

34

~~27.6.66~~

~~From Cabinet Office -- (record of meeting)~~

~~34a~~

Destroyed and replaced by 44z

35

27.6.66

From Cabinet Office (draft of P.M's statement)

35a

36

28.6.66.

Note for File

36a

28.6.66.

From Cabinet Office (draft of P.M's statement)

37z

28.6.66
29.6.66

Cutting from HANSARD of 28 June 1966
To Cabinet Office, Home Office and Ministry of Labour

37za
37a

38

29.6.66

Note for File

38a

39

29.6.66

Note for File

39a

40

29.6.66

Loose Minute to D.G. from F.

40a

41

~~29.6.66~~

~~To Home Office and Cabinet Office~~ Filed in error -
duplicate of 37a
therefore destroyed.

~~41a~~

42

30.6.66

To Cabinet Office and Home Office

42a

43

1.7.66 Note for File

43a

44

4.7.66 From Prime Minister's Office

44z

5.7.66 Cutting from Evening Standard

44a

45

5.7.66 Note for File

45a

46

6.7.66 From Cabinet Office

46a

47

6.7.66 Note for File

47a

48

8.7.66. Ext. from Note on D.G's visit to Home Sec.

48a

49

8.7.66 Ext. from Note on D.G's visit to Home Sec.

49a

50

14.7.66 Note for File

50a

51

14.7.66 From Cabinet Office

51a

	52	
15.7.66	Note for File	52a
	53	
15.7.66	Draft letter to Cabinet Office and Home Office replaced by 55a	53a
	54	
	<u>Director-General</u>	
	<p>Please see at 53a a draft reply to Sir Burke Trend. I had a word this afternoon with Sir Philip Allen who is in entire agreement that we should ignore the point about the "use of Special Branch police" and was content with my draft which I read over to him on the PICKWICK.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>R. Thistlethwaite</i> R. Thistlethwaite.</p>	
	<p><u>F.</u> 15 July 1966.</p>	
	55	
18.7.66	To Cabinet Office in reply to 51a	55a
	56	
18.7.66	To Cabinet Office re Ted HILL	56a
	57	
18.7.66	To Cabinet Office re P.M.'s meeting with Mr. Heath	57a

	58	
18.7.66	From Home Office	58a
	59	
27.7.66	Note for File	59a
	60.	
29.7.66.	Copy of letter from 10, Downing Street recording meeting between The Prime Minister, Mr. Heath & the D.G.	60a.
	61.	
15.8.66.	From Home Office.	61a.
	62.	
10.10.66.	Notice of P.Q. re seamen's strike.	62a
	63.	
10.10.66.	D.G.'s note re P.Q. at 62a.	63a
	64	
19.10.66.	Cutting from Morning Star	64a
	65	
1.12.66	F. Note to D.G.	65a
	66.	
25.1.67.	To Brig. Sir C. Spry, A.S.I.O., enc. note re the role of the Communist Party during the Seaman's Strike, 1966.	66a.

FILE CLOSED

SECRET

66

SF. 452-51 Link A/F.

25 January 1967.

I gather that during Bill Magan's visit to see you he mentioned the part the Communist Party played in last year's strike in the National Union of Seamen. This is now partly old history, although a struggle within the Union continues, but it was one of the most interesting and complicated industrial disputes that we have ever had. You may therefore care to have the attached note about it.

With good wishes,

R. THISTLETHWAITE

R. Thistlethwaite.

Brigadier Sir Charles Spry, C.B.E., D.S.O.,
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation,
Melbourne,
AUSTRALIA

Enclosure.

SECRET

SE
31.107

SECRET

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE OFFICIAL STRIKE OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN, MAY - JULY 1966.

The Communist Party has always been numerically weak in the National Union of Seamen (N.U.S.). Of the 48 members of the N.U.S. Executive Council only 2 could be rated in May 1966 as Communist sympathisers, and the General Secretary, William HOGARTH, who obtained his appointment with some left-wing support, has always been poorly regarded by the Party. In the industry as a whole the number of Party members can be counted on the fingers of both hands, and although in the past it has tried to develop an apparatus its efforts have rarely met with success. Nevertheless in the organisation of the official strike it succeeded in capturing a surprising number of influential positions. Of the 4 members of the negotiating committee elected from the floor at the Annual General Meeting of the N.U.S., one, Gordon NORRIS was a long standing Party member, while two others rated as Communist sympathisers. (Gordon NORRIS led the abortive unofficial seamen's strike in 1965, and was very nearly expelled at the time from the union for his unofficial activities.) The Chairman of the Victoria and Albert Docks Strike Committee, which the Party regarded as the most important in the United Kingdom, Jack COWARD, was a Party member, as was the Chairman of the Liverpool Strike Committee, Roger WOODS. In the North East, which in recent years has been the centre of militant activity in the N.U.S., the Party regarded the Strike Committee as sympathetic although there was no Party member on it. In the Union's National Disputes Committee, the apex of the strike organisation, there were no known Communists. Nor was there any evidence of Trotskyist penetration of the N.U.S. as a whole.

The Party made no attempt to conceal the fact that it was wholeheartedly behind the strike which, like the dispute in the railway industry earlier in the year, it regarded as yet another test of the Government's determination to enforce its wages policy. The Party did, however, find itself in some difficulty over day to day tactics. Anxious that the seamen should win and therefore that they should be backed by workers in allied industries, the Party, during the initial stages of the strike, followed its familiar policy of working through official union channels. The N.U.S. leadership, itself, at this time, made great efforts not to involve other unions in the dispute. This reluctance to get involved in the strike also characterised the policies of other unions closely affected, notably the Transport and General Workers Union, to which most dockers belong. Not surprisingly the slow growth of the strike and its apparent lack of visible impact on the economy caused a number of prominent Party officials to agitate for extension of the strike. Thus it was that early in June the Party decided that it would take steps to try and have the strike expanded and that the recall on 8th June of the Executive Council of the seamen's union would provide a suitable opportunity for the Party to promote this extension. Party policy in the dispute was being worked out at this time in a small ad hoc group of seamen and dockers, meeting secretly, which included Bert RAMELSON, Chief Industrial Organiser, Dennis GOODWIN, Industrial Organiser of the London District, Harry WATSON, the President of the Tugboatmen's Union, the dockers Jack [unclear] and Danny LYONS, Eric RECHNITZ, a lorry driver in the docks, and the seamen Gordon NORRIS and Jack COWARD.

The Executive Council rejected, on 8th June, the interim award of the Pearson Committee, the body hastily convened in May, after the start of the strike, to examine the seamen's case. At the same time, having been subjected to an increasing demand for tightening the strike position, due in no small

/measure

SECRET

measure to pressures stimulated by the Communist Party, the Executive decided in a rather clumsily worded communiqué to appeal for the blacking of:

- (1) all British ships in foreign ports,
- (2) oil tankers making non-regular voyages to the U.K. and
- (3) foreign ships in the coastal trade.

Certainly the Lightermen's Union (the W.L.B.T.U.) under the influence of its Communist President, Harry WATSON, agreed in principle to black all British ships (though in practice it fell short of this). The Transport and General Workers Union (T.G.W.U.), occupying a central and key position during the strike (most dockers belong to this union) held firm and refused to extend the dispute, taking its cue from the T.U.C. which advised its affiliates against extending the stoppage. In the T.G.W.U. the Party's principal contact, the Executive Council member Bill JONES, a fellow-traveller and a long standing Party member up till 1957, appears to have been out-manoeuvred by Harry NICHOLAS, the Acting General Secretary of the T.G.W.U. In the event this union passed an ambiguous motion merely calling for continued support of the seamen. There were some minor unofficial stoppages among dockers in Liverpool and Hull, probably inspired by Trotskyists, but in London the dockers remained at work. Jack DASH's influence was, on the whole, moderate, and never really appeared more than lukewarm to Party policy which, had it been successfully carried through, would virtually have put all dockers out of work.

By the middle of June, Bert RAMELSON was meeting Joe KENNY of Liverpool and Jim SLATER of South Shields, the leading militants on the Executive Council of the N.U.S. who were both staying, together with Jack COWARD, at the Clapham flat of a veteran Communist known as Nan GREEN. RAMELSON saw in KENNY the ideal instrument for trying to get the inexperienced Executive to put into effect the Party line. Neither KENNY nor SLATER are, or have been, members of the Communist Party, but nevertheless they were prepared to meet RAMELSON, listen to his advice and to try and have it accepted and implemented by their Council. The burden of the advice, once the Party had seen that dockers would not come out on strike or black British ships regardless, was that the Executive Council should maintain pressure for a forty hour week now in the expectation that congestion in the docks would soon become intolerable and the Government would be forced to use the Navy and Army to move essential supplies. Had military intervention been necessary, RAMELSON anticipated that the dockers would immediately come out with the resultant spread of the strike. When KENNY and SLATER were virtually "blown" by the Prime Minister's statement on 20th June, SLATER took fright and left Nan GREEN's flat, and refused to have anything more to do with the Party. KENNY, who is made of sterner stuff, stayed on and continued to see RAMELSON.

When the Executive Council decided to end the strike the Party's immediate advice to seamen was to close ranks and return to work as an organised body. Not surprisingly RAMELSON found it hard to convince KENNY that this was the best course to adopt but he succeeded in the end.

/The Party

SECRET

- 3 -

The Party regards the strike as a "partial victory" for the seamen, and after a first angry reaction to the Prime Minister's comments finds the resultant publicity by no means unwelcome.

Since the conclusion of the strike a struggle has been going on in the National Union of Seamen between the militant sea-going members of the Executive Council and the more moderate full time officials on the same body. There is a proposal before the union to change the Rule Book. The object of the militants is to end the dominance of the officials on the Executive Council and to consolidate the position of the militant members. The Communist Party by virtue of its contact with KENNY and NORRIS is working hard to see that the militant element comes out on top.

SECRET

RESTRICTED

Reference BF. 452-51 Link A.

~~D.G.~~ ^{10/5.12} to see

65a

NOTE.

After attending a symposium at the Hilton Hotel on 30 November in order to hear General Lemnitzer, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, I had a friendly conversation with Lord Carrington who was also one of the speakers. I have known him off and on as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, High Commissioner in Australia and First Lord of the Admiralty and of course he knows what I do from S.I.F.E. days. During our conversation he mentioned the seamen's strike and I was careful to confine myself to the facts revealed in the Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons. Peter Carrington however went on to say that the Tories could have made life very difficult for the Prime Minister over this if they had wanted to. I therefore took the opportunity of saying that we were obviously worried about our sources and very relieved that the demand for an Enquiry had not been pressed to a conclusion beyond the Prime Minister's final statement.

R. Thistlethwaite
R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

1 December 1966.

RESTRICTED

B
AKS
2.12.66

Cutting from Morning Star of 19.10.66.

64a

Wilson says no to Red smear probe

By Our Parliamentary
Correspondent

MR. WILSON yesterday told the House of Commons he does not intend to hold an inquiry into his allegation about outside pressures on the seamen's leaders during their lengthy strike.

He said he had come to the conclusion that there was no case for a separate inquiry, and laughter greeted his assertion that "once I made the facts known in this House the strike immediately ended."

Mr. Ian Mikardo (Lab. Poplar), who raised the issue, said the decision—for which he was grateful—would be widely interpreted as the Prime Minister's opinion that "an investigation would reveal no justification for the way in which you smeared the executive of the seamen's union."

'Behind you'

Mr. Wilson said he would be surprised if it were interpreted in that way "except in some rather strange places."—a remark which was greeted with general laughter and Tory cries of "Behind you!"

He then went on to say that "some of the people who were smoked out" after he had given details "did disport themselves on television and some very damaging admissions were then made about their interference with industrial disputes."

He did not come forward with any evidence of what the "very damaging admissions" were, or exactly who he had "smoked out" from where. But that is the manner in which the Prime Minister has treated the seamen's dispute from the start.

*F/WB
24.10.66.*

63A

25/11/10

NOTE FOR SF.452-51/LINK A.

F. to see.

[Handwritten signature] 12/10

At a meeting at the Cabinet Office with Sir Burke Trend and Sir Philip Allen my attention was drawn to the P.Q. at 62a.

2. It was hoped that the Prime Minister would finally take a firm line in declining an enquiry of any kind, but it would probably be necessary for him to consider the question at a meeting with the Lord Chancellor, Home Secretary and Minister of Labour. Sir Philip Allen confirmed that the Home Secretary was opposed to holding an enquiry.

[Handwritten signature]

D.G.

10th October, 1966.

[Handwritten signature]
D.G./C.
11.10.66.

COVERING

SECRET

MR. SIMKINS

Chd - 16/8

~~F to see~~



Rec: 15.8.66

6/16

PA in SF 452-51 link A~~2~~

With the Compliments

of

A.G. 16/8

Sir Philip Allen

F. 17/8

19/8

Home Office
Whitehall

62A

To.....D.G.....

NOTICE OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

given.....Tuesday...18th..October, 1966.

A 2

- * 13 Mr Ian Mikardo (Poplar): To ask the Prime Minister, what is the result of the consideration he has given to the possibility of an inquiry into the forces behind the seamen's strike; and if he will make a statement.

Date 10.10.66.....

.....
SecretariatM/A.
11-10-66

10, DOWNING STREET,
● WHITEHALL S.W.1.

*With the Private Secretary's
Compliments.*

Rec: 29-7-66

P.A.:

POL.F. 50-6-312 / SUPR/A

Com To:

SF.452/51/LINK/A

RS 15/8

~~Handwritten signature~~

Copy

60a
10, Downing Street,
Whitehall.

July 27, 1966.

SECRET

This is to record that the Leader of the Opposition called on the Prime Minister in his room at the House of Commons at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, July 25 to discuss his proposal that there should be an Inquiry into certain matters relating to the seamen's strike.

The Prime Minister saw Mr. Heath alone for about ten minutes and then summoned Mr. Furnival Jones and myself to join the meeting. At the Prime Minister's invitation, Mr. Furnival Jones then explained to Mr. Heath the difficulties which an Inquiry would cause for him. Thereafter Mr. Furnival Jones and I withdrew and the Prime Minister and Mr. Heath resumed their discussion a deux.

After Mr. Heath had gone, the Prime Minister said to me that Mr. Heath had been impressed by the case made by Mr. Furnival Jones but appeared still to think that some form of Inquiry should be mounted and had mentioned the possibility of using a "house trained" judge for this purpose. The Prime Minister added that he would give Sir Burke Trend a full account of the discussion at some convenient opportunity.

1584

boa

- 2 -

I am sending copies of this letter to
Sir Philip Allen and Mr. Furnival Jones.

(SGD) P. LE CHEMINANT

W.K. Reid, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

SECRET

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Copy sent
Sir B. Trend 9/8.

At a meeting held in the Cabinet Room, 10 Downing Street, at 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 9, the Prime Minister discussed the Leader of the Opposition's request for an enquiry into the part played by the Communist Party in the Seamen's Strike with the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and Sir Burke Trend.

The Prime Minister said that he had arranged for Mr. Heath to be given a full briefing by the Security Service and to have his attention drawn to all the dangers to the work of that Service which an enquiry would entail.

Mr. Heath had agreed that a formal enquiry, such as a Tribunal, which would entail confrontation of accusers and accused, would not be appropriate but had nevertheless pressed for some form of investigation. In particular he had suggested a private enquiry conducted by a suitable judge. The Prime Minister had undertaken to consider this proposal with his colleagues - hence the present meeting.

In discussion it was agreed that the only suitable judge for a delicate task of this kind would be Jocelyn Simon and he was convalescing from a serious operation and should not undertake any serious duties for many months. In the circumstances and given that pressure for an enquiry appeared to come only from Mr. Heath and had little or no support in the House, the best course would be to attempt to let matters ride until the Recess. If Mr. Heath later returned to the charge, the matter could be looked at again.

9.8.66

Phil 24

Rec: 14-7-66

59a

CABINET OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
S.W.1

F.

I will reply on
Monday - pl let me
have a draft
14.7

With the
Private
Secretary's Compliments

E. M. Furnival Jones,
ESq.
CBE

CONFIDENTIAL

~~F.~~ to see

FIA/HPRE then p.a.
28/7.

592

NOTE FOR POL.F.50-6-312/SUPP/A

~~COPY FOR SF.452/51/LINK/A : F. to see~~

At the request of Burke Trend I attended a meeting at the House of Commons on 25th July when the Prime Minister was discussing with the Leader of the Opposition the holding of an enquiry into external influences on the N.U.S. during the seamen's strike.

2. I described to Mr. Heath the Security Service arguments against holding an enquiry, namely the risks to our sources, human and technical. The Prime Minister and Mr. Heath had discussed the matter before I was called in and continued after I left.

3. In conversation with Trend today, he told me that his understanding was that the Prime Minister and Mr. Heath had agreed to continue to think about the matter. Heath favoured a one man enquiry and had suggested Simon - the judge. Trend thought the best course was to play it along until it was forgotten.

D.G.
27th July 1966

CONFIDENTIAL

Filing
28.7.66

MR. FURNIVAL JONES

58a

SF.452/51
Link 1A.



Rec: 18.7.66

With the Compliments

of

Sir Philip Allen's
Private Secretary

Home Office
Whitehall

CONFIDENTIAL

~~F.~~ 19/7.

S 80

CONFIDENTIAL

15th July, 1966,

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for your letter of 14th July about the letter and memorandum which the Prime Minister has received from the General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Sir Philip Allen has asked me to let you know that he is entirely in favour of sending a brief acknowledgment and an indication that the Prime Minister does not wish to receive a deputation.

He would be against making any specific reference to the allegation at 'X' in the memorandum - for two reasons. First, if the reply refers specifically to this allegation, but to no other statement in the memorandum, it may leave the impression that the rest of the memorandum is accepted. Secondly, any denial about the use of Special Branch police would be likely to set off a further debate about what methods the Government used to obtain information.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Furnival Jones.

(Signed) P.G.W. HUNT

[Signature]
11.7

Private Secretary

M. H. M. Reid, Esq.

CONFIDENTIAL

[Handwritten initials]
19.7.66

15 18/7
P. to see

SECRET

57A

SF.452/51/Link/A/DG

18th July 1966

You told me on 14th July that you had been asked by No.10 to co-ordinate a brief for the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Heath about the N.U.S. strike. The only Security Service contribution to this brief would be on the arguments on the protection of sources which I put to the Prime Minister on 5th July. At that meeting the Prime Minister suggested that he might wish me to accompany him when he met Mr. Heath. The advantage of this course might be that Mr. Heath might think that my views were purely professional and dispassionate and might therefore find them more persuasive.

50a

45a

2. I suppose that the Ministry of Labour and the Home Office might have other arguments for or against the holding of an enquiry.

E. M. FURNIVAL JONES

Sir Burke Trend,
K.C.B., C.V.O.,
Cabinet Office.

SECRET

DG/MJW
18/7

CONFIDENTIAL

56A

Copy to PF.42,719

~~F.~~ to see

SP.452/51/Link/A/DG

18th July 1966

When I saw you on 14th July you mentioned that the Prime Minister had enquired whether Ted HILL could be of use in solving problems within the National Union of Seamen. I consider nothing would be gained by approaching him and I base this opinion, which is shared by Barnes to whom I am copying this letter, on the attached appreciation which we made of Ted HILL last September.

50a

E. M. FURNIVAL JONES

Sir Burke Trend, K.C.B., C.V.O.,
Cabinet Office.

Enclosure 1 (To Cabinet Office only)

CONFIDENTIAL

DG/mam
18/7

CONFIDENTIAL

56A

Edward James HILL

Edward James HILL was, until he retired very recently, President of the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers. He was also a member of the General Council of the T.U.C. and was regarded as one of the most outspoken members of that Council.

2. There is little doubt that HILL was a member of the British Communist Party from 1936 until about 1941. He may have continued to be an under-cover member of the Party until the early 1950s. Information about his under-cover membership in the latter period is not conclusive but it is known that throughout that time he continued to receive Party support in his various elections to union office. Since about 1955 it is reasonably clear that HILL has ceased to hold either openly or covertly a Communist Party card though he continues to receive Communist support in general terms and to support the Communist Party on a number of industrial issues.

3. HILL is a man of robust character and his current political sympathies are difficult to define. He is equally liable to take a Communist or anti-Communist line on any given issue and he gives the impression that his views are the result of short-term considerations rather than the result of any deep-laid political convictions. He is generally popular in trade union circles and is understood to be a good committee man of considerable capacity. He is a heavy drinker and this may go some way to explain the relatively contradictory views which he expresses from time to time.

4. HILL has retained his close links with leading members of the Communist Party and in recent years he has been cultivated by Soviet Bloc diplomats.

13 September 1965.

copy sent under Compliment Slip by F. to
Ministry of Labour on 14.7.66.

CONFIDENTIAL

25/19/2
F. to see

CONFIDENTIAL

55a

SF.452/51/Link/A/DG

18th July 1966

Please refer to Mr. Reid's note of 14th July enclosing a letter and memorandum from the General Secretary of the Communist Party asking the Prime Minister to receive a deputation. I am sure that the Prime Minister's inclination is sound, namely that he should send a brief acknowledgement to GOLLAN and indicate that he does not wish to receive any such deputation. The less said the better. If the reply were to refer to "the use of Special Branch police in an industrial dispute" it might prolong the correspondence. I think therefore it would be best to ignore this allegation.

51a

I have sent a copy of this letter to Philip Allen.

E. M. FURNIVAL JONES

Sir Burke Trend,
K.C.B., C.V.O.,
Cabinet Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

DG/MTW
18/2

SECRET

Reference SF. 452-51 Link A

Copy on POL.F. 241-7-1

D.G. to see

52a

NOTE FOR FILE

I called on Dennis Barnes this morning to discuss three points which had been raised by Sir Burke Trend with the D.G. yesterday, namely

- (a) the Leader of the Opposition has written formally to the Prime Minister asking for a meeting to discuss an enquiry into the seamen's strike. Trend, who is accompanying the Prime Minister to Moscow tomorrow, is to co-ordinate this and as he and Mr. Wilson will return on Tuesday the meeting might possibly be held on Wednesday or Thursday.
- (b) GOLLAN has written to the Prime Minister asking him to receive a deputation which will make representations about the use of Special Branch and gestapo methods in the seamen's strike.
- (c) When the Prime Minister read our note of 7 July on the seamen's strike he put forward a tentative suggestion that some action might be taken with Ted HILL.

2. As regards (a) Barnes agreed with us that we should do all we can to persuade Heath not to press for an enquiry and he was all for the D.G. presenting the Security Service views as forcibly as he could. As regards the Ministry of Labour they felt powerfully that any enquiry, if it came off, should not be undertaken by the Royal Commission on Trade Unions which had already expressed some concern that it should be asked to take part. It would be virtually impossible to formulate terms of reference except in a very broad way and if these were put to the Commission its Report would be still further delayed. Because of this delay this proposal would be unlikely to appeal to Mr. Heath who has already criticised the slowness of the Commission's machinery. Barnes may write to Trend putting forward these views about the Royal Commission. As regards (b) Barnes was sure that we would be right to advise the Prime Minister not to receive GOLLAN and his deputation. On (c) Barnes had not only read our note to the Home Secretary but also our 1965 appreciation of Ted HILL and he was sure that it would be wrong to make any approaches to him. In his view Ted HILL was not only unreliable but "ga-ga".

3. We then discussed the labour situation in general terms. Barnes said that not only were we in the middle of a major economic crisis but there was a major trade union crisis ahead which would begin with the docks in September, followed by the motor industry, the National Union of Railwaymen and the National Union of Seamen. It was quite obvious that the Prime Minister would want "to do things" about all this and he agreed with me that it might be a

SECRET

A. H. W. B.
B. 7. 66

SECRET

Reference.....

- 2 -

useful measure if Trend called an early meeting of the A.C.(H) Committee. Meanwhile the Ministry of Labour would look into what action it could take to mitigate against the damage of this envisaged trade union crisis not only to help the country but also to dissuade the Prime Minister from having some general commission investigating the whole labour situation.

R. Thistlethwaite

R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

15 July 1966.

SECRET

COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 16 KING STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

Telephone: Temple Bar 2151-5

General Secretary: John Gollan

Telegrams: Communal Rand London

Overseas telegrams: Communal London-WC2

July 9th, 1966

The Rt.Hon. Harold Wilson, O.B.E.,
10 Downing Street,
S.W.1.

Dear Sir,

The Executive Committee of the Communist Party, at its meeting to-day, considered the statement made by you concerning the Communist Party in the recent seamen's strike.

Our views are set out in a statement of which we enclose a copy.

We ask you to receive a deputation from the Executive Committee of our Party to inform you fully of our views on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

John Gollan
GENERAL SECRETARY

COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 16 KING STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

Telephone: Temple Bar 2151-5

Telegrams: Communal Rand London-WC2

General Secretary: John Gollan

STATEMENT ADOPTED AT THE EXECUTIVE MEETING
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY: Saturday July 9th
1966

THE PRIME MINISTER, THE COMMUNISTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Harold Wilson's intervention in the seamen's strike created a dangerous precedent which can only encourage those who seek to shackle the unions with repressive legislation.

The Prime Minister wilfully misrepresented the character of the strike, describing it as being directed against the state and the community, although he knew perfectly well that this was a dispute with the ship owners. in which the union was concerned to raise the living standards of its members to the level of comparable workers elsewhere.

He further sought to create divisions in the ranks of the strikers and the union executive by his baseless charges that the Communist Party was aiming to take over the union and, in the strike, was mainly concerned to damage the British economy.

X | The use of special branch police in an industrial dispute also has the gravest implications for civil liberties, going far beyond an attack on Communists.

As the Prime Minister of Britain is now sponsoring this McCarthyite red bogey the Communist Party wants to make its position clear.

It will be noted that the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen completely rejected the slanders of the Prime Minister.

The Communist Party is proud that during this historic strike it was able to give assistance to the seamen. In doing so it was fulfilling its working class duty.

The Communist Party believes in the fullest democracy in the trade union movement, so that trade union members freely decide policy and elect the leaders they want. It holds that trade unions are independent bodies which should not be subject to state intervention and control.

The Communist Party does not aim at the take over of the unions. It believes that the trade union movement needs a more progressive policy and leadership to confront the problems and conflicts in monopoly capitalist society. It believes that only unity of all left and progressive forces in the unions, including the Communists, can bring this about, and supports all movements for the purpose of giving such leadership.

The suggestion that Communist policies are aimed at disrupting the economy is a slander. The Communist Party opposes the incomes policy as a fraud, which will make worse, rather than help solve the economic problems of the British people.

The Communist Party fights to maintain full employment and will struggle to ensure that the Government does its utmost to maintain it.

It is the capitalist economic system and the Government's policy in attempting to solve its problems at the expense of the working people which threaten full employment and retard economic growth.

The Communist Party declares that the power of big business must ultimately be replaced by socialism if the economy, using the latest technology, is to provide a high level of well-being for all its citizens. But it also campaigns for an alternative policy which can help the people improve their conditions here and now. These views and such a policy are shared by growing numbers in the Labour Movement.

The Communist Party demands that the Prime Minister ceases to slander trade union militants and stops trying to subject the unions to a reactionary policy on wages and salaries and trade union legislation.

It is this reactionary political intervention in union affairs which is a menace to trade unionists who should unite to demand that it ceases.

.....

51a

14th July, 1966

CONFIDENTIAL

The Prime Minister has received a letter and memorandum from the General Secretary of the Communist Party inviting him to receive a deputation. The Prime Minister's inclination is to send a brief acknowledgment and an indication that he does not wish to receive a deputation. Sir Burke Trend has asked me to obtain the views of Sir Philip Allen and Mr. Furnival Jones (to whom I am copying this letter and its enclosures) both generally and specifically as regards the wisdom (or reverse) of allowing the allegation at 'X' in the memorandum to pass unanswered.

Could you very kindly let me have advice on this for submission to the Prime Minister.

W. K. REID

Miss P. G. W. Hunt.

13/7/66
W.K.R.

SECRET

50a

F. to see

NOTE FOR SF.452/51/Link/A

When I called on Sir Burke Trend this morning the following points arose:

(a) The Prime Minister had received a letter from Mr. Heath requesting a meeting to discuss the holding of an enquiry into the seamen's strike. Burke Trend had been asked to co-ordinate briefing for this meeting and would be writing to me.

(b) The Home Secretary had sent the Prime Minister the three F. Branch notes I gave to the Home Secretary on 8th July. The Prime Minister hoped that material of this kind was not going to the Home Secretary exclusively. Burke Trend asked me to consider sending him copies of such notes that I gave to the Home Secretary.

(c) The Prime Minister wondered whether Ted HILL, referred to in the note on "The Communist Party and the National Union of Seamen" as Chairman of a committee, would be approachable. I said I would think about this and let him know my views.

2. After Burke Trend had left for a Cabinet meeting, Reid :

(d) Showed me a letter to the Prime Minister from GOLLAN requesting the Prime Minister to receive a Communist Party delegation. Burke Trend would be sending this letter to me and to Philip Allen for comments.

3. I spoke to F. about items (a), (c) and (d) above and asked him to concert views on (a) and (c) with the Ministry of Labour and with Philip Allen on (d).

Extracted to:
POL.F. 50-24-101
POL.F. 50-6-312/SUPP/A
SF. 491-18 (363a)
PF. 295, 076

Extracted to:
PF. 42, 719

Extracted
to PF. 42, 719

[Handwritten signature]

D.G.

14th July 1966

SECRET

[Handwritten notes]
F/W/S
15.7.66

H9a

RS 14/7.
E. to see

SF.452/51/Link/A ✓
SF.491/18(363a)
PF.295,076
POL.F.50-6-312/Supp/A

Extract from Note of D.G.'s Meeting with Home Secretary on 8th July 1966. Original filed at 194a in POL.F.50-24-101/Supp/A

After first calling on Sir Philip Allen, I saw the Home Secretary this morning when the following matters were discussed :

.....

- (d) I gave the Home Secretary copies of the F. Branch notes on :
 - (i) The Communist Party and the National Union of Seamen (SF.452/51/Link/A);
 - (ii) The Communist Party and the Prime Minister's Visit to the Soviet Union (SF.491/18(363a);
 - (iii) The Communist Party and the Resignation of Mr. Cousins (PF.295,076);

which he read and described as fascinating. He agreed that he should forward them to the Prime Minister. Philip Allen retained carbon copies.

.....

D.G.

E. M. FURNIVAL JONES

8th July 1966

F102/17
14-7-66

12/17 F. to see

TOP SECRET

SF.452/51/Link/A ✓
POL.F.50-24-101

ALG

Extract from Note of D.G.'s Meeting with Home Secretary on 8th July 1966. Original filed at 194a in POL.F. 50-24-101/Supp/A.

After first calling on Sir Philip Allen, I saw the Home Secretary this morning when the following matters were discussed :

.....

(b) I gave the Home Secretary an account of my meeting with the Prime Minister on 5th July during which I had advanced my arguments against holding any form of enquiry into Communist influence on the N.U.S. I told him that the Prime Minister had found the arguments impressive and was hoping that pressure for an enquiry would evaporate. I also told the Home Secretary of our fairly frequent meetings with the Prime Minister throughout the strike, adding that I hoped that the Home Secretary did not feel that I had failed to keep him adequately informed. He said he had no such feeling.

.....

D.G.

E. M. FURNIVAL JONES

8th July 1966

TOP SECRET

FILED
16-7-66

TOP SECRET

The Communist Party and the National Union of Seamen
(N.U.S.)

Today Bert RAMELSON, the Communist Party's Chief Industrial Organiser, drew GOLLAN's attention to the fact that the N.U.S. had set up a Rules Revision Committee. In RAMELSON's view both the setting up of the Committee and its composition was a highly favourable development for the Communist Party. He explained that the original intention had been that the Committee should consist of five officials and five laymen with an independent Chairman from one of the N.U.S. trustees. RAMELSON's contact, Joseph KENNY, had argued that there ought to be a majority of laymen and had been successful. The Committee will now consist of six laymen and five officials with Ted HILL, of the Boilermakers' Society, in the chair. The laymen are drawn entirely from the group of militant Executive Council members active during the strike and include KENNY, SLATER and Danny STEWART; STEWART is believed to have joined the Communist Party in the last week or so. KENNY claims that he and his supporters succeeded in selecting two of the weakest nonentities among the five officials. RAMELSON's assessment is that the Party could hardly have hoped to do better.

2. RAMELSON explained to GOLLAN that the whole strategy was to keep the full-time officials on the defensive, by which, presumably, he means that they should be forced to submit themselves to re-election. He has a copy of the N.U.S. Rulebook and it has been arranged that he together with KENNY, Gordon NORRIS and Jack COWARD, (the last two are Communists) will prepare a working paper for a meeting in September which will be followed by meetings of broad groupings of the left in the Union. KENNY and NORRIS will be responsible for putting these proposals across in the Union.

3. The N.U.S. has also set up an Enquiry Committee into the conduct of the strike. RAMELSON believes that this consists of five members and that the militants, including KENNY, are in a majority on it. This Committee will examine the conduct of the strike on both national and district level.

Security Service

7th July 1966

*N.B. Copy sent to
Ministry of Labour on
14.7.66.*

TOP SECRET

SF. 452/51/Link/A

47a

CABINET OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
S.W.1

*With the
Private
Secretary's Compliments*

R. Thistlethwaite, Esq.

Received by
hand 6.7.66

SECRET

Reference.... Pol.F.241-7-1.....

Copy: SF.452/51 Link A ✓

H7

NOTE FOR FILE

This morning Director F. and I discussed the latest moves regarding an enquiry into the seamen's strike with Mr. D.C. Barnes and Mr. Z.T. Claro at the Ministry of Labour. Director F. explained that a suggestion had been made that Communist activity in the trade union movement might form the subject of a remit to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations and we would be interested to know the reaction of the Ministry of Labour. Barnes expressed doubts about the proposal and clearly felt that any investigation into the effect of pressure groups on the democratic machinery of the trade unions could hardly be confined to the Communist Party. Director F. agreed and pointed out that in this context we were anxious to protect IRIS. We added that it was the desire of the Security Service to take no active part in this project and to leave it to the professional anti-Communists such as Carron and Cannon. It was agreed that we would await developments.

2. I then outlined the latest information about the Communist Party's reaction to the resignation of the Minister of Technology, Mr. Cousins, and said that we would be compiling a short note on the subject tomorrow for issue to the Ministry of Labour and the Home Office.

3. Claro expressed some anxiety about the situation in the docks and was particularly anxious to know what DASH had in mind. The Honeyman enquiry into proposed amendments to the Dock Labour Scheme is likely to report in the first half of August, legislation to implement the Devlin Report is in draft and Claro was afraid that DASH might cause trouble now that the Labour Party National Executive had given its blessing to the principle of nationalisation in the docks. He thought that this would also have an adverse effect on the new employer groups which would be required to put up considerable capital. I assured Claro that we were likely to get timely information on DASH's moves and would keep him informed.

J. S. ELLIOTT

J.S. Elliott

F1A

6 July 1966

SECRET

Mr. Kenneth Lewis (Rutland and Stamford): To ask the Prime Minister whether he will name the persons who have been bringing pressure to bear on the executive of the seamen's union; and what action he will take to deal with the problem

DRAFT ANSWER

I would refer the Hon Member to the Speeches I made in the House on 28th of June.

NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

There is nothing to add to the speeches on 28th June. They speak for themselves - as do the events which took place after they were made. They clearly achieved their purpose in drawing attention to an unsatisfactory state of affairs within the union and in mobilising the more moderate members of its Executive to stand up to extremist pressure. That - neither more nor less - was all that was at stake; and now it is for the NUS - and for any other union which may find itself in the same sort of position - to learn the lesson of this episode and to manage its affairs in future with a greater sense of responsibility to the ordinary rank and file of loyal membership.]

As was made clear in the speeches there was no question of illegality in any of the activities in question; and, having considered what was said both for and against some sort of enquiry - and almost as many sorts of enquiry were suggested as there were speakers - the Prime Minister has concluded that there is neither need nor justification for any kind of special investigation into the circumstances of the strike. But there is certainly need - as the strike itself showed and other recent events have confirmed (Carron and Donlon)^{Cannon} - for a greater degree of vigilance on the part of ordinary union members against pressure from extremist forces; and anything which the Royal Commission on Trade Unions can suggest to strengthen members' rights in this respect and to ensure that the affairs of unions are conducted on a genuinely democratic basis will have to be very carefully considered.

SECRET

F. to see

HSA

NOTE FOR POL.F.50-6-312/SUPP/A
and SF.452-51/LINK/A

I called on the Prime Minister this morning to explain my reasons for wishing to avoid any form of enquiry into the part played by the Communist Party in the seamen's strike.

2. I told him that the sources of our information had been an amalgam of human sources and eavesdropping devices. Our attack on the Communist Party was conducted at two levels - principally by human sources at district level and by both means at the centre. It might take very many years of patient nursing to advance an agent from the lowest level to the centre of the Party. In this process the agents tended not to become more relaxed but increasingly jittery. Already there were signs of anxiety at the mere prospect of an enquiry and we could not afford to lose such sources.

3. Although we believed we were successful in mounting the eavesdropping attack, there /securely was no form of device known to me which could not be discovered and neutralised. At the moment the Party did not seem to suspect that eavesdropping had been an important source, ascribing the information to telephone checks and surveillance, but their suspicions could be easily aroused and they had plenty of Communist technicians at their command. We did not want these to be used in a thoroughgoing inspection.

4. We already had experience of our sources being put at risk and I instanced the enquiry by the Three Advisers into Communism in the Civil Service Unions as the result of the Radcliffe Report. It did not matter whether the Privy Councillors were informed about our sources or not. Communists who appeared before them would assume that they did know about them, or at all events had been fully briefed on their product, and all the time they would be drawing inferences from the questions they were asked about the intelligence that lay behind them. This could start off a major security review by the Party.

5. The Prime Minister said that he fully understood my anxiety and thought that the case /was

SECRET

FHWB
6.7.66

SECRET

was convincing, particularly on the human side. He thought that so much was now happening to engage the attention of the House - the resignation of Mr. Cousins, the supposed split over Vietnam, the Prices and Incomes Bill - that it was quite likely that the Opposition would drop the idea of an enquiry which, indeed, they had not pressed for very hard in the debate on 28th July. If it were raised again and pressed, he would speak to the Leader of the Opposition.

6. He thought that there might be a case for the Royal Commission on Trade Unions looking into the general question of Communist influence in the Trade Unions. I said that our impression was that the Communists were on the defensive, if not in retreat, in the Trade Unions and the Prime Minister confirmed that he had read the F. Branch paper produced for the A.C.(H) Committee. What he had in mind was that men like Carron, Cannon and Chapple should give evidence to the Royal Commission on their experiences of Communist activity in the Unions and nothing should be said about Security Service information on the topic. It was left that Sir Burke Trend would speak to Barnes at the Ministry of Labour about this proposal.

D.G.

5th July 1966

SECRET

ON PIER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

ECONOMY

OPEN carefully.

RE-USE with Economy Label.

Cutting from Evening Standard of

5 July 1966

Handwritten signature

CODE No. 27-22

*F/LWB
5.7.66*

WHILE WILSON HAS HIS TROUBLES, THE TORY LEADER HAS HIS OWN PROBLEMS...

Eleven months ago

Mr. Edward Heath became leader of the Tory Party.

How is he making out?

Here he replies to some searching questions...

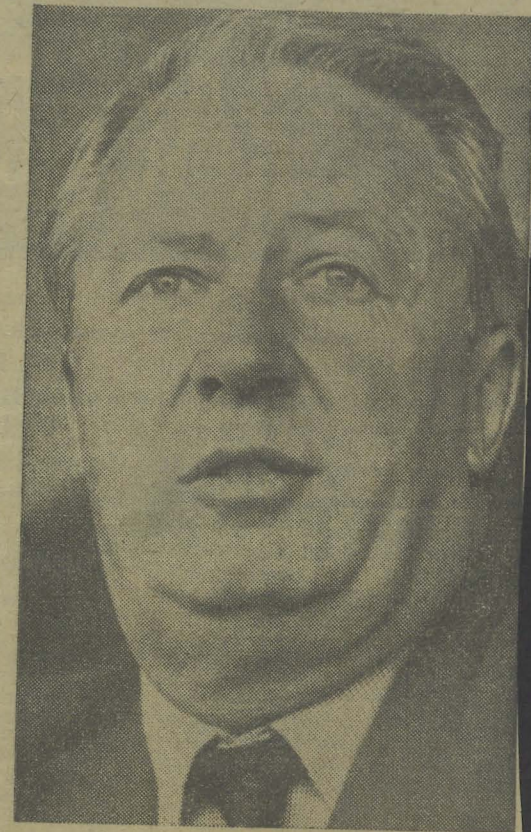
starting off with his

recent angry Commons

exchanges with Mr. Wilson..

Mr. Heath answers the knockers

ROBERT CARVEL asked the questions*



CARVEL: The Prime Minister has said that he'd clobbered you twice, and you said that it was time he started behaving like a Prime Minister. Why are you so angry with each other?

HEATH: I thought that he was in fact trying to prove that I had criticised General de Gaulle as head of the State of France, which was completely untrue, and he pursued this attempt, and therefore I was justifiably angry.

Does it alarm you that you have had a bad Press? For example, The Times, a newspaper that has often spoken highly of you in the past, said that you had been trounced in a humiliating way, by Mr. Wilson. Was this fair?

I don't think it was fair. I have noticed that when one puts up a good performance nobody writes about it, but if anything goes wrong then immediately they delight in this sort of article. The Times, of course, wasn't the only newspaper that was critical. Oh, no!

Politics not personalities

Do you think you beat Mr. Wilson this week, then?

No, but I'm not thinking in terms of beating Mr. Wilson. Surely this is what is wrong with British politics at the moment, and in the comment on it. It is seen entirely in terms of personalities trying to beat each other.

What people ought to concern themselves about is the real things that matter in politics. Take the debate about emer-

gency powers. This was of immense importance for the country, for the people concerned in the seamen's strike, for our economic life and for the whole question, which Mr. Wilson brought up, of saying that certain people had got such a hold over the Executive of the Seamen's Union that they weren't their own masters.

But how much comment was there on my speech in which I called for an enquiry? The whole thing has just got entirely out of focus.

Do you still see the need for an enquiry?

Yes, I do.

Why?

Because the Prime Minister said he doubted whether the Executive of the National Union of Seamen were their own masters. The evidence he gave to the House, certainly didn't prove this point.

Do you then agree with the Labour Left, that the Prime Minister sheltered unreasonably behind Parliamentary privilege in what he said about the "Red Plot"?

Yes I do. But this isn't because I agree with the Labour Left. It's because I said it before the Labour Left said it.

You talked a lot at the last Election of reforming the unions. Now, if you were Prime Minister right now, what would you do?

Most of the points we put forward at the Election were to deal with unofficial strikes, wild-cat strikes and injustices to union members. The Seamen's

strike was official, sanctioned by the union.

What I said in the House of Commons, was, that this raised two further points. First of all the Pearson Committee said that the union had gone into the strike unjustifiably and it was premature.

Now this raises the question: Ought there then to be what is called a "cooling off period" in our industrial relations, as you can do in the United States, a certain period of time, 30 days, 90 days, whatever you like?

The first thing to do is to get an answer on this one. And the second thing of what Mr. Wilson complained was that other unions were being asked to strike in sympathy. It's the first time I have heard a Labour Prime Minister complain about this, but if there is justification for it, then we ought to look at this question, and see whether sympathetic strikes ought to remain legal or not.

Tory view on Vietnam

On Vietnam, unlike the Government, does the Tory Party give the Americans 100 per cent support?

What Mr. Wilson has done is to say that he supports the Americans, but at the same time, when they take a very unpleasant action on military targets, he rats on them to please his Left wing.

What if the Americans use nuclear weapons?

