Friend also said—I hope that he will not take exception to this quotation, because this was loudly applauded on both sides of the House—that we are not in favour of abandoning N.A.T.O. I agree with that wholeheartedly. But will anyone tell me what is the purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in the sphere of defence? Although its functions and purpose may be extended in course of time—that, I think, is the desire of all of us—will anyone tell me what is the purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in the military sphere unless it is furnished with the instruments which will enable it to perform its function in the event of an emergency?

I am as pacifically minded as any hon. Member and, like any other hon. Member, desire peace, but I cannot understand why we should agree to retain the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation unless we inject into it the ingredients—the essential ingredients—which would enable it to carry out its purpose if circumstances compel the organisation to act.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is not an aggressive organisation. It is defensive in character. That has been its purpose from the outset. But I have regarded it for many years as a weak and ineffective organisation. If anything has demonstrated what I have said in the past about N.A.T.O. it has been illustrated by the action of some of the countries associated with that body.

Consider, for example, the attitude of Norway and Denmark, who are unwilling to accept missile bases or any of those dreadful instruments of war. But in the conventional sphere, deplorable as it may seem—I state the facts—in the past neither Norway nor Denmark has made a useful contribution. That has been one of the weaknesses of N.A.T.O.

What is even worse, the French have not declared their intention, except in principle, whatever that may mean. It may mean something or nothing. There has to be a shot in the arm of a very painful nature before they will accept, in practice, what they have accepted in principle. Even the French have not expressed their willingness to accept either the bases or the missiles—at least, at the moment.

The fact of the matter is that the weakness of N.A.T.O. is the unwillingness of

the 14 or 15 N.A.T.O. countries, with the exception of ourselves for the most part and now, I understand, Turkey, to respond to the principles that were established at the formation of N.A.T.O. and make a useful contribution with their resources. It is that which has placed this country of ours almost exclusively and, as I think, unhappily, under the control of the United States.

If we have to renounce our sovereignty or any part of it, it is not because we wish to do so, although I recognise that in co-operation, in a combination of countries on the basis of collective principles, some renunciation of sovereignty is bound to occur. But we are now placed in the unfortunate position that we have hardly any say whatever in these fundamental matters. It is due to the weakness of N.A.T.O., to which attention has been directed over and over again, but hardly any notice has been taken of it.

I want here to say—I must repeat it with emphasis—that either we have a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation primarily intended to defend the countries concerned against aggression, capable of performing its function, or we might as well abandon it altogether. It must be either one or the other. Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale, I do not wish to abandon it, but for what purpose is it to be retained? As an ornament? As a plaything? As a symbol? As a convenience? As a subject for argument and disputation in this House and elsewhere, or to enable Foreign Secretaries and Ministers of Defence, and now Prime Ministers, to assemble in Paris, Geneva, or elsewhere, for the purpose of talking? Is that its purpose? As I say, it must be either one thing or the other.

That brings me to the subject of the nature of our defence. One of the unfortunate factors in the situation—it has been developing for some time—is that apart from the nuclear weapons, these dreadful weapons of destruction, for some considerable time no serious effort has been made in N.A.T.O. to build up conventional forces. That has been one of the troubles.

If there had been satisfactory and effective conventional forces in Europe at the disposal of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation we in this country might

not have been placed in the unfortunate position of having to transfer our sovereignty, or, at any rate, a large part of it, to the United States.

Sir Robert Boothby (Aberdeenshire, East): Surely N.A.T.O. is really an area which has been designated by the United States as an area which they will help to defend even with the ultimate weapon. That in itself gives it enormous significance.

Mr. Shinwell: I have no desire to suggest that the United States, in this context, are not anxious to place their resources at the disposal of the West for the purposes of defence, but I am under no illusion about their attitude either, because the United States expects to use Europe as one means of defending themselves. I take no exception to that. It is natural. It is a kind of enlightened selfishness. But that is what it is. We have to recognise it.

What follows from that? If United States' defence depends upon us and upon the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries, as we and they depend on the United States, there should be effective co-operation.

Mr. K. Zilliacus (Manchester, Gorton): Is it not the United States who define what they mean by defence, and does not defence under N.A.T.O. today mean Mr. Dulles' strategy of massive retaliation and Mr. Dulles' tactics of brinkmanship and his policy of anti-Communist liberation.

Mr. Shinwell: It may be that that is in the mind of Mr. Dulles, but I am not concerned with what is in the mind of Mr. Dulles. I am concerned with what is in my own mind.

I wish it were possible to say from these benches, "Let us abandon our defence. It is a costly business, a stupid business, a crazy business." Of course it is. But I do not feel that that would be honest to say so. Therefore, I want the best means of defence against aggression.

I come to another reference made by my right hon. Friend, I am not disputing with my right hon. Friend, because I agree with so much of what he says. I am trying to elucidate some of the points. Referring to the hydrogen bomb being in the air, to being armed to the teeth, so

to speak—not a very happy metaphor, but hon. Members will understand what is meant—my right hon. Friend asked, "Is there any reason for this emergency?"

It never seems to occur to some people that Russia is ready for an emergency. There is not a one-way traffic, although it is almost that so far as Russia is concerned. Russia is armed to the teeth. Russia has now got, so she says—there is a good deal of bragging and boasting about it and perhaps a good deal of propaganda, but we take her at her own word—the inter-continental ballistic missile. The Russians have a great deal more than that. They have sufficient rockets to destroy Turkey. They could destroy us. They could destroy the Scandinavian countries. They have missiles to reach throughout the whole world.

There is the emergency. What have we to offer? The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, with most of the countries contracting out, and we now, in our unfortunate position, pretty much in the hands of the United States.

I refer to the question of political control. I say to the Prime Minister that he must, in the interests of this country and also in the interests of the principle of interdependence that he has enunciated, resist any attempt by the United States, apart from providing weapons she has at her own disposal in her own defence and in the defence of the West, to take from us, a free and independent country—but recognising the principle of interdependence in these affairs—the right to decide for ourselves, if the circumstances are favourable—I make that qualification—whether arms of this character should be used. He must resist any attempt of that kind.

I recognise that in an emergency, for example, if Russia were to attack, there would not be time to call a committee meeting and to pass resolutions. There are some people who think that that would be possible. I do not think it would. However, prior to any attempt of that kind if such were contemplated—indeed, now, at present—we should insist that the United States should provide us with all the information we require in relation to these matters, not merely technical information but information of their political intentions and their military intentions, so that we may be assured

[MR. SHINWELL.]

that we shall not be caught napping and the people of this country, on the verge of destruction, do know what it is all about.

I am expressing myself in plain, perhaps clumsy, terms. I do not possess those scintillating phrases which are at the disposal of some of my colleagues. I have to make the best of my impoverished language. Nevertheless, I hope that the point is taken.

My disappointment with the Government is that they have been content to accept this North Atlantic Treaty Organisation declaration only in principle. I would much rather see the Scandinavian countries contracting out entirely. I would much rather hear France say, "We are occupied in Algeria and elsewhere and have no time for this."

Mr. Zilliacus: And Turkey?

Mr. Shinwell: I would say that all contributions are gratefully received. If Turkey wants to do so and is ready to defend herself and to help to defend us too, all the better. Somehow or another, I like to be defended.

I have an idea—perhaps it is no more than a suspicion—that, if the people of this country, to whom reference has been made today, who are straining at the leash, who are galvanised because of their emotions, were asked whether they want some defence and to have missiles and bases and the rest, I know what their answer would be. Let hon. Members try it in their constituencies. Let them ask them. Not the half dozen, the usual attendance at a constituency political meeting. Try it before a very large audience. Ask them. Say to them, "We do not like bombers, we do not like missiles, we do not like bases, we do not like to spend money on defence, all of which is wasteful, crazy, fantastic. But would you like to be without defence?" Let a Member say, "I should prefer to see all the machinery and paraphernalia of defence in the hands of the Russians, but discard it in this country." Hon. Members will get their answer.

Mr. George Wigg (Dudley): If my right hon. Friend poses the problem of hon. Members on both sides of the House as to whether, in their constituencies, they

would prefer to say that we should have no bombers and no thermo-nuclear weapons, would he go further and search his own conscience and recognise that the Government's fundamental weakness is that they say, for political reasons, that we will not have conventional forces? Will my right hon. Friend reconsider his own view of conscription?

Mr. Shinwell: I hope that no one suggests for a moment that I do not think that the Government are at fault occasionally. I have said over and over again that defence is not really a party matter. We have either to defend the country or we have not. I know that some of my hon. Friends believe in disbanding our defences and demand unilateral disarmament. I understand the emotion, but not the logic of that. Even if our defences are ineffective, as I think they are, we have to have some means of defence.

I arrive at my final point—which concerns the matter referred to in paragraphs 16 and 17 of the communiqué about suggested conversations with the Russians. I think that the Government have been very half-hearted in this. I do not know what is their real purpose. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale. I wish that the Foreign Secretary had not begun his speech this morning in such a fashion. Many of us dislike what happens in Russia and do not care much for Bulganin, Khrushchev, and all the rest. I do not meet them as often as some of my colleagues. Perhaps they are more honourable gentleman than I believe them to be and perhaps some of my colleagues, like my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman), understand them better than I do.

But although we may dislike them personally and dislike what happens in the Soviet Union, nevertheless I do not think that it is wise to enter into negotiations with a blunderbuss in our hands. It is no use indulging in harsh language. I would not mind entering into negotiations with the Russians if we were strong in defence, because we might have a much better chance of success.

I hope that the Prime Minister, irrespective of the United States, Mr. Dulles, President Eisenhower, and the others, will have the courage—and I do not dispute his courage, even although I am

not always happy about his intentions—to use every possible opportunity that presents itself in the near future to resume conversations with the Russians—to call their bluff, perhaps. Let us try to understand each other and make an end of this crazy situation in which we find ourselves.

Therefore, I offer two suggestions: let us build up N.A.T.O. with all the power at our command, and, almost simultaneously, if we can, try to engage the Russians in further conversations in the hope that we shall find a solution.

1.3 p.m.

Mr. Walter Elliot (Glasgow, Kelvingrove): I think few more modest statements have ever been made in this House than the statement just made by the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) that he is not a master of scintillating phrases and cutting remarks. Frankly, we have all listened with the utmost interest and the utmost delight to a polished and masterly piece of Parliamentary discussion, all the more so because from time to time he disagrees with us on this side and from time to time disagrees with those on his own side.

This great discussion in which we are now engaged cuts across party and national lines altogether. Reference has been made to the United States and Mr. Dulles. After all, the greatest impact in recent months on political thinking has been brought about by the political addresses of Professor Kennan in the Reith Lectures on the B.B.C. A deep division of opinion clearly exists in the United States in this matter. The fact is that the free nations of the world are now literally engaged in an agonising reappraisal, not in one man's mind, but in millions of minds, because we are faced with a situation, the gravity of which no one would wish to underestimate. It is very nearly the survival of life on this planet. If we take the wrong turning we may find a chain reaction has been set off which it is impossible for any of us to arrest.

The book "On the Beach" by Nevil Shute describes the end of the few survivors of humanity in Australia after an atomic war had been touched off in the northern hemisphere. On the one side there is that novel and on the other side George Orwell's powerful book "1984." We have these two—this Scylla and

Charybdis—and we have to navigate between them. It is something which requires the close and careful attention of every Member of Parliament in any legislature, and still more of the ordinary rank and file individual. That is where the particular benefit of these debates in which we are now engaged lies.

The N.A.T.O. organisation ran far beyond the knowledge and support of the peoples on whose behalf it was contracted. We are only now beginning to work up to the conception of what we have all engaged ourselves to and the conditions under which these engagements can or should be fulfilled. It is a very good thing that these matters should be worked out, discussed, talked over and thought over, because nothing could be more dangerous for the peoples of the free world than to find suddenly that they have been committed to responsibilities which they did not wish to implement. That is the danger in which we are at present.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Easington very clearly brought out some of the fallacies which arose in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan), who was in favour of preparedness, but not great preparedness, and readiness, but not great readiness, and a proposal by which, as far as I can see, the ultimate temptation would be extended to any hostile nation, particularly a hostile nation controlled by a powerful central organisation, such as the Soviet Union, to launch an attack on bases which were not ready and on forces which were not armed—in fact, to repeat the extremely vivid experience, which is at any rate in the recollection of everyone in the United States, of Pearl Harbour. Would it not have been better in the case of Pearl Harbour if the aeroplanes had been in the air, if the fleets had been at sea and if live ammunition had been in the ammunition hoists and even in the guns? What advantage is to be gained by saying to our potential enemies, "If you hit our bases and destroy our runways the danger to you is gone. The bombers are not in the air, the bombs are not loaded, and there is no way in which they can be subsequently got back into the air. You are safe."

Take the homely experience of any one of us going into the garden to smoke

[Mr. ELLIOT.] out a wasps' nest. We do that at night when the wasps are at home and can be suffocated without the slightest danger to the person attacking them. We think very differently of going near them in the middle of the day when these formidable insects are abroad and can retaliate. When they have abandoned their deterrent their powers of defence disappear rapidly; they are destroyed without the slightest chance of retaliation. On this question of deterrent, we are at a false issue, as the right hon. Member for Easington has said. If anyone has produced that state it is certainly the Soviet Union by the production of the inter-continental ballistic missile and the boasts that they have made about the range and power of this missile which they say they now possess in sufficient quantities to annihilate all their enemies.

Mr. Emrys Hughes: What about the American boasts of the weapons which they have not got?

Mr. Elliot: Only the hon. Member hopes to deter by boasts of that kind. He wishes all the world to be deterred by the weapons we have not got. That is the purpose of the policy and advice which he has so frequently enjoined upon the House; but, on the whole, the House and the country do not accept that view.

Nobody is deterred by imaginary weapons. There is no doubt at all that the Soviet weapon exists. Twice a day we hear of the Sputnik going over and we listen to the boasts of Khrushchev about what that device could do if it were fitted with an atomic war-head instead of the body of a dog which has now been revolving a thousand times round the planet.

Mr. Zilliacus: Is it not a fact that the Soviet Government have been saying all the time, just as we do, that they have to build these weapons in defence against attack? What reason have we for believing that they intend aggression? Is it not a fact that this has been denied emphatically by Mr. Kennan and other good authorities? Why not test the matter by going into peace negotiations on reasonable terms?

Mr. Elliot: Does anybody here believe that the Soviet Union maintains 500 submarines and builds two more every ten days merely to defend itself against

attack? In this war between the elephant and the whale, how is the whale to come ashore and cross a thousand miles of desert and tundra? But when the elephant takes to the sea and swims around turning its trunk into a snorkel, and carries atomic bombs all over the place, there is surely an immediate threat. It is done for the purpose of aggression and for no other purpose.

No one has ever suggested that the Russians should take out 500 submarines and sink them as a preliminary to negotiations for disarmament. But what are the submarines for, and all these continual launchings? What is this great fleet for? Certainly not to defend the great land mass of Russia against some naval assault mounted from the oceans of the Atlantic and the Pacific. If anyone is looking for aggressive intention the submarine fleet of the Soviet Union is the clearest proof ever created. Those who do not believe that will never believe anything.

Mr. S. Silverman: May I put a point to the right hon. Gentleman in quite broad terms? I know he will understand that it is not put for the purpose of prejudicing the matter either way. If there are two great nations, each of which fears attack from the other, and one of which has the possibility of delivering its attack on the territory of the other, is it necessarily aggressive on the part of the other one to equip itself with weapons which will enable it also to strike, not on the territory of the allies of the other nation, but on the territory of the other nation itself?

Mr. Elliot: The difficulty of delivering several speeches at one time is one which we have all experienced in the House. The hon. Member would not expect me to reply to one of his powerful pieces of dialectic by an answer off the cuff. But, in short, this is not a question of one nation having the monopoly of power of attack over others. Both great blocs have great power of air attack, and I was merely saying that the question of sea attack is one which specifically and particularly affects this country and does not affect the Soviet Union in any way at all. The Soviet Union has nothing to fear from sea attack, but we have everything.

Like the right hon. Member for Easington, I find it difficult to deliver a speech

in the House because so many people wish to accompany it, but I will do my best to be as brief as I can and come to my main point. The element of public opinion is vitally essential to the strength of the N.A.T.O. Alliance. In that connection I would call the attention of the House and of the Government to the existence of the Assembly of the N.A.T.O. Parliamentarians which came into being quite spontaneously and is attracting more and more attention. It may well be one of the ways in which we can secure the understanding and the support of the peoples which, to some extent, the alliance at present lacks. It is also true that it is a way of getting in touch with the legislature of the United States, with the Senate and with the House of Representatives.

One thing of which one can be quite sure when one meets a Minister from the United States is that he is somebody who is forbidden by law to be the elected representative of the people. This is a position so paradoxical to us that we find it difficult to understand. It is a difficulty that the opinion of the elected representatives of the American people cannot be heard through the mouth of Ministers, because Ministers are specifically debarred from being elected Members of either the Senate or the House of Representatives. Therefore, they represent no more than a reflection of the views of the President.

The difficulties which we face are all the greater because of another factor which is not appreciated by the country. I doubt even whether it is fully appreciated by this House. It is that this question of atoms for war is also a question of atoms for peace, and that atoms for peace are much more potentially dangerous than atoms for war. There is at present a building up of the possibility of using nuclear power for peaceful purposes. But this means the possession of fissile material by all the new States to which the reactors are entrusted.

The United States produce the most stringent laws against secrets or materials being entrusted to other countries for warlike purposes. Yet they are quite willing and indeed eager to entrust them to other countries for so-called peaceful use, with only a promise exacted that these fissile materials will not be used for warlike aims. How are we to control these

powers when they have got into the hands of a number of what are called underdeveloped countries — countries with no long education in statesmanship and responsibility? These are the people to whom, by hypothesis, these tremendous powers are now to be entrusted.

This means that the need to discuss these matters with the heads not only of our own Western States but with the heads of the Soviet group is imperative. Within ten years there will be in the world at least 1,000 kilogrammes of plutonium outside the control of the present Powers. This is the raw material not only for the explosion, which is serious enough, but for the release of the radioactive cloud, which is the really dangerous factor in the present situation.

An explosion, however vast, is limited, and it is limited in time. A radioactive cloud is almost unlimited both in space and in time. That is to say, it will go on in some cases until life on the planet has been extinguished. Certainly the danger of that cloud being accidentally or intentionally released by some of the Powers to whom these enormous weapons of peace are being handed is not one to be minimised. I believe, therefore, that a much stricter control must be exercised and a much greater sense of responsibility must be felt on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

There is much to be said for the several Foreign Ministers meeting together. The difference between the Paris Conference and ordinary conferences is that an international conference generally consists of a preliminary conference and then a final conference, the preliminary conference being at a lower level than the final summit meeting. The Paris Conference has begun at the same summit level, but is apparently to continue as an executive conference with the Foreign Ministers. That may not be at all a bad course, but it means that there is still an important executive act to take place, a new conference of Foreign Ministers at which we hope the Soviet Foreign Minister will be present.

There is a great deal to be said to them on this point of the danger of the release of these powerful weapons by some intent or accident in the time of near war. But there is the equally great danger of release by accident or ill-will

[MR. ELLIOT.] on the part of those to whom these powers have been entrusted in time of peace. We have only ten years, because by the time one thousand kilogrammes of plutonium are loose in the world it will be difficult, almost impossible, to bring that back under control.

Therefore, everything possible should be done also to turn attention to this problem and to discover how far these enormous powers can be entrusted to the smaller countries. Mention has been made of Mr. Kennan's five radio addresses. It has been said that we should adopt his forward-looking attitude on the difference between our views and the Soviet views in relation to Germany. But will any hon. or right hon. Gentleman opposite adopt the whole of Mr. Kennan's views? Will they adopt his views on the under-developed countries, for instance? Will they adopt his views on the Middle East?

What are Mr. Kennan's views on the Middle East? Let the Suez Canal be blocked, let the pipelines be blown up. Do without them and adopt a lower standard of living in the West. Is that the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite? What are his views on N.A.T.O.? Do not have discussions between 14 and 15 nations but leave it to the United States, with the assistance of Great Britain. I think that people may agree with certain aspects of Mr. Keenan's views, but it would be difficult to find anyone in any part of the House who would accept them all.

It is only a further example of what I have said, that at the moment re-thinking is going on. Therefore I deprecate the vehement tone in which the debate began, and the decision to take a Division at the end of it. It was right for this debate to take place upon a Motion for the Adjournment of the House, because we should go away and think about it. These things cannot be decided on a Friday afternoon before the Christmas Recess. They will require the concentrated attention of Parliament and conferences over many months, indeed years. Meanwhile, I am sure that we must keep our organisation strong, that we must be willing to shoulder our responsibilities, to take upon ourselves the dust and heat of the day. We must not believe that there is any method in which we can conjure a way out of our difficulties, either

by folding our arms or lying on our backs and kicking our feet in the air. Above all things we cannot start with the idea that by abandoning N.A.T.O., or by taking steps gravely to weaken it, by giving ground, we are advancing the cause of peace. We are not, we are bringing war nearer.

We have heard all these arguments for giving ground before. I make no apology for having tried, time and again, to reach an accommodation with the German Government when I was in the Cabinet, when the late Neville Chamberlain was in power. All these things were tried then, and tried in the face of dog's abuse from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, some of whom were only too willing to write articles in the Press saying that there would be no war and thereafter denouncing as guilty men any who had listened to their advice. We did all this. Yet there was no success. Therefore, let us remain ready and resolute, and willing to negotiate. Along that line we may come to some solution. There is no other way in which it can be done.

1.24 p.m.

Mr. John Hynd (Sheffield, Attercliffe): With much of what the right hon. Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot) said at the beginning and end of his speech many of us can agree. Certainly, among men and women in all parties whose main purpose is the establishment of world peace there can be room for serious and sensible discussion of the tactical methods of dealing with the present situation. It cannot be overlooked, however, that in each party there is a fundamental difference of conception of world affairs and political matters generally, which is much to the fore in this debate and in the present situation. Indeed, it was clearly expressed by the Foreign Secretary at the beginning of his address to the House.

It was the same conception which many of us on this side of the House opposed at the end of the last war, namely, the other side's policy of unconditional surrender, which seems to be the basis of their foreign policy in every critical situation where they have a difference with some other Power. This seems to be what comes out of the Foreign Secretary's report today on the N.A.T.O. Conference.

It is the same conception as we had when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill), attacked the Labour Government in 1946, because that Government had decided to give India freedom. It was the same conception we saw only last year in dealing with the Suez problem. The party opposite, with a certain number of exceptions, seems to overlook the fact that we cannot expect to be able to maintain the policy of unconditional surrender in the circumstances of today. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is today too strong to consider accepting a policy of unconditional surrender. What is possibly even more important is that the world outside Soviet Russia, and outside the N.A.T.O. Alliance, is against the British Government's attitude in this respect.

Therefore, whilst agreeing with the right hon. and learned Gentleman that we must recognise that the ultimate political purpose of the Communist world is the establishment of Communism throughout the universe—just as I hope it is the purpose of democratic Socialists in this and other countries to see the achievement of democratic Socialism throughout the world, and presumably the same is true of other parties; recognising that this is their purpose; recognising that they are, and have been in an aggressive mood for many years, there is no real argument across the House as to whether or not we should maintain our strength and our alliances in order to be able to meet any possible threat.

Having said that, one comes to the question of whether or not we adopt the attitude expressed by Mr. Dulles, by the Foreign Secretary and by Her Majesty's Government generally in the last few months, of refusing to recognise any possibility of accommodation with the Russians in the new circumstances; or whether we take the line pressed by the Opposition, by many of the neutral countries throughout the world, and by large elements in the N.A.T.O. countries themselves, of trying to find every opportunity of getting accommodation with Russia.

Incidentally, in the matter of maintaining our sovereignty, I am not one of those who is very much excited about the question of giving up too much sovereignty to the Americans. I am not sure that I would be much happier in leaving a decision on peace or war to a Government

which is still the Suez Government than I would be in leaving it to the Americans. After all, since 1945 the American Government have shown a much less militarily aggressive attitude in dealing with international affairs than have the present British Government. The American Government have shown a much more generous attitude towards the under-developed countries and, indeed, in the beginning when they had the opportunity, they showed a more generous attitude towards some of the Communist countries than Her Majesty's Government have ever shown.

Therefore, I am not too excited about the question of sovereignty. I recognise that if we are to have an effective alliance there must be a modification of sovereignty; and that applies to both parties. But that is not what we are concerned about at present. There is agreement, by and large, that we should maintain the N.A.T.O. Alliance and strengthen it. I do not go along with my right hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell), who suggested that, having gone that far, unless we are prepared to provide the N.A.T.O. Alliance with the ultimate weapons and have them hovering in planes over the brink all the time, we might as well disband the whole show. On that argument, we should long since have abandoned the British Commonwealth. We have never adopted such an attitude, and the British Commonwealth has never been such a closely-knit organisation with central supreme command, hydrogen bombs, and the rest. The N.A.T.O. Commonwealth can also be an effective force for peace, even if it is imperfect in some respects.

What we have to do, having accepted this, is to recognise that we need our alliances and to recognise the possibilities of threats. I agree with what was said by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan), that what we have to fear is not a calculated decision on the part of the Soviet Union to launch a hydrogen bomb war, but the risk of a situation arising where we should all find ourselves dragged into a world war. That situation might arise in the Middle East, in Germany, or somewhere else.

Having then accepted the necessity for maintaining our readiness and the strength of N.A.T.O., where do we go from there? The burden of the speech

[MR. HYND.] of my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale—which, I believe, has the unanimous support of my hon. Friends, and I am sure it would have the support of a large number of hon. Members opposite if they were free to express themselves—is simply that in this situation, Russia, which, like ourselves, has an economy to consider and cannot afford indefinitely to go on piling up these tremendously costly weapons, which recognises, as we do, the awful dangers of an accident occurring—that has been made clear in some of the pronouncements and letters from Mr. Bulganin in the last few days—must, like ourselves, be concerned about the situation. Thus, there may be—I put it no higher than this—a possibility now—there certainly appears to be a better possibility now than ever before, and as good a possibility as is ever likely to arise again, as has already been said—of getting together with Russia to ascertain whether there is a way in which we can relax the tension and give ourselves a breathing space, or a time gap, in which to try to minimise the dangers of such an accident.

What is the new approach to be? The only one that has come forward is the one which has been referred to by Mr. Kennan in his lectures and by the Leader of the Opposition in Berlin. It was proposed in somewhat similar terms by Sir Anthony Eden, at the Berlin Conference. It is the establishment of some kind of buffer zone, under control, in which there can be some room for manoeuvre and where armies can be removed somewhat from each other. It is the idea of a neutral zone in the centre of Europe.

I confess that from the beginning this idea has never attracted me particularly, for reasons which have been given over and over again. They were given by Mr. Attlee, as he then was, and they were referred to by the Foreign Secretary today, namely, the problem: who ensures that this zone, and particularly Germany, shall remain neutral? Who ensures that this zone, and particularly Germany, remains disarmed? That is a very effective argument, although it may not be a conclusive one. I know that Western Germany is a sovereign Power, and a united Germany would presumably be a sovereign Power. There is no question of our imposing any such solution upon

Germany, or upon any other country for that matter.

My own preference, when this matter was under discussion, was rather to suggest that there should, perhaps, be a group of nations in the centre of Europe who would be invited to consider whether they would voluntarily join such a neutral group and accept certain guarantees from the four great Powers. Western Germany, Eastern Germany, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and others could associate themselves with it if they so desired. I do not think that we could go a great deal further than that. Unfortunately, that idea has not gained wide adherence. The other idea has received more support.

Events have moved on. The situation is now much more urgent and dramatic than it appeared to be some months ago. Therefore, I would be prepared to accept that we should make such a proposition as I have mentioned to countries who would be entitled voluntarily to accept it or reject it. This applies particularly to Western Germany. After all, Western Germany was created on our initiative. Western Germany exists because of a similar situation on a narrower front than we are discussing today, a situation in which it was found impossible to get agreement between the Western Powers and Russia to unify Germany as a single economic unit, as was provided for in the Potsdam Agreement, and have it administered by a central German authority. We were faced with that quandary then on a narrower front, just as we are faced with it on a wider front today.

We cannot get agreement between the Western Powers and Russia. We cannot get the central authority of the United Nations to function over the whole area. We have been driven back into our democratic organisation, N.A.T.O., and the Communists have remained on their side. It was because in 1945-48, we had no alternative but to remain frozen in the four zones in Germany, and because any general currency reform had been refused, and because any central economy was impossible without agreement with the Russians, that we decided to unify Germany over as wide a front as possible and over as many of the Occupying Powers as would agree.

We did that, and we did it on our own initiative. We asked the West German people to accept this situation

and to see about creating a Parliament and a Government to do it. They did it. We then asked them to join with us in seeking to defend the Western democratic world. They accepted that responsibility. Whatever one may say about certain manifestations in this or that corner of Western Germany today, meetings of little suspected groups, declarations by individuals and the rest, the fact remains that Western Germany has voluntarily allied herself with the Western democratic Powers and has loyally carried out all her obligations so far as lay within her power. In so far as she has fallen short, it has been because of the reluctance of the German people to return to militarism. That is the one thing on which she has not yet fulfilled her obligation, and it is one which we must in some respects welcome although we may, at the same time, deplore it on the grounds of general defence strategy.

I want that to be said, because if we are to press forward with the idea of a neutralised zone in which Western Germany will be invited to play her part, we must do it, first, in consultation with Western Germany herself. If there is something that would be fatal to our relations with the Germany of today and the Germany of the future, which would be fatal to the confidence of Germany in Western democracy, it would be for us to give the appearance that we are trying to sell out an ally whom we created and invited into the alliance and who has stuck loyally to that alliance throughout. We cannot afford to do that, and it would be tactically wrong to do it.

In my view, in Western Germany today, on the evidence of recent elections there, nearly 50 per cent. of the population are attracted to the idea of having a relaxation of the tension in Central Europe, of having a new situation in which the prospects of the unification of Germany, even within a neutralised group, would become possible. These people recognise, as I think we must do, that if the present situation goes on indefinitely, the present two Germanies will become stabilised and frozen in their present position. However, if we can get even a temporary situation of a neutralised area composed of voluntary partners—and effectively being guaranteed by the great Powers—against any aggression or infiltration, that kind of

situation would not remain as a permanent, frozen situation, because history itself is dynamic. Things just do not remain like that for ever. The fact that Germany became one would, in the long run, mean that Germany would develop its own identity again, and either democracy or the alternative would spread throughout the whole area. My own guess is that it would be democracy.

Similarly, in so far as a relaxation of tension and the separation of great armies was made possible by this arrangement, clearly there would be a greater possibility in the near or distant future of that area becoming extended and the relaxation of tension developing to the point where, through the United Nations or a similar world authority, the nations would be able to agree more and more on a basis of world peace.

We do not need to assume that if this proposition were put to Western Germany it would be rejected outright. It may be said that Dr. Adenauer and one or two of his colleagues might like to reject it, but, if that were so, they would still have to have regard to public opinion in Western Germany and, once the German Government and people had accepted it, we would be entitled to go forward with them and put it on the table in our discussions with the Russians.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale said, and as I said earlier, I do not want a neutralised Germany in the centre of Europe. I do not want a vacuum in the centre of Europe, but a vacuum of this kind, a neutralised area in which Germany was voluntarily playing her part, would be better than a continuation of the present situation, a situation which has been surrounded by the vituperation of the Russians, what we have heard from the Foreign Secretary today, and what we hear too often from Mr. Dulles and some others on our own side.

This is not my preference, but I am prepared to accept it as being at least something within the bounds of possibility which might provide time gap, or a physical gap which would give us a chance of a new approach and upon which we could subsequently build. If it were rejected in the first place by Germany, we should have to try something else, because we could not force

[MR. HYND.] this proposition on Germany, nor have we the right to try. If it were accepted by Germany and rejected by Russia, we should know where we were. Unless the Russians put forward alternative suggestions, if it were simply "No", like the aftermath of the Geneva and Berlin Conferences, again we should know precisely where we were.

At least we should have tried and we should have made Russia declare before the whole world that her present propaganda, about banning the bomb and a new initiative for peace, was nothing but propaganda. Everybody will agree that one of the most important things that we have to seek to do is to impress upon world opinion where the truth is, that at least we are trying. If Russia is not trying, the only way we can demonstrate that to public opinion is by giving the Russians an opportunity of declaring themselves. I therefore support the proposal put by my right hon. Friend. It is the only practical initiative suggested so far. I recognise that it has many weaknesses, but it is a new step, which is the main thing we want.

Our aim is not simply the building up of a Western defence community. It is not simply getting a neutralised belt in Europe. It is not simply getting agreement with Russia over a certain limited time. What we are aiming at is the creation of a situation in which we can hope to get a central world authority to function. The United Nations has not functioned satisfactorily up to now. It may continue to function unsatisfactorily, but it is our responsibility, as members of that organisation, to see that it does function, if we can make it do so.

Even the United Nations itself is only a step to what we are seeking, because what we all want, and what can be the only solution to this situation which arises in our history from time to time, is the ultimate establishment of a world authority in which there will be world law and a world police force to administer that law.

1.45 p.m.

Mr. Martin Maddan (Hitchin): I echo the last words of the hon. Member for Attercliffe (Mr. J. Hynd) and agree with him that the ultimate objective of the

foreign policies of every nation must be world government because this is the only way to guarantee the peace of its people. I also echo the sentiment of the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Pitman) that unless this objective is held clearly before us, and worked for, our foreign policy can be nothing but a series of expedients.

I want to address myself to N.A.T.O. and our defences in N.A.T.O. against Russia and the proposition put by the right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) and echoed by the hon. Member for Attercliffe. I do not see how it contributes to realistic thinking. It confuses time and space, and I do not see that neutral zones running up and down the middle of Europe, or anywhere else, will be very relevant when we have intermediate range ballistic missiles and intercontinental ballistic missiles hovering over the horizon.

Mr. J. Hynd: Does not the hon. Member agree that Berlin itself is at present a neutralised zone under four-Power control and guarantee, and that that is a very important factor in maintaining peace in Europe?

Mr. Maddan: I certainly agree that Berlin is under four-Power control, but I do not know whether that situation is a great contribution to peace. There was a time when that situation was just about to touch off war, which was prevented by the Berlin airlift more than by any other measure.

The situation with which we are faced is that at any time any Power with ballistic missiles can loose them to hit other Powers and the only hope of the Powers attacked—or hope of warding off an attack by the deterrent—is to be instantly ready. To be instantly ready means a centralised, highly efficient command and in N.A.T.O. we do not have that centralised and highly efficient command: I am talking not about the supreme allied commanders, but about the political set-up which backs the organisation.

We have been having discussions in this country—and they have been reflected in the debate—about who should press the buttons in the new push-button war. Because they have to be pressed so quickly, there is no question of real consultation. That the aircraft are in

the air and are ready is most admirable. I am far happier to have them there than I should be if they were not there. I am worried about the political control over the use of those aircraft. I am not worried that it will immediately be abused. I am worried that the political structure of N.A.T.O. has fallen far behind technical progress in armaments.

I am disappointed that at the Conference of N.A.T.O. we did not have some indication that the machinery of N.A.T.O. was to be overhauled in a way which would make it possible for the member nations—and the people more particularly—to have a voice in the use of these deterrent weapons, rather than leaving it in the hands of the largest Power, which, as a matter of practical politics, is the only way in which it can be handled at present.