If Mr. Wilson doesn't believe in the action they are doing, then he should say he doesn't support their policy. This is the point. What he's trying to do is face both ways, as he so often does.

Which way would the Tory Party face if the Americans

used nuclear weapons in Vietnam?

Obviously we don't want to use nuclear weapons, of course not, it's an entirely hypothetical question. This is a red herring. You're trying to drag it across the trail.

I'm trying to find out if you have any reservations at all about American military action?

Of course we could have reservations if this escalates further. On this particular instance I was quite clear. I know the effect of these oil storage tanks are having on the transport of reinforcements down to South Vietnam. If we're going to be an ally, then let us be a good and honourable ally and not one that rats when it gets to a difficult position.

Not depressed by defeat

May I turn to some personal questions, Mr. Heath? It's nearly a year now since you became Conservative Party Leader. Looking back, are you satisfied with what you have achieved?

I think we have had a very full and active and constructive 11 months. Of course one is never satisfied, but we have achieved a great deal. We have achieved first of all the reorientation and reconstruction of the Conservative policy.

But unfortunately for you, you were very heavily defeated at the Election. Now does it even depress you, that you are not apparently more popular?

No. The Public Opinion Poll rating, such as we've seen, suggests that Mr. Wilson is very, very much more popular as a party leader than you are, and that in fact your ratings are possibly not terribly different

from those of Sir Alec Douglas Home, when he resigned.

Well, this is once again a typical comment from a commentator, that all that matters is popularity.

But that is what counts for votes, surely Mr. Heath? You are after votes?

I fought the Election on what I believed to be the right policy at the right time, and people will come to recognise that these policies are right.

They will recognise that this Government is not dealing with the real problems that face the country. They will then turn to a party which has got the courage and the honesty to deal with it.

How long do you think you need to get people into this

frame of mind? A year, two years?

Oh, we need a bit more time. Could it be, as Mr. Grimond has been suggesting, that you are trying too hard and butting in too much?

Well, of course, we're talking about one particular week. Once they said that I wasn't butting in enough, and that I was doing absolutely nothing, so you can take your choice, can't you? We have to decide ourselves how best to handle this.

You'll never please us all, will you, Mr. Heath?

No! It's therefore useless to try. * Mr. Heath was interviewed by Robert Carvel in Tyne Tees Television's programme Focus.

PART TWO

KILBRACKEN in KURDISTAN

This was the war that nobody knew about. The nomadic Kurds, warriors on horseback, more used to daggers than machine guns, against Iraq government troops, trained men using Hunter jets. Unknown, that is, until LORD KILBRACKEN was smuggled into the war zone. He has just returned from Kurdistan. Here is his second report.

TWO great mountains tower high above Hamilton's Road as it approaches Rowandiz; they are Zozik (6650ft.) to the north and Hendrane (6630ft.) to southward. When the government planned their May offensive against the road from the Rowandiz garrison, they knew they must drive the Kurds from both peaks before they could advance along the road in the valley.

The impetus of their first surprise attack, with 30,000 men including the crack 3rd, 4th and 5th brigades supported by artillery and aircraft, carried them to the peak of Hendrane and allowed them to occupy a deep salient on the mountain. They also took the western foothills of Zozik.

But on May 12 the Kurds launched a counterattack. This, they subsequently claimed, had been completely successful and drove the enemy clear back to their garrison at Rowandiz. The enemy, however, had also

claimed the victory! They had consolidated their advance, they said, and the demoralised *pesh mergas* were broken and on the run.

To discover the truth, Pat Leatham, whom I met when I was first smuggled into the war zone, and I set out for the front, travelling by night along Hamilton's Road to within a mile of it.

Further than this we could not take the jeep and we left the road to climb Zozik itself. We were accompanied by Sami, our admirable guide, and a dozen reckless *pesh mergas* who were all armed to the teeth. We were soon within easy range of enemy small arms fire and had to go cautiously, making full use of cover.

Blackened

Zozik must be a forbidding peak in peacetime, soaring arid and barren. Now for a month and more it had been a battlefield and the desolation was complete. It was totally blackened by napalm, which had been dropped in raid after raid on the *pesh mergas*, on gun positions, even on patches of corn which had struggled among the rocks. (In the fertile valley we had seen hundreds of acres

of wheat and barley wilfully destroyed in the same way.)

Sami led us by a careful route to avoid exposure as far as possible. But then he would say, "Hurry across this valley—the enemy hold the ridge above us," and the rocky ridge he indicated would look very close indeed. Or: "Follow this ravine, we cannot cross the mountain slope to north of it."

And we trusted him blindly (as we were bound to do), doing as we were told.

Thus we edged slowly and watchfully to the very front line, coming finally to the forward positions some 400 yards from the enemy's. En route we passed ruins of government defences built hastily after the attack from which they had then been driven.

At last, having crested a final rise, we could look down on the enemy-held town and garrison of Rowandiz, less than three miles away.

Failure

From here we could confirm beyond any possible doubt the absolute failure of the government's offensive. We could see that all Hendrane had been swept clear of their men. A few hard-won acres were still occupied on Zozik to westward ahead of us, but of no strategic importance. In their bid to drive along the road toward the border at Haji Omran, they had not advanced a yard.

We heard the story of the Hendrane battle from officers at advance HQ—a deep cave beside Hamilton's Road, after our safe

Rousted!
the little
army
puts 15,000
men on
the run...

exultant *pesh mergas* pressed on. The further they advanced, the faster the enemy ran till they had run all the way back to Rowandiz.

Thus fifteen thousand men had been routed by 1200. In their haste the government forces abandoned much important equipment, including the mortars, ammunition and 75mm. cannons that were proudly displayed for my inspection. They also left well over 1000 dead, many of whose bodies were still rotting in the sun. (Barzani had suggested a truce for burial but this had been refused.)

Meantime on Zozik the government had made a less spectacular initial advance but had been able to hold a small part of the captured ground. Since then, the front line had been stabilised and ground hostilities confined to occasional raids and sniping.

After our day on the mountain we headed for Haji Omran, again travelling by night, for our meeting with the Kurdish leader, General Mustafa Barzani, who was then in that region.

© Lord Kilbracken

TOMORROW

DODGING MiGs
AND HUNTERS



Pesh mergas inspect a cannon, one of many captured at the battle of Hendrane

A WAR COSTING
£100m A YEAR

REFERRING to the excellent article by Lord Kilbracken, written during his visit to the Kurdish leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani, may I make the following comments?

It is hardly necessary for me to say what a brave thing it was for Lord Kilbracken and his party to stand beneath dive-bombing Iraqi aircraft taking photographs with bombs and rockets hitting anything except the Choman Bridge which was their target.

His enterprise will delight and live with the Kurds, brave men themselves and admirers of that quality in others. This raises the point of just why have Britain and Russia sold Hunters

to successive Iraqi Governments after peace announcements similar to this one, drifted quickly back to war again.

The danger will become acute when the new autonomous Kurdistan must be defined and its borders drawn, also when its constitution as between the present tribal system and the claims of the Kurdish Democratic Party have to be adjusted.

There will, too, be the size and function of the Kurdish armed forces to be defined—this being solely Mulla Mustafa's decision. The oil revenue share for the 1½ million Kurds must take account of the fact that former prosperous areas have been practically obliterated, the villages bulldozed, inhabitants dead or gone.

The alternative to making



POL.F. 452-51-Link A

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

AKH2

CONFIDENTIAL
COVERING TOP SECRET

July 2, 1966.

PT
F 6/7 Rec: 4-7-66

Dear Furnival Jones,

I sent Thistlethwaite a draft of the note which I made of the Prime Minister's meeting with the Leader of the Opposition on June 22 and he agreed it without amendment. The note has now been typed in fair and I am enclosing a copy for your records. I should be grateful if you would destroy the draft sent to Thistlethwaite with kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Balls

Draft Destroyed
D.G. Sec/MJW.
5-7-66

Mr. Furnival Jones,
Ministry of Defence.

F 11/13
6.7.66

TOP SECRETRECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON
22.6.66Present

Prime Minister	Mr. Heath
Minister of Labour	Mr. Maudling
Mr. Furnival Jones	
Mr. Thistlethwaite	
Mr. Elliott	
Mr. Halls	

The Prime Minister accompanied by the Minister of Labour began the meeting with Mr. Heath and Mr. Maudling alone.

2. The Prime Minister emphasised that the information which he proposed to be given to Mr. Heath and Mr. Maudling would be on strictly Privy Counsellor terms. He recalled again, as he had done the day previously when he met Mr. Heath alone, Mr. Macmillan had informed him on these terms of the facts relating to the Philby case, both Mr. Heath and _____ had been present. He was offering similar facilities to

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Mr. Heath and Mr. Maudling and if they wished the Head of the Security Service with his colleagues, who were waiting outside, would be ready to give the full facts on which the Prime Minister's statement in the House on June 20 had been based. Mr. Heath accepted.

3. Before Mr. Furnival Jones and his colleagues were invited to join the meeting the Prime Minister referred to the question of an enquiry. He said that he had been thinking further about the possibility of establishing some form of enquiry after the strike was over. This, as Mr. Heath would appreciate, was a very delicate matter.

It was of crucial importance that nothing should be done which would prejudice the sources of the Security Service; this was a problem - whether the enquiry was in public or in private. There was, too, another problem which needed careful consideration; natural justice usually demanded that the accused should be confronted with his accusers. For obvious reasons this would not be possible. Mr. Heath replied

that he would like to think further about his attitude to an enquiry after he had heard the facts which were to be laid before him that afternoon.

4. At this stage, Mr. Furnival Jones, Mr. Thistlethwaite and Mr. Elliott joined the meeting.

5. The Prime Minister said that he wanted to make it clear at the outset that the information had been secured through the Security Service's normal coverage of the Communist Party. Mr. Furnival Jones re-emphasised this point.

6. Mr. Elliott then gave a full account of the Communist activities connected with the strike of the National Union of Seamen. He said that a special feature of this case was that the strength of the Party in the N.U.S. was extremely small. The Communist Party had in fact no member on the National Executive of the N.U.S. Nevertheless, when the strike began, the Communist Party had considerable success in penetrating the N.U.S. at vital points: Mr. Coward

had secured the Chairmanship of the London Strike Committee, Mr. Woods the Chairmanship of the Merseyside Strike Committee, and Mr. Norris although not a member of the Executive Council, had secured election to an ad hoc Negotiating Committee which was established a few weeks before the strike began.

7. Having regard to the fact that the Communist Party was weak numerically in the N.U.S. its tactics at the beginning of the strike were to try and extend support for the strike from other unions. The principal target was the Transport and General Workers' Union where the Communist Party not only had resources in the form of Mr. Jack Dash in the docks, but another contact in the form of Mr. William Jones who was for some time a member of the Communist Party and now a fellow-traveller. The Communist Party were, however, very restive about the lack of action in the docks and were particularly disappointed at the very restrictive

attitude of the Transport and General Workers' Union to the blacking of ships. In order to try and get things moving more quickly the Communist Party set up a secret co-ordinating committee, comprising Norris, Coward, Watson (Lighterman's Union), Dash and a representative of the Industrial Department of the Communist Party, either Ramelson or Goodwin. This committee which met clandestinely was in all senses a co-ordinating and directing committee. It continued to try and extend the stoppage in the docks.

8. When the Government decided to announce a state of emergency, the Morning Star the next day called on other Trade Unionists not to be associated with any actions or assistance which the armed forces might give. The Communist Party then decided that the N.U.S. Executive should be called upon to do two things; first to get more effective action in the docks and to get ships effectively blacked; and secondly, to stop the flow of oil diverted to foreign ships.

9. The Party's next step was to influence the National Executive to reject the Pearson Court of Inquiry.

In the event the Executive Council rejected the report brusquely after little or no consideration. Finding the Executive of the N.U.S. isolated from other Unions, the Communist Party began to step up its pressure.

On instructions from Ramelson, William Jones of the T.G.W.U. again tried to get a resolution accepted blacking all British ships but was out-maneuvred by Mr. Harry Nicholas. A meeting in the London Docks attended by about 2,000 dockers under the Chairmanship of Coward and addressed by Norris, Jack Dash, Watson and Harry Mundy, accepted a resolution that all ships should be blacked. After a short period of confusion, however, the dockers decided not to implement the resolution and quickly returned to work. The Party's plans for both Merseyside and Hull also misfired mainly through the actions of the Trotskys.

10. Mr. Elliott then turned to the Communist Party's connection with the National Executive of the N.U.S.

The contact was carried out through Slater (from the North East) and Kenny (from Liverpool), neither of whom were Communist and both of whom were able and vocal.

Regular meetings between Slater and Kenny on the one hand and Ramelson on the other took place at the house of a well-known Communist where both Slater and Kenny stayed when in London. Slater and Kenny rallied the militants of the N.U.S. and opposition to their views was silenced through fear of abusive reprisals.

11. The Prime Minister said that Kenny and Slater were able to dominate the National Executive through their influence with the militants. Anyone who spoke out against the advocacy of militancy was immediately accused of being a Judas and violently abused. The membership of the N.U.S. was pretty easily frightened; that was understandable since anyone who opposed the views of Kenny and Slater feared that he might be singled out when he returned to sea - and none wanted that within the confinement of a ship. Many ships today had not only their sea lawyers but a type of sea-going

ship steward; any member of the N.U.S. who supported a return to work did so in danger of being sent to coventry or worse when he returned to sea. Mr. Marshall, the Assistant General Secretary did in fact oppose at one stage Kenny's and Slater's influence but he was quickly broken down and offered to resign. The Prime Minister continued that Mr. Hogarth had told him that when Norris went to Glasgow to see the Strike Committee there, he carefully avoided meeting the Secretary of the Committee and concentrated only on those whom he knew he could influence. The Prime Minister also mentioned that on the eve of his series of meetings at 10 Downing Street with the N.U.S. and the ship owners, Kenny and Slater had held a meeting of 18 members of the Executive which they had conditioned to reject any proposals from the Government before even they had been made. The Prime Minister reminded Mr. Heath of the television interview where Slater had side-stepped a question whether he knew Ramelson. Finally the Prime Minister said that Mr. Jack Dash had been restrained

in his activities for the obvious reason that he did not wish to be responsible for the dockers losing their pay and being unable to draw strike pay.

12. The Minister of Labour then elaborated on the manifest amateurism of the N.U.S. Executive. It was quite different from any other Executive - indeed the strike was quite different from any other strike.

Men with little or no experience of industrial disputes found themselves surrounded by a few professionals and unable either to argue with or meet the eloquence of Slater and Kenny. Many of them were, for the reasons which the Prime Minister explained, frightened men. In his experience, the Minister said that he had not previously known of such a carefully planned Communist Party operation as its influence on the seamen in this strike.

13. Mr. Heath thanked Mr. Elliott for his lucid account. He asked two questions and made one comment. First, he enquired about Norris; it was explained that though he was not a member of the National Executive, he was

a member of the powerful negotiating committee.

Secondly, he asked it to be confirmed that from his understanding the Communist Party only came into contact with the National Executive through the actions of Mr. Slater and Mr. Kenny. Mr. Thistlethwaite interjected that while there were only seven seamen in this particular operation who were members of the Communist Party, they had nevertheless seized three key positions.

This was an outstanding feature of the Communist penetration in this case. Mr. Heath said that he wished to discuss with Mr. Maudling the information which they had been given that day before he made any reference in the House to the exchanges between the Prime Minister and himself and in consequence he would make no reference to these exchanges in Supplementary Questions arising from the short Statement which the Prime Minister was making after Questions on the strike.

14. The Prime Minister said that he had very carefully considered whether he should make the

Statement which he did on Monday, June 20, but he had concluded that it was right to do so, and that he hoped to bring home to the moderates the pressures to which they were being exposed by the Communist Party. He had said as much as he had thought appropriate on that occasion but in his Statement on the Debate when the Emergency Regulations were renewed, he proposed to give a fuller account of the activities of the Communist Party and to name those who had played a leading part. He said that from the information he was receiving, it seemed that the Communist Party were beginning to think that there was no future in this strike. As he had explained to Mr. Heath the day before, the Communist Party were now contemplating the possibility of inducing a secret ballot as a device to extend the strike.

15. The Prime Minister suggested and Mr. Heath agreed that nothing should be said to the Press other than that there had been a full exchange between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

Copy 1 File
Copy 2 Sir Burke Trend
Copy 3 Mr. Furnival Jones

SECRET

43a

NOTE

When I took the situation report down to Sir Burke Trend yesterday afternoon he agreed that henceforth we should put our reporting on a less operational basis.

2. At the request of the Director General I also made arrangements with Trend for him to see the Prime Minister alone on the subject of the risks to our sources of any enquiry into the seamen's strike. This meeting was tentatively fixed for this morning.

R. Thistlethwaite
R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

1 July 1966

SECRET

FKWB
1.7.66

42a

The attached note was handed by Director F. to Sir Burke Trend, Cabinet Office on 30.6.66 A copy was sent by hand to Sir Charles Cunningham, Home Office.

A copy was also sent to Mr. Z.T. Clafo, Ministry of Labour.

TOP SECRET

The Communist Party of Great Britain (C.P.G.B.) and the
Seamen's strike

(Position as at 3 p.m. on 30 June)

The Attitude of Communist Party Headquarters (C.P.H.Q.)

C.P.H.Q.'s first reactions to the calling off of the strike are now available. According to its information, of the ten votes which changed between Saturday and Wednesday, four were from Scotland and six from London and there was an overall majority among the lay members of the Council in favour of the "postponement" of the strike.

2. RAMELSON is known to have met KENNY on Tuesday night and to have impressed upon him the need for maintaining unity within the N.U.S. whatever the outcome of the meeting yesterday morning. KENNY was of the view that if he was in a minority in the Council on Wednesday morning, he should press for the recall of the Annual General Meeting. RAMELSON, and certainly GOLLAN, did not regard this proposal with any enthusiasm and their objections seem to have been based upon the fear that the calling of an A.G.M. would widen the split in the union. (The reference is presumably to the differences between the short and deep sea trades). RAMELSON also impressed upon KENNY that if the voting went against him, he, KENNY, should be careful to preserve the unity of the Executive Council. This appears to have arisen from fears expressed by KENNY that a recommendation to return to work might not receive full support in Liverpool and Hull in particular. RAMELSON advised KENNY not to associate himself with any revolt of this kind and argued that there were going to be new elections in the union, that there were going to be changes in the rules and that the union could be converted into a progressive one with a militant leadership.

3. After yesterday's Executive Council decision became known RAMELSON wondered whether it would be ascribed to the Prime Minister. GOLLAN had no doubt that some would certainly ascribe it to him because he had given names on one day and the strike had ended the next. GOLLAN expected (that is yesterday afternoon) that the Prime Minister would make a statement, that he would probably be magnanimous. He added that the N.U.S. had in effect run out of ammunition and their only hope would have been if troops had gone in because then the dockers would have come out.

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4. It is expected that there will be a further meeting between KENNY and RAMELSON and there is to be a meeting of the ad hoc Committee at the house of Danny LYONS tonight. The purpose of the latter meeting is to estimate the lessons to be learned from this dispute. There are also indications that the Party is becoming increasingly disenchanted with NORRIS, who is too individual for its taste, and he has almost out-lived his usefulness.

Security Service

30 June 1966

SF. 452-51 Link A.

TOP SECRET


TOP SECRET

Reference..... Loose Minute.....

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HOA


Director General

The risk to Security Service sources in the event of an enquiry into the seamen's dispute

No matter what type of enquiry is set up and no matter what instructions the Prime Minister may issue that security sources are not to be risked, there is bound to be a process of erosion as witnesses are examined and facts checked. This happened to a marked extent in the Australian enquiries resulting from the PETROV revelations and damaged the efficiency of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. In our own case our sources are mixed, human and technical. Nevertheless suspicion of one sort may throw suspicion on the other. This is particularly the case with what may be termed "central sources". The Party by its very nature and because, like all English institutions, it has its headquarters in London, is a highly centralised organisation and our success in penetrating it therefore is all the more dangerous and brittle if we take risks. There is moreover the important point that if our F.4. sources hear that an enquiry is being made their morale could be seriously affected. Sources on the periphery are no less important and the risk to them is not to be underestimated. But what we cannot at all costs put at risk is LASCAR and long-term F.4.

2. It is difficult for anybody who has not lived with these sources to understand both their importance and how we work, and because the Prime Minister is ignorant of them he is bound to be unaware of the implications of our producing evidence before any sort of commission. It is true that the Communist Party has to work and therefore has to have telephones, secretaries and all the apparatus of a political party. It is also true that it is fully aware of many technical devices, has its own security department which is reasonably efficient and that it has nevertheless accepted the risk of its present method of working. It did take considerable security precautions in its industrial machine after the E.T.U. case and we can anticipate a natural strengthening of security after the seamen's strike, but if as a result of cross questioning by an enquiry it came out in any way that our coverage is on the scale it is the Party would be capable of taking far more drastic counter-action.

3. For all the above reasons, which can be elaborated, I still think we should try to stop any enquiry being made at all. The strike is over and the Prime Minister could simply say "The facts speak for themselves; no enquiry is necessary". If he wanted added ammunition he could use the proposal put forward

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- 2 -

in the House by Grimond and Foot during the debate when they made the point that it is not so much the people who cause the enquiry who suffer as those who are brought in from outside during the proceedings and cannot defend themselves. Finally, the Prime Minister has already been taunted in the House with being unable, or unready, to provide more information than has appeared in the Sunday press and he is surely putting his reputation at risk if any enquiry which is set up adds nothing much to what he has already told the House, which is a real possibility. It would be still worse if it does not confirm what he said about happenings in the Executive, whereas as things stand at the moment public opinion will infer from the calling off of the strike that he was right.

R. Thistlethwaite
R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

29 June 1966.

SECRET

39a

NOTE

I delivered the daily brief to Sir Burke Trend at 10.30 this morning and he said that he would like to discuss the latest developments. In his view there were two important points:-

- (a) the possibility of an inquiry,
- (b) the action to be taken if the strike were prolonged.

On the second point he said that if the N.U.S. Executive Council at its meeting this morning decided either to ballot the members or to recall the Annual General Conference, this might mean that the strike would go on for a further fortnight at least. This would probably be unacceptable so far as Government was concerned and would most probably mean that it would be necessary to put naval tugs into some ports. He added that Denis Barnes of the Ministry of Labour was of the view that, on the assumption that the strike would go on, the time had come for some well-directed strike-breaking. Barnes had in mind that employers at a selected port, for example Harwich, should be asked to recruit crews and try and get a ship away. I told Trend that we had no information about the likely outcome of the E.C. meeting this morning and the only comment I could offer on Barnes' proposal was that we should probably need to have a look at our coverage. (the employers in Harwich, or for that matter any other South Coast ferry port, are likely to be British Railways and we should need to know the anticipated N.U.R. reaction. The T/C on AHERNE may be needed).

2. We then had a very brief meeting with the Prime Minister who, on the points raised by Trend, said that the strike-breaking proposal could be discussed in the Emergency Committee this afternoon but he would not put it to the Cabinet until early next week.

3. I then had a meeting with Trend and the Paymaster General in the latter's room on the subject of an inquiry. The Paymaster said that while the P.M. was less enthusiastic this morning than he had been last night about an inquiry he, the P.M.G., felt that the P.M. would almost certainly come down in favour of an inquiry. He believed that the P.M. would be under pressure at the Labour Party Conference in the autumn and would want to be armed with the result of an inquiry. The discussion then followed lines very similar to those on which Director F. has already reported (38a).

4. I thought I ought to warn the P.M.G. that the Communist Party has declared its intention not to co-operate in any inquiry. This could mean that if, for example, RAMELSON were asked to give evidence

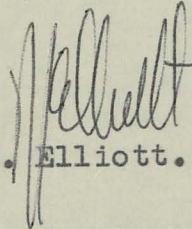
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- 2 -

he might refuse to do so. If measures were then taken to enforce his attendance the Party would probably make political capital out of this. A greater danger was that he would agree to attend only if he were assisted by Counsel and had a right to examine his accusers. Trend and the P.M.G. took the point.



J. S. Elliott.

F.1.A.

29 June 1966.

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Reference...SF. 452-51 Link A

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380

NOTE

James Elliott and I went down to see Sir Burke Trend at lunch-time yesterday to go through some further amendments to the Prime Minister's speech. They included all the ones which we had put forward and which were accepted. We had already been told that there would only be one seat for us in the "Box" at the House of Commons and we therefore agreed that James Elliott should kick off so that I could attend the D.G.'s meeting. This I did. As the D.G. was anxious that there should be continuity in our representation in the "Box" I went down to the House again but was refused admission on the grounds that it was full. After returning to the office and consulting the D.G. I decided to carry out our original agreement and relieve James Elliott shortly after 6 p.m. so that he could have a meal. When I arrived at the House the policeman outside the Chamber was on the telephone and said to somebody that I had just arrived. This turned out to be the secretary of the Home Secretary who said the latter would like me to be present at a briefing at 7 p.m. because he had to go on television later in the evening. I therefore took over from Elliott in the "Box" but just as he returned before 7 p.m. to relieve me the Prime Minister's secretary said I was required at a meeting in his room. Elliott therefore went up stairs to take my place with the Home Secretary and I joined a meeting with the Prime Minister, Trend, Barnes and Graham-Harrison, which was later joined by the Paymaster General. This was to discuss the debate so far and the question of an enquiry. Trend suggested that the Home Secretary should join us, to which the Prime Minister agreed and Mr. Jenkins came in leaving James Elliott free to go back to the "Box".

2. Everybody in the room except the Prime Minister was against an enquiry and said so. The Paymaster General in particular used two arguments which I had put to him at our first meeting during the Trooping of the Colour, namely

- (a) danger to Security Service sources;
- (b) incipient McCarthyism in this country.

3. Since the Prime Minister clearly intended to pursue the possibility of some sort of enquiry, which he agreed should in no way endanger the sources of the Security Service, various possibilities were canvassed. The Paymaster General wanted Lord Radcliffe because of his wisdom and knowledge of security matters. The Prime Minister wanted Privy Counsellors because they could be hand-picked and because their procedure was so much more informal. The Home Secretary objected to Privy Counsellors because they had been used on security matters before and this would point the finger at security. Trend did not like a judge because the matters at issue were not

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Reference..... 38a.....

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judicial but political. I said I personally did not like Radcliffe because we had had many dealings with him in the past and there would be an inevitable tendency on his part to want evidence of Communism produced to him as preliminary briefing in much the same way as had happened in the VASSAL case. The Prime Minister reminded those present that the VASSAL enquiry had changed into a tribunal and in any case he thought Lord Radcliffe too old. What he was working to was a Committee of the House consisting of three Privy Counsellors, namely Patrick Gordon Walker, Alec Douglas Home and Joe Grimond. At one moment he was thinking of making this a very far reaching enquiry into the whole influence of Communism in trade unions, something which might last two years. The feeling of the meeting was that if an enquiry had to be held, and it was still hoped that this would not be necessary, it should be confined within the very narrow limits of the seamen's strike. The Prime Minister then drafted terms of reference on the following lines:-
"To enquire into the activities of the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen towards the prolongation of the strike and into any external pressures put upon it". Barnes recognised that this would involve the Ministry of Labour more than ourselves but he was not altogether averse to it. He thought, however, that some reference to an enquiry might frighten the seamen and force them to call off the strike.

4. In the event there was a muddle in the debate. It had been anticipated that this might last all night, but in fact the regulations had to be renewed for some technical reason before 10 p.m. and the Prime Minister only had five minutes in which to wind up. Trend hoped that he would use this opportunity to omit any reference to an enquiry and in fact he confined himself to saying:-

"When the strike is over I would be prepared to consider some form of enquiry and if there is to be an enquiry, what terms of reference would be appropriate to conform to the national interest. When the strike is over. Not now."

R. Thistlethwaite
R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

29 June 1966

SECRET

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

F.1.A/J.S.E.

The attached note was handed by ~~Director P.~~ to Sir Burke
Trend, Cabinet Office on 29.6.66. A copy was sent by
hand to Sir Charles Cunningham, Home Office.

A copy was also sent to Mr. Claro, Ministry of Labour.

37a

TOP SECRET

The Communist Party of Great Britain (C.P.G.B.) and the
Seamen's Strike

(Position as at 9 a.m. on 29 June)

The Attitude of Communist Party Headquarters (C.P.H.Q.)

Both yesterday and today C.P.H.Q. has been preoccupied with the Prime Minister's statement and as a result there has been no comment on the negotiations about the strike. Much the same pattern has been followed by the unofficial leaders also. As could have been predicted, the Party has decided to put on a brave front. It has had to concede that the statement about the activities of Communists and the contact with KENNY and SLATER are true, though it claims that these are no more than a reflection of the Party's declared support for the strike from the outset. It clearly feels that it is on firmer ground when it attacks the Prime Minister's statement that the seamen's leaders were not their own masters and this is likely to be the Party line in any subsequent developments in this controversy. It is of interest that GOLLAN has committed himself to opposition to any enquiry. In a situation such as this GOLLAN's policy tends to be dictated by day to day expediency and, there was some slight risk that he might have decided to gamble on an inconclusive outcome from an enquiry.

2. There are indications that the press are trying to identify the flat to which the Prime Minister referred in his speech, but have so far gone off on a false trail. They believe that the flat in question is that of NORRIS and have not so far connected COWARD with Nan GREEN.

Security Service

29 June 1966

SF. 452-51 Link A.

TOP SECRET

S.F.452/51/Link A.

372a

Cutting from "Hansard" of Tuesday, 28th June, 1966.

Emergency Powers: (Re the Seamans Strike).

Motion - (The Prime Minister) - agreed to.

F/KWB
6.7.66

KV 3/449

CUTTING FROM "HANSARD"
OF TUESDAY, 28th JUNE 1966

people who would regard it as sacrilegious or irreverent to disturb the last resting place of those who have died and been accorded a proper funeral. To these people I say just this. We are dealing with the living and those as yet unborn. In many part of our cities open spaces, gardens for the elderly, playgrounds in safety for the young are often not available.

Does it make any kind of sense to have these disused graveyards, often locked up, untended, unvisited which could cheaply and quickly be used for a really worthwhile purpose? Before passing judgment, we should ask ourselves what would the wishes be of those people who have passed on and have lain in such graveyards for many years. I think that there can be only one answer. Legislate for the living, not for the dead.

The view of the Churches is extremely important since, in many cases, they may be the owners of the disused graveyard—
[*Interruption.*]

Mr. Victor Goodhew (St. Albans): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not possible for those of us who wish to listen to my hon. Friend giving an account of his proposed Bill to listen to him in peace and quiet without having all this noise led from the Treasury Bench?

Mr. Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Member for reinforcing the appeal I have made.

Mr. Thomas Steele (Dunbartonshire, West): Further to that point of order. Is not the experience we are having this afternoon reinforcing the opinion of—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that we should interrupt a speech under the Ten Minute Rule to discuss what I think the hon. Member for Dunbartonshire, West (Mr. Steele) has in mind.

Mr. Cordle: I am very grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, and to my hon. Friend the Member for St. Albans (Mr. Goodhew) for his intervention.

The view of the Churches is extremely important since, in many cases, they may be the owners of the disused graveyard and, anyway, they will certainly be concerned with any change in use from both a theological and practical standpoint. I understand that the Churches are, broadly, sympathetic with the aims of my proposed Bill. They would welcome an extension of the power to use disused burial grounds after a reasonable period and they would also welcome a widening of the factors upon which burial grounds could be closed. I am very grateful to Sir Griffith Williams, Secretary of the Churches Main Committee, and his staff, for the sympathy and encouragement they have given to me in this matter.

We are spending prodigious amounts of money, quite rightly, on new towns and slum clearance. The rotting centres of many of our old towns and cities are being replaced by gleaming new flats and office blocks. Yet we all know that many people for many years to come will be born and grow up in districts where open space probably means a wilderness of rubble or a second-hand car sales site and where a park or garden of rest is either a bad joke or a long and relatively dangerous journey to another part of the town.

If my Bill could only help a small proportion of these people I feel that it would be infinitely worth while.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Cordle, Mr. Hugh Fraser, Sir George Sinclair, Mr. John Tilney, Dame Irene Ward, Mr. Geoffrey Wilson, Mr. Harry Randall, Sir Frederic Bennett, Mr. Robert Cooke, Mr. Joseph Hiley, Mr. Gilbert Longden, and Mr. Michael Alison.

DISUSED GRAVEYARDS

Bill to provide for the better use of disused graveyards and burial grounds, presented accordingly, and read the First time; to be read a Second time upon Friday, 22nd July, and to be printed. [Bill 62.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EMERGENCY POWERS

Message from Her Majesty [22nd June] considered.

Message again read.

4.2 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Harold Wilson): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty thanking Her Majesty for her Gracious Message communicating to this House that Her Majesty deems it proper by Proclamation, made in pursuance of the Emergency Powers Act 1920, as amended by the Emergency Powers Act 1964, and dated 22nd June, 1966, to declare that a state of emergency exists.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that it will be for the convenience of the House if I also speak to the Second Order of the Day, the Motion which asks the House to confirm the Regulations made in consequence of the declaration of the state of Emergency.

That the Regulations made by Her Majesty in Council under the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, by Order dated 22nd June, 1966, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June, shall continue in force, subject however to the provisions of section 2(4) of the said Act.

Sir, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour, who has played so great a part in dealing with the problems associated with the seamen's strike, would have sought to catch your eye this evening to wind up the debate. Unfortunately, my right hon. Friend, who has been under very heavy strain during these weeks, has been advised by his doctor that he must take a rest and he is going away from London for some days. I am sure that the whole House will wish him a speedy recovery. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] In those circumstances, I hope that, if a brief reply to the debate is needed, the House will grant me leave to reply.

Since the last exchanges in the House about the dispute in the shipping industry, there have been considerable and hopeful moves in the direction of a solution. This debate takes place against the background of the negotiations which have been proceeding today on the appropriate panel of the National Maritime Board, and all of us will hope that these will now come to a successful conclusion. But, as

I hope to explain later, even if the strike were to come to an end before this debate is concluded, this would not mean that we can immediately advise the termination of the state of emergency or a withdrawal of the Regulations.

First, it might be convenient for right hon. and hon. Members if I gave the House a more up-to-date report on the developments aimed at ending the dispute since I last reported to the House on Monday of last week. The House will recall that on that occasion I gave a report of the talks which my right hon. Friend and I had had with representatives of the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen and one meeting with the full Council, and also of the meetings that we had had with representatives of the Shipping Federation. Those talks, spread over three days, were aimed at finding a solution based on the interim Report of the Court of Inquiry. That Report, the Government considered, provided the means to a just and honourable solution in the interests of the seamen, of the industry, and of the nation as a whole.

I said then that we did not stand on every dot and comma of the Report, but I said that, if there were to be any departure from the Report, any further improvement should be paid for by real economies in working agreed between the parties, effective economies, not pious aspirations about increased productivity or reduced costs. Although at that time the National Union of Seamen did not state that it was prepared to accept the Pearson recommendations of a two-stage introduction of the 40-hour week, which was the union's main objective, it was clear that the problem which was in the minds not only of the Executive Council, but of seamen all over the country, and which was impeding a solution, was the question of leave arrangements. This was because the Court of Inquiry, in order to provide partial compensation for the cost of the progress towards a 40-hour week, had recommended that the number of days leave with pay in respect of days spent at sea, which have recently been averaging about 51 a year, should be reduced to 39. There was and is no doubt that this was the problem preventing a settlement.

The House will recall that it had been urged upon us that a reduction in overtime over and above that which was

envisaged in the Report to take effect a year from now could provide sufficient savings in cost to compensate for the seamen's proposal that the leave arrangements should continue as in recent years and not be reduced as the Court recommended. As the House knows, when this was put to the owners by my right hon. Friend and myself it was rejected. Nor could the owners, when challenged to do so, suggest then any significant changes in working practices or in any other way which could provide the saving necessary for helping to solve the problem of leave arrangements.

As the House will recall, my right hon. Friend and I were successful in bringing the shipowners and representatives of the Seamen's Executive together at Downing Street to see whether this problem could be solved. Unfortunately, the leaders on both sides had to report to us that they had entirely failed to make any progress. It was then, in these circumstances, that my right hon. Friend and I—I am now talking about the situation a week last Friday—addressed the full executive and put to it, as we had to its representatives, our proposal that, since there did not seem to be any immediate prospect of agreement on what we called copper-bottomed guarantees of reduced costs, the Court of Inquiry should be asked as a matter of urgency, in dealing with that part of its terms of reference relating to productivity, to examine all the suggestions which had been made, including reductions in overtime, standards of manning, more flexible use of crews as between deck and engine room, and so on, and to report whether adequate savings could be ensured. Meanwhile, we suggested that the union, while accepting the Court of Inquiry's first Report, reserved its position on the question of leave arrangements, which could then be settled satisfactorily in due course on the basis of the productivity inquiry by the Court.

My right hon. Friend and I warned the executive that, though there had been and still was great sympathy in the country for the seamen's case, that sympathy was being rapidly eroded, if not destroyed, by their repeated and brusque rejections of every proposal made to help in finding a solution. We stressed the damage, actual and potential, to the economic life of the nation. We stressed

equally the damage, which could well be lasting to the shipping industry and to the future security of those who sought and would hereafter seek employment in the industry.

Nevertheless, when the executive had returned to its headquarters it voted speedily, and again unanimously, for the continuation of the strike. The unfailing unanimity of the executive's decisions on this and on previous occasions is a factor to which attention has been called on a number of occasions recently; and I shall be returning to this point later.

It was following these events that I reported to the House eight days ago. The House well recognises, I think, that we could not leave the matter to rest there. There will be those who will argue that it is the Government's duty to remain outside a battle of this kind, to let natural forces take their course, and to wait until exhaustion—physical, mental, spiritual or financial—exerts its toll. There will certainly be those who feel that we have acted in an unprecedented way by setting up a court of inquiry while the strike was on, instead of insisting on a return to work. I agree that this is unprecedented, but so are the circumstances of this dispute. The whole House has shown the deep concern it feels about the growing damage to our economy with every day that this strike continues.

In these circumstances, my right hon. Friend and I felt it right last week to go into the question of still further initiatives. As the House knows, we had a long discussion with the members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the T.U.C. The House well knows the patience and skill with which the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the General Council itself, and, in particular, Mr. George Woodcock, the General Secretary, have sought at every point in this dispute to open up the possibility of new initiatives and to try to break the log jam which at times seemed immovable. It was they who made it clear to the N.U.S. that the Pearson Report should have been accepted and that the union could not look to organised labour in this country for any spreading of the strike.

When my right hon. Friend and I met the Finance and General Purposes Committee, last Wednesday, it agreed with

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

us that Lord Pearson, who, even in so short a time, had earned a unique position with both sides of the industry and who was willing to offer his services in helping to find a solution [two days ago] should chair a meeting between the two sides, and the T.U.C. were successful in persuading the executive to accept this proposal. The Shipping Federation similarly agreed to join in these discussions.

Thanks, I believe, to the patience, objectivity and skill which Lord Pearson brought to these discussions, and equally to the evident desire of both sides last Friday to approach these problems in a constructive manner, suggestions were discussed and examined which pointed the way to a possible solution.

All were conscious that the outstanding problem was that of leave arrangements, and, as a result of suggestions from both sides, concrete proposals were made to secure real and effective economies in working, sufficient to provide a substantial easement in the proposed reduction of leave days, without adding measurably to the cost of the original Pearson proposals.

As the House will know, the executive council on Saturday accepted these proposals as a basis for negotiations, and those negotiations have been proceeding today. I know that the whole House will trust that these will be successful, and that there will be a speedy return to work.

Even if agreement had been reached, if that had been possible a day or two ago, it would still have been necessary to commend these Regulations to the House. The House will be well aware that the problems of congestion in the ports are only just beginning. There are 518 ships engaged in the home and short-sea trade and 373 ships engaged on the ocean going trades which are at present immobilised. Very many of these are moored away from the berths, and in many ports there will be the most difficult problems in ensuring that the ships are enabled to return to berth in an orderly manner to load up with the nation's accumulation of exports and get away. For this reason it may be necessary to keep the Port Emergency Com-

mittees in being, with power to regulate shipping in ports.

The ending of the dispute, if this occurs, may not mean immediate relief to those parts of these islands which have suffered most by the events of the past six weeks, and emergency arrangements will still be needed. Urgent action will have to be taken to build up stocks of essential commodities, particularly to catch up with the summer stock building programme for coal at power stations, gas works and other public utilities. But, clearly, the Government would hope that if the House agrees to the continuance of these Regulations today, an early ending of the strike would mean that the Proclamation could then be revoked and the Regulations lapse at the earliest possible moment.

While all our thoughts and hopes will be concentrated on the negotiations which are now proceeding, it is not too early to begin to consider some lessons of the dispute. The House will, in any case, expect me to speak more fully about some of the issues which I raised in my statement eight days ago. I have referred to actions taken by the Government which were unprecedented in dealing with previous disputes, and I said that in many respects this strike had unusual and even unprecedented characteristics.

This is an industry which, apart from the very special problems which developed on Merseyside and certain other ports six years ago, has been virtually strike-free for many years, but as I have said on many occasions inside the House, and even more directly to representatives of both sides of the industry, this strike has no single, simple cause. It is the result of the accumulation over many years of grievances and frustrations which—and all of us share the responsibility here—the nation should never have allowed to develop.

I have referred to the fact that for many years a large part of the membership of the union increasingly felt that the union was not discharging its responsibilities to the seamen collectively or individually, as those of us who have the honour to represent a considerable number of seagoing constituents well know. In consequence, these grievances and frustrations were allowed to remain, to

grow, to fester, and, at a heavy cost to the nation, to suppurate. The feelings engendered by the operations of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, an Act which was passed three years before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, are part—and, I believe, a considerable part—of the cause of the dispute, but not the whole of the cause.

One thing that the seamen can feel has come out of the recent concentration of national attention on their problems is the fact that the Court of Inquiry—and this was offered them before the strike began—has full power to inquire into the problems caused by this barnacle-encrusted legislation and to make urgent recommendations for modernisation. Indeed, as I told the House, my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has been in discussion with both sides of the industry about the reforms which are necessary, but these discussions, in common with so much else in this industry, became a casualty of the clash between the two sides that developed a few months ago.

Another lesson from the dispute is a fact which emerges from the Report of the Court of Inquiry that a great deal is amiss in the efficiency with which this industry is conducted. When, across the table, we have discussed the possibility of reducing by one or two hours the overtime which men in this industry are asked to work, we are doing this against an average working week of 66 hours on the deep-sea trade and 73 hours on the short-sea trade. It is clear that the Court of Inquiry considered that, in comparison with the working practices of the shipping industries of other countries, these figures are inordinately high, and I think that they would be generally regarded by the House as excessive.

When, at the same time, it is clear that the earnings of British seamen fall below those of many of their foreign counterparts, one is bound to have grave reservations about the efficiency of the industry taken as a whole. When I asked the owners if they could think of any working practices whose removal might be thrown into the balance in these negotiations, I was told that there were, with only marginal and localised exceptions, no restrictive practices in the industry, and that they could not think of anything

which would guarantee even so marginal an increase in productivity—

Mr. Ian Lloyd (Portsmouth, Langstone): Is the Prime Minister prepared to concede that the efficiency of the shipping industry depends as much on the application of restrictive practices in the docks as in the industry itself?

The Prime Minister: One cannot separate the shipping industry from the rest of the transport industry. This is a point on which I may have some words to say later. In fact, it is a considered view of the Court of Inquiry both that earnings are lower in the British industry and that the rate of overtime is higher, and I think that it would conclude from this—certainly I should, *prima facie*—that there is a case for inquiry into the efficiency of an industry where that is true compared with similar industries overseas.

One of the difficulties about securing guaranteed improvements in productivity was the pathetic admission of the Shipping Federation that it could not speak for all its members, not only for the legitimate reason that the ships of Britain's Merchant Navy covered so wide a range of types of trades and occupations, but also because it had to speak for 400 individual companies with an average of only about six ships per company, varying from the great shipping lines which are big enough and competent enough to be moving forward rapidly with modernisation and improved productivity, as some of them are, to a great number of smaller businesses of very varying efficiency. For this reason, the Government have decided now, following the action which we took with the Geddes inquiry into shipbuilding, and the Plowden Report on the aircraft industry, to set up as a matter of urgency an independent inquiry into the structure, organisation and efficiency of the industry.

The third lesson must relate to the organisation of the union and the problems presented in terms of industrial democracy. I have said more than once during the past few weeks when reporting to the House that one of the problems in this dispute is the new-found militancy of the union. On constituency as well as on national grounds, I rejoice in the fact that this union has become, in recent years, more vigorous, and when I referred to it last week as a sturdy union I meant it.

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

No hon. Member will underrate the difficulties of organisation, particularly democratic organisation, in a union catering for seamen. At any moment of time, by far the great majority of its members are scattered over the seven oceans. Even today, after more than six weeks of the strike, when every seaman returning to these shores has left his ship, only 26,000 out of the 65,000 sea-going members of the union are on strike.

The difficulties of communication are of a dimension different from those experienced in any other trade union, for example, in manufacturing or one of the service industries. This is shown by the fact, for instance, that when, under the constitution of the union, ballots have to be held to elect the executive council, these ballots inevitably do not extend to the majority of seamen, namely, those who are out at sea and out of touch. The present executive council was elected—I am not saying this in a critical sense, but just to show the difficulties of communication—by only 5,000 of the 65,000 members. Only in the case of the election of a General Secretary does the constitution provide for a ballot of all the members, and under the constitution six months are allowed for this process.

These considerations are, perhaps, relevant to the suggestions put forward in the House eight days ago, suggestions which we ourselves have considered as a possible and obvious procedure, that a ballot of the members should be held about a return to work. It is because the union's membership at any moment of time is so widely scattered that those members of the union who are engaged on the cross-Channel and short-sea trades, in localised port operations or in the coast-wise trade inevitably predominate in the democratic organisation of the union.

While it is sometimes said that they account for a considerable proportion of the active and militant members, it is equally true that on these, in the main weekly-paid, members the sacrifice and the burden of the strike has so largely fallen. They are only too conscious that they will have lost in the past six weeks, in most cases, well over £100 in earnings, and in many cases of high seasonal activity far more than that, while the majority of the union's members, for

whose interests they are fighting, are still at sea and at any time, a week, a month or two months from now, will be returning to Britain with the accumulated earnings of a long voyage.

It is, therefore, easier to criticise this union than it is to suggest any means by which it could be made more fully representative of its members. I felt it right to say this before coming to some of the facts which I think it necessary to lay before the House. These two facts I have just mentioned, the recent efforts to give the rank and file an effective say in the affairs of the union—democracy is a very recent growth—combined with the difficulty of making democracy truly effective—it is these two facts no less than the long accumulation of unrighted grievances which lie behind the problem to which I drew attention in my statement eight days ago. For, as I made clear then, superimposed on all these difficulties which I have just outlined, there is the further problem to which I now turn.

I begin with what has never been challenged, that there are no Communists on the executive council of this union and that the number of Communists among the membership of the union is extremely small. I doubt that they would be capable of manning more than one or two picket lines. We must be extremely careful, as I have always been, in approaching this problem to distinguish between external influences and the very real feelings of tens of thousands of union members that they have had a raw deal over so many years in the past. To be militant in this or in any other union is not a matter for reproach, perhaps least of all in this union. If the processes of industrial democracy, with all the difficulties I have mentioned confronting democracy in this union, lead to a militant approach, I, for one, would not complain.

What we have to do is to distinguish between the genuine grievances and the genuine expression of those grievances, whether by rank and file or by elected representatives at all levels, on the one hand, and deliberate exploitation of those grievances by outside influences, on the other. Again, it would be wrong to suggest, and I shall not suggest, that members of the Communist Party—I think

particularly of some dedicated Communist seamen—are not deeply concerned about these grievances and about the problems which have to be settled.

There was and is no question of my impugning the integrity of the executive council. What I was referring to in my statement eight days ago, which was borne out by the whole history of the executive council's proceedings up to that time, was not any lack of integrity, but its lack of "guts".

The House will be aware that the Communist Party, unlike the major political parties, has at its disposal an efficient and disciplined industrial apparatus controlled from Communist Party headquarters. No major strike occurs anywhere in this country in any sector of industry in which that apparatus fails to concern itself. In special cases it has been seen at work, for example, in the Electrical Trades Union, where it made a successful take-over bid if not for the share capital at any rate for the management of the union, lasting for some years. No other political party is organised on these lines.

It may be because of the political impotence of the Communist Party that it has sought expression in industrial organisation. But hon. Members would delude themselves if they imagined that there was not a most efficient organisation on the industrial side, that it has not got full-time officers ready to operate in any situation where industrial troubles are developing. Equally, we would underestimate its power if we did not recognise that, however misguided we may consider Communists' objectives or methods, in their own way they desire to see an improvement in working-class standards. They would not be effective if this were not so.

There is one other thing I want to make clear. None of this is in any way illegal. In a free society—it might be different in a Communist society—they have the legal right to do it. I have no evidence at all that, in pursuance of these aims, so far as the seamen's strike is concerned, they have committed any individual acts of illegality. I should make clear, equally, that there is no suggestion of any interference in this strike from overseas. Whatever has been done is indigenous in character and it is rooted in our own doc-

trines of freedom of association and action.

But if those who act in the way I am going to describe are within their legal rights—I take it that, whatever recommendations the Royal Commission may make, none of us would wish to curtail the basic legal rights of freedom of speech and action in this democracy—equally, those of us who regard their activities as harmful have our rights, including the right to take such action as we may think appropriate.

I have had to think a great deal about this in recent weeks, and my statement of eight days ago was not made without a great deal of anxious consideration. Some of us, owing to the position we hold, have not only an equal right to take any action within our power to ensure that these activities are known and understood for what they are, but we have a duty to exercise that right. Otherwise, I would not have spoken as I did or as I now intend to speak.

For some years, the Communist Party has had as one of its objectives the building up of a position of strength not only in the Seamen's Union, but in other unions concerned with docks and transport. It engages in the struggle for power in the Seamen's Union because it recognises the facts which I have outlined to the House not only that democracy is shallow-rooted in this union, not only that grievances and exploitation have festered for so many years, but that the very nature of sea-going employment makes infiltration from outside easier than in most other industries.

The bid that the Communists are making is directed to next year's conference at which the rules can be changed and at which steps can be taken also to change the full-time officers. In this union, for the reasons I have given, the full-time officers have an unusual degree of power to influence the conduct of the union's activities, even if this power has not been very much exercised of late. This is a take-over bid, and take-over bidders on all sides of industry are notorious for their single-mindedness and their ruthlessness. The whole formidable power of the Communist Party's industrial apparatus has for some time been directed towards this end, and the seamen's strike, with all its background of justification for industrial action, has provided the ground.

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

What I am saying has been known for some time. A seaman who played a leading part in the localised strikes of 1960 on Merseyside and elsewhere, and who was himself a former chairman of the National Seamen's Reform Movement and got a little disillusioned with some of the things he saw, made a long statement in the January 1965, issue of the *Seaman* setting out the way in which this take-over bid was being organised.

Having given details—and I commend the statement to right hon. and hon. Members to read—of what was being done on the North-East Coast and in the Mersey area, he summed up by saying:

“Thus the Communists are in a position to use the movement for their own purposes; and all British seamen know what this means. In particular Gordon Norris and some well-known Communists on the North-East coast are going round all ports to ensure that the Communist Party keeps a firm grip on the movement.”

In this long and factual statement, he advised his fellow members of the N.U.S. to counter what he called these

“... very small groups of active Communists who are working for their own interests and those of the Communist Party.”

I said that I would give the facts as soon as they became known. The Communist Party's industrial organiser is Mr. Bert Ramelson, who, in January, succeeded Mr. Peter Kerrigan. He has three full-time officials on his staff and in the London area, where the docks provide his hunting ground, his principal lieutenant is Mr. Dennis Goodwin. Round this full-time nucleus has been gathered a small group of active trade unionists in the N.U.S. and other trade unions.

I have referred to the numerical weakness of the Communists in the N.U.S. Yet, despite this, as soon as the strike began, they were successful in ensuring that the chairmanships of the strike committees in the country's two major ports, London and Liverpool, were taken by two Communists, Mr. Jack Coward and Mr. Roger Woods. Again, in the union's negotiating machinery, a leading member of the negotiating committee, not himself a member of the executive council, who was elected from the floor at the annual general conference, was also a highly articulate and effective Communist, Mr. Gordon Norris, who, in certain of his activities, has operated under the name of George Goodman.

The objectives of the Communist Party in this dispute were, first, to influence the day-to-day policy of the Executive Council; secondly, to extend the area of the stoppage; and, thirdly, to use the strike not only to improve the conditions of seamen—in which I believe them to be genuine—but also to secure what is at present the main political and industrial objective of the Communist Party—the destruction of the Government's prices and incomes policy.

First, let me deal with the organisation of the union and the strike. I have referred to the Communists' success in capturing two of the major strike committees. They are also effectively represented in other areas. When Mr. Norris, who has not paused for breath during the last six weeks, visited Glasgow, he made it his business to contact certain members of the strike committee, but omitted to contact the secretary, who happened to be an efficient and loyal member of the union. The same thing, according to newspaper reports, happened in Belfast. At various stages since the strike began, these individuals I have mentioned have met to decide their policy and have sought, through whatever means have been open to them, to influence the executive council.

As I have said, they started with the disadvantage of having no Communists among the members of the executive council. They had to operate through any who were responsive to their suggestions, including a circle of members whose conception of the strike made them amenable to the type of proposals the Communist Party was advocating.

I have referred to the difficulties of industrial democracy in elections to the executive council. One must recognise effects of the history of the union in the inexperience of many members. The political and industrial inexperience of some of the members of the Executive Council, which we would not find in most of our other Unions because of their day-to-day political and industrial contacts, has meant that a small group of articulate, intelligent and well-briefed members could exercise influence far beyond their number.

If I refer to Mr. Joseph Kenny and Mr. James Slater, neither of them a member of the Communist Party, I must acknowledge their political and argumentative

skill. I have had five meetings with the executive council, or with committees appointed by that council, and I can testify to their ability and to their mastery of the details of the seamen's complaints, to their ability to absorb skilled briefing and to their dominance amongst their colleagues.

They live in Liverpool and South Shields respectively and over the past few weeks, when attending the executive council in London, they have stayed at the same flat as Mr. Jack Coward. Of course, they are free to stay where they like, but Mr. Ramelson has visited the flat when they were there and Mr. Norris has been in constant touch with them. They have been in continual contact with Mr. Ramelson and Mr. Norris.

I need no evidence, other than my eyes and ears, to recognise that these two have dominated the executive council throughout the negotiations. Again, they were predominant in the executive council's brusque and unanimous rejection of the appeal my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour and I made to the executive council a week last Friday.

The House may well ask how influences of this kind even exercised through a small number of highly articulate and experienced members of the executive, could have so long secured acceptance, unanimously and almost without rebuttal, from a council of 48 members. But, first, let us recognise that the views which the militant members of the council were expressing fell on fertile ground because all their colleagues were aware of the strong feelings of the sea-going community. And let none of us underestimate the extent to which moderate members of the council, no less militant in their objectives than their militant colleagues, would be subject to pressures which any of us would find distasteful and perhaps almost irresistible.

All of us are used to hecklers, but the treatment anyone who, during the past six weeks, advocated a return to work on almost any terms would have received from strike committees—and some of them did and from picket lines outside union headquarters—and the more vociferous members of strike meetings, would have daunted many of us. I had it in Liverpool 10 days ago and, like many right hon. and hon. Members, I am an old hand. But it was not pleasant and

those who, through the history and organisation of this union are less experienced than we, might find this treatment almost intolerable.

An article in *The Guardian* last Saturday indicated the pressures to which any moderate member might be subjected in his strike committee, in his home port and—let us not under-rate this—in the treatment he might receive when he returned to his ship. The article referred to the fact that at many of these meetings can be recognised

“ . . . men who are not in the N.U.S., but are members of other unions . . . ”
and that

“ Their aim—and an organised pattern is discerned here—is to keep the temperature of meetings running high to inflame the legitimate grievances of seamen by intervening with abrasive slogans shouted at appropriate moments.”

All of us who know the great seaports know how true this is. I would commend to right hon. and hon. Members all the evidence produced in some of those newspaper reports—the telephone calls to branches, the organisation of brutal slogans, placards, interjections, the implications and suggestions, whether on the executive or at strike committees or at any other level—and this certainly took place—that anyone who advocated negotiations up to a few days ago was a traitor to the men who elected him and a marked man at the next election. These things were being said and we know that this is true.

The members of this union are not, in the main, armchair warriors in the industrial struggle. They are sea-going mariners and there is no more tightly-knit community than a ship. From a ship there is no escape. There is no happier hunting-ground for the sea-lawyers, who could make the life of any man a misery who had been marked out as a blackleg even for exercising his democratic duties as a member of an elected body, than a ship on the high seas.

Time and again in this dispute the Communist Party's objectives have rapidly become the policy of the executive. This is particularly true in relation to the determination of the party to spread the strike. This was also the policy of the N.U.S. It was not the policy of the T.U.C. or of any of the other unions affiliated to the T.U.C.

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

When the state of emergency was declared, the *Morning Star*, whose well-informed articles I do not consider to derive from any process of *a priori* reasoning on the part of its editorial staff, declared:

“No self-respecting Trade Unionist will work in co-operation with the Army and Navy.”

and that

“Every Trade Unionist must rise in solidarity in support of the seamen.”

This was a clear invitation to extend the dispute and, obviously, the most likely area of extension was the docks. This was, in fact, the policy being pursued by Mr. Ramelson and his colleagues. It was not the policy of Mr. Hogarth, who, though his presence at the dock meeting had been announced, knew that, in accordance with the usual rules with which the T.U.C. would be concerned, it would be wrong to appeal to the members of another union—in this case, the Transport and General Workers' Union—except with the approval of the executive committee of that union.

The policy of extending the dispute was, however, conducted by Mr. Ramelson, Mr. Goodwin and a number of other influential Communists whose influence extended to unions beyond the N.U.S. The most prominent of these was Mr. Harry Watson, the President of the Lightermen's Union, and such well-known figures as Mr. Jack Dash and Mr. Danny Lyons, who are both members of the unofficial liaison committee in the London docks, together, of course, with Mr. Gordon Norris and Mr. Jack Coward representing the seamen. I have referred to Mr. Dash who, as his numerous speeches in the docks indicated, took a more moderate line because he was torn between his loyalty to the party and his loyalty to his union, which was resisting all pressures to take the Communist line.

Hon. Members will have followed with interest the course of events in the week in which the Pearson Report came out. There is much to suggest that rejection of the interim Report was virtually a *fait accompli* before the executive had even seen the text of the Report. Inaccurate accounts of what the Court of Inquiry was likely to recommend were circulating among the Press on the night of Tuesday, 7th June, and were almost

certainly known to some of those I have mentioned. On the Wednesday morning, the executive received the text of the Report and rejected it, with its then customary unanimity, with the most perfunctory discussion, and with no regard to the broader issues raised by the Report.

From then on the emphasis was on widening the strike. On 13th June, a meeting of about 1,500 dockers, chaired by Mr. Jack Coward, was held in the London docks and was addressed by Mr. Watson, Mr. Norris, and Mr. Dash, the first two of these with great enthusiasm and the third with lesser enthusiasm, commending a resolution to “black” all British ships in the London docks. But a fourth speaker, Mr. Mundy, the official representative of the Transport and General Workers' Union, took the opposite line. In the event, the resolution was carried and two hours of confusion in London's docks followed, while the dockers sought advice from those able and competent to give that advice, namely, their own unions. Because of the resolute advice given by Mr. Mundy on behalf of the Transport and General Workers' Union, despite that resolution, by twelve o'clock the dockers were hard at work on the ships.

This was a turning point in the history of the strike, but another turning point was the rejection by the International Transport Federation, whose British representatives include all Britain's transport unions—the railway unions, the T. & G., the Merchant Navy Officers' Association, as well as the N.U.S., of the N.U.S. request that the Federation should call on foreign seamen's unions to take corresponding action to prevent the movement to Britain of foreign-owned ships. The last hope of those who sought to extend the strike, to extend the damage to Britain's economy, let alone to bring the nation and the Government to a state of surrender, was, in fact, the meeting two days ago of the Management Committee of the International Transport Federation where, although an appeal for financial help was approved, moves to extend the strike were finally buried.

Once 13th June had passed, the emphasis shifted to the talks which my right hon. Friend and I had with the unions and the employers. I believe that

the union made a great mistake, particularly in terms of its appeal to the nation, in rejecting the Report of the Court of Inquiry. Pretty quickly after that rejection the extent of this mistake was realised, I think, and not only in union circles. I believe that there was a widespread recognition that this strike had reached the point of diminishing returns, not only in terms of the support of the rank and file, but in terms of what it was likely to achieve with each succeeding week of unemployment and hardship for N.U.S. members.

The purpose which my right hon. Friend and I had in mind was to see whether there was a way to meet the concern of the seamen about the question of leave arrangements—at no additional cost beyond what was contemplated by the court of inquiry and at no additional cost in terms of a national incomes and prices policy. But political rather than industrial counsels won the day. What my right hon. Friend and I sought to achieve, what we outlined in our appeal to the Executive, again met the most brusque of rejections. This may have been connected with the intense and active canvassing of a substantial number of council members on the night of Thursday, 16th June. However that may be, that rejection of our appeal, which followed the most persuasive table banging by the leading militants on the executive council, was decisive and, as I have said, unanimous.

These are the circumstances in which I reported to the House on 20th June. I think that there were those who thought that when I spoke frankly to the House about some of the influences operating on the union I would set up resistances which might prolong the strike. I can understand this feeling, which was expressed in the House. The danger that it might be a consequence of my action was naturally one of the possible consequences which I had to weigh most anxiously. In fact, I believe that the fact that for the first time last Thursday the moderate members of the executive took their courage into their hands and voted against the strongly-pressed advice of their most militant colleagues, suggested that I was not ill advised.

I think—and I am not saying this without good reason—that a large proportion of the executive, almost certainly

a majority, on the previous Friday, if they had voted according to their considered opinions, would have voted for a return to work, or at least a return to negotiation on the basis of what my right hon. Friend and I had said to them. I believe that one result of what I said last Monday is that the moderates have become articulate, and that in so doing they represent the views of the majority of the rank and file members of the union, particularly those who have—and I pay every tribute to them—suffered great hardships for the cause in which they believe.

I know that there will be those who will say that it is not the duty of the Government or of anyone who holds the responsibilities that I hold, to be concerned with such matters, that our duty is to remain aloof. Having regard to the great economic dangers to the nation, in the determined battle which we are fighting for economic solvency, and the facts, mentioned by hon. Members on both sides of the House, about the effects, and long-term effects, on our export trade, I feel that it was my duty to take this action if it seemed directed towards speeding the end of the dispute.

They are wrong who believe that what I did then or what I have done today is an attack on militant trade unionism. Having regard to the history of this union and to the grievances which I and so many hon. Members consider to be deeply felt by seamen in every port of Britain, I could not conscientiously deny this union, nor would I want to, the right to pursue its case as vigorously as seems right to it. It is an inevitable reaction from the union's past, but we have the right to ask that militancy should depend upon the representation of the democratic views of the union's members, and should not be artificially exploited by those whose motives, while partly directed to the seamen's interests, are also inspired by a desire to secure power within the union, and at the same time, more widely, to destroy a policy, which is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, on prices and incomes and which the House will shortly be asked to ratify.

Mr. Hogarth is reported as having said that this dispute is not fundamentally about hours or pay, but about a struggle

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]
for power within the union. It is, in fact, about both. But in so far as this strike has been artificially prolonged because of this power struggle, I believe that it was my duty to speak out.

After this strike is over, no doubt many hon. Members will be considering its lessons in terms of the general policy so far as the nation, on the one hand, and the rights of trade unionism, on the other, are concerned. I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite hold sincere views about the way in which these matters can be regulated, and in particular, about the way in which these problems could be dealt with by simple changes in the law.

As I have already told the House, after my experience of the most intimate and detailed discussions with 48 men representing, as they did, 65,000 members who consider themselves pushed almost beyond the bounds of endurance, I feel that in this case certainly, we are dealing not with a simple legalistic matter, but with issues going to the very frontiers of human relations. My right hon. Friend, in one of the controversies which arose on these issues, some weeks ago, said that industrial relations were human relations. I believe that he was right, and to be fair, I believe that he was quoting some words of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister of Labour.

This is not the moment to anticipate the findings of the Royal Commission which will be concerned with legal and constitutional matters, but also with a problem of human relations. And they will be wrong who seek from this unique chapter in the history of industrial relations in this country to proceed to oversimplify and draw hasty conclusions, however plausible they might appear. Rather should they be left, I think, to the combined wisdom of the members of the Royal Commission on which, ultimately, the House, and indeed the country, will pronounce the final verdict.

Before I sit down, I must refer to one issue about the responsibilities of the House and of any Member of the House, on whatever side he may sit, and be he Minister or backbencher. Last Saturday, the executive council of the Seamen's Union indicated its regret about the brief statement which I made last week. It

has invited me to make a public statement outside on the lines of what I then said. I have not attacked its integrity, as I have said. There was no question at all of shrinking from a confrontation with the executive about the issues I have raised, because last week I indicated quite clearly to the executive that I was ready to meet with it and discuss what I had said.

But it has raised the question of parliamentary privilege and it is right that I should refer to this. Privilege adheres not so much to individual Members of the House as to the House as a whole. It is time-honoured and is essential to the rights of this House. The House can be a guardian of the public interest only to the extent that any hon. Member can feel able to use the privilege that this House traditionally has, and, in the exercise of that privilege, to raise any matter affecting the public interest.

This applies to every Member of the House, in whatever part of the Chamber he may sit. Some of the classical battles for freedom in this House have been derived from a judicious use of this privilege for every Member who invokes it has a responsibility, recognising that he has the power he has, secure, as he is from the normal process of law. No hon. Member would lightly invoke that privilege, but his first duty must be to the public interest.

There will always be those who say that no hon. Member should invoke any form of words in this Chamber that he is not prepared to use outside. This is to misunderstand privilege. I am not prepared to be silenced, or to let any other hon. Members be silenced, in any proceeding that they feel right in the public interest, by the fact that the repetition of words used here and outside might lead to legal processes which would have the effect, for a year or perhaps two years, of preventing any comment on the subject, either by that Member or by the Press, or even by the House itself, in discussing these vitally important issues.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the rules which it is the Chair's duty to enforce, once such a legal process is under way, whether it is ultimately proceeded with or not, not only would all public discussion be stifled, but because the issue would be *sub judice*, discussions

even in this House would be stifled and that is why, in the Bill of Rights, nearly three centuries ago, it was laid down

"That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in Parlyament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parlyament."

I believe that the issues that have been raised by the question that I have raised this afternoon, by the pressure upon this union, by outside interests, is a matter of vital national interest. As I have said, it was only after the most anxious consideration that I felt it right to put these issues before the House.

Mr. Stratton Mills (Belfast, North)
rose—

The Prime Minister: I will give way in a moment. This House is the custodian not only of personal liberties, but of the wider national interest and that interest would remain unheard if any one of us, whatever our individual responsibilities to this House, felt that we were not free to raise matters of great national import except under conditions which had allowed those in our view who are working against the higher interests of the nation to stifle public and Parliamentary discussion.

I hope that what I have said today will justify this thought, that as Members of the House, we have not only rights, we also have duties. And in the exercise of those rights and duties, it is incumbent upon every one of us to give to the House any information necessary to promote and further the national interest. For if there are actions being undertaken, whether, as in some past cases, by the Executive, or, as in the present case, by any private organisation which any of us considers harmful to the public interest, this House is the place where these actions should be brought under public scrutiny.

If—as with the operations that I have described, even though they derive from reasons which seem good to their authors and even though, as I have said, they involve no contradiction or breach of the law—if in the nature of things such operations are largely conducted away from the public gaze, it is the duty of any of us having this knowledge to bring them into the light.

This House can perform its ancient functions only on the basis that we are free to speak freely in this House.

Mr. Stratton Mills: The right hon. Gentleman has carried the House with him in his last few remarks, but he has based his main case upon newspaper reports and upon a general supposition based upon his own arguments. Is it his intention, before sitting down, to give some more firm evidence to the House to substantiate these very serious allegations?

The Prime Minister: I have based none of my case, or my facts, on newspaper reports, except on the one occasion when I referred to visits by one of the leading Communist officials to Northern Ireland. That was the only newspaper report on which I based what I have said.

For the rest, I referred hon. Members, and I see no reason why I should not, to an article in *The Guardian* last Saturday, which explained, at greater length than it would be right for me now to go into, exactly what is the answer to this problem, which I think has puzzled all of us, of how it is that a small number of men can get a lot of others to vote with them in this way. The article I quoted—*[Laughter.]* I think that this is a very serious matter that we are debating. The article that I quoted gave a lot of reasons how intimidation, not illegal intimidation, but intimidation, is organised, and how this can become effective in allowing a small number of active organisers in this way to terrify or terrorise others from voting in a particular way.

In asking the House to approve this Address and Reply, and to approve the Regulations, I hope that we will all feel that we are all debating not only what is necessarily, and from the point of view of all of us, inevitably, in a personal sense, painful consequences of this dispute, but that we are ready to learn the lessons and ready to assert the duties as well as the rights and privileges of membership of this House. It is only in that spirit that I have addressed the House in the terms that I have, after very deep thought, chosen to adopt this afternoon.

4.57 p.m.

Mr. Edward Heath (Bexley): We on this side of the House greatly regret the absence of the Minister of Labour from this debate today and are immensely sorry about the reason for it. We all know the strain under which he has been working and the heavy responsibilities

[MR. HEATH.]
which he has been bearing during these last few weeks. The whole House has an immense respect for the right hon. Gentleman and I join with the Prime Minister in hoping that he will make a speedy recovery to full health.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Heath: I would ask the Prime Minister that during the absence of the right hon. Gentleman he should place a senior Minister in charge of the Ministry of Labour. Much as we admire the ability and charm of the hon. Lady the Parliamentary Secretary, nevertheless, in a difficult period such as this, it is desirable that a senior Minister should be placed in charge of the Department. I do not believe that in industrial matters it is right that the Prime Minister, however willing he is, should handle the details of a dispute of this kind at all levels. He is, after all, in the political sphere, the ultimate court of appeal and the ultimate means of persuasion.

In these circumstances, it is essential to have a senior Minister who can handle these aspects of such a dispute while it is going on. It is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to decide this matter and I would ask him if he would place a senior Minister in charge.

The purpose of this debate is to approve the Emergency Regulations. It has become a debate on the whole issue of the strike of the seamen. Perhaps the House will feel the need, after a long speech by the Prime Minister, concentrating to such a large extent on the political influences at work on the union, to get the seamen's dispute into perspective. The strike is now in its seventh week and it is one of the longest and most damaging strikes for many years. I believe that it is the third or fourth longest strike in British history. It is damaging, none the less so, because it appears to have little direct effect upon people's ordinary lives. Overseas, it has certainly made a tremendous impact, as those who have travelled abroad during the Whitsun Recess will know. It has undermined, to a considerable extent, confidence in the delivery of our exports and in the ability of the British shipping industry to perform the services required of it. As a result, countries and individuals tend to turn to other producers and other shippers, and

once a change is made it is difficult to regain these customers.

It is damaging the national interest and our balance of payments to the extent, as I think the National Institute has calculated, of about £20 million a month, which I should have thought was, on the whole, on the conservative side. It is damaging the seamen's interests because there is the risk that, with the loss of trade and shipping services, their own jobs will be diminished. But, above all, I believe that it is making people abroad question whether as a nation we are capable of running our affairs reasonably and responsibly. In the long term, this is the greatest damage which this strike is doing.

I should like to deal in what I hope will be a very brief speech after the Prime Minister's naturally long description of events, first, with the question of the renewal of the emergency powers; secondly, with the economic and industrial background to the strike; thirdly, with the handling of the dispute itself; and, fourthly, with the pressures on the executive of the National Union of Seamen.

First, on the emergency powers, let me say straight away that we support the renewal of these Regulations. There is, I think, little more to be said than was said in the first debate on them. We accept the need for the additional powers concerning aircraft. These powers are indeed wide, as has been pointed out, but the Government consider them to be necessary, and we do not quarrel with that in any way. Indeed, our criticism is that the powers which were granted to the Government have not been used in cases where they should have been used.

We recognise the problem confronting every Government in such a situation as this. It is how to use emergency powers of this kind in the interests of the country without exacerbating still further the feelings of those engaged in the dispute. But once the powers have been granted by Parliament, and granted as they were in this case on a very wide basis without any division of opinion in the Lobbies, then they must be used firmly, otherwise no one will believe that the Government are in earnest either in taking the powers or in their statements.

I would give as a particular case the interests of the Scottish Islands. The Prime Minister said last Monday that he did not want to use emergency powers until the need arose. But from all the information I have there has been a need for the use of these powers by the Government for the past three weeks to help the situation in the northern islands of the country. The population is bound to suffer because tourism has not been possible during May or June, and there are many cancellations during July.

At the same time, there are shortages of fuel and of petrol supplies. These are impeding people in getting to work and are, therefore, causing, or are likely to cause, unemployment, particularly in the Harris tweed mills and elsewhere. There are shortages of beverages on many islands. Some of the distilleries are closing down. On Shetland—no doubt the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) will be able to give more details about this—people have been unable to move stock from the mainland.

To sum up very briefly on this point, the Scottish Office and the Secretary of State for Scotland appear to have made no attempt to deal with these problems by the use of the emergency powers. They have not set up any emergency headquarters. I cannot find any record of a visit by a Scottish Minister to the islands to see for himself exactly what the position is. The Government's administration seems to have broken down or failed the islands entirely. This is a place where, I believe, the emergency powers should have been used speedily and firmly. I can give the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Scotland further details on these points if they want them. I hope that they will use the powers speedily and firmly to meet these needs.

Secondly, I turn to the economic background to the strike, which is an aspect never mentioned by Government spokesmen. I do not think that it has been mentioned by the Prime Minister in any of his speeches or statements. The real economic background to this dispute is the very large and inflationary wage increases which have taken place since the present Administration came to office. The figures are now well known.

Taking October, 1964-65, average weekly earnings went up by 7.4 per cent.

Since then, they have been running at an annual rate of 9.6 per cent. The last figures available to October last year show that average hourly earnings were running at 10.1 per cent. It is quite natural that the seamen should have seen some of these wage awards being made and should have drawn their own conclusions from them. These wage increases have been going on despite the incomes policy which the First Secretary of State has carried out, with immense energy. Nobody questions or doubts the devotion which he has put into this policy.

The second point, which is a psychological point—I want to touch on it only briefly—is that the Government, when they were in opposition, were constantly critical of the incomes policy attempted by the then Government and, in particular, by my right hon. Friend the Member for Barnet (Mr. Maudling). It was not really surprising to any impartial observer that when the present Administration came to office the trade unions, naturally, did not expect to be asked to restrain their wages in the way that they have been asked to do.

If the Prime Minister doubts that, there are many quotations on record—which I have and which I can read to him—of the sort of thing said in opposition by the First Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Labour. I do not believe for a moment that the trade unions expected to be confronted with the sort of request put forward by the Government. Therefore psychologically, this has added to the atmosphere in which the seamen have pressed their claims.

In the recent wage awards, the Government when they have been the employer and, therefore, directly concerned with the incomes policy, have in the ultimate result allowed themselves to be pushed into awards which certainly did not conform with their own incomes policy. Again, the seamen saw this and drew their own conclusions. That is really the economic and psychological background of the dispute. I do not propose to go into the details which the Prime Minister gave about the past problems of the union or about the amendment of the Act. But in the background to all these points there is the present economic situation and the Government's policy.

[MR. HEATH.]

I wish to deal, thirdly, and again briefly, with the handling of the strike. When there is an industrial dispute in this country all too seldom it is discussed in the House. While it is on, hon. Members on both sides refrain from pressing the point with the object of trying to do nothing which will deter a settlement. When the strike is over, again both sides of the House are asked not to go over past quarrels, but to let bygones be bygones and concentrate on trying to avoid them in future. This is the first occasion that I can recall during the years that I have been in the House on which there has been a debate which will obviously turn on the handling of the strike as well as the factors involved in it.

Already, certain questions arise which should be considered, and I will try to put them as generally and as impartially as I can. First, on the inquiry. The question which arises is the timing of it. The decision to strike was taken on 14th April and the strike was to begin on 14th May. The Minister of Labour saw both trade unionists and the employers on 18th April. It was then recorded in the Press that he formed the impression that the union might accept a committee of inquiry, and the employers likewise. But was it offered to them then? I understand that it was not. It was not offered until 7th May, and it was then rejected by the union.

If the Prime Minister says that the members of the Executive were under these pressures, obviously that interval of three weeks is of considerable importance. If the inquiry had been offered straight away on 18th April, it could have been held and its report made and considered before the strike was due to begin. Therefore, the timing here is very important.

It is true to say that the union rejected it on 7th May, but when the Pearson Committee was set up on 26th May it was done on the Government's initiative and both sides were informed. The Government could, therefore, have done this at an earlier stage in the dispute. The question is whether there was a misjudgment of the strength of union feeling and of the length of time that the strike was likely to last, or whether the Government wanted to see the dispute settled with-

out having an inquiry if they could avoid it. Those are the questions which arise.

I come now to the second point which I raised with the Prime Minister. On 13th May, when the right hon. Gentleman intervened in the dispute, he called the union to No. 10, but he did not, I understand, invite the employers. As one who has had to deal with these things, I suggest to the Prime Minister that, tactically and psychologically, one is immediately in difficulties when calling only one side to any group of discussions.

That also, I believe, played its part in the psychology of the executive. It was followed by the Prime Minister's telecast on the Monday evening, when the right hon. Gentleman was quick to make it clear that this was now a dispute with the Government. It was not a case in which the Government were the employer, it was not similar to the railwaymen or some of the other disputes. It was a dispute between employers and employees. The question therefore immediately arises whether, in any attempt to settle a dispute of this kind, it is right for the Government and for the Prime Minister to make it quite clear that the dispute was with the Government, and in any event to make it so clear at such an early stage.

The fourth question which arises out of the handling of the strike is this. The Pearson Committee reported on 8th June. The Prime Minister has given his account of the reaction of the executive. The Government were very slow to make their views known. The Prime Minister spoke on 14th June and the Minister of Labour, I think, on Monday, 13th June. They then expressed their belief that the Pearson Report was a fair settlement.

If, however, the Government had been able to make their views known at the point of publication of the Pearson Report, they could have said clearly so that the executive and the moderates on the executive would have known that that was the Government's view, the Government having intervened and considered the recommendation of the court of inquiry to be a fair settlement and that it should be accepted as such.

The Prime Minister: Although the right hon. Gentleman is going into the matter constructively, he has his facts wrong. The same night that the Pearson Report appeared—it was published on

the Wednesday—my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour said that it was the right answer and was a fair and honourable settlement. The following day, following a Cabinet meeting, a statement was issued from No. 10 the day after publication of the Report saying the same thing. I would be glad to send the right hon. Gentleman a copy of the statement that the Government as a whole issued the day after the Report was published.

Mr. Heath: I stand corrected in view of what the Prime Minister has said. The important point remains that the Prime Minister, knowing the pressures which were upon the executive, did not make plain at the point of publication of the Report that the Government believed that the settlement was a fair one and one which ought to be accepted. I believe that this, too, could have helped in a very difficult situation.

The next question which arises from the handling of the dispute is that the Pearson Report states, at page 16:

"In our view the Executive Council were not justified in using the strike weapon without further attempts to resolve the position, because there was nothing to call for the use of this very drastic and dangerous remedy."

That leads one to ask whether we ought to consider the system which exists in the United States and some other countries of a cooling-off period which would have come into operation in exactly such circumstances as these. I do not wish in any way to prejudice the issue, but I think that the Pearson Committee, by making this statement, has put into the arena the question of whether we should have a cooling-off period.

The last point which arises both from the handling of the dispute and the Prime Minister's statement today is the question of the sympathetic strike. The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned the activities of Communists and others to bring other unions into the strike. In this country the sympathetic strike is legal. There has always been a dispute legally as to the position of a general strike, but a sympathetic strike has always been legal. The question is now raised as to whether, if influences of that kind are at work, the position ought to remain as it is. I am not in any way prejudging the

matter. I merely say that it is one of the substantial questions which arise from the handling of the strike, the Pearson Report and the Prime Minister's statement.

I do not believe that it is enough to leave these points to the Royal Commission, which has been sitting for 15 months. It has still not received the evidence of the Trades Union Congress. This is a matter for great regret. I know that the Prime Minister does not like to be reminded of his witticism that Royal Commissions take minutes and waste years, but I have a great fear that he will be proved not only witty, but right, on this occasion concerning the Royal Commission on the Trade Unions and Employers' Associations.

Therefore, in view of the points which have now been raised, I do not believe that it is enough to leave this matter to the Royal Commission, certainly not the Royal Commission in its present form and moving at its present speed. I ask the Prime Minister to look at this whole question again.

I come, finally, to my fourth series of points: that is, the pressures on the union executive of which the Prime Minister has spoken. He has given a long and full account, and I thank him also for giving to my right hon. Friend the Member for Barnet and myself in advance some of the facts which he has given the House today. The House, and certainly those who have ever had to handle these affairs at the Ministry of Labour, will agree that what the Prime Minister has told us today in a general sense is very well known.

It is very well known to many hon. Members. It is known to former Ministers of Labour. It is known to the industrial correspondents of the newspapers and is widely known in Fleet Street by many others. It is well known that in some unions the position is difficult because there are members of the executive who are members of the Communist Party. It is also known that, where this is not the case, Communists try to influence others in the union.

It is also known that they try to sway other unions not directly on strike and to influence them in their policy. What is new is that this matter should be raised by a Minister, and in this case the

[MR. HEATH.]
Prime Minister, in the House of Commons. It has never, I believe, been discussed here before. In my period of membership of the House I cannot recall it being raised by a Minister during a strike.

In its quiet, reflective mood, the House might pause for a moment to think what would have happened if a Conservative Minister of Labour, let alone a Prime Minister, had stood up in the House of Commons and made that part of the statement which the Prime Minister made last Monday and which he has again made today. No hon. Member opposite would challenge the fact that there would have been immediate uproar. Indeed, it would have been led by the Prime Minister himself.

That is what is new. The matter has not been raised in public before. Last Monday, and today, the Prime Minister has set a precedent for the handling of industrial disputes by bringing forward information of this kind and using it—I do not in any way question his motives—to bring about a settlement of the strike. The point which affected me particularly during the answers to the questions following the Prime Minister's original statement was when he said, on 20th June:

"My doubt is—and this is not just a question of individual extremists—on the question of how far they"—

that is, the executive of the National Union of Seamen—

"are their own masters in taking decisions of this sort."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 20th June, 1966; Vol. 730, c. 49.]

That seemed to me to be a strong and important statement, to question whether the executive are masters in taking decisions of this sort. It immediately raises questions not only of influence or of other people's opinions being expressed, but of the actual control of the executive by people outside the executive. If the members of the executive are not their own masters, who are the masters, in which way are they masters and how do they control the executive? I believe that that is the question to which not only the House, but the country, is looking for an answer, because it is a matter of the utmost importance to our industrial life.

As I said, the Prime Minister has given a very full account of the Com-

munist activities. He has said quite specifically that there is nothing illegal in them. He has also said quite specifically that there is no evidence of any personal illegality. He has also said quite specifically that there is no evidence of any influence from overseas. So the question still remains: exactly in which way is this small body of people, the Communists, the masters of the executive?

It seems to me that what the Prime Minister was saying was that two gentlemen, Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater, to whom he paid tributes for their debating skill and their power of persuasiveness, argued the executive into the decisions which it took. The Prime Minister gave no evidence of their having any hold over the executive other than to argue it into taking the decisions which it took. He said that there was nothing specifically illegal, and that intimidation would be illegal. So apparently there was no intimidation of an illegal nature, but they out-argued the rest of the executive. How, then, did they have a hold over the executive? That is the question which remains.

The other question which arises is: as these gentlemen are not Communists themselves, the Prime Minister told us, what hold have the Communist Party over those two gentlemen to make them do the things which made the executive do something because its members were not their own masters?

It seems to me that those are the fundamental questions which have been raised by the Prime Minister's statement today, and they are questions of the very greatest importance.

The Prime Minister made his statement last Monday and his speech today in a sense of duty to the national interest. He has told the House so quite clearly and frankly. He believed that the members of the national executive ought to know what is going on if they did not know, and that the public ought to know so that public opinion should be brought to bear on the executive. We in the House can fully understand that. We want public opinion to know if there are political bodies at work in the country using influence behind the scenes in a non-democratic way, even if it is not illegal, and we want trade union

executives to be able to make decisions in the light of the fullest knowledge.

At the same time, everyone in the House will agree that there are also individual rights and interests and collective rights and interests—in this case, the executive of the union which has to be fully considered and safeguarded. It is not only that we are concerned with the national interest, the public interest and public information. We in the House are sent here also as the protectors of the rights of individuals.

As a result of the speech which the Prime Minister has made today, there are certain individuals outside the House about whom information has been given. Those individuals, as reported in the Press, have challenged the information which has already been given and which the Prime Minister has repeated today. So here we have a case of a conflict between the national interest, the individual interest and, indeed, the collective interest of the executive of the Union.

The Prime Minister has said, quite rightly, that privilege is of fundamental importance to us in the House of Commons. I quite understand, as many hon. Members will, that the statements which he has made under privilege cannot be made in public outside the House. At the same time, he does not wish to abandon privilege here, because he believes that it is essential that we should retain it so as to be able to speak out frankly without fear of damage when we believe it right to do so.

If that is the case and if there is a conflict between the national interest as seen by the Prime Minister of the day, other hon. Members of the House and the rights of individuals, it seems to me that some other means must be found whereby individuals can exercise their rights. And that must be set alongside the national interest. Only then shall we be performing our real duty to the citizens of the country.

The questions which arise are these. When the Prime Minister says that he doubts whether the members of the executive were their own masters, is his conclusion justified? Secondly, was it wise to make these statements in public in any case? Thirdly, if the statements are fully justified, is any further action needed, either administrative or legisla-

tive, to deal with these issues? Those are the three questions which arise out of this situation.

If I may deal with the question whether it was wise or not, the Prime Minister believes, as he has told us, that they have already shortened the strike, and he justified them on those grounds. I would suggest that we ought to wait a little longer before coming to a final conclusion about that matter. It may be that they have enabled the moderates to get power and shorten the strike. It may be that they have hardened opinion and will lengthen the strike. I ask the House to withhold judgment. I do not think that it is the right time to make a judgment of this kind. Only time will show.

Secondly, is any further action needed, administrative or legislative, to deal with such a situation? If the Prime Minister is right, and the members of the executive were not their own masters, that is a situation which cannot be tolerated in the country. I do not believe that it can be left to informed public opinion through a debate in the House. It needs very serious consideration about what further action is needed. That is vital in the national interest.

The Prime Minister has been quite clear about the situation, how we can deal with it in the national interest and, at the same time, safeguard individual rights which must be considered. In those circumstances, I believe that the matter is of such importance both to the national interest and to individuals who are affected, either by themselves or collectively, that there should now be a full inquiry. I believe that it should be held in public where possible, but in private where necessary. It has been our tradition in such cases that any inquiry can take evidence in private where it is undesirable in the national interest that it should be made public, though those affected have to be considered.