I have heard it seriously suggested that we should be better off if we became the forty-ninth member State of the United States, because we should then at least elect two Senators and a number of Congressmen to the legislative authority of the United States, and in that way we should have some direct say in the choice of the people who would make these decisions. In this middle part of the twentieth century there must be a most fundamental change in the way in which nations in general, and alliances in particular, conduct themselves.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot) referred to the N.A.T.O. Parliamentarians' Conference. This new child of N.A.T.O. is growing up slowly and cautiously—perhaps wisely so. I am disappointed that at the Summit Conference no particular reference was made to the need for making something more of what is already in existence in the shape of the N.A.T.O. Parliamentarians' Conference.

One of the resolutions passed by the Conference—it was associated with the name of Senator Kefauver—suggested, among other things, that a sort of international commission should be set up to investigate ways in which the countries of N.A.T.O. could work together more effectively and—this came out in the discussions which took place upon the resolution—could give their people some voice in the destinies of N.A.T.O.

I had hoped that this suggestion, tossed into the general bran tub at

Christmas time, might have come out at the Summit Conference and been acted upon, but I am afraid that it did not. The reason why I wished to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, was to express the hope that at the further conferences at Ministerial level, which we are promised for early next year, these suggestions will be most seriously considered.

We are rightly talking about interdependence as being the only viable way for nations to exist today. If that is the only way, we must develop or start thinking about the sort of institutions which can give reality to the word "interdependence," rather than merely making interdependence a camouflage for dependence.

Mr. Paul Williams (Sunderland, South): My hon. Friend appears to understand some of the words in the N.A.T.O. declaration. Can he tell me why interdependence is so essential in Europe, and sovereignty and independence is vital in the Middle East?

Mr. Maddan: I would not attempt to explain the communiqué. I should only disagree with my hon. Friend if I made the attempt, because I do not believe that sovereignty and independence make any real sense anywhere in the world today.

Mr. Williams: They have worked fairly well in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Maddan: I do not know that they have worked well in the Commonwealth. If sovereignty and independence really had worked, and if it had, in fact, existed, it is probable that neither ourselves nor the Commonwealth would have become involved in war in Europe in 1914 and in 1939.

Mr. Anthony Fell (Yarmouth): As my hon. Friend seems to have such a grip of this new theory of interdependence, world government and common sovereignty, will he go a little further and tell us exactly how the dangers with which the world is presently faced could be overcome by getting rid of independence?

Mr. Maddan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I will try to develop my argument, and I hope not to be very long, because I know that many other hon. Members wish to speak—and it is also getting very late for lunch.

Mr. Harold Davies (Leek): Absolutely typical!

Mr. Maddan: What I want to emphasise is that the idea that any nation, today, can be sovereign and independent and remain untouched by other nations is so out-of-date and so out of line with the facts that it is very dangerous to propagate it.

My hon. Friend asked me to define what "interdependence" means. What it means in the minds of the N.A.T.O. Governments I do not know, but I will certainly tell him what it means to me, and what I think it ought to mean generally. In the world situation today, as the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) and others pointed out, the free democratic nations of the world are facing threats, and the whole idea of N.A.T.O.—which we all agree to support—is to meet the threat of war and attack; otherwise, it has no purpose.

If we are to meet threats of attack in the mid-twentieth century, with the push-button war, and when missiles would take 15 or 20 minutes, or even less, to arrive, there will be no time for all the Foreign Secretaries to fly to and fro from capital to capital, which used to take place and even then did not succeed. Therefore, there must be a central authority which can give the word, and give it quickly, when action has to be taken. If that authority is to take the form of the head of any nation, it follows that all the other nations can only tag along behind and accept what he does without their having had any say in the matter. I say that this idea is out of date and that the time has come to develop institutions which will give every elector in the alliance a say in the choice of the people who run it and the policies adopted by it.

Mr. Fell: Surely my hon. Friend realises that his theory, which has been propounded for thirty years or more by friends of his, would take at least ten years to bring into operation. Why should my hon. Friend make this speech at this time? I thought that we had had a Summit Conference because things were terribly urgent.

Mr. Maddan: They are indeed terribly urgent. They have been urgent for ten years, and will go on being urgent until

radical steps are taken to cure the situation.

I am much helped by my hon. Friends in making my point. I do not intend to go on at any great length. I know that the views that I have been propounding are sometimes said to be impracticable. They have been called impracticable for thirty years or more, but they have been steadily gaining ground all that time, so much so that their terminology is now being accepted by the Governments of the West. I hope that the substance will also be accepted shortly.

If these ideas are thought to be impracticable, I would ask my hon. Friends to reflect upon what the present situation must be. If what I say is impracticable, the situation that exists today is both insane and suicidal, in regard to the selfishness and out-of-date-ness with which nations imagine that they can conduct their foreign affairs and Governments imagine that they can somehow secure the protection of their peoples.

1.58 p.m.

Mr. Denis Healey (Leeds, East): We can all be grateful to the hon. Member for Hitchin (Mr. Maddan) for providing us with the first break in the blank wall of complacency which the Government benches have so far displayed in this debate. There has been a tendency on the Government side to suggest that the Government party is the only one in this House which is interested in the unity and success of the N.A.T.O. effort, and that the Opposition are either opposed to N.A.T.O. in principle or are at least recommending policies which are likely to undermine it in practice.

I believe that precisely the opposite is the case. I believe that the rigid, Philistine complacency shown by the Foreign Secretary today is the one thing which will not only ruin N.A.T.O.'s influence in other parts of the world but will rot the very core of N.A.T.O.'s unity in Europe. I do not believe that we could have a better proof of this than what happened this week at the N.A.T.O. Council meeting in Paris.

The fact is that the N.A.T.O. Council meeting which has just ended was a political "Floppnik." It was a diplomatic counterpart of the American failure to launch the Vanguard weapon at Cape

Canaveral the other day, a failure made much more damaging to the West by the exaggerated hopes and publicity which preceded the meeting.

What were the facts? We were told before the meeting that its main purpose was to recapture from the Soviet Union the initiative in world affairs for the West and that this capture of initiative was to take place under the leadership of Britain and the United States as agreed by the Prime Ministers in Washington a few weeks ago. But what, in fact, happened at the meeting? Not only did N.A.T.O. fail to recapture the initiative from the Russians, but the fact is that the Russians had the initiative even inside the N.A.T.O. Council meeting itself.

The only important or interesting thing that happened at the meeting at all was the confused reaction of the various member Governments to the Bulganin letters of last week. Moreover, the other remarkable thing about the meeting was that it was marked by the first public rejection of Anglo-American leadership by the smaller European members of N.A.T.O.

I believe that unless Her Majesty's Government take this warning seriously and reflect on the causes for the fiasco at the Council meeting, persistence in their present policies is likely not only to wreck N.A.T.O., but vastly to increase the dangers of world war for humanity as a whole.

The only American proposal which was accepted at the Council meeting was the proposal in principle to establish intermediate-range missile bases in Europe. In practice, three countries said that they would not accept those bases. The value of the agreement in principle on this issue was, I think, well stated by Mr. John Foster Dulles at a Press conference which he gave just before leaving for Paris. He said:

"I am not attracted by agreements in principle. They usually mean that the Governments concerned are reserving the right to frustrate them in practice."

Those are wise words, and they rob the American and British Governments of any satisfaction which they may pretend to feel at the results of the Council meeting last week.

Why is N.A.T.O. disintegrating? Why do the Russians so clearly have the

initiative not only in Africa and Asia, but now also in Europe? Surely the reason is that N.A.T.O. is still frozen rigid in postures which are many years out of date. It has completely failed to adapt its collective policies to the tremendous revolutions which have taken place in world affairs since it was founded, to the fact that the hydrogen bomb has been invented, that the Russians have it as well as the Americans, that Stalin has died, that there are significant changes in the nature of the Soviet system and, more important still, that there is a decay of Soviet control over foreign Communist parties, above all in Eastern Europe and China.

There has been no adaptation whatsoever of N.A.T.O. policy to these changes, although many of them are already years old. The result is that N.A.T.O. in its present posture has become hopelessly remote from the instinctive feelings of the people it purports to represent and, more important still, from the policies of the Governments which are its members.

We had a very interesting recitation of the usual incantations about the wickedness of the Soviet Union from the Foreign Secretary today. But if the right hon. and learned Gentleman really believed that the Western world was in such mortal danger of violent attack then he should have resigned from the Government long ago, because what have the Government been doing? In the military field they have slashed British defence expenditure and adopted a completely revolutionary policy incompatible with that of N.A.T.O. as a whole. Does that suggest that the British Government really believe what they say when they talk in Paris about the reality and immediacy of the Soviet military threat?

Her Majesty's Government preceded this very Council meeting by adding insult to injury with its French ally in the Suez adventure by quite unnecessarily joining the Americans in sending arms to Tunisia. Take the way in which the Government have been handling negotiations with Germany on support costs. An official publication of the British Embassy in Bonn made a typical Foster Dulles threat of an agonising reappraisal unless we got the money we wanted, saying that we would consider turning to a peripheral strategy and withdrawing all our remaining troops. This is a British threat which

[MR. HEALEY.]

means the immediate disintegration of N.A.T.O. as a military alliance.

If the Government really believe the sort of things they have been saying today, why do they act differently? The Foreign Secretary said very rightly that we want deeds not words. If we look at the deeds of the British Government we find that their real beliefs about the current situation are totally different from those they recite at the regular ritual meetings in Paris of the N.A.T.O. Council.

I believe that persistence in this course is not only going to mean the disintegration of the N.A.T.O. Alliance, but, much more serious, that the path to which the Government have now committed themselves is vastly going to increase the danger of a completely unnecessary world war.

There was something to be said for basing Western European security on an American threat of massive retaliation at a time when only America had the power to inflict massive retaliation on anybody. There is little to be said for it today, and yet, because N.A.T.O. is still tied to this doctrine, each of the members of the alliance is opting either for neutralism or for the right to start an atomic war on its own account.

A terrible thing which happened at the N.A.T.O. Conference this week was that N.A.T.O. decided in principle to distribute the weapons of atomic war, not only tactical but strategic weapons, without first deciding what military strategy these weapons were to serve and without first reaching agreement as to how they were to be collectively controlled inside the alliance.

There was something to be said for a policy of massive retaliation when it was thought, perhaps rightly, that the only danger of world war lay in a calculated act of aggression by the Soviet Union. But we have learned in the last twelve months that the real danger of war comes from a local conflict which originates not in an act of Soviet policy, but through the irrational irresponsibility of small Powers, such as the Suez adventure last year, or through a spontaneous eruption of ordinary men and women against intolerable political conditions as in Hungary last year.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is now trying to commit itself to place not only tactical but also strategic nuclear weapons in the hands of Western Germany at the very moment when we have discovered that there may well be a war which nothing can prevent developing in Eastern Germany because of the decay of Soviet power and the protest of ordinary men and women against the consequences of the present division of Europe.

I am very much encouraged by the fact that the West Germans themselves are extremely reluctant to take the enormous risks of accepting these weapons in a situation which is so unstable as it has been proved to be in the last twelve months. What everybody was asking in Paris, and what the Norwegian and Danish Governments asked publicly of their allies, was that before we allow N.A.T.O. to disintegrate into this sort of thermo-nuclear anarchy, which will enormously multiply the existing dangers of war, it should seek, by negotiation with the Soviet Union, a more stable and secure European settlement which would make this process unnecessary.

In his speech today the Foreign Secretary did an extraordinary thing. He gave a reasoned argument against the proposals which the previous Conservative Prime Minister put forward for a militarily neutral zone, a zone of reduced and controlled armaments, in Central Europe. I fully agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman that that scheme was put forward on the condition that, prior to it coming into operation, Germany would be united by free elections. But this political condition does not affect the argument of the Foreign Secretary, which was based on the physical impossibility under any circumstances of maintaining control over a Germany which is not in the Western Alliance. Surely, the fact of the situation is that with the decay of Communist and Russian power in Eastern Europe the risks to the West of disengagement are infinitely less today than when a Conservative Prime Minister put forward the proposal in 1955. But with the imminent distribution of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, the risks of maintaining our present course are infinitely greater than in 1955.

In spite of this tremendous change in the balance of factors which must determine our European policy, the Foreign Secretary and the Government have actually gone back on the course they were ready to recommend two years ago and remain fixed like wooden Indians in the posture of 1949, when today is 1957. In my view the only good result of the N.A.T.O. Council meeting this week is that, for the first time, some members of the alliance publicly revolted against this sort of Philistine rigidity, against the sterility of the Anglo-Saxon leadership inside N.A.T.O. In the communiqué they stated that they were willing to promote any negotiations with Russia likely to lead to disarmament. They were also

“prepared to examine any proposal, from whatever source, for general or partial disarmament, and any proposal enabling agreement to be reached on the controlled reduction of armaments of all types.”

It is no secret that the words used to describe this decision in the communiqué were imposed on the Anglo-Saxons against their will by the small Powers, which made it a condition of agreeing to the decision in principle on the distribution of nuclear missile bases. But I wish to ask the Government whether the agreement in principle to negotiate is to be frustrated by the British Government in practice. It is true that on Monday the Prime Minister said he was ready to negotiate, but as a move in psychological warfare not a serious attempt to reach agreement; it would be an attempt to establish a basis on which he could force the allies to co-operate in a policy which they did not want to accept. The right hon. Gentleman said, “We are willing to restate our position.” Today we hear the Foreign Secretary reject discussion of the one hopeful proposal the Russians have put forward, the proposal about military disengagement in Europe, on which there is a real possibility of reaching agreement.

I believe that the party opposite is still suffering from the trauma induced by its catastrophic experience during the Munich period in 1938. It was the folly of the analogy with Munich which led to disaster at Suez a year ago. Now we have a Prime Minister and a Foreign Secretary saying that if we make proposals and the other side will not accept them any

attempt to change our proposals should be branded as appeasement.

The question of world peace and a European settlement is not a sort of diplomatic game in which one side or the other can score points. The instability of the present European settlement and the increase in that instability which is bound to follow the implementation of the present N.A.T.O. policy is a threat as much to Russia as to the West, and as much to India as to Russia or the West; because if the present situation leads to a thermo-nuclear holocaust, nowhere on this planet will escape. The Indians and the uncommitted peoples whose support we must have in this great struggle for political and other reasons, are watching our behaviour and deciding that, in fact, our position is far less reasonable, far less flexible than that of the Russians.

The continuing of our present policy means disaster for the West in the cold war and perhaps catastrophe for the human race in a hot war. Visibly our support in Africa and the East is melting — this is the one area where the competition between the Soviets and the Western system is really acute and is likely to be decisive and it is leading also to the disintegration of the alliance in Europe. I wish to say again what was said this morning by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan). We are not trying here to make party points. The situation is far too serious for that. If the Government wish to describe proposals for disengagement as “the Eden plan” or “the Churchill plan” instead of “the Bevan plan” or “the Gaitskell plan”, no one on this side of the House will object.

The fact is that when N.A.T.O. was set up it represented to all of us on this side of the House and to the freedom-loving people all over the world a symbol of buoyancy and hope to set against the rigid sterility of Stalinist Communism. As a result of the way in which this Government and allied Governments have conducted the affairs of N.A.T.O. in the last few years, we have come to assume the posture of bitter, bloody-minded Pharisees. Nothing could be more disastrous to the hopes of those who really believe in Western solidarity and in the Alliance. I believe that in the N.A.T.O. Council this week this Government had a wonderful opportunity to meet the

[MR. HEALEY.]
hopes of the whole of humanity and reverse the present trend towards catastrophe. Nothing can be hoped from the United States at this time because of the sickness of the President and because of the constitutional inadequacies of the American system. Everything could be hoped from Britain; but Britain threw away the chance. If we vote today against the Government, it will be because we believe it is in the interests of the British people, the whole Western Alliance and the whole of the human race. We believe that if this Government will not accept the challenge they should make way for a government that will.

2.18 p.m.

Viscount Hinchinbrooke (Dorset, South): I can understand the reasons for the cheers which greeted the speech of the hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey). I was deeply interested in the speech and I thought the hon. Gentleman gave a pretty exact analysis of the situation today revealing as usual his great knowledge; but there was a vein running through the speech which was profoundly disagreeable to me, and probably to my hon. Friends. The hon. Gentleman seemed to darken counsel deliberately. It is all very well to criticise and expose policies and to complain of and castigate the Government, but hon. Members on this side of the House have been looking, perhaps in vain, during this debate for some signs of concrete, hopeful proposals emanating from hon. Members opposite.

The speech of the hon. Gentleman was not unlike that of his leader the hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) who, in a brilliant portrayal of the world situation, included a damning indictment of Her Majesty's Government but yet somehow failed to contribute light and understanding to the common problems which face us today.

On behalf of my hon. Friends I have to say that unless we have a reply to this debate by the Prime Minister and a greater degree of reassurance as to the course of the Government's foreign policy than we have had from the Foreign Secretary, we shall be compelled to abstain, if a vote is taken. My hon. Friends earnestly hope that, even at the last

minute, hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite will not carry the House into the Division Lobbies.

I ought to explain—I hope briefly, so as not to take up too much time—that I and my hon. Friends have not dissociated ourselves from the Conservative Parliamentary Party as a mere protest gesture, a kind of self-inflicted wound which can be immediately healed in a period of convalescence and after which there is a glorious and safe return; we have dissociated ourselves in a much more formal way and for much more fundamental reasons. We have become convinced that the power of Britain is being fatally undermined by a false theory, a theory which has been at work in this country for a very long time past and has been given an accelerated pace in recent years; the theory that sovereignty can be submerged into some predicated system of international justice or some political organisation—be it the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or whatever it may be.

We are absolutely at variance with what I may call, for brevity's sake, the Liberal concept of the mechanistic Society of Nations, founded on a spurious morality. We are against the process of counting heads. We are against majority decision. We are against the concept of collective security. We are against the quixotic pursuit of ideology. We are against the deployment of ultimate force for an ultimate good, however well conceived that may be. We find that British foreign policy has been drawn into this Liberal mechanistic theory increasingly in later years and that it is destroying the whole idea upon which this country built up its great power and influence over so many hundreds of years past.

Furthermore, we are becoming convinced, with the evidence of the last two wars and since that American Liberalism, with its many agents all over the world and many agents in this country too, is remorselessly depriving us, the British, of our independence, manoeuvring against our Empire and against our positions of military strength overseas and, at this very moment in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, is hauling us on board a Juggernaut in Europe that the Americans have created against an enemy of their choice. We believe that

it is time that this country woke up to the full significance of the facts that range around us, and decided that we are no longer content to be conscripted for an ideological cause not our own.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) in one of his great exclamations in the middle of the last war, said:

"Let the Mississippi roll on, full flood, inexorable, to broader lands and better days." But the trouble is that the lands are not broader, they are more constricted: the days are not better, they are meaner—meaner in spirit, in patriotism and in purpose.

That brings me to the point I want to make about the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and I do so within the context of the concept which I have just sought to give and to which I shall refer again before I sit down. My hon. Friends and I cannot conceive of any future for Britain today, bound hand and foot as we are in the enmeshing snare of a military arrangement of this kind. The Foreign Secretary has just returned to the debate. I would ask the Government whether we can have replies to some of the questions which we have been putting in recent weeks, notably in the debate on the Address, and which were refused at the time by the Minister of State when put by my hon. Friends.

What, for example, is to be hoped as the result of this arrangement in Paris, about the future of Fighter Command and British naval units? Are they to be merged into the military organisation of N.A.T.O. and to be manoeuvred about at will without the Minister of Defence in this country having the ultimate say as to their use? Passing from there, I would ask a few questions about the rocket sites that it is proposed to establish.

They are, I see, to be sited by the Commander of N.A.T.O.—or is it of S.H.A.P.E.—General Norstad, or whoever is to succeed him in two years' time. Is that at their discretion? Now that we have committed ourselves to this N.A.T.O. agreement, do we have any opportunity of saying, in the next two years, during the course of time when these weapons are likely to be delivered, that, on the whole, we shall not choose to have them? Can our pledge be recalled if, as a result of further study, we find that it is unnecessary to have them?

Why did the Government, two years before the rockets can be delivered, put them into the cockpit of political discussion? What is the gain in having said in Paris that the weapons are to come? Is it expected that, in the two years, Russia will give us some concession and that thereafter we shall not need to have the rockets? I should also like to know what concession we are getting from the United States of America in agreeing to instal these bases in this country. Are we certain that the McMahon Act will be repealed? Have we drawn a bow at a venture, the arrow of which may not fly to its mark, so that when we have started to site the bases and order the rockets, the United States Congress will not, in the end, give us the changes in the McMahon Act that we want?

I want to know much more about the high strategy of the situation. When the hydrogen bomb was manufactured, tested and exploded, I think it was the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister himself who said that this was a supreme weapon which we had deliberately designed and produced to give us an independent foreign policy. In other words, the hydrogen bomb with the aircraft capable of delivering it was an all-round weapon of offence and it carried with it an all-round weapon of diplomacy. We are now getting rocket bases established in Scotland. They point only in one direction; they are a weapon of diplomacy in only one direction. They compromise the position of the British hydrogen bomb. My hon. Friends and I will be grateful if my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will explain that position.

There is another aspect of the matter. Hitherto I have always thought that the principle of an Alliance was that it gave greater protection to oneself, that it was a mutual arrangement because the nations who came in also thought that they were getting greater protection for themselves. On this occasion with these rockets, we are clearly inviting the risk of attack in some way, and we are giving a one-sided protection to the United States.

Mr. Harold Davies: Hear, hear. It is time that was said.

Viscount Hinchinbrooke: I wonder very much, if we happened to be at war with some South American State, whether the United States would allow us to

[**VISCOUNT HINCHINGBROOKE.**] establish hydrogen bomb rocket bases along the coast of Louisiana or, indeed, on the Panama Canal? I doubt it very much.

There is one great danger, which perhaps may be a little imaginative, but, since it is in fashion in the debate I will put it. Suppose an American airman from the great base in Dharan in Arabia misconstrued his instructions, pressed the wrong button—say he was mad, overdrilled or frustrated—and somehow something went wrong and there was a great hydrogen bomb calamity inside the Soviet Union. How then could then tell from whence that missile came? They might suspect that it came from an American base in this country, and who knows what reign of terror might fall on us through no action at all on our part. I formally request the Government to postpone consideration of the establishment of these bases in this country until public opinion has been fully enlightened.

Mr. Harold Davies : And tested.

Viscount Hinchingbrooke : I come back to N.A.T.O. My hon. Friends and I are convinced that the very opposite must take place from what in fact is happening and, so far from sacrificing further sovereignty into the N.A.T.O. machine, we believe N.A.T.O. itself must be reorganised so as to recreate the independence of its constituent countries. Why are we repudiating the great political theme of the invasion of Europe of 1944? It was Hitler who dominated Europe with a powerful force and forced all these countries into an amalgam. Our liberation message was one of the re-creation of the independence of those countries in Europe, and for that many of our men died.

What has happened to that concept now? Why have we deserted it, and for what terrified reasons do we imagine it is necessary to perfect a design which has never served Britain well in the past on the Continent of Europe and promotes no salvation for the countries in Western Europe? N.A.T.O. ought to be made an attractive force, not a repellent force. By an attractive force I mean an organisation, a political and to some extent military organisation, which in the end will invite some of the countries of Central Europe to come into it.

What hope is there of recovering any of the satellites of Eastern Europe while this curtain of fire remains on the ground and every target is pinpointed as the rockets are emplaced and as more and more rough edges are given to N.A.T.O.? The countries of Eastern Europe under the heel of the Russian Army have given signs of trying to fight free for themselves. Many of them are now looking to see what sort of political design in Europe is to be permanently established and whether they can ever in the end be associated with it. We may be sure that as they watch this steady, remorseless militarisation of the N.A.T.O. machine, they will feel sadly disillusioned and disappointed. Indeed, a technique of this kind forces them into the arms of Soviet Russia and postpones the day of liberation.

Can we not turn to another idea? If N.A.T.O. is too military, if it is too threatening and too alarming to those nations, can we not turn to something like Western European Union? That was a brain child of Sir Anthony Eden but it has never had any sustenance; the Foreign Office have neglected it. Sir Anthony did not contrive it for no purpose at all. It was the heir of the E.D.C. organisation which many people in this country found fearful and did not want to see established on the Continent. W.E.U. has never been erected into anything of any significance, although there are many indications from Central Europe that a country such as Austria might join Western European Union, whereas they would never do so if N.A.T.O. persisted on its present course. We believe Western European Union ought to be made the main political force in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation should stand back, as I sought to explain to the House in a speech in February this year. There must, however, be some token that this is being done.

We are prepared to recommend to Her Majesty's Government that the United States should withdraw from Western Germany into the Low Countries and France if Russia is willing to thin out in Eastern Germany. There are many people who think that it is possible to divest both West and East Germany of all forces except the forces of the countries concerned. I think that would

be extremely dangerous. It would recreate a Korean situation where, if there were no formal force behind the existing indigenous forces, in the present atmosphere of anxiety and frustration, and even hatred, between East and West Germany, those forces might be precipitated at each other and another Korean situation might supervene. Therefore, a token and limited withdrawal of what now are not occupying forces but associated external forces, should take place.

Secondly, we consider that the British and the French Ambassadors—most definitely not Dr. Adenauer's Ambassador, nor he himself—should start negotiations with Russia through diplomatic channels and not by way of a summit conference. Mr. Kennan, whatever people say and whether they agree with his thesis or not, seems to make this telling point that the world is surfeited with summit conferences, cosmic settlements and international solutions on a comprehensive scale which never come to reality. We must attempt to go back to the patient ways of the old diplomacy and see whether it is not possible to achieve limited solutions. Sir Anthony Eden after the Berlin conference stressed the importance of going for small points of agreement. There is some hope, I think, of finding that Russia is prepared to agree to such limited solutions.

One word about the Middle East. We conceive that Russia has now permanently arrived in the Middle East and must be recognised there. We think it absurd to say that Russia has never before been heard of in that part of the world. One has only to look at the Suez Canal Convention of 1888 or the Montreux Convention of 1937 to notice that Russia was a signatory to both those great treaties and the period of alarm and dispute that went before them in each case was not unlike the situation that obtains today.

I am quite convinced that if again on a diplomatic network the Foreign Office would start exploring with Israel and her neighbours the possibility of a territorial settlement and, as these agreements for one design or another began to emerge, would acquaint our French partners, America and Russia with the result, we might build up a satisfactory situation which could then be subjected to an international con-

ference of the major Powers for a decision. To go about it the other way round, as we have been doing since the war, having summit conferences with all their publicity and propaganda, then achieving no result at all, merely serves to heighten world tension and make the situation more dangerous.

I should like to revert now to the matter of which I spoke at the beginning of my speech. Britain has won all her victories in the past by acting nationally, alone, or with an alliance obtained in the crisis of the time. We have won by always refusing to entangle ourselves in any permanent alliance, especially one which was designed for ideological ends. When we have failed to do that we have been seriously weakened. The Crusades were an early example. There was another example more recently during the last two years of the First World War, when, in 1916-18, we were seized by ideology under the Liberalism of Lloyd-George. We squeezed the Kaiser until the pips squeaked. What was the result? The Treaty of Versailles and the resurrection of German nationalism.

The same thing happened in the last year of the last war, which, in my view, we fought for far too long, for unconditional surrender. Now we are gripped by these American Liberal concepts which come wafting across the Atlantic, and we are carrying on almost from the day the war left off in Europe. General Norstad is a substitute for General Eisenhower. N.A.T.O. and its organisations are very like S.H.A.E.F. in 1945. The Hitler redoubt was conquered, but still these forces march on towards the East all the time, finding new enemies, new ideologies, to pursue. It may be that the United States, with her immense power and false Liberal concepts, can indulge in this sort of thing and survive, but the British people cannot do so.

Major H. Legge-Bourke (Isle of Ely) : When my noble Friend says that the powers of the West march on eastwards, eastwards, all the time, has he really totted up the sum and considered the enormous increase in the number of people who have come under the heel of the Communist tyranny?

Viscount Hinchingbrooke : If my hon. and gallant Friend is talking about Europe, whose fault is that? Who wrote

[VISCOUNT HINCHINGBROOKE.] The Treaty of Teheran in 1943 which gave the Russians suzerainty over those lands? And what evidence is there that the Russians have crossed the line that was agreed on with military force? None at all.

A very great miscalculation of Russian intentions was made in 1946 by my right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford in his speeches at Fulton and Zurich. I have said this in the House many times before; it is not new from me. However that may be, we did have that great speech of my right hon. Friend in May, 1953, when he sought to pacify the world and suggested the four-Power conference which took place in 1954. We had Sir Anthony Eden's friendly action and able diplomacy devoted towards peace at Geneva in 1955, culminating in the visit which was paid to this country at his invitation by Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev in 1956.

What has happened since then? Why has the Foreign Office allowed tension to mount? When I was in Russia in August, I asked Russians whether, from their point of view, it was our Suez operation which had made them angry, alarmed and suspicious, leading to new, acrimonious polemics. They said it was nothing of the kind. That was a small event, a sign of British Imperialism, but not alarming fundamentally to their position. From our point of view, what has done it? Was it Hungary last year? That has been cited many times as a point of fundamental disagreement. I am quite certain that the Russian action in Hungary affronted us enormously, particularly Liberal opinion in this country, but was it responsible, was it the reason why we have had this extraordinary change in temper, why all the actions of my right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford and of Sir Anthony Eden have been set at nought, why the Foreign Office today is directly in contact with the State Department in producing the fantastic phrases which appear in the Communiqué today. No, it cannot be Hungary.

Again, some miscalculation is the cause. I urge my right hon. and learned Friend and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to look back to what was done between 1953 and 1956, now that the Paris Conference has been concluded, to consider whether they may not take the

lead, whether Britain is not best placed in the world to take the lead, whether it is not an almost heaven-sent mission which falls upon this country, and whether they cannot return to patient diplomacy, largely in secret, to bring about an amelioration of mankind's predicament and improve the prospects of peace.

2.47 p.m.

Mr. Christopher Mayhew (Woolwich, East): We have heard a most remarkable speech from the noble Lord the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchings-brooke). Though he said many things with which practically everyone will find some disagreement, he has, like my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), who preceded him, given us his views without any trace of partisanship at all. He has given us views which are, in many cases, I think, very widely held by people in this country now.

It has been very noteworthy to those who have sat through the entire debate so far that there has been no support from the Government back benches for the speech which the Foreign Secretary opened the debate. We had the highly critical speech of the noble Lord to which we have just listened, and two other speeches from the back benches, most admirable in many respects, in favour of the cause of world government. It has always struck me as being a worthy but somewhat academic cause, but if I were making a choice between giving a speech in favour of world government or in support of the Foreign Secretary's speech this morning I know that I should have no difficulty in choosing.

The Government are finding themselves increasingly isolated from public opinion in this country. The speech of the Foreign Secretary and the communiqué which we have read will do nothing to restore confidence that the Government have the moral drive to try to solve the desperate problems which face Europe today.

In that part of the communiqué which dealt with arming, there is much which is concrete and detailed, but, where the problems of East-West relations are concerned, everything is perfunctory, without conviction and vague. Yet this, of course, is where the real victory must be sought. I heard the Prime Minister speak on television last night, returning, as he said, with victory from N.A.T.O. But, of

course, success in further arming, though perhaps necessary, is not victory. Disarming is the victory for which everyone looks.

What I quarrel with the Government about is not so much what they are doing in the military field as what they are not doing in the diplomatic field at the present time; and particularly, I think, because their attitude towards the European problem is a defeatist one. They have not recognised—and here I agree very strongly with my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East—and have not adapted themselves to, the changes that have taken place since the early days of N.A.T.O.

I remember very well the atmosphere prevailing at the time when we formed N.A.T.O. Then, there was a sense of an expanding Communism driving westwards under the leadership of a man who might be considered a power maniac. I speak quite objectively. What Mr. Khrushchev said about the later days of Stalin confirms it. In 1948-49, we saw a sweep westwards of an imperialist Communism of a political and military kind. We were right then to form N.A.T.O. I do not apologise for that; I am proud of what the Labour Government did in forming N.A.T.O. at that time.

But even when we founded N.A.T.O. there was not in our minds the idea that it should become a permanent, tight, military alliance. We still had the objective of one world based on the United Nations, and based on a properly working Security Council. We also had the idea that N.A.T.O. was only part of our policy—there was also the constructive Marshall Aid, and other constructive economic and political schemes for Europe.

Today, the situation has changed a lot. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East spelt out the things that have changed, but one fact that he did not mention is that, of course, ideologically, the Russians have lost in Europe. The Foreign Secretary spoke of the menace of the westward sweep of Communism. Of course, in 1948, there was hardly a country in Western Europe that had not its group of Communist M.P.s, and a lively and advancing Communist Party. Where are they today? The M.P.s have gone. The parties have collapsed. Even in France, a party that was recently nearly 1 million strong now has only

300,000 members. And if there are few Communists left in Western Europe, there are even fewer in Eastern Europe.

The problem is not now so much one primarily of the military threat from Communist imperialism in Europe, or an ideological threat from Communist imperialism in Europe; it is essentially a diplomatic problem of reducing the tension between the two sides there. That is, of course, where the Government and the N.A.T.O. Powers are failing. The Russians are winning this diplomatic offensive. It is they who put forward these schemes of disengagement. It is they who have put forward this word "co-existence", which is, in reality, a Western democratic conception. Anyone who has studied Marx and Lenin knows very well that the conception of co-existence runs completely counter to the ideology of dialectical materialism. But it is the Russians who have put forward this idea as theirs.

East-West relations are the real problem, and the Government and the Western leaders are not leading because they have not adapted themselves at all to the new situation. There is the same great priority given to the military defence of Western Europe. To that, all is subordinated, and the political, economic and diplomatic initiative that should be taken is, consequently, hamstrung. They are petrified in the kind of statuesque attitude adopted in the cold war.

I believe that there were some soldiers of Napoleon's army who, in the retreat from Moscow, were found frozen solid with their rifles still pointing towards the enemy. That attitude may have been suitable at the time of the retreat from Moscow; it was not appropriate, two years later, at the Congress of Vienna. I want to see the Western statesmen un-freezing themselves a little from the familiar postures that were rightly adopted when the threat was different.

Perhaps I may here take up a point made earlier by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan), when he referred to having planes in the air with hydrogen bombs in them. I am not attacking the need for the deterrent. Let me make my position clear. I am all for the N.A.T.O. concept, for the political unity of N.A.T.O.; and I recognise, though I hate it, the need for a strong deterrent. But what degree of

[MR. MAYHEW.]
readiness is really appropriate to the military threat that faces us?

We have these planes in the air, with the hydrogen bomb, instead of on the ground, at 15 minutes' notice. That means that the Government think that if those machines were grounded instead of in the air the Russians might launch an all-out nuclear bombardment of Great Britain within the next 15 minutes—before ten past three. That is the only justification for keeping those planes in the air at the present time.

I ask myself on what basis do they judge this to be the likelihood of a Soviet nuclear bombardment of Great Britain? My judgment is—and I am not naive in these things; I do not trust the Russians on these things—that to estimate that before ten past three this afternoon the Russians are to launch an all-out nuclear bombardment on Great Britain is an hysterical judgment. It is irrational. It is not borne out by any carefully calculated considerations—

Mr. Patrick Maitland: Surely the Soviet Government did threaten these islands a year ago.

Mr. Mayhew: As I have said, I do not want to be thought to be against the conception of a deterrent. I can imagine circumstances in which extreme measures of readiness might be necessary, but I do think that the present situation does not justify us going to the extreme of readiness, as the Government are doing is more likely to increase tension and the chance of a war than actually to act as an effective deterrent.