I am not putting to the Prime Minister any rigid view about the nature of the inquiry. I am not saying that it ought to be under the 1921 Tribunals of Inquiry Act. There is time to consider the name of the inquiry carefully, and also the chairmanship. I do not believe that an inquiry purely by the House would be satisfactory. I think that the House

[MR. HEATH.]
itself and the country would like to have an inquiry which was conducted by an outside person. But that and the question of the terms of reference are matters which can be fully discussed.

The inquiry can then make public its conclusions, and we can see whether or not the members of the executive were their own masters. If they were not their own masters, the way in which the hold, for hold there must be, was exercised by certain members of the executive and the way in which the hold over those members was exercised by the Communist Party from outside the union. When the committee has reached its conclusions on these matters, first the Government and then the House can decide what other action, administrative or legislative, ought to be taken if the situation needs to be put right.

As the Prime Minister has said, I believe that these matters are of vital importance to the national interest. At the same time, I believe that the citizen of the country ought to have his rights and interests safeguarded in the same way as the national executive. I believe that in the situation which has now arisen, the only way in which that can be done is for the Prime Minister to set up a full inquiry into the facts of the case. Therefore, on behalf of this side of the House I ask him to do so.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. J. Grimond (Orkney and Shetland): I would like to turn at once to the proposal for an inquiry, because the House should be quite clear about what the inquiry is to inquire into. The Leader of the Opposition has said that he is putting that out as an idea and that he would like it discussed. I take him at his word.

When the right hon. Gentleman spoke of protecting the rights of individuals, are the individuals whose rights he thinks are threatened the men in the Seamen's Union who have been accused of being Communists? Or are they the members of the executive, or both? If they are the former, what we have to examine is how far these rights cannot be protected by the ordinary processes of law. I am very chary of setting out on an inquiry with rather vague terms of reference and finding that it does a great deal of dam-

age in ways which were not foreseen when the inquiry was set up. We should be quite clear as to what inquiry we are pursuing, and what individuals we are attempting to protect. It is no crime in this country either to be a Communist, or to call anyone a Communist.

The Leader of the Opposition says that the inquiry should look into the allegation that the seamen's executive was not its own master, and should seek to find out how this undue influence, as it appears to be suggested, was exercised on the executive. We are all politicians in this Chamber, and we know that constantly influence is exercised on anybody who has any power. It is a commonplace of life, and I do not believe that we will find out very much more than what is well known about the Communist Party, that it seeks to take advantage of any situation in which people's tempers are raised, and in which they believe they have grievances. In this situation the Communist Party is pretty ruthless, but not illegal, in its methods of bringing pressure to bear. I do not see what sort of inquiry can elucidate this much further, and, if it did, I am not quite clear what the result would be.

One point which I should like to clear up is this: does the Prime Minister think that the pressures exerted on the executive of the Seamen's Union, though in his view not illegal, should be made illegal? If he feels that an amendment of the law is necessary, that is one proposition. This would be a general amendment of the law covering all sorts of pressures, and all sorts of bodies. What I am afraid of is an *ad hoc* decision arising out of this strike, and aimed at a particular situation, and at a particular Executive, which I think is an undesirable way of coming to a general conclusion about the trade union world, or about any amendment to the democratic processes within it. I believe that we should be quite clear about whether this is a situation in which a court of inquiry would do good, and not damage, exactly what its terms of reference will be, and, further, what sort of people we think should sit on it.

I do not believe that if we were to translate this into the terms of our own political lives we could have an effective inquiry to discuss, for instance, the teetotal lobby and its effect on the Liberal

Party, or the brewers' lobby and its effect on the Conservative Party. Both these lobbies are perfectly proper. It is right that people should lobby. They may, of course, go too far, but I very much doubt whether an inquiry will establish how far they ought to go and how far they do go.

I have some reservations about rushing into these inquiries which I think most people would agree when set up lately to investigate various allegations by this House have led to considerable damage to innocent people.

Sir Douglas Glover (Ormskirk): It may be that such an inquiry will show the whole of this trouble to be the result of the Prime Minister's imagination, I do not know.

Mr. Grimond: If the Leader of the Opposition means that the inquiry should investigate the truth or otherwise of the Prime Minister's allegation, that is quite different from investigating pressures within the trade union movement, and this brings out my point that to set up a vague inquiry, with vague terms of reference, might be dangerous.

I leave that point and turn to the Prime Minister's revelations about the degree of Communist influence in the N.U.S. I think that the House would be badly advised if it thought that this strike would not have taken place had it not been for the Communists. Having talked to many of the strike committee, I am certain that this strike would have taken place anyway. How far the Communists have prolonged it, or encouraged it, is a matter which we shall never be able to decide.

What we know, and what the Prime Minister has made clear, is that the Communists take advantage of any situation, even if they do not create it, and one major lesson is that this situation in the seamen's Union was allowed to fester for years and years. I think that part of the blame rest on the tradition of this House that industrial disputes should never be discussed. I am very pleased that we have been able to discuss this strike this afternoon.

One reason why it is good to discuss these strikes is because these situations build up and steps are not taken in time. The Merchant Shipping Act has not been amended, though it should have been

years ago. Secondly, we are blind to the fact that many of these disputes are not necessarily disputes between unions and employers. They are disputes directed possibly at another union or possibly to bring pressure on the employer by the effect which they have on the public.

At the moment, there is a dispute affecting the Consett Iron Company. The company is not involved in the dispute at all. It is an inter-union dispute, but the company will suffer. As this dispute impinges so directly on the public interest, this is a good reason for the House to discuss it.

I regret that this inquiry was not set up some time ago. This raises the question of how we are to be seized of industrial situations, how we are to get the information about them. This is another example of how badly informed the House is, and how valuable it might be if it had sources of information so that it could be made aware that these situations were building up.

The proposals of both sides and of the Pearson Committee are of crucial importance to get this strike settled. I should like to know what is the difference in cost between the old Sunday agreement, the new proposal by Pearson, and whatever compromise is being discussed. I know that this cost may be met by improved efficiency, by changes in the work done on ships, but I would be grateful if I could be told the amount at issue.

The Prime Minister: It is about 2.4 per cent. above the cost of Pearson to restore the 12 days which were taken away. As against the 4½ per cent. which Pearson recommended, there would be an additional 2.4 per cent. if the 12 days which were taken away in the Pearson Report were restored. The proposal which is at present before them for restoring nine of the days would cost about 1.8 per cent., which is compensated for by two changes in productivity, which between them add up to about 1.8 per cent.

Mr. Grimond: So if this could be agreed the incomes policy would not be damaged. Or perhaps I should say that it would not be damaged any further. It has been damaged already. I understand that the Government accept this as being within the tolerance of the incomes policy. I think that it is important

[MR. GRIMOND.]
to narrow down the issue in terms of cash.

It is generally agreed by everyone that the Merchant Shipping Act has either to be drastically amended or reintroduced.

Mr. Arthur Lewis (West Ham, North):
What about judges' salaries?

Mr. Grimond: I am more concerned with the Merchant Shipping Act. Is it possible to give an undertaking, not as to the nature of the Amendment, but as to the timetable for it? The seamen feel that they have been put off, that they are always being promised an inquiry on amendments but that these inquiries never end, and the amendments never come.

I do not know whether the Prime Minister is to wind up the debate. If he is, he has given an undertaking that the Pearson Committee will continue to examine the operation of the Merchant Shipping Act, and I shall be grateful if he can give us any idea of a timetable for getting this done.

Further, it strikes me from the contacts that I have had with members of some of the strike committees that there are peculiar features about the arrangements in this industry. No doubt these arise out of the nature of the industry. Anyone who has studied the Year Book must have been struck by its complexity. I cannot believe that this is a good basis for carrying on negotiations. Surely there should be some simpler method of doing it.

We must remember that the Communists on the strike committees were elected to them. As the Prime Minister has said, the chairman of the Liverpool strike committee is a Communist. He was elected to that office, and I do not think there is any suggestion that he was wrongly elected. It may be that very few people voted, but very few people vote in local elections, and other elections. It is strange that those few Communists, properly elected in many cases, should nevertheless be able to exercise this extremely powerful influence—not illegally. I cannot help thinking that it must be because the Communists are extremely energetic and acute people. There is no real answer to the problem,

except to remove the circumstances in which the Communists flourish and by bringing forward equally energetic people who will get themselves elected.

I now turn to the conditions which I have experienced in my constituency and around the Scottish Islands. Here in London one would not think there was emergency, but we in the North are in an emergency, and we have been for weeks and weeks, and it is doing us a great deal of damage. When the strike started there was a great deal of sympathy for the seamen among members of my constituency. Many seamen come from Shetland. There was no desire to have any privileges which were not being enjoyed by the rest of the country. We realised only too quickly that we were going to lose our tourist trade, not for a month or two but for the summer, but we believed that we should not be subjected to a total blockade, which can do no one any good, which cannot have any bearing on the settlement of the dispute, and which is suffered nowhere else on the mainland.

That is the situation that we have been in for seven weeks. We have had only about one-eighth of our normal merchandise. I ask hon. Members who are sympathetic with the difficulties of the seamen to put themselves in the position of an English county with which there is no trading by rail or road. That is the position that we have been in for seven weeks. When the emergency began we decided that we would try to play along with the strike committees. That we did. We had no desire to play the part of strike breakers.

But I warned the Government that if the dispute persisted for a month or more we should find it impossible to run the community on a hand-to-mouth basis. We were told that landing craft and other vessels would be made available. I pointed out that landing craft were unsuitable, because Shetland lies across 150 miles of rough sea, and landing craft were not intended to undertake such operations. They are also too small and are unsuitable for merchandise. But we played along, with the local communities suffering great hardship, and with the total disruption of our trade.

Then, on 20th June, the Prime Minister made his serious allegations about the

nature of the dispute and its motivation by the Communists. He also said:

"the Government now propose to supplement this service by the regular use of naval vessels to make possible a greater movement of supplies"—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 20th June, 1966; Vol. 730, c. 41.]

The supplies that we wanted were the normal ones of fuel, oil, and groceries, feeding stuffs, etc. But if we could not have a tourist trade, at least we wanted a trade in livestock from Orkney and refrigerated fish from Shetland. The Government knew this, and when I read the statement I presumed that there had been some emergency planning and that the Navy was in a position to implement these plans.

But what was the position? The only ship at Aberdeen was the landing craft "Abbeville", which is very small, and is not suitable. It is extremely difficult to load. The other vessel was the "Lofoten", which was then at Devonport, of all places. This was to serve Orkney and Shetland, hundreds of miles from the extreme northern tip of Scotland. The "Lofoten" has two holds, the bigger one having the disadvantage that its hatch is welded down, and the only entrance is along a passage. It is intended to carry tanks or vehicles loaded through the bows or the stern.

These were the two craft to be used, and a third was spoken of. This was the contingency planning for the movement of supplies by naval vessels. This was the sole preparation by this Government, who call themselves planners. In the middle of last week I had consultations with the Government, and was assured that other vessels would be procured and that the "Lofoten" would be sent to Aberdeen by Friday. I do not blame the Government for postponing the arrangements for other vessels temporarily; I can appreciate that in the present state of negotiations it might have been sensible. But they should have been ready to put these plans into effect as soon as the strike continued. They had been warned weeks and weeks ago of what was necessary.

But in the mounting crisis in my constituency and in other Scottish islands there was no sense of urgency in the Scottish Office, and no Minister in the North. It was extremely difficult to find out even what these vessels would hold,

and when they would move. No other vessel has been made available since last Wednesday, in spite of definite promises that this would be done. The "Abbeville" left Aberdeen yesterday, leaving behind 70 tons of cargo and all the mail which it could not carry because of the weather, and then had to shelter at Peterhead, because it could not face the seas. It is now shipping water and approaching Shetland at a speed of 2 knots.

Wholesalers in Shetland are running out of supplies. The "Lofoten" should have been equipped to take livestock, and should have been provided with refrigerated space. Whether she has been I do not know, but she was not so equipped on 20th June, although the strike had been going on then for five weeks, and one would have thought that a Government of planners would make some contingency planning.

I cannot emphasise too strongly the disastrous effect that this situation is having on the islands, particularly Shetland, and this situation can be paralleled all round the coast of Scotland. There might have been a case for keeping the Navy right out of it, but there cannot be a case for putting it in in a totally incompetent way. If there is a hurricane in the Bahamas the Government take pride in having the Navy there to deal with the disaster by means of aircraft carriers, destroyers, and so forth. But in this case we have only two totally unsuitable landing craft, one of which was at Devonport only a week ago.

Whether or not the strike goes on the Government should make preparations for saving the people of Shetland, Orkney and the other islands, who are in a serious position. Surely we can use the air? There has been little supplementation of the air services—which are booked months ahead—one flight by the Royal Air Force, I believe. I hope that the Government will talk to the Post Office authorities about it. People in Shetland are horrified at the way this operation was carried out. They must, too, now send aircraft up to lift the mail from Aberdeen and improve the whole service. Our only method of getting urgent supplies is by airmail. I hope that we shall see a total change in the degree of urgency which the Government are

[MR. GRIMOND.]
putting into the emergency which already exists in some parts of the country.

The real solution is to stop the strike. I do not know what the news is today, but I hope that we shall be able to come to some arrangement on the basis now being discussed, and especially on the question of leave. I am horrified at the way in which the emergency arrangements are being carried out. The position is even worse than the Leader of the Opposition indicated, because all this could have been done without these Regulations. The Government moved naval vessels two days after the strike began, but they did not move the right ones, and there was no attempt to procure cargo vessels, which were the only ones which could do the job.

I make no apologies to the House for bringing to its notice the disastrous effects of the strike on my constituents and asking hon. Members to support me in getting some proper steps taken at least to save us from a more dreadful fate if the strike continues.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. Ian Mikardo (Poplar): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak, because a significant number of the men on strike are constituents of mine and a significant number of the ships tied up are tied up in the docks and waterways which interlace the southern part of my constituency.

I thought that there were long passages in the speech of the Prime Minister which were among the most penetrating and most masterly pieces of analysis and exposition which even he has given to the House. We were all much indebted to him for his careful and detailed analysis of the way in which the present situation has been influenced by the unfortunate history, over many years, of relationships between the executive committee and the rank and file members of the National Union of Seamen. I thought also that he made a notable contribution to our discussion in what he said about the just grievances of the seamen and about our not needing to use the term "militant", as so many people do, as a term of abuse.

Having paid my right hon. Friend that tribute, I wish that he had said what he said about those things today when he went on television a day or two after the

beginning of the strike, instead of, as he did, going on the television and beating the seamen over the head with all his great power, skill and authority. If he had spoken in these terms of understanding and even of sympathy on the television that day that he has used in the House today, I believe that he would have had far more influence than he has had on the seamen, both the executive and the rank and file members, even to the extent that he might have been able to use that influence to get the strike settled long before now.

The right hon. Gentlemen who have spoken from the benches opposite have said—of course, rightly, and I agree with them—that the story which the Prime Minister unfolded of the Communist Party seeking to stir up trouble in every strike situation and, for that matter he might have added, in every pre-strike situation, is an old and familiar story. The Prime Minister was telling us nothing which most, if not all, of us did not know.

Nobody who has been engaged in trade union activity for any length of time, certainly nobody who has had to represent trade unionists in negotiations on their behalf and sometimes carrying out industrial action on their behalf, will find what the Prime Minister said today a great and blinding revelation. I have been a member of the national executive committee of the trade union of which my right hon. Friend is a member for 20 years, and I have seen at first hand a good deal of the activity which he has described today. But, out of that experience—I think that what I am saying will be endorsed by many of my hon. Friends whose experience in these matters is infinitely greater than mine—I would say that my right hon. Friend ought not to overrate the effect of the influence of Communist activity in a strike situation.

In my experience there has not been a single strike—I have been involved in a few—which would not otherwise have taken place and which did take place because of Communist intervention, nor do I know of a single strike which went on longer than it would otherwise have done because of Communist intervention. I challenge any challenge on that. The plain fact is that, if a man is a professional purveyor of irritants, as are some of the gentlemen about whom my right hon.

Friend has been talking today, he can scratch a wound until it gets a bit more sore, but he cannot create the wound.

The Communist is effective only to the extent that there is a deeply-felt and widely-felt grievance which would be deeply-felt and widely-felt without him. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition said that if the Prime Minister's statement today had been made by a Conservative Minister or Prime Minister, it should have been heavily criticised by members of my party. I am sure that that is true. The criticism which would have been made under those circumstances is that it is all too fatally easy to be mentally lazy and not seriously analyse what is going into a strike by saying, "It is just the Communists; you do not have to bother to look very deeply below the surface."

Too many people—I hope that my right hon. Friend will not add himself to them—make the too-glib mistake of attributing to the Communist Party in its activities in strike situations far more power and influence than it has. The Prime Minister talked about the policy of the Communist Party as being, amongst other things, to oppose his prices and incomes policy. In all friendliness—the Prime Minister is a friend of mine in more than a conventional sense—I would say to him that if the only opposition to his prices and incomes policy which he had to fear were from the Communists, he would be a lot better off than he is and than he will be over the next few months.

I must say, with regret, that I think the Prime Minister's speech today, carefully thought out, moderately expressed and cogently argued though it was, still does not relieve him from a serious charge. The serious charge is that he did something which he ought not to have done in laying charges one day and producing what he believes to be the evidence eight days later. If he had said on Monday of last week what he said today, he would be in a much stronger position. But on Monday of last week, he said to us that the members of the executive of the seamen's union contained people who either were, or were the creatures of, a sinister, tightly-knit group.

In parenthesis, I would say that I do not know why we have suddenly dis-

covered the phrase "tightly-knit" as a pejorative term. There is nothing wrong with being tightly-knit. At one time or another, my right hon. Friend and I have both been members of a tightly-knit group—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] It was a wholly beneficent group. It was a wholly praiseworthy group: he and I would not have been members of it, otherwise. It was not any the less beneficent or praiseworthy on account of being tightly-knit.

However, apart from interrupting myself, what I was saying was that, eight days ago, the Prime Minister left it open to every Member of the House and to everybody in the country to believe that there were some sinister people, members of or influenced by a tightly-knit group, on the executive of the National Union of Seamen. Today, he has told us who they were—two of them—and I will accept for the moment, because I have no way of knowing whether it is right or wrong, that every word he told us about those two people is absolutely right.

Today, my right hon. Friend has exonerated 46 people from a charge which he laid on them eight days ago, for eight days ago he did not name the people concerned and we did not know whether the number was two, seven, four, or whatever it might be. Because he did not, eight days ago, name any one of those 48 people for using their position on the National Executive of the N.U.S.—not in furtherance of the interests of the members of the union who had elected them, but in furtherance of the Communist Party or some other outside body—those 48 people have been under that charge.

I agree in general with what my right hon. Friend said—and the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition agreed with this—about the need for the maintenance of privilege. However, I thought that he was stretching the right of privilege a bit far, because if I were one of the 46 innocent members of the union I would feel that I had had a charge held over me for eight days, one which would be actionable in a court of law if it were made without being made under privilege. That is not only a bit hard, but absolutely wrong. Even today, while the Prime Minister no longer suggests that these 46 people are under that

[MR. MIKARDO.] charge, he is saying that they are suckers, mugs, because they are being led by the nose. In some respects this is an even greater charge. The French have a phrase for it, "C'est plus qu'un crime: c'est une faute", which means that a mistake is more blameworthy than a crime. Often it is. A mistake in a man occupying a high representative position is, in some respects, more blameworthy.

I say immediately that, as far as I am aware, I do not personally know any of the 48 members of the executive of the N.U.S. Unless by accident, perhaps at a meeting, I have been introduced to one or any of them, to the best of my knowledge I have never met any of them. However, I do not believe that there are 46 Britons anywhere, on any Clapham omnibus, certainly not 46 Britons who have carried the confidence of substantial numbers of their fellow men who have elected them to office, who do not include among them a single one who is incapable of resisting being led by the nose by sinister forces.

I therefore cannot accept the picture painted by my right hon. Friend of 48 people—probably more than 48 if one adds officials and others—sitting around a table with two of them being very vocal and militant while the other 46 are acting like a lot of blinking sheep. I do not believe it. If, instead of that number, it had been three or four, that might have been credible. If it had been 10 or a dozen I would have found it a bit hard to believe. But 46 of them, without one man of guts and principle among them, I cannot believe. There must, therefore, be a lot more explaining and a bit more hard evidence before we can accept all this.

I come to another point which does not directly concern the present strike, but of which the present strike is one example following a lot of other examples. There are many hon. Members on both sides of the House who, in the last few years—indeed, this goes back a number of years—have become increasingly perturbed at the extent to which information is fed out from Government sources to other people and other institutions before it is given to the House. I am not blaming one Government for this, because it goes

back a long way. It was, I believe, rife during a part of the Government of Mr. Harold Macmillan, and I think that there has been a lot of evidence of it during the lifetime of the present Government.

The Prime Minister told us today that we must have privilege because it is the duty of all of us to get up and tell what we know. I will obey my right hon. Friend's command and I will do exactly that. And what I know is that last Saturday morning, among all the industrial correspondents who were assembled in Clapham to cover the meeting of the executive of the N.U.S.—and among those were some of the most reputable ones, those who represent what I believe in the trade are called the "heavies," the serious newspapers—it was commonly known that some information had been fed out of a dossier from Downing Street about the strike to a representative of the *Observer*.

It could well be that the reason why it was resented by the representatives of the other newspapers was because of a bit of professional jealousy. They were, perhaps, a little peeved because they did not get the leak as well. However, I am concerned not with the reason for that discussion, but with the facts. It was said freely among them that the contents of the dossier were made available—either part of the contents or the lot—to this person from the *Observer*, that they had also been shown, perhaps for good reasons, to Mr. Hogarth, and that, perhaps for excellent reasons, they had also been shown to Mr. George Woodcock, and that this dossier implicated a number of officials of trade unions other than the N.U.S.

My right hon. Friend mentioned one today, but not a number. He mentioned one, but in that dossier, apart from the one he mentioned, were a number of others. It also implicated a number of hon. Members of the House. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] The people who were implicated ought to have been among the first to be shown this information, if anyone was to be shown it at all. Certainly, this House should have been given this information before anyone else was given it. I repeat that this is one illustration. It is not only the strike which this sort of thing has affected. It has affected a lot of other things—this increasing tendency to keep

everyone else informed before the House is informed.

Sir D. Glover: On a point of order. As the hon. Gentleman's speech is becoming somewhat of an attack on the Prime Minister, do you not think that the Prime Minister should be in his place, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. William Hamilton (Fife, West): Grow up.

Mr. Speaker: That is the second bogus point of order today.

Mr. Mikardo: I regret that interruption on the part of the hon. Member for Ormskirk (Sir D. Glover), because I am trying to make a sober and reasoned contribution. I wish to avoid arousing any feelings. I am not attacking anybody. I should have thought that, with the hon. Gentleman's long experience, he would have been as anxious as any other hon. Member to get at the facts of this situation without heat or acrimony. That is what I am trying to do, and the hon. Gentleman should not try to create bad blood between me and my right hon. Friend, because he will not succeed in doing so.

Sir D. Glover: I am grateful to the hon. Member for giving way. I was not trying to make bad blood, but as the hon. Member has been telling us a story and I have been listening to it with great interest and as this dossier was issued, I think that the persons concerned would like to hear what it was.

Mr. Mikardo: I am sorry that I gave way. I thought that the hon. Member was rising to apologise; otherwise, I would not have given way.

I draw my remarks to a close and perhaps I may use the intervention of the hon. Member to say that in so far as I have made some criticisms I have made them with the deepest regret. Unlike the hon. Member, I am not trying to score off anybody. We are today discussing a serious matter. My right hon. Friend said that we ought to learn from this strike some lessons for the future. I have tried to draw three lessons for the future. The first is that we should not over-rate the influence of Communists who are noisy but puny when it comes down to brass tacks. The second is that we should provide the evidence at the

same time as we make charges, not a week later. The third is that if there is any inside information which is given it should be given to this House before it is given to anyone else.

6.12 p.m.

Mr. Nigel Birch (Flint, West): I find myself very much in agreement with almost all that the hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) said. Indeed, we are in some danger of becoming "a tightly-knit group of politically orientated men". I agree with him that the charges made by the Prime Minister against the executive of the National Union of Seamen are very serious indeed, very grave charges. What he was saying was that somehow or other—he did not explain how—these 40-plus men were intimidated, threatened and bamboozled into taking decisions which they themselves thought were wrong, wrong for their union, and wrong for their country, a very serious charge indeed to make against any body of men, and it was made under the cover of privilege.

The Prime Minister had something to say about privilege and I shall have something to say about it at the end of my speech. Of course it is important that we should have privilege in this House, but we cannot expect to keep it if we abuse it. I do not think anyone ought to make an accusation in this House without producing some solid reasons to show that his accusation is true. What I think is unacceptable except in very unusual circumstances is that anyone should make a charge in this House which he is not prepared to make outside. The charge was made and no evidence was produced at the time and we were waiting to hear what evidence the Prime Minister would give today.

As the hon. Member for Poplar pointed out, the Prime Minister spoke almost exactly from the same brief as was used by the *Observer*. It was the same brief except for the addition that someone went to someone's flat. We are all giving information. My information is that this brief was offered to several other newspapers which would not use it. I suppose it was done by the Paymaster-General or some of those fellows who work on the deep-litter system at 10, Downing Street. The Paymaster-General thought the proprietor and editor of the *Observer* was a big enough sucker to buy the story.

[MR. BIRCH.]

What does the story say? It simply says, as everyone knows, that when there is a strike, official or unofficial, Communists always cash in and, in the words of the hon. Member, try to make things a bit worse, offer help and try to organise it. That is absolutely common form and is known to everyone. It happens in every single strike but that is not the same thing as intimidating members of a union. If we say that because Communists are trying to muscle in on a strike and make it worse therefore those running the strike are under the influence of the Communist Party and are intimidated by it, what we are doing is to cast a slur on the trade union movement because in every strike Communists interfere.

I thought there was nothing in that article. The good article was the one published on the same day by the *Sunday Times* which had really been into the question and interviewed everyone, including Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater. Its conclusion was contained in the interview with the last man who was interviewed and was reported in the last sentence of the article. This man said:

"The Prime Minister is doing another Hardy Spicer, but this time on the unions."

I believe that is true.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition said that there ought to be some inquiry into this matter. I do not think we can leave things exactly as they are. I should like a tribunal to be set up. The Prime Minister has a very good memory. He probably remembers the Bank Rate Tribunal. There, as he will remember, he made unfounded charges against Lord Poole. The only way to clear those charges up was to bring them before a tribunal. I cannot think that we could get these charges cleared up without a tribunal. If there is a tribunal I promise the Prime Minister that I will listen to his evidence with the same wrapt attention as I listened to his evidence at the Bank Rate Tribunal.

6.17 p.m.

Mr. E. Shinwell (Easington): Perhaps my only qualification for intervening is that I happen to have taken part in the last national seamen's strike 55 years ago. I am an honorary member of the National Union of Seamen, as far as I

know the only one in this Assembly, and throughout the years I have maintained close contact with the seamen of this country, and moreover with the ship-owners, so I think I know something about the subject.

I understood that what we were proposing to discuss, as the Leader of the Liberal Party said, was an industrial dispute, but we are doing nothing of the sort. It is merely an attack on the Prime Minister. I observed that the right hon. Member for Flint, West (Mr. Birch) was not in his usual form, bursting with venom. All he could say was that he agreed with my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo). That is very strange company for my hon. Friend and strange for him to be commended by the right hon. Member for Flint, West. It is the worst attack I have heard in this House for many years.

Mr. Mikardo : Guilty by association.

Mr. Shinwell : No doubt mistakes were made in the course of this tragic affair. Several days before this dispute occurred I spoke to the Minister of Labour and I ventured, out of such experience as I had of the seamen and of the shipping industry, to adopt a certain course. It was followed. When the Leader of the Liberal Party in this House, as he will recall, asked for an inquiry I opposed it because I thought it far better to leave this matter to be negotiated between one side and the other, which is customary.

If I had had my way, whether it was a tribunal presided over by Lord Pearson or perhaps by a conciliation officer appointed by the Minister of Labour, I would have kept both sides together as is customary in negotiations of this sort until I exhausted them and forced them to come to a conclusion. It might have been better if that had been done, because there is always a danger when an inquiry is set up that the conclusions, if they are not capable of being imposed on both sides, are regarded as static and rigid. That is the mistake which was made. Even when the inquiry was set up it was too prolonged. It enabled all the militant forces which exist either in the union or on the perimeter of the union to make their demands in more militant fashion than at the beginning of this affair.

A demand has been made that a tribunal should be set up to enquire into

the charges made by the Prime Minister. Is it suggested that such a tribunal should inquire into whether the seamen are masters in their own house? That is a fair question. Is the executive of the National Union of Seamen master in its own house? I put another question: are all the shipowners masters in their own house?

It so happened that, with the consent of the appropriate parties, I ventured to intervene in this affair, although nothing appeared in the Press. It did not attract any publicity. The General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary of the Union were good enough to come and meet me and some of my colleagues who are interested in shipping matters. We discussed the situation in the most friendly fashion, and certain suggestions were made.

No sooner had we made those suggestions than I had the opportunity of talking to the Chairman of the Shipping Federation. Again, this conversation was conducted in the most friendly terms. It was thought that negotiation could proceed along certain lines dealing primarily with the question of leave. This is a very complicated matter, but one which some of us understand. We thought that we had guided it into the right lines, but we had not.

I shall not blame Communists or any militants operating on the perimeter of the Union, although these things happen. The Prime Minister's reference to the National Executive of the National Union of Seamen not being masters in their own house has been spoken of in derisory terms, but very few trade union executives are masters in their own house. I say this because, if it were otherwise, we should not have the number of unofficial disputes that we do have. These occur precisely because national executives are unable to exercise control, to impose discipline, to assert their authority, as men like Ernie Bevin and even Jimmy Thomas and Marchbanks could do in the old days. Because of this we have too many unofficial strikes. They are not masters in their own house.

The same applies to the shipowners. There are several shipping companies which could afford to meet every one of the demands made by the seamen—the 40-hour week immediately without great

cost, the leave days, etc.—and pay the necessary overtime at a fairly high rate. Several shipping companies could do this, but many could not. Some shipping companies are on the verge of bankruptcy. As a result of this dispute, they may go out of existence. That would be disastrous, not only for them, but it would not confer any benefits on the country as a whole. I would deplore it if this happened. I say without fear of contradiction that many shipping companies are so heavily in debt to the banks that they have to do pretty well what the financiers dictate. Their policy is often dictated by the financial situation. I am not blaming them for that. This happens to be their position. In view of this, can it seriously be argued that the shipowners are masters in their own house?

Who is the master in any house? Is the Leader of the Opposition any more master in his house than the Prime Minister is in his, or any more than any of us is? We are dictated to and pestered—rightly so—by our constituents. Therefore, are we masters in our own houses, free and independent? I beseech hon. Members not to try to put that sort of baloney over to me. I understand things much better than to believe that.

I will tell the House something about the executive of the National Union of Seamen, whether in the past, the present or the future. I pose rhetorically the question: are the executive of the Union masters in their own house? They are not under the control, authority and dictatorship of Communists and militants outside. They are under the control of their members. They are not masters in their own house. They must do as their members tell them or else out they go, because these officials are not elected for life.

I come now to discuss the dispute itself, because that is what we are supposed to be discussing. What is it all about? Let me indulge for a few moments in history. What happened in 1911? Before then, Havelock Wilson, the seamen's leader, was bankrupt. He had three times assailed the Shipping Federation in the courts. On two occasions he had been adjudged bankrupt, but he succeeded in one action and was awarded a ¼d damages.

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There was practically no union. Here and there attempts existed sporadically to create a union—an organisation—but they were always resisted by the Shipping Federation. Havelock Wilson and the Shipping Federation were deadly enemies. After 1911 and 1912, after a series of transport strikes and following the seamen's strike in 1911, they became very good friends. Ever since then, through the National Maritime Organisation, they have maintained relations of the utmost friendliness, on the understanding—make no bones about it; the seamen understand this also; they know all about it—that strikes would be avoided at all costs.

The militants in the union are not the oceangoing men. What opportunity have they got? Of course they argue in the fore-castle, in the galley, in the engine room, as the case may be. They argue amongst themselves, because there are always sea lawyers about. However, as to expressing militancy when they come home and are discharged, perhaps after a four-month or five-month voyage and after they receive their pay, do they bother to attend a committee meeting? Of course not. They are told that they owe, say, five months' contributions. They pay up willingly. That is all. They stay home for three or four weeks and then they join a ship again. Such men hardly ever attend the union meetings.

Those who attend the union offices and committees are mainly those on the short sea trade and the longshore men and riggers. These are the people who are largely responsible, along with the officials, for the administration of the union.

What was the dispute about in 1911? Able seamen were sailing to the River Plate for £3 a month. Firemen were getting £3 10s. a month. I remind the House that in those days they were all coal-burning ships. A demand was made for £5 10s. a month all round. Havelock Wilson, in his contact with the Shipping Federation and in his negotiations in London, accepted £5 a month. We on the Clyde held out for £5 10s. a month, and we got it. If ever there was an example of militancy, we were responsible for it.

Throughout the years the conditions of seamen have never been satisfactory.

I confess that I blame myself for this to some extent. Some of my colleagues are equally to blame. There used to be a Shipping Committee in the House. We dealt with shipping affairs and made contact with the seamen. For the last two or three years we have not bothered, largely because when there were shipping debates in the House—I am within the recollection of some of the older Members—not more than half a dozen people took part. Under the Conservative Government Colonel Ropner was the only one who spoke from the Government side on behalf of the shipowners. From the Opposition side, I myself and two or three others spoke on behalf of the seamen and very often put the case for the shipowners also. We were concerned about this country as a maritime nation and wanted to sustain it. We blame ourselves. We should have maintained that Committee and we might have gained some knowledge of what was happening among the seamen and intervened at an early stage.

I hope that the seamen will come to some conclusion with the Shipping Federation this evening or perhaps tomorrow, but certainly as soon as possible, to bring this tragic affair to an end. We have to ask ourselves whether we can go on as a nation affording strikes of this character. I put a fair question, and I should like an answer from anybody in the House or outside, or from the *quidnuncs* and wiseacres in the Press who talk about things about which they know nothing.

For six weeks, seven weeks, maybe eight weeks or maybe longer, the nation is held up for ransom. I am not blaming the seamen—they had a justifiable case. But we cannot go on in this fashion, destroying the economy of the country at a time of financial stringency, when our economy is almost in ruins, no matter who is to blame, whether it is this Government or successive Tory Governments. Something must be done about the situation.

A Royal Commission is to inquire into the trade unions. Something must be done long before the Royal Commission comes to a decision. With such modesty as I possess, I say that I am perhaps an older trade unionist than anybody here, because I joined a trade union in 1902,

which is a long time ago. I know something about the trade union movement, and I have always thought that there should be some reforms. Way back in 1928 I ventured to make a speech at a conference of the Independent Labour Party in Birmingham, in which I criticised the trade union leaders. It did me no good, because the T.U.C. passed a resolution of censure on me, which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald took note of when he was forming his Cabinet in 1929.

That does not matter now. I do not care whether it is my friend and colleague for whom I have great admiration and affection, the Minister of Technology, or Sir William Carron, whom I know very well, or any of the trade union leaders—Ted Hill who is now retired—I know them all. I have met them all in my time and I do not care who they are, I venture to say that the time has come for drastic reform of the trade unions, cutting out the dead wood and perhaps in the case of the seamen—I do not know whether the seamen would like this—a paternal and solicitous attitude towards the organisation that cannot possibly be democratic because the ocean-going men who travel the seven seas have to leave their destinies in the hands of a few officials and some of the long-shoremen and some of those men who come from the short sea trades.

A word about the Prime Minister: does the Prime Minister never make mistakes? Of course he does. What is the position of the Prime Minister? If anybody imagines that I am asking for favours, the answer is that I am not. I do not think of anything that he can give me. I am about the only one who does not want a job on the Government—I do not dislike the members of the Government at all. I think that there are some very good men in the Government, and some good women. There are good men throughout the House. There are good men on the other side; I have met a lot of very decent people on the other side. That may surprise some of my colleagues but nevertheless it is true. Of course there are—even the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for St. Marylebone (Mr. Hogg), in spite of that extraordinary speech which he made the other day when he described the Prime Minister as an emperor. I sometimes pity the right

hon. and learned Gentleman, and so I shall not indulge in any offensive reply on this occasion. We all feel sorry for for him.

What about the Prime Minister? If one is Prime Minister and is faced with a strike of this character one is almost helpless. He is faced with an executive which will not do what he has asked it to do. He has an inquiry conducted by a man of vast knowledge, juridical and otherwise. Yet the seamen's executive will not listen. What is one to do, with the nation in the meantime suffering from the economic effects, and the Leader of the Liberal Party concerned about his two islands beyond the North of Scotland?

The Prime Minister naturally looks around to see who is responsible for this, and he knows very well that the Communists will take advantage of every strike in this country, and no doubt they have taken advantage of this one. It is not illegal, but a time may come when some elements may seek to use their power, and propaganda to destroy the nation's economy, or at any rate to weaken it. It may then be necessary to take action. I am all for free speech, of course, but I am not in favour of licence. If anybody disagrees with me, I remind him that in wartime we do not allow the nation's economy to be weakened by elements which are concerned only with political, and very often sinister, motives.

Here is a situation in which the Prime Minister has made charges, and in my judgment he was not far off the beam. If I had had to make the charges, I should have used much more elegant language. If my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar had had to make the charges, one can imagine the eloquence in which he would have indulged.

The Prime Minister, in his matter-of-fact, prosaic fashion, made the charges in circumstances which indicated that he was going through a great ordeal, as we all are in these circumstances. We want to end this tragic and at this stage—not at the beginning—unnecessary affair. If we are to learn a lesson, let us get the right lesson, not to indulge merely in attacks on the Prime Minister, whether justified or not. In these circumstances we should say to the seamen and the shipowners, "Put an end to all this nonsense. You

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and we have had enough. Get together, try to compose your differences, the nation cannot afford this any longer." That is the way to talk to them.

If they do not listen, the only recourse open to the Government is to impose regulations in a stringent fashion. The country will not stand anything else. Let us make our appeal from the House today, and I ask even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Flint, West for his co-operation in this regard, to join with us. Let us all join together to say to the seamen and the shipowners. "Come to some arrangement. Come to some conclusion in the interests of the nation."

6.30 p.m.

Sir Lionel Heald (Chertsey): I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak at this moment, because I want to approach the subject from the point of view which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) has been recommending. Of course, we must support the Regulations. But before the House passes them, and as a condition of doing so, I believe that we are entitled to seek from the Prime Minister a clear statement of his views and intentions on the long-term aspect of industrial relations.

We have heard nothing about it from him for years. Indeed, I cannot remember having heard anything from the Prime Minister about it. I have here documents such as "Signposts for the Sixties", "Working for Prosperity", the Labour Party manifesto at the last election, and the text of the Prime Minister's speeches. The right hon. Gentleman has always avoided the subject. We are entitled on both sides of the House to have a clear statement of what his intentions are.

No doubt, I shall be told that this is all subject to the Royal Commission. For the right hon. Member for Easington—I am glad to have his authority to follow in this matter—that is not enough. What is required is that the Government should give more guidance to the Royal Commission than they have. We are entitled also to ask that the Trades Union Congress should give more guidance than it has. The Government have put before the Royal Commission a document, a copy of which I have here, the Ministry

of Labour's evidence, and a very woolly production it is. I had great difficulty in getting hold of a copy at all today because very few people seem to have heard of it. I looked through to see what comments I could find in the Press at the time, and I found practically none.

Although the Royal Commission cannot possibly solve the problems of industrial relations, at least it could contribute and the Government could contribute, a great deal if we were to have a more modern and efficient machine. Here again, I have the authority of the right hon. Member for Easington to follow.

Undoubtedly, there are many aspects of trade union law and the trade union system which give opportunities to the Communists to cause trouble, which cause friction, which produce results unfair and unjust to individual members, which cause trouble between unions, and the like. I have here an interesting document which many people may have forgotten but which aroused a good deal of interest at the time, the *Daily Mirror* publication, "The Trade Unions" published in October, 1965.

I speak with great humility in this matter, but ever since I have been a Member I have regarded the question of industrial relations as one of the fundamental questions in our national life. In my own constituency, I have managed to keep it apart from party politics, and I have had the great benefit of discussions and friendly contacts with many trade unionists both in the rank and file and in the leadership. I was immensely impressed at the last General Election by the warm and friendly reception I had from trade unionists, including many political opponents of mine, when I expounded what I believed to be the Conservative policy then established which was originally stated at the very outset of the campaign by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bexley (Mr. Heath).

I refer in particular to the proposal for an efficient, up-to-date industrial court with real prestige and able to command the confidence of the country. We are one of the few large nations in the world which do not have such a court. We have our *ad hoc* committees. I speak with trepidation in these matters, but I

am told by those who know much more than I do that it is the *ad hoc* appointment of a committee at a late stage in a dispute which often causes more trouble than it does good. The industrial courts which other countries have gain knowledge of the difficulties by experience and are very often able to avert serious trouble by wise decisions.

There is, of course, the question of the powers which the court should have. I believe that there is in the country today a strong public demand, quite irrespective of party, for a court which has power not only to make a report which is argued about and discussed, and bandied to and fro in the Press but which has the power, if necessary, to make an order, to grant an injunction. I believe that a court with such powers would give a great deal of confidence.

It is not appropriate in this debate to go into detail, but I feel entitled to say that I have, and have had for some years, the privilege of being chairman of an organisation of Conservative lawyers, the Inns of Court Conservative Society. As long ago as 1957, we produced a pamphlet, "A Giant's Strength", with proposals for reform in the trade union system. I think that it came before its time, but we recently submitted to the Royal Commission a series of proposals following the general lines of policy laid down by the leader of my party before the last election. The industrial court system is there discussed in some detail.

Such a system would deal with all the different kinds of problems and difficulties which arise. If it were an efficient, competent body, with regular sittings, proper staff and with background and experience, it could do great good. Perhaps it could sit in the regions or, on the other hand, there might be regional courts and a central court. Such an industrial court would be able to deal with internal injustices in the unions, and it would be able to deal also, in whatever manner was decided by Parliament, with industrial disputes.

I believe it to be true that the Communists take advantage of any situation which suits them. One such situation arises when there is really no law, when no one knows what the law is. We have the jungle which was explored in the *Rookes v. Barnard* case. We have all the difficulties of applying the law to

matters which are not really matters of law at all.

A court of that kind which was trusted would not be there for the purpose of crushing the workers or repressing the trade unions. It would be there to do justice between man and man, between man and his union, between one union and another, and between the trade unions and the country as a whole. I hope and believe that it will come.

But what we must have is further guidance given by the Government to the Royal Commission, either directly to the Commission or in a speech from the Prime Minister in which he really went into the matter. I do not say that what he said today was not perfectly sound as far as it went. But it dealt only with the beginnings of an analysis of the causes of the trouble. We want a remedy as well. We were not advanced very far in that direction today. Although I appreciate that there may be people who feel that their reputations have been affected and they have a perfect right to demand an opportunity to vindicate themselves if they wish, I cannot believe that what the Prime Minister said today added anything to the knowledge of anyone in the House who has ever studied this subject or, certainly, of anyone who read the *Observer* last Sunday. So it does not get us very far.

What would take us some distance would be a statement from the Prime Minister, following the lines suggested by the right hon. Member for Easington, that steps must be taken to improve our industrial relations. Industrial relations are vital. We can never expect to have efficient industry, growing exports and all the things we need so badly if, at the same time, our opportunities are spoiled by bad industrial relations.