The consequence of all this is that the degree of moral responsibility for the tension and deadlock in Europe today has shifted a good deal since those days when we formed N.A.T.O., nine years ago. In those days, I think that it was plain to any clear-headed person that 90 per cent. of the blame for the tension, and the danger of war in Europe had to be placed squarely at Stalin's door, and not more than 10 per cent. at the door of President Truman and Mr. Attlee as he then was. Can we be so confident today that that is the position? I do not think that many fair-minded people would put more than 70 per cent. of the blame at the door of Mr. Khrushchev or less than 30 per cent. of it at the door

of the United Kingdom and American Governments as a whole.

That is the disturbing thing, and it is the thing that puts a greater degree of moral responsibility on us for improving the situation. It was once Mr. Molotov who said "No" the whole time. He is now at Ulan Bator, and Mr. Dulles is beginning to be promoted into the place left vacant by Mr. Molotov. I can imagine that Russian school children must be learning the English word for "nyet" in the same way as we learnt what "nyet" meant in English in the Molotov era.

It is not good enough, because it is not necessary. It is not necessary to assume that negotiations on disengagement and disarmament will be fruitless. They may be fruitless. We have to meet the point. But if they are fruitless we shall at least have shown where the moral responsibility lies. But they may not be fruitless. In these letters from Mr. Bulganin there is always an appeal—usually in the last paragraph—for free contacts between the Soviet Union and the countries receiving the letters. I often ask myself, "Is this a sincere offer?"

As it happens, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Windsor (Sir C. Mott-Radcliffe) and I have had considerable experience in this field over the last three years as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Relations Committee, and during those three years we have been in touch with the Russians on this question of free contacts. If someone asks me whether the "free contact" paragraphs of Mr. Bulganin's letter is sincere, the answer cannot be either "Yes" or "No." On the one hand, these people do not mean contact in the way we understand it, and, on the other, we have shown, by continued patient argument, that there is some measure of agreement in this field that can be reached.

I cannot believe that if the same passionate attempts were made now in the much bigger and much more important field of disengagement and disarmament, something might not be achieved. There would not be a clear-cut agreement; there would not be a real meeting of minds. But something would be achieved that was of benefit to both sides. I am sure that it would be worth while, and I urge on the Government to

show some initiative in these diplomatic matters.

I must not take up the time of other hon. Members who wish to speak, and I must not go into the whole question of disengagement, but I noticed considerable references to Mr. George Kennan's, I think from the benches opposite as well as from here, and some of them very favourable. While listening to the debate, I thought, in relation to the Government's position, as Tennyson might say, of

"Kennan to right of them,
Kennan to left of them,"

This conception of mutual disengagement is not just a party one, shared on this side of the House. I think that these ideas are widely and increasingly felt to be worth trying by many people. Obviously, I cannot go into the details of the matter, but would like to put this point to the Foreign Secretary. In his speech, he complained of the need to resist the westward increase and expansion of Communism, but, of course, one of the things which he turned down when he refused to concede the idea of a neutral Germany or a neutral belt in Europe was the only possible hope of peaceful liberation from Communism of the peoples of Eastern Europe. That is one thing we can do. The advantages of a neutral Germany and a neutral belt in Europe should be in all our minds at present.

Finally, I hope that my speech will not be taken as being hostile to the N.A.T.O. concept or to the need for the political unity of N.A.T.O. I strongly support the need for a greater degree of political unity, rather than less, all the more when I see the degree of unity on the other side, in the Eastern camp. They all sign together in every detail their statements of policy. They all say that the political and ideological struggle between East and West is inevitable. That, surely, must prove to us that this is no time for dismantling the political unity such as exists in N.A.T.O., but it does mean that we must take positive action inside N.A.T.O. Her Majesty's Government should be concerned about these things and should present some positive ideas on disengagement and disarmament to the N.A.T.O. allies, in such a way as to make a positive, and not a purely negative, contribution to the world situation.

3.4 p.m.

Mr. Antony Head (Carshalton): If he will excuse me, I will not follow the points made by the hon. Member for Woolwich, East (Mr. Mayhew), because I do not wish to detain the House for more than a few minutes. I would not have spoken at all had I not felt very sincerely that there was a danger that, in the light of the N.A.T.O. Conference and, in some respects, of this debate, the free nations were concentrating on what to me seemed to be non-essentials rather than the essentials of our present dangers.

I should like to explain that very briefly. I think it would not be unfair to say that the consequences, as I have heard them in the House, of the communiqué of this Conference have been that there have been great efforts at N.A.T.O. to take steps to make good what has been understood to be an undue lead by Russia in nuclear arms, and, secondly, further to strengthen the defences of Europe. It is my belief that the last thing the Russians want is a nuclear war, and that the deterrent against the likelihood of a nuclear war is still held by the United States and elsewhere and that they will never use it by policy. Therefore, although we must keep our defences and our deterrent, I do not want us to concentrate on that unduly.

I believe that the Russians know that Europe, if they were to attack it, is one of the most sensitive areas of all and perhaps the area most likely to lead to nuclear war. Therefore, I believe that the likelihood of an attack on Europe is comparatively small. What I feel is that the danger of the statement of policy, and the result of the N.A.T.O. communiqué is that, while we concentrate on N.A.T.O. nuclear defence and the defence of Europe itself, there is perhaps very little coherence of policy and joint policy in something which has gone on since 1947, namely, the gradual infiltration and erosion of South-East Asia and the Middle East.

These are the areas in which not only do dangers to the Western world exist, but if they go too far and if the Middle East and South-East Asia come largely under Communist domination, then the dangers of war are increased. It is my belief that the economy of the free world and of this country would be infinitely

[MR. HEAD.] damaged if, gradually, the young countries aspiring towards nationality and independence, from no particular fault of their own and maybe not through policy, gradually come under the sway of Communism through infiltration by economic aid, by weapons, or by other means.

All that I should like to ask—and I do not address this to the Government so much as to N.A.T.O. as a whole—is this. Looking back on the last ten years, whereas there has been a joint policy in N.A.T.O. the countries of the West have been singularly divided in policies both in the Middle East and in South-East Asia. I believe that if that rather haphazard, individual and *ad hoc* method of dealing with the situation both in South-East Asia and the Middle East continues, and if the next ten years show the same erosion as we have seen in the past ten years, we shall be in great danger and difficulty. I feel strongly that what must happen if that situation and trend is to be arrested, is that the free world must get together, particularly with the Americans, and have a joint and agreed policy and tell the world that that is so.

That policy should start, I suggest, by saying that we do not wish in any way to stop, stultify or retard the aspirations towards nationhood of countries in the Middle East and South-East Asia, but that we do wish to help them, and that we are determined to apply a joint policy to prevent rash, unduly rapid and unarmed entry into independent nationhood resulting in their being dominated, perhaps involuntarily, by Communism. It is my belief that if that were said and if, at last, the countries of the West got together and evolved a joint policy, something might be effected to stop this gradual infiltration and erosion which, in my opinion, has been the main success of Communism in the last ten years and which also guarantees that the nation which has been so successful in that infiltration will not wish for any nuclear war or to touch Europe.

I believe that the continued effectiveness of that infiltration will be the vindication and triumph of Communism. I believe that the West has to be helpful economically and give aid with arms to those countries of the Middle East and South-East Asia, but that unless we join

together in doing that and do not leave it to *ad hoc*, individual settlements, which can never be satisfactory, gradually we shall find South-East Asia and the Middle East coming under Communist domination.

I suggest to the House that when that happens there will be a strong reaction, both in terms of economic difficulties to the West and in the desire to take rather late steps to put the situation right. That situation could be a very dangerous one. Therefore, I hope and believe that, perhaps without the House being told, this has been discussed at N.A.T.O. The last ten years have, however, shown a singularly unco-ordinated policy by the West in that area, which, in my opinion, is the most dangerous to them economically and is the most dangerous in the sense that, unattended, it might well be the greatest threat to peace.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Desmond Donnelly (Pembroke): With much of what the right hon. Member for Carshalton (Mr. Head) has said, every hon. Member on this side of the House would agree. It is essential that we should take note of the new nationalism of the uncommitted areas of the world, and it is vital that there should be a co-ordinated Western policy towards them. Almost the key gesture so far as South-East Asia is concerned, however, is a more enlightened Western policy towards China.

It is essential for Her Majesty's Government to use much more influence than they have done so far in securing a more realistic appraisal by the United States of what has actually happened in China, because the continued refusal to admit China to the United Nations is regarded by the rest of the Asian world as an affront to all Asia. That is the damaging effect of the failure of Her Majesty's Government to face their responsibilities in this matter within the Anglo-American Alliance.

The background to this debate was touched upon in a remarkable speech by the noble Lord the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchingsbrooke), when he spoke sometimes with the romanticism of John Buchan and at other times in the accents of Mr. Michael Foot, but at all times with interest to the House.

Amongst the various points raised by the noble Lord, what he was saying in essence was that not only must we negotiate with the Russians, but that we have the doubly difficult task of having to negotiate with our American friends as well. This is because the Americans have misconstrued the actual nature of Communism. They continually approach the Communist problem in an attitude of political Buchmanism. It is this political Buchmanism which has led to the disillusionment which exists among many people who would like to be friendly with the United States of America but who find themselves put off by the attitude that the Americans continually adopt.

The United States looked upon the N.A.T.O. conference as an extension of American defence. We should have been looking upon the N.A.T.O. conference as a meeting of Powers to formulate, first, a political policy; secondly, to redeploy our defence, and thirdly, to decide upon the posture, as Mr. George Kennan calls it, that we should be adopting towards the rest of the world, especially with our eyes upon the uncommitted areas of the world.

In the last few days, while the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary has been away, a very remarkable Gallup poll has been announced in the *News Chronicle*. It is something that the Government would do well to ponder. In this Gallup poll, 85 per cent. of all voters—there is very little party difference in this respect—were in favour of negotiations with the Russians and only 4 per cent. were against. Fifty-six per cent. of all voters were in favour of a withdrawal of troops from West Germany if the Russians agreed to a withdrawal from East Germany and only 20 per cent. were against doing so. Thirty-one per cent. of all voters were in favour of missile bases in Britain and 55 per cent. were against. Sixty-two per cent. of the voters thought that peace with Russia was possible and only 14 per cent. thought that it was not.

That is a very significant attitude of mind on the part of the British people at this moment. The Foreign Secretary's statement this morning will have done nothing but to continue their disillusionment towards the policies of the Government and the fact that we are

not taking the positive steps that we ought to be taking and which people think we ought to be taking at present.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman this morning talked about negotiation from strength. Where does this negotiation from strength end? His speech this morning was like a man shouting through a muffled blanket in the middle of a London fog. That was all the illumination that it will bring.

The stakes in this situation are very high indeed. There is a situation in Eastern Europe which is not likely to continue for very long. It may go on in Poland as it is for two years or three years, but it may go on only for two weeks or two months—nobody knows. If there is an uprising in Poland, nobody knows where it will end and nobody knows the consequences of what might happen. It is because of the inflammable situation which exists at the moment in Poland that it is essential for an initiative to be taken by people who are aware of the actual nature of the Communist problem in Europe. The gravamen of our charge against Her Majesty's Government is that they have taken no step along those lines.

Secondly, there was no indication whatever in the Foreign Secretary's speech of the changes which have been taking place in the Soviet Union since the death of Stalin. These are partly political changes. They are partly social changes arising from expanding education. A man cannot be trained to launch the Sputnik, to speed the jet engine or to split the atom and permanently be denied control of his own destiny. They are partly social changes which are resulting from a desire to have further contact with people in the outside world.

Let me interpose for a brief moment an illustration of precisely what I mean. I have spent some weeks recently travelling in the Soviet Union. On one occasion, I called upon the chairman of a *Sovnarhoz*, which is one of the national economic planning committees that have been set up. When I came away, the young man who acted as my interpreter in that city, which must be nameless, and with whom I had had many free political discussions, said to me: "You see that man to whom we have been talking this morning? That kind of man will have to go and a new generation will have

to come before we get agreement with your people. That kind of man is our arch conservative." Then, after stopping for a moment, he said, "He is a complete Moscow man. I suppose he is the equivalent of your Selwyn Lloyd."

It is not without significance that behind the Iron Curtain today the people who are being referred to as the Left are the anti-Moscow men and liberty men and the people who are the adherents of the rigid Communist policies are being considered to be the Right wing. This is a situation which can be utilised substantially to our advantage, but it will not be utilised to our advantage if we, ourselves, pursue indefinitely a policy of rigidity.

What we must do, I suggest, is to start to try to get both the Russians and the Americans to advance backwards. If we can get the Russians to advance backwards to the Bug in exchange for an American advance backwards to the Rhine, that should be worth while.

Whilst some people may ask what is Her Majesty's Government's policy and others say that it is to preserve peace, I should say that our policy in Europe is not only to preserve peace, but to help to preserve peace by getting the Russians out of Eastern Europe. That is one of the fundamental tasks and my hon. Friend the Member for Woolwich, East (Mr. Mayhew) touched upon it in his speech.

I think it is possible for us to start to try to see whether we can do that—after all we have Mr. Khrushchev's offer to this effect—yet, all that we are doing at the moment is to solidify the position. What we have done by the recent conference is to compel the Russians to dig in where they are and we have compelled the satellite countries to make an agonising choice in their present geographical dilemma. That is the kind of stultification which stems from the fact that if we continue to regard Communism purely as a military problem, we will leave ourselves with absolutely no political room for manoeuvre.

The second point about which we should be thinking a great deal more, but of which no signs have emerged in the course of this debate, is a greater contact with the Communist people, with the

ordinary people. I am of opinion that almost any contact, on almost any terms, is ultimately to the Western advantage. We should be making it much more easy for people from behind the Iron Curtain to come here. We should be taking much more positive steps to stimulate our radio programmes that are beamed on Eastern Europe and Russia. I found to my intense pride that wherever I travelled along that belt from Samarkand to Alma Ata, an enormous number of people listened every night to the B.B.C. The B.B.C.'s reputation was created in that area largely by its conduct at the time of Suez. People said, "Here is a broadcasting system which gives both sides of the question and therefore it must be fair." We want a widening of that approach towards political propaganda in the cold war. Truth is the most powerful weapon we have got.

One of the things we ought to do in helping our colleagues in the Anglo-American Alliance is to try to persuade them to make the "Voice of America" less like a Sidney Horler thriller. It is absolutely essential to realise that behind the Iron Curtain are people longing for contact with us, longing to hear what is going on on this side of the Iron Curtain, desperately seeking communication with us; but they want the truth.

This pronouncement in this Communiqué which was announced yesterday will contribute nothing whatsoever towards meeting that desire or accomplishing that end. If we go along on these lines we shall be perpetrating exactly the same mistakes we did at the time we adhered to the Maginot Line. It is the Maginot Line mentality which will be most dangerous for the West.

There are two main arguments in the world today. One argument is about liberty and who is for liberty? The people of this country are for liberty. The other argument is about social justice and who is for social justice. If we intensify carry on with our policy of piling up the cold war, liberty will die. If we armaments, we shall never be able to implement the policy of social justice. That is why I regard this vote this afternoon as a vote of censure on Her Majesty's Government, and I shall vote against them.

3.22 p.m.

Sir James Hutchison (Glasgow, Scots-town): I have listened with interest and respect to what the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Donnelly) has had to say to this House, and, indeed, to other hon. Members who have taken part in this debate so far, all of whom have shown that they know their subjects deeply. I agree wholeheartedly with the hon. Member for Pembroke about the desirability of and need for contact with the peoples behind the Iron Curtain. It is of immense importance that such contacts, whether through the interchange of students or by wireless, by whatever means, should be divested of propaganda and should be in simple truth.

As the hon. Member for Pembroke said, truth is our greatest ally. Let those peoples know how our trade union system functions. Let them know how our democratic institutions carry on their discussions and their votes. That is the sort of knowledge for which they are thirsting. It is a very remarkable fact that within the last year the students in Leningrad have been demanding and have succeeded in getting copies of newspapers such as the *New York Herald Tribune* and *The Times*, in order that they may be able to keep more abreast of what is happening in the West.

Having made that comment on the speech of the hon. Member for Pembroke, I would tell the hon. Member for Woolwich, East (Mr. Mayhew), so as to assure him that my right hon. and learned Friend has at least one supporter on this side, that I approve of the Foreign Secretary's speech. I approve of it for this reason, that almost every other speech made implied, in greater or lesser degree, the destruction of N.A.T.O. I had understood that the whole House started by agreeing that N.A.T.O. should be kept, agreeing that it was a precious thing and that it should in some form continue. I had thought that that was one of the things about which there would be no discussion.

In this agonising problem with which we are confronted there are three certainties, and it is absolutely essential that we should fix in our mind these certainties before we can come to anything like a reasonable solution of our problem. The three certainties are that if an all-out war occurred there would

be a holocaust which would destroy civilisation. That is the first certainty. The second is that if all nuclear weapons were abandoned, whether by us or by both sides, the Russians with their conventional forces would have a walk-over. The third certainty is that the Russians still want to dominate the world with Communism. It has been reiterated time and time again, and once again quite recently.

Mr. Zilliacus: Surely the hon. Gentleman appreciates that what the Soviet leaders have said time and time again, and what has been endorsed by Mr. Kennan, is that they believe that Communism will conquer the world through the actions of the workers in each country, not by the action of the Soviet Government or Soviet forces. I believe they are mistaken, but that is what they believe.

Sir J. Hutchison: They have also said they are entitled to bring about the dominance of Communism by any trick, treachery or method which lies to their hands.

That being so, I liked the refreshing realism which was brought into the debate by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell). It blew away some of the effects of the admittedly splendid language used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan), leaving his speech somewhat naked of accuracy and logic.

For example, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale complained that there was no concession indicated by the Government to the Opposition's point of view. Yet, with one exception, perhaps, he would not indicate what that Opposition view was. There was no indication of what concession it was intended should be made. The only indication which he gave was that there should be more independent leadership by the Government. What on earth does independent leadership mean unless it is indicated to what target, to what goal, it is intended we shall be led? To talk merely about independent leadership in itself means nothing.

Then, as have other speakers who have spoken since, he touched upon the theory or the method known as withdrawal or

[**SIR J. HUTCHISON.**] disengagement. Having studied this question profoundly, along with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Basselaw (Mr. Bellenger), during the Recess, though I would not in any way pledge him, I have come to the conclusion that it would be militarily at least an extremely dangerous step to take.

My right hon. and learned Friend has talked about the instability that would be introduced politically by a vacuum, or even by a consortium of Central European States acting as a new force or a new body. It would weaken the defence of the West in a grave manner. It would bottle up the forces of the West; deprived of German assistance, they would be forced to operate in a restricted area. As every strategist knows, the faster war moves—and it is moving faster all the time—the more ground one needs for manoeuvre. So while we should be sacrificing a great deal by being bottled up in France and the Low Countries, Russia would be left with an immense territory behind her. We should not only lose the help of German forces, but we should gravely incapacitate our own power of manoeuvre in what territory would be left.

The only circumstances in which this withdrawal theory would, in my view, be acceptable and not gravely weaken the Western Forces would be if the Central States, whether East and West Germany were closer, or Poland, Hungary and the other Central States, were allowed alliance together and were strong in their own defence and were ready to make a pact of non-aggression with both the West and the East. Is there the slightest likelihood that Russia would agree to those States being left armed to the teeth? Incidentally, whence would they get modern weapons? Would Russia agree to a new force at her very side, a new force with which she might have to contend? So I believe that, on balance, politically, and certain militarily, the withdrawal theory is one which we should resist.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale reproached the Government for not having made any attempt at conciliation, for not having made any step forward to any form of discussion or agreement. Paragraph 17 of the communiqué deals with the possibility of a new disarmament meeting. What is this

accusation, as though the Russians were on our doorstep begging to be heard and we, obdurate, unheeding and dogmatic, were turning them back and sending them away. Have we not for months on end been negotiating on disarmament through the Disarmament Sub-Committee? After all, is not disarmament the real acid test of their sincerity?

Mr. Ziliacus: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way again. Is it not true that paragraph 17 simply says that we are prepared to discuss implementing the previous proposals? There is nothing about changing the position.

Sir J. Hutchison: As I read the paragraph, it means that the Government are prepared to meet at Foreign Ministers level to discuss how to resolve the deadlock if lesser and preliminary steps do not succeed. What more can be expected than that?

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale, having said that the Foreign Secretary quoted a document which my right hon. Friend thought to be favourable to his point of view, in turn quoted the Bulganin letter. What hope of advancement does that letter show? It not only does not lead us any further forward, but in some senses it leads us back. It makes no mention of a possible reduction in conventional forces. It ignores the necessity for inspection of the manufacture or testing of nuclear weapons, and it makes no mention of the cessation of the further production of nuclear weapons. Those are three essentials if any disarmament agreement is to be successful. Yet on the threadbare foundations of the Bulganin letter, my right hon. Friends are prepared once again, if necessary, to meet and have discussions with the Soviet Union. I cannot think of a greater gesture towards trying to come to a conclusion on these matters.

I have been asked to be quick. There are many other points I should have liked to touch upon, but I will leave most of them out and merely emphasise that N.A.T.O. is changing character. N.A.T.O., judging from the discussions which took place in Paris, is expanding in three new directions, and that is desirable. As has been indicated, N.A.T.O. has more than a military task before it. Its character is tending to change.

I welcome the United States' offer of an increase in economic resources to the under-developed countries. While we are on that subject, may I point out how desperately important it is that, if we intend to bring about the Free Trade Area and the Common Market, it should be clearly explained to foreign countries who see a suspicion in it of a new form of colonialism that it is intended to benefit them as well as us and to expand world trade. It is absolutely essential that that point of view should be made clear to them.

I also welcome closer political consultation. It is essential that we should present a politically and diplomatically united front. Steps are being taken, according to the communiqué, to help to bring that about. I welcome the increased emphasis on the part that science and technology shall play. I welcome the suggestion for 500 doctorates which has been put forward by American protagonists. I welcome the N.A.T.O. missile defence training centre. I think that all these things will strengthen N.A.T.O. and turn its activities and its influence in different directions.

I welcome the agreement on the missile bases. I agree that the United States should hold the nuclear warheads, but I echo what was said by my noble Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchinbrooke), that as a counterpart to this we should have a promise that the McMahon Act will be rescinded or weakened.

I believe that we should man these weapons. I do not believe that American troops should not only hold the nuclear warheads but also man the weapons and be in control of the bases. That is undesirable, partly from the point of view of our own prestige, partly because we would wish to eliminate the little frictions that always arise when we have large numbers of American troops on our territory for a long period of time, but principally because it denies us a double check on the use of these missiles. If we manned the weapons, both the Americans and we would have to agree that the missiles should be discharged, and that arrangement would not allow of one nation alone to use them.

Believing that, I believe that Scotland is ready and indeed proud to accept such

bases as are considered to be necessary by the Supreme Command. I do not believe that my country is an ally only as to 75 per cent. and only when it is convenient and that we think that other people should hold the bases and run the risk. In any case, is there greater risk in having the missile bases than in having large ports which would mean large concentrations of troops or even large cities? Finally, who is in command of the Supreme Commander?

Mr. Harold Davies: The 64,000-dollar question.

Sir J. Hutchison: In higher strategy, who is in command if there is a difference of opinion between the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and the Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, or between both of them and the troops which still remain under our command? Who decides? I believe that there is something missing here.

Interdependence has already altered everything. I believe that it was necessary and desirable, for both time and science and threats are nibbling away at the old conception of sovereignty. Indeed, we have recognised this from the day when we put the British Army, under Field Marshal Haig, under the Command of Marshal Foch. It is the price that we have to pay for security. It is part of the price which we have to pay, alas, for having saved civilisation in two world wars when we enfeebled ourselves to earn the right for ever to hold our heads proudly.

3.37 p.m.

Mr. J. Grimond (Orkney and Shetland): The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Donnelly) said that the great political debate today was about liberty and social justice. I do not believe that. I think the great political debate is about liberty and nationalism and that it cuts across not only nations but parties within nations and across the House this afternoon. One of the matters most fiercely canvassed is the amount of sovereignty that we should or should not continue to hold; and the hon. Member for Scotstoun (Sir J. Hutchison) has asked the penetrating question who ultimately should control the Supreme Commander in N.A.T.O.

I hold the view that we have to surrender sovereignty and face the implications of so doing, but if we agree

[MR. GRIMOND.]

to do so we must be informed of what is expected of us. That is the question which should have been discussed and answered and about which we should have had information from the recent Paris Conference. Yet paragraphs 19 and 20 of the declaration and communiqué are extraordinarily inconclusive and quite uninformative. We are told that the intermediate range ballistic missiles will have to be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. What does that mean? Quite clearly, if war breaks out it does not matter whether the missiles are fired from Arizona, the Hebrides or France. We are all going to be in it, and I agree with the previous speaker that it will not matter, from the point of view of being "nucleated", whether we live in Glasgow, London or on the particular base.

I think the *Manchester Guardian* made a good point this morning when it questioned the military value of these bases. The noble Lord the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchingsbrooke) made another good point when he questioned whether this was the time to raise the question of the bases, when they cannot, in fact, be brought into commission for about two years. Sooner or later, however, we have to face the fact that if we are to have the nuclear deterrent in the Western world it means that if nuclear war breaks out we are all in it, and we must develop methods of controlling these deterrents, whether they are in America or France or Britain or anywhere else.

That seems to me to be the weakness of Europe today. The noble Lord, and the representatives of those who wish to maintain our national sovereignty, must answer various questions. If they want to have complete control of our armaments, are they going to demand that this country is to be put in the position of being itself able to meet any threat which may develop against it in the world? I cannot believe that they are. I cannot believe that they really intend that this country should be self-sufficient in armaments. Do they, then, think that we can contract out, or try to keep out of any major world conflict?

There again, I do not think we or our Commonwealth could possibly do that. I think they must also face the question that if they demand national sovereignty,

so will everyone else in the world, not only in Europe, but Colonel Nasser and everybody else in the Middle East as well. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot) that we shall face a situation very soon when countries will be in the position to get control of plutonium and other similar substances. If this is the general demand, they may also demand the right to build their own stocks of atom and nuclear bombs.

That would be a disastrous situation, and I do not share the view, either, that the world is getting safer, which is sometimes a view expressed in these debates. I think it is true that the Russians do not positively want war, but they have been brought up in the Communist philosophy which believes that the capitalist system leads to war and, however pacifist particular capitalist may be, there is inherent instability in the system which may lead to war. That has a certain encouragement for us. I think it is one of the reasons why they keep such an immense level of armaments, not for aggressive reasons, but because they genuinely believe, some of them, that capitalism in the long run is a wild beast.

When the right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) says that no one would consciously plan to drop the nuclear bomb, we should also remember that people have dropped the atom bomb and, indeed, that it was not the Russians who did so. It was one of our allies who did that. I do not think we can leave that out of account in thinking that these nuclear weapons will never be used.

Like many other hon. Members, I was deeply disappointed in the White Paper, and I hope that those who have an enthusiasm for Summit Meetings will be rather damped by the results of this one. Far too much was expected of it, and disappointment inevitably involved not only disillusion but, I suspect, misunderstanding. For instance, paragraph 5 is one of astonishing banality—

"In the course of our review of the international situation we have given consideration to recent serious events in Indonesia. We view them with concern."

This is the result of a Summit Meeting—

Mr. Harold Davies: God help us.

Mr. Grimond: If it had issued from a rather weak sub-committee of the

Liberal Party, I would have said they had had an off day. The document is full of it. Read the passage about the Middle East, which refers to:

"... independence and sovereignty of the States in this region . . ."

Could anything be more dangerous? What we want in the Middle East is some diminution of sovereignty and some general agreement for pacifying the area. I dare say the Russians will have to come in on this.

Therefore, I personally hope that we shall not have any more Summit Meetings for some time. Equally, however, I hope that we shall also get rid of all those phrases and slogans of which democracy is so fond. We seem to me to be repeating all the classic errors of democracy. We get into a panic because the Russians launch a Sputnik or the Americans fail to do so. We invent phrases like "interdependence". The hon. Gentleman the Member for Bath (Mr. Pitman) wants the Government to make a solemn declaration, a formal declaration for world government. He knows that the Government do not believe in world government. In fact, he knows it is not possible. The history of democratic diplomatic relations is scattered with these phrases behind which there is no force, phrases which no one takes the trouble to question but in which no one has any faith.

I believe there are certain directions in which some hard bargaining, in secret probably, could be done with the Russians. If this is to be done, it must be done at points at which there is some chance that the Russians will respond. I deplore the polemical language against the Russians in the White Paper. If we are to negotiate, we shall negotiate not for victory but about something which both sides can feel is in their interests. To carry on the language of war is inappropriate and ineffective.

I go further than that and say that, as I believe any negotiation with the Russians will be a long-term business, it had better be about something on which not only the countries of the Western world agree but on which the parties in the countries also agree to some broad extent. I do not believe we can go into such negotiations with the negotiators feeling that if they fail they will suffer political defeat at home. One of

the dangers of the Western world is that that is what happens to negotiators; the Western world cannot turn its back on its own national politics.

There have emerged from the debate certain limited fields in which negotiations could be initiated with some chance of getting support from the Western world and some bi-partisan support from within the Western world.

Eastern Europe is one such area. There has been a lot of misunderstanding about the Eden Plans. They were put forward in different circumstances, and they have become rather confused. However, there was a plan put forward by the Leader of the Conservative Party for a degree of disengagement in Eastern Europe and for some demobilisation. We have seen the Leader of the Opposition put forward a similar plan, and also Mr. Kennan, who speaks for a considerable amount of American opinion.

Cannot this be taken a little further? I do not believe we shall get the Russians to evacuate the whole of the satellite countries, and I do not believe that we shall get unity in Germany for the moment, but I do believe that if we offer at least nuclear disarmament we may get a slight easing of tension, and ultimately we might be able to withdraw foreign forces from Western Germany, Eastern Germany and Poland, and that would be a step forward.

I do not deny that to leave a vacuum in Eastern Europe might be dangerous. We might have to have some form of inspection. If we are going into genuine negotiations, we must expect to have some give-and-take. I do not think this is an impossible area for negotiation. Reading Marshal Bulganin's letter confirms my belief that the Russians might not be as difficult as we think. Is Eastern Europe any great advantage to them now? They do not need it militarily, for they can fire across it. They have failed in it politically. Their political failure in Eastern Europe is far more important than the launching of the Sputnik. The fact that refugees are still pouring out of Eastern Europe and that the Russians have failed to impress their system on the countries there is of immense importance to the West, but in twenty or thirty years' time those countries may have given up hope and reconciled themselves to Communism.

[MR. GRIMOND.]

Again, I think there is some chance of a common policy, a bi-partisan policy, on a limited field of disarmament. I would start by saying that, if we can get some agreement, further nuclear tests should be at least postponed for the time being. Like other hon. Members, reading the White Paper leaves me vague as to whether the Government will make any proposals about this sort of thing. They say they would welcome proposals, but will they make them? Who will take the initiative? This is extremely important.

The third limited field in which I think progress can be made is the Middle East. I believe that we could make some progress about the settlement of refugees, and I think that we should take up again the sort of suggestion that was made after Suez for a general development board for that area. We, the Americans and the Russians have made statements which would seem to make it possible for some agreement to be reached on such lines as those.

Finally, I believe that possibly the greatest need facing the Western world is the perfectly humdrum need of improving its own economy. Ultimately, the struggle between East and West will depend upon whether we can build in the West a society which is more vigorous, more satisfactory, than the Russians can. That in turn depends on simple matters like the organisation of our industries, development of our science and education, and the amount we save and invest.

I somewhat dread the excitement which has lately grown up about what are to me wild and visionary ideals. World government has been mentioned in the debate. It is a splendid idea, but it falls under the rather brutal criticism of Lord Keynes, that it is a long-term matter and in the long term we may all too easily be dead. We have to settle down to the short-term matters not only *vis-à-vis* the Russians, but *vis-à-vis* our internal conditions and setting our own house in order.

There is a reference in the White Paper to Article 2 of the N.A.T.O. Treaty. Can the Government tell us a little more about that? They used to say, when this was pressed on them—and it was pressed on them very hard

by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies)—that the Article should be greatly expanded, that it involved the building up of European economic unity. Are they now departing from that? Do they regard it as being an instrument for making advances in Europe and the rest of the world?

So far, I am afraid, the public reaction to their doings in Paris has been one of grave disappointment, but they have a chance in the next two or three months to reverse that public opinion, if they can do so. I am forced to admit that so far I see no hope of that happy event.

3.52 p.m.

Mr. George Brown (Belper): I rise now with a view not to shortening other speeches but because I have been asked to make an arrangement with the Prime Minister so that there is no infringement on his time, which I am happy to do.

No one who has listened to the debate could disagree that of all the debates in the House which have promised to be a big occasion this has come nearest to it. We have had an impressive debate. To me as a comparatively junior Member of the House it has been impressive in many ways, not only because of the points which have been pressed home all the time, but because of the way arguments have cut across ordinary associations and ordinary ideas. I am thinking not only of speeches of my own side, but of the speech—whether I agreed with all of it or not—of the noble Lord the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchings-brooke), whose speech was powerful and impressive.

This big debate has been an occasion on which something more than House of Commons, political party or Parliamentary emotions have been involved. We are meeting under the general impact, under the general umbrella, of an enormous degree of public concern about the consequences of much which is being done or not being done in the public's name. Many of the issues raised stem as much from the fact that we know that our constituents are feeling their way as from our own personal views.

That is why I regret only two cross-currents which have emerged during the debate. One has been the implication that, if we argue, as did my right hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr.

Bevan) in that notable opening speech, about the different ways of meeting Communism and the threat to democracy and suggest that it is not best done by the kind of pointless and rather abusive denunciation with which the Foreign Secretary opened the debate, in some way we are being soft about Communism. The other one has been that if we have suggested that we should consider the exact degree of military readiness in operation at the moment, it is said that we are in some way being soft about the requirements of N.A.T.O. and about the consequences of our own support of the country's armament position.

I will deal with both those suggestions straight away, and I hope that neither will be raised again. Many hon. Members on this side of the House have spent a good deal more time preventing Communists taking over free organisations than hon. or right hon. Members opposite. Although, clearly, that does not mean that we cannot make mistakes or be wrong, it does mean that on the whole we are likely to have whatever advantages come from experience in this matter. I might remind hon. Members opposite that when Mr. Khrushchev had an argument with me he had no doubt which party he would join if he were an Englishman. He chose the party opposite—not my one.

On the subject of the readiness of aircraft, it does not follow—and it should not be suggested that it does—that because my right hon. Friend questions the degree of readiness, the amount of time left to us, and the point at which political and civilian controls over the military commanders have to operate, we are scheming to waltz or go back on our agreement upon the need for N.A.T.O. forces to exist or to be able to fulfil their job if they are asked to do so. It is a pity that that point came up, and I hope that it will not be raised again.

The other thing that puzzles me about the Government is the way in which they manage to give the impression that they are so little disturbed by and take so little account of the feeling of the people. There is nothing dishonest or political—in a nasty sense—in suggesting that the views and emotions of democrats need be taken account of, because after we have provided all the bomber bases and the rocketry and made any other arrangements we care to, in the end, as

we are so proud of saying in a different connection, it is the will of the people to resist that makes those things have any point at all.

The people are very disturbed at the moment by the whole business of H-bomb tests, which left a good deal of feeling behind it; the operation of American bases, which has shaken the people very much, and the whole pattern of American comments in recent times. Unless we can give the people basic reassurances about the need for these things, and about the place that they occupy in the political strategy of the moment, they will run away from us in a big way.

The major criticism of the Government, which I make not because it is a party duty, is that in their own speeches and actions; in the communiqué to which they are a party—although I recognise that other people have had a hand in writing it; I would not hold them responsible if that were their only failing—and in the Secretary of State's speech this morning, they are showing signs of being unable to seize any political opportunity that comes to them because, being themselves small men, they are so desperately keen to act like big men and they make the mistake of thinking that anything that is said in a big way must make one big. In fact, they are afraid to grasp an opportunity lest anybody thinks that they are not big enough to carry the responsibilities of the moment. I believe that this is so, and I believe that the people think that it is so.

I believe that the West comes out weaker and not stronger as a result of the communiqué; that N.A.T.O. comes out weaker and not stronger, for reasons that I shall develop, and that the chance of obtaining an enduring peace of even a limited type, buttressed by agreements, is much less likely. The only people who can be pleased with it are the Communist propagandists. It has once again enabled those who write Marshal Bulganin's letters and Mr. Khrushchev's newspaper articles to seize the opportunity, as my hon. Friend the Member for Woolwich, East (Mr. Mayhew) said, of turning to their advantage all the words, postures, and beliefs that are essentially democratic.

I now propose to discuss as quickly as I can the three major matters that I wish

[MR. BROWN.]
to raise. First, let us keep reminding ourselves of the basis of N.A.T.O. The Foreign Secretary said towards the end of his speech today that the basis of N.A.T.O. was strength from which to talk; that the strength of N.A.T.O. was not intended to be an end in itself but only a means to an end. I am glad that the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that, but I have a tremendous feeling at the moment that that is not the way in which he and the Government are behaving.

One has to remember that, in a sense, it is the tensions that hold us together and which keep the alliance going. We are led on from that to a sort of desire to create military arrangements that will themselves prolong the tensions and keep the alliance going as though the alliance were born out of an innate belief in its goodness instead of out of an innate fear of the consequences if we do not have it.

The Government are acquiescing in the American belief that it is necessary to maintain this posture permanently, this military alliance, for reasons that are not good for us at all, although they may well be good under conditions in America. It is important that we should argue this through because I am not at all sure that the rules of the game are not changing. Up to now and perhaps for a wee bit longer—I make no point about the exact period—there has been a long period in which we could argue that the strength of the West was maintained and developed and that the advantage of strength lay with the West.

I believe that we are now at a point where the advantage, if there be any, from a continuing cold war and where the advantages, again if there be any, of nuclear armament competition may well not lie with us any more and where the risks of getting more out of delayed negotiations may well be turning into a chance of the Russians getting more because we have reached parity. Indeed, we may well be over the edge of parity and from now on, I think, it would be a very bold man who claimed increased advantages for us through delay.

This is a reason why I regard the Conference as the last opportunity we shall have. What advantages we could have got six months ago we could not, maybe, get now. I am not sure that six months

hence we should be able to get the same advantages as we could get today. It is desperately important that we do not allow this desire to freeze patterns of conflict, patterns of advantages and patterns of arms to occupy more of our time than we should.

As I understand it, the Government say that if the N.A.T.O. Conference did that it was by accident. The real point, they tell us, is that N.A.T.O. was strengthened by the Conference and by the communiqué. Let us examine that because it is a basic point cardinal to the Government's defence. What were the weaknesses of N.A.T.O.? I beg hon. Members to remember that, to a large extent, the Conference was made necessary by the confusion into which N.A.T.O. had been thrown (a) by Suez and (b) by the Government's Defence White Paper and the fact that as a result the whole strategy of N.A.T.O. became completely changed and altered out of all recognition.

What were the weaknesses? I rely on my own impressions. I was with the right hon. Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot) and others at the Parliamentarians' Conference last month. First of all, the main cause of difficulty with the smaller nations was the lack of a common political policy, the lack of a common political directive and the lack of any sense of joint political control over what was going on.

The second was the feeling that the forces were not there to support the strategy of the Supreme Command and that the Supreme Command had not changed its strategy to base it on the forces it had. Behind the minds of everybody was the idea, "Well, never mind, if we have not enough forces for this strategy, we shall get more and more of the sword, more and more of the weapon which can be delivered over vast distances, and we need not worry ourselves if the shield is not as big as we should like."

The third point, arising out of the first, was the fact that there was no effective civilian control over who was to use the weapon and what weapon he would be allowed to use; in other words, who was to control the military commander.

I do not believe that this communiqué even appears to meet any of those three points. It does not produce arrangements for overall political policy and action.

It certainly does not deal with the problem of not having enough forces under his command for SACEUR to follow up his strategy. All it does is to import into his strategy—I believe for the first time—the element of the long-distance missile, the only purpose of which is to form the ultimate weapon. It imports the deterrent into the thinking of the very people who ought not to be thinking in terms of a deterrent, but in terms of what we do if the deterrent does not work. It does not do anything at all about the kind of weapon that SACEUR may use on the battlefield, and I will say something about that later.

Is it unreasonable to deduce that there is in this communiqué every sign of a divided council, every sign that once again under this Government we have chosen the wrong side in an argument between our friends and allies; that we find ourselves supporting the American view—which, were one an American, one might think sensible—while all our nearest friends and neighbours on the Continent are doing their best to modify, amend and quieten that particular viewpoint. There are only two worthwhile military decisions in the paper—in fact, there are only two decisions. One is on tactical weapons. The decision is announced to stockpile nuclear warheads, by which I take it, since it is separate from the strategic weapon, is meant the tactical weapon.

Will somebody at some time realise that so long as we cannot say what are these weapons, how big they are, and for what purpose they will be used, there will be a continuing reluctance on the part of Governments and peoples to follow this decision through? We can stockpile them, but we have to get them used. In a debate, I think it was in February, the Prime Minister said that in his view the Hiroshima bomb was now a tactical battlefield bomb. That is a bomb of 20,000 kilotons—well, the Hiroshima bomb; 20,000 tons. I was so anxious to say it in the term usually used that I have got myself mixed up between the English and the French.

This is the bomb now for the battlefield. When I went to Paris it was apparent that the current military thinking there was, on the contrary, anything up to 50,000 tons. That was a

battlefield bomb. I do not believe anybody can persuade people that it is possible to draw a line between this weapon and the ultimate weapon of mass suicide, mass destruction. If it is possible to do so, by the time we get to 20 kilotons we are much too far down the line. Simply to say that we are to stock nuclear weapons all over Europe without saying what weapons they are and making it clear whether or not we are talking about the weapons of mass suicide, is an empty decision. The Prime Minister has to get his own mind clear about this matter and make the matter clear to us.

Stockpiling of military weapons that can be used on the battlefield—or so it is thought—may be intended to strengthen the alliance in regard to fire power, but it does not really increase its fire power. It does not bring additional strength to the forces or strengthen N.A.T.O. It will encourage a lot of people to say, "Now that N.A.T.O. is relying on these things there is less need for troops and conventional forces," and thus they will weaken and not strengthen N.A.T.O. The nations in the front line on whose territory these weapons are likely to fall will be the first to say that fighting on the freedom side does not look much more comfortable than fighting on the other side. We shall find the organisation disintegrating in our hands because of this decision, unless the organisation can be made a lot tighter.

The decision is given to the Supreme Commander to use the I.R.B.M.s, which are not yet built or tested and cannot be ready for a couple of years. They might not be ready for even longer than that. The Supreme Military Commander, the man about whom the political authority is already most worried—I am not talking of the man personally—is to be given what he has never had before, I understand, a long-range strategic weapon for blasting Moscow or any other city 1,500 miles behind the front. The Strategic Air Force of America was never put under the control of the Supreme Commander, and our V-bombers were never put under Supreme Commander control. In that way we kept the shield and the sword separate.

Now we have virtually seen the end of the idea of a shield. We are turning it all into sword, and we are, in my view, weakening and not strengthening the Alliance and ourselves by so doing.

[MR. BROWN.] I urge the Prime Minister, whatever he feels he has to say tonight in the light of this debate and of the things said about him, to reconsider the consequences of this policy. I am desperately disappointed by the communiqué, and I attack the Government on their military side. I beg the right hon. Gentleman to understand that I do so because I think our position is weakened, and not because I am running away from a decision which appears to be strengthening it but can only weaken it. It seems to misread entirely what is wrong with N.A.T.O. and to misread the atmosphere on the Continent and the needs of the moment.

Let me look at the proposals to have rocket bases here. It is open to anybody to argue the logic of this matter. The Prime Minister can ask me if I had not accepted the strategic air-command bases. He can then say, "The missile is an aircraft, except that the crew is on the ground to operate it, whereas in the older type of aircraft the crew flies with it. If you accept the one position you much accept the other." That is logic, but I must examine whether the extension in logic is needed and whether the arrangements under which we have operated so far have been suitable, successful and worth while. It is a question of purpose and of control about which we are concerned.

Honestly, we have not been helped by the dissembling of the Government on this matter every time we have asked them questions. The Foreign Secretary must realise that if he had not been quite so airy the first time this matter was raised and when I suggested that he did not know whether the bombers were going into the air armed, if he had said, "I will look at it and give a considered answer," we might have had a different situation. He said, "I assume" and "I am prepared to believe," at every one of our successive attempts to get an answer from the Government, until we found we were met with the same rather airy unwillingness or inability to answer. When we turned to the Prime Minister he did what he is fond of doing even on the biggest issues, he gave us an answer with a little smirk or snigger. If he does that, he must understand that we are not convinced, nor is the public convinced, of

the need to extend the bomber arrangements, nor of the satisfactory nature of the existing agreement.

On the last day before he went away, I asked the Prime Minister whether the decision to put these bases on an alert was covered by the agreement, made in the first place by Mr. Attlee and Mr. Truman and reaffirmed by the right hon. Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill), The Prime Minister, in an Answer which just avoided getting reached and, therefore, was a Written Answer, said that the placing of these bases on an alert is not covered by the agreement, which reinforced what the Foreign Secretary said some weeks earlier, when he said

"... it is a matter for the United States Strategic Air Command."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 27th November, 1957; Vol. 578, c. 1163.]

What the agreement actually says is that the use of these bases in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision. A decision to alert them, a decision to decide that fifteen minutes on the ground is too long, apparently is not an emergency; it is not a matter for joint decision. I am bound to tell the Prime Minister—he may play with it as he likes this afternoon—that by telling people they not only have no control but have no say in a decision to use the bases in that way, the Government are not going to get agreement to any extent to the present facilities, because people will say, "We did not know it." Perhaps we should have known it; perhaps we should know that that was the agreement. Hon. Members opposite can score off us and say that Mr. Attlee made it, but making mistakes is not a criminal thing. Refusing to learn from them is the criminal thing.

The fact remains that in a situation where this can happen, where the Government do not know what is happening, where the Government could not know because they say they were not asked and had no right to be asked—if that is the position, I say it is unsatisfactory. I am not convinced that we have to take an urgent decision about the rockets. Fortunately, perhaps, we do not. The rockets are not to be available for two years or more. There have been no successful tests of the Thor or Jupiter and there is no crushing hurry. Thirty-two million pounds worth of earthworks would have to be built to launch them, they cost £8 million or £9

million apiece and we are not in a crushing hurry. I say to the Prime Minister that I am not running away from the logic of my position.

As the technique moves on in the absence of disarmament agreements and political settlements which would help us, I am not prepared to deny to us the technical developments someone else would like us to have. All I am saying is that at this stage we have no agreement over these eight bases which gives us anything like sufficient control over our own destiny. We have not any suggestion that we shall have a real part in the rocket bases. They frighten people more than ordinary planes. It is no use laughing that off. I repeat what was said by my right hon. Friend, that we know too little about the things. We do not know whether the McMahon Act will let us have the warheads or whether they will be in a locker to which we have not got the key. We know too little about the rockets and, perhaps in a different sense, too much about the operation of the present bases.

Therefore, I re-echo very deliberately what my right hon. Friend said. We are not prepared to acquiesce in the granting to another sovereign Power of this kind of sovereignty over things which control the whole of our destiny unless that agreement is revised in a way which gives us a proper, full measure of political control in our own hands over something which affects us and is an indispensable part of our sovereignty.

I should like to conclude by speaking, quite shortly, about the major issue which has come up in the debate. It is, in fact, not only the question of N.A.T.O., which I have noted occupies a curiously small part in the communiqué, but the political content of the foreign policy and defence policy of the Government which is so very important. We on this side, and many hon. Members opposite, I believe—certainly many people in the country—are really upset, concerned, and worried at the apparent lack of any central political idea in our foreign policy today.

We may have had lots of trouble in the Disarmament Commission. Adopting the phraseology of the Foreign Secretary, I am prepared to assume that we have always done our best, and the others have always been the ones to hold up progress. I am prepared to assume that, although I

think there is about as much accuracy in my assumption as there was in what the right hon. and learned Gentleman was prepared to assume in connection with the other thing. However, for the purpose of the debate, let us assume that.

Even so, the cross of democracy is that we must go on trying. We must not merely say, "We are prepared to talk again and have any discussions which will lead to the implementation of the Western proposals, and if you do not like them, you can go on and put up some other ideas. If you do not want that, let the Foreign Secretaries meet". All that sounds good, but I never went to any negotiations like that. It is time we decided that the package deal will not work, that the global settlement is not going to work, and it is time we got down to trying to pinch out the areas where agreement would help us best and where, as my right hon. Friend said, the other people too may well have a consuming interest in pinching out sources of trouble at this moment. In other words, are there any topics upon which our interests can so solidify and come together that more chance of progress may be had than has hitherto been possible according to the methods we have been following so far?

The Gaitskell plan, like many babies which grow up to be good-looking children, has been the subject of competition as to its paternity. I prefer to go on calling it, for the moment, the Gaitskell plan. It represents an attempt to do just what I have suggested, an attempt to find an area where, if we could succeed, it would not mean just getting an agreement, not just making concessions to the other side—the phrase which the Foreign Secretary used—but it would be adding to our strength when we have done it. For example, not to have the risk of Berlin ever present would be an excellent thing. Not to have—I do not know whether this is an indecent thing to say—the ever-present risk that a "Hungary" may be repeated in East Germany, with much more unpredictable and worrying possibilities, would be an enormous achievement.

We do not understand why the Government are so obstinate about picking on this idea or why the Foreign Secretary has to throw it down in the way he did this morning. There are other possibilities. If we could have an area free of

[MR. BROWN.] strategic rockets in the centre of Europe, should we necessarily be the only loser, or even the major loser? If we could have an area free of tactical atomic weapons, with enough reduction of conventional forces to make that worth while, should we be the major losers, in the light of N.A.T.O. today? If we could only have a large measure of inspection and control, anything which prevented the risks of surprise of an overnight attack on us, that would be a gain.

There are so many possibilities. With any one of them, we should gain. It is not so much that I do not believe that the Government want to gain in that way, but I believe that they have so far failed to put forward concrete ideas on the subject. The N.A.T.O. meeting was a chance to do just that.

We believe that the N.A.T.O. meeting failed, in part, because our Government are too inert, too inept, and too unimaginative—too much all these things—to put the ideas forward. We dislike this communiqué very much indeed. We think that it is a very frightening document at a very serious moment of world history. Unless the Prime Minister is in a position to say something so completely different from the mood and spirit of the White Paper, we shall have to advise the House to divide.

4.25 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Macmillan): This has been a very important and a very well-attended debate in which many speeches have been made which have been great contributions to perhaps the largest problem that confronts us all today. It arises out of an important occasion. The meeting of fifteen Prime Ministers or Heads of State in Paris, with the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers—although, of course, those representing the British Government are, to use the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Belper (Mr. G. Brown) to be written off as “inapt, inept and inert”—did include at least fourteen other Prime Ministers and Heads of State and Foreign Ministers who represent every known political party—Socialists, Liberals, Conservatives—of all those countries that sat down to take counsel together with a degree of co-operation and comradeship that, I am bound to say, struck me as very remarkable.

Whether we have done well or badly is for the House to decide, but we have done our best to make our contribution to these joint decisions. I will not maintain that the precise language of the declaration, or communiqué, is as good as if it had been written by one person instead of agreed by fifteen. That is always likely to happen, but what matters is the character of the decisions. I believe that what we have done together has been well done, and that it will strengthen our position both for the defence of the freedom in which we believe, and for the seeking of peace. I will try to give my reasons.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Bevan) attacked the Foreign Secretary for relying on Communist statements to give a picture of Communist ambitions. He laughed at them very much, and called them quite out of date—and then found that they were only a month old. Things move very quickly, but it is not true to say that Communism has lost its dynamism. It is not true to say that the ambitions and hopes of a mixture of imperialism and Communism are not still there.

I think that it is a great mistake not to take some of these things that are said and written at least at some value. I remember that we made that mistake before. Mr. Hitler wrote a very long and a very dull book. Very few people read it, but it would have been a good deal better if we had read it, because what, in that book, he said that he intended to do he, in fact, did.

I do not, therefore, think that the purposes or that the philosophy has changed, but I do agree that the situation has changed, and that these ambitions can no longer be achieved at little or no risk. The Russians cannot now take the Baltic States, or Poland, or Hungary, or Czechoslovakia at no risk to themselves. In other words, I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the Russians see no advantage from war. I agree with him when he says that we and Soviet Russia have a common interest, the avoidance of war. That is certainly true, but that has come about only because the Western Powers—with all their weaknesses and faults, all the multiple difficulties of combining democratic Governments—have, in fact, taken

steps to see that war would not benefit the Soviet ambitions.

I thought that the noble Lord the Member for Dorset, South (Viscount Hinchinbrooke), who made a very interesting speech, and very interesting suggestions, was a little ungenerous to the United States. He said that the United States wished to use Europe for her own protection.

I think we should not forget that during the period when we were trying to build up N.A.T.O., we have, in fact, lived for nine years under the protection of the immense air power of the United States. Therefore, I say that we should remember how N.A.T.O. began, and that the Foreign Secretary of the day, Mr. Bevin, played perhaps the greatest rôle in its foundation. It began with the fall of Czechoslovakia, and if times have changed and if war is no longer a convenient instrument for Communist ambitions, it is because we have taken these steps. It is because we have got this power.

That is not to say that we ought not to make every effort to get the best use of it. I do not believe, and I must be frank about it, that the general philosophies of life on the two sides can easily be reconciled, but I think there is the possibility of disarmament arrangements and other arrangements, and the test of that is really the words used by the right hon. Member for Belper, who spoke of the nature of the advantages which could be got by some measure of agreement—words which have been used all through these discussions from the very start of our disarmament discussions. I heard them at Geneva, at the summit meeting, and again at the Foreign Secretaries' meeting. He said what an advantage it would be if we could have the security of a system of inspection and control.

That is the hub of the whole matter. If only we could have inspection and control, that would give confidence and real sincerity, and progress could be made. That is our proposal, which we have made year after year. That was the central part of the proposals for the four-Power disarmament programme. They have not been accepted. I agree that we must not give up hope, but must go on working for them. That is the test, and if

we can get that, many other things could easily become possible which now seem so difficult.

The right hon. Member for Ebbw Vale wound up his speech by saying that his party was in favour of N.A.T.O. I am bound to say, from some of the questions which are asked me week by week from some parts of the House, that I would not say that his party is violently partisan on N.A.T.O. [HON. MEMBERS: “What about your own?”] They seem to me to have been directed to undermining the strength of the free Powers to the benefit of the Soviet Powers.

The situation was well put in a speech by the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell), with which I found myself very largely in agreement. He was speaking with his usual frankness and courage, and the only criticism that I would venture to make of him is that I thought he did not give enough credit to some of the countries of N.A.T.O. He was rather critical of the Scandinavian countries, for instance, but it is an important fact in this communiqué and these decisions that the Scandinavian countries did not raise any moral or ethical objections to the weapons.

They are, of course, in a difficult position, and sometimes a rather precarious position. The Norwegians are making a great contribution to the radar and forward warning system, and, all the time, their air force squadrons are stationed north of the Arctic Circle near to the borders of the U.S.S.R.; and, while we realise their hesitation, I am bound to say that I could not have found a better colleague than Dr. Lange, and the Prime Minister of Norway, and the representatives of Denmark and Holland as well.

With regard to France, the right hon. Member for Easington is really under a misapprehension. There is no hesitation at all. Indeed, the French are extremely anxious to obtain these missiles, and are anxious to obtain them on the same basis as that upon which we began to negotiate at Bermuda—negotiations which were announced to the House in April.

Our policy, therefore, is really two-fold, and I think in essence simple. It is a firm and powerful N.A.T.O., from the military point of view, but always ready to discuss and to negotiate on a practical basis to obtain practical results.

[THE PRIME MINISTER.] We had another problem, to which hon. Members on all sides have called attention, and it is a very big one; that is, how to maintain this strength—which I really believe, although we may differ in detail, the great mass of the House of Commons is anxious to maintain—without placing too big a burden on the economies of the free societies of the West. That was one of the aims of our Paris meeting.

We made a step forward—I was glad that this was mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton (Mr. Head), by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond), who leads the Liberal Party, and by other speakers—towards political unity. Those paragraphs in the communiqué which deal with the growth of political consultation within the countries of N.A.T.O.—although in expressing them it is difficult to give the real results of long discussions—represent a really marked effort on behalf of all the member States of N.A.T.O. to strengthen the machinery for political consultation amongst themselves. That is of great importance.

We had also to take into account—this is the main point on which I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton—that N.A.T.O. must look onwards. Long as is the line from Norway to Turkey, it is not the only line in the world; and we must not build a sort of defensive Maginot Line which leaves the flanks unguarded. We know that. These are not wholly military problems. They are problems of political and economic pressure and subversion.

Although it has taken a little time to develop this point of view in N.A.T.O.—as the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate, some of the countries who do not have interests in those parts of the world, or some of them who feel themselves to be more remote, take a little time to engage in this new point of view—I think we have made great progress. It is easy to laugh at the words of the resolutions. They simply mean that these discussions did take place upon this outward view to see what we could do by economic methods, by a variety of methods between us, to see that our flanks were not turned and that in the Middle East and in the Far East we maintained a strength which would otherwise, if it were lost, deeply injure us. We discussed, and I believe

that in due course we shall work out a machinery for, some link or relationship between N.A.T.O. and other regional organisations in the world.

We dealt extensively with the need for economic co-operation and we were very much encouraged by the President's references to the intention of the United States Administration to seek Congressional authority to increase substantially the Development Loan Fund and the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank. These are at present the only effective machineries for long-term investment that are available to the American Government. They also proposed to extend the existing trade agreements legislation for another five years.

We recognise that the general shortage of capital for development, and the need to expand trade and to conserve and increase the free world's resources of gold and dollars, make measures of this kind most opportune. In some of the discussions—private discussions, which are not reflected in the communiqué—we were able perhaps to do something to bring home to those countries which have this possibility more at the moment than we have, how great is their duty if we are to pursue policies that are likely to keep full employment and expansion throughout the free world.

To confirm and strengthen the military forces of N.A.T.O., the fifteen countries took some important decisions. The right hon. Gentleman said that we had taken them too far ahead and he asked why we had to deal with the question of nuclear warheads or the plan for rockets. As he said, it takes a long time before they will be ready. [Interruption.] I thought the right hon. Gentleman said that it would be a long time before they would be ready and they were not yet in production. I thought the purpose of the argument that they were not yet in production was to show that it was not necessary to reach a decision now. If it is not that, I accept that.

I think it is necessary to reach a decision because not only does it take some time to produce these things, but, no doubt, it takes some time both to make the right military decisions as to where they should be located and to make the necessary arrangements to receive them.

We also discussed the co-ordination of research, development and production, not only in the scientific and technical field but in the general field of weapons production. In that connection I would mention what seems to me of very great importance, the acceptance by the United States Government of the principle that America should draw this modern type of weapon from Europe, because if we can get those production teams and research teams working here, in order to deal with this dollar difficulty America would procure—that is the word they use—in fact, buy these weapons produced in Europe, and that makes a very great alleviation of what otherwise would be a great difficulty from the balance of payments point of view to many European countries.

We also discussed a matter which I think caused some concern to some of my hon. Friends, what we called in our paper which we put in before the meeting, the policy of balanced collective forces.

Mr. Bevan: Before the right hon. Gentleman enters upon that, is he going to say nothing about the principle of political control over the bases?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am coming to that.

I want just to make this clear because it is of some importance. There are many fields of activity especially in Europe—I am talking here of N.A.T.O. forces—where in our view, for instance, in air operations and in early warning, it has been recognised that the Alliance must think as a whole. In air defence, for instance, the United States and Canada have gone into partnership. They have a joint command, and they have agreed how their common effort can best be employed.

Great Britain has military responsibilities outside Europe which in some cases it has to carry out alone, police problems and others which are its own responsibility, and the forces which we must maintain for the discharge of those duties must of course be balanced forces, forces that are capable of operating on their own. But for the rest we believe it is right—these are the words I used to the Conference—to adapt the contributions we make to the alliances which we support so that they produce the greatest

possible accretion of strength to those alliances. As a practical example of what I mean, we consider that the greatest menace which we have to face at sea is the enormous fleet of Russian submarines. We believe our contribution to the naval forces of N.A.T.O. would perhaps be more effective if it concentrated on anti-submarine warfare and less on other things such as the offensive strike rôle which may well be left to the Americans to make.

We go further and say that there are other tasks which could be better performed if collectively organised. The tasks I have in mind are those dealing with high-flying supersonic reconnaissance aircraft with which we shall have to contend in a few years' time.

I come back to the point which both right hon. Gentlemen raised and say a word about the I.R.B.M.s. It was decided after the Bermuda Conference and announced in April that we were in negotiation with the United States about having them for this island, and indeed, if I remember aright, the chief anxiety on both sides of the House seemed to be whether they would necessarily be under the control of both Governments, or whether we would be free to make warheads for our own uncontrolled use.

I do not think it was about the decision to have them as such, but there was some argument about the method of control. If the policy of the party opposite involved having in these bases the American bombers, I think, and the right hon. Gentleman quite frankly admitted it, that there is no logic at all in objecting to having missiles instead of the bombers.

I was slightly confused by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale when he said that the Opposition did not acquiesce in what he described as the complete United States control or veto over missiles. I do not know what he meant. He went on to imply that we should accept hydrogen bombers, or missiles carrying hydrogen bombs, in this country only provided that they were under complete British control. That is going too far. What we have is a complete negative control. We do not demand and do not ask for a positive control. We do not ask that we should be allowed to use these without the approval of the United States Government.

Mr. Bevan : There is no confusion about it. It is perfectly simple. These bases would be established as a consequence of an arrangement with an ally. However, they would be bases established on our soil, and, therefore, we consider that they should be activated only by British consent.

The Prime Minister : That is what I am saying. We have a negative control. The agreements which are now being negotiated regarding I.R.B.M.s. will give us a complete negative control—a complete veto. We do not ask that if the weapons are made by the United States we should have the right to use them without United States approval. That would be quite absurd.

I will go into the history of this quite shortly. In 1948 the United States bombers first came to this country. It was, I think, at the time of the Berlin tension. The Government, then under the Premiership of Mr. Attlee, in my opinion quite rightly accepted this arrangement. I do not know what the reason was, but it was not until 18th October, 1951, that any formula—the formula to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ebbw Vale has referred—was worked out between the two countries. For three-and-a-half years we were without anything except this general understanding. This formula, dating from October, 1951, was confirmed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) in January, 1952, and the understanding was confirmed and stated in the communiqué. It is quite true that the circumstances are somewhat different, although not so very different. The right hon. and learned Member for Rowley Regis and Tipton (Mr. A. Henderson) said that in that period nuclear weapons were not carried from these bases. Perhaps he has been misinformed. I have made inquiries and I have found that American kiloton bombs were in this country and were flown in aircraft before 1951.

Mr. A. Henderson : Obviously, to bring them into the country, they would have to be flown. What I was saying in reply to the question from the back bench opposite was that so far as I knew—and if the Prime Minister can prove that I am wrong I will accept his statement—there were no standing patrols by

American strategic bombers carrying atomic bombs.

The Prime Minister : They were flown into the country and flown by machines based—[HON. MEMBERS: “Cheap.”] Of course, they were flown into the country, but they were flown on exercise in machines based here.

Mr. Bevan : Is the right hon. Gentleman able to tell the House when United States authorities alerted their own planes here by way of putting live bombs into them on patrol?

The Prime Minister : I am coming to that question. That is another question. [HON. MEMBERS: “Answer.”] I am saying that this agreement was made in 1951, and before 1951 the A-bombs were here and were used off the bases on patrol or armed training.

Hon. Members : Cheating.

Mr. Frank Beswick (Uxbridge) rose—

The Prime Minister : I have very little time left. I must really, therefore, ask the House to accept these facts. [HON. MEMBERS: “No.”] As to the use here, there is no special alert. There has been no state of emergency. What happens—and I have made special inquiries again of the President last week—is this: they have decided to bring their aircraft at the highest possible state of readiness and we are doing the same. [HON. MEMBERS: “When?”] And the date by which this particular exercise was to be ready was 1st October. It was planned some time ago, and we are planning the same. It was planned—[HON. MEMBERS: “When?”]—a year or so ago. They are planning to bring it to a maximum state of alert, and I for one am glad it is so, because if we are to have a deterrent, it seems to me that the more prepared and ready it is the more likely it is to do its work.

I can understand those who say that we should not have a deterrent. I can understand those who do not want this policy, but I do not understand how, if one is in favour, one should be against the readiness and the bringing of the teams of aircraft, whether American or British, to the highest possible capacity.

Mr. G. Brown : Will the right hon. Gentleman now explain at what point he gives his part of the joint decision to do anything to use the bases?

The Prime Minister : If there were any question of using these bases or the I.R.B.M.s when they are ready, it would have to be by agreement between the two Governments. The right hon. Gentleman knows enough about aircraft to know that orders can be given and would be given to the aircraft, whether they were British or American, only after the agreement of the two Governments. As for the idea which has been put about that there are a lot of these aeroplanes flying about England all the time, that is not so. I have made special inquiries of the President. [HON. MEMBERS: “Oh.”] What really happens is this. So that there shall be no misunderstanding, I wish to confirm that our understanding was the same as his; and ours is, and has been, that these machines are occasionally flown on operational flights or on training flights out to sea and return, of course, to their bases in this country. And the only possible risk, as I have explained to the House many times, would be a possible risk of crash on landing. But such a crash could not result in an explosion. It could result only in the tiniest and really most limited danger arising from the breaking of the uranium of the bomb.

I should like to answer one further point raised. [Interruption.] Right hon. Gentlemen asked a lot of questions, but they do not seem very anxious for me to answer them. [HON. MEMBERS: “They have not been answered.”] Yes, I have answered. My answer is that right hon. Gentlemen opposite had no agreement at all for three years. They made one a week before the Dissolution, and then we confirmed it afterwards. Now there is perfect understanding where these operations are concerned.

I want to go back from the questions of air readiness and the strength of N.A.T.O. to the other question which has so much interested the House. Although I believe that there is a general desire to maintain our readiness, there is an equal desire to find as many ways as we can of getting back to discussion and to reduce the tension by partial or general disarmament. [An HON. MEMBER: “Bring those bombers down.”] If the Soviet Union will not participate in the work of the new Disarmament Commission, then we are ready at any time to have a discussion at Foreign

Secretary level to break this deadlock. This is a very important point, which the right hon. Gentleman raised. It is not true to say that we are only prepared to discuss the four-Power disarmament proposals; we are prepared to discuss these, or any variations, or any new proposals, or any of the proposals that have been mentioned recently and in the debate. We are prepared—all the countries are prepared—for those discussions to be held over the whole field.

Whilst I recognise the sincerity and the anxiety we must all have to get this terrible burden lifted from us, I feel also that we are more likely to provide and reach some basis of agreement—not necessarily comprehensive; partial agreement if you like—on one of these plans that have been put forward. All that can best be done if first we operate the Disarmament Commission which, at the Russian request, or on what we felt to be their views, has been raised from the original six to twenty-five members. If they do not like that, let it be at Foreign Secretary level, though I think it would be very helpful if there were diplomatic preparation, and careful diplomatic preparation, of what the change should be, what the proposals should be. Otherwise a short meeting over three or four days, the first two days of which are taken up in discussing what is to be discussed, will not be very satisfactory.

It has been said by two speakers, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Easington and my right hon. Friend the Member for Kelvingrove (Mr. Walter Elliot), that the atmosphere of this debate, and the problems, have recalled to us some of those of the old days. Well, Sir, I felt the same. I feel that the phrase used by the most experienced amongst us, both in the period before the war and in the war and immediately after the war, is a phrase which still should be our basis, “Arm and parley”. That was the phrase used by one whose advice, had it been followed, would have made us all much better off than we are today.

At any rate, it is the policy that the fifteen nations adopted at Paris last week, and so far as Her Majesty's Government played a rôle—and it was not an insignificant rôle—in forming and framing that policy, I ask the House to give us their support.

Question put. That this House do now adjourn:—

The House divided: Ayes 251, Noes 289.

Division No. 26.]

AYES

[5.0 p.m.