It should not be a party matter in any manner or sense. But there must be some lead from the top. That lead must come from the Government—from the Prime Minister himself. I criticise the Prime Minister in many ways and will continue to do so, but he is Prime Minister of Great Britain and if he puts forward a line of policy which is in the public interest it is the duty of all of us to support him. But he never has on this so far, and I hope that I shall not be considered impertinent if I suggest that this is the moment for him to start.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Archie Manuel (Central Ayrshire): I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Chertsey (Sir L. Heald) will forgive me if I do not follow him, but I think that it is a little too soon to talk about industrial courts. A great deal of water must flow under the bridge before we get to that situation.

I am concerned about the two statements that the Prime Minister has made—the first on Monday last week and the second today, at much greater length and with great cogency. It was apparent to the House today that he had given the preparation of his speech much thought. Generally, the speech was well received.

What I am concerned about is the serious position emanating from the two statements. Whether we in this House like it or not, we are in a new situation *vis-à-vis* the trade union movement. There will be great repercussions throughout the country—there is no doubt about that.

What it boils down to is that two individuals of the Executive Council of the N.U.S. have exerted great influence over the other 46 members. My right hon. Friend has also told us that no illegality has been committed—that no charges could be preferred for any action these men have taken. One wonders how much further this House would like to go as far as individual freedom is concerned. I am delighted that my right hon. Friend said that he had nothing against militancy and that, indeed, he encouraged it, particularly in the N.U.S. But many questions will be asked by the rank and file trade unionists.

I have long experience as a trade unionist, as a member of one of the most active railway unions. I have taken part in local negotiations. I have been embroiled in three great strikes, when there was a complete turnout of our membership. On no occasion was I aware of the strike being fomented or led by anyone with Communist opinions. The men had a case which was recognised and would have taken action anyhow. Pillars of the Church in my district were also pillars of the trade union movement, and they included the branch president and the branch secretary. The combination of trade unionism with Scottish Presbyterianism was unbeatable.

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But the present situation is different. I recognise the enormous strain on the Prime Minister. In the present economic situation, he perhaps felt that the future of the Government was in some way imperilled, taking over, as they did, the adverse balance of payments from the party opposite and trying to struggle through, making some headway but going back into the ditch economically because of the strike. Nevertheless, we have a duty as Members of this House, and I accept my right hon. Friend's invitation that we should exercise it.

I do not want to take the benefit of privilege, but we should speak out. Is there anything wrong in a person on an executive being so active that he influences other members of the executive? There will always be active people on every executive. There are active people in the Cabinet—some more active than others. There are outside influences that, to some extent, shape Cabinet policy and decisions, whether we like it or not. The very fact that there are outside influences is something that an executive can do very little about.

I have no time for Communist philosophy, as the few Communists in my constituency know full well. But the Communists in this country are only a small band, as they are in the trade unions. The majority of trade unionists are members of the Labour Party, but there are many Tories in the unions—indeed, there are also some Liberals here and there. There has been far more interference by active Tories in decisions arrived at than there has ever been by the Communists.

Sir Edward Brown (Bath): I am following the hon. Gentleman's remarks closely. Does not he agree that the active interest of Tory trade unionists—and I am one—is nevertheless in the interests of the society of Great Britain, whereas the influence of the Communists through infiltration—such as occurred in the E.T.U.—is in the interests of a foreign power?

Mr. Manuel: I will tell you that I have—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must address the hon. Member for Bath (Sir E. Brown) through the Chair.

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Mr. Manuel: I was trying to let the hon. Member for Bath down very gently, Mr. Speaker. I cannot find it in my heart to have any respect for a Tory trade unionist holding a position. I know that there are many Tories in the trade unions. I have been fighting them all my life and my constituents sent me here not to fight Communists—there are none in the House—but to fight Tories. The right hon. and learned Member for Marylebone (Mr. Hogg) makes speeches worse than any Communist ever made. The right hon. and learned Member for St. Marylebone causes more strife and more argument and more industrial trouble because of that wicked forked tongue of his than any other hon. Member I know. He has had a great education, but look at the use he makes of it! Squandered! I wish that I had had the opportunity which his parents gave him. I would have done more for the country than the right hon. and learned Gentleman has done.

We have to be very careful about deciding that the trade union movement can be so easily swayed by one or two individuals. I have had a great experience of the movement and there are many other hon. Members on this side of the House who have had even greater experience. Certainly I have played my part in the movement, and while it may be that in the larger cities there are these hole-and-corner meetings and manipulations, I have not come across them in Central Ayrshire or in my travels in Scotland addressing trade union branch and political meetings. At any rate, such groups are in a minority. We have to be careful that my right hon. Friend's statements are not used by hon. Members opposite—and I hope that hon. Members opposite would not be supported by the Liberal Party in this—to try to fashion a weapon to alter the trade union structure in some way, or to attempt to do so. Such an attempt would never be successful.

If there is to be alteration and streamlining—and my right hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) spoke of the great need to reform the structure of the trade union movement—and we can agree that in this modern society reforms are needed in the trade union movement as well as in the House

of Commons—and nowhere is reform needed more than in the House of Commons—reform will come only from within that great movement itself.

I therefore object to any tittle-tattle which suggests that this great movement will be destroyed because of the influences within it. Those influences are rare and do not count. This Labour Party grew out of the trade union movement, and the heart and soul and content of the movement are firmly established in a country which is committed to a democratic way of life and not to manoeuvres such as those about which suspicions have been thrown about the Chamber today.

I do not want to say more. I wanted to put it on the record that, while recognising the tremendous strain which the Prime Minister is under, recognising his great ability and what he has done for the country and recognising that we have all given him complete loyalty since he came to power as leader of the Labour Party, I believe that we have to preserve the right to put on the brake a little when we think that he is making a statement which might be misunderstood or which might weaken the trade union fabric. He may have given a great lever to those anti-trade union forces represented by right hon. and hon. Members opposite who abhor the trade unions and who will do what they can to weaken their influence.

7.5 p.m.

Mr. Julian Ridsdale (Harwich): I deny at once the statement by the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Mr. Manuel) that we on this side of the House have no place for trade unions or trade unionism. I listened very closely to what was said by the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Chertsey (Sir L. Heald) about the need for hurrying on the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations. If nothing else comes out of this tragic debate this evening, perhaps we shall have a hurrying on of the Report of the Royal Commission and possibly an interim report to deal with one issue which appertains to the shipping strike and which was mentioned by the right hon. Member for Easington, the subject of coastal shipping. One thing which has emerged from the strike is the need to develop a separate union for coastal

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shipping and a separate union for deep sea shipping.

In view of what some of us have felt from personal experience of what is happening in the strike, feelings which the Prime Minister confirmed this afternoon, I can understand why the Government took some of the measures which they have taken. What we have been witnessing, as the Prime Minister said, has been a battle for power in the union itself just as much as a desire to better the conditions of the seamen. For some time, some of us have been pressing for amendment of the 1894 Act. I have been pressing for its amendment ever since the strike in Harwich in 1960, but we have never been led to believe that that might lead to strike action. I cannot remember the Prime Minister as Leader of the Opposition pressing for better conditions for seamen.

Mr. Simon Mahon (Bootle): Is the hon. Gentleman cognisant of the fact that the Minister of Labour at that time gave a categorical promise to my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and myself, on 23rd August, 1960, that the Government would amend the Act immediately the men returned to work from unofficial strike?

Mr. Ridsdale: The point I am making is that the Government have not been under pressure to amend the Act. The impression which I have been getting, as the Prime Minister tended to confirm, has been that this has been a battle for power within the union as much as a battle to better the seamen's lot.

As the Member for a constituency which has not only a number of seamen on strike, but also many retired people, more than 5,000 of them, on small fixed incomes who have benefited from rating relief legislation, I am naturally concerned about the strike's continuance and the effect which that will have on the cost of living. I know that seamen engaged on the Harwich-Continental route on average will have lost more than £100 in wages and in many cases far more than that at this time of seasonal peak earnings with tips and overtime. With a wage settlement estimated at providing a further £1 a week, it will take nearly two years for those men to get back what they and their families have

already lost, and that period will increase by each day that the strike continues. What a lot these men have lost and how difficult it will be for them to get it back! What a responsibility the strike leaders have on their shoulders! A number of men have already spent their holiday pay, while others have spent their savings for old age, and there have been some examples of severe hardship. If a large number of these men were feeling strongly, I could understand them being prepared to make such a sacrifice, but I must admit that of the seamen I have met, the large majority want to go back to sea. I do not believe that their heart is now in the strike.

After saying in the House that it was fear of intimidation, of being blacklegged, that kept these men out, I was asked to substantiate what I had said in a discussion on television with one of the strike committee members. This I did, pointing out that in my view the threat of withdrawal, by the executive of the National Union of Seamen, of the T.C.F., the employment card, was a major factor in preventing quite a number of these men going back to work. I welcome the fact that the Prime Minister said last week:

"I make clear that as far as the Government are concerned we shall not stand for any victimisation of any individual by either side of industry."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 20th June, 1966; Vol. 729, c. 52.]

Mr. Manuel: That is what hon. Gentlemen are doing every day.

Mr. Ridsdale: Having had some close dealings with the seamen in Harwich during the course of this strike, I feel bound to say that I can understand the Prime Minister's feelings in wishing to expose some of the unseen pressures which have been exerted over this strike. All along I have felt that a very small minority has been exerting its will on the majority, especially from the centre. These pressures were certainly not spontaneous locally. Indeed, the Harwich seamen have tried, by constitutional union rules, to sway union opinion to adopt a moderate attitude. This is very much to their credit but it was because of this feeling of excessive centralised pressure that I pressed for a secret ballot.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The kind of situation facing us today is largely

due to apathy. We have been told that the present executive of the National Union of Seamen was elected by 5,000 votes out of a membership of 65,000.

Mr. Arthur Lewis: Is the hon. Member aware that it is only in recent months that the Tory Party have gone through an election for their leader?

Mr. Ridsdale: I do not wish to be led astray by the red herring of the hon. Gentleman. The trouble with this strike is that it has been forced upon us by a small section of the community. The seamen are not alone. Prosperity has brought apathy, apathy which has led to a failure to see that we have the right executives on our associations, be they political, trade union or otherwise. If we do not alert ourselves to this, those with extreme views, because of their faith, and energy will overthrow our democratic processes and our freedom, which is in danger, will have vanished overnight.

It is high time that those who want to see the victory of common sense and moderation stirred themselves into action. I am sure that under 1 per cent. of the population is causing what we call the British sickness, because the vast majority of the population do not care. With such a situation a secret ballot is not enough. We have to clear away the apathy which stops the moderate man from playing his part, not only in the unions but in other organisations. If the Report of the Royal Commission on the Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, can tell us how to do this then I hope that we will hurry its completion along. I am sure that the root cause here does not lie in any thick blue book, however intellectual it is, or intelligently it may be written.

The key must lie in leadership and in understanding to get over the boredom and apathy which today surrounds so many of our democratic institutions. It is for us on both sides of the House to accept the challenge as being one coming not just from the executive of the National Union of Seamen and directed against the Government, but as a challenge to the nation. Some of this may sound platitudinous, but I am sure that this is the heart of the matter, and is the sickness from which our industrial life is suffering today.

Democracy means accepting personal responsibility and personal participation. The attitude of "I could not care less" is a recipe for extremes and dictatorship. Somehow we have to see that the country realises that if we, of moderate opinion, do not support our organisations or unions, then the extremists will win and our industrial democracy will vanish overnight.

The immediate task must be to get the seamen back to work. Given good will and understanding, which I am sure is there now in the coast ports, especially on the leave question, I believe that we could do this. I know that the fight of the seamen will not be in vain but above all I am convinced that it is the apathy of the moderate man, the apathy of prosperity, which causes people not to go along and join their organisations. It is that which is putting our democratic processes in danger and this is fundamental to the problems in our industrial democracy today.

7.17 p.m.

Mr. Eric S. Hefter (Liverpool, Walton): I have been involved with seamen for many years, both as a Member of Parliament for Walton and also as a trade unionist in the port of Liverpool. I can remember that since 1946 there have been two official disputes and one official strike. The 1947 seamen's dispute in Liverpool and other parts of the country took place because the union was failing to respond to the opinions and demands of its rank and file. Everyone says now what we knew then—that there has to be a cleaning up inside the National Union of Seamen.

In 1960 my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Simon Mahon) and myself were appointed by the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party to be the mediators in that official strike. I can assure the House that I understand the pressures which the Minister of Labour has suffered in the past few weeks.

We worked night and day in order to get a settlement in that dispute. We were not really negotiating between the shipowners on the one hand and the seamen on the other. At that stage most of our negotiations were between the General Secretary and the officials of the National Union of Seamen, and

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 the rank and file seamen, through their unofficially elected members in the various ports. We said to the seamen in 1960, "We think that your case is right, but it is wrong for you to act outside of your trade union. Your job, your responsibility, is to get into your union and make it work". The seamen did precisely that. They went into their union. They decided to make it a democratic body. They have made it a democratic body. Some people say that to have 48 members of an executive is ridiculous. Perhaps it is too many. But the seamen must decide that. If there are 48 democratically elected representatives coming from all the major and minor ports, obviously they are reacting to the demands of their rank and file who have elected them.

I listened to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister with a great deal of sadness. It does not give me any joy to say some of the things that I am about to say. As my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) said, most of my right hon. Friend's speech was an analysis of the background to the union. I have given some additional facts based on experience of the position in the union.

Names have been mentioned. Somebody has had some association with or met some Communists. The district secretary of my union was a man called Leo McGree, who is still alive. He was my district secretary from the first day that I joined the union—a Communist. When he retired, the entire trade union movement in Liverpool—Right-wingers, Left-wingers, centre-ists, Tories perhaps who were trade unionists—made a great collection. They collected £1,000. They gave him a new car and some money so that he could have some of the comforts of life in his retirement. That was what the Liverpool trade union movement thought of Leo McGree, the Communist.

Did hon. Members see Dick Etheridge on the television? I did. I am not a Communist, and I do not agree with the Communist Party. It threw me out. But, as far as I am concerned, the Communist Party is still a legal organisation in this country.

As I say, names were mentioned. My friend Joe Kenny was mentioned. He is

not only a personal friend of mine but for 16 years has been a member of my constituency Labour Party. Of course he knows about the seamen's problems. Of course he knows how to argue skilfully in relation to the seamen. Perhaps he learned some of that from me; I do not know. I hope that some of what I had to say has rubbed off. Joe is skilled in relation to the seamen because he is a seaman and industrially lives this question day in and day out. While he was in London, he lived in a flat with Jim Slater and another Liverpool man called Jack Coward. He was in the international brigade. He was caught by the Franco forces, was put in Franco gaols and suffered there for many years. When he came home to this country, his hair was bleached white as a result of his suffering.

I know these people. Jack Coward is a Communist, but he is a damned good honest working man. I do not agree with his politics. I think that his political ideas are wrong. He offered to let Jim Slater and Joe Kenny live in his flat while they were in London during the dispute. Bert Ramelson, the industrial organiser, went along and perhaps took advantage of the situation and talked to Joe Kenny and Jim Slater at the same time. What great conspiracy is this? Is it guilt by association? Perhaps I am in the dossier to which reference has been made. [HON. MEMBERS: "The hon. Member is."] Oh, I am. I will tell the House why.

When this strike broke out, I knew that there were Liverpool seamen from my constituency here in London on strike. As a Liverpool Member of Parliament, I decided that it was my responsibility to go down to the seamen's headquarters in the London Docks and find out what it was all about and to add a bit more background information to what I knew already. When I got there, whom did I meet? There were about 12 people, one of whom was Jack Coward and another chap called Norris. It was only as I left the place that my wife, who was with me, said, "That chap was on television. He is a Communist". Therefore, I am as guilty as Joe Kenny and Jim Slater and anyone else, because I have talked to some Communists.

I know Jack Roger Woods. I did not know that he was a Communist until the

Prime Minister said so. I imagine that, on the basis of Liverpool experience, 90 per cent. of the Liverpool strike committee are good Roman Catholics as, incidentally, is Joe Kenny. This is a very dangerous thing which has been done in this country.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) said that he would not get a post in the Government now. I am young enough to be offered a post in the Government. Everybody when he comes to the House want to do a positive job. I do not care about posts in the Government if it means that we cannot stand up and honestly say what is required. I do not care if I never get a job in this Government or any other Government.

Mr. Arthur Lewis : One has to crawl to do it.

Mr. Heffer : When people are, in my opinion, wrongly attacked, the time has come to stand up and be counted. That is not defending Communism. It is defending the basic democratic rights of the British people for which we have always fought over the years. I did not know that guilt by association was one of those basic democratic rights.

I do not wish to speak at length. I have a wad of notes here which I have not looked at, and I do not intend to look at them. But I want to say one or two words about the way in which this strike has been handled.

I said in the last debate that if ever there was ineptness in handling an industrial dispute this was the acme of ineptness. On the first full day of the dispute, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister went on the television and said, "This is a battle against the prices and incomes policy", making it a political issue from the word "go". How do hon. Members think the seamen felt? I should think that they felt sick at that television broadcast. Of course, the employers were pretty happy about it. One can hide very nicely behind the skirts of speeches like that. One does not have to do a damn thing about getting round the table and trying to reach a compromise.

We had another episode. After a while, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour decided that the time had come to get the National Union of Sea-

men into one room and the employers in another. At the very moment that my right hon. Friend was getting them together in the same building, although not round the same table, we were declaring a state of emergency in the House. That is absolutely brilliant! That is exactly the way to get a strike settled.

What else did we do? I kept in touch, as some of my hon. Friends have done, with some of the lads on the Seamen's executive. We have given our advice. They have not always taken it. We tried to help behind the scenes to get a reasonable solution. We knew that a movement was being made for a solution and that the leave question was now the central issue.

Approaches were made by my hon. Friends and myself to the Prime Minister to explain the situation. The previous day he was to meet the N.U.S. executive. On the following day a statement was made in the House, arising out of questions, that in no circumstances would there be any advance on the Pearson Report. Who are the seamen fighting? The Government or the shipowners? Unfortunately, it has been made an issue between the Government and the seamen, and the shipowners have been out of the picture practically throughout. Now that they have been brought back in, it is still as difficult as ever to get any further advance for the seamen.

This whole strike has been a great tragedy indeed for the Labour movement and for the people of the country. It has been a great tragedy, first because of the ineptitude of the way the dispute has been handled, but also because of the new dimension which has been introduced in the British Labour movement and in British politics that if one knows a Communist there could be something sinister in it.

My right hon. Friend made a great deal about the unanimity of the executive of the union. What is wrong with the unanimity of the executive of the union? We are always being told in the Parliamentary Labour Party that it is a good thing if we have a unanimous decision. It has even been suggested that it is better if we do not have a vote at all, but yet it is implied that it is rather sinister because the executive of the union has been unanimous. Does anybody believe that two men, as my hon. Friend

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the Member for Poplar said, could dominate 48 others? If they did, it was for only one reason: that their arguments were more persuasive and obviously reflected the feelings of the others and caught more of a responsive chord than anybody else on the executive.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister can talk about persuasiveness. I have heard him speak many times inside and outside this House. He has persuaded me on pure logic and argument that what he was saying was right. No outside pressures were applied to me and to my hon. Friends in supporting the Government in what they have been doing. There was only the pressure of argument and the conviction that it was correct.

Some of the statements which have been made have implied that the Seamen's executive were a lot of stupid nits. I do not believe that they are. I want us to go on—[*Interruption.*] If I am a nit, then so are you.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Even that must be put in a Parliamentary way.

Mr. Heffer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not like being put off by people mumbling in their beards when one is trying to put a serious case to the House.

I understand that the negotiations have again practically broken down. This is again a tragedy. I appeal to the Government not to dash in once again and give the impression that it is the seamen who are wrong in every sphere of the argument. Put the pressure where it is really needed—on the shipowners. If they will not respond, do what it is possible to do under the emergency powers. Take over the shipping industry, run it on behalf of the nation, and make certain that the seamen get a square deal.

7.35 p.m.

Mr. Ian Lloyd (Portsmouth, Langstone): This is a debate which undoubtedly has aroused passion and sincerity. I am quite sure that all of us respect the passion and sincerity shown by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer). The hon. Member concluded by saying that one remedy was for the nation to take over the shipping industry. Before I pass on to more serious points, I should like to direct the hon.

Member's attention to the consequence of what has happened in the United States, where the wage level in the shipping industry has been raised to such a point that the nation has virtually had to do that and that the subsidy costs to the United States Government for the United States shipping industry are now running at several million dollars a year. That is one solution, but the consequences are costly.

I should declare my interest. This is a debate in which assertions of conspiracy are flung about, and I would not like it to be thought that I had not declared my interest. I have had a long, continuing and, for my part, greatly valued association with one of our great liner companies. I joined that company in 1956 with all the zeal of the reformed economist. Only those who have been at the receiving end of such zeal can know sometimes what a devastating effect it has.

No one at that time could have been more critical than I of some of the components of management and of the efficiency of the industry. In some cases I was right and in others I was wrong. The industry was tolerant of my criticisms and indulgent towards my mistakes. I pay this tribute to it when it could easily have reacted in another way. It turned to me and said, "See what you can do in a constructive fashion about this." It gave me superb opportunities to travel widely throughout not only Europe, but virtually the globe, and to bring back whatever I could to improve the efficiency and the performance of the industry.

I am not, perhaps, the ideal advocate for the industry, but it appears that I am this evening almost the only one. The industry has been brought to the Bar of the House and no less a person than the Prime Minister himself has seriously criticised its efficiency.

This point must be taken up. I endeavoured to do so in an intervention when, for obvious reasons, it was impossible to deploy a case. I wish, however, to make this serious point about the industry and its efficiency. One of the most futile terms which can be used today is the word "efficiency" employed to a collection of 300 or 400 firms. It is almost a collective stupidity.

Every industry of that size, whether shipping or any other, in which there are

some 300 or 400 units, must clearly display a spectrum of efficiency, of profitability and of productivity. This applies to the shipping industry, to the steel industry and to almost every industry which any Member of the House could name. It applies to almost any industry which is the subject of the reports of the Anglo-American Council on Productivity, whose teams went to the United States after surveying industries in this country shortly after the war. The late Sir Stafford Cripps was the great inspiration. The theme throughout all the teams' reports was that of a spectrum.

The other point which I should like to make is about the industry and the shipowners. Can we get away from the idea that because there are a few extremely wealthy shipowners, which no one would dispute, that is the picture which the nation should have of the shipowners? In the case of the company about which I have most information, I know that there are some 6,000 shareholders, and the average size of their holdings is of the order of £200. When we talk about the shipowners, let us think about those 6,000 shareholders. When we think about the shipping industry, let us multiply that 6,000 by whatever the appropriate figure is to make a collectivisation of 400 firms. It comes to between 100,000 and 200,000 shareholders, all of whom probably own, on average, £200 worth or less of shares in their companies.

Mr. Simon Mahon: As the hon. Member is in possession of all these figures, can he tell us how many ship's firemen hold any of these shares?

Mr. Lloyd: I wish that a great many ship's firemen held shares. I am a great believer in the widest possible dispersion of share ownership. It is the greatest antidote to all the nonsense which we hear time and time again.

If one goes one stage further, ignores individual holdings and takes the proportion of shares which are held by insurance companies, one can see how that represents a further dispersion of a national interest in the shipping industry, and we come somewhere near the truth in this matter.

The Prime Minister obviously did not have the time to examine in detail the

efficiency of the industry. I suggest that there are probably five main variants. The first is the question of propulsion, the hull form and capacity. That is a physical phenomenon which has been the subject of prolonged and lengthy research over the years. The industry can be criticised on that score, and it has recently had to concede advances to the Japanese, but it is by no means behind them in the extent and measure of the technical research which it is doing. It is spending some £1 million per annum, which is a higher level than the United States, and, therefore, probably a higher level than any other major maritime country.

Mr. S. J. Bidwell (Southall): Will the hon. Member not agree that the National Union of Seamen has itself gone a great way along the road to assist the industry to modernise itself?

Mr. Lloyd: I am sure that the N.U.S. has gone along that road. It is in the Union's interest that it should. I was going to suggest later on that it is in the further interests of the N.U.S. that it should end this nonsense and co-operate with the industry to facilitate further travel along the road, which is the only lasting and certain guarantee of high level incomes and living standards for those employed in the industry.

May I turn to the second element of efficiency? I referred briefly this afternoon to docks. The efficiency of the shipping industry is now widely seen to turn more than any other factor on the efficiency with which cargo can be loaded on and off ships. Certainly the ships can have their efficiency raised. Manning can be reduced. But if one looks at the operating cost of a shipping company and the total limit within which the industry now regards itself, the key at each end lies in the ports and their efficiency and the cost of handling cargo on and off the ship. It is not entirely outside the shipowners' control, but I suggest that it is one of the most difficult economic environments within which any industry has to operate. If there is a wide range of restrictive practices limiting the ability of the industry to modernise itself in the docks, not only in this country but sometimes in inefficient docks systems in other countries, there lies one of the keys to the inability of the industry to modernise

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as quickly as it would like to do and as hon. Members opposite would like it to do.

Ships can be run with fewer men. The Scandinavians have shown how it can be done. They are operating very large tankers with 24 or 26 men. Our industry has been conscious of that and has been seeking to reduce manning scales wherever possible. But it is quite outside the shipowners' control. It is within the control of a joint body, and the owners can only move as far as the N.U.S. permits them to move. That may be right, but let it not be implied that the shipping industry is completely its own master in matters of this kind.

Mr. Heffer: Who is responsible for the failure to develop bulk carriers in this country? Secondly, up till now, who has been responsible for failing to develop the container system for shipping? Does the hon. Gentleman suggest that it has been the N.U.S.?

Mr. Lloyd: I am glad that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) has raised those two points. British shipowners would be the first to say that in the vital years since the war others have taken the lead which they would like to have taken. But the fiscal and economic environments in Britain in the years after the war were less favourable to the British shipowner than some of his competitors found who, as a result, have been able to make considerable advances.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned container traffic. In 1959 I crossed to the United States to see what was going on there, and I have kept in close touch with the development of container traffic ever since. However, the hon. Gentleman is obviously more concerned with a private conversation than with my answer to his question, so I shall not take it any further.

I want now to refer to the commercial and financial aspects of efficiency. The Prime Minister did not refer to them, because those aspects of efficiency are impeded by the Selective Employment Tax. Even the shipping industry has to sell its services. That is done largely from head offices within the United Kingdom, and it is a type of activity which,

generally speaking, will suffer a penal taxation.

The survival of the industry in the last ten years in many cases has depended on the most skilled financial advice which it could employ. The fact that it has survived is a pointer to two things. The first is that the industries have the wit to do it. The second thing is that it lives in a fiscal environment in which that advice is probably the most single aspect of management. The Prime Minister did not refer to it because, quite clearly, it is yet another aspect of the general hostility of the environment of free enterprise in shipping which he would prefer not to discuss.

The industry has been criticised for failing to move with the times over the Merchant Shipping Act. I am sure that the industry will be the first to admit that the Act needs drastic reform. However, in September 1963 the former Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, started a series of meetings with both sides of the industry directed specially towards the reform of that Act. He tells me that those meetings were held regularly and continuously until the Conservative Government went out of office. What do hon. Members opposite say to that? Could the industry have done more? If it could, why has not more been done since the present Government came to power? A great deal was being done, but no one has referred to it, because it is inconvenient to refer to it. It is much easier to say, "Here is this obsolete Act, with this industry sheltering behind it." That is easy to say, but it is not the truth, and it is time that our judgments in these matters were based on the truth.

With regard to the criticism that the industry has tended to focus on the question of conditions in ships, I would make but this simple point that the shipping industry, while it employs vessels which have an average life of about 20 years, will always be exposed to this type of criticism, because in any fleet, not only the British Merchant Marine, there will always be ships which are at least 20 years old, and on these ships it is not possible to have conditions equivalent to those on ships which are being built now.

This is a fact of life which nothing that we can do in the House of Commons

can alter. It is a fact of life which we ought to recognise. We can say that conditions in these very old ships are so bad that by legislative or other means we shall drive them out of economic employment. If this is what we believe, let us define the conditions. Let us define the ships which fall within these conditions, and then we will know where we are. We will also know the economic cost to the nation—because this is a point of which we cannot lose the sight—of raising the conditions, and cutting off in the 20th, 19th, 18th, or 17th year, or whatever point one chooses, the level of acceptability of ships.

I turn now to deal with the Emergency Powers Act. The question I ask myself is, emergency powers for what? Are these emergency powers required to deal with the consequences of the strike, or are they, as I have suggested, emergency powers to deal with the consequences of inflation? It seems to me that the wage claim which is the subject of this strike—and four-fifths of the wage claims which have been made in Britain since the war—is a wage claim against inflation.

I go further and say that four-fifths of the strikes which have taken place in this country since the war have been strikes against the consequences of inflation. One can go further and say that four-fifths of every wage claim which is conceded is dissipated by inflation within the following eight months. Therefore, is it not time that we redirected four-fifths of our argument to the fundamental causes of the economic malaise which faces the country today?

We need emergency powers against an automatic mechanism whereby the money supply of Great Britain is automatically increased to meet the requirements of demand cost inflation. We need political courage to tackle the causes, and not the symptoms. It is widely recognised now, surely, that inflation is the most efficient and corrosive solvent of the social structure ever devised, and people are beginning to use this fact in a way which cannot be regarded as in the national interest.

If we do not show the courage to face reality in this House of Commons, this House will become

“A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay.”

We can and must do something more than fret. Before we can inspire the nation, we must inspire ourselves. The best way to do this is to bring Ceasar up to date, this Island is not divided into two parts, employers and employees, but three, employers, employees, and the public, and it is high time that the ghost which has been kept away from every conference table was brought back and re-embodied and given voice.

7.55 p.m.

Mr. Michael Foot (Ebbw Vale): At the end of my remarks I shall return to the larger discussion to which the hon. Member for Portsmouth, Langstone (Mr. Ian Lloyd) was referring, the question of inflation and the economic consequences of what we are discussing today. I should like first to refer to some of the other things which have been said in the debate.

At the beginning of his speech my right hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell) chided my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) because, he said, he found my hon. Friend in a curious temporary association with the right hon. Member for Flint, West (Mr. Birch). I do not know whether my right hon. Friend the Member for Easington was aware of what happened to him at the end of his speech. He received a number of cheers from the other side of the House, and since then there has been hardly a speaker from the benches opposite who has failed to compliment my right hon. Friend on the main core of his speech, so I think my right hon. Friend should be a little careful of making these accusations by the method of association.

One of my main criticisms of what the Government appear to have unleashed by the policy which they have followed in these matters is that they have given great encouragement to some hon. Gentlemen opposite in the action which they wish to take about the trade unions, action which the right hon. Member for Bexley (Mr. Heath) did not fail to exploit in his speech, in particular the proposal that he now makes in this debate—and it is the one concrete proposal which has come out of the debate, and therefore I wish to refer to it—for an inquiry into the allegations which were made by the Prime Minister a week ago, and which have been repeated today, an inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman suggested

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might be done possibly under the Tribunals of Evidence Act.

That was referred to by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I agree with the right hon. Member. I do not think that we would succeed in advancing our affairs very much by such an inquiry. The right hon. Gentleman said that he did not think we would discover what pressures were being exerted on people in this House, much less on executives of trades unions by such inquiry. He said that we would not be able to discover by means of such an inquiry whether the brewers' lobby brought influence to bear on the Conservative Party, or whether the teetotal lobby brought influence to bear on the Liberal Party. What one might say about that is that the brewers are effective in one case, and not in the other.

I am prepared to say that the Liberal Party is abstemious of its own free will, and no doubt the Conservative Party reaches such condition as it does without any outside pressure whatsoever, so I think it is true to say that we will not be able to solve these matters, because we will not be able to discover exactly what are the kinds of pressures which are exerted either on Members of this House or on executives of trade unions.

But there is a much more powerful objection than that, as I am sure that the Leader of the Liberal Party would acknowledge. Indeed the right hon. Gentleman referred to it, or suggested that he would refer to it. There is a much bigger objection to this kind of wide-ranging tribunal. I become more and more opposed to it every time I hear about it, and on every occasion I have opposed the institution of these tribunals of inquiry.

I was surprised to see the right hon. Member for Flint, West come out in favour of such an inquiry. He once kicked up a big row about it, and indeed I thought it was a decision of this House that we should set up an examination into whether we should have any more of these tribunals in the future, because in the past we had seen that they had inflicted such grievous injustices on individuals.

I think that the right hon. Gentleman—that is if he was making a serious proposal—should have considered this

afresh, because if it is wrong, as I believe it is, to have tribunals to investigate the kind of specific matters which arose in, say, the Vassall case, or in earlier cases on which it was thought unnecessary to have these inquiries because they would inflict hardship, it is even more wrong to want an inquiry into a vague charge of Communist association.

The right hon. Gentleman contended that he was speaking in the name of individual freedom. If he was serious—and I am still not sure whether he was—he was asking for an inquiry which, if it were set up, would be a kind of glorified McCarthy inquiry, and I hope that hon. Members on both sides of the House will be opposed to any such investigation.

Mr. Heath: The hon. Gentleman is allowing his argument to run away with itself. To begin with, I was deliberately not speaking only about an inquiry under the Tribunals of Evidence Act, 1921. I said that this was one method. In fact, I think that if the hon. Gentleman looks at past history he will see that each tribunal of inquiry has learnt from the mistakes of its predecessor. The problem which the hon. Gentleman raised could be avoided or we could have another form of inquiry. In any case, I was serious about this because charges have been made against individuals under privilege which they have no way of dealing with because the matters cannot be stated in public outside the House except before an inquiry.

Mr. Foot: I am coming to the question of charges made against individuals. First, however, it is quite proper for me to deal with the remedy proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, and to say that this would make the disease worse, because we would have a tribunal investigating wide, unspecified charges of Communist pressure and association with trade unions. Nothing could be more injurious, not merely to individual freedom but to the economic welfare of the country. If anybody thinks that we can help to solve the economic problems of the country by an inquiry of this nature he should consider the question again.

Mr. Heath: But charges can be quite specific, and a tribunal can inquire into something quite specific. The Government, through the Prime Minister, said that the executive was not its own master.

Nobody has ever accused the House of not being its own master because of lobbying by somebody else.

Mr. Foot: The right hon. Gentleman may hold the view that the deficiencies of this tribunal have been removed. In my view they have not. I recall that in each case when a tribunal of this sort has been set up an injustice has been done to some individual—often to someone whose name had not previously been associated with the inquiry. That is what happens once there is this wide-ranging inquiry, in which there is no specific charge and no one knows the accusation against which he must defend himself—which is always the case under the Tribunals of Inquiry Act. That is why some of us have fought against it, and why I would oppose such an inquiry today. I hope that anybody who is genuinely in favour of protecting individual freedom would oppose the one concrete suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman for dealing with the situation.

I now turn to the question of privilege, to which the Prime Minister devoted a prominent section of his speech. There may be circumstances in which privilege has to be invoked to protect free speech in the House. I would not say that it should necessarily be altogether excluded, although there might be an argument for doing that. But if we are going to invoke privilege to protect ourselves because of what we say in this House we must do so with extreme care, because what we are doing when we invoke privilege is to say, "We have rights in this House which the rest of the citizens of this country do not have," and we remove ourselves from a section of the law which applies to the rest of the citizens of this country.

If we do that we must do so with extreme care, and only when it can be clearly shown that the national interest is absolutely paramount. Only in such circumstances have the Government, the Prime Minister or anyone else the right to invoke privilege.

Mr. Peter Tapsell (Horncastle): The hon. Member's definition of Parliamentary privilege is not a satisfactory one. Although I am not a lawyer, in my view it is more accurate to define privilege as being executed by us on behalf of our constituents—as their representatives.

It is their privilege that we are exercising, and not our own.

Mr. Foot: That is a very fanciful definition. The fact is that all the other citizens of this country are subject to the laws of libel and slander, but we say that we are exempt from those laws. That is confirmation of what I say, namely, that when we invoke privilege we are in that sense exempt from laws which apply to the rest of our citizens.

If we do not like the libel and slander laws we should change them. We must be very careful when invoking privilege on our own behalf. Everybody using privilege in order to say something in the House of Commons—and particularly in order to name individuals—should think twice, thrice and again before doing it. It can be extremely unfair, as it is in this instance.

Before I leave the question of privilege I must tell the Prime Minister that although, as he says, privilege has been used in this House to protect the national interest and our freedoms, it is also true that over many decades or centuries privilege has been used in this House to deny genuine freedom to people outside. That is the history of the eighteenth century—the history of the fight Members had to get published what they said in the House. It was a fight against privilege. The Prime Minister must therefore be careful in invoking privilege, and doubly careful in using it to mention names. That is perhaps the reason why he did not use names on the previous occasion.

My hon. Friend the Member for Poplar has also proved in a deadly manner that when the Prime Minister made his statement last Monday he was making an accusation—at any rate against the 46 members of the Executive—which he was not entitled to make, in view of the statement that he has made today. What about the other two? I listened with extreme care to what my right hon. Friend said. I heard him describe how Communists and others had advocated the spreading of the strike. I understood him to say that they had urged other people to come in and support the strike. None of this is exceptional.

I listened with extreme care to what he said about Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater. I listened as carefully as anybody, and

[Mr. Foot.]
so far as I am concerned Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater leave this debate with an absolutely clean sheet. There is not a thing against them. There has not been one accusation, except that they had pressed their argument with great power and force. My right hon. Friend can press an argument with great power and great force. We might call him the Mr. Kenny of the House of Commons. He can persuade a lot of people. That is what Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater are guilty of doing.

It is no crime; indeed, in many respects it is an honourable thing to do. Last Monday the Prime Minister said:

"It has been apparent for some time—and I do not say this without having good reason for saying it—that since the Court of Inquiry's Report a few individuals have brought pressure to bear on a select few on the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen who in turn have been able to dominate the majority of that otherwise sturdy union."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 20th June, 1966; Vol. 730, c. 42.]

I presume that Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater are included among those select few. So that is the formidable argument—that two members of the executive committee have been able to sway the other 46 members, who, apparently, are so feeble that they have given way to all the pressure exerted upon them.

I do not believe that story. Mr. Kenny and Mr. Slater may be misguided in their views as to how the strike should proceed. In my view—although it is very easy to say this, from the outside—it would have been wise for the seamen to accept the decision of the Pearson Inquiry. But I can understand people who take a different view.

It must be clear to everybody that Mr. Slater and Mr. Kenny leave this debate without any stain on their characters. In that case, what is the debate about? Why was the original charge made by the Prime Minister? What about the others? One or two of them are known Communists. They have probably expressed their Communist views, but that is not a crime. The Prime Minister said there was nothing illegal about it.

The Prime Minister: Hear, hear.

Mr. Foot: My right hon. Friend says, "Hear, hear," but he went on in his speech to refer to "terrifying" and

"terrorising". I hope that those adjectives do not apply to Mr. Kenny or Mr. Slater, or any of the other people who have been named. They ought to be distinguished.

I come back to what I was saying, that if one is to invoke privilege, one must do it with the utmost care. If one is going to name people, one must say exactly what the crime is and exactly what the charge is. My complaint against the Prime Minister's conduct of the dispute in this respect is that he has not specified the accusation against these people. All those who have been named, leave this debate with nothing against them, nothing whatsoever except that they have advocated their extreme views with considerable skill and force. That is all they have done—

Mr. Ian Lloyd: Would the hon. Gentleman not concede that this difficulty which he is describing arises from the simple fact that national economic sabotage is not a crime in our law?

Mr. Foot: I am sure that not the Prime Minister nor the Leader of the Opposition nor anybody else in the House will be thankful for the support of the hon. Gentleman. If we are to have a new crime of national economic sabotage because people advocate the views in which they believe, he would be one of the first put behind bars, and he would find many of the shipowners there with him.

This leads me to the further question about the dispute, the real one which we ought to be discussing. One of my complaints against the Prime Minister's conduct is that, by the introduction of this whole issue of the so-called illicit pressure which has been exerted—although, as I have tried to illustrate, this has not been the accusation—one of the dangers of this method of controversy is that the House of Commons and the country and, of course, the newspapers are all diverted from the real problems which we ought to be facing, the real problems of the dispute and the economic situation. The real question which should be asked about the dispute itself is, did the Government take all the steps prior to the dispute resolving itself into strike action which they should have taken to prevent the strike?

On their own testimony the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour—I do not like to attack him in his absence but we are perfectly entitled to criticise him—did not take every step to deal with the strike before it became a strike. The Government did not say to the shipowners before the strike started that they ought to concede what the Pearson inquiry said they ought to concede, nor did the Government say before the strike started that they ought to consider the measures which are now being proposed about leave time.

All these proposals could have been urged upon the shipowners by the Government before the strike occurred. Who knows whether they would have averted the strike or not? This is anybody's guess, but they should have been tried, especially, as my hon. Friend the Member for Poplar has underlined, when the tone of the Prime Minister's speech today and in the last week or so on this aspect of the strike has been very different from the tone he adopted a few weeks ago, and very different also from the tone of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the eve of the introduction of the emergency powers.

I was here that night, as were many other hon. Members, on the eve of the introduction of the emergency powers, when many of us urged—my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) constantly urged with great authority and wisdom—that pressure should be brought upon the shipowners. But in that debate, on the eve of the emergency powers being introduced, the Chancellor said that that would be a wrong moment for the Government to bring pressure upon the shipowners in this respect.

The Government have neglected many of the measures which they should have taken to avert the strike, which makes it all the worse that they should have resorted to the kind of accusations which, as we now see, have precious little foundation.

There is another aspect of this matter. I am not saying—nobody could say for certain—that, if the Government had urged upon the shipowners originally the concessions which we will have to make to the seamen after 40 or 50 days of the strike, the strike might have been post-

poned. It might have been worth trying, particularly as we were saying that we were doing everything in our power to assist the seamen and a union which had suffered hardships and deprivations in the past. It would have been worth offering. The Minister of Labour bears a heavy responsibility for not having urged these proposals on the shipowners earlier, and the whole Government must share the responsibility with him. Nobody can say for certain whether this would have won the allegiance of the seamen, but this is the real issue which we should be debating and the question which the Government should put to themselves.

It is no good their thinking that they have massive support in the House. What is the support outside and the support from the seamen? The seamen are as patriotic as any other citizens. The seamen want to see the success of this Government as much as any other section of the community. They probably played as big a part in helping the Government to be returned to power as almost any other section. Therefore, why have the Government not been able to command the allegiance of the seamen? Let them ask that question. If they do ask the question, I believe that they must come to the answer, that they have gone about their incomes policy in the wrong way and that, prior to the attempt to win the allegiance of the seamen in support of their incomes policy, they have taken a series of other measures to undermine support for their incomes policy.

They have taken this action with the judges and with the doctors. I remember very well sitting up for a whole night last July in the debate arguing against the increase in the judges' salaries, which came into operation in April. I remember arguing against it during the night. We were told that it had to be done because it was part of a bargain. It was a most absurd bargain. We tried to warn the Government, more than a year ago. We said, "If you proceed with policies of this nature and say that we must vote huge increases for sections of the community like the judges, you will not be able to win the allegiance of the whole community for your incomes policy." We argued it all night. They took no notice. We were told that it had to be done. But who was right about those warnings?

[MR. FOOT.]

The same thing applies in a different degree to the doctors. I do not say that many of them did not deserve an increase; of course they did. I do not say that other factors did not concern them. But if we are to win the allegiance of the community to the Prices and Incomes policy, we must take stern measures, of which I am in favour.

We should have had a Budget to deal with this subject, but the Budget took no action against the richer sections of the community which would have persuaded the seamen that there would be a fair sharing of the national wealth. Why, in the Government's Budget, did we not revoke the concessions which were given by the right hon. and learned Member for Wirral (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd) to Surtax payers? If the Government had done that, they would have raised about £80 million, £20 million of it in unearned income, and would have had a better chance of saying to the seamen, "We are trying to work out an incomes policy which will be fair. We cannot do it all at once, but we are really making a start."

These are the real lessons of the dispute. When the dispute is over, the Government will still be left with the question, how are they to command the allegiance of the people of this country for a fair incomes policy? They cannot do it the way they are going. This is what concerns them. They will have to change their policies and introduce measures of taxation, because that is the only way of sharing fairly the nation's wealth. That is the way in which to appeal to people who are much worse off.

If the Government had been really intelligent, they would have introduced the kind of Budget which I have described and have said, when the seamen put in their demand, that one of the purposes of their incomes policy was precisely to help people like the seamen, not to hold them back, that this was the idea.

If the Government had done that in the case of the seamen, I believe that they would command far greater allegiance throughout the country. That is what some of us are arguing and that is why some of us are horrified that this debate on the economic affairs of the nation and the economic success of this Government,

which is what we wish to see, should be diverted into this absurd channel of yelling, "Yah, Communist!", and seeking for Communists under the bed, over the bed or anywhere else. This is to reduce the great problems that we must solve to a fifth-rate level.

The Government must alleviate the whole situation and that can be done only by deeds. It cannot be done by words. They must perform deeds which will arouse fierce antipathy from hon. Gentlemen opposite, who are not in favour of sharing the nation's wealth. They do not mind the seamen being done down, although they do not want other sections of the nation to be dealt with in an effective manner.

If we had a Government who put such proposals forward there would be fierce yells of opposition from hon. Gentlemen opposite. Then the Government would have a better chance of commanding the allegiance of the seamen. It is more important for the Government to have the allegiance of the seamen than to have any common ground of policy with hon. Gentlemen opposite. We are warning the Government in good time. It is not only a question of wages and incomes, although it is extremely important that there should be a proper sharing of the nation's wealth, because there are many other things in which we believe and to which we are pledged, like better pensions, better education, a better Health Service and so on. They are all lagging behind the proposals in the National Plan.

If we are to speed forward with these policies, the Government must take much more courageous measures than we have yet seen from them. I hope that, when this debate ends, nobody will think of the absurd proposal to set up a tribunal of inquiry. I hope that we will have no more of these accusations which, on analysis, have been shown to be unprovable and unfounded. I hope that the Government will consider their policies and try to answer this question: why is it that the seamen, who helped to return this Government to power and who are eager for this country's success, did not respond to the appeals which the Government made to them?

8.22 p.m.

Mr. Aidan Crawley (Derbyshire, West): The hon. Member for Ebbw Vale

(Mr. Michael Foot) objected strongly to the Prime Minister's speech. I object less to what the Prime Minister said and rather more to some of the things he did not say. We are being asked to give enormous powers to the Government, powers which will allow them to dispense with almost every regulation which normally governs the docks, ships and transport. It is right, therefore, that we should look carefully at the reasons why the Government should attain such powers.

The Prime Minister admitted that the seamen have grievances. He did not admit that the Government had any responsibility for the fact that these grievances led to a strike. Yet I believe that it has been largely the action of the Government in handling this strike and other disputes—in particular the action of the Prime Minister—that has been responsible for this strike.

The origin of the strike may well be found to lie in the right hon. Gentleman's handling of the dispute with the railwaymen last summer. I know that the Prime Minister feels that he made no concession to the railwaymen, but I have yet to meet a trade unionist—the Cabinet having said that no further talks should take place with the railwaymen—who does not agree that, after that, the Prime Minister saw them and allowed further talks to take place provided the strike was called off. In doing that the right hon. Gentleman struck a blow against moderate trade unionism and encouraged everyone who believes that strikes should go on till the last moment.

The Prime Minister: Before the hon. Gentleman continues, I hope that the trade unionists with whom he talked were better informed than he is. There was no question of handling the issue of the railway trade unions last summer. That occurred on 12th February this year. Secondly, we never said that there would be no talks whatever. That would be a ridiculous thing to say, but there were no concessions made in the Downing Street talks beyond those offered in the previous discussions.

Mr. Crawley: The right hon. Gentleman's colleague said that the Government had nothing further to say to the railwaymen.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend simply meant that the railwaymen were asking for further concessions beyond those proposed by the Prices and Incomes Board; what my right hon. Friend said nine days before I met them and had offered them in interpretation of the Board's Report. When various of my right hon. Friends said that we had nothing more to say, we meant that if we met them we would not go beyond that Report, as interpreted by my right hon. Friend, and, when we met them, we did not go beyond what my right hon. Friend had said to them.

Mr. Crawley: That explanation may satisfy the Prime Minister, but some of the seamen and the members of their executive, with whom I have talked, felt that they only had to carry their movements to the point of strike and to get to see the Prime Minister and they would then get some concessions. One of the facts about this strike has been the bitterness towards the Prime Minister on the part of the members of the seamen's executive. I do not think that they were necessarily justified in expecting the right hon. Gentleman to make such concessions, but they certainly did expect them and their bitterness, when they found that he had nothing to offer them, is one reason why this strike has gone on for this length of time.

The Prime Minister said that the granting of an inquiry while the strike was proceeding was unprecedented. I consider it a bad precedent. Everyone knew that the inquiry would grant concessions and, when it did, all the militants in the seamen's union felt that they had that under their belts and that if they held on a little longer they would get more concessions. As I say, it was a bad precedent, and this point has also been responsible for the continuance of the strike.

Mr. Arthur Lewis: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that in addition to the concessions the inquiry took away from the seamen something which they had enjoyed for 13 years? Why should the seamen give up something which they had enjoyed for 13 years because the Government had set up an inquiry which they did not want?

Mr. Crawley: On balance, I think that everyone is agreed that the Pearson Inquiry awarded more to the seamen than

[MR. CRAWLEY.]
they had been offered previously. If something was taken away that is really irrelevant, because the seamen were offered more than they have been offered by the employers.

The Prime Minister spoke of militancy. This is something of which the hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) approves and which the Prime Minister admitted has a place in trade unionism. However, it is absurd to pretend that such a thing can help the industrial situation, and the Government are responsible in large measure for the militancy we have seen recently. The Industrial Disputes Act, passed last year, gave the green light to intimidation as my hon. Friends warned at the time, and since then militancy has increased.

The form of incomes policy which the Government are seeking to impose increases militancy. I know that the seamen feel, I believe with some justification, that they are the victims of this policy. Of course, if inflation goes on as it is we may have to have a wages freeze, but that is not a policy. A repressive incomes policy, which is what the Government's policy is, will never succeed. One cannot in this country hold down wages and prices, except as an emergency and for a short time, because there are always too many special cases. We have seen half a dozen of them during the last year. To try to hold down wages and prices in such a way would involve compulsion to a degree which no British Government could sustain. There is only one form of incomes policy which will ever work. It is a policy which allows wages to rise with productivity. But that means a frontal assault on productivity and a frontal assault on restrictive practices.

This is something which the Government have refused to face and have again passed off on to the Royal Commission. I have always believed that such a frontal assault is not only possible but practicable. It would involve management as well as the unions, because everything would be agreed between the two. If we made such a frontal assault, just as in the Restrictive Practices Court procedure the force of example brings about a revolution in restrictive practices, a revolution in relations between management and men would be brought about in a very short time. If we had that we would have a

policy in which incomes as well as productivity could rise instead of having a policy of stop-go.

Because of this repressive form of incomes policy, not only the seamen but the teachers are now asking for higher pay, and each section of the community feels that it is the victim of a policy which they do not believe is working or ever will work. This again increases militancy. For all these reasons, the Government bear very heavy responsibility for the starting of this strike and for its continuance.

It would be wrong to suggest, as I think the Prime Minister was trying to suggest, that the main responsibility for the continuance of the strike lies with the Communist Party. On the other hand, I think he did a service in reminding the country again of the way in which the Communist Party seeks to exploit this and every other industrial dispute. He drew attention to the fact that the Communist Party has a very powerful industrial organisation. Many people are aware of this, but many are not.

This first came to light and to the attention of the general public during the Electrical Trades Union case, but there have been many changes since then. It is still true that the industrial and political committee of the Communist Party, which, as the Prime Minister did not choose to mention, is closely in touch with the World Federation of Trade Unions and takes its policy from the Federation, controls to a large extent the policy in the Electrical Trades Union, but at the time of the case it exercised control through secret advisory committees. Members of the Communist Party used to attend and concentrate on particular unions. As all that was exposed it changed, and now the contracts are of a much less formal character, and within the exercise of these informal contacts that the men whom the Prime Minister named were functioning during the seamen's dispute.

There has been a further development recently which was mentioned the other day in a report which is to be published by Sir William Carron. There is a new industrial organisation which the industrial committee of the Communist Party is able to use which is called the "Voice of the Unions". It was sponsored by some hon. Members of this House. I do not know if hon. Members have seen

"Aviation Voice", "Dockers' Voice", "Engineering Voice" and so on. The meeting to which Sir William Carron referred was called on behalf of that Engineering Voice and took place at the beginning of this month and it illustrates the way in which the Communist Party now works. That meeting was attended by many members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and others. Although they discussed the magazine, they also discussed in great detail how to take away the control of the Amalgamated Engineering Union from those who now hold it and get in their place Communists and those who sympathise with the Communist point of view. These reports will be published by Sir William Carron very soon.

It is of use that the country should be aware of what happens at these meetings, and in that sense the Prime Minister by drawing attention to this matter has done a service. This is a real takeover bid. The Prime Minister was exaggerating when he referred to action in regard to the seamen as a takeover bid, but there are takeover bids being made in connection with the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

When we discuss whether anything can be done to counter the influence of a perfectly legal organisation, obviously we are on much more difficult ground. That can be done fundamentally only by trade unionists themselves. There are hundreds of trade unionists fighting this battle every day of their lives. I do not believe that an inquiry would reveal very much that is not already known. I rather agree with the hon. Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. M. Foot) when he said that when people have done nothing illegal—and there is no question of any of the people the Prime Minister mentioned having done anything illegal—it seems a little unfair to mention them by name. I do not believe that an inquiry would reveal that any of these people have done anything illegal. Nor is there anything illegal in the whole industrial pursuits of the Communist Party, however pernicious one may think they are within the law. Nothing that is likely to be exposed at this moment will show that the Communist Party contravenes the law in any way. The Electrical Trades Union affair taught the Communist Party a great deal.

The main actions which can be taken are by trade unionists themselves. The

Government can help. When the time comes, there are many suggestions that we on these benches can make for reorganising the trade unions and strengthening the discipline within them, which I believe would be welcomed by a large number of trade unionists, and which might enable them to exercise more control within their own unions.

There is one very old idea which I believe the Government should take advantage of now. It is the idea of acting by injunction. Today no major strike can conceivably be considered as simply between the union and employers. This is true, no matter whether the unionists concerned are seamen, railwaymen, dockers or anybody else. Any major union which finds it necessary to strike inevitably involves the whole country and inevitably the Government is drawn in.

I believe that in an advanced industrial society like ours there should be a system by which the Government of the day can, as in Sweden, the United States and other countries, proceed by injunction and gain a cooling off period of, say, 40 days or 60 days. Thus the Government could gain the time not only to put their own point of view across, but for both sides to be brought together to seek a solution and so avoid a strike which is damaging to the national interest.

I believe that such a system has become necessary. I do not believe that the Government should wait for the recommendations of the Royal Commission before adopting this system. After this strike the Government would be well advised to legislate on such a system immediately. I cannot believe that many people would object to it. I do not believe that seamen or anybody else enjoy a strike. Throughout the strike everybody has felt that there was not all that between the two sides and that somehow the strike should have been avoided.

The right to strike would not be abandoned or weakened by having a cooling off period. I believe that in the United States the procedure has been invoked 22 times and only once have the parties failed to find the basis for an agreement in the cooling off period. A procedure such as this would offer this country the hope of avoiding a repetition of recent events.

[MR. CRAWLEY.]

The Prime Minister's remarks need to be put in their right perspective. A very large share of the responsibility for what has happened lies with the Government. I do not believe that this strike, either in its origin or in its continuance, has been mainly due to the activities of the Communist Party. I think that the Communists have done their utmost to exploit it, but that is normal. I am not sure that it is right to censure people for what is both normal and legal behaviour.

8.38 p.m.

Mr. Hugh D. Brown (Glasgow, Provan): The speech of the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. Crawley) should be a warning to the seamen because, having expressed great sympathy for them and understanding of their case, he went on to exploit the situation in the same way as he has accused the Communist Party and the Communists of doing. Perhaps this is a lesson to all of us to try to apply ourselves to this problem objectively and make constructive suggestions, if that is possible in such a delicate situation, which may help to bring this dispute to a close.

I have not the experience, and perhaps not even the eloquence, of my hon. Friends the Members for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Michael Foot) and Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) in criticising or attacking the Prime Minister. I sincerely hope that I have the opportunity in future to develop or acquire the experience. Before I make one or two points on what I think has been a mishandling of the situation, I should like to address myself to the Conservative Members. As usual, none of them is here.

Mr. Arthur Lewis: Two. The right hon. and learned Member for St. Marylebone (Mr. Hogg) is here.

Mr. Brown: I am not sure whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman is with me or not at the moment.

Mr. Quintin Hogg (St. Marylebone): I was. I was noting the hon. Member's phrase about the Government—"a mishandling of the situation".

Mr. Brown: I wanted to pay the right hon. and learned Member a compliment, because the new-found interest in the situation, as witness the contributions

which we have had here today, is quite a change from the debate that took place on 26th May more than a month ago, when we were discussing the granting of emergency powers. From half past six onwards that night there was not one single Conservative Member in this House who wished to contribute anything to the debate. As far as I remember, there was not a Liberal present all day.

Therefore, it seems to me that the new-found interest to jump on the anti-Communist bandwagon must be looked at in the light of somewhat advantage there is in it for the Conservative Party. What is it that the Conservatives are asking? The right hon. Member for Bexley (Mr. Heath) seemed to suggest that we should have some inquiry. With what end in view—to make the Communist Party an illegal or proscribed organisation? Would that be helpful? It is almost an undercover organisation in many respects at the moment, especially in the industrial sense.

What further guidance are hon. Members opposite seeking from the Government? I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has departed again, because I sincerely hope that when he replies tonight he will pay particular attention to the fact that not one Member on this side of the House has been with him on the statement which he made eight days ago.

Mr. Simon Mahon: Had I been given the opportunity, I assure my hon. Friend that I, like many others, would have been with my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, in all his remarks about Communist activity in the trade union movement.

Mr. Brown: Nobody is disputing the Communist influence in the trade union movement. What we are disputing, or at least what I am disputing, is the time and place to make it public. That is an entirely different point. One might take it from the interjection of my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Simon Mahon) that I was suggesting that the Prime Minister had deliberately misled hon. Members. I never suggested anything of the kind.

I should like to make three brief points from the Glasgow or Scottish angle. Reference has been made to the Islands,

and I am prepared to include Ireland as one of the islands off the shores of Scotland. I am amazed by the plea of the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) about sending the right kind of vessel. I quite agree in thinking that the Government's handling in this regard has been most unfortunate. My hon. Friend the Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Malcolm MacMillan) made an excellent contribution in the debate on 26th May, and it is a pity that more attention was not paid to it by the Government before they took what I regard as precipitate action.

If a contribution has to be made, it must be made in the sense of trying, if not to win the confidence of the seamen, at least to give the feeling that one is impartial. One cannot be neutral in this situation but one can be impartial in the sense of trying to project the idea that one has confidence in their sense of fairness in a difficult situation. I think that the Government's action was a bit precipitate in Scotland, in sending the Navy to the islands when we already had a good example, unlike what the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland said, of co-operation in the interests of the Harris tweed industry. This was one mistake.

Secondly, I should like to have seen some kind of comment on the disturbing affair of the circular letter that has been sent to all members of the seamen's union, so I understand, though I have had no official approaches by the seamen. I should like to know whether there has been any police activity or Government activity in going into this as there seems to have been in following the movements of people who go from one flat to another, and so on. This is the kind of line which must be taken if one wants to convince people.

As regards gaining the confidence of the seamen, no action, according to what I could see, was taken by the Government on the illegal use of fishing boats to the islands, including Ireland. Here again, no one is likely to gain the confidence or the understanding of the seamen if all these things can be marked up against him.

Now, let us look at the other side of the picture, so to speak. It is not my impression that the National Union of

Seamen, the executive, the strike committees or anyone else in the membership has been manipulated in any underhand sense by the Communist Party. For some of the reasons which the Prime Minister gave—developments in the union and its organisation and so on—the people who are leading or who have been thrown up as leaders of the strike committees seem to be a lot of inexperienced trade unionists. When I say inexperienced, I am not belittling them. I am satisfied that they have courage, capacity and integrity, but they lack the experience which one can gain only through dealing with trade union affairs day in and day out. For obvious reasons this is something which they lack.

Some of the decisions taken by some branches have seemed almost incredible to me. I say this not because I want to attack the seamen. I do not. I had occasion to call on the Glasgow members the day after the Report was issued. The opinion of the national executive was accepted. They gave an impression of unanimous support for the executive, though not one member in the audience had even read the Report. Neither had I at that time. This is an expression of loyalty which would be magnificent if it were not just a little misplaced. However, it must be understood—I emphasise this—that, to my knowledge, there was not a single Communist at that meeting. No one spoke, apart from the chairman. Yet that was the feeling of loyalty expressed by the seamen. It may have been misplaced, but it was there plain to see.

With such tremendous loyalty felt towards them and with the sense of responsibility which they themselves feel towards their members, it is all the more difficult, in these unsophisticated circumstances, for members of a union executive to go back and advise their members to accept something less than that on which they had set their hearts. This is one of the fundamental reasons why I say there has been a mishandling of the situation in not getting the feel of the strike and in relying too much, perhaps, on such impressions and superficial pictures as are painted across the horizon now.

The Government failed to secure the confidence of the seamen. Equally, it must be said that the shipowners gave

[MR. BROWN.]

no cause for confidence. Every time I saw a representative of the shipowners on television, my back was put up. If ever there was a stubborn intractable approach in a dispute, it was that displayed by the leader of the Shipping Federation. In spite of our being told three weeks ago that not another penny could be afforded, we learn in a couple of weeks that the extra penny can be afforded. The Government have failed to come forward and criticise the shipowners with the same impartiality with which they seem to criticise the seamen.

Such a move could have made an enormous contribution in the circumstances. Hon. Members opposite tell us that this is a battle, that the union are taking on the Government and challenging the prices and incomes policy. If they say that, some of us are entitled to reply that the shipowners are hiding behind the Government's prices and incomes policy. I should like to see us being a little fairer in our approach to both sides in the dispute.

We must recognise that there has been a singular lack of evidence to substantiate the Prime Minister's bringing in this Communist smear or technique. I am sorry to have to say this. I think that there is a natural disappointment among many of us. We are going through a period of frustration, because the Government and the policies we believe in are not showing the success in such a short space of time that many of us hoped for. It is a natural feeling.

I believe that it is shared to some extent by the seamen. It is the feeling, "Surely we should be able to get something out of the Labour Government", but it comes at the very time when the country is in a more difficult financial situation than ever before. In these circumstances, it is not right for my right hon. Friend to have used the language he did. I cannot find any good reason why he should have chosen to use it in his statement eight days ago or in his speech today.

I plead with my right hon. Friend to try to counteract the impression which may have been created outside. At the same time, I appeal to the seamen to be a bit more reasonable and to make some attempt to understand the difficulties of

the Government and our loyalties to the Government, just as they have their loyalties to their Executive. If we have more understanding and talks with one another, perhaps we may be able to see an end to this unfortunate problem.

8.52 p.m.

Mr. Eric Moonman (Billericay): I am grateful to have been called, for I have sat here since my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made his speech. It has been a hard day's night. There is no doubt that the Prime Minister's speech has been misunderstood in certain quarters. Its greatest impact is that it was comprehensive. It was quite simply a statement dealing with the individuals who may have been engaged in subversive activities, but even the critics will admit that it was a detailed analysis of the background of the strike, and I am grateful for that.

What depresses me is that it is only on an occasion like this that we are given an opportunity to debate industrial relations. That is a great shame. There are other occasions when we seem to spend our time perhaps less usefully. Last night was an example. We had a whole series of repetitive speeches without the urgency involved in this issue. I regret this, because one or two hon. Members have made the point that the centre of any economic policy is the health and quality of our industrial relations between management and the unions. My right hon. Friend has also invited us to give our experiences, and I propose to relate mine.

I have had several informal meetings with seamen and found that in only two cases out of 20 was it their feeling that the basic problem was the reduction of hours and the jacking up of wages. Much more was it a problem of communication between owners and men, status in the job and satisfaction from it. That is also true of many other industries. We often find that the blatant points about wages and conditions of service are really camouflage.

The fundamental issue of so many disputes in the last five years is the extent of Government action. That means we should be prepared to consider the rôle of Government, management and trade unions. It is quite clear that in the last four to five years there has

been a gradual increase of interest by the Government, with Acts of Parliament relating to security of employment, industrial training and so on, which has meant that the Government have had a direct interest in what happens in industry.

There is also the need for management itself to clarify its functions, and many employers in this industry do not have the efficiency which we expect. In place of efficiency, there is often cowardice and in place of organisation, we get inadequacy. We should be prepared to criticise management in the industry. We have heard some extraordinary speeches from hon. Members opposite from which one might believe that the only group to blame in the industry is the trade union and that it is they whom we should be prepared to condemn. That is only one part of the problem and the whole harmony of industrial relationships depends on an understanding of both sides.

I hope that the Prime Minister will take some time to explain the rôle of the trade unions. Many trade unionists find the present change in the situation extremely difficult. What is the rôle of the trade union movement in the context of the economy which we are now creating? The First Secretary has said that the trade union movement should not be militant. This is something which he said outside the House a few weeks ago. But today the Prime Minister said that the trade unions need to continue to be militant. What is their expected rôle? If they are not to be militant and have to have a new rôle, how can they be protected? This is something which we have to be prepared to work out.

A new situation has been developing in our industrial environment. The Pearson Court of Inquiry represented an imposed settlement which was a departure and a very serious matter. Contrary to the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, which does not demand prior acceptance of a court's report by both sides to a dispute, the Government insisted on a settlement.

I want to give my own views as a Labour Member of Parliament. The right hon. and learned Member for Chertsey (Sir L. Heald) was way off beam when he said that in industrial relations we could not have political matters. I do not see how that is possible. Industrial

relations surely suggest that there are political views, and on this side of the House we are concerned not only with the efficiency of management, but with deep and loyal interests to the trade union movement. The views of hon. Members opposite are clearly contrary.

There will be great concern in the trade union and Labour movement about the way in which the debate has been shaped. The criticism about particular individuals who may have taken an active part in the strike should also be regarded as an admission that they are good organisers. If it is a criticism, we are going in the face of all we have encouraged the trade union movement to do over the last fifty years. That is something which comes out very clearly.

We must be prepared to admit that industry does not exist in isolation. The personalities and patterns of behaviour of people are shaped considerably by their past and present experience in home, school and the community. If we want to minimise the effect of isolated subversive elements, if it is true that they exist, we must try constantly to improve the fabric and quality of the society in which we live.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Eric Fletcher): Mr. Hogg.

Mr. Arthur Lewis (West Ham, North): On a point of order. Am I right in assuming that this is exempted business and that, subject to catching your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, hon. Members will be able to speak after the right hon. and learned Gentleman has spoken?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This Motion is not exempted business.

9.4 p.m.

Mr. Quintin Hogg (St. Marylebone): There can be relatively few occasions when the House is debating matters which are not generally expected to result in a contested Division when so many hon. Members have attempted to catch the eye of the Chair, or have made such useful contributions. Despite the slightly un-called-for remarks which came about two speeches ago from below the Gangway opposite during the dinner hour, there are very few recent occasions which I can remember when the House has shown, by constant attendance in the Chamber, a greater interest in the subject under discussion.

[MR. HOGG.]

I must say that although this has been a melancholy occasion for debate, because of the seriousness of the situation which has given rise to it and the gravity of the issues involved, I can seldom remember a more interesting debate, nor one in which there have been stranger or more exciting divergences between hon. Members of the same party or coincidences between hon. Members of opposite parties. Several hon. Members have commented on this and I find it encouraging rather than otherwise where these coincidences exist.

Before I address my remarks to the topics under discussion, may I reiterate what my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition said in opening, that we on this side are heartily sorry to hear of the sudden illness of the Minister of Labour. I have been a Member of Parliament for very nearly 30 years now, and I must say that in recent years bitterness between individuals and parties has increased rather than diminished. But I hope that there never will come a time when we find it impossible in this House to convey sympathy which is wholeheartedly sincere when one or other of us falls into sickness. Those of us, and there are quite a few on this side, who have known the loneliness and the strain of high office during moments of emergency and crisis will feel warmly towards the right hon. Gentleman, and I know that the whole House will wish him a very speedy recovery from his illness.

This debate arises on the occasion of the renewed Proclamation of emergency and the Regulations made thereunder. It is worth saying that, whatever criticism may have been levelled against the Government from various quarters during this debate, some of them far more severe than I shall feel inclined to make, I do not recollect a single speech from all those that have been delivered that has doubted the duty of the Government to proclaim the emergency in the first place and to go on renewing the powers until the strike is at an end.

What is involved in the use of the powers under the Emergency Powers Act is not intervention in the merits of an industrial dispute, but the safeguarding to the community of its means of livelihood; its food, fuel, light, water and

means of communications. I am glad to think that no one during the course of the debate has doubted or disputed in any way the duty of the Government to take the steps which are, theoretically at any rate, the only steps under discussion and to renew the emergency in order to safeguard these things for the community.

I could have wished that there had been a little more precise material in the debate on the subject of the emergency and the Regulations themselves. I have never been satisfied that this whole Draconian Code was a necessity. It seemed to me when we had them for the first time that what happened had been that the Government had tacked on the Regulation which they had used in 1949 to the Regulations which we used in 1956, or thereabouts, and then added a few from the General Strike and a few more which the various Departments thought that they might need in certain circumstances. I cannot agree that this is the ideal method of acquiring power to govern by decree. In the unfortunate event of further Regulations being necessary, I could wish that the Government would be a little more specific in their definition of the particular Regulations which they have asked us to pass. The Government have told us absolutely nothing at all, as far as I can measure to date, about what plans they have to put into effect Measures to ensure that the community has those things which the Emergency Powers Act is there to safeguard.

As I said last time, perhaps there are very good reasons for the Government holding their cards fairly close to their chest. It may be that they are afraid of the strike spreading. It may be that they are afraid of ill-intentioned people interfering with their plans. If either were the case, it would be a most melancholy circumstance. The community is entitled, when faced with a challenge to its supplies of fuel, light and food and communications, to have at least some indication from the Government of the plans which they have ready in case the use of powers should prove necessary. I regret that this has not been done.

A great deal of the discussion has related to the strike itself. I do not want to go into the many criticisms levelled at the Government from their own benches. I do not think that it is helpful

in an industrial dispute which we all hope will be settled in the course of negotiations for the Official Opposition, and it may be even supporters of the Government, to present the Government with a series of carping criticisms relating solely to the handling of the past.

I listened to the Prime Minister's account of the matter. We all recognise that he was right that many of these grievances are of long standing and relate to inadequacies of the legislation which he says will be repealed. I thought, however, that he stressed too much what he described as the uniqueness of this strike and ignored too much the similar events which have taken place elsewhere. There is no ignoring the fact that over a number of years parties, unions and others have been playing the game of "last across" against the incomes and prices policies of successive Administrations. Some of them have won and some of them have lost.

If the National Union of Seamen, perhaps more naïve than some, perhaps, as the Prime Minister gave us to understand, less intelligently led in some respects, has got in the way of oncoming traffic, I feel that it is not its fault alone. What we have to ask ourselves is the question which was asked from below the Gangway by the right hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Shinwell): Can this country afford to go on like this? How many more times must we lurch from one emergency to another, faced always with demands in which Governments have to choose between the validity of their incomes policies and a damaging industrial dispute which must cause danger to the economy of the country?

The Prime Minister indicated the course which the negotiations have taken and are taking. It looks as if at some time an agreement will be made on the exact number of leave days to be conceded in return for the exact proportion of productivity. One hopes that that will be to mutual satisfaction. But is there no better way that a highly civilised and politically conscious industrial country can conduct its business than to arrive at a decision of that kind in which minutiae are haggled over for weeks at the cost of an almost infinite amount to the prestige of the country and to its economic life in terms of exports and imports?

I should like to advert to the second of the two main topics of the debate. This was the account given by the Prime Minister of the facts which justified, as he claimed, his observations eight days ago on 20th June. These have come in for a good deal of discussion from more quarters than one. One recognises at once—at least, I recognise—that if the right hon. Gentleman believed, and I have no doubt that he believed, on 20th June that a tightly-knit body of persons were deliberately manipulating the executive of a great industrial union so that they became—I am quoting, I think, almost verbatim—more eager to inflict damage on the community than to acquire justice for their members, he must have been entitled to say that to the House. There can be no doubt that the head of the Government of a democratic country is under an obligation to inform Parliament if he believes that to be the case.

I cannot doubt that in saying that to the House on 20th June, the right hon. Gentleman was fully justified if he believed it to be true, as I accept that he did. We are, however, entitled, since the Prime Minister accepted the obligation upon himself of establishing the grounds of his belief, to ask how far the facts which he has produced today match up to his allegations. It is no charge of insincerity against the right hon. Gentleman if one subjects that to a certain amount of scrutiny.

As has been said repeatedly, one always recognises that, in every muddy pool of industrial disputes, both Communists and Trotskyists will be sitting on the bank with their rod and line fishing the dirty water. That does not mean that they created the pool or put the fish into it, or that there are no other fishermen. Whilst I fully accept that the Prime Minister has today correctly described the events connected with the dispute and has correctly described in general the efficiency of the Communist industrial organisation or the danger that they can present to unions which they are constantly trying to infiltrate with better or less success, I cannot see that what the right hon. Gentleman has said today amounts to proof of the specific allegations he made on 20th June. What he said on that occasion was that a certain number of individuals had so succeeded in infiltrating in a minority of the executive

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that they were able to dominate it, that a number of the executive were seeking to damage the country more than to obtain justice for their members and that the executive was not master in its own house. I cannot see anything in the elaborate account which we were given today which justifies those allegations.

It is, of course, true that in any hotly disputed matter members of executives with power, as the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) reminded us, will be subjected to pressures of one kind or another. I have no doubt that it will be said that if they do not vote in this or that way, they will find it the worse for them when it comes to an election. Which of us has not been subjected to similar pressure at one time or another with more or less result?

I cannot, however, accept such pressures as being either terrifying or amounting to terrorisation. Nor can I say with the right hon. Gentleman that this sort of thing is such as to daunt the stoutest hearts. If they were subjected to anything which would daunt the stoutest heart or terrorise or terrify in the ordinary sense of those words, that would be an illegal act. That would be a crime under Section 7 of the Protection of Property Act, 1875. If the right hon. Gentleman has evidence of that, he should have given it to the House. But I did not understand from what he said that he had any evidence of it.

The next thing that I want to do is to comment on the remarkable story about the *Observer* article which was produced by the hon. Member for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Flint, West (Mr. Birch). The hon. Member for Poplar said that the very striking article in the *Observer* last Sunday, which I certainly read, was fed to the *Observer* in its essentials by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister himself or by the Government. When the right hon. Gentleman replies, I invite him to answer that charge, aye or no.

I must say that when I read the article, without the information which the hon. Member for Poplar commands, I thought myself that it could only have come from the Government. I did not believe

that responsible journalists could have used language of that kind without having precise sources from the Government and, in fact, from the Prime Minister's office. If I had the time, I could justify that from the language of the article itself. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to say whether that is the case.

The remarkable thing about the *Observer* article is that it made another and much more sinister case than that which the right hon. Gentleman was able to produce to the House in his speech today. The precise case made by the *Observer* article was to the effect that what was described as "a package deal" had been made to the executive and accepted by it. It said:

"In return for allowing outside direction"—

of the strike—

"members of the executive were offered a guarantee of phased and unofficial strike support from other unions building up if necessary to a general strike."

It added:

"It now appears that the tightly knit group put their proposals to individual members of the National Union of Seamen executive whilst the Pearson Inquiry was sitting. Just as privately and informally this proposal had been accepted."

I am bound to say that if that is the case something far more sinister would have been established than anything that the right hon. Gentleman alleged today. I would ask him specifically if that information came from the Government. If it did not, I am not accepting for a moment that what was described in the article as a conspiracy, I think correctly, would have been such that he would have been able to say that nothing illegal was done.

I must remind the right hon. Gentleman, who was rightly concerned from the point of view of the country with the threat to spread the strike throughout the country—which did appear from his speech—that but for the repeal of the Act of 1927 the right hon. Gentleman would have been armed with an Act of Parliament saying that a strike was illegal as a lock-out was illegal if it had any object other than or in addition to the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in which the strikers were engaged and was a strike designed

or calculated to coerce the Government either directly or by inflicting hardship on the community.

That Act of Parliament was repealed in 1945, without a reason for it being given. I ought perhaps to say that only one reason was given for it, in the now famous words, "We are the masters now". I wonder whether the Government are the masters in their own house now that they have deprived themselves of that piece of legislation and whether they do not regret the foolish action of their predecessors in interfering with a piece of legislation which had worked successfully for nearly 20 years without any complaint from either side.

However, that is all past history now. The Government have to face the legal situation as it is. Here I agree with the right hon. Member for Easington when he says that the question is not what we should have done in the past but what the country can do now, and what it can do to prevent the recurrence of one emergency after another, such as we have been suffering from year after year under Governments of both political complexions threatening the life of the community and interfering with its ability to survive.

Several hon. Members have put forward different views. I admit that mine came nearest to that of the right hon. Gentleman. But I would put to him the consideration that we cannot alter the organisation of unions, any more than we can alter the organisation of limited liability companies unless we pass legislation altering the law. A new Trade Union Act is as much a condition of the development of trade union law as a new Companies Act is a condition of the development of company law. It is utterly wrong for one hon. Gentleman opposite to suggest that we think that because we dislike unions. I hope the House will forgive me if I say perfectly candidly that I have no desire whatever to involve the Government in party politics in this issue. We have all tried to make our constructive contributions here.

I should like to tell the House what I think has gone wrong in industrial relations for a long time in this country. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were two great new forms of economic activity. There was the one which

one could call the great partnership, which developed into the limited liability company, and there was the trade union. Different in all other respects, they had this factor in common, that each was outside the ambit of the law as it was then understood, the limited liability company because the law allowed no limitation of liability of partners, the union because it was held to be a conspiracy in the restraint of trade.

In the then Benthamite philosophy of the time, the Parliament of that day smiled on the company, and frowned on the union. The result has been that from 1862 onwards the limited liability company has thrived and proved the basis of industrial activity in this land, to the infinite advantage of the nation as a whole, and all those who have taken part in it. Parliament gave it a code. It gave it a court. It gave it specified rights. It gave it model rules. It kept them up to date. It revised them from time to time, and nobody dreamt of saying to the limited company, or on its behalf, "You must not legislate for limited liability companies, because if you do you will be upsetting the whole basis of industrial civilisation".

The history of the unions has been utterly different. They have staggered for more than 100 years in a sort of twilight world. There is no piece of trade union legislation comparable to the Companies Act. The so-called Trade Union Acts have, in almost every case, been *ad hoc* reversals of specific decisions of the court.

If we tried to run limited liability companies on the same absence of law, the same jungle justice, the same twilight absence of precision, that we run the trade unions, companies would fall into the same of difficulties into which unions are falling.

Mr. Shinwell: This is a most interesting thesis, but who is to blame for the staggering attitude of the trade unions? What about the Osborne judgment, and the resentment which that created?

Mr. Hogg: We are all to blame, more or less, those who are older probably more than those who are younger, but I am not here to try to adjudicate blame, because I come midway between the two extremes. All that I say to the right hon. Gentleman is that surely the time has come, in a new age, and a new

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Parliament, to give to the trade union movement the kind of charter which the Parliament of our fathers gave to the great partnership, the limited liability company? Let us not go on recriminating with one another about whether we like the unions or not. In a modern society, activities as important as those of the unions must come into the full beneficent sunlight of law if we are to avoid injustice and chaos, which is what we have been going through lately.

We are told that we must wait for the Royal Commission. I dare say that we shall have to wait for the Royal Commission. After all, my party was not elected at the General Election. But I with the Royal Commission would break into a gentle trot. I wish that Mr. Woodcock would get the trade union cart-horse of Mr. David Low to move at an amble or walk. I understand that it has not given its evidence to the Royal Commission. If this opportunity is not taken soon it may prove too late for our industrial survival.

What we have been talking about this evening is nothing less than the sovereignty of Parliament. I am not here to attack executives or politically motivated individuals, but can it really be the best way of conducting the affairs of democracy for a group of 50 people, however well-intentioned, however sincere, and however middle-of-the-road or responsible, to have it in their power to say that this country should live or die in an important part of its industrial activity? Can that be the best thing or the last thing that we can say? Is it not Parliament which must decide these matters?

If we are not masters in our own house—in this House of Parliament, supporting democratic Government—can we hope to survive in a world in which individual interests and special pressures can be built up from either side? If we do not take it into our hands to legislate for trade unions I believe that democracy will go the way of other forms of society which have failed to face the challenge of the rule of law.

9.26 p.m.

The Prime Minister: I can reply only by leave of the House. If I have that I

shall be very grateful. I thank the right hon. and learned Member for St. Marylebone (Mr. Hogg) for his opening remarks, and especially for what he said about his hopes—and the hopes of all of us—for a speedy and fruitful settlement of this dispute. He will forgive me if I do not follow all the points that he has made, especially going so far back into the nineteenth century as he went. I feel that the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, is about as far back as any of us should go in relation to this dispute.

In a few minutes I want to deal with some of the concrete points that he made, but on his last point it is important to tell him that no one—not myself nor any of my hon. Friends—would yield in the enthusiasm that he shows, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman showed, for the authority of the House and Government. But there are limits to what we can do by law. We cannot get ships to sea by passing a law or a Resolution of this House—or perhaps this strike would never have occurred. One lesson of this strike—not that we needed it to learn the lesson—is that democracy, or government by consent, involves not merely passing laws, be they restrictive or constructive; it means satisfying those who are concerned in an industry that they are being fairly treated.

The big problem in the shipping industry, as I have argued many times in the House, arises from the accumulated catalogue of grievances and frustrations which were never put right and which have all boiled over into the serious situation that we face today.

Before I come to the other points made by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, I want to deal with some points made by the Leader of the Opposition. He rightly addressed himself to something which has not been very much discussed today, namely, the problem of the emergency powers and the fact that we are seeking their renewal and extension. He said that his party would support us in this, although he commented on the fact that these powers have not been used. He expressed the view that we have failed to use them because of the far of exacerbating the strike situation. Under that phrase he probably meant spreading the strike to other industries.

The reason why we have not used these powers is that they were not needed, certainly to the extent of the national position. I shall refer to certain peculiarly Scottish problems later. As I have said before, it is surprising that after six and a half weeks of this almost total strike, so far as it affected each ship coming into harbour, we are not suffering from acute port congestion, that berths have been kept open by a lot of imagination and ingenuity and—what has not been said so much today—by the fact that some of the trade unions not directly concerned in the dispute have shown very great courage and imagination in what they have done to keep the ports open. I hope that this will be recognised. It was not until last week—

Mr. Heffer: Is my right hon. Friend not aware that this very point was made in the first discussion of these powers? It was pointed out that as the Transport and General Workers' Union had now made an agreement with the N.U.S. the powers were unnecessary.

The Prime Minister: I think my hon. Friend made the point earlier than that debate, at Question Time once as well, that this agreement had been made. I wish I could say that it had made the powers unnecessary. There are many powers, any one of which might be needed. We have been told that it was not, but I agree that the agreement made very early in the dispute between the Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Union of Seamen meant that many of our anxieties about early congestion of the ports did not materialise. I agree about that.

Even last week, it looked as though there would be a serious problem and that it would be necessary to have a selective acceptance of ships and in other ways to control shipping movements. That is why the Port Emergency Committees were set up, though because the situation has not yet deteriorated further it has not been necessary to invoke the Minister of Transport's powers through the Port Emergency Committees. However, a great deal has been done by informal persuasion by the leaders of the port community, which is perhaps another reason why we have not needed to use these powers.

The second power which we thought might have to be used—there were many signs that it might have to be—was our power of price control. In the early days, even before the strike began, there were signs of some speculative interests pushing up food prices and blaming it on the strike, before even a single ship had come to port and rested there. However, largely because of the voluntary action of some of the trades, because of the strong pressure by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture and also because we had been helped by the time of the year—fresh vegetables, fruit and home-killed meat has been coming on the market in increasing quantities—we have been somewhat fortunate in regard to food supplies and prices.

I think it is right to warn the House that we shall have problems perhaps some months ahead with certain foodstuffs because ships which have not gone to far distant supplying areas in the last month will obviously not be returning in July or August as they normally would. Some, perhaps, will not be back until September even if the strike ends immediately, and we may be short for some time of those foodstuffs and materials which come long distances.

The question of the Scottish Islands was raised by the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Grimond) and by the Leader of the Opposition. I think that the Leader of the Opposition went a little far when he said that we have failed to meet the needs of the Islands. When it became clear, within four days of the beginning of the strike, that there would be a shortage of essential foods in some of these Islands, the Government instructed defence vessels to take supplies to them—there was some criticism of the Government in the House at that time for being too hasty in using the vessels for this purpose—and these ships have given a more or less regular service ever since. Particularly, they have had some success in improving the service to the Western Isles.

The right hon. Gentleman knows well—he has kept in close touch with the Government on all these questions—that Orkney and Shetland were served in the first few weeks by the "Rognvald", a civilian cargo boat, and later when the union withdrew its agreement to man ships the Government moved up the

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Army landing craft, now joined by a second and larger vessel, the "Lofoten". These two vessels, which are, of course, designed for defence purposes and not for the peculiar requirements of maintaining trade to and within the right hon. Gentleman's constituency, are not entirely suitable for carrying civilian supplies.

We still have the problem of getting supplies away from the right hon. Gentleman's constituency, particularly perishable foodstuffs. However, the combined capacity of these two vessels should be adequate to meet essential needs and to carry eggs, fish and other local produce on the return journey. One form of transport for which they are unsuitable is the carriage of livestock, which should be one of the major exports from the area at this time.

The Leader of the Opposition was, I believe, mistaken when he said that there was no emergency headquarters for the Scottish operations. Shortly after the beginning of the strike an operations room was set up by the Royal Navy and the Scottish Office in Edinburgh to co-ordinate emergency arrangements, and I understand that this is working smoothly. Information about the needs of the islands is being collected by local authorities, departmental officials and the shipping companies. Regular meetings are held in London and Edinburgh between Ministers and officers of all the Departments concerned.

The right hon. Gentleman also said that there was a fuel shortage in the Western Isles and that this was, he understood, affecting employment in the Harris tweed mills as well as in the whisky distilleries. As a result of inquiries I have made of my right hon. Friend, I find that the strike has not had that effect. The Harris tweed industry has, I understand, been able to meet its needs and has arranged sea transport to and from the island privately, with the knowledge of the N.U.S. The question of distilleries is one on which the whole House will wish to be fully informed. Both distilleries were closed for seven days during the time the "Rognvald" was running irregularly and the cause was lack of malt and yeast supplies. However, these supplies have now been arranged privately and both distilleries are open. One distillery, at Islay, is

closed, but that is because of routine annual maintenance.