Ainsley, J. W.
 Albu, A. H.
 Ailaun, Frank (Salford, E.)
 Allen, Arthur (Bosworth)
 Allen, Scholefield (Grewe)
 Anderson, Frank
 Andrews, S. S.
 Baird, J.
 Bellenger, Rt. Hon. F. J.
 Bencc, C. R. (Dunbartonshire, E.)
 Benn, Hn. Wedgwood (Bristol, S.E.)
 Benson, G.
 Beswick, Frank
 Bevan, Rt. Hon. A. (Ebbw Vale)
 Blackburn, F.
 Blienkinsop, A.
 Blyton, W. R.
 Boardman, H.
 Bottomley, Rt. Hon. A. G.
 Bowles, F. G.
 Boyd, T. C.
 Brockway, A. F.
 Broughton, Dr. A. D. D.
 Brown, Rt. Hon. George (Belper)
 Burke, W. A.
 Burton, Miss F. E.
 Butler, Herbert (Mackney, C.)
 Butler, Mrs. Joyce (Wood Green)
 Callaghan, L. J.
 Castle, Mrs. B. A.
 Champion, A. J.
 Chapman, W. D.
 Chetwynd, G. R.
 Clunie, J.
 Coldrick, W. H.
 Collick, P. H. (Birkenhead)
 Collins, V. J. (Shoreditch & Finsbury)
 Corbet, Mrs. Freda
 Cove, W. G.
 Craddock, George (Bradford, S.)
 Cronin, J. D.
 Crossman, R. H. S.
 Cullen, Mrs. A.
 Dalton, Rt. Hon. H.
 Darling, George (Hillsborough)
 Davies, Rt. Hn. Clement (Montgomery)
 Davies, Ernest (Enfield, E.)
 Davies, Harold (Leek)
 Davies, Stephen (Merthyr)
 Day, G.
 Delargy, H. J.
 Diamond, John
 Dodds, N. N.
 Donnelly, D. L.
 Dugdale, Rt. Hn. John (W. Brmweh)
 Dye, S.
 Ede, Rt. Hon. J. C.
 Edelman, M.
 Edwards, Rt. Hon. John (Brighouse)
 Edwards, Rt. Hon. Ness (Caerphilly)
 Edwards, Robert (Bilston)
 Edwards, W. J. (Stepney)
 Evans, Albert (Islington, S.W.)
 Evans, Edward (Lowestoft)
 Fernyhough, E.
 Fienburgh, W.
 Finch, H. J.
 Fletcher, Eric
 Foot, D. M.
 Foster, Thomas (Hamilton)
 Gibson, Lady Megan Lloyd (Gar'hen)
 Fisher, C. W.
 Gooch, E. C.
 Greenwood, Anthony
 Grenfell, Rt. Hon. D. R.
 Grey, C. F.
 Griffiths, David (Rother Valley)
 Griffiths, Rt. Hon. James (Llanely)

Griffiths, William (Exchange)
 Grimond, J.
 Hale, Leslie
 Hall, Rt. Hn. Glenvil (Coine Valley)
 Hamilton, W. W.
 Hannan, W.
 Harrison, J. (Nottingham, N.)
 Hastings, S.
 Hayman, F. H.
 Healey, Denis
 Henderson, Rt. Hn. A. (Rwly Regis)
 Herbison, Miss M.
 Hewitson, Capt. M.
 Hobson, C. R. (Kelghley)
 Holman, P.
 Holmes, Horace
 Holt, A. F.
 Howeth, Charles (Perry Bar)
 Howell, Denis (All Saints)
 Hoy, J. H.
 Hughes, Cledwyn (Anglesey)
 Hughes, Emrys (S. Ayrshire)
 Hughes, Heo'or (Aberdeen, N.)
 Hunter, A. E.
 Hynd, J. B. (Aterrolville)
 Irvine, A. J. (Edge Hill)
 Irving, Sydney (Dartford)
 Isaacs, Rt. Hon. G. A.
 Jay, Rt. Hon. D. P. T.
 Jeger, George (Goole)
 Jeger, Mrs. Lena (Hlbn & St.Pros.S.)
 Jenkins, Roy (Steefford)
 Johnson, James (Rugby)
 Johnston, Douglas (Paisley)
 Jones, Rt.Hon. A. Cressht(Wakefield)
 Jones, David (The Hartepools)
 Jones, Etwyn (W. Ham, S.)
 Jones, Jack (Rotherham)
 Jones, T. W. (Merioneth)
 Kenyon, C.
 Key, Rt. Hon. C. W.
 King, Dr. H. M.
 Lawson, G. M.
 Ledger, R. J.
 Lee, Frederick (Newton)
 Lee, Miss Jennie (Cannock)
 Lever, Harold (Chetham)
 Lewis, Arthur
 Lindgren, G. S.
 Lipton, Marcus
 Mabon, Dr. J. Dickson
 MacColl, J. E.
 MacDermot, Niall
 MacChee, H. G.
 McInnes, J.
 McKay, John (Walsend)
 McLeavy, Frank
 MacMillan, M. K. (Western Isles)
 MacPherson, Malcolm (Stirling)
 Mahon, Simon
 Malliatieu, E. L. (Brigg)
 Malliatieu, J. P. W. (Huddersfd, E.)
 Mann, Mrs. Jean
 Marquand, Rt. Hon. H. A.
 Mason, Roy
 Mayhew, G. P.
 Mellish, R. J.
 Messer, Sir F.
 Mikard, Ian
 Mitchellson, G. R.
 Monslow, W.
 Moody, A. S.
 Morris, Percy (Swansea, W.)
 Mort, D. L.
 Moss, R.
 Moyle, A.
 Mulley, F. W.
 Noel-Baker, Francis (Swindon)

Noel-Baker, Rt. Hon. P. (Derby, S.)
 O'Brien, Sir Thomas
 Oliver, G. H.
 Oram, A. E.
 Orbach, M.
 Oswald, T.
 Owen, W. T.
 Packer, W. E.
 Paget, R. T. E.
 Palling, Rt. Hn. W. (Dearne Valley)
 Palling, Will T. (Dewsbury)
 Palmer, A. M. F.
 Pannell, Charles (Leeds, W.)
 Pargiter, G. A.
 Parker, J.
 Parkin, B. T.
 Paton, John
 Pearson, A.
 Peart, T. F.
 Pentland N.
 Plummer, Sir Leslie
 Poppelwell, E.
 Prentice, R. E.
 Price, J. T. (Westthoughton)
 Prie, Philip (Gloucestershire, W.)
 Probert, A. R.
 Procter, W. T.
 Pursey, Cmdr. H.
 Randall, H. E.
 Rankin, John
 Rehead, E. C.
 Reeves, J.
 Roberts, Rt. Hon. A.
 Roberts, Albert (Hormanton)
 Roberts, Coronet (Caernarvon)
 Robinson, Kenneth (St. Pancras, N.)
 Rogers, George (Kensington, N.)
 Ross, William
 Royle, C.
 Shawcross, Rt. Hon. Sir Hartley
 Shinwell, Rt. Hon. E.
 Short, E. W.
 Shurmer, P. L. E.
 Silverman, Julius (Aston)
 Silverman, Sydney (Nelson)
 Simmons, C. J. (Brierley Hill)
 Skeffington, A. M.
 Slater, Mrs. H. (Stoke, N.)
 Slater, J. (Sedgfield)
 Snow, J. W.
 Sorenson, R. W.
 Sorkins, Rt. Hon. Sir Frank
 Sparks, J. A.
 Steele, T.
 Stewart, Michael (Fulham)
 Stonehouse, John
 Stones, W. (Consett)
 Strauss, Rt. Hon. George (Vauxhall)
 Stross, Dr. Barnett (Stoke-on-Trent, C.)
 Summerskirk, Rt. Hon. E.
 Swinger, S. T.
 Sylvester, G. O.
 Taylor, Bernard (Mansfield)
 Taylor, John (West Lothian)
 Thomas, George (Cardiff)
 Thomas, Iorwerth (Rhondda, W.)
 Thornton, E.
 Tomney, F.
 Unged-Thomas, Sir Lynn
 Usborne, H. C.
 Warbey, W. N.
 Watkins, T. E.
 Weitzman, D.
 Wells, Percy (Faversham)
 Wells, William (Walsall, N.)
 West, D. G.
 Wheelton, W. E.
 White, Mrs. Eline (E. Flint)

White, Henry (Derbyshire, N.E.)
 Wiggs, George
 Wrook, Group Capt C. A. B.
 Willey, Frederick
 Williams, Rev. Llywelyn (Ab'tillery)
 Williams, Roldal (Wigan)
 Williams, Rt. Hon. T. (Don Valley)

Williams, W. R. (Openshaw)
 Williams, W. T. (Barons Court)
 Willis, Eustace (Edinburgh, E.)
 Wilson, Rt. Hon. Harold (Huyton)
 Winterbottom, Richard
 Woodburn, Rt. Hon. A.
 Woolf, R. E.

Yates, V. (Ladywood)
 Younger, Rt. Hon. K.
 Zilliaous, K.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES:

Mr. Bowden and Mr. Wilkins

NOES

Agnew, Sir Peter
 Aitch, W. T.
 Allan, R. A. (Paddington, S.)
 Alton, C. J. M.
 Amery, Julian (Preston, N.)
 Anstruther-Gray, Major Sir William
 Arbutnot, John
 Ashton, H.
 Astor, Hon. J. J.
 Atkins, H. E.
 Baldwin, Lt.-Cmdr. J. M.
 Baldwin, A. E.
 Galinié, Lord
 Barber, Anthony
 Barlow, Sir John
 Barter, John
 Baxter, Sir Beverley
 Beamish, Maj. Tufton
 Bell, Philip (Bolton, E.)
 Bell, Ronald (Bucks, S.)
 Bennett, F. M. (Torquay)
 Bennett, Dr. Reginald
 Bevins, J. R. (Toxteth)
 Bidgood, J. J.
 Birch, Rt. Hon. Nigel
 Bingham, R. M.
 Bishop, F. P.
 Black, C. W.
 Body, R. F.
 Boothby, Sir Robert
 Bossom, Sir Alfred
 Boyd-Carpenter, Rt. Hon. J. A.
 Boyle, Sir Edward
 Braine, B. R.
 Braithwaite, Sir Albert (Harrow, W.)
 Bromley-Davenport, Lt.-Col. W. H.
 Brooke, Rt. Hon. Henry
 Brooman-White, R. C.
 Browne, J. Nixon (Craigton)
 Bryan, P.
 Bullus, Wing Commander E. E.
 Burden, F. F. A.
 Butcher, Sir Herbert
 Butler, Rt. Hn. R. A. (Saffron Walden)
 Carr, Robert
 Cary, Sir Robert
 Channon, Sir Henry
 Chester-Glark, R.
 Churchill, Rt. Hon. Sir Winston
 Clarke, Brig. Terence (Portsmouth, W.)
 Cole, Norman
 Conant, Maj. Sir Roger
 Cooke, Robert
 Cooper, A. E.
 Cooper-Key, E. M.
 Cordeaux, Lt.-Col. J. K.
 Crockett, Capt. F. V.
 Craddock, Beresford (Spelthorne)
 Crosthwaite-Eyre, Col. O. E.
 Crowder, Sir John (Finchley)
 Crowder, Petre (Ruislip—Northwood)
 Cunningham, Knox
 Currie, G. B. H.
 Dango, J. C. G.
 Davidson, Viscountess
 D'Avignon-Goldsamid, Sir Henry
 Deedes, W. F.
 Digby, Simon Winfield
 Dodds-Parker, A. D.
 Donaldson, Cmdr. C. E. McA.
 Doughty, C. J. A.
 Drayson, C. B.
 du Cann, E. D. L.

Dunson, Sir James
 Duthie, W. S.
 Eccles, Rt. Hon. Sir David
 Elliot, Rt. Hon. W. E. (Kelvingrove)
 Elliott, R.W. (N'castle upon Tyne, N.)
 Errington, Sir Eric
 Erroll, F. J.
 Farey-Jones, F. W.
 Finlay, Graeme
 Fisher, Nigel
 Fletcher-Cooke, C.
 Fort, R.
 Foster, John
 Fraser, Hon. Hugh (Stone)
 Freeth, Denzil
 Gammans, Lady
 Garner-Evans, E. H.
 George, J. C. (Pollok)
 Gibson-Watt, D.
 Glover, D.
 Glyn, Col. Richard H.
 Godby, J. B.
 Goodhart, Philip
 Gough, C. F. H.
 Gower, H. R.
 Graham, Sir Fergus
 Grant-Ferris, Wg Cdr. R. (Nantwich)
 Green, A.
 Gresham Cooke, R.
 Grimston, Hon. John (St. Albans)
 Grimston, Sir Robert (Westbury)
 Grosvenor, Lt.-Col. R. G.
 Gurden, Harold
 Hall, John (Wycombe)
 Hare, Rt. Hon. J. H.
 Harris, Reader (Heston)
 Harrison, A. B. C. (Maldon)
 Harrison, Col. J. H. (Eye)
 Harvey, Sir Arthur Vere (Macclesfd.)
 Harvey, Ian (Harrow, E.)
 Harvey, John (Walthamstow, E.)
 Harvie-Watt, Sir George
 Hay, John
 Head, Rt. Hon. A. H.
 Heald, Rt. Hon. Sir Lionel
 Henderson-Stewart, Sir James
 HesKeth, R. F.
 Hicks-Baugh, Maj. W. W.
 Hill, Rt. Hon. Charles (Luton)
 Hill, John (S. Norfolk)
 Hobson, John (Warwick & Leam'g't'n)
 Holland-Martin, C. J.
 Hornby, R. P.
 Hornsby-Smith, Miss M. P.
 Horobin, Sir Ian
 Howard, Gerald (Cambridgeshire)
 Howard, Hon. Greville (St. Ives)
 Hughes Hallett, Vice-Admiral J.
 Hughes-Young, M. H. C.
 Hulbert, Sir Norman
 Hurd, A. R.
 Hutchison, Michael Clark (E'b'gh,S.)
 Hutchison, Sir Ian Clark (E'b'gh,W.)
 Hutchison, Sir James (Sootstoun)
 Hyde, Montgomery
 Hynton-Fos'er, Rt. Hon. Sir Harry
 Iremond, T. L.
 Irvine, Bryant Godman (Rye)
 Jenkins, Robert (Dulwich)
 Jennings, J. C. (Burton)
 Johnson, Dr. Donald (Carlisle)
 Johnson, Eric (Blackley)
 Johnson, Howard (Kempton)

Jones, Rt. Hon. Aubrey (Hall Green)
 Joseph, Sir Keith
 Joynton-Hicks, Hon. Sir Lancelot
 Kaberry, D.
 Keegan, D.
 Kerby, Capt. H. B.
 Kerr, Sir Hamilton
 Kershaw, J. A.
 Kimball, M. K.
 Kirk, P. W.
 Lagden, G. M.
 Lambert, Hon. G. C.
 Lancaster, Col. C. G.
 Langford-Holt, J. A.
 Leather, E. H. C.
 Leavay, J. A.
 Lburn, W. G.
 Legge-Bourke, Maj. E. A. H.
 Legh, Hon. Peter (Petersfield)
 Lennox-Boyd, Rt. Hon. A. T.
 Lindsay, Hon. James (Devon, N.)
 Lindsay, Mar. in (Solithull)
 Linstead, Sir H. N.
 Llewellyn, D. T.
 Lloyd, Rt. Hon. C. (Sutton Coldfield)
 Lloyd, Maj. Sir Guy (Renfrew, E.)
 Lloyd, Rt. Hon. Setwyn (Wirral)
 Low, Rt. Hon. Sir Toby
 Lucas, Sir Jocelyn (Portsmouth, S.)
 Lucas, P. B. (Brentford & Chiswick)
 Lucas-Tooth, Sir Hugh
 MacAdeen, S. J.
 Macdonald, Sir Peter
 MacKesson, Brig. Sir Harry
 Mackie, J. H. (Gatloway)
 McLaughlin, Mrs. P.
 McAuly, Rt. Hon. John
 McAleen, Sir Fitzroy (Lancaster)
 McLean, Neil (Inverness)
 Macleod, Rt. Hn. Iain (Enfield, W.)
 Macmillan, Rt. Hn. Harold (Bromley)
 Macmillan, Maurice (Hairfax)
 Macpherson, Niall (Dumfries)
 Maddy, Martin
 Maitland, Cdr. J. F. W. (Horncastle)
 Maitland, Hon. Patrik (Lanark)
 Marnham-Buller, Rt. Hn. Sir R.
 Markham, Major Sir Frank
 Marlowe, A. A. H.
 Marshall, Douglas
 Mathew, R.
 Maudling, Rt. Hon. R.
 Mawby, R. L.
 Maydon, Lt.-Comdr. S. L. C.
 Medlicott, Sir Frank
 Molson, Rt. Hon. Hugh
 Moore, Sir Thomas
 Mott-Radley, Sir Charles
 Nisbarro, G. D. N.
 Neave, Airey
 Nicholls, Harmor
 Nicolson, N. (B'n'm'th, E. & Chr'oh)
 Nugent, C. R. H.
 O'Neill, Hn. Phelim (Co. Antrim, N.)
 O'Reilly-Gore, Rt. Hon. W. D.
 Orr, Capt. L. P. S.
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Ian (Hendon, N.)
 Osborne, C.
 Page, R. G.
 Pannell, N. A. (Kirkdale)
 Partridge, E.
 Peel, W. J.
 Peyton, J. W. W.

Pickthorn, K. W. M.
 Pilkington, Capt. R. A.
 Pitman, I. J.
 Pitt, Miss E. M.
 Pott, H. P.
 Powell, J. Enoch
 Price, David (Eastleigh)
 Price, Henry (Lewisham, W.)
 Profumo, J. D.
 Rawlinson, Peter
 Redmayne, M.
 Rees-Davies, W. R.
 Remnant, Hon. P.
 Renton, D. L. M.
 Ridsdale, J. E.
 Rippon, A. G. F.
 Roberts, Sir Peter (Heeley)
 Robertson, Sir David
 Robson Brown, Sir William
 Rodgers, John (Sevenoaks)
 Roper, Sir Harold
 Russell, R. S.
 Sandys, Rt. Hon. D.
 Scott-Miller, Cmdr. R.
 Sharples, R. C.

Shepherd, William
 Simon, J. E. S. (Middlesbrough, W.)
 Smyth, Brig. Sir John (Norwood)
 Spearman, Sir Alexander
 Speir, R. M.
 Spence, H. R. (Aberdeen, W.)
 Spens, Rt. Hon. Sir P. (Kens'gt'n, S)
 Stanley, Capt. Hon. Richard
 Stevens, Geoffrey
 Steward, Harold (Stookport, S.)
 Steward, Sir William (Woolwich, W.)
 Stoddart-Scott, Col. Sir Malcolm
 Storey, S.
 Stuart, Rt. Hon. James (Moray)
 Studholme, Sir Henry
 Summers, Sir Spencer
 Sumner, W. D. M. (Orpington)
 Taylor, Sir Charles (Eastbourne)
 Taylor, William (Bradford, N.)
 Teeling, W.
 Temple, John M.
 Thomas, Leslie (Canterbury)
 Thomas, P. J. M. (Conway)
 Thompson, Kenneth (Walton)
 Thompson, Lt.-Cdr. R. (Croydon, S.)

Thornycroft, Rt. Hon. P.
 Thornton-Kemsley, C. N.
 Tiley, A. (Bradford, W.)
 Tilney, John (Wavertree)
 Tweedsmuir, Lady
 Vane, W. M. F.
 Vaughan-Morgan, J. K.
 Vickers, Miss Joan
 Walker-Smith, Rt. Hon. Derek
 Wall, Major Patrick
 Ward, Rt. Hon. G. R. (Worcester)
 Ward, Dame Irene (Tynemouth)
 Watkinson, Rt. Hon. Harold
 Webbe, Sir H.
 Whitelaw, W. S. I.
 Williams, R. Dudley (Exeter)
 Wills, G. (Bridgwater)
 Wood, Hon. R.
 Woolam, John Victor
 Yates, William (The Wrekin)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES :
 Mr. Heath and Mr. Oakshott.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—[Colonel J. H. Harrison.]

Adjourned accordingly at nine minutes past Five o'clock, till Tuesday, 21st January, pursuant to the Resolution of the House yesterday.

OVERSEAS SERVICE BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

4.45 p.m.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

This also is really an enabling Bill to make it possible to implement the White Paper policy set out in May last year in Cmd. 9768 on Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service. Its purpose in regard to the Special List, to which I and, I know, many hon. Members on both sides of the House attach the utmost importance, is to put the Government in a position to be able to meet various financial obligations which we have assumed under certain special agreements entered into with certain Colonial Territories, such obligations as payment of pensions, contributions to salary while an officer is *en disponibilité*, and contributions, if necessary, to compensation.

This is not, I think, the occasion for me to speak of the compensation schemes for those who leave the Service. We are here far more concerned with those who stay on in the Service. Nor, I think, would it be in order for me to speak at length on the efforts which we have made in recent years, with much backing from the Territorial Governments concerned, to secure recognition of the paramount importance of having impartial and independent public service commissions in territories which are gaining independence within the Commonwealth. In this way, and by the signature of public service agreements, we have shown the great importance we attach to this, and that promotion and other Civil Service matters should be, as in the United Kingdom, kept away from political control. This is not the occasion to discuss these issues, but they are of the first importance.

I am glad to see one of my predecessors on the Front Bench opposite, and he would, I am sure, agree with me that no Secretary of State for the Colonies could fail to be conscious of his solemn obligations to the Overseas Service and of the indispensable work which its members are doing for the welfare of Colonial Territories. I, like my predecessors, have seen at first hand in the last three and a half years much of their courage and

loyalty and good humour, patience and integrity.

I have seen men and women facing situations which they never envisaged when they first joined the Colonial Service. I have seen them meeting new situations quite different in kind but just as challenging as those which confronted their predecessors, and I have seen them giving complete and absolute loyalty to new Governments which have emerged in the Colonies in recent years. I have watched them, as one is bound to do, facing often many frustrations and disappointments but never letting their enthusiasm be soured or their courage grow dim. They have, I think, to an unequalled degree what Lord Milner, another great predecessor of ours, once called the British trump card ;

“The power of our individuals overseas to fit into the most incongruous situations and make the best of limited opportunities without troubling their heads about the imperfections of systems.”

But it must be our task as far as we can to try to perfect the system.

These are people for whom the House have a special regard and responsibility. In 1954, my predecessor, Lord Chandos, proclaimed the formation of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service as the successor to the Colonial Service. His statement announced safeguards for officers whose service is cut short owing to constitutional changes. It was really quite a revolutionary statement for, for the first time, it was recognised explicitly that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have a definite obligation towards certain categories of officers.

The purpose of setting up the new Service was to define these categories, to separate them from that huge body known as the Colonial Service and give them a collective title. The statement of 1954 was not an end but the beginning of a new deal. The next step was the issue of the White Paper, Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, in May of 1956. There were two aspects of that White Paper on the policy and organisation of Her Majesty's Overseas Service.

In the first place, we announced in the White Paper our intention to recruit people with the necessary qualification for secondment to Colonial Territories approaching self-government and to Commonwealth countries that had already attained that status, on request from the

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]

Governments concerned. We said at the time that lists would be prepared of those who were ready and available to accept service of this kind and, if the demand rose to substantial proportions and regular employment for a number of years could be foreseen, these people would come into the regular employment of the United Kingdom Government for service overseas. This body of officers has since been generally referred to as the Central Pool.

Secondly, in the White Paper last year we argued that this was only part of the problem. We said, and I think with general agreement, that where constitutional changes took place which fundamentally affected the conditions of serving officers, compensation schemes had been and would be negotiated with the Governments concerned, but where, as in the Territories which comprise the Federation of Nigeria, acute staffing difficulties existed, special arrangements must also be made to help create conditions which would encourage officers to remain in Nigeria.

So the White Paper proposed as its second proposal, subject to the agreement of the Governments concerned, to establish a Special List of officers of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service who would be in the service of Her Majesty's Government and would be seconded to the employing Governments. In the first place, this Special List would apply to overseas officers in the Federal and Regional Governments of Nigeria, but it might later be extended by agreement to other Territories.

As to the first part of these proposals, the Central Pool, I am sorry to say that experience has forced me to the most reluctant conclusion that there are very formidable difficulties in the way of the proposed policy for a central register and pool as outlined in the White Paper. The main difficulty that we have found is guaranteeing a continuing career for an officer recruited into the Central Pool initially for a particular job in a particular territory, and guaranteeing him also a succession of jobs of ascending importance and level of responsibility during his career. This has been a great disappointment, but in order to see the matter in perspective, we should look at the picture as a whole.

Governmental Departments concerned with the problem of supplying experts for service overseas have their own records of suitable people, and these can be called upon by any Department which is in search of a suitable officer. In practice, however, we have found that younger suitable men are not likely to be available at short notice for assignments overseas, and the useful part of these records is that confined to older retired officers who are mainly interested in short-duration jobs. We have come to the conclusion that younger officers must either be found by advertising or by selections from serving officers in the United Kingdom and the Colonial Territories.

Some indication of the way in which our mind was moving was given in the House on 26th March last year by the Lord Privy Seal, deputising for the Prime Minister. He said:

"... the creation of a pool of administrative and technical officers must wait evidence that there is a substantial demand for their services and that regular employment for them can be foreseen for a number of years. It is intended to test this demand by improving the existing arrangement by which members of the Home and Overseas Civil Service can be made available to Commonwealth countries without prejudice to their pension rights."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 26th March, 1957; Vol. 567, c. 96.]

My right hon. Friend added that legislation would be necessary. Here is the legislation, and provision is made for this in Clauses 2 and 3 in respect of the Home Civil Service.

Clause 2 provides for the making of Orders to govern pensions earned while in the Overseas Service, and Clause 3 provides for the preservation of pension rights already acquired. The House realises, and all hon. Members who are well-informed about Colonial matters know, that many appointments are already being made to the Colonies on secondment or temporary transfer from Home Government Departments, like the General Post Office, and from local authorities and other public bodies, like the B.B.C. Over the last three years I have been deeply indebted to my colleagues' Departments and bodies like the B.B.C. for the co-operation they have shown. These Clauses will help forward this good work. When the Bill is law we shall ask the Government of the Colonies to enact comparable legislation to preserve the pension rights of officers in their

own service who have been transferred under the Bill.

So much for the first purpose, the creation of a register and Central Pool. As to the second purpose of the White Paper, the Special List, there is a more hopeful situation to record. The 1954 White Paper, as I have said, was not an end but the beginning of a new deal. Thereafter we considered urgently not only the general question of the future structure of the service but the particular problem that arises, especially in Nigeria, where officers have to be given the right to retire, with compensation, if they wished to do so, yet neither Her Majesty's Government nor the employing Governments want them to go. We decided, therefore, as I announced then, that as and when circumstances make it desirable officers of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service should be offered transfer to the Special List.

Those in the Special List will be actually in the service of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and will be seconded to the overseas Government. Salaries and terms of employment will be as agreed between Her Majesty's Government and the Territorial Governments. Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will pay their pensions, recovering the money from the Government concerned, and will look after them if they lose their jobs through no fault of their own. If a displaced officer cannot be found other work immediately, he will, if necessary, be kept on full pay for up to five years, the commitment being shared between Her Majesty's Government and the Territorial Governments.

On behalf of the British Government, I signed Special List agreements with the four Nigerian Governments at the Constitutional Conference last June. Pensionable officers in the service of these Governments have been invited to join the Special List. We are now only in the very early days of that opportunity. They have five years in which to join. So far about 120 officers in Nigeria out of the 2,000 eligible have applied to join, but I repeat that they have five years in which to make up their minds, and the applications are coming in pretty steadily. Curiously enough, and not because of this debate, there were twenty applications

this morning. I cannot claim to be satisfied with the position any more than can any other hon. Member who knows the staffing problem in Nigeria.

We have arranged with Sir John Martin, who will be well known on both sides of this House and who is the Deputy Under-Secretary of State responsible for Overseas Service matters, to go to Nigeria. He is now in that country examining the position. I have asked him to consider any alternative arrangements, either within the framework of the Special List or outside it, which might help to ensure that overseas officers will remain in Nigeria so long as their services are required, to assist in the difficult transitional period before and after the attainment of self-government and until African civil servants are available to take their places. The application to Malaya of the Special List procedure is the subject of current and cheery negotiations with the Government of Malaya.

This is the background to the Bill, and in the course of my observations I have referred to certain Clauses in it. The House will notice that the Bill makes no distinction between the Special List officers and those in the Central Pool, but refers in Clause 1 to officers to be available for civilian employment in the public service of overseas territories, and thereafter in the Bill to "officers to whom this Act applies". This is because we think that in practice it would be undesirable, and indeed unnecessary, to draw a hard and fast line between the two categories of officer. For example, Special List officers whose services are no longer required in Nigeria, and who are held on unemployment pay under the directions of the Special List agreements, may become in effect the first members of the Central Pool for service in the overseas territories.

Subsection (4) of Clause 1 ensures that no servant of an overseas Government can be appointed without the consent of the Government concerned, which may be either specific, directed to the individual, or as part of a general arrangement like the Special List agreements. So if at any stage an appointment under the Act of any particular individual serving, for example, in Ghana were under consideration, this Clause would ensure that the appointment would not be made

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.] without the consent of the Government of Ghana. In the case of Malaya, where a Special List agreement is under consideration, appointments under the Act would, of course, be in accordance with the terms of any such agreement. I hope it is not necessary for me to stress that no overseas Government need fear that Her Majesty's Government will entice its staff away or enrol them either in the Central Pool or in the Special List.

Clause 4 of the Bill contains special provisions relating to police officers. These are necessary because United Kingdom police officers are protected when they are on temporary transfer from one police force to another by statutory provisions regarding discipline and the right of reverting to their parent force. The Police Overseas Service Act, 1945, extended similar protection to members of home police forces enlisting in an overseas police force under the control and at the expense of a Secretary of State. Under such an arrangement many United Kingdom policemen are now serving in Cyprus. Clause 4 of this Bill, and the Second Schedule to it, amend the 1945 Act so that individual police officers can be appointed under this Bill for limited periods with service overseas.

Finally, in regard to the Clauses, under Clause 6 officers can be appointed to a wide variety of public services under overseas Governments, municipal or local authorities or bodies corporate established for public purposes, or to any Federal Government or outside authority like the East African High Commission.

I have heard of anxiety being expressed by some officers serving in Nigeria lest, in consequence of transferring to the Special List, their pensions under the eagle eye of the Treasury should become automatically liable for United Kingdom taxation, whether or not they are resident in the United Kingdom for tax purposes. In the ordinary way, as hon. Members will know, Special List pensions being paid out of United Kingdom Government funds would be chargeable to United Kingdom Government tax, even in the case of non-resident pensioners. It has been agreed, however, that so much of a Special List officer's pension as

relates to his service with overseas Governments, or other public bodies overseas, will be exempted from Income Tax if he is not resident here. This provision will be embodied in an early Finance Bill.

As to Estate Duty, if when the pension arrangements envisaged in the Bill are completed they are found to involve more liability to Estate Duty than would have arisen if benefits relating to overseas government service had been paid directly by the overseas Governments concerned, then exempting legislation will also be introduced to deal with this point.

I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House are deeply concerned about the staff position, primarily in Nigeria, but not exclusively there. It may be of some interest, therefore, if I conclude by giving the latest recruitment figures for the year that has just ended. The figures deal only with Colonial Office appointments, that is, overseas officers appointed to the administration or to professional branches where full professional qualifications are required. In 1956, 1,467 officers were selected for appointment. Last year the number grew to 1,689. These figures are not quite comparable, because the 1956 figure left out cases in which officers had declined appointment, but even allowing for this fact we more than held our own in the year that has just ended. Of particular interest is the fact that we made 284 appointments, mostly on contract to Nigeria, and this is higher than the total number of entitled officers—that is, those entitled to retire with compensation—in either the East or the West taken separately.

These figures are encouraging but, as I said, I am by no means satisfied with the situation in Nigeria, nor are the Governments concerned. However they are encouraging, and the service still offers a fine career for men of courage and imagination. This Bill will help us to do our duty by them and, through them, to the territories which they serve.

Mr. Hector Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Can the Secretary of State say how many officers declined appointment?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I am not certain, but I will let the hon. and learned Gentleman know at the close of this debate.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Arthur Creech Jones (Wakefield): I think that all of us are in general agreement regarding the principles set out in the Bill. Although, to some extent, the Bill is a complicated one because of the provision made in regard to pensions, nonetheless the principles underlying it are pretty simple.

The Bill records, of course, another stage in the adaptation of the Colonial Service for the broad purposes which we as a nation pursue in our Colonial policy, and regrettable as some of us may fear and feel are the effects of that policy on the Colonial Service, I think that we are right to try to adapt the Service to meet the growing needs and changes brought about by the fulfilment of British purpose.

One is tempted to look back at the Service as one knew it a few years ago. After the war we made some serious efforts to reorganise the Service along new lines, and I should like to pay tribute to the excellent work done during the war years by the members of the Devonshire Committee and to the influence of their work on subsequent changes which took place. In mentioning the Devonshire Committee, I should like to associate with it, and with the work of the Colonial Office in this field since, the names of Sir Ralph Furse and of Sir Charles Jeffries, both of whom made the organisation of the Colonial Service a great deal of their life work. I think that they carried through excellent jobs.

One should also, I think, understand what happened in the years immediately after the war. We adopted a policy of more liberal recruitment and of improved facilities for training. We are grateful to the universities, particularly London, Oxford and Cambridge, for the help they gave in equipping themselves for training cadets in the new tasks which our colonial administration was expected to discharge.

In the Colonial Services themselves, we also removed racial discrimination so far as pay and promotion were concerned and we offered new facilities for the training of local people in their service so that they might take up responsible positions in local administration. We also provided for the poorer Colonies various schemes whereby they could get well qualified

persons for the jobs they had in hand. As the Secretary of State has reminded us, we set up Public Service Commissions in order that justice might be done in the respective territories. One final example of what has been done in the last decade or so is that of breaking down the isolation and insularity of officials in the field.

The effect of all this reorganisation was to bring the United Kingdom Government into the work, particularly the Treasury, to pay for recruitment schemes, for the training of the Service and for a number of special schemes under which expert distinguished people could go and perform services in the respective territories. After all that reorganisation work, there was, I think, great hope in the Service, and a renewed capacity for service which all of us certainly appreciated.

The Secretary of State paid a tribute to the work, the loyalty, the integrity, the efficiency and the quality of the Colonial Service. I should like to join with the right hon. Gentleman in my testimony from my experience of its high quality. Sometimes, I think, the critics of anti-colonialism have not sufficiently recognised the very high standard of the work and the great contribution which these men and women made to civilisation and the extension of freedom.

The work done has been described by a number of writers, such as Sir Charles Jeffries and Kenneth Bradley and in biographies by governors, but I think that the public would appreciate most the work of Grimble in his description of the spirit of administration so wonderfully well set out in his *Pattern of the Islands*. Everywhere the imagination of the public has been struck by the humanity shown, the insight, and the enlightenment of his administration. May I say that the number of such men is by no means small; they are pretty general in the Service.

When we look back on our colonial history, I think, too, that we are impressed by the very great contribution which some of our distinguished governors and others have made to colonial well-being. I think, for instance, of a man so little known as Dundas and of his work for co-operation among the Chagga people in Tanganyika. I think, too, of people like Cameron in Tanganyika and Nigeria, of Guggisberg in the Gold Coast, of Arden Clarke in the Gold

[MR. CREECH JONES.]
Coast, of Selwyn Clarke as a Japanese prisoner in Hong Kong on behalf of our people there. There are many others who have added distinction to our country's annals. These men have helped to achieve the great purposes of British colonial administration, in pressing back the frontiers of barbarism and in bringing civilisation into a larger field. These men have won the affection and the regard of the colonial peoples.

But now the transformation to Commonwealth has gone on apace. It has progressed far more rapidly than many of us foresaw even a few years ago. That transformation has brought out one or two important facts. Perhaps we have not adjusted with sufficient speed the institutions and structures of government in our Colonial Territories, and perhaps, too, we have not been sufficiently diligent in seeking out and training colonial people for the tasks which independence brings to them.

The result of the coming of independence has been the tremendous anxiety felt by our own administrators and professional and technical staffs and the feeling that perhaps their own careers would suddenly come to an end and that they would be left stranded. The number of territories now reaching independence and emerging towards independence and undoubtedly to contract the opportunities of these people.

I think that we now see in many of our territories the premature loss of men of experience and high quality whose knowledge could be of immense importance in future development. Even when independence has been reached, and in spite of the generous arrangements that have been made by a number of the independent Governments in consultation with the Colonial Office, there is still that anxiety in the hearts of these men.

I think that hon. Members of this House will recall the anxiety expressed a year or so ago by a Commonwealth Parliamentary Delegation to West Africa, led by Mr. Walter Elliot, when they expressed fears as to what might happen when the Imperial framework was withdrawn on the adoption of independence.

I should like to say in passing how all of us deplore the death of Walter Elliot. I had the privilege to serve under him on

two occasions in West Africa. He showed enormous insight into the problems which he had been asked to explore, considerable friendship to the Africans he met, and he won the regard of their heads and hearts for the quality of the work which he did. The Africans have lost a great friend, and we ourselves have lost a very wise counsellor in regard to the work in Africa.

Mr. Walter Elliot and the rest of us who were members of that delegation were alarmed by what we saw in Nigeria, in Ghana and elsewhere, with the gradual crumbling of our administrative and technical services. We had a feeling that perhaps tremendous difficulties would be experienced in those territories when independence came because of the inadequacy of their own services, the absence as yet of civil service tradition, and the immaturity and inexperience of many of those who are now being asked to carry on the administrative and technical work under independent government.

We were alarmed that so little had been done up to that point to cope with the situation that we saw arising—a situation which continues dangerous today. There are altogether far too few people carrying on. We saw in Nigeria, as well as in the Gold Coast, visible changes because of the paucity of officers available from African ranks to carry on much of the necessary work indispensable to good Government and good order in those territories.

In 1954, as the Secretary of State has reminded us, the name of the Service was changed to the Overseas Civil Service. Undoubtedly, the Government did their utmost in trying to come to terms, not only with the men but with Governments, so that adequate compensation and pensions could be paid to those who felt that they should withdraw. I must confess to some profound disappointment with what the Secretary of State has told us this afternoon in regard to the creation of the Central Register and Pool. One can appreciate the considerable difficulties and I still hope that the experiment has not been altogether abandoned. But at least it did mean that there was a register of civil servants who were prepared to go forward and carry on provided that the Secretary of State, with the local Government, could make proper arrangements on their behalf.