The question of the carriage of mails to the islands was raised by the right hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland. I understand that these have been picked up and that they left Aberdeen at 5 o'clock this evening. The G.P.O. has already used the services of the R.A.F. for picking up the accumulated backlog and a delivery to Shetland in this way was made a few days ago. The G.P.O. is keeping a close watch on the postal mail deliveries to Orkney and Shetland and we have been assured that a reasonable service will be maintained, with the use of defence vessels and R.A.F. services where necessary.

I know that there is concern in Scotland because in a few days' time nearly 200 schoolchildren are due to return from the mainland to the islands for their summer holidays. Discussions are going on about this, and I assure hon. Members that transport will be provided for these children.

I turn from the question of the Regulations and their use to incomes policy. The Leader of the Opposition referred to our record in opposition. He seemed to think that the seamen's strike was largely due to the fact that when we came to power everyone thought that the lid would be taken off all forms of income. I hoped that the right hon. Gentleman was going to develop his argument and justify the statement which he made in the United States: that if he had been elected to office this strike would not have occurred. However, I think that the right hon. Gentleman was indulging in a bit of transatlantic exuberance at that time, and perhaps that is why he did not develop his argument.

Since the right hon. Gentleman tried to substantiate what he was saying by relating his argument to the incomes policy, I will dwell on that matter for a short while. The right hon. Gentleman is wrong to say that we did not preach in opposition as we have in Government the need for an incomes policy. I could refer the right hon. Gentleman to articles of my own in *The Guardian* as long ago as 1957. There were three articles on this very issue. There was also the policy statement issued by the Labour Party when we were in opposition before the 1959 election, called "Industry and

Society", which contained a powerful piece on this matter. I could also draw his attention to the arguments which were repeatedly stated by Hugh Gaitskell when we attacked hon. Gentlemen opposite for what we considered to be a biased and narrow type of incomes policy, acting selectively on certain people, as introduced by the right hon. and learned Member for Wirral (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd). We stated that a real incomes policy was needed. As for lacking courage to say this before the election, one of my biggest speeches was made at the Transport and General Workers' Union Conference in Scarborough on 8th July, 1963, and I could have thought of no better audience to hear that speech. Indeed, I was given an ovation at the end of it.

The suggestion that we were preaching in opposition that there would be no incomes policy when we came into Government and that this led to the situation which the right hon. Gentleman described is, of course, absolute nonsense. I made the same sort of speech to the T.U.C. on 7th September, 1963. What we said was that an incomes policy must be fair and must cover all incomes, not just wages, and there must be suitable budgetary policies to provide the right background. I thought it right to mention this because the right hon. Gentleman made so much of it.

On the right handling of the dispute, the right hon. Gentleman went through the various phases. Although I think he was wrong on the point on which I interrupted him about our statement about the Pearson Committee—it was made the same evening and next day there was a Government statement—I concede that there could be two views on whether we handled it the right way or the wrong way. Even without being wise after the event, obviously there could be two views about it. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the inquiry and asked why we did not have it in April or early May so that it could have reported before the strike began.

At no point when my right hon. Friend was in discussion with the union—I did not meet them until the Friday before the strike began—would the executive agree to anything at all except the 40-hour week. If they were not going to get the 40-hour week, and get it then, there would be a strike. That did not create a situa-

tion where one could at that time have proposed the court of inquiry as a means of averting the strike. When my right hon. Friend and I met the executive in May, it was quite clear that nothing would avert this strike, literally nothing. That was the view I formed. More to the point, it was the view of my right hon. Friend with all his vast experience of industrial negotiations and knowledge of the personalities involved.

As one of my hon. Friends said, they did not want to make life more difficult for the Labour Government. They wanted to see the Government succeed and they did not want to do harm to the nation. They said this, and it was right, but they said that in the present mood of the seamen if they did not have a strike unofficial elements would take over. They said that they had to have this strike to assert their leadership over the seamen because the seamen were so incensed about the whole situation. At one stage, I understand, they told the T.U.C. that if the employers were to concede the whole 40-hours a week case there would still be a strike if only to celebrate because they had it so much in their blood. If there were any attempts on the part of the executive to stop the strike the executive would lose the leadership for all time to other elements.

Because it was clear that this could not be avoided, this, I think, was the main reason why we did not invite the employers to 10 Downing Street that day. There was such a great gap between them and there was no willingness on the part of the executive to meet the employers unless the employers were prepared to concede the whole, or practically the whole, of that case. On the other question, whether we were wrong to hold the inquiry when the strike had already begun instead of insisting on a return to work, this can be and probably will be argued. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman would say that we were wrong to agree to hold it when the strike was on.

The right hon. Gentleman then criticised my own broadcast the Monday after the strike began. He said that I had said that this was a dispute against the Government. I think that the right hon. Gentleman got me wrong there. I did not say that it was a dispute against the Government. It is true that I referred

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to the prices and incomes policy, and I will come to that point a little later. What I said in the broadcast, as I have said to the members of the executive council of the union, was that once they had resorted to a strike whose only result, as they knew, must be great economic damage to the community, from that moment their strike action—not the wages dispute—was a strike against the community and the Government. That is a very different thing from saying that the dispute over wages was a dispute between the union on the one hand and the Government on the other. I think that it was a different thing and, if the right hon. Gentleman will turn up again the text of what I said, I think he will see that what I have said is right.

When the right hon. Gentleman talks about the wages dispute being a dispute against the Government, if by that he is criticising me for invoking in that broadcast the prices and incomes policy—I am not sure if this is his argument—I must ask him to think again whether I was wrong to do that. He himself has said repeatedly since that time that we should not go beyond the Pearson Report. I think the right hon. Gentleman felt that the Pearson Report was fair or was the upper limit of what was fair, certainly that we should not go above it. The right hon. Gentleman's argument this afternoon was that, because higher increases were awarded, taken or agreed in other industries last year—in fact, there was a 14½ per cent. increase for the seamen themselves last year—the seamen were so exasperated that they took the measure that they have taken. As I have said, the seamen had one of the highest increases awarded last year, anyway.

However, quite apart from the fact, I should have thought that this argument gets into some difficulties, because if the right hon. Gentleman is saying that we ought to have been tougher in resisting the wage increases of last year, it is very difficult for him, if this is what he is doing, to criticise me for invoking the prices and incomes policy in that broadcast; because if I have not invoked it then and if there had been a big inflationary settlement, as the right hon. Gentleman would put it, he might be standing at the Dispatch Box in another

two or three months' time when there was another strike saying that that other strike would not have happened if we had stood up to the seamen by invoking the prices and incomes policy. It is not appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to say that we should have been tougher last year and then complain, if he is complaining, that I used the prices and incomes policy as one of the arguments in my broadcast at the beginning of the strike.

I will come later to the right hon. Gentleman's proposal for an inquiry, because it follows on certain of the things raised by the right hon. and learned Member for St. Marylebone.

I am sorry that I did not hear all the speeches which have been made in the debate. The hon. Member for Harwich (Mr. Ridsdale) said, if it has been reported to me correctly, that he thought that there was a case now for separate unions for coastal shipping and for deep sea shipping. As one who wants to see a strong, active, virile and democratic union, I fear that this strike may well involve a split in the union on those very lines. Whereas I think that the hon. Gentleman would like to see it split in this way, I would not. I would like to see the union retain its unity, but I think that one of the results of the situation I described this afternoon, where the seamen employed in the short sea trade and coastal shipping and the cross-Channel trades are bearing practically the whole of the burden and brunt, while their more fortunate deep sea comrades are still on the high seas and will soon be returning with their accumulated voyage earnings, will be that very serious strains will be caused between man and man within the union.

My hon. Friends the Members for Poplar (Mr. Mikardo), Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and Ebbw Vale (Mr. Michael Foot) all spoke, in varying degrees critically, of what I said last Monday and of what I said again today. I think that all of them felt that what I said was a diversion. They did not all go as far as to say that I was looking for Communists under the bed. They know me well enough to know that I do not go looking for Communists under the bed. The suggestion that this was a diversion from

the real issues of the dispute I do not think will bear examination. I have emphasised time and time again the deep and underlying causes behind this strike. But I believe that I was right last Monday and again today to express my concern about the pressures that have been put on the executive council. I said that the Communist Party, on all the evidence known to me, has acted legally, that there have been no illegal individual actions, and that they have been acting within their rights. Certainly that is so.

Some hon. Members tend to underrate the situation. They accuse me of oversimplifying. I do not. I recognise its great complexity. But they simplify the situation into a straight struggle of right and wrong, of good and evil, of "goodies" and "baddies", on the question of the wage increase, the 40-hour week, and the leave arrangements.

What they neglect is that a power struggle is going on in the National Union of Seamen, a highly-organised take-over bid for this union, and the strike is being artificially lengthened. Efforts are being made to extend it in time and coverage, in scope as between unions, for reasons which have nothing to do with the main issues that the strike is supposed to be about.

I ask why the executive council was unanimous in rejecting every peace move, in standing firm on a 40-hour week, without any concession or offer to consider any concessions, until last week, when for the first time there was a vote on the executive council. Why did it reject the proposal which my right hon. Friend and I made at Downing Street a week last Friday, involving Lord Pearson's Court of Inquiry, to set productivity gains against the cost of the leave arrangements, and then, on Saturday, only eight days later, accept negotiations on the basis of what Lord Pearson proposed—the fulfilment of what we ourselves had proposed only eight days before?

In the course of the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Mr. Michael Foot) went deep into the democratic history of the House, as I did this afternoon. All of us want to see democracy function and flourish. But one of the conditions of this is that when pressures are being exercised, and exercised, as it were, under cover of darkness, as some of these are, the duty of anyone

who knows these facts, or believes them to be the case is to bring them into the light, because that is the one thing that can make democracy function.

One thing that can make democracy break down—and the right hon. Gentleman was very gloomy in his concluding words about the dangers of ultimate breakdown of democracy—is if there are pressures which no one really knows about, if one is being pushed about without knowing it.

Reference was made to my phrase about being masters in their own house. I was reminded that perhaps we are not fully masters in this House, that there are lobbies and pressures. We have always taken good care, as far as possible, to see that pressures on Members should be brought into the open. This is why we have rules about disclosure of interest. This is why two or three years ago the rules about certain dinners, luncheons and other activities in the House had to be tightened up a little.

This is why if any lobbies were to start putting pressures through public relations or other means on Members improperly the whole House would insist on something like the American system of registration of lobbies and much fuller declaration of interest on the part of those concerned. I think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for St. Marylebone was right in saying that every one of us may be in doubt as to whether we shall be re-elected if we take certain action. There are very strong laws of privilege in the House for those who try to put improper pressures on how any hon. Member shall vote, or even speak. This is essential to the democracy that we know in the House. I believe that at any rate a small part of this is essential in protecting members of other areas in our democracy from what may be improper pressures.

The real point is not so much that they are improper as that they may not be fully realised, and I believed that it was my duty last week to bring them out. It was my job to decide whether it was my duty or not. My hon. Friends can criticise, but it was my job at the end of the day to take the decision. As I say, I felt that it was my duty to make clear to those who, with such surprising unanimity, were taking decisions the nature of

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the pressures being brought to bear upon them.

Mr. Michael Foot: Will my right hon. Friend define what he means by an improper pressure, and will he say who among the people he named in the House today was guilty of applying improper pressure?

The Prime Minister: The answer is that I believe that the organised groups of Communists operating on and through members of the executive, directly and indirectly, were exercising improper pressure and were not doing it directly, stating what their motives were.

I have just realised that I have about four minutes left. I thought that this was exempted business. I suppose that we all have to be here about 20 years before we get the answers right. I think that this Motion is not exempted business but the second is. I shall try to hurry along.

The right hon. and learned Member for St. Marylebone quoted certain precedents. First, on the Royal Commission, he said that we would have to wait for the outcome of that, because his party was not elected at the General Election. I can only say that he and his right hon. and hon. Friends had 13 years. They could have set the Royal Commission up to six years ago and we could have had the Report by now. In fact, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition refused to set one up when it was proposed in 1960.

As regards the stories in the *Observer*, they did not come from my office. My hair stood on end as I read some of them. I can only say that I take no responsibility for them. Some of the facts in those stories were to my knowledge wrong, and there were one or two sensational allegations which may or may not be true. I have no means of checking them.

The proposal for an inquiry made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition raises some difficult questions. I explained this afternoon why I acted as I did. Sometimes all of us have to take unusual action of this kind. I take responsibility for what I said in the House. I should not have said it if I had not good reason for knowing that what I was saying was true and that it was necessary and relevant to the dispute

despite the disadvantages of saying it. I knew that some of my hon. Friends would be critical. I think that their criticisms are limited. They do not think that this is part of a McCarthyite witch-hunt, or anything like that. But, at the end of the day, they have the happy luxury of being able to make negative statements, of being able to say that this is where we get with our prices and incomes policy.

Some of us, on the other hand, have the job of governing. We must have a prices and incomes policy, or, we know this nation will be plunged again into unemployment. Therefore, we have to take the decisions. [AN HON. MEMBER: "We want a real prices and incomes policy."] Yes, a real one, and I hope that a lot of my hon. Friends will support it when we have achieved it. [AN HON. MEMBER: "We will indeed."] That has not always been so clear. As I say, we have to take these decisions, and we have to stand by them.

As regards an inquiry, the right hon. Gentleman said that only if we got fuller facts from an inquiry could one check whether I was right about their not being their own masters. My purpose was to do something more than a long-term investigation. I wanted to bring into the light of day and to warn the moderate members of the executive committee now of the insidious pressures which were being put on them.

Again as regards an inquiry, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Liberal Party, my hon. Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale, and the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. Crawley) expressed doubts, grave doubts at times. I can only say that the right hon. Gentleman knows some of the difficulties involved in an inquiry of the kind he proposes. When the strike is over, I for my part would be prepared to consider some form of inquiry and, if there is to be an inquiry, what form it should take and what terms of reference might be appropriate and most likely to conform to the national interest. When the strike is over, not now.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty thanking Her Majesty for Her Gracious Message communicating to this

House that Her Majesty deems it proper by Proclamation, made in pursuance of the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, as amended by the Emergency Powers Act, 1964, dated 22nd June, 1966, to declare that a state of emergency exists.

To be presented by Privy Councillors or Members of Her Majesty's Household.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That the Proceedings on the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill and on the Motion relating to the Welsh Grand

Committee may be entered upon and proceeded with at this day's Sitting at any hour, though opposed.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

EMERGENCY POWERS

Resolved,

That the Regulations made by Her Majesty in Council under the Emergency Powers Act 1920 by Order dated 22nd June 1966, a copy of which was laid before this House on 22nd June, shall continue in force, subject however to the provisions of section 2(4) of this said Act.—[*The Prime Minister.*]

[Continued in Col. 1735]

Tuesday, 28th June, 1966

DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

Development Plans

2. **Mr. Dodds-Parker** asked the Minister of Overseas Development what proposals he has for controlled development of still dependent territories, such as the Caymans and Turks and Caicos Islands, in the particular interest of those who live in these smaller territories.

Mr. Oram: It is the practice for dependent territories to draw up development plans which are submitted for approval to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands have prepared a plan for the period 1966-68. There is no formal plan for the Cayman Islands but the Government is pressing on with development in accordance with an agreed list of priorities. I am most anxious that my Ministry should be able to offer these territories every assistance through our new Development Division in Barbados.

MALAYSIA

Aid

5. **Mr. William Hamilton** asked the Minister of Overseas Development why further aid has been refused to Malaysia.

Mr. Greenwood: Other calls on our resources have prevented us offering Malaysia any additional development aid this year. Our economic aid and technical assistance will in fact cost about £5 million. It will be approximately the same, in volume and nature, as in 1965.

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Financial Aid

9. **Dame Joan Vickers** asked the Minister of Overseas Development what contributions his Department is making to universities and technical colleges in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Oram: The following details relate to more than 20 institutions to which financial aid is currently committed.

CURRENT COMMITMENTS OF CAPITAL AID FOR UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN THE COMMONWEALTH

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Estimated Expenditure in 1966-67</i> £
1. <i>Nigeria</i>	
(a) Ahmadu Bello University	
(b) Ife University	
(c) Kaduna Polytechnic	
(d) Auchu Technical College	
(e) Enugu Technical College	1,500,000
2. <i>Sierra Leone</i>	
Institute of African Studies, University College of Sierra Leone (Fourah Bay)	20,000
3. <i>University of Malawi</i>	270,000
4. <i>University of Zambia</i>	600,000
5. <i>University of Basutoland, Bechu- analand and Swaziland</i>	200,000
6. <i>University of East Africa</i>	
(a) Makerere University College	100,000
(b) University College, Nairobi	55,000
(c) University College, Dar-es- Salaam	5,000
7. <i>Nairobi Polytechnic</i>	11,000
8. <i>Malta</i>	
(a) University of Malta	254,000
(b) Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology	73,000
9. <i>Caribbean</i>	
(a) University of the West Indies	150,000
(b) University of Guyana	100,000
10. <i>Hong Kong University</i>	60,000
Total	£3,398,000

NOTES:

1. In addition to the sums listed above, the following allocations of capital have been made but no expenditure is anticipated in 1966-67:—

(a) University of Mauritius... ..	£225,000
(b) Chinese University, Hong Kong	250,000
(c) Hong Kong Technical College...	50,000

2. There is a balance of some £300,000 outstanding in the C.D. & W. allocation for the University College in Salisbury.

3. There is an element of £420,000 for the University College, Dar-es-Salaam in the proposed £7½ million loan to Tanzania but no details are available of estimated expenditure on the College in 1966-67.

4. In addition to capital aid, it is estimated that £462,000 will be spent in this financial year from Commonwealth Education funds in helping to staff universities in overseas Commonwealth countries.

5. A sum of £450,000 has been earmarked for the Owerri Advanced Teacher Training College in Nigeria, but it is not thought that any of this money will be spent this year.

Received by hand from Cabinet Office
on the morning of 28.6.66

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PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

28.6.66.

I beg to move,

"That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty thanking Her Majesty for Her Most Gracious Message communicating to this House that Her Majesty has deemed it proper by Proclamation, dated the 22nd of June 1966 and made in pursuance of the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, as amended by the Emergency Powers Act, 1964, to declare that a state of emergency exists."

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that it will be for the convenience of the House if I also speak to the Second Motion on the Order Paper which asks the House to confirm the Regulations made in consequence of the Declaration of the State of Emergency.

It may also be for the convenience of the House, Mr. Speaker, if I seek to wind up the debate if I have the leave of the House to do so.⁷

Since the last exchanges in the House about the dispute in the shipping industry there have been considerable and hopeful moves in the direction of a solution. This debate takes place against the background of the negotiations which are going on today on the appropriate panel of the National Maritime Board and all of us will hope that these will come to a successful conclusion. But as I hope to explain later, even if the strike were to come to an end before this debate is concluded, this does not mean that we can immediately advise a termination of the State of Emergency or a withdrawal of the Regulations.

First it might be convenient for the House if I gave the House some more up-to-date report on the developments aimed at ending the dispute since I last reported to the House on Monday of last week.

The House will recall that on that occasion I gave a report of the talks which my Right Hon. Friend and I had had with representatives of the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen, and one

meeting with the full Council, and also of the meetings we had with representatives of the Shipping Federation. Those talks, spread over three days, were aimed at finding a solution based on the interim report of the Court of Inquiry. That report, the Government considered, provided the means to a just and honourable solution in the interests of the seamen, the industry and the nation as a whole. I said that we did not stand on every dot and comma of the report but said that if there were to be any departure from it, any further improvement should be paid for by real economies in working agreed between the parties, effective economies, not pious aspirations about increased productivity or reduced costs.

Although at that time the Seamen's Union did not state that they were prepared to accept the Pearson recommendations of a two stage introduction of the 40 hour week which was their main objective, it was clear that the problem which was in the minds not only of the Executive Council, but of seamen all over the

country, impeding a solution, was the question of leave arrangements. This was because the Court of Inquiry, in order to provide a partial compensation for the cost of the progress towards a 40 hour week, had recommended that the number of days leave with pay in respect of Sundays and Bank Holidays at sea, which have recently averaged 51 per year, should be reduced to 39. There was and is no doubt that this was the problem preventing a settlement. The House will recall that it had been urged upon us that a reduction in overtime, over and above that envisaged in the report to take effect a year from now, could provide sufficient savings in cost to compensate for the Seamen's proposal that the Sunday leave arrangements should continue as in recent years, and not be reduced as the Court recommended. As the House knows, when this was put to the owners by my Right Hon. Friend and myself, this was rejected, nor could the owners when challenged to do so, suggest any significant changes in working practices or in any other way which could provide a saving necessary for helping to solve the problem of Sunday leave arrangements.

As the House will recall, my Rt. Hon. Friend and I were successful in bringing the ship owners and representatives of the Seamen's Executive together at Downing Street to see if this problem could be solved. Unfortunately, the leaders on both sides had to report to us that they had entirely failed to make any progress. It was in these circumstances that my Rt. Hon. Friend and I addressed the full Executive and put to them, as we had to their representatives, our proposal that since there did not seem to be any immediate prospect of agreement on what we called copper-bottomed guarantees of reduced costs, the Court of Inquiry should be asked as a matter of urgency, in dealing with that part of their terms of reference which related to productivity, to examine all the suggestions which had been made, including reductions in overtime, standards of manning, more flexible use of crews as between the deck and the engine room and report whether adequate savings

could be ensured. Meanwhile, we suggested, the Union would, while accepting the Court of Inquiry's first report, reserve their position on the question of Sunday leave arrangements which could then be settled satisfactorily on the basis of the productivity enquiry by the Court.

My Rt. Hon. Friend and I warned the Executive that though there had been and still was great sympathy in the country for the Seamen's case, that sympathy was being rapidly eroded, if not destroyed, by their repeated and brusque rejections of every proposal made to help in finding a solution. We stressed the damage, actual and potential, to the economic life of the nation, and we stressed equally the damage - which could well be lasting - to the shipping industry and to the future security of those who sought and would hereafter seek employment in the industry. Nevertheless, when the Executive had returned to its headquarters, it voted speedily and, again unanimously for the continuation of the strike. The unfailing unanimity of the

Executive's decisions on this and on previous occasions is a fact to which attention has been called on a number of occasions recently and I shall be returning to this point later.

It was following these events that I reported to the House eight days ago.

The House well recognises that we could not leave the matter to rest there. There will be those who will argue that it is the Government's duty to remain outside a battle of this kind, to let natural forces take their course and to wait until exhaustion, physical, mental, spiritual, or financial, exerts its toll. There will be certainly those who feel that we have acted in an unprecedented way, by setting up a Court of Inquiry while the strike was on instead of insisting on a return to work. I agree this is unprecedented. So are the circumstances of this dispute, and the whole House has shown the deep concern it feels about the growing damage to our economy with every day this strike continues. In these

circumstances, Mr. Speaker, my Rt. Hon. Friend and I felt it right last week to go into the question of still further initiatives. As the House knows, we had a long discussion with the Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the T.U.C.

Pay tribute to T.U.C. - See page 8A

The T.U.C. agreed with us that Lord Pearson, who even in so short a time had earned a unique position with both sides of the industry and who was willing to offer his services in helping to find a solution, should be asked to chair a meeting between the two sides. The T.U.C. were successful in persuading the Executive to accept this proposal and the Shipping Federation similarly agreed to join in these discussions.

Thanks, I believe, to the patience, objectivity and skill which Lord Pearson brought to these discussions, but thanks equally to the evident desire shown by both sides to approach these problems in a constructive manner, suggestions were discussed and examined which pointed the way to a possible solution.

The House will know the patience and skill with which the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the T.U.C., the General Council itself, and in particular Mr. George Woodcock the General Secretary, have sought at every point in this dispute to open up the possibility of new initiatives, and to break the log-jam which at times seemed immovable. It was they who had made clear to the N.U.S. the Pearson Report should have been accepted, and that the Unions could not look to organised labour in this country for any spreading of the strike. When My Rt. Hon. Friend and I met them last Wednesday they agreed with us

All were conscious that the outstanding problem was that of leave arrangements, and, as a result of suggestions from both sides, concrete proposals were made to secure real and effective economies in working, sufficient to provide a substantial easement in the proposed reduction of leave days, without adding measurably to the cost of the original Pearson proposals. As the House will know; the Executive Council on Saturday accepted these proposals as a basis for negotiations, and those negotiations are now proceeding. The whole House will trust that these will be successful, and that there will be a speedy return to work.

But even if agreement had been reached a day or two ago it would still have been necessary to commend these Regulations to the House. The House will be well aware that the problems of congestion in the ports are only beginning.

513 ships engaged in the home and short sea trades and 364 ships engaged on the ocean-going routes are at present immobilised. Very many of these are moored away from the berths and in many ports there will be the most difficult problems in ensuring that the ships are enabled to return to berth in an orderly manner to load up with the nation's accumulated exports, and to get away. For this reason it may be necessary to keep the Port Emergency Committees in being - with power to regulate shipping in ports. The ending of the dispute, if this occurs, ^{may} ~~will~~ not mean immediate relief to those parts of these islands which have suffered most by the events of the past six weeks and emergency arrangements will still be needed, ~~and in some cases will have to be intensified.~~ Urgent action will have to be taken to build up stocks of essential commodities, particularly to catch up with the summer stock building programme for coal at power stations, gas works and other public utilities. But clearly the Government would hope that if the House agrees to the continuance

of these Regulations today, an early ending of the strike would mean that the House would not be troubled again in this regard.

But, Mr. Speaker, while all our thoughts and hopes will be concentrated on the negotiations now proceeding, it is not too early to begin to consider some of the lessons of this dispute, and the House in any case I know, will expect me to speak more fully about some of the issues I raised in my statement eight days ago. I have referred, Mr. Speaker, to actions taken by the Government unprecedented in dealing with previous disputes, and I said that in many respects this strike had unusual and even unprecedented characteristics. This is an industry which, apart from the very special problems which developed on Merseyside and certain other ports six years ago, has been virtually strike free for many years. But as I have said on many occasions inside this House, and even more directly to representatives of both sides of the industry, this strike has no single, simple cause: it is the result

of the accumulation over many years of grievances and frustrations which - and all of us share a responsibility - the nation should not have allowed to develop. I have referred to the fact that for many years a large part of the Membership of this Union increasingly felt that the Union was not discharging its responsibilities to the Seamen collectively or individually, as those of us, Mr. Speaker, who have the honour to represent considerable numbers of sea-going constituents, well know. In consequence these grievances and frustrations were allowed to remain, to grow, to fester and at heavy cost to the nation, to suppurate. The feelings engendered by the operations of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, three years before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, are part, and I believe a considerable part, of the cause of this dispute, but not the whole. And one thing the Seamen can feel has come ^{out} of this recent concentration of national attention on their problems, is the fact that the Court of Inquiry - which of course was offered them before the strike began - has

full powers to enquire into the problems caused by this over-barnacled legislation, and to make urgent recommendations for modernisation. Indeed as I told the House my Rt. Hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has been in discussion with both sides of the industry about the reforms necessary, but these discussions, in common with so much else in this industry, have become a casualty of the clash between the two sides that developed a few months ago.

Another lesson from this dispute is a fact which emerges from the report of the Court of Inquiry that a great deal is amiss in the efficiency with which this industry is conducted. When, across the table, we have discussed the possibility of reducing by one hour or by two, the overtime which men in this industry are asked to work, we are doing it against an average working week of 66 hours on the deep-sea trade and 73 on the short-sea trades, and it is clear that the Court of Inquiry considered that in comparison with the practices of the shipping industries of other countries

these figures are inordinately high and must be regarded by this House as excessive. When at the same time it is clear that the earnings of British seamen fall below those of many of their foreign counterparts, one is bound to have grave reservations about the efficiency of the industry taken as a whole. Moreover, I recall that when I asked the owners if they could think of any working practices, whose removal might be thrown into the balance in these negotiations, I was told there were, with only marginal and localised exceptions, no restrictive practices in the industry, and they could not then think of anything which would guarantee even so marginal an increase in productivity.

One of the difficulties

One of the difficulties about securing guaranteed improvements in productivity was the pathetic admission of the Shipping Federation that they could not speak for all their Members, not only for the legitimate reason that the ships of Britain's Merchant Navy covered so wide a range of types of trades, of occupations, but also because they had to speak for 400 individual companies with an average of only about 6 ships per company, varying from the great shipping lines - big enough and competent enough to be moving forward rapidly with modernisation and improved productivity - to a great number of smaller businesses of very varying efficiency. It was for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that the Government have decided now, following the action we took with the Geddes Inquiry into shipbuilding and the machine-tool industry, to set up as a matter of urgency an independent enquiry into the structure, organisation and efficiency of the industry.

The third lesson, Mr. Speaker, must relate to the organisation of the Union and the problems presented in terms of industrial democracy. I have said more than once during the past few weeks when reporting to the House, that one of the problems in this dispute is a new-found militancy of the Union. On constituency as well as national grounds, Mr. Speaker, I rejoice in the fact that this Union has become in more recent years more vigorous and when I referred to it last week as a sturdy Union, I meant it.

No Honourable Member will, Mr. Speaker, underrate the difficulties of organisation, particularly democratic organisation, in a union catering for seamen. At any moment of time by far the greater majority of its members are scattered over the seven oceans, even today after more than six weeks of the strike, when every seamen returning to these shores has left his ship, only 26,000 out of 65,000 sea-going members are on strike. The difficulties of communication are of

a different dimension from those experienced in any other trade union, in manufacturing or in service industries in this country. This is shown by the fact that when, under the constitution of the union, ballots have to be held to elect the Executive Council these do not extend to the majority of seamen, namely those at sea and out of touch. The present Executive Council was elected - and I am saying this not in a critical sense but to show the difficulties of communication - by only 5,000 of the 65,000 members. Only in the case of the election of a General Secretary does the constitution provide for a ballot of all the members and, under the constitution, six months are allowed for this process. Perhaps these considerations are relevant to the suggestions put forward in the House eight days ago, which we ourselves had considered as a reasonable and obvious procedure, that a ballot of the members should be held about a return to work. It is because the Union's membership at any moment of time is so

widely scattered that those members of the union who are engaged on the cross-channel and short sea trades, in localised port operations and the coast-wise trade inevitably predominate in the democratic organisation of the union, and while it is sometimes said that they account for a considerable proportion of the active and militant members, it is equally true that on these, in the main weekly-paid members, the sacrifice and burden of this strike has largely fallen. They are only too conscious that while they have in the past six weeks lost in most cases well over a hundred pounds in earnings and in many cases of big seasonal activity far more than this, the majority of the Union members, for whose interest they are fighting, are still at sea and at any time a week, a month, or two months from now, will be returning to Britain with the accumulated earnings of a long voyage.

It is therefore easier to criticise this Union than it is to suggest any means by which it could be fully

representative of its members. I felt it right to say this before I come to some of the facts which I feel it necessary to lay before the House. It is these two facts, the recent efforts to give the rank and file an effective say in the affairs of the Union, combined with the difficulty of making democracy truly effective, it is these two facts, no less than the long accumulation of unrighted grievances that lie behind the problem to which I drew attention in my Statement eight days ago.

For as I have made clear, superimposed on all these difficulties, is a further problem, to which I now turn.

I begin with what has never been challenged, that there are no Communists on the Executive Council of this Union and that the number of Communists among the membership of the Union is extremely small; I doubt if it would be capable of manning more than one or two picket lines. And we must be extremely careful, as I have always been in my approach to this problem, to

distinguish between external influences and the very real feelings of tens of thousands of the Union members that they have had a raw deal for so many years in the past. To be militant in this or in any other union is not a matter for reproach, perhaps least of all in this Union. And if the processes of industrial democracy - with all the difficulties I have mentioned in this particular case - lead to a militant approach, I for one would not complain. We have to distinguish between the genuine grievances and the genuine expression of those grievances whether by rank and file or by their elected representatives at all levels on the one hand, and the deliberate exploitation of those grievances by outside influences on the other. Again, it would be wrong to suggest, and I am not going to suggest, that members of the Communist Party, and I think particularly of dedicated Communist seamen, are not deeply concerned about these grievances and the problems that have to be settled. There was and is no question of my

impugning the integrity of the Executive Council; what I was referring to in my Statement eight days ago, and this was borne out by the whole history of the Executive Council's proceedings up to that time, was their lack of guts.

But the House will be aware that the Communist Party unlike the major political Parties, has at its disposal an efficient and disciplined industrial apparatus controlled from Communist Party Headquarters. No major strike occurs anywhere in this country, in any sector of industry, in which that apparatus fails to concern itself. In special cases it has been seen at work, for example, in the Electrical Trades Union, where it made a successful take-over bid, if not of the share capital, at any rate of the management of that Union, lasting for some years.

No other political Party is organised on these lines, and it may be because of the political impotence of the Communist Party that it has sought expression in industrial organisation. But

Hon. Members would delude themselves if they imagined that there was not the most efficient organisation on the industrial side, that it has not full time officers ready to operate in any situation where industrial troubles are developing. And we would underrate equally its power if we did not recognise that however misguided we may consider their objectives or their methods, they in their own way desire to see an improvement in working class standards, and would not be effective if this were not so.

One other thing I want to make clear. None of this is in any way illegal. In a free society - it ^{legal} may be different in a Communist society - they have the right to do it. And I have no evidence at all that in pursuance of these aims, so far as the Seamen's strike is concerned, they have committed any individual acts of illegality. I should make it clear equally, that there is no suggestion of any interference ~~from~~ in this strike from overseas. Whatever has been done is

indigenous in character and is rooted in our own doctrines of freedom of association and action.

But if those who act in the way I am going to describe are fully within their legal rights and if, as I would feel, - subject to any recommendations of the Royal Commission - there does not seem any legislative step which could appropriately be taken which would deny them these rights - if they are within their rights, equally those of us who regard their activities as harmful have our rights and the right to take such action as we may consider appropriate. I have had to think a great deal about this in recent weeks, and my Statement eight days ago was not made without a great deal of anxious consideration. Because some of us owing to the positions we hold have not only an equal right to take any action within our power to resist these activities, I believe we have a duty. Otherwise I would not have spoken as I did, or as I am now going to speak.

For some years the Communist Party have had as one of their objectives to build up a position of strength not only in the Seamen's Union but in others concerned with docks and transport. They are engaged in this struggle for power in the Seamen's Union because they recognise the facts I have outlined to the House, not only that democracy is shallow-rooted in this union, not only that grievances and exploitation have festered over so many years, but that the very facts of sea-going employment make infiltration easier than it is in other industries. This bid is directed to next year's conference where the rules can be changed, and equally steps taken to change full-time officers, who for the reasons I have given have an unusual degree of power to influence the conduct of the Union's activities, even if this power has not been much exercised of late. This is a take-over bid. And take-over bidders on all sides of industry are notorious for their single-mindedness and ruthlessness. The

whole formidable power of the industrial apparatus has for some time been directed towards this end and the seamen's strike with all its background of justification has provided the ground.

/Quote SEAMAN Jan. 1965. - See 25A

This has been known for some time. A seaman who had played a leading part in the localised strikes of 1960, and was a former Chairman of the National Seaman Reform Movement, made a long statement in the January 1965 issue of the Seaman setting out the way in which this takeover bid was being organised, and having given details of what was being done on the North-East coast and in the Mersey area summed up:-

"Thus the Communists are in a position to use the movement for their own purposes; and all British seamen know what this means. In particular Gordon Norris and some well-known Communists on the North-East coasts are going around all ports to ensure that the Communist Party keeps a firm grip on the movement". He then went on in this very long statement to advise his fellow members how to counter what he called *these* this "very small groups of active Communists who are working for their own interests and those of the Communist Party".

The central figure in the operation is the Communist Party's industrial organiser, Mr. Bert Ramelson, who in January succeeded Mr. Peter Kerrigan. Mr. Ramelson has three full-time officials on his staff, and in the London area, where the Docks provide his hunting ground, his principal lieutenant is Mr. Dennis Goodwin. Round this full-time nucleus has been gathered a small group of active trade unionists in the N.U.S. and other unions.

I referred to the Communist Party's numerical weakness in the membership of the National Union of Seamen. And yet, despite this, as soon as the strike began, they were successful in ensuring that the chairmanships of strike committees in the country's two major ports, London and Liverpool, were taken by two dedicated Communists, Mr. Jack Coward and Mr. Roger Woods. Again, in the Union's negotiating machinery a leading member of the negotiating committee, not himself a member of the Executive Council, who was elected from the floor of the Annual General Conference,

was also a highly articulate and effective Communist, Mr. Gordon Norris, who in certain of his activities, ^{has} also operated under the name of Mr. George Goodman.

The objectives of the Communist Party throughout this dispute, were, first, to influence the day-to-day policy of the Executive Council of the N.U.S., second, to extend the area of the stoppage, and thirdly, to use this strike, not only to improve the conditions of the seamen, but also to secure what is at present the main political and industrial objective of the Communist Party, the destruction of the Government's Prices and Incomes Policy.

First let me deal with the organisation of the Union and of the strike. I have referred to their success in capturing two of the major strike committees. They are also effectively represented in other areas. When Mr. Norris, who has not paused for breath in the past six weeks, visited Glasgow, he made it his business to contact certain members of the strike committee but omitted to contact the Secretary who happened to be an

efficient and loyal member of the Seamen's Union.

I have seen a newspaper report that the same happened in Belfast.

At various stages since the strike began, the group have met and decided their policy and sought, through whatever means were open to the^m, to influence the Executive Council. They started with a disadvantage, that there were no Communist members on that Council. What they had to do was to operate through any who were responsive to their suggestions, including a circle of members whose conception of the Seamen's strike made them amenable to the type of proposals the Communist Party were advocating. I have referred to the difficulties of industrial democracy in the election of the Council, and one must recognise the effects of the history of this union in the inexperience of many of its members. This political and industrial inexperience of some of its members - which you would not find in most of our other unions because of their day-to-day political and industrial contacts - meant

that a small number of articulate, intelligent and well-briefed members, could exercise an influence far beyond their numbers. If I have to refer to Mr. Joseph Kenny and Mr. James Slater, neither of whom is a member of the Communist Party, I must acknowledge their political and argumentative skill. I have had five meetings with the Executive Council or with Committees appointed by that Council and I can testify to their ability, to their mastery of the details of Seamen's complaints, to their ability to absorb the skilled briefing they have been given, and to their dominance among their colleagues. They live in Liverpool and South Shields respectively and over these past few weeks when they have attended Executive Council meetings in London they have stayed at the same flat as Mr. Jack COWARD. During the strike Mr. RAMELSON has visited this flat when Mr. KENNY and Mr. SLATER were staying there and Mr. Norris, of course, has also been in constant touch with them. They have in fact been in continuous^a contact with Mr. Ramelson and Mr.

Norris.

I need no evidence other than my own eyes and ears to recognise that these two have dominated the Executive Council throughout the negotiations. Certainly they were predominant in the Executive's brusque and unanimous rejection of the appeal which my Rt. Hon. Friend and I made to the Executive a week last Friday.

The House may well ask how influences of this kind, even exercised through a small number of highly articulate and experienced members of the Executive, could have so long secured acceptance, unanimously and almost without rebuttal, from a Council of 48 members. But first let us recognise that the views which the militant members of the Council were expressing fell on fertile ground because all their colleagues were aware of the strong feelings of the sea-going community. And let none of us underrate the extent to which moderate members of the Executive Council, no less militant in their objectives than their militant colleagues, would be subject to pressures which any of us would find distasteful and perhaps almost irresistible.

We are used to hecklers, but the treatment anyone who in the past six weeks advocated a return to work on almost any terms would have received from Strike Committees, and the more vociferous members of strike meetings; would have daunted the ~~strongest~~ toughest of us. I had it in Liverpool 10 days ago, but I suppose I am an old hand, but it was not pleasant and those who through the history and organisation of this Union are less experienced might find this treatment almost intolerable. An article in The Guardian last Saturday indicated the pressures to which any moderate member might be subjected in his Strike Committee, in his home port, and, let us not underrate this, in the treatment he might receive when he returned to his ship. That article referred to the fact that at many of these meetings, they will recognise "men who are not in the N.U.S., but are members of other Unions ..." that "Their aim - and an organised pattern is discerned here - is to keep the temperature of meetings running high;

to inflame the legitimate grievances of seamen by intervening with abrasive slogans shouted at appropriate moments." All of us who represent the great sea ports of this country know how true this is. I would commend to Hon. Members all the evidence produced in that article, the telephone calls to branches, the organisation of brutal slogans, placards, interjections, the implications and suggestions - whether on the Executive or at Strike Committees or at any other level - and this certainly took place - that anyone who advocated negotiations up to a few days ago was a traitor to the men who elected ^{him}, and a marked man in the next election; we know this is true. The members of this Union are not in the main armchair warriors in the industrial struggle. They are sea-going mariners. And there is no more tightly knit community than a ship; from a ship there is no escape; no happier hunting ground for the sea lawyers who could make the life of any man a misery who had been marked out as a black-leg even for exercising his democratic duties on an elected body, than a merchant ship on the high seas.

Commit

Time and again in this dispute the Party's objectives have very rapidly become the policy of the Executive. This is particularly true in relation to the determination of the Party to spread the strike. This was, it is true, the policy of the N.U.S: it was not the policy of the T.U.C. or of any of the other Unions affiliated to the T.U.C. When the State of Emergency was declared, the Morning Star, whose well-informed articles I do not consider derive from any process of a priori reasoning on the part of its editorial staff, declared "no self-respecting Trade Unionist will work in co-operation with the Army and Navy" and "every Trade Unionist must rise in solidarity in support of the seamen". This was a clear invitation to extend the dispute and obviously the most likely area of extension was the Docks. This was in fact the policy pursued by Mr. Ramelson and his colleagues; it was not the policy of Mr. Hogarth who, ~~xxxxx~~ though his presence at the dock meeting had been announced, knew

that in accordance with the usual rules with which the T.U.C. would be concerned, it would be utterly wrong for him to appeal to the members of another Union except with the approval of the Executive Committee of that Union. The policy of extending the dispute was, however, conducted by Mr. Ramelson, Mr. Goodwin, and a number of other influential Communists whose influence extended to Unions beyond the N.U.S. The most prominent of these was Mr. Harry Watson, the President of the Lightermen's Union, and such well known figures as Mr. Jack Dash and Mr. Danny Lyons who are both members of the Unofficial Liaison Committee in the London Docks, together with Mr. Gordon Norris and Mr. Jack Coward representing the seamen.

XI have referred to Mr. Dash . . .

I have referred to Mr. Dash who, as his numerous speeches in the docks indicated, took a more moderate line because he was torn between his loyalty to the Party and his loyalty to his Union which was resisting all pressures to take the Communist line.

Honourable Members will have followed with interest the course of events in the week in which the Pearson Report came out. ^{There is much to} ~~All the evidence~~ suggests that the rejection of the interim report was a fait accompli before the Executive had even seen the text of the Report. Inaccurate accounts of what the Court of Inquiry was likely to recommend were circulating on the night of Tuesday, June 7 and were almost certainly known to some of those I have mentioned. On the Wednesday morning the Executive received the text of the Report and rejected it, with their then customary unanimity, with the most perfunctory discussion and with no regard to the broader issues raised by that Report. ~~7~~

From then on the emphasis was on widening the

strike. On June 13 a meeting of about 1,500 dockers, chaired by Mr. Jack Coward, was held in the London Docks and was addressed by Mr. Watson, Mr. Norris and Mr. Dash, the first two of these with great enthusiasm and the third with lesser enthusiasm commending a resolution to black all British ships in the London docks. But a fourth speaker, Mr. Mundy, the official representative of the Transport and General Workers' Union, took the opposite line. In the event the resolution was carried and two hours of confusion in London's docks followed, while ^{the} dockers sought advice from those able and competent to give that advice. And because of the resolute advice given by Mr. Mundy, on behalf of the Transport and General Workers' Union, the [very] dockers who had passed the resolution] were by 12 o'clock hard at work on the ships. This was a turning point in the history of the strike. But another turning point was the rejection by the International Transport Federation, whose British representatives include all Britain's transport unions, the railway unions, the T. and G.,

the Merchant Navy Officers' Association as well as the N.U.S., of the N.U.S. request that they call on foreign seamen's unions to take corresponding action to prevent the movement to Britain of foreign owned ships.