I can see the difficulty of guaranteeing in many cases continuous employment. We must remember that we have had to tackle somewhat similar problems before when independence has been won. On the whole, I think we have managed to absorb in one service or other those men who became redundant in Ceylon, in Palestine, in the Sudan, in India and in Burma, and one would hope that the task would not prove too formidable in the future with other territories as independence is reached. We want our remaining responsibilities in the dependent territories to be met by at least some men who have had experience in some of the territories which have reached independence. I would like to know a little more about the experience of the Colonial Office in regard to the Register and the Common Pool which it had contemplated in 1954.

In regard to the Special List, I had been under the impression—it may be a completely false one—that virtually all the Overseas Service men, the expatriate pensionable staff in Nigeria, would now go on to the Special List. I should like to know whether or not that is the case. We were informed this afternoon that that Special List will possibly extend to Malaya. Is it contemplated that further steps will be taken in regard to other territories?

I am not happy about the division which is now occurring inside the Overseas Service. On the one hand, we shall have the Special List people in Nigeria and possibly elsewhere, and at the same time we shall have alongside them another group of people who are normally Overseas Service people without the special privileges which are attached to the Special List. Therefore, I should like to know how far it is likely that this Special List can be extended and to what extent the reconsolidation of the Overseas Service can take place.

These divisions are likely to create certain difficulties—the word jealousies is a little too strong—but a certain pique as between one group of officers and another. I gather, too, that the Treasury will hold the responsibility in regard to the appointments to the Special List. I can only hope that the Treasury will be much more forthcoming than it has been in the past. It is the Treasury, I think, which has

blocked the Secretary of State in his ardent desire to get something moving for the Service in this field in order to cope with the changes brought about in the emerging territories. Therefore, I hope that the Treasury will not create difficulties for him in the days to come, when he is trying to make the Special List widely applicable.

I also hope that the Secretary of State will feel that he is reasonably free to bring in people for service in the territories overseas from the other public services. It is true that schemes have existed in regard to teachers and police. I should like to know whether this transfer or seconding from the home public service of people of experience is likely to be widely extended into fields where qualification and experience are specially called for if the service in those territories is to be efficiently carried out. I hope that the pension rights of such seconded persons will be preserved, their seniority in the staff list to which they belong will not be prejudiced, and that because of the increasing requirements for development of our overseas territories the Secretary of State may use reasonably freely this method. I should also like to be confirmed in my view that the Special List will consist not only of members of the Overseas Civil Service, the expatriate, pensionable officers already in it, but of men who may be seconded from the Home Civil Service.

There is also the very difficult problem of recruitment. All of us have been alarmed in recent years at the falling away of candidates, the fact that there has not been quite the enthusiasm among the younger people that was once experienced for this kind of service. I wonder whether it is possible now to meet that situation to some extent. I was very pleased to hear the encouraging report which the Secretary of State gave about recruitment. I wonder whether it is possible for cadets, once they are selected and appointed, to be put on the Register which was contemplated in 1954 and then transferred to the Special List for the permanent appointments which they receive. In these jobs in territories emerging to independence and in those which have become independent, there is not the glamour and prestige which existed in the days of the district officer, when he could exercise great authority in his district and was tremendously respected by the local people.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the majority of those appointed in Nigeria were, as I pointed out, on contract. This is not a case like that of the cadet officer of the past at the start of a long career. These men were appointed on contract, and, that being so, the conditions are quite different.

Mr. Creech Jones: I must confess that I did not appreciate that a large proportion of expatriate people in Nigeria are now contract people specially appointed for special work.

The point that I am making is in regard to recruitment. I wonder whether the prestige of the work can be enhanced if the men go from the Register to the Special List.

I think all of us must agree with the pension arrangements in the Bill. They are sensible and calculated to meet some of the difficulties which the Secretary of State is experiencing. There is, however, one point that I wish to make in regard to pensions. I wonder whether it is possible for the Secretary of State to reconsider the anomalies which have arisen in respect of the pensions which are payable to Governors under the 1911 and 1947 Acts. I wonder whether the anomaly of the difference of treatment as between those Governors and the Governors coming under the 1956 Act might be removed.

It seems to me that if the earlier Governors had not risen to their high rank in the Service, these men would have been treated far more generously when they came to pension age than they are now being treated. There are only about thirty-eight such Governors, and the cost to the Treasury would be very little indeed, and it would be a decreasing cost. I hope the Secretary of State will give some further thought to the problem so that the feeling of resentment can be removed. There is a particular difficulty in that no provision whatever is made for the widows of these Governors. I hope that, in addition to the small concession which the Secretary of State was able to offer a little time ago, something much more comprehensive will be done. As I have said, there are only a few such men and the cost would be very small.

I think that all of us will welcome the Bill. We want to see recruitment speeded

up. We want to see the scheme of the Special List extended into other territories. One hopes that as a result of all this the apprehensions of the Overseas Service will diminish and it will have something of the old confidence and assurance. Those belonging to it are engaged in a great job, a job of great distinction from the point of view of the great purposes for which British Colonial policy is now conceived.

5.35 p.m.

Mr. John Tilney (Liverpool, Wavertree): I, too, welcome the Bill, belated though its appearance has been. I also welcome the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and those of the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) in paying their tributes to the work of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service.

It was early in 1954 that some of my hon. Friends and one or two hon. Members opposite urged that action on these lines should be taken. From my recent tour of West Africa, I am afraid that it may be almost too late. What are the members of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service in Nigeria thinking now? Some of them say that it may be better to join the local regional government service. Others—I am afraid there are more of them—are tempted by the extremely generous terms of compensation for loss of a career.

In some ways the compensation has been almost too generous. It is attractive today when investments have fallen. It is very difficult for most people in days of high taxation to acquire capital of any kind, and it is feared by some that unless they take their capital now and invest it the purchasing power of the £ may in a few years' time be less than it is today. There are, therefore, a number of factors influencing an overseas civil servant to take this compensation.

I wonder whether we really have considered what our object is. Is it merely to treat well a man who has served his country and his adopted country, as the terms of compensation do, or is it to make certain that the expanding Commonwealth will remain an entity? It is possible that those two objects may not coincide. It is also possible, I submit, that we may have to look again at the terms of compensation and, by means of

lengthening the period of freezing, induce civil servants, whose knowledge is of such value to territories such as Nigeria, to stay in their jobs.

There is one other item which has affected the climate of thought, and that is the action of some Governments in respect of past pensions. I can speak only about West African pensions. However, Ghana has not been as generous as has this country over retired officers. Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria have not been as generous as this country and many others in the Commonwealth about widows' and orphans' pensions. It is remarkable that the poorest territory in West Africa, the Gambia, has been much more generous than some of the richer and larger territories.

I hope my right hon. Friend will remember what was said in Colonial White Paper No. 306, 1954, where it was stressed that the Colonial Service was a single service under the Crown. The fact remains, however, that that Service has not been treated as a single service and that, despite the generous treatment proposed in the Bill, many members of it feel that their colleagues in the past have not been properly looked after.

The climate, therefore, is not ideal for this Bill at the present time and yet our object must be to provide good technical aid, in which I include good administrative advice. Administrators are not all that easy to find, even in industry. From the employing Government side, action must not be taken so to alter the ideas of commercial or other morality that civil servants no longer wish to serve. Actions by other countries, not in the Commonwealth—as, for example, at Abadan or Suez or even in Indonesia—have not helped to get those in this country to give up their possible careers here for service abroad.

What should be the future of this Special List? What size ought it to be? Should it not operate, not only in Nigeria and in Malaya—I welcome what my right hon. Friend has said, that discussions are taking place with Malaya—but also in the Central African Federation, and what about Singapore? Could we be told something more about that?

What Departments will be embraced in the Special List and what are the criteria by which its possible members are judged? Am I right in saying that the

purpose of the Special List is to assist Nigerian Governments to retain in their service officers whom they want to keep and who without the special safeguards might decide to leave?

Surely, if we are considering a Special List that is all-embracing, the Nigerian Governments in their own right should not have a veto on who should be recommended. I gather that applications must be recommended by the Governors and in the case of the Eastern and Western Regions by the Public Service Commissions also. That is a suitable safeguard, but I hope that it will not degenerate into a veto.

Could my right hon. Friend say, too, whether those on the Special List could be seconded anywhere? Could they go to the United Nations, to the Colonial Development Corporation or to the Trucial coast, where we have such a major interest? I hope that they can. I do not agree with some of the objections I heard in West Africa that members of the Overseas Civil Service were engaged to serve in one country and should not be sent anywhere else. The new Service should be like the Army and one should be able to be seconded wherever the interests of the Commonwealth lie.

It is somewhat difficult to comment further without knowing what percentage of the Civil Service is leaving Ghana, Malaya or Nigeria at the present time, although I welcome what my right hon. Friend has said about the encouraging recruitment figures. I support, however, what the right hon. Member for Wakefield has said in the hope that some of the new recruits could be put straight into the Special List. If there is a Special List and an old list, sooner or later there will be a divergence between the two types which will not be of benefit to the Commonwealth.

I regret that under the Bill the Treasury seems to have so much control. I hope that it is control over the broad size of the Special List that may become the common pool, and will not be used over actual detail to decide who should be taken on and who should be refused. If that were done, I believe that our trade—which in Nigeria is worth £250 million a year—would suffer, not only to this country's detriment but to that of the Treasury also.

[MR. TILNEY.]

Nevertheless, there is much to commend in the Bill. I hope that the seconding, whether of police, teachers or doctors—there is nothing like enough of it today—will be expedited and increased. I hope that we shall not be frightened of expanding this potential common pool and this Special List. It is, after all, an investment in the British way of life. If we find that too many are taken on, will it not be possible to employ some of them temporarily, while they are awaiting a new job overseas, in some of the Ministries of this country at present occupied by the home Civil Service?

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in a most encouraging Commonwealth tour, is no doubt discussing with his fellow Prime Ministers the future of this country, of the Commonwealth and of the Free Trade Area in Europe. It might well be that if we look upon this Special List in a generous spirit it could form the cement to a Western headquarters which might be instrumental in producing a prosperity for those who believe in our Western way of life such as we have never seen before. But if we allow the cement to lie in the open and disregard it, the whole concept might perish.

5.47 p.m.

Mr. J. Grimond (Orkney and Shetland): I am very glad to follow the hon. Member for Wavertree (Mr. Tilney), because I wish to discuss some of the points he has raised. First, however, I should like to join with the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) in expressing our very great regret at the death of Walter Elliot. He was a great friend of many people in this House. He had a mind of such extraordinary activity that nearly every political problem was thrown up into greater interest by him. For me personally, he has enlivened even the dullest morning on the Scottish Standing Committee. He took a particular interest in the subject of colonial development.

As the Secretary of State has said, this is an enabling Bill. In so far as it will help us to do justice to those men who have worked in the Commonwealth and who, as has been said, have deserved so well, both of the countries in which they

work and of this country, I welcome it; but I share the doubts expressed by the hon. Member for Wavertree about the position of some of the pensioners. They have been making representations and the hon. Member himself, I believe, has taken part in putting them before the Government. I hope that the Government will bear in mind what the hon. Member has said, that the Colonial Service is one service and that everyone in it has a right to look to the Government for reasonable pension provisions.

As to the importance not only of the Colonial Service in the past but its continuing effect upon the world, I should have thought that there could not possibly be the slightest doubt. If we look at the situation in the Far East today we see the success of India, which I should have thought was due largely to the fact that the traditions of the British Civil Service have continued there, and we have succeeded in leaving behind us a great many Indians to carry on those traditions. We can contrast that situation with the one existing in Indonesia where, for all that the Dutch did—and they did a great deal—they seem to have failed to create an Indonesian Civil Service. That is a great lesson to the Western world, and I regret that the Secretary of State has not found it possible to go further in this Bill.

As the hon. Member for Wavertree said, we are in a difficult position in that Britain has a contracting field for the Colonial Service; but the hon. Member also pointed out that there is an expanding need in the world—in the Commonwealth generally and in Asia and Africa outside the Commonwealth—for technical assistance, administrative ability, and guidance in all sorts of ways. We should now consider whether we ought not to find the kind of Commonwealth service which has often been recommended, recruited from throughout the Commonwealth, with the help of Commonwealth Governments, and available not only in the Commonwealth but also in other territories which need technical assistance. The hon. Member mentioned the Trucial Coast; Iraq is also in great need of technical assistance, and there are other possibilities in Asia, Africa, the West Indies and South America.

I do not think that we can provide immense amounts of capital for the

development of these countries, but we should be able to supply some staff, notwithstanding the fact that there is a great demand for highly-skilled people of all types in this country as well as abroad. I believe that many people would welcome the sort of work which would be open to them in these countries if they could be assured that it would be continuing work; that they would form part of a service, and would receive a reasonable pension and other emoluments at the end of their service.

I do not believe that the numbers need be so very great. We must look more and more to the training of the indigenous peoples for much of this work, but it is the top-level people who are important at the moment, and who can do such an important job. The Secretary of State seemed to indicate that there might not be such a big demand for these experts, but I would have thought that there was a considerable demand. There are all sorts of development schemes, both in the Commonwealth and outside. There is, for instance, the Colombo Plan, and Point Four. All these projects need technical staffs.

I quite understand that the difficulty lies in questions of promotion and of holding up the prospects of people, besides the terms of service. We already go a good way in the secondment of people from different Departments to do different jobs, but the Civil Service must accept a far bigger movement within itself. I understand that the Indian Civil Service already has a continual change from Department to Department—even from the Treasury to the Foreign Office. I sometimes think that that might do our Foreign Office a lot of good—and perhaps also the Treasury. I think that it is possible to have a considerably greater degree of interchange between services than exists at present. But that does not meet the demand for an overseas Commonwealth-recruited service available to serve in any country.

For people who will spend much time overseas on technical jobs it is important that there should be an opportunity to come back to this country and do a shift at home, with a certain amount of re-training in industry or the home Civil Service Departments in order to catch up with developments and new techniques. That is not impossible to arrange. It

might require a staff college at home to provide a basis for retraining, which could be carried out when jobs were not available overseas.

The essential requirement is that these people must be employees of the Commonwealth. If they are working for another Government their rights of pension and pay must be guaranteed by this Government or the Commonwealth Governments as a whole. A scheme of this sort—limited, and perhaps now in need of amendment—was put forward by Sir John Sargent, who had long experience in India and had to face the problem of heavy demands being made for technical personnel which he was unable to fulfil. I believe that the details of that scheme are to be found in the Colonial Office or in some other Government Department, and I think that it should be looked at again.

We now have a tremendous opportunity for developing the Commonwealth both as a source of recruitment and development. There are also great possibilities for under-developed countries generally. I do not know how quickly we could take the idea put forward in the Bill to its next stage, but I agree with the hon. Member for Wavertree that time is not on our side in these matters. We are losing a great many people who might be interested in this work, and creating conditions in which people will be very uneasy about accepting overseas employment. I believe that uneasiness is unnecessary; such work still offers great opportunity.

For a short time after the war I worked for U.N.R.R.A., when conditions were rather different, but we found that there was a continual request for administrators, technicians, educational experts and so forth, and that there was no sound method of recruitment. In those days we rang round to various Ministries asking for help, but although they tried to be helpful all that they usually said was, "We have old so-and-so who is out of a job just now. He might help you for a month or two." There was then nothing like the Register or the Special List that we have now, and we had very great difficulty in undertaking our very valuable work. I hope that we shall be able to develop considerably further the ideas contained rather inadequately in this Bill.

[MR. GRIMOND.]

The only other point which I wish to raise concerns the position of the African Colonies and the people working there. I had not appreciated that most of the people were employed on contract.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The figures that I gave did not apply to most of the people in British territories in Africa; they concerned Nigeria. I said that many of those people were on contract.

Mr. Grimond: I presume that they would be available for transfer to the Special List if they fell within the terms of the Bill.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): Would they?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Each case must be examined on its merits. I cannot give an assurance that they would. They certainly would not be ineligible—but the same criteria would have to be applied to them as to anyone else. But they are recruited for specific jobs and for a period of years, and are not really comparable with administrators and other officers with whom we are concerned in order to maintain the structure of Government.

Mr. Grimond: I should have thought that the people on contract would be a valuable addition to the List. I hope the Secretary of State will say something more about this when he winds up the debate.

5.57 p.m.

Miss Joan Vickers (Plymouth, Devonport): I welcome the Bill and also the presence of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. I hope that he will soon be fully recovered from his accident. I support the argument put forward by the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) in regard to Governors. We discussed this matter in a previous Bill. I moved an Amendment, which was not carried, to the effect that these people should receive better pension, and especially that there should be better provision for their widows. As their number is now thirty-eight, my right hon. Friend may agree to reconsider that point.

This is a very important Bill, which will have enormous consequences in the future in binding the Commonwealth together. We must remember the work that has been done in the past and encourage more people in the belief that

they are joining a band of people who are greatly respected. For that reason I was very pleased to see, by way of a letter in *The Times* yesterday, signed by Lord Halifax, Lord Mountbatten, Lord Pethick-Lawrence and others, that a plaque is being put up in Westminster Abbey to commemorate the work of previous overseas civil services. The second paragraph in the letter says:

"In August, 1947, Parliament passed a Resolution expressing the gratitude of the nation for the spirit which these services had shown in the discharge of their duties. From our own personal experience of their competence and high sense of responsibility we can testify how fully this tribute was justified. . . . They were originally mainly British in their composition, but the policy of Indianisation pursued during the quarter of the century preceding 1947 tended to include in them an increasing Indian element."

We must keep that very much to the fore. Their high sense of responsibility and competence has helped, we must remember, to build up the British Commonwealth, and I am glad that their service has now been commemorated.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Wavertree (Mr. Tilney) who, I know, has worked extremely hard to get this Bill through the House of Commons. This idea is a practical one, and that is proved by the fact that the police have for many years been able to transfer from one service to another. When I was in Tanganyika recently I found that Malayan police were in the service of the Tanganyikan Government.

I would ask one or two questions of my right hon. Friend. The White Paper says:

"There is no doubt that such developments are now essential."

That means the development of Her Majesty's Government's Overseas Civil Service. The White Paper goes on to say:

"Various overseas governments have already said that they would like to be able to look to Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for help in finding such officers."

I should be grateful if we could know which overseas Governments have asked for officers. If we had a list, it would encourage people to know that there were jobs for them in many territories and not only in the British Commonwealth.

I should like to know the criteria for joining this Special List. Are women to

be allowed to join it? Are Africans, Malaysians, and Indians permitted to do so? If we are to bind the Commonwealth together, Indians should be allowed, for example, to go and work in Africa and Malaya and in other territories. That would be very beneficial, as I have found from experience that it is very often easier for somebody who has been trained by the British and who is not necessarily British to put over the British viewpoint to an African, even than a British person himself.

So far as I know, women can get only a certain way in this service. They can become administrative assistants, but I have never known a woman to be a district officer, for instance. What is to be the future of women in this service? Can their service be extended to several territories under this scheme? For example, many will be needed for Community Development. If so, this will be one of the most beneficial overseas developments in the future.

The White Paper says that fifty years of age is to be that of retirement, but that is a difficult age for either men or women to get other jobs. I suggest their service might be extended to sixty, when they they would not need another job, or they might retire at forty-five, at which age it would be very much easier for them to get other jobs. The amount of pension which they will receive when they finally retire is out of all proportion to what they get in a large lump sum. Many of them will be tempted to take the lump sum and retire early rather than to risk getting a pension some time in the future, and be unable to obtain further employment.

What will be the position of women government servants when they marry? I understand that most of them have to resign on marriage. In a recent Report by the United Nations Commission on the subject of Tanganyika, I read in paragraph 470:

"If women government servants marry, they must resign. They can re-enter the service if they are prepared to work full-time, and if they do they are taken on a temporary basis and lose all their pension rights."

What will happen to women on the Special List? The United Nations Report ended by expressing surprise that this practice should be still in operation. I suggest that persons, even if they are in

temporary service, should have security. If they get on to the Special List, they should be allowed to count their service for pension. That is an extremely important point.

People may be just a little nervous of going over permanently to the Special List in present circumstances. Could they be allowed to do so for three to five years before they made up their minds definitely whether they wished to join it? Having worked in Malaya very happily for a very short time under the administration of a Malay, I am able to say that some people may be a little nervous of this change in their conditions, and should be allowed a period before they come to a definite decision.

What is the position of doctors and nurses? I see that teachers in Government service are mentioned but there seems to be no specific mention of doctors. I should like them to continue in the Overseas Service to gain knowledge of tropical diseases. Trying to deal with tropical diseases requires a completely different method of approach in this country from dealing with them in the tropics. The service of these doctors should be continuous, and they should be given encouragement for research work in overseas territories.

I hope that everything will be done to see that people have an assurance of security for their future. One of the dangers of this type of service is that people may be chopped and changed about too much in the different territories and different types of jobs. I should like to know that they will get definite security in a territory of which they have knowledge for as long as possible. I should also like to know whether it is proposed to take African, Malayan and other civil servants into this service on the Special List in future.

6.7 p.m.

Mr. James Johnson (Rugby): The Secretary of State for the Colonies must be feeling happy for once, because of the welcome that has been given on all sides to the Bill. I, too, welcome the Bill, and I also welcome back the right hon. Gentleman in view of his recent illness. There were rumours in the Press at the weekend about his impending departure, but the right hon. Gentleman is back. We shall now all watch him in his evasive action for some months to come.

Mr. Callaghan: How does my hon. friend know?

Mr. Johnson: Having said that, I turn to the speech of the hon. Lady the Member for Devonport (Miss Vickers), who is a good feminist. She put up a good case for her sex. I would like the Minister to tell us where we can place these ladies when they come into the Colonial Service. Perhaps in the Co-operative movement as in Kenya—training African women coffee Co-op officers. One looks and wonders where to place ladies of ability and charm in the colonial scene. I hope that the Minister will think about this matter, because we should like to hear from him on the subject.

There are ladies in the Ministry of Labour who could do a good job in the Colonies. Women are on the move in places like West Africa. There are many women's organisations and we could send out ladies to advise them. They might do it slightly better than some male members of the I.C.F.T.U. have been doing for some years in certain parts of Africa.

Many of us have been immensely perturbed in the past year or two by the number of first-class men of integrity and ability who are leaving the Colonial Service. Why are they leaving? Some two years ago I had a long conversation about this exodus with a gentleman named Dr. Azikiwe, who, despite his vicissitudes, still manages to remain in charge of the Eastern Government of Nigeria. The Colonial Secretary said that about 284 people have gone to Nigeria in the last year, but they are not sufficient to make up the wastage in East and West Nigeria respectively. Are we to accept this position?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: They are more than the entitled officers, who are those entitled to go on compensation in East and West Nigeria separately.

Mr. Johnson: Are they more than the wastage of those who will be leaving us in the years to come? Dr. Azikiwe was immensely perturbed by this. Why are these people leaving?

I beg the right hon. Gentleman to look beyond his speech and not to think merely in terms of service, pensions, wages and material things of that kind because it is not only a financial matter. It is perhaps a good thing that some of

them are leaving. I am certain that Africans need in Africa only people who like the continent and like the people there—people who are keen on the work itself over and above the questions of pension and pay. Some do not like serving black elected African Ministers. It would be a good thing if the generous compensation terms enabled those people to leave. In that way by financial choice they would leave and make way for others.

I have been immensely disturbed to find some in commercial circles in Africa who use such a picturesque term as "Africa is a dead duck". It is no good people talking about Africa in that way because they dislike Africanisation not only in the Civil Service but at higher levels. I hope those people will accept the terms and leave. Against this, I think there is one situation where the European can be listened to, for I met cases of nepotism in which, under the cloak of Africanisation, the European civil servant was passed over on his way to promotion by an African civil servant. There is no excuse for an African, because of his clan or family, being able to advance up the line of promotion. But all these things are happening and help to explain the exodus which is taking place.

It is said that the Africans are pushing on too fast politically and in this way disappointing and depressing Europeans who therefore do not stay. I wonder if that is always the case. When one talks to African Ministers one finds they do not want that. They know as well as we do that for many years to come Africa will need these skilled, devoted and gifted administrators. The need is there. It is a physical fact. I think I am correct in saying that in Tanganyika there are possibly no more than 250 out of a population of 8 million Africans at the School Certificate level. For many years to come they will need Europeans to guide and advise. T.A.N.U. and other African organisations know that is true. Given the pay and given the pension, I hope we shall get men to go out and serve under Ministers in Africa, whatever their colour.

A little time ago an hon. Member made a comparison, which I do not think was odious, between our colonial administration and that of the Dutch in

Java and the East Indies. If we must have empires—and we have had them in the past by historical accident—I think ours is the least bad among them. We have only to look at India, Ceylon and Ghana to see where lie the hearts of people who have left us in the Metropolitan State. It is a delicate, difficult and dangerous job to have them off to self-government and leave our own people behind under the independent coloured Government.

I want to quote something which I think may help some people who get a little depressed by the actions of black nationalist leaders in Africa, and who say there is little hope left for some of our young men who want to work like their fathers worked twenty or forty years ago. There has been difficulty in East Nigeria, and not long ago civil servants were leaving in scores. Dr. Azikiwe sent a New Year message to "Eastern Nigeria Today", from which I wish to quote. Of all people, "Zik" has been most attacked for his Africanisation, for going too fast and squeezing out Europeans. He paid tribute to

"that band of gallant heroes who defied the tropical climate in order to generate the social mechanism which has enabled us to bridge the gap between the days of the porters and the hammock bearers, on the one hand, and this modern era of mechanical progress on the other".

Then he singles out the European public servant for special comment in his New Year message and said:

"I must confess that at every stage in the evolution of our Public Service in Nigeria, both the expatriates and the indigenous civil servants pursued their careers with missionary zeal and a sense of duty, for which this Government must be eternally grateful . . .

Here I should like to repeat the assurance which I gave publicly on my return from the Constitutional Conference that we want our expatriate friends to give us the benefit of their expert knowledge to help formulate and implement our policies and we want them to work with us and not for us. It is my hope that a great number of expatriate officials will stay with us, especially during the difficult transitional period that lies ahead."

As the Colonial Secretary said, there is good will at this end and at that end for our people to go out and labour in that field where they are so badly needed.

I think it would be a great mistake to think only of English, Scots, Welsh and Irish going overseas to specific British Colonies. If one goes to East Africa one finds quite a number of New Zealanders

working in the Tanganyika public service. I should like to see many of the so-called "colonials" in our administration. Whether we like it or not—and most of us do like it—those New Zealanders and other Dominion men have a different approach from many of our people who go out there.

One hears tales in Southern Rhodesia about how well the Italians worked with the African population on the Kariba Dam scheme. One finds that New Zealanders are just as easy and acceptable when working with the African people as are the Latins. They bring a new breath of air to what many colonials feel has been a rather pompous approach. Let us widen this field and, if possible, get a Commonwealth team to work in what today is a Commonwealth effort. Really, I think it is an Atlantic Alliance effort because the amount of American money going into Africa really shames me sometimes. I would not demur if not merely New Zealanders, Australians and Canadians, but Americans went there. That would add a new whiff of energy and new life. It would give a new slant to administration in this field, which we would welcome.

I am very glad that we are going ahead on these lines, because the headaches will not only be in the West, but in East and Central Africa in the near future. On my last visit I met quite a number of people in East Africa who were asking what was to happen to them in twenty years' time. It was not only Dr. Azikiwe about whom people were worrying, but about African Congress leaders in the east and the centre. Let us look ahead in welcoming this Bill and think not merely of people indigenous to these islands, not only of English, Scots and Welsh, but particularly of New Zealanders, Australians and Americans also. They can all come in and make it a genuine Overseas Service.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Michael Clark Hutchison (Edinburgh, South): Like other hon. Members, I welcome the Bill. I used to be in the Colonial Service myself, and I still keep in touch with many colleagues overseas. There is no doubt that with the march of events many of them are feeling a little insecure about their future. This particularly applies to men in the thirties and forties who have heavy commitments,

[Mr. HUTCHISON.]

who perhaps have children to educate or who are buying a house here. They are concerned, and I believe that the provisions of the Bill will give them some reassurance.

So far, most of the uncertainty has been confined to territories which are on the threshold of complete independence, but it is permeating through the Service. It is my belief that in areas which have reached full independence the abolition terms have, on the whole, been generous and have not caused hardship, and I believe that in other areas which are to become independent the terms will be no less favourable. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind human nature. There is always before us the melancholy situation of British officials who served in Egypt.

I have three questions which I should be glad if my right hon. Friend would investigate. The first concerns pensions. In the old Colonial Service the pensions rule did not work at all fairly. In a wealthy colony or one with a high standard of living, such as Malaya or Hong Kong, an officer was paid more highly, and his pension was based not only on the length of his service, but primarily on his emoluments during his last three years of service. This meant that he received a very much higher pension than an officer of equivalent grade in East Africa or Aden. It seems to me that under these new arrangements, with the Special List and the Central Pool, officers appointed in the future should all have exactly the same conditions and that arrangements should be made by my right hon. Friend and his advisers to see that at the end of the day they all draw exactly the same pension.

The same difficulty arose when officers were on leave. An officer from, perhaps, West Africa or the West Indies who was on a fairly low scale of pay had only that small amount of money to spend in the United Kingdom when he came home; he was paid the same amount as he was receiving in the West Indies. On the other hand, an officer in exactly the same grade who was serving in Malaya, for example, received two or three times that amount of pay and when he came home on leave he had two or three times the amount to spend than had his colleagues from the West Indies or, for

example, from Aden. There is scope for all these matters to be ironed out in these new arrangements.

The second point I wish to make is about the composition of the Special List and the Central Pool. In my opinion, the list should not be confined to officers from this country. In my service I knew many from India, Pakistan and elsewhere who were very sound officers. We should retain them and recruit more from those Dominions. I also agree with the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) that we should recruit officers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. We should make our needs known to those Dominions in order that we can get all these officers into the Central Pool and make it a Commonwealth service serving the Commonwealth.

The third point concerns the name. In the old days men in the Colonial Service were very proud to serve in it and to give a lead to local peoples. It was a good life's work helping these people among whom our fellow countrymen went out to live. Regrettably, the word "colonial" now has an unfortunate meaning. This is quite wrong, but it has acquired this meaning largely through misunderstanding, I think, primarily, on the part of foreigners.

We had to change this. The name has been changed to the Overseas Civil Service. In my view that is a very bad choice. It is rather nebulous. I think it would be difficult to owe loyalty to a service with such a name. Secondly, the name is a tongue twister; it is, in fact, a hissing and an abomination. I ask my right hon. Friend to think about a change of name, and I suggest that the name should be Her Majesty's Commonwealth Service.

6.26 p.m.

Mrs. Eirene White (Flint, East): We have waited a long time for this Bill. We are glad to have it at last, but I think that the Secretary of State has already realised that those of us on both sides of the House who are interested in the subject are somewhat disappointed in the Bill.

The right hon. Gentleman said that it is an enabling Bill, but I have looked at it with apprehension because in some respects it seems to be a disabling Bill.

The hand of the Treasury is all too evident in it. I very much hope that in Committee we shall be able to delete Clause 1 (3) because it appears to me that the Treasury is taking upon itself not merely general supervision, as it naturally must in such a matter, but also particular supervision, with the result that it may interfere even in the appointment of an individual officer. That seems to me to be monstrous. I stand to be corrected, because I am not familiar with the terms of service of the Foreign Service, but I very much doubt whether the Treasury possesses, and certainly whether it exercises, that power in Her Majesty's Foreign Service. Why should the Overseas Service be any less independent?

Just how much or how little the Secretary of State is ultimately able to perform under the Bill seems to depend very much upon his relationship for the time being with the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being, whoever he may be. That, therefore, limits the potential usefulness of the Bill. We are asked to pass legislation which will depend very much indeed upon the power relationship within the Government hierarchy at any particular point in time.

Provided that the Treasury were much more generously minded than the Treasury usually is, the Bill could be interpreted in a very wide way. Just how wide it could be interpreted I am not clear, and I should be grateful if in his reply the Minister would make clear to us exactly what the scope of the Overseas Service is intended to be.

The Bill refers throughout to "the Secretary of State". That, I presume, could mean any Secretary of State, and would cover both the right hon. Gentleman himself, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, and also the Foreign Secretary, if suitable. Clause 6 defines "overseas territory" as "any territory or country outside the United Kingdom";

That means, therefore, that it is not confined to the Commonwealth. It is a very interesting point but we should like to have it developed, as, in presenting the Bill, the right hon. Gentleman made no reference to such possibilities. As the Bill could concern persons whose service was related either to the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, or the Foreign Office we really should have

a more adequate explanation of what machinery could be used.

The right hon. Gentleman said that he was disappointed by the response to the Central Pool, but he has not really told us what efforts, what experiments, have been made, or in what direction or in what relation to these other Departments they have been made. Those of us who had in mind something much more exciting than what the right hon. Gentleman seemed to have in mind in relation to Commonwealth service are entitled to a great deal more explanation of why he is now so pessimistic.

Is it purely the dead hand of the Treasury, or what are the real reasons that, apparently, make it so difficult to envisage an overseas service of a kind to which almost every previous hon. Member who has spoken has referred? They have referred to something that is not just a holding operation in, say, Nigeria—important as that might be—but something creative and positive, which will contribute to the Commonwealth and give us the kind of advantage which will, in many countries, be our only one. It is the sort of relationship that we may get through administration, university education and highly skilled technical co-operation, and the like, on which our influence in the Commonwealth is likely so largely to depend.

The right hon. Gentleman said that among other reasons for despondency was the fact that those who seem to be interested in the Central Pool were largely the older men who had, in fact, retired, but who were prepared to take on a short-term job of a particular kind. He said that there was difficulty in attracting any of the younger people to the pool. Why is that? Is it because the kind of employment offered does not attract them? This idea that everyone should be on contract is not very satisfactory.

I am particularly concerned about the younger administrative officers who are, as we know, in a peculiar position. It is known that when a country gets to near-self-government or to full self-government, it is the administrative rather than the highly technical people who are likely to be dispensed with, but it is of the utmost importance that, whilst in the Service, they should be of good quality. That applies equally to East Africa or to Central Africa, where self-government may not

[MRs. WHITE.]

be approached for many years but where there will in the future be a gradual but increasing supplanting of officers of European origin by educated Africans. We would like to know just what are the difficulties in attracting younger people.

If one of the problems of this conception of having a much more dynamic Overseas Service than it seems we are likely to have is the difficulty of guaranteeing continuous employment, I wonder whether one could interpret fairly widely the reference in Clause 1 (8) to "other employment"? I can envisage certain circumstances in which it might be desirable for the Secretary of State to say to some officer, "At the moment we really have no suitable job for you in the public service, in the narrow sense, either here or overseas, but you might do some extremely useful work in other approved employment in the academic field, or even, in certain circumstances, in the commercial field."

Is that the kind of idea behind that reference to "other employment"? We want to do everything possible to make this overseas service attractive to our high quality younger people. They have to feel that they have the chance of a really satisfying service. It is not just a matter of pay or pension, important as that may be. It is also the idea that thought will be given to the best way of employing their talents at any particular time.

There is another very serious criticism, and this was touched on by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. M. Clark Hutchison), who has his own personal experience in the Colonial Service. Many of us have thought that if we were to have a Bill of this kind at all an opportunity should be taken to deal with the situation which has existed for so long, for historic reasons, in the Colonial Service, whereby someone serves in a territory at the rate of pay and conditions of service that the territory can afford. That means that when he sees an opportunity for promotion, such an officer, very naturally, leaves that territory and goes where he thinks he may be better off.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) said that during his term of office some effort was made to assist the smaller and poorer territories to obtain specialist services

which otherwise they might not have been able to secure. As I understood him, however, that applied only to certain special jobs and not to the ordinary run of the administrative service. For example, as I have mentioned before, when I was in Zanzibar not very long ago, one complaint, among many, was that they had had, I think, seven directors of education in ten years—

Mr. Ede (South Shields): They have had more than seven in ten years here.

Mrs. White: That may be so in certain authorities with which my right hon. Friend may be associated. It is very disturbing for some of these territories to realise that they are just jumping-off grounds for persons with their eyes on better paid jobs elsewhere. One therefore hopes that it may be possible so to interpret the Bill as to overcome this difficulty. It should be possible for a man to be sent where he will be most useful; that his own personal pay, pension rights, and so on, should be safeguarded as personal to him, and that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom should make suitable financial arrangements with the other Government and, if necessary, make up the difference between what the receiving-end Government can pay and what the officer is entitled to receive. Were that done, we would have fewer of these changes, which can be so very disturbing to the countries concerned, and fewer unsuitable appointments, which are sometimes made, even at the rank of Governor, simply to enable a person to obtain promotion which otherwise he would not have had.

Whether or not this is a good or a bad Bill will really depend very much on how it is interpreted. I can only say that we were rather disappointed at the pessimistic interpretation that the Secretary of State seems to be placing on it at the moment. I hope that the trend of this debate will have convinced him that there are those of us on both sides who would like him to show a very much more positive and creative attitude to the overseas service than he seems to have at present.

Mr. Callaghan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, There are four backers to this Bill, of whom three are present. But one important backer is not here, and that is the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. We are all conscious in this

debate of what a large part the Treasury plays in the Bill. Indeed, the Financial Secretary is to move a Money Resolution in relation to it when the Bill has secured its Second Reading. The Treasury plays a large part, and various things cannot be done without its consent. I wonder if it would be possible for a Government Whip to see if the Financial Secretary can be present, because I am sure that it will help with his education if he can hear what is being said on both sides of the House.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. Bernard Braine (Essex, South-East): It is always a pleasure to agree with the hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White), and today I find myself agreeing with almost everything she said about this subject. The hon. Lady said at one stage that far from this Bill being an enabling Measure it looked rather like a disabling one. I am not so sure that I could follow her that far, but I must express my conviction that this Bill seems to enable the Secretary of State to do very little, to do very little too late.

Tributes were rightly paid by my right hon. Friend and the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) to the men of the Overseas Service. I cannot think of any more devoted and dedicated body in the whole of the Commonwealth than the men who devote their lives to the service of the less well-equipped, less advanced and less sophisticated peoples of our great family of nations. There is a service which brings its own satisfaction, but it is not an easy job and it is not an easy life. I said "Hear, hear" rather loudly when my right hon. Friend said that this House owes a debt to the men of the Overseas Service. That being so, I think that the Measure we now have before us is quite inadequate to meet the need.

I remember how some of us were disappointed when in 1954, after much prodding on the part of some of my right hon. Friends, the White Paper appeared. If we are so concerned about the future of this Service, we should pay some regard to the feelings and susceptibilities of the men engaged in it. It was well-known in 1954 that there was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction in the Service. It was because these men were devoted and loyal and were the right stuff that they kept

their grumbles very largely to themselves. That was in 1954 and this Bill has only just appeared.

I should like to know—and this is the first of the questions I want to ask—why there has been this long delay. The right hon. Member for Wakefield talked about the contraction of opportunity, and other speakers in the debate have implied that part of the trouble is that the men already employed in the Service know that it is virtually dying on its feet. Is this correct? If it is not, it may be leading us to false conclusions.

I remember some years ago conducting a survey into the prospects of the Colonial Service, and I came to some very interesting conclusions. We are faced here with a dilemma. On the one hand, with the political ties between the Colonial Dependencies and the mother country weakening, with more and more of these territories moving towards self-government and mastery over their own affairs, administrative changes in the colonies and in this country in the Colonial Office are inevitable, and these are bound to lead to anxiety among those serving and also those who, in normal circumstances, would be attracted to join them.

I remember when in East Africa in 1954 being told by one promising young district officer that he felt like looking over his shoulder all the time at the men who had served in the Sudan and those in that incomparable Civil Service, the Indian Civil Service, and who were now elsewhere. These anxieties were natural, and inevitable, but it is clear that if, as a result of these anxieties getting a grip, the Service is allowed to run down, the consequences to the whole of the Commonwealth and ourselves would be tragic.

The fact of the matter is that political advance in all these territories which have achieved or are about to achieve independence has far outstripped their administrative capacity. The hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. J. Johnson) quite properly quoted Dr. Azikiwe and other political leaders, who have in the last few years made it absolutely clear that they want British administrative assistance to continue and on terms satisfactory to the men concerned. They recognise that the kind of disinterested advice and expertise

[MR. BRAINE.] which these men can provide are absolutely essential if their young democracies are to find their feet, master their environment and develop their resources.

So we have a situation in which the demand for good men from the United Kingdom is not diminishing, but is increasing. I allow at once that where administrative officers are concerned, particularly the senior ones, opportunities of the right kind are contracting, but, since I made my survey, which was three years ago, I believe that the picture has not altered. In fact, if anything, a new emphasis has been given to my conclusions.

In the first eight years after the war, three times as many forestry and legal officers were required as in the eight years immediately previous to the war, four times as many administrative officers and medical officers, seven times as many veterinary officers, twelve times as many surveyors and geologists, and twenty-six times as many educational officers. The reason for this is quite clear. Economic, social and political development is quickening all the time in the Colonial Empire, and the demand for expertise increases accordingly. What I am driving at—and I am sorry that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is not here to hear this—is that colonial development is not just a matter of finding money. It is not just a matter of providing capital goods. It is, first and foremost, a matter of finding the right kind of men with the right kind of knowledge to guide, train and to enthuse the colonial cadres who will take over in the end.

I was most interested when my right hon. Friend gave some figures of the recruitment to the Colonial Service in the last two years, but I should have liked to have been given another figure, and perhaps my right hon. Friend, when he replies, may be able to give it. My information is that the demand has been so great in recent years that there is quite a considerable lag between the vacancies being notified to the Colonial Office and the appointments being made. I should like to know whether that lag is disappearing, and whether the number of young cadets is increasing. In short, the conclusion which one reaches is that at a time when anxiety is getting keen and when a number of the senior men in the

Overseas Civil Service are thinking in terms of taking their compensation and getting out, the field of opportunity, far from contracting, is widening, except, as I have said, in the administrative service.

As a result of this dilemma, we are faced with two related problems; first, how are we to provide continuity of employment and good prospects of advancement for those men already in the Service; and, secondly, how are we to ensure recruitment? One administrative officer in the West Indies told me a few years ago: "Remember, the chief source of recruitment to the Service are those already in it." Just as a doctor very often hopes that his son will follow him in his noble profession, so the colonial administrator hopes that his son will find happiness and a vocation in the Service. Unfortunately, in the last two years a number have been saying "I hope my son will not follow me, because the prospects are no longer bright."

In the past, colonial servants did not belong to a single unified service working to the same set of rules and answerable to the same master. It is true that they were recruited by the Colonial Office, and they were selected by the Secretary of State and many of them were appointed directly by him. But they were employed by colonial Governments and once appointed they were the servants of those Governments and of no other. As many hon. Members have said, the terms and conditions of service varied widely.

Is it not now the position that the Secretary of State has less and less control over appointments and that more and more the public service commissions are making them instead? I am convinced that there is no way out of the difficulty except by providing a single unified service with pay and pensions underwritten by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, although increasing discretion will have to be left to the local public service commissions and to the Governors to make the actual appointments.

I can see no reason even now why the re-employment of officers made redundant through no fault of their own but through political or administrative changes in these colonies should be left to chance or good will or to the whim of the Treasury. How are we to attract into the Service men whose intellectual quality and

character is such that they could find a niche almost anywhere else in these days of full employment? How are we to keep them in the Service unless we guarantee that once redundancy occurs their future will not be left to chance? Indeed, redundancy often occurs because a man has done his job well and has hastened the day of self-government.

I should like to know why there should be two categories, one being those on the Special List. Why should there be two kinds of colonial civil servant? What is the reason? We have not yet been given an explanation. Perhaps my hon. Friend will tell us that there are technical or financial reasons, or that the Treasury insists that the Special List should cover only a small, narrow, exceptional category of men in order to save money. If that is the truth, let us be told so.

The 1954 White Paper fell far short of what was required. It did not allay anxiety about prospects and pensions at the time. I do not see why the pensions for the whole Service should not be funded and located in the United Kingdom. The Bill, I readily allow, moves in the right direction, but it moves timidly and half-heartedly and is manifestly the product of a titanic struggle between the Colonial Office and the Treasury.

I should like to know how many officers in West Africa have thrown in their hand during the three years which have elapsed since the White Paper. I should like to know too how many officers in the Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria have taken their compensation. I should also like to know what has become of them. Have they sought similar service elsewhere, or have industry and commerce gained them?

The other day a young, brilliant administrative officer serving in one of the key territories of the colonial empire came to see me. He told me of his fears and doubts. If he stuck to his post, which was a senior one, there was the chance that a glittering prize lay ahead. He was not particularly concerned about that. He liked the job, and he had done a good job. He had helped in a territory where there has been a very rapid transformation, and he felt that he had made some contribution to it. He was young and married and had children, and he had to think of the future. He had had attractive offers from business houses. He wondered what he should do. I could have

shown him the Bill, but I doubt whether he would have obtained much encouragement from it. I do not know what he will do, but I do know what large numbers of other officers of similar age and distinction have already done. They have taken their compensation and gone.

I should like to know also why the Special List is limited to Nigeria. We have had nearly three years to think about this. There are other territories in which serving officers are filled with doubt and apprehension. We have been told today that there is a possibility of a similar list being negotiated with the Governments of Malaya and Ghana. I am glad to hear it. I should like to know when the negotiations opened and how long they will take to complete.

I should like to know whether the proposal will be limited to Malaya and Ghana. What about the Caribbean territories and some of the remote islands about which people hardly ever hear but where men are doing a fine job? Why should the matter be dealt with in piecemeal fashion? Why should we select one area and then go on to another? The men in the Service, certainly all the specialists except language experts, should be capable of being moved from one territory to another as need arises. Why cannot we treat this as a unified Service in which every man entering knows he has equality of opportunity and prospects with his fellows?

Is the Treasury responsible for the niggling treatment? What is the meaning of Clause 1 (2) and (3)? I agree with the hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East. Why should the Treasury determine the conditions under which these officers are appointed? There is also the matter of Clause 1 (6). It seems to me that the Secretary of State has extraordinarily wide powers to terminate appointments. If that provision is read with Clause 2 (4) it seems to me that he can do what he likes in respect of these appointments subject to not being challenged in Parliament.

I am not sure that these provisions are likely to inspire confidence among the members of the Overseas Service. I have with me a letter from a very distinguished ex-Colonial Secretary. He asks me the question which I have just asked. He writes:

"What does Section 2 (4) mean? As a layman, I can only read it to the effect that the

[MR. BRAINE.] Secretary of State can do anything he likes with an official pension. How encouraging!

I will not read the rest of the letter because it is, perhaps, unnecessarily harsh.

If these provisions were linked with an intelligent system of interchange with the home Civil Service, well and good, but we have had no evidence that this is intended. If it is intended, I hope my hon. Friend will give the House some information.

In short, as one who has had the proud privilege of being able to visit a very large number of Colonial territories during the last decade and has been struck by what he has seen of the devotion and hard work shown by the Colonial Service everywhere, I must register my acute disappointment that the opportunity has not been taken in the Bill to tackle the problem more boldly and with greater imagination and generosity. The Secretary of State, quite rightly, paid a great tribute to the men of the Service and said that the House owed a debt to them. I should have thought that this is one of the very few issues which cannot be judged on grounds of immediate expense. Clearly, we are moving into—indeed, we are already in—a phase of difficult and delicate relations with the peoples of the colonial empire. We cannot afford not to have the best men guiding, training and inspiring the colonial peoples.

Enemies of our way of life in the world are to be found everywhere. There is plenty of cynicism, plenty of uncertainty and doubt, plenty of fear. The colonial civil servant is much more than an ambassador for this country. He is forging the links in a chain of understanding, trust and friendship which alone can ensure that the Commonwealth, of which Britain is only a part, can endure. On the quality of their leadership, on the example they set and the confidence they inspire, will depend whether the new self-governing States of the Commonwealth decide to stay within the family circle. On those grounds alone—there is no need to advance any other—I should have thought that they were entitled to a better deal than they are receiving now.

Mr. Callaghan: On a point of order. I did, some twenty minutes ago, raise the question of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury being here. We have a Lord Commissioner of the Treasury here. Can

he tell us whether the Financial Secretary will attend the debate?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Callaghan: In that case, will you allow me to move a Motion, "That the debate be now adjourned"?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a Motion I can accept. The Ministers who are present can answer for the Treasury.

Mr. Callaghan: We have a Motion to be moved later on—I trust I am being perfectly courteous in this matter, Mr. Speaker, though I am not at all sure how far the Treasury is being courteous to the House—which is directly related to the Bill; it is, in fact, the Money Resolution. A great many strictures are being made this evening about the attitude of the Treasury, and it is surely reasonable to suggest that we should have a Treasury Minister here in order that he may know what our attitude is, and, indeed, what is the attitude of the House in this matter.

Mr. Speaker: These are not concerns of mine, and they are not points of order in any way. It is not a matter in which I have any power to interfere, and the debate must go on. We are dealing now with the Second Reading of the Bill.

Mr. Callaghan: But, Mr. Speaker, these are the reasons which would lead me to submit to you that it would be reasonable to move the adjournment of the debate. What has in fact happened?

Mr. Speaker: I could not accept such a Motion. Mr. Hector Hughes.

7.5 p.m.

Mr. Hector Hughes (Aberdeen, North): I disagree profoundly with the pessimistic tone of the speech just delivered by the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine). He made a number of niggling points, which seemed to me to be points much better dealt with in Committee than on Second Reading. As I understand the procedure on Second Reading, it is to consider the principle of the Bill. In my submission, the Secretary of State has made a good case for the principle of the Bill in general, though I have certain objections to it in detail.

The hon. Member for Essex, South-East, criticised the Bill for being too little and too late. That is the kind of cheap criticism which could be made of any Bill at any time. It seems to me that our function is to consider the principle of the Bill, and then, in Committee, when the hon. Gentleman may wish to make his small points, to consider whether the Bill can be improved. It is our task to make the Bill as good a Bill as possible.

I hope that the reservations I have in welcoming the Bill will not recoil upon me as being Committee points. Briefly, I consider that the Bill should be tightened up in certain ways. There are certain terms in it which merit definition yet which are not to be found in the definition Clause. Discretions are given too widely throughout the Bill, particularly to the Treasury, and it seems to me that the Treasury will in course of time be in conflict with the Secretary of State. The powers which are given are not in all cases clearly defined, and it seems to me that some of the looseness in the Bill will make for difficulty in administration.

The general principle of the Bill is good. It attempts to solve some of the essential problems in a very practical way. There is no doubt that legislation in this matter is much needed and, although it may be that the need has existed for some time, that is no reason for discarding a Bill which makes a reasonable and practical attempt at a solution.

Like other hon. Members who have spoken, I have had the opportunity—I say it humbly—of visiting some of the Colonies, and I know some of the problems involved. I do not profess to know—like some hon. Members who have spoken—what all the problems are, nor do I profess to know all the solutions, though I know of some of them. In the places I visited, I had conversations with officers in Her Majesty's Colonial Service and with others not in the Service, who could, perhaps, take a more objective view. It seems to me that the Colonial Service is doing excellent work. The question which the House has to consider is, will it continue? Will the Bill help it to continue? Does the Bill do enough? It is easy to say of any Bill that it does not do enough, but at least the one now

before us takes a step in the right direction. It confronts in its own way the essential, urgent current problems which await solution.

I shall put four of those problems as tersely and briefly as I can. The first is the problem presented by the rapid diminution in the number of trained and experienced officers in the public service in the Colonies. The second is the failure of the present attempts to retain expatriate British civil servants in their respective offices. The third is the counter-attraction which the British Government strangely and inconsistently offers them to retire prematurely—a very serious matter which must be tackled, and which, in my opinion, the Bill makes some attempt to tackle. Fourth is the insufficient number of trained, indigenous civil servants available and coming forward, efficiently to take the place of those who are retiring.

Those problems have a number of causes, of which I shall mention only two, which are related. The latest and short-term cause is that the existing officers have been given the right to retire with the pensions they have earned plus a lump sum for compensation. To this privilege they have become entitled in Nigeria, as has been mentioned, owing to the change of masters, as it is called, on transition from colonial status to the higher status of self-government. The Colonial Secretary took the view—I think quite correctly—that he could no longer guarantee their terms of service. Because of this, it is estimated that about 25 per cent. of the expatriate civil servants have opted to retire, and it is estimated that in about two years' time very few expatriate British civil servants will remain. That is the kind of problem the Bill is designed to tackle.

One cannot blame the civil servants for so succumbing to the inducement which the British Government—not only the present Government, but past Governments—have offered to them to retire prematurely from their posts, in that way reducing the numbers of the British civil servants in those posts. Their reasons are many and are almost coercive, particularly having regard to the present high cost of living. One is the attractive lump sum, which, at a time when the cost of living is high, makes it practically impossible for civil servants with

[MR. HUGHES.] family responsibilities to do other than retire. Another reason is the uncertain conditions of service under new Governments, conditions which may not be as attractive as those enjoyed at present. A third reason is that under the new régime the rates of pay and superannuation may fall if these civil servants stay on.

A fourth and very important reason is that these civil servants are attracted to leave the service because they want to get into industry and commerce before the men who are now being turned out of the Forces. There will be great competition in trade, industry and commerce, and those civil servants who retire prematurely and at a comparatively young age must look to the future and consider what competition there will be when they retire.

This almost spectacular diminution of expatriate British civil servants in the Colonies would not be serious if new men were coming forward to take their places, but they are not coming on with sufficient celerity to enable trained personnel to be put into all the places which are being vacated by those who are retiring.

That brings me to the other aspect of the cause of this diminution in the expert Civil Service in the Colonies. I have mentioned the recent and short-term cause. I now mention the older and long-term one. In my submission, past British Governments have not done their duty to our Colonies in this way. They should have foreseen the time when, in the march of events, those Colonies would achieve higher constitutional status and would need to man their own Civil Service. They did not take time by the forelock, and they did not educate the indigenous races as they should have done. If they had done that, the men—in the case of Nigeria, the Nigerians—would be coming forward now in sufficient numbers to fill the places which are being vacated. But past British Governments neglected their duty in that way, and they have only themselves to blame for the shortage of indigenous manpower that is arising.

What is meant by the term "officer" in the Bill? Who is an officer? The Bill does not define the word. Is "officer" to include a military officer as well as a Civil Service officer? I have

a case at present—I shall not mention the name or the area from which it comes—of a thoroughly expert, highly-educated civil servant who is now in a Colony. He has been given a high-up job under a superior officer who has no knowledge of the requisite technique and there is chaos in the office and trouble between them. That is the kind of thing that might ensue if "officer" is to mean other than a Civil Service officer. Before the Bill reaches the Statute Book, the term "officer" should be so defined as to ensure that incompetent persons are not given authority.

I should like to ask the Minister a few questions. Who are the officers to be appointed? How is their fitness to be tested? What must be their qualifications for appointment, and what is meant by the words

"arrangements . . . with Governments of overseas territories"

in Clause 1? Subsection (2) seems to me to give a veto to the Treasury as against the Secretary of State. If that is so, it may cause difficulty in administration. To me, these are important questions. The testing and the qualifications are important matters, not only to the Colonies but, indirectly and in the long run, to the solidarity of the Commonwealth of Nations. Unless these Colonial Territories when they achieve higher constitutional status are properly administered, and by their own men, the solidarity of the Commonwealth of Nations may indirectly, or perhaps, directly, be affected. On the whole, this is a good Bill, but it has certain defects which I hope will be cured in Committee. I hope that it will reach the Statute book and achieve the aim that it has in view.

7.17 p.m.

Mr. T. L. Iremonger (Ilford, North): I should like to add a word of assessment and appreciation of the Bill as I have served in the Colonial Service and as it touches upon the most vital and important issue in this vital and important age in which we live. It seems to me that the fundamental object of the Bill is to ensure the continuity of the British Imperial mission. I think that when history comes to judge us it will say that our British Imperial mission was the most significant contribution that we have made to the advancement of mankind.

The immediate object of the Bill, as I see it, is to ensure that those who carry on the mission shall have their careers continuable in the immediate future. It is proposed to achieve that object by securing for certain of them—not all of them—that the debt of honour which Her Majesty's Government owe to them will be fulfilled. We owe them a debt of honour because they have been selected by the Secretary of State and they are subject to his Regulations. It is our duty to see that they are not let down in mid-career while we stand impotently by. If they are rather anxious about this, one cannot wonder. They may be wondering about what happened to the British employees of the Egyptian Government who were let down so shamefully while we stood by quite unable to help them.

I shall not detain the House for long, but I want to say a word or two with special reference to the Bill about the Imperial mission of this country—I make no apology whatever for using the phrase—and to those who carry it out, with a special reference to the administrative service. As to the mission, we have completed the first and, perhaps, the easiest part of it, which we might call the Lugard era, of maintaining law and order and establishing sound administration.

We are now, however, entering a far more tricky period. We must nurse to maturity and responsibility the fierce and elemental nationalism which our own policy has created. We have to cherish the humane and civilised standards of behaviour and forms of government with which we have endowed the Colonies and we have to guide the economic development that we have started. To do these things in the atmosphere which we have created, we must have men of character, vision and infinite patience. It is the most important thing that we have to do for the world and it calls for the very best men that our country can produce.

Those who have served have a splendid and honourable record, but I am particularly concerned with those whose jobs are yet to be done. Those are the men that this Bill is about. In the 1954 debate on the organisation of the Overseas Civil Service, which was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Colchester (Mr. Alport), whom I am glad now to see in his place on the Front Bench as Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth

Relations, who had the singular good fortune to win the ballot for Private Members' Motions on two Fridays running, we discussed the question and I ventured to say that the morale of the Colonial Service was very low and that the Service itself was quite chaotic. I hope that the Bill will take steps to arrest the decline in morale and improve the outlook for those in the Service.

I want to ask my right hon. Friend especially about the recruitment of young cadets just embarking on their careers. I have heard it said that we are asking too much of them, and that we are asking for an act of faith and sacrifice that is not fair. Looking at Colonial Paper 306, which was published four years ago, we could not blame a young officer if he were to say, "This gives me nothing certain to look forward to." If we look at Regulation 5 in the Appendix, we find that it says:

"A serving Member of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service, while having no claim to employment otherwise than in the office which he has been offered and has accepted, shall be eligible for consideration by the Secretary of State for employment in any post which he may be requested or authorised to fulfil."

In other words, the young officer says to himself, "If a nationalist government kicks me out, I am on the garbage heap at 45 and have no redress". That is not the basis on which we should ask young men to build their life's work. I hope that the Bill, developing a hint in Colonial Paper 306, puts some heart into these men who are contemplating entering what will be an enormously responsible Service. The gist of the Bill is that we shall say to these young cadets, "Do not worry because, in the last resort, if the Government have made a Special List agreement with the Government of the Colony in which you will serve, you will then be the United Kingdom's 'baby' and the Government, if you are transferred to the Special List, will guarantee your pension and take you on the payroll until you are 50, and, if you are sacked unfairly, will try to find you another job."

I am not certain that this is all we ought to offer to officers in these circumstances, because if we look at Cmd. Paper 9768, published in May, 1956, on which this Bill is based, paragraph 7 (iv) reads:

"Officers transferred to the Special List will accept an obligation to serve Her Majesty's

[MR. IREMONGER.]

Government in the United Kingdom up to the age of 50 in any post to which they may be assigned from time to time."

I think it might well occur to junior officers who are about to embark on their careers that this offers them very much less choice than they might have had if they had remained in the Colonial Service in the circumstances which prevailed before the war. I am not sure that this is an attractive proposition for them.

Secondly, I feel that it is open to doubt as to who decides whether an officer is to be transferred to the Special List or not. It appears, on the face of the Bill, that this is subject to Treasury veto. It is written into the Bill, and the Treasury could say, "We will not accept this man," or "We will not accept this group of men". I should have thought that not enough security is given to an officer entering the Service.

It has been suggested by the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine) that the Special List ought to embrace all officers in the Overseas Service. I do not think that that criticism is quite fair. I do not see how it could be done, because the Special List only has any meaning by virtue of a Special List agreement which has to be negotiated with a competent Government. Such Governments are not everywhere in existence. A young officer going into the Tanganyika Service, for example, could not ask to be put on the Special List because the Tanganyika Government are not in a position to negotiate a Special List agreement with the Government. The suggestion that is made is unrealistic, and I think that the Secretary of State has been unfairly criticised.

I think that we are still asking a very great deal of young men in their second and third years at universities who are thinking of entering the Overseas Service. I hope that this last-ditch guarantee in the Bill will give them enough certainty of outlook to enable my right hon. Friend to recruit the men whom we need. I would like a definite assurance that he is seeking the men of the right calibre and that it is his prime objective to obtain them by this Bill and will sympathetically consider Amendments designed to that end.

It would be of great interest to the House if he could let us know how many vacancies there are in the administrative branches of the Service in various Colonies.

He told us that recruiting was improving, but he did not indicate to what extent the supply was satisfying the demand. I do not think we can emphasise too strongly the importance to the Service of obtaining young men of the coming generation, because they have grown up in a world in which nationalism exists.

Nationalism is the creed and faith of the Africans who are the men they will have to work and deal with in the territories to which they are appointed. Nationalism is a part of their world and they understand it. At Oxford and Cambridge and other universities they meet the young men of the Africa of tomorrow. They have an insight into and a sympathy with their passions and their dreams in a way which the old hands can never have, because it was not a part of their world. These men have a decisive part to play in the world, and we in this House must do everything we can to ensure that they are forthcoming from this country to play it.

7.27 p.m.

Mr. Arthur Moyle (Oldbury and Halesowen): There are one or two observations I should like to make on the Bill. First of all, I welcome the principle underlying it. The Bill may be rather belated, but I think its principle demands the support of both sides of the House.

I share the view of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) when he complained about the absence of any representative from the Treasury, because I am sure the Colonial Secretary will agree with me that he is merely an instrument of policy and that decision lies with the Treasury and that without the Treasury this Bill would not exist. I should like to support my hon. Friend in his plea to the Colonial Secretary that, as a matter of prestige, he ought to instruct one of his officers to call at the Treasury so that the Financial Secretary can be brought here and we may put questions to him.

I have been through this Bill very carefully. I should like to know exactly how the salaries and conditions of service are to be determined. For example, I should like to ask whether the salaries and conditions of service will be basically those which operate in this country. Or are they to be the subject of a negotiated arrangement between the home Government and the colonial or local territory

to which these officers may be posted? If so, I should like to know what will be the machinery of review. Who will be the authority to determine any revision of salaries, conditions of service or pensions? Will it be the Treasury of this country? I think that is a fair point, because to anyone who launches out into a career and has to consider various claims upon his desires in relation to his future, one of the basic factors is, "What kind of salary will I receive? What are the prospects of promotion? What will be the means by which I can get my salary adjusted in accordance with any change in the economic circumstances with which I might be faced?" Therefore, I would say to the Colonial Secretary that this is a moot point. It is not clear to me how the salaries and conditions of service are to be determined, how they are to be reviewed and regulated. Who will be the authority for that?

I agreed with the hon. Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine) when he referred to Clause 2 (4), which deals with superannuation rights. The one thing about pension rights to which anyone is entitled is whether there is any certainty about them. He wants to know if there is anything in his contract of service affecting his contributions, or, in a non-contributory scheme, as here, whether and how it affects any or all of his conditions of service, such as pensionable service. He wants to know whether there is any security of his pension rights yet. This subsection says nakedly:

"Any order under this section may be varied or revoked by a subsequent order thereunder."

I think the Colonial Secretary would be advised to explain it. Such a decisively worded provision must have a purpose. I can understand it in relation to salaries, but I cannot understand it in relation to pension rights.

I come now to what may be a Committee point, but I must put it to the Colonial Secretary. I refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum. It says:

"Under the Police (Overseas Service) Act, 1945, a member of a home police force can be allowed to engage in police service overseas, with a statutory right to revert to his former rank in his home police force at the end of his police service overseas."

I should have thought any police officer seconded abroad and having served a

period of years there, and having done his duty with merit, would have experienced some promotion. Would it not be advisable, to encourage such overseas service, to offer something a little better than reversion to his original rank, the rank the officer had when he went overseas? Would it not be advisable to make provision to ensure that when an officer returns to home duty from overseas he returns to a comparable rank at a comparable salary? This provision as set out with such pride in the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum, that an officer, if he returns, will be assured of the rank he filled when he took overseas service, is really rather discouraging, and it wants some explanation.

However, I think this Bill is a step in the right direction. Anyone who has followed the correspondence in *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* during the last few years will agree that the Colonial Territories which are emerging as self-governing territories, including those which have achieved self-government, are most anxious to secure the services of competent British personnel to carry on the administrative and technical work involved in government. I hope the Bill will be followed by wider measures so involving agreement between the Government in the United Kingdom and the colonial and local Governments to ensure reciprocal arrangements, to encourage the flow of expert personnel, such as nurses, doctors, teachers, technicians and so on, between the Colonial Territories and Britain, so that the work we have done in the past, in India and in the other countries which have been referred to in this debate, may be continued to the benefit of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and in such a way as to redound continuously to our credit and helpfully to the territories which are emerging as self-governing and independent.

7.36 p.m.

Colonel Tufton Beamish (Lewes): I was lucky enough a year ago in Malaya and Singapore and a month ago in Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons to meet a great many of the people who may be affected by this legislation, and so I hope to be able to make a useful contribution to this debate. Like everyone else who has spoken in the debate, I was enormously impressed by the

[COLONEL BEAMISH.] extremely high quality of the people concerned. Like other hon. and right hon. Members who have spoken, I am sorry that the Bill has come a little late. If it had come a few years ago, it might have been more effective. However, there is no use in complaining about that now, and what we now have to do is to try to make the Bill as good as possible.

My right hon. Friend told us—I think I have the figures aright—that 120 out of a potential 2,000 have so far applied to join the Special List. He made it quite clear that his hopes had not by any means been completely fulfilled. I would say that this figure is a very disappointing one indeed. That is obviously why so many of those who have spoken in this debate have been asking themselves what is the reason for it. I am glad indeed to hear that Sir John Martin is now in Nigeria looking into this and kindred problems. I am sure that the report he makes after meeting the people affected, considering the great expert he is, will be a very useful one.

Like other hon. Members, I think the main reason the response has been so disappointing is that the lump sum compensation and the pension which can be taken is so generous, and the political uncertainty in some territories is so great. These two things taken together have induced a great many people to go.

I found in Eastern and Western Nigeria last month that about 25 per cent. of the administrative officers have gone in the last two or three years and that about 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. have already decided to go during the next couple of years or thereabouts. I think those figures are accurate. It was extremely difficult to find anyone in the administrative service who will stay. I can count the administrative officers who have decided to stay, who have said that they are going to do so, on the fingers of one hand, out of dozens to whom I spoke.

It is, therefore, probably too late to persuade many to stay in the East or West Regions of Nigeria, and that is very unfortunate indeed, particularly in view of the attitude expressed by Dr. Azikiwe, a rather new attitude expressed so frankly in the New Year message which has been read from the other side of the House today.

In the North, though, the administrative and technical officers have not yet had to make up their minds and they will not have to do so for about two years, I think, until self-government is achieved in 1959, as we all hope it will be. So there a great deal may, perhaps, be done if very careful thought is given to this question. As everybody knows, the Northern Region is now making great progress in training new administrative officers among the Northern Nigerians themselves. I was very impressed indeed by the School of Administration in Zaria, where I spent half a day. It is very much a pet of the Premier, the Sardanna of Sokoto, who is very interested in it indeed. I was also very impressed by the School of Arabic Studies in Kano, which is doing excellent work in somewhat different fields, in an Islamic context. But unfortunately Northern Nigeria is not as far ahead as it would like to be in these directions.

The Government in the North would like the great majority and perhaps even all of the colonial officers in that Region to stay. One of the main things that I learned from talking to officers in the colonial service there is that they would be much more likely to stay if they could take part of their lump sum—perhaps half—on opting to stay, with the certain knowledge that they could have the rest when they went.

It is an idea very well worth while considering. It came from many with whom I spoke. I am sure that my right hon. Friend has it in mind as a possibility. I cannot see that it would cost any more if that were done. Bearing in mind that many of these men are between 30 and 40 years of age and have young children at school their attitude is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let us have half the lump sum now. We can then offset that other half against some of the political uncertainties that are bound to arise throughout Nigeria."

The second reason why so many people have already decided to go in the East and the West, and may decide to go in the North, is the very wide powers which the Secretary of State has under Clause 1, to which reference has been made on both sides of the House. One officer to whom I spoke said, "It seems to me and my friends that the Government can say just what they think is a reasonable job and

what they think is adequate pay, and there is no appeal against either of these decisions. Furthermore, there is no appeal against postings and no appeal against conditions of service."

This may seem on the face of it a somewhat unreasonable attitude, but I found it widespread. We might bear in mind that we all recognise that one of the greatest deterrents to recruiting in the Army has been the upheaval that officers and N.C.O.s, particularly those who are married, undergo. The upheavals which those who join the Special List might undergo could be far greater than anything normally experienced by Army officers and N.C.O.s. There would be difficulties of educating children in remote parts of the world, constant moves to new territories, problems of accommodation and all the other things which make life difficult for married men of 30 or 40 years of age with young children to bring up. These wide powers in the Bill must be looked at very carefully if these anxieties are to be allayed.

Several hon. Members have also spoken about secondment from other home Government Departments. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said something very interesting and welcome on the subject. I was most impressed in Nigeria and Malaya by the fact that more and more technical officers will be required as those countries develop. Not fewer but more men and women will be required in somewhat different conditions. Undoubtedly they will be well paid. People like veterinary surgeons, forestry experts, doctors and school masters are wanted in increasing numbers.

I should like to feel, more than I do at present, that the Ministers of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, of Health, and of Education were Commonwealth-minded in these things and did not think it any more unusual to send doctors and veterinary surgeons and forestry experts to Western Nigeria or Malaya, or wherever they might be required, than to Sussex or Northumberland. It is a general criticism, quite outside any party context, that some Government Departments have never been Commonwealth-minded at all. Those concerned with the police and the Post Office may be the outstanding exceptions which prove the rule, but other Government Departments could very well think much more in terms of the Common-

wealth than they do at present. I am sure that the Colonial Secretary would be the first person to welcome that.

As everyone has said in the debate, the idea behind the Bill is excellent and welcome. It is a good thing that, as it is an enabling Bill, it provides the Government with a great deal of flexibility to bear in mind and act upon the suggestions that have been made. I am very comforted by my right hon. Friend's obvious determination to make the scheme work really well. That is essential if we are to adjust ourselves to the enormous possibilities of our future relations with a country of the great importance of Nigeria. If we are to avoid what I think is a serious risk of a complete administrative and technical breakdown in some territories, it is of crucial importance that the terms of service in the Special List should be improved and that all the criticisms and suggestions made in the debate should be considered so that the Bill may become the real success which all of us wish it to be.

7.47 p.m.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): In your absence, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I have ruffled the calm waters of this debate a little by twice asking for the presence of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and then endeavouring unsuccessfully—and I was not surprised that I was unsuccessful—to move the adjournment of the debate until we had the advantage of the hon. and learned Gentleman's presence. I made the attempt because this is in essence a Treasury Bill. It is formally introduced by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, who have a very close interest in it, but, if I may tell them so without any disrespect, they are no more than Treasury agents in this matter.

They are the people who will recruit and appoint officers for this new Overseas Service, with the consent of the Treasury. They will fix terms of remuneration on a basis which the Treasury may consider appropriate. They intend to fix superannuation provisions, subject to the agreement of the Treasury. It is not unreasonable, therefore, for us to expect a Treasury Minister to be here. If this had been a Bill relating to the home Civil Service it would not have been introduced

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]

by any Departmental Minister but by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in his capacity as the person who looks after the conditions of the Civil Service.

A number of observations have been made from both sides of the House about the position of the Treasury in this matter. I wish to make some myself at a later stage, but I should prefer to make them when the Financial Secretary found it convenient to be present. The debate has now proceeded for over three hours and we have not had any word from him or any explanation why he is not here. In order that I might regulate the length of my remarks and keep them within reasonable compass, I should be very happy to give way while we hear when he is likely to be present, so that apposite remarks may be made in the presence of the Minister who will influence the final consultations. I make this request to the Treasury Bench now. Can they kindly give an indication to the House whether or not the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is coming to this debate? If not, is some other representative of the Treasury coming here?

I am putting it extremely courteously and it is not an unreasonable request to make. May we have an answer from the Secretary of State? If not, I hope that at some stage during this evening we shall have an answer. The Government have other business to get through. I do not know whether they hope to get it through by ten o'clock or not. There are two hours and ten minutes to go. I do not know whether the other Orders are essential for today and I do not know whether the Government want this Bill today or not. I can tell the Treasury Bench now that I am capable of speaking until ten o'clock or until the Closure is moved, unless we can have an answer to what I regard as a serious point, namely, some indication by the Treasury Bench why the Financial Secretary is not here and whether he is prepared to come.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: When the matter is put that way I am prepared to answer the hon. Gentleman. It has never been the practice of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury automatically to attend this House when a Bill mentions in various Clauses the consent of the Treasury. Were that his obligation my hon. and learned Friend would spend his

entire life in this House instead of getting on with other important work which he must do elsewhere. In this case it is clearly appropriate that when we are entering into considerable financial obligations, which we gladly do for the sake of the service and the territories, there should be the restraining hand of the Treasury in the background. It is not true, however, that the Treasury will be vetting individual applications. I myself have virtually blanket authority in this matter and I shall not refer to the Treasury all the individual applications to join the Special List.

I can assure the hon. Gentleman that if, when we examine the Bill Clause by Clause, there are Clauses where it is felt to be appropriate that there should be a Treasury spokesman present, I will convey that wish to my hon. and learned Friend the Financial Secretary. However, no arrangements have been made for him to be present here tonight, and I do not think it is reasonable that the hon. Gentleman should regulate the length of his speech—interested though we would be to see if he could emulate practices in the American Senate—by the presence or absence of the Financial Secretary. I will pass on all he has said to the Financial Secretary with whom, needless to say, or rather with whose predecessor, I have had many consultations about this Bill. It will be for my hon. and learned Friend to decide whether it would be appropriate for him to turn up at various stages of this Bill.

Mrs. White: With all respect, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman says he has blanket authority, but the subsection of Clause I to which I drew his attention earlier states specifically that the Treasury's consent is required to the appointment of a particular officer.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I followed time-honoured language. I am letting the hon. Lady and the rest of the House into a domestic secret.

Mr. Callaghan: I am grateful to the Colonial Secretary for giving us that explanation. Let me say, however, that it is not our view. We do not wish to hound Ministers or to compel their presence in the House when they might be engaged on other duties, like trying to save £50 million, although I am bound

to say that there were occasions during the lifetime of the Labour Government when a considerable amount of hounding went on. In this case the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is not merely somebody who is concerned in a Clause. He is the second backer of the Bill. His name appears there. Admittedly the name is that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Powell) but I take it that the mantle of Powell has descended upon Simon and that between them they share the responsibility.

Mr. Ede: The mantle of Enoch?

Mr. Callaghan: I knew I was getting close to it, but I was not sure.

Mr. Ede: The Scriptures say

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not."

Mr. Callaghan: I resign from this competition of erudition, Mr. Deputy-Speaker.

There is a point here. I am sure the Colonial Secretary sees it, by his comments. The Treasury hand is written right through the Bill and later I shall ask the right hon. Gentleman to deny, if he can, that the reason for the delay in producing this Bill is because of differences with the Treasury. It is a delay that, in the view of a number of us, has been fatal to the success of the Measure in certain of the territories discussed here this evening.

None of us here can compel the Financial Secretary to come to the House. Yet I take it that he is within five minutes' walk of it. It would not take the hon. and learned Gentleman long to walk across, and it would have been reasonable that he should have been here. Therefore, I ask the Colonial Secretary to convey to his hon. and learned Friend, as he has promised to do, the observations made from both sides of the House in this debate about the attitude of the Treasury on the employment of colonial civil servants.

Whilst I think that this Bill is welcome, it is a hotch-potch. I do not believe that anybody in 30 or 40 years' time who writes the history of the Overseas Service will say about the principles underlying the employment of overseas colonial civil servants today what his- torians today can say about the prin-

ciples which underlay the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms which led to the establishment of the home Civil Service 100 years ago.

I was sorry to disagree with my learned and hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hector Hughes) in springing to the assistance of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine), who made what I thought was an excellent speech. It seems to me that there will be groups of people employed overseas in future, and that we shall not know into which group anybody comes. We shall have those willing to go on the Special List, those who will not be willing to do so and who will presumably be employed on some other terms. There will be indigenous officers, there will be contract officers—

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have them now.

Mr. Callaghan: I know, but I was hoping that when a Bill was produced to deal with the future Overseas Service, this hotch-potch might be reduced to a framework into which these people could be fitted more easily. From what has been said on both sides of the House today it is clear that it is the uncertainty of the position of these officers that is causing, in the words of one of my correspondents in West Africa, the whole idea to go sour on them. This Bill is welcome because it goes a stage forward, but I do not think that the Colonial Secretary will find that it will last in its present form. There will have to be a substantial review of our staffing arrangements for the overseas territories within the next few years in order to put them on a more permanent basis.

Now I come to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White) about the appropriate Secretary of State. From my reading of the Bill, and because his name appears on the back of it, I take it that it is the Secretary of State for the Colonies who will be responsible for the Special List. My hon. Friend thought that it would also include the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations or, indeed, even the Foreign Secretary. I do not know whether that is true or not. Perhaps the Colonial Secretary will be able to tell us? If it is, it seems to me that the time is coming when this should be taken

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]
out of the hands of the various Secretaries of State, for a number of reasons.

In the first place, I can see that the jealous pride of the newly emerging nations may engender a feeling that they will not want to be under the wing of the Colonial Secretary, ample though it may be. Incidentally, the opinion has been slightly injured recently but we are glad to see that it has now recovered. They may prefer to be dealt with by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. If this is the case, if we are to have groups of Secretaries of State concerned with this matter, we shall get into a state of confusion.

I should have thought there was a case for saying that the Civil Service Commission might handle this matter, since it handles the home Civil Service adequately; indeed it does so extremely well. This would remove any semblance of patronage, although that is fast going out of the door in the Colonial Service. It seems to me that it would make for an administratively tidier arrangement if the Civil Service Commission handled it. I have no fixed views about this but, if more than one Secretary of State is to be concerned in the List, it might be an administrative improvement.

Now I come to the question of the Central Pool. I, like my right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones), regret very much the abandonment of that pool, and the fact that it has taken us two years to reach this conclusion. We must ask the Colonial Secretary some questions. The right hon. Gentleman said that his colleagues in other Departments play up well if he asks them to lend men to go to the overseas territories. I expect they do, but more than that is required.

Is it dependent at the present time upon the good will of the Department concerned whether it releases an appropriate man for service elsewhere, or can the Colonial Secretary put his finger on the man he wants? I imagine that the first of those alternatives is correct. That will not be very successful in the future. Hon. Members who have seen the inside of a Government Department know that what tends to happen is that if it gets a request for someone and the Department cannot refuse, it sends the fellow

it likes least and wants to get rid of most. That is not the sort of person we want to see going out into the Colonial Territories. If the right hon. Gentleman is abandoning the Central Pool and is relying upon the good will of his colleagues in other Departments to supply him with men, how will this arrangement be made? What choice will the right hon. Gentleman have about the people he hopes he will get?

The Bill has been very much delayed, in fact for eighteen months, because of the failure of the Treasury to match up to the needs of the situation. It has haggled and argued and wrangled about the conditions of service under which these men are to be employed and has failed to give the guarantee that was necessary to enable the men to take on the job which had to be done. The consequence is that in at least one territory the opportunity has been dissipated to a large extent. The Treasury is acting in accordance with the worst traditions I could expect from it. I think most hon. Members agree that we can offer very little to the Colonial Territories except skill and brains. It is surely worth our while to pay what is necessary in order to get them.

Suppose these problems were posed in terms of the cold war. We would get a very different response and a vastly different decision. Suppose it were said that the Russians were sending out 500 administrators, technicians and specialists into the Colonial Territories and were willing to pay for them. The whole Treasury Front Bench would be falling over itself to say how wrong and wicked this was. Well, here is the cheapest way in which we can maintain a continuing influence in these territories, where the emerging nations want us to do so. One reason why I feel rather savage about the Treasury is that by the expenditure of an infinitesimally small amount we could guarantee the salaries of all the necessary men. We need not enter into all the fine shades of difference about which the Colonial Secretary will be haggling with the Treasury. We could do the whole thing.

I am told that the French Government which, between periods of resignation, seems to be able to get things done, have taken over the whole responsibility for the payment of the salaries of French civil servants in Colonial Territories.

What a wonderful and rich investment this would be, and what a good return we could get for a very small expenditure.

Mr. Cyril Osborne (Louth) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Callaghan: I do not know why the hon. Gentleman should object to that statement, unless he wishes to support the Treasury. Perhaps he is casting his mind forward to Thursday and thinking that Government supporters will have to support the Treasury and defend the proposition of paring off the last £50 million irrespective of what happens.

Mr. Osborne: The hon. Gentleman suggested that the French Government were getting a good return for their expenditure, but that is not true in every case, for example in Algeria.

Mr. Callaghan: I accept that point, although that was not in fact what I said.

Some of us believe that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury should be present during the Committee stage of the Bill so that we can put these considerations to him with some force and try to get the Treasury to behave generously about the Overseas Civil Service and the Special List.

I agree very much with what was said by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) about the need for movement overseas from home Departments and back again. In view of the fact that the Central Pool is now being abandoned, I should like to see a regular call upon our home Departments for movement out to Colonial Territories. I believe we should find a vast untapped reservoir of men in home Departments who would be ready, indeed anxious, to go for five years or any other contract period, to get a spell of service overseas. The experience would strengthen our home Departments and broaden them.

I would ask another question about salaries. Although the Bill is not an enabling one, I understand that under it the Colonial Secretary will determine rates of pay of these officers and will prescribe them. The hon. Baronet the Member for Glasgow, Scotstoun (Sir J. Hutchison) said there would be equality of salary for them, no matter where they were serving. There is obviously variety

in the capacities of territories to pay and—

Mr. M. Clark Hutchison: May I point out to the hon. Gentleman that I am the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South, and that I am not a baronet.

Mr. Callaghan: If only the hon. Member were a member of the Liberal National Party I guarantee that he would be a baronet within eighteen months. As it is, he will have to wait a little longer. He is on the East Coast of Scotland. I am told that they do very well on that side of Scotland, so perhaps he will not have very long to wait.

There is variance in the capacity of territories to pay. What will the Colonial Secretary do when one territory comes to him and says, "We should like to have half a dozen of your chaps but we cannot afford to pay for them"? Would the Government be in a position under the Bill to subsidise the salaries of those officers? I presume we should not approve of cut-price officers. Are the Government free to put in some measure of subsidy so as to give top price to the people needed, irrespective of the capacity of the territory to pay?

A point was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldbury and Halesowen (Mr. Moyle), about the courses which these officers take before they go overseas. Somebody has referred to these officers as emerging slightly pompous, and said that the fresh breezes of New Zealand should blow through them because that would help the officers a great deal. Whatever we may think about this point, I ask the Colonial Secretary whether he has recently had a chance of looking at the courses undertaken at Oxford and Cambridge by these men. I do not know whether Oxford and Cambridge are the two best universities for this purpose. There might be something to say for the red-brick universities, which seem more appropriate. [*Interruption.*] I know that I may be offending hon. Gentlemen who went to Oxford or Cambridge, but I hope they will be able to sustain my criticism.

The breadth and nature of the courses will obviously be of great importance when the men go out into the territories. I ask the Colonial Secretary what review is made of the courses which are taken by these young men and to what extent there is consultation with or control by

[MR. CALLAGHAN.]
the Colonial Office about what is done in those two universities at the present time.

It is not now necessary for me to make the lengthy speech to which the House was looking forward. In view of what the Colonial Secretary has said, I conclude by saying that we give a modified welcome to the Bill. We think it represents a step forward in the course and history of the Overseas Civil Service. We think it will help. There is a great deal to be done very quickly and we hope that when we get to the Committee stage we shall have assurances from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury that will lead us to the conclusion that the Treasury will not throw away the Commonwealth for the sake of 64d.

8.10 p.m.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd) : I will do my best to answer a number of questions which have been raised, although a great many of them can more properly be dealt with on the Committee stage. On that occasion, whether fortified by the attendance of other Ministers or not, I will do my best to give appropriate answers to what really are Committee points.

I must first apologise to the hon. and learned Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hector Hughes), who for the moment is not in his place, as I cannot at this moment give the precise numbers of those officers who in 1956-57 were selected for appointment to the Overseas Service and declined, but I will send him the information.

This debate has certainly shown the passionate interest of hon. Members on both sides of the House in the welfare of the main instrument of Colonial development, Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service. I am very glad that the speeches have taken on such an interested, and, at times, such a vehement tone. I do not in the least resent that. I have been very anxious for this Bill for some considerable time. I am delighted that it has now been possible to introduce it, and I believe it will make a substantial contribution to the cause we all have at heart.

I say this about what may appear to be some slight delay in the introduction of the Bill. Clearly it raised a number of new problems and new issues. It was also highly desirable when we finalised

the Special List that we should do so in a form which was likely to commend itself to those overseas Governments with which we were anxious to make Special List agreements. It would have been absurd had we introduced a Bill which bore no relation to what in fact the overseas Governments—who are the essential parties in the Special List procedure—were prepared to agree.

There was bound to be a great deal of discussion and inevitably some delay, but, in order that the ill effects of the delay should as far as possible be offset, I made a statement, through the medium of a White Paper, in May of 1956 making it quite clear that there was going to be a Special List. In so far as that could bring solace and comfort to members of the Overseas Civil Service the promise that there would be such a list and that legislation would be introduced for it must have done something to retain their confidence.

I recognise that by itself no Act of Parliament can solve our problems, either of recruitment or of the maintenance of a healthy service on the scale that we all desire. A great many other considerations enter in and not the least is the attitude of local governments. I have lost no opportunity on my many visits to colonial territories to impress on political leaders the necessity of casting their mantle over the Civil Service in the way in which British Ministers have been accustomed to, which means that Ministers must take responsibility for unpopular decisions and not lay the blame on officials. If attacks are made on officials the Ministers responsible must instantly leap to their defence. Not the least of the difficulties some of us have found in recent years has been the fact that individual civil servants have been mentioned adversely by name in a number of legislatures and charges have been made against them which have not been answered and they themselves were precluded from making any answer at all. Those are the sort of circumstances which work against that peace of mind and contentment which we are all anxious to achieve.

I can, of course, introduce with the consent of the Treasury and of my colleague and with the approval of Parliament—such legislation as seems desirable.

but that by itself will not do all we need. This is bound to be a business in which co-operation between ourselves and the local governments is imperative. When I say co-operation, I mean not only by words, which are always welcome, but by deeds, which are even more welcome. There are now many evidences that responsible Ministers in the territories most concerned fully appreciate this fact and I hope they are taking every opportunity of making it abundantly clear.

A number of very important points have been made in this debate and I shall certainly ponder on all the suggestions that have been made. I shall come more educated to the Committee stage than I would otherwise have been. The right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Creech Jones) regretted what he called the loss in the appeal of the services and my hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East (Mr. Braine) also referred to the same theme. We ought to get this into perspective, as I think my hon. Friend clearly did. In spite of the political unsettlement in different areas, in spite of the many other attractive opportunities in commerce and industry open to professional people, we are still recruiting over the whole field at four times the pre-war rate of recruitment. So I do not think we ought to take too seriously a charge that there is a loss of appeal to the services. In administration the rate of recruitment is about the same as pre-war, but in the professional branches it is much higher and, over the whole field, it is four times what it was before the war.

My hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East was quite right in saying that there is an increasing demand and what matters is the gap between what we can supply and what the demand is shown to be. There is a substantial gap, but we are recruiting at four times the pre-war level over the whole field. I am most grateful to those of my officers and others who have so quickly got out the figures which are really "hot" from the printer. The number of vacancies in administration on the last day of last year was 130, and in all branches 1,384. That is a substantial improvement on 1956. At the end of 1956 we had 170 administrative vacancies and 1,456 vacancies in all branches. The proportion of vacancies to the total number of overseas officers

in the service now is very roughly about 7 per cent. We must do what we can to close that gap, but we ought to see the gap in perspective.

Mr. Creech Jones : Would the vacancies include omission from the list of Malaya, Ghana and possibly other countries?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd : Yes, that is taken into account. The proportion now is 7 per cent. of vacancies in the Colonial dependent territories and the figures have been adjusted to take account of that fact.

I was also asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East and a number of other hon. Members for the number of officers leaving Ghana and Nigeria. These figures represent very substantial losses. If the hon. Lady the Member for Flint, East (Mrs. White) thinks I am unduly pessimistic, I hope she will realise that no greater disservice could be done to the cause we all have at heart than to be unwisely complacent. There is a very real problem here. I believe that in the Special List we have a potential dynamic appeal which, properly presented and developed, may well help to meet the situation.

I believe there is some dynamism in this Bill, but I was being brutally frank when I drew attention to the fact that all is not well and we ought not to think it is; above all we ought not to allow those in whose hands is the cure of these ills to believe that all is well. In Ghana, approximately 400 officers have left, which is approximately 50 per cent. of the entitled officers—that is, officers entitled to compensation. About 50 per cent. have retired. The retirement scheme in Ghana dates from July, 1955, and the retirements have, therefore, been spread over quite a long period.

In Eastern Nigeria, 51 have retired, which is 23 per cent. of the entitled officers. In Western Nigeria, 68 have left, which is between 23 per cent. and 24 per cent. of the entitled officers. In both these territories retirement schemes date only from the autumn of last year.

We come to the question which has run through the debate and which a number of hon. Members have raised—the appeal which substantial compensation terms are bound to make to officers who are confronted with very difficult decisions. My hon. and gallant Friend

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]
the Member for Lewes (Colonel Beamish), who has had another singularly successful tour in Colonial Territories, and other hon. Members have raised this point, among them my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Mr. Tilney). In a way, the very nature and size of the compensation scheme has been one of our great disadvantages, but I would ask right hon. and hon. Gentlemen in this respect to put themselves in my position: in fairness or propriety, we could not have used the financial weapon to induce officers to stay against their better judgment. For example, we could not have said, "We will not use our best offices to try to get good compensation terms for loss of office or if a situation arises which makes you want to retire."

If we had not been so successful in our negotiations with Colonial Territories and if we had not obtained such substantial compensation, no doubt some officers who have left would not have left, but I think I should have been doing my duty very badly by those officers if I had failed to get them the best possible compensation terms. Side by side with that has gone the duty to try to do everything one can to induce them to stay.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) used a phrase about abandoning the central pool. It is too early to say that that will be so. I have no wish whatever to do that, and as long as there is a reasonable chance of success being achieved that way, I have every intention of preserving the framework into which it can fit. Indeed, as I said to the right hon. Member for Wakefield it might be that some Special List officers in Nigeria who were not wanted for further employment there might themselves form the beginnings of the central pool for employment elsewhere.

I made this quite clear and I also repeated the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal in March last year that it was intended to test the demand for such a pool

"by improving the existing arrangements by which members of the Home and Overseas Civil Service can be made available to Commonwealth countries without prejudice to their pension rights."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 26th March, 1957; Vol. 567, p. 96.]

That, in fact, we have done, and Clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill are expressly

designed to do it. We are not abandoning the central pool, although I am bound to say that at this stage I think that the Special List procedure is the more fruitful line of approach.

Mr. Creech Jones: In connection with the Central Register, in 1954 a time limit was given to the Overseas Service for people to apply to go on to the Register. Is it now said that the response of the Overseas Service was so poor that it hardly justified the existence of the Register? What was the experience of the appeal which was made by which they might apply for admission within six months?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I said at the start that there was very little indication that such a register and pool would appeal to younger people, who would be recruited for a particular job in a particular territory. I said that it was more likely to have an appeal to older people.

One of my hon. Friends rightly pointed out that the Special List demands a Special List agreement, and this is the reason that a distinction is drawn between officers on the Special List and others. The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East made some mild fun out of the suggestion that there would be a series of different people serving in the Colonial Service who would be on different terms, but that seems to me to be quite unavoidable. Nothing that we do in the House will do away with the growing system of recruitment on contract terms. Anybody who has had to deal with the political leaders in emerging territories knows how reluctant they are to saddle themselves, as they regard it, with a life-long obligation to people whose skill may well have been acquired by people of their own Territory long before the lifetime of the European officers has been exhausted. We are seeing more and more recruitment on contract terms and there is nothing we can do to stop it.

Incidentally, the Special List is not meant to deal with officers recruited on contract terms. The leader of the Liberal Party said that he thought they would be particularly appropriate for the Special List, but the Special List is meant to deal with people who are pensionable, which they are not, and who are eligible for compensation, which they are not. That is not to say that in exceptional

circumstances the United Kingdom Government and the local Government alike might not agree that some officer could qualify both for pension and for compensation and could find himself on the Special List.

The point which I was trying to make was that nothing we do can alter the fact that there will be a growing number of people on contract terms. We therefore cannot have the tidy arrangement which we should like to have and which nostalgic and other considerations might lead us to think preferable. There are bound to be distinctions, also, between Special List officers and other members of the Overseas Civil Service for the simple reason that the Special List set-up involves a Government which is qualified and ready to sign a Special List agreement.

In respect of both the Nigerian Governments, there have been 120 applications. Sir John Martin will make recommendations to me and he will most certainly look into the point raised by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Lewes—the suggestion of an officer taking half his compensation and remaining. I must say, however, that the Governments concerned in Africa up to now have not shown any great liking for the idea of officers remaining who have already drawn some of their compensation. That is not to say, in view of the very grave situation, that this is not a suggestion worth considering. It has been put to Sir John Martin, and I think it well worth pursuing. As I have said, however, there are bound to be officers employed on the Special List and other officers of H.M.O.C.S. who are not so employed. In Nigeria, so far there have been 120 applications.

Discussions are going on now in respect of Malaya, and in my opening speech I ventured to hint that they were taking a fruitful turn, but it is not for me to state to the House what will happen in Malaya which is no longer my responsibility, nor have the talks yet been concluded.

A number of hon. Members, primarily my hon. Friend the Member for Wavertree asked why this should not apply to the whole of the Colonial Service. May I here say to all my hon. Friends how grateful I am for the work they have done in this particular field. This interest is, of course, common to all Members,

on both sides of the House, but I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Wavertree, who has been persistent in this matter, deserves special praise, as does my hon. Friend the Member for Essex, South-East for his admirable articles on this very matter in the *New Commonwealth*. They are entitled to be singled out, but, as I say, hon. Members on both sides are equally zealous in this sphere.

At first sight, that would appear to be an obvious thing to do, but I must, at this stage, put in a word for Her Majesty's Treasury and remind hon. Members of the obligation there is on the Treasury not to enter into open-ended commitments without knowing exactly where they will lead. I do not normally find myself in a position of publicly defending the Treasury—though I naturally stand by every decision that the Government arrive at in their collective wisdom—but I think that it is reasonable to point out that if there is to be a Special List there should be special circumstances surrounding it.

As an experiment, we have applied it to Nigeria and it seems to us that we should first concentrate on dealing with the situation in Nigeria, and making the scheme a success there. I must point out that, in some other territories, neither the officers nor the Governments may altogether like the Special List procedure. Clearly an agreement must be introduced which is acceptable to the local Government and will also be welcomed by the officers themselves. Certain Governments, and it is no secret that this is the view of the Central African Federation, feel strongly that their services should be locally based. It has also been borne in on me in recent months and years that overseas officers in Nigeria and Malaya have, in many cases, shown notable reluctance to accepting the provision of compulsory transfer from one territory to another, which is a special feature of the Special List arrangements.

The arrangements would also, I think, apply in East Africa. There, also, I have reason to believe that the officers would not altogether welcome the provision under which Special List officers transferred to a particular territory can have their appointment terminated at twelve months' notice by the Government of that territory. These are matters that I would, on another occasion, be glad

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]
to develop, but I am only too ready to negotiate Special List arrangements where the officers want them and the emerging Government are ready to negotiate them, and I will lose no opportunity to do so.

The right hon. Member for Wakefield also asked me about the progress in the seconding from the home public service, and whether this will be extended. It will, indeed, be pressed on with vigour. I have a summary of the various Government Departments that have helped in this way, and I will gladly show it to the right hon. Gentleman to illustrate how widespread are the links between the various Government Departments, and public organisations, municipal and otherwise, in the United Kingdom.

He also asked if I would look again at what he called, not unjustly, the anomaly in regard to the pensions of those Governors who did not enjoy the advantages of the 1956 Act. I have taken, as I think the Governors concerned would themselves agree, a very close personal interest in this matter. I was very anxious to find a way out of the difficulty, but—as I think any Minister would find in seeking to make changes in pension laws in order to meet what are undoubtedly hard cases—the difficulty is that it does not stop at the particular category of pensioners, eminent though these are, with whom we are concerned; and the repercussions in every field of public service would be widespread. I have reluctantly had to tell those Governors that I could see no way in which I could meet what they wanted. I made one or two suggestions which they did not think were really adequate—nor did I, for I recognise the hardship that had been caused.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wavertree and many hon. Gentlemen opposite asked what the criteria are by which people are appointed to the Special List, and my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport (Miss Vickers) asked a number of questions, with which I shall try to deal, including that one.

All pensionable overseas officers in Nigeria are eligible to apply, and that provision, I may tell my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport, most certainly includes women. But it does not include local officers—Nigerian officers. The

object is to keep officers in the Service, and the scheme is not really needed for local officers. I think that a moment's thought will show that that is so. But, of course, it includes any officer from any British Dominion who is a member of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service. All of us who travel widely in the Colonial Territories know what an invaluable part Dominion people are playing in that Service. All of them who are members of the Service would be eligible to apply.

Officers must be recommended by the Governor, and in self-governing regions by the public service commission also. Such officers could normally be taken on the Special List. There is no question at all of there being an individual scrutiny by the Treasury, though the conventional wording might legitimately give rise to such a fear.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East asked whether—though he might have known this phrase from the particular jargon of this business—we intended to “top up” salaries in the poorer territories. That is not our intention. There are many difficulties in the way of “topping-up” salaries, not least the encouragement which it gives to local Governments not to pay a proper salary themselves. The salaries will be agreed between the United Kingdom Government and the territorial Government, and if there is disagreement, this would go to arbitration.

I was sorry to hear from my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Lewes (Colonel Beamish) that some of the officers whom he recently met felt that Clause 1 of the Bill might turn the scale in favour of their not applying for the Special List. I am delighted to know that Parliamentary productions of this kind are scrutinised with that sort of care, because it is an earnest of the importance which they attach to this Bill and to any measure which is designed to give them the necessary encouragement and peace of mind. I can assure such officers that there would be no question of recommending scales of pay that were unworthy, or transfer to jobs that were patently unsuitable. Nor would they find, in fact, that they were being confronted with more likely dangers in the field of transfer than are common to all who join a service in which constant changes are so often the fate of officials.

I was also asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Wavertree about employment under the Commonwealth Relations Office or under the Foreign Office, and I was asked by the hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East whether the Secretary of State was uniformly the Colonial Secretary or whether he could be transferred into the Commonwealth Relations Secretary or Foreign Secretary in certain circumstances. In regard to recruitment and employment of experts under the technical co-operative scheme, this is not covered, as the hon. Member knows, by any specific legislation, but is carried out by administrative action. It is not intended that this Bill should change the existing procedure, because there are cases where it is convenient to look to H.M.O.C.S. for the supply of an expert to be sent out, as under the Colombo Plan, and there would be no bar to employment of that expert being made, or being stated to be made, under the provisions of this Measure. The responsibility for bearing the cost of pay and any superannuation contributions would thus be borne by the United Kingdom.

In the case of Foreign Office appointments to S.E.A.T.O., these posts are normally filled by secondment from the United Kingdom Government, or from the Foreign Service, but if a person in the Overseas Civil Service were recruited, the provisions of this Bill could, if necessary, be applied. In cases of this kind, negotiations on the terms and conditions of service would be in the hands of the Commonwealth Relations Secretary or the Foreign Secretary, and not of myself. The phrase “Secretary of State” has been expressly used so as to provide for that contingency.

Mr. Callaghan: I ought to have realised this, but I do not. What happens when Nigeria becomes independent? Is it still the responsibility of the Colonial Secretary?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: When I have started on this business, I remain the responsible Minister, but if somebody is transferred to a territory which is already independent or is in the crucial stage of becoming independent, it would be the Commonwealth Relations Secretary or the Foreign Secretary who would be the responsible Minister.

The hon. Lady the Member for Devonport referred to the age of 50 as being a difficult age for a man who finds himself out of a job and seeking further employment. The actual words of the White Paper, as the hon. Lady will remember, are:

“If an officer becomes unemployed through no fault of his own, he will be left on full pay for as long as may be necessary up to a maximum of five years or until he reaches the age of 50, if that is earlier.”

I am very glad to say that, with the full agreement of the Nigerian Government, we have introduced into agreements with them the age of 55 instead of 50, which is a very welcome improvement. The hon. Lady also asked me about doctors and nurses, and if they would be eligible for the Special List. I am glad that last year we were able to recruit for Overseas Service 100 doctors and 126 nurses. I know of no field where service is more needed and more valued than in the nursing and medical professions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. M. Clark Hutchison) asked a number of questions and referred to the variation in pensions. I know that what he says is so. I do not think I should be in order in going in detail into the pensions of the various territories in East Africa or West Africa and their relative value in relation to the United Kingdom pension increases, but that is a subject which in our view is worth discussing at some time because it is a very important one.

I know that from time to time I draw the attention of Colonial Governments to the feelings of Members of Parliament on this matter, but the Overseas Colonial Service has never been completely unified and conditions have never been completely uniform, nor has it been home based or controlled directly by Whitehall. Of course there are disadvantages in this, but there are also great advantages. It derives from our general colonial policy of devolution, which is bound to include devolution in salaries and other public service matters. Salaries and establishments are determined by Governments and by Legislatures in the Colonies, which must be allowed some responsibility.

My hon. Friend asked whether Commonwealth candidates were eligible. I can answer that with an emphatic “Yes”, either for the Special List or for Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service generally.

[MR. LENNOX-BOYD.]

My hon. Friend also said that he did not like the term

"Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service".

He suggested that it should be the "Commonwealth Service". This would not, I think, be suitable because it would imply that Commonwealth Governments had a responsibility for the Service, whereas responsibility lies solely with Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. It would also imply that the Service was intended to operate in Commonwealth countries more widely than it is likely to do. I think that the name which has been chosen is a good one in the sense that it is acceptable to most officers to whom I have talked, and it is certainly more acceptable than "Commonwealth Service" would be to newly independent countries.

The hon. Member for Oldbury and Halesowen (Mr. Moyle) saw some significance and something sinister in Clause 2 (4) of the Bill which provides that a pension order may be revoked or varied by a subsequent order. This is necessary if pension arrangements are to be kept up to date. Clearly, they change for the better from time to time, and an order must then be revoked and another introduced. Orders are subject to negative Resolutions of this House, and any Order which appears unfair could be debated in the House.

I have done my best to answer a wide range of questions, leaving a number of detailed points to be dealt with in Committee. I do not in the least resent the criticisms to which I have been subjected, because I know that underlying them there is a general belief that the Bill will do good, and in that spirit I welcome the speeches which have been made. I commend the Bill to the House, and, through the House, send a message of good will to all who are serving in the Overseas Civil Service and the thanks of the nation for the splendid work they are doing.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—[Mr. Finlay.]

Committee Tomorrow.

OVERSEAS SERVICE [MONEY]

Considered in Committee under Standing Order No. 84 (Money Committees). — [Queen's Recommendation signified.]

[Sir GORDON TOUCHE in the Chair]

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to authorise the Secretary of State to appoint officers available for civilian employment in public services overseas, it is expedient to authorise—

(a) the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of expenses incurred by the Secretary of State in consequence of the provisions of the said Act or of any order made thereunder;

(b) any increase attributable to the provisions of the said Act in the sums payable out of moneys provided by Parliament under any other enactment;

(c) the payment into the Exchequer of sums received by the Secretary of State in consequence of the provisions of the said Act or of any order made thereunder, or in pursuance of any arrangements made by the Secretary of State (whether before or after the passing of the said Act) with Governments of overseas territories, being arrangements relating to employment in the public services of those territories, and any increase attributable to the provisions of the said Act in the sums payable into the Exchequer under any other enactment.—[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]

8.45 p.m.

Mr. James Callaghan (Cardiff, South-East): This is the great moment for which we have all been waiting. Many of us have sat here since 4.45 p.m. hoping that we should see the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whose name appears for the first time on the Order Paper attached to this Money Resolution. We wish to congratulate him on his appointment, on the circumstances in which he has succeeded, and now we are to be robbed of all this. It is really a sad deprivation for the Committee, Sir Gordon.

As a minor matter, which, of course, the Treasury Front Bench would not think worthy of consideration, I mention that, even if those considerations do not move them, it would not be a bad thing if we had a word of explanation about this Money Resolution. After all, this at least is something on which the Treasury does spend its time. Here is where the great quarrels are coming in

the weeks which lie ahead. Now we shall see what the Treasury Ministers are made of. We shall see how these new officials face the battle and fight inflation. Yet, at the first sign of an engagement, the Financial Secretary does not even turn up on the battlefield.

I am bound to say that this is a pretty poor start for the Government. Many of us really hoped that they were in earnest. I trust that the hon. and learned Gentleman has not resigned. Perhaps that is the reason for his failure to appear. If he has resigned, no doubt we shall hear some explanation from his successor. After all, the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton South - West (Mr. Powell) appeared on the Bill, but by the time we receive the Order Paper, the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West has gone and the new Financial Secretary is the hon. and learned Member for Middlesbrough, West (Mr. Simon). Has he gone now? Shall we find that when we reach the next stage there is someone else? I feel that there is a real mystery behind this. It is not a simple matter of £50 million. There is far more to it than appears on the surface.

We made a simple request that the Financial Secretary should come. At a quarter to seven we asked that he should come, and he did not. At 7 o'clock we asked that he might come. He still is not here. Even in the present state of London transport, it should not take him all that time to come across from Whitehall: it is only 300 yards even if he walks it. We really shall hold it against the present Financial Secretary that, on the first occasion when he had the opportunity to strike a blow for the Government, he could not be in his place to deliver it.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported.

Report to be received Tomorrow.