The last hope of those who sought to extend the strike, to extend the damage to Britain's economy, let alone to bring the nation and the Government to a state of surrender, was the meeting two days ago of the Management Committee ^{of the} International Transport Federation where ~~everybody~~ moves to extend the strike were finally buried.

Once June 13 had passed, the emphasis shifted to the talks which my Rt. Hon. Friend and I had with the Unions and with the employers. I believe the Union made a great mistake particularly in terms of their appeal to the nation, in rejecting the Report of the Court of Inquiry. I think pretty quickly after that rejection the extent of this mistake was realised, and not only in Union circles. I believe that there was a widespread recognition that this strike had reached

the point of diminishing returns, not only in terms of the support of the rank and file but in terms of what it was likely to achieve with each succeeding week of unemployment and hardship for N.U.S. members.

The purpose of my Rt. Hon. Friend and I was to see whether there was a way to meet their concern about the question of leave arrangements - at no additional cost beyond what was contemplated by the Court of Inquiry, and at no additional cost in terms of a national incomes and prices policy. But political rather than industrial counsels won the day. What my Rt. Hon. Friend and I sought to achieve, what we outlined in our appeal to the Executive, again met the most brusque of rejections. This may have been connected with the intense and active canvassing of a substantial number of Council members on the night of Thursday, June 16. However that may be, that rejection which followed the most persuasive table banging by the leading militants on the Executive Council, was decisive and as I have said, unanimous.

These are the circumstances in which I reported to the House on June 20. There were those who thought that when I spoke frankly to the House about some of the influences operating on the Union, I would set up resistances which might prolong the strike. I can understand this feeling which was expressed in this House, the danger that it might be a consequence of my action was naturally one of the possible consequences I had to weigh most anxiously. I believe that the fact that for the first time last Thursday, the moderate members of the Executive took their courage into their hands and voted against the strongly-pressed advice of their most militant colleagues, suggested that I was not ill advised. I think, and I am not saying this without good reason, that a large proportion of the Executive, almost certainly a majority, on the previous Friday, if they had voted according to their considered opinions, would have voted for a return to work or at least a return to negotiation on the basis of what my Rt. Hon. Friend and I had said to them. I believe that one...

result of what I said last Monday is that the moderates have become articulate, and that in so doing they represent the views of the majority of the rank and file members of the union, particularly those who have - and I pay every tribute to them- suffered great hardships for the cause in which they believe.

I know, Mr. Speaker, there will be those who will say that it is not the duty of the Government or of anyone who holds the responsibilities that I hold, to be concerned with such matters, that our duty is to remain aloof. Having regard to the great economic dangers to this nation, in the determined battle we are fighting, for economic solvency, I feel that it was my duty to take this action.

They are wrong, who believe that what I did then or what I have done today, is an attack on militant trade unionism. Having regard to the history of this union, and to the grievances which I, and I believe so many Hon. Members, consider are so deeply felt, by seamen in every port of Britain, I could not

conscientiously deny this Union the right to pursue their case as vigorously as seems right to them. It is an inevitable reaction from the Union's past, but we have the right to ask that militancy should depend upon the representation of the democratic views of the Union's members, and should not be artificially exploited by those whose motives, while partly directed to the seamen's interests, are also inspired by a desire to secure power within the Union, and at the same time, more widely, to destroy a policy, which is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, on prices and incomes and which this House will shortly be asked to ratify. Mr. Hogarth is reported as having said that this dispute is not fundamentally about hours or pay but about a struggle for power within the Union. It is in fact about both. But in so far as this strike has been artificially prolonged because of this power struggle, I believe it was my duty to speak out.

/After the strike is over.

After this strike is over, no doubt many Honourable Members will be considering its lessons in terms of the general policy so far as the nation on the one hand and the rights of trade unionism on the other are concerned. I know that Honourable Gentlemen opposite sincerely hold views about the way in which these matters can be regulated and in particular about the way in which these problems can be dealt with by simple changes in the Law. As I have already told the House, after my experience of most intimate and detailed discussions with 48 men representing as they did 65,000 members who consider themselves pushed almost beyond the bounds of endurance, I feel that in this case we are dealing not with a simple legalistic matter, but with issues going to the very frontiers of human relations. My Rt. Hon. Friend, in one of the controversies which arose on these issues, said that industrial relations are human relations. I believe he was right, and to be fair, I believe he was quoting some words of the Right Honourable Gentleman when he was Minister of Labour. This is not the moment

to anticipate the findings of the Royal Commission which will be concerned with legal and constitutional matters but also with a problem of human relations. And they will be wrong who seek from this unique chapter in the history of industrial relations in this country to proceed to over-simplify and draw hasty conclusions, however plausible they might appear. Rather should they be left to the combined wisdom of the Members of the Royal Commission on which ultimately this House, and indeed the country, will pronounce the final verdict.

Before I sit down I must refer to one issue about the responsibilities of this House and of any Member of this House, on whatever side he may sit, and be he Minister or Backbencher. Last Saturday, the Executive Council of the Seamen's Union indicated their regret about the Statement I made last week. They have invited me to make public Statements outside on the lines of what I then said. I have not attacked their integrity as I have said. There was no question of shrinking from any confrontation with them about the

issues I have raised. Last week I indicated quite clearly to them that I was ready to meet them and discuss what I had said.

But they have raised the question of Parliamentary privilege. Privilege adheres not so much to individual Members of this House as to the House as a whole. It is time-honoured and it is essential to the rights of this House. This House can be a guardian of the public interest only to the extent that any Honourable Member can feel able to use the privilege this House traditionally has, and in the exercise of that privilege to raise any matter affecting the public interest. This applies to every Member of the House in whatever part of the chamber he may sit. Some of the classical battles for freedom in this House have derived from a judicious use of this privilege, for every Member who invokes it has a responsibility, recognising that he has the power to inflict damage on any individual or group of individuals by the words he uses, secure as he is

from the normal process of Law. No Honourable Member would lightly invoke that privilege but his first duty must be to the public interest. There will always be those who say that no Honourable Member should invoke any form of words in this Chamber that he is not prepared to use outside.

This is to misunderstand privilege. I am not prepared to be silenced or to let any other Honourable Member be silenced in any proceeding they feel right in the public interest, by the fact that the repetition of words used here and outside might lead to legal processes which would have the effect for a year or perhaps two of preventing any comment either by that Member, or by the Press, or even by the House itself ^{in discussing} or discussing these vitally important issues. Because, Mr. Speaker, under the rules which it is your duty to enforce, once a legal process is under way, not only would all public discussion be stifled, but because the issue would be sub judice, discussions even in this House would be stifled. That is why in the Bill of Rights nearly

three centuries ago it was laid down:-

"That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in Parlyament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parlyament."

X I believe that the issues that have been raised by the pressure upon this Union, by outside influences, is a matter of vitally national interest and as I have said, it was only after the most anxious consideration that I felt it right to put these before the House. But this House is the custodian not only of personal liberties but of the wider national interest. And that interest would remain unheard if any one of us, whatever our individual responsibilities to this House, felt we were not free to raise matters of great national import except under conditions which had allowed those in our view who are working against the higher interests of the nation, to stifle public and Parliamentary discussion.

None of us would lightly invoke the powers that we as Members enjoy, least of all one who holds the

responsibility that I hold. But I have felt, and I hope what I have said today will justify this thought, that as Members of this House, we have not only rights, we have also duties. And in the exercise of those rights and duties it is incumbent on everyone of us to give to the House any facts necessary to promote and further the national interest. For if there are actions being undertaken whether by the Executive or by any private organisation which any of us considers harmful to the public interest, this House is the place where these actions should be brought under public scrutiny. [And if, as with the problem I have described, whether meant for reasons which seem good to them, and which as I have said involved no contradiction of the law, and if in the nature of things these operations are largely conducted away from the public gaze, it is the duty of any of us having this knowledge to bring them into the light.]

[Because] this House can perform its ancient functions only on the basis that the truth is known to it.

In asking the House to approve this Address and Reply, and approve the Regulations, I hope we will all feel that we are debating not only necessary and from the point of view of all of us, inevitably, in a personal sense, painful consequences of this dispute, that we are ready to learn the lessons, and that we are ready to assert the duties as well as the rights for the privilege of membership of this House. It is only in that spirit that I have addressed the House in the terms I have, after deep thought, chosen to adopt this afternoon.

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This strike could be ended on THURSDAY

"DAILY EXPRESS"
21st June, 1966

THE time has come to end all the surmises emanating from the apparent inconsistencies of the seamen's leaders.

Here is a chance for them to demonstrate to the world either the openness of their determination to carry on the strike and to hell with the national economy, or the willingness of some of them to end the strike.

There could be a controlled secret ballot of the seamen's union executive.

This is the plan which I submit, could end the strike on Thursday. Mr. Wilson confessed in the House yesterday that the idea had struck him, too.

Inevitably, it is slightly unorthodox, but this strike has enough unusual features and will be so frightfully devastating to our national economy that any idea which is practical is worth considering.

HEAVY-HEARTED

LIKE most experienced observers, I have been mystified by the curious sequence of events which took place last Thursday and Friday.

Mr. William Hogarth, the secretary, and the executive of the National Union of Seamen met Mr. Wilson and Labour Minister Mr. Ray Gunter at 10, Downing Street.

There were moments when the Ministers were convinced that the seamen's leaders were on the point of calling off the strike and accepting,

—BY A SECRET BALLOT OF THE SEAMEN'S EXECUTIVE

by
TREVOR
EVANS

with heavy-hearted reluctance, the recommendations of the Pearson committee which granted them only partial success.

But barely an hour after they returned to their Clapham headquarters Mr. Hogarth was saying in his precise, Scottish way that his executive had decided *unanimously* to reject the Prime Minister's appeal to end the strike.

There is something very odd about this. Why should there have been such a dramatic change of attitude between Downing Street and Clapham, with no significant intervening development?

Of course, there is a facile

explanation. It is that four or five of the extremist, emotional, and highly articulate members of the executive are so hell-bent on their destructive course that they cow the other 40-odd members into submission.

The clear implication is that many members of the seamen's executive are reluctant to hold up their hands to support calling off the strike lest they should be victimised.

There is some semblance of support for this idea.

The Government was tipped off in Downing Street that if five members of the executive were ditched there could be a settlement within half an hour.

And when the executive got back to its own boardroom in Clapham the most vehement speeches were made by three of the most extreme leaders and there was barely a whimper in favour of ending the strike.

But I anticipate a thunderous rejection of the notion that a handful of mavericks have taken over control of the union.

MISGUIDED

I ACKNOWLEDGE that it may be a slur on decent men who honestly believe that they can get a better deal for their members by prolonging the strike.

I think they are misguided, but they are elected members entitled to their opinion.

A secret ballot of the executive could clear this all up. If there is a willingness to consider the idea, then there should be little trouble in arranging it.

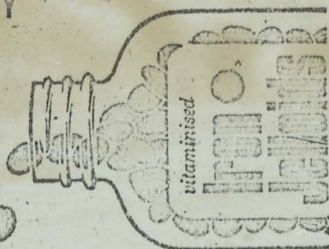
Mr. Hogarth could invite Mr. George Woodcock, T.U.C. general secretary, to supervise the ballot of the 48-member executive at its meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Hogarth did ask the T.U.C. for help at the beginning of the strike, so surely he can now ask for its aid in clearing up a situation which, if prolonged, is bound to be costly and may be humiliating for his union.

But the initiative must come from Mr. Hogarth and he cannot be indifferent to the mounting suspicions of the motives of some of the members of his executive.

Look and Feel a new woman in 2 weeks

with this
"active"
iron
therapy



When your system fails to secure enough iron from the foods you eat, your blood quickly becomes impoverished.

As a result, you feel nervy, listless, headachy, irritable. Life is a burden. These wretched symptoms are often caused by iron deficiency—or, in other words, simple anaemia—a complaint that affects many people today.

But take heart. To every woman suffering from iron deficiency we make this splendid promise: start today with Iron Jelloids and even in 2 short

weeks Iron Jelloids will bring about an amazing difference! You'll say goodbye to simple anaemia's weariness and headaches. You'll feel gay, alive. You'll find new vitality, new enjoyment of life!

Each day's dose of Iron Jelloids provides more iron than a pound of calves' liver: active iron, for easier assimilation. That's why vitaminised Iron Jelloids is the perfect iron replacement therapy.

Once you see for yourself the wonderful benefits that Iron Jelloids bring, we know you'll never want to be without them again!

START NOW... **Iron Jelloids**
"active" iron replacement therapy

If you still feel your original tiredness after 3 or 4 weeks, consult your doctor.

VICTIMISATION

WHAT would be the result of such a secret ballot of the union executive? Certainly, it would be far speedier than a ballot of all the union membership.

Secondly, it would reveal how many realise the danger of a head-on clash with the Government.

Thirdly, the danger of victimisation would be removed, if it exists.

Fourthly, union members have declared that they will accept the executive's decision, whatever it is.

And lastly, this loyalty will be strained, and may even be dissipated, if the men at Clapham go on indefinitely "waiting for something to turn up."

There is, of course, the effect of the strike on the nation. But Mr. Hogarth, in his natural preoccupation with "in-fighting," continues to give the impression of being blissfully indifferent to this.

If he really cares, here is a chance for him to prove the readiness of his union to be candid and bold.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

36

NOTE

35a The D.G., F.1.A. and I went down to the Cabinet Office yesterday where we were joined by Francis Graham-Harrison and Sir Burke Trend. We discussed the Prime Minister's draft statement and made some suggested amendments. It was also agreed that the D.G. should do all that he could to persuade the Prime Minister to refuse any sort of enquiry. The Prime Minister's secretary meanwhile

34a left a note for me of our previous meeting with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and the Leaders of the Opposition. Mr. Elliott read it through and found it satisfactory

2. Trend rang me later in the evening to say that we were wanted by the Prime Minister in his room in the House of Commons at 7 p.m. but that he wanted us first to see a "piece of paper". This turned out to be a note (attached) prepared by the Paymaster General about information he had received from Tom SUTTON. We then went through the Prime Minister's draft page by page and various amendments suggested by the Minister of Labour, the Lord Chancellor and ourselves were incorporated. These are as annotated in the attached copy.

3. The Paymaster General, Sir Burke Trend and the D.G. spoke forcibly against any form of enquiry and this advice was accepted by the Prime Minister.

R. Thistlethwaite
R. Thistlethwaite.

F.

28 June 1966.

~~TOP SECRET~~F16/13
28.6.66.



Miss Golding arranged for her father to drive his Ford Consul PCD.221 to meet Tom Sutton at the Plough, Clapham at 6 p.m. on Sunday, 26th June, and to bring him to my flat.

When he arrived he at once went into an explanation of why he had not contacted the Prime Minister before and he said that he was afraid to do so because when he was visiting No. 10 with the Executive he found himself for a few minutes in the entrance to No. 10 in the company of Ray Gunter, Dennis Barnes, a chap he described as having a handlebar moustache and somebody named Hoskinson or Hodgkinson. Ray Gunter said, "Hello Tom, how are you? How are things going?" and Tom replied, "We shall have to ditch four or five of these so and so's before we can get a settlement". This remark was reported in the northern edition of what Tom thought was the "Daily Express" and he also thought that it was on Monday, 20th June. He said that Joe Kenny had got a cutting and had used the remark already and proposed to use it at meetings over the weekend and he also intended to use it whenever opportunity offered as an indication of No. 10 thinking. Tom said that article was written by Trevor Wignall but in my endeavours to check I have established that the industrial correspondent of the "Express" is John Grant and the nearest approach to the name of Trevor Wignall is the industrial correspondent of "The Times".

I re-established contact with Tom this morning and he is going to endeavour to get a further look at the cutting and establish the date of the paper. It is clear, however, that both he and others are affected by the statement, he because he made it and Kenny and his fellow militants because they can produce something in print which establishes, so they claim, to be No. 10 thinking.

(SINCE DICTATING THE FOREGOING I HAVE IDENTIFIED THE ARTICLE AS ONE WRITTEN BY TREVOR EVANS WHICH APPEARED IN THE "DAILY EXPRESS" ON 21st JUNE CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING WORDS: "THE GOVERNMENT WAS TIPPED OFF IN DOWNING STREET THAT IF FIVE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE WERE DITCHED THERE COULD BE A SETTLEMENT WITHIN HALF AN HOUR".)



Tom then described Saturday's meeting. He said that Marshall, his fellow Industrial Co-Assistant Secretary, moved the immediate acceptance of the agreement with the owners and this was seconded by Tom. Kenny and Slater supported by Worthington resisted the motion and moved an amendment remitting the agreement to the Negotiating Committee. During the discussion Hogarth said nothing. Marshall and Tom Sutton were both accused of rushing things. Tom replied, "We started at 10 o'clock and it has now gone on to 11 o'clock and this is an hour about something which is cut and dried, whereas when the Pearson Report was considered we got rid of it in 20 minutes". Tom regarded this as a knock out. The voting was 26 to 17 in favour of the amendment but neither Hogarth nor Gibson voted. Later Tom taxed Hogarth with his abstention and Hogarth said, "Why didn't you count me in?" Tom's reply was, "Because you didn't put your hand up".

Since the meeting Tom has got assurances of three members of the Executive who will definitely vote next Wednesday for the agreement to be accepted. ~~amendment.~~ In Tom's view the amendment which was subsequently carried was no more than a device to serve the ego of the militants but he thought they had a point for the Negotiating Committee had been set up yet it had not met the owners since 6th April and whilst Tom regarded it as a waste of time he thought it would do no harm for when they meet on Tuesday the Negotiating Committee would sit round the table with the owners, there would be no vote and in Tom's judgment the agreement which has already been reached would not be interfered with.

The most significant thing, however, on Saturday morning was that as soon as the Executive concluded their consideration of the agreement they at once turned to the P.M.'s statement last Monday and had an all round the wicket attack on him, statements being made that they would never vote for the Labour Party again, they would tear up their Labour Party cards. Hogarth pointed out, however, that the Prime Minister had not said anything that impugned their honesty



or alleged

/impropriety or illegality and the Executive ought to wait until

after the P.M.'s statement on Tuesday before taking further action.

This was brushed on one side. The motion was carried and there was insistence that without further ado the contents of the motion should be passed downstairs to the Press so that it could be published with the least possible delay. Tom Sutton expressed the view that there was concern about what the Prime Minister was going to say and he thought that the motion was passed containing the demand he should repeat the statement outside the House in order to harry the P.M. and lessen the impact of his statement.

At this point I began to wonder whether Tom had not come to try and get from me what the Prime Minister was going to say for he turned to possible sources of the Prime Minister's knowledge. He said he thought he was relying on Inspector Fryer of the Special Branch but that he thought the man with the most knowledge of the docks and seafarers was "Mr. Alan of the P.L.A." who he said had once been the expert in the Special Branch.

Tom then ran over the people on the Executive who might have extreme left contacts. He mentioned Mr. Brankley from Dover who he described as a registered fellow traveller and Mr. Hodgins of Hull who he regarded as a Trotskyite. Mr. Slater, he said, had been clearly influenced by his desire to get Hogarth's job. In fact Mr. Slater had made up his mind it is a certainty he is going to get it. Tom said that Slater had been approached by members of the Moral Rearmament movement and the London organiser had visited Slater and stayed at his home. Tom also said on this point that Norris and Slater were close together and that when Norris visited South Shields he stayed with Slater. Tom said at one time Norris received £14 a week from the C.P. but this had been reduced to £4 a week.

As regards Kenny, he said he had no doubt whatever that he had close contacts with the C.P. He, Tom, had made a point of sitting next to Kenny when they were in the Cabinet room and he noticed that the papers Kenny had were set out in terms of questions to put to the Prime Minister and at the top was written "Joe Kenny" in pencil.



He said that at one point when Kenny turned towards the Prime Minister he managed to nudge the papers and saw a communication from King Street.

Tom said that there was no doubt that Hogarth, to whom he referred in the most contemptuous terms, was concerned about the new rule which Norris was getting through which would limit the appointment of officials to a period of five years. He, Tom, was 63. He was in receipt of a war disability pension; under rule he could now retire on reduced pension and he was prepared to go but Hogarth was 56 and had got four years to go and as he was a deck hand life would be very difficult for him if he lost his present job for the only thing he could do would be to go back to sea.

Tom mentioned Worthington who he said worked in the bar and who would eventually look to Tom to get his job back. Worthington was a man of extreme language. He had attacked the Prime Minister violently and he took the Slater/Kenny line on Saturday. Tom thought, however, that outside the violence of Worthington's language there was not much to him.

Tom held the view that it would be better if the Prime Minister's statement could be postponed^{until Wednesday}. He said that the critical thing was bank holidays. He, Tom, was sure he could carry the Southampton men on this issue. Indeed as far back as 9th June at a meeting with the T.U.C., the T.U.C. representatives had asked the Executive to give them a toe hold and Marshall had put forward the suggestion of the bank holidays as a possible starting point. As soon as the meeting was over, Hogarth, Marshall and Tom were held back for a Press statement and the rest of the Executive went downstairs. Marshall followed, Tom being just behind him. A few minutes later he found Marshall in the car bitterly upset. He said that he had been punched in the back, he had been called a scab and Tom himself had been kicked. This was because although only a few minutes had elapsed since the end of the meeting between the T.U.C. and the Executive the news had been passed down that Marshall had put forward



a solution which involved a possible compromise. The next day, 10th June, when the Executive met Marshall said he wished to make a statement and he offered his resignation to take effect immediately because, as he said, he was not going to be punched and called a scab. This caused consternation and there were pleas that Marshall should hold his hand and this he agreed to do but Tom thought it was only temporary and that unless there was a clean-up on the Executive Marshall would go and he, Tom, would go with him. At this point, he said that if on Wednesday the agreement which has been reached was not endorsed he and Marshall would both resign immediately.

At this point in the discussion we found ourselves getting back to square one in which Tom underlined the difficulties that had been caused by the statement that it was necessary to ditch a number of members of the Executive and he said that there was no doubt that there was a struggle for place and position and that men like Hogarth and Marshall felt that if the extremists won there could be no future for them.

I asked Tom whether he agreed that the Prime Minister's statement last Monday was justified. He said, "Yes there was no doubt about it that what he said was true." There was no doubt about it and it was also clear that it was the Prime Minister's statement that brought about the changed atmosphere. He said that he had been a very worried man. He couldn't see any way out but the Prime Minister's statement plus the agreement about bank holidays enabled him to see the way ahead.

Tom said he would have no difficulty in going round all the branches explaining the agreement to the men and he had no doubt that it would be accepted. Indeed he had volunteered in the course of Saturday morning's discussion to visit the branches. He was certainly absolutely confident that Southampton would fall into line.

Tom said that he was sure the Executive had made up their mind that Wednesday would see a settlement. Before coming to see me he had telephoned to the International meeting at the Ambassador's Hotel



and he had learnt that the meeting had agreed to what they really wanted, not an extension of the strike but an undertaking by other bodies that they would subscribe money on a pretty lavish scale to help them with the ^{N.U.S.} difficulties after the strike was over. Tom said that they had spent $\$1\frac{1}{2}$ million but this information had not been leaked out. He said ~~that~~ everything leaked, ~~that~~ as soon as anything happened it was known ^{to the Press} at once. He said that Kenny had leaked the contents of the Pearson Report to Monty Meth. The only thing which had not leaked was Marshall's statement to the Executive on 10th June that he wished to resign.

The meeting ended at 7.35 with a brief discussion about the contents of the "Seaman" and the statements which had appeared in that paper about communist infiltration. Tom offered to make available copies from January 1965 onwards and I arranged for Miss Golding to visit him on Monday morning to collect them.

Rec. 27 JUN 1966

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 28.6.66.

35a

I beg to move,

"That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty thanking Her Majesty for Her Most Gracious Message communicating to this House that Her Majesty has deemed it proper by Proclamation, dated the ²²rd of ^{June} May 1966 and made in pursuance of the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, as amended by the Emergency Powers Act, 1964, to declare that a state of emergency exists."

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that it will be for the convenience of the House if I also speak to the Second Motion on the Order Paper which asks the House to confirm the Regulations made in consequence of the Declaration of the State of Emergency.

[It may also be for the convenience of the House, Mr. Speaker, if I seek to wind up the debate if I have the leave of the House to do so.]

Since the last exchanges in the House about the dispute in the shipping industry there have been considerable and hopeful moves in the direction of a solution. This debate takes place against the background of the negotiations which are going on today on the appropriate panel of the National Maritime Board and all of us will hope that these will come to a successful conclusion. But as I hope to explain later, even if the strike were to come to an end before this debate is concluded, this does not mean that we can immediately advise a termination of the State of Emergency or a

withdrawal of the Regulations.

First it might be convenient for the House if I gave the House some more up-to-date report on the developments aimed at ending the dispute since I last reported to the House of Monday of last week.

The House will recall that on that occasion I gave a report of the talks which my Right Hon. Friend and I had had with representatives of the Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen, and one meeting with the full Council, and also of the meetings we had with representatives of the Shipping Federation. Those talks, spread over three days, were aimed at finding a solution based on the interim report of the Court of Inquiry. That report, the Government considered, provided the means to a just and honourable solution in the interests of the seamen, the industry and the nation as a whole. I said that we did not stand on every dot and comma of the report but said that if there were to be any departure from it, any further improvement should be paid for by real economies in working agreed between the parties, effective economies, not pious aspirations about increased productivity or reduced costs.

Although at that time the Seamen's Union did not state that they were prepared to accept the Pearson recommendations of a two stage introduction of the 40 hour week which was their main objective, it was clear that the problem which was in the minds not only of the Executive Council but, of seamen all over the country,

impeding a solution, was the question of ~~Sunday~~ leave arrangements. This was because the Court of Inquiry, in order to provide a partial compensation for the cost of the progress towards a 40 hour week, had recommended that the number of days leave with pay in respect of Sundays and Bank Holidays at sea, which have recently averaged 51 per year, should be reduced to 39. There was and is no doubt that this was the problem preventing a settlement. The House will recall that it had been urged upon us that a reduction in overtime, over and above that envisaged in the report to take effect a year from now, could provide sufficient savings in cost to compensate for the Seamen's proposal that the Sunday leave arrangements should continue as in recent years, and not be reduced as the Court recommended. As the House knows, when this was put to the owners by my Right Hon. Friend and myself, this was strenuously denied, nor could the owners when challenged to do so, suggest any significant changes in working practices or in any other way which could provide a saving necessary for helping to solve the problem of Sunday leave arrangements.

As the House will recall, my Rt. Hon. Friend and I were successful in bringing the ship owners and representatives of the Seamen's Executive together at Downing Street to see if this problem could be solved. Unfortunately, the leaders on both sides had to report to us that they had entirely failed to make any progress. It was in these circumstances that my Rt. Hon. Friend and

I addressed the full Executive and put to them, as we had to their representatives, our proposal that since there did not seem to be any immediate prospect of agreement on what we called copper-bottomed guarantees of reduced costs, the Court of Inquiry should be asked as a matter of urgency, in dealing with that part of their terms of reference which related to productivity, to examine all the suggestions which had been made, reductions in overtime, ^{and} ~~problems~~ of manning, demarcation, ^{more flexible use of crew} ~~questions~~ as between the deck and the engine room and report whether adequate savings could be ensured. Meanwhile, we suggested, the Union would, while accepting the Court of Inquiry's first report, reserve their position on the question of Sunday leave arrangements which could then be settled satisfactorily on the basis of the productivity enquiry by the Court.

My Rt. Hon. Friend and I warned the Executive that though there had been and still was great sympathy in the country for the Seamen's case, that sympathy was being rapidly eroded, if not destroyed, by their repeated and brusque rejections of every proposal made to help in finding a solution. We stressed the damage, actual and potential, to the economic life of the nation, and we stressed equally the damage - which could well be lasting - to the shipping industry and to the future security of those who sought and would hereafter seek employment in the industry. Nevertheless, when the Executive had returned to its headquarters, it voted speedily and, again,

unanimously for the continuation of the strike. The unfailing unanimity of the Executive's decisions on this and on previous occasions is a fact to which attention has been called on a number of occasions recently and I shall be returning to this point later.

It was following these events that I reported to the House eight days ago.

The House well recognises that we could not leave the matter to rest there. There will be those who will argue that it is the Government's duty to remain outside a battle of this kind, to let natural forces take their course and to wait until exhaustion, physical, mental, spiritual, or financial, exerts its toll. There will be certainly those who feel that we have acted in an unprecedented way, by setting up a Court of Inquiry while the strike was on instead of insisting on a return to work. I agree this is unprecedented. So are the circumstances of this dispute, and the whole House has shown the deep concern it feels about the growing damage to our economy with every day this strike continues. In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, my Rt. Hon. Friend and I felt it right last week to go into the question of still further initiatives. As the House knows, we had a long discussion with the Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the T.U.C.

[Pay tribute to T.U.C.]

agreed with in that
They fell in with our suggestion that Lord Pearson, who even in so short a time had earned a unique position of

^{with}
trust so far as both sides of the industry are concerned and who was willing to offer his services in helping to find a solution, should be asked to chair a meeting between the two sides. The T.U.C. were successful in persuading the Executive to accept this proposal and the Shipping Federation similarly agreed to join in these discussions.

Thanks, I believe, to the patience, objectivity and skill which Lord Pearson brought to these discussions, but thanks equally to the evident desire shown by both sides to approach these problems in a constructive manner, suggestions were discussed and examined which pointed the way to a possible solution.

All were conscious that the outstanding problem was that of ~~Sunday~~ leave arrangements, and, as a result of suggestions from both sides, concrete proposals were made to secure real and effective economies in working, sufficient to provide a substantial easement in the proposed reduction of leave days, without adding in any significant sense to the cost of the original Pearson proposals. As the House will know, the Executive Council on Saturday accepted these proposals as a basis for negotiations, and those negotiations are now proceeding. The whole House will trust that these will be successful, and that there will be a speedy return to work.

But even if agreement had been reached a day or two ago it would still have been necessary to commend these Regulations to the House. The House will be well aware that the problems of congestion in the ports are only beginning.

413 ships engaged in the home and short sea trades and 364 ships engaged on the ocean-going routes are at present immobilised. Very many of these are moored away from the berths and in ^{many} every port, there will be the most difficult problems in ensuring that the ships are enabled to return to berth in an orderly manner to load up with the nation's accumulated exports, and to get away. The ending of the dispute, if this occurs, will not mean immediate relief to those parts of these islands which have suffered most by the events of the past six weeks and emergency arrangements will still be needed, and in some cases will have to be intensified. Urgent action will have to be taken to build up stocks of essential commodities, particularly to catch up with the summer stock building programme for coal at power stations, gas works and other public utilities. But clearly the Government would hope that if the House agrees to the continuance of these Regulations today, an early ending of the strike would mean that the House would not be troubled again in this regard.

But, Mr. Speaker, while all our thoughts and hopes will be concentrated on the negotiations now proceeding, it is not too early to begin to consider some of the lessons of this dispute, and the House in any case I know, will expect me to speak more fully about some of the issues I raised in my statement eight days ago. I have referred, Mr. Speaker, to actions taken by the Government unprecedented in dealing with previous disputes, and I

said that in many respects this strike itself had unusual and even unprecedented characteristics. This is an industry which, apart from the very special problems which developed on Merseyside ^{and certain other ports} six years ago, has been virtually strike free for ^{very many years} ~~over half~~ a century. But as I have said on many occasions inside this House, and even more directly to representatives of both sides of the industry, this strike has no single, simple cause: it is the result of the accumulation over many years of grievances and frustrations which - and all of us share a responsibility - the nation should not have allowed to develop. I have referred to the fact that for many years a large part of the Membership of this Union increasingly felt that the Union was not discharging its responsibilities to the Seamen collectively or individually, and those of us, Mr. Speaker, who have the honour to represent considerable numbers of sea-going constituents, ^{will know} ~~know exactly what I have in mind.~~ ~~Past leaders of this Union, and - I have said this to the Shipping Federation and I see no cause to withdraw it - some of the owners themselves bear a heavy responsibility~~ ^{In consequence} ~~for the fact that~~ these grievances and frustrations have been allowed to remain, to grow, to fester and at heavy cost to the nation, to suppurate. The feelings engendered by the operations of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, three years before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, are part, and I believe a considerable part, of the cause of this dispute, but not the whole. And one thing the Seamen can feel has come out of this recent concentration

of national attention on their problems, is the fact that the Court of Inquiry - which of course was offered them before the strike began - has full powers to enquire into the problems caused by this over-barnacled legislation, and to make urgent recommendations for modernisation. Indeed as I told the House my Rt. Hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade has been in discussion with both sides of the industry about the reforms necessary, but these discussions, in common with so much else in this industry, have become a casualty of the clash between the two sides that developed a few months ago.

Another lesson from this dispute is a fact which emerges from the report of the Court of Inquiry that a great deal is amiss in the efficiency with which this industry is conducted. When, across the table, we have discussed the possibility of reducing by one hour or by two, the overtime which men in this industry are asked to work, we are doing it against an average working week of 66 hours, and it is clear that the Court of Inquiry considered that in comparison with the practices of the shipping industries of other countries this figure is inordinately high and must be regarded by this House as excessive. When at the same time it is clear that the earnings of British seamen fall so far below those of ^{many of} their foreign counterparts, one is bound to have grave reservations about the efficiency of the industry taken as a whole. Moreover I recall that when I asked the owners if they could think of any working practices ~~any restrictive practices~~, whose removal might be thrown into

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the balance of these negotiations, I was told there were, with only marginal and localised exceptions, no restrictive practices in the industry, and they could not then think of anything which would guarantee even so marginal an increase in productivity.

One of the difficulties about securing guaranteed improvements in productivity was the pathetic admission of the Shipping Federation that they could not speak for all their Members, not only for the legitimate reason that the ships of Britain's Merchant Navy covered so wide a range of types of trades, of occupations, but also because they had to speak for 400 individual companies with an average of only about 6 ships per company, varying from the great shipping lines - big enough and competent enough to be moving forward rapidly with modernisation and improved productivity - to a great number of smaller businesses of very varying efficiency. It was for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that the Government have decided now, following the action we took with the Geddes Inquiry into shipbuilding and the machine-tooling industry, to set up as a matter of urgency an independent enquiry into the structure, organisation and efficiency of the industry.

The third lesson, Mr. Speaker, must relate to the organisation of the Union and the problems presented in terms of industrial democracy. I have said more than once during the past few weeks when reporting to the House, that one of the problems in this dispute is a new-found militancy of the Union. On constituency as well as national grounds, Mr. Speaker, I rejoice in the fact that this Union has become in more recent years more vigorous and when I referred to it last week as a sturdy Union, I meant it.

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No Honourable Member will Mr. Speaker, underrate the difficulties of organisation, particularly democratic organisation, in a union catering for seamen. At any moment of time by far the greater majority of its members are scattered over the seven oceans, even today after more than six weeks of the strike, when every seaman returning to these shores has left his ship, only ^{26,500} ... out of 65, 000 sea-going members are on strike. The difficulties of communication are of a different dimension from those experienced in any other trade union, in manufacturing or in service industries in this country. This is shown by the fact that when, under the constitution of the union, ballots have to be held to elect the Executive Council these do not extend to the majority of seamen, namely those at sea and out of touch. The present Executive Council was elected - and I am saying this not in a critical sense but to show the difficulties of communication - by only 5,000 of the 65,000 members. Only in the case of the election of a General Secretary does the constitution provide for a ballot of all the members and, under the constitution, six months are allowed for this process. Perhaps these considerations are relevant to the suggestions put forward in the House eight days ago, which we ourselves had considered as a reasonable and obvious procedure, that a ballot of the members should be held about a return to work. It is because the Union's membership at any moment of time is so widely scattered that those members of the union who are engaged on the cross-channel and short sea trades, in localised port operations and the coast-wise trade inevitably predominate in the democratic organisation

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of the union, and while it is sometimes said that they account for a considerable proportion of the active and militant members, it is equally true that on these, in the main weekly-paid members, the sacrifice and burden of this strike has largely fallen. They are only too conscious that while they have in the past six weeks lost in most cases ~~no less than~~ ^{were well over} a hundred pounds in earnings and in many cases of big seasonal activity far more than this, the majority of the Union members, for whose interest they are fighting, are still at sea and at any time a week, a month, or two months from now, will be returning to Britain with the accumulated earnings of a long voyage.

It is therefore easier to criticise this Union than it is to suggest any means by which it could be fully representative of its members. I felt it right to say this before I come to some of the facts which I feel it necessary to lay before the House. It is these two facts, the recent efforts to give the rank and file an effective say in the affairs of the Union, combined with the difficulty of making democracy truly effective, it is these two facts, no less than the long accumulation of unrighted grievances that lie behind the problem to which I drew attention in my Statement eight days ago.

For as I have made clear, superimposed on all these difficulties, is a further problem, to which I now turn.

I begin by ~~repeating~~ ^{with what has generally been taken as challenge} what I have ~~always~~ accepted, that there are no Communists on the Executive Council of this Union. Again, ~~I think it is right to tell the House~~ ^{and} that the number of Communists among the membership of the Union is extremely small; I doubt if it would be capable of

manning more than one or two picket lines. And we must be extremely careful, as I have always been in my approach to this problem, to distinguish between external influences and the very real feelings of tens of thousands of the Union members that they have had a raw deal for so many years in the past. To be militant in this or in any other union is not a matter for reproach, perhaps least of all in this Union. And if the processes of industrial democracy - with all the difficulties I have mentioned in this particular case - lead to a militant approach, I for one would not complain. We have to distinguish between the genuine grievances and the genuine expression of those grievances whether by rank and file or by their elected representatives at all levels on the one hand, and the deliberate exploitation of those grievances by outside influences on the other. Again, it would be wrong to suggest, and I am not going to suggest, that members of the Communist Party, and I think particularly of dedicated Communist seamen, are not deeply concerned about these grievances and the problems that have to be settled.

There was and is no question of my impugning the integrity of the Executive Council; what I was referring to in my Statement eight days ago ^{and this was borne out by the whole history} was their lack of guts. ^{at that time}

But the House will be aware that the Communist Party unlike the major political Parties, has at its disposal an efficient and disciplined industrial apparatus controlled from Communist Party Headquarters. No major strike occurs anywhere in this country, in any sector of industry, in which that apparatus fails to concern itself. In special cases it has been seen at work, for example, in the

Electrical Trades Union, where it made a successful take-over bid, if not of the share capital, at any rate of the management of that Union, lasting for some years.

No other political Party is organised on these lines, and it may be because of the political impotence of the Communist Party that it has sought expression in industrial organisation. But Honourable Members would delude themselves if they imagined that there was not the most efficient organisation on the industrial side, that it has not full time officers ready to operate in any situation where industrial troubles are developing. And we would underrate equally its power if we did not recognise that however misguided we may consider their objectives or their methods, they in their own way desire to see an improvement in working class standards, and would not be effective if this were not so.

One other thing I want to make clear. None of this is in any way illegal. In a free society - it may be different in a Communist society - they have the right to do it. And I have no evidence at all that in pursuance of these aims, so far as the Seamen's Strike is concerned, ^{they have committed} any individual acts of illegality ~~have been committed~~. I should make it clear equally, that there is no suggestion of any interference in this strike from overseas. Whatever has been done is indigenious in character and is rooted in our own doctrines of freedom of association and action.

But if those who act in the way I am going to describe are fully within their legal rights and if, as I would feel - subject to any recommendations of the Royal Commission -

there does not seem any legislative step which could appropriately be taken which would deny them these rights - if they are within their rights, equally those ^{of us} who regard their activities as harmful have our rights and the right to take such action ~~within the law~~ as we may consider appropriate.

I have had to think a great deal about this in recent weeks, ~~knowing what I know~~, and my Statement eight days ago was not made without a great deal of anxious consideration. Because some of us owing to the positions we hold have not only an equal right to take any action within our power to resist these activities, I believe we have a duty.

Otherwise I would not have spoken as I did, or as I am now going to speak.

For some years the Communist Party have had as one of their objectives ^{to us, mind} ~~the control~~ ^{a position of strength in} of the Seamen's Union and others concerned with the docks and transport. ~~That they have not~~ ^{it has fallen short} ~~succeeded~~ ^{of this objective} is a tribute to the resolve and determination of

~~some of the unions they have sought to infiltrate.~~ They are engaged in ^{the process of struggle for power} ~~a take-over bid~~ for the Seamen's union

because they recognise the facts I have outlined to the House, not only that democracy is shallow-rooted in this union, not only that grievances and exploitation have festered over so many years, but that the very facts of sea-going employment make infiltration easier than it is in other industries. This ~~take-over bid~~ ^{is activity} is directed to next year's conference where the rules can be changed, and equally steps taken to change full-time officers, who for the reasons I have given have an unusual degree of power to influence the conduct of the Union's activities, even if this power has not been much exercised of late. This is a

take-over bid. And take-over bidders on all sides of industry are notorious for their single-mindedness and ruthlessness. The whole formidable power of the industrial apparatus has for some time been directed towards this end and the seamen's strike with all its background of justification has provided the ground.

[Quote SEAMAN Jan. 1965]

X The central figure in the operation is the Communist Party's industrial organiser, Mr. Bert Ramelson, who in Jan. 1966 succeeded Mr. Pete Kerrigan. Mr. Ramelson has three full-time officials on his staff, and in the London area, where the Docks provide his hunting ground, his principal lieutenant is Mr. Denis Goodwin. Round this full-time nucleus ~~has been gathered~~ ^{there is} a small group of active trade unionists in the N.U.S. and other unions.

I referred to the Communist Party's numerical weakness in the membership of the National Union of Seamen. And yet, despite this, as soon as the strike began, they were successful in ensuring that the chairmanships of the strike committees in the country's two major ports, London and Liverpool, were taken by two dedicated Communists, Mr. Jack Coward and Mr. Roger Woods. Again, in the Union's negotiating machinery ^a ~~the~~ leading member of the negotiating committee, not himself a member of the Executive Council, who was elected from the floor of the Annual General Conference, was also a highly articulate and effective Communist, Mr. Gordon Norris, who in certain of his Communist activities, also operates under the name of Mr. George Goodman.

The objectives of the Communist Party throughout this dispute, were, first, to influence the day-to-day policy of the Executive Council of the N.U.S., second, to extend the area of the stoppage, and thirdly, to use this strike, not only to improve the conditions of the seamen, but also to secure what is at present the main political and industrial objective of the Communist Party, ~~the~~ ^{the} destruction of the Government's Incomes and Prices Policy.

First let me deal with the organisation of the Union and of the strike. I have referred to their success in capturing two of the major strike committees. They are also effectively represented in other areas. When Mr. Norris, who has not paused for breath in the past six weeks, visited Glasgow, he made it his business to contact certain members of the strike committee but omitted to contact the Secretary who happened to be an efficient and loyal member of the Seamen's Union. I have seen a newspaper ~~repeat~~ ^{report} that the same happened in Belfast.

At ~~every~~ ^{various} stages since the strike began, the group have met and decided their policy and sought, through whatever means were open to them, to influence the Executive Council. They started with a disadvantage, that there were no Communist members on that Council. What they had to do was to operate through any who were responsive to their suggestions, including a circle of members whose conception of the Seamen's strike made them amenable to the type of proposals the Communist Party were advocating. I have referred to the difficulties of industrial democracy in the election of the Council, and one must recognise the effects of the history of this Union in the ~~inexperience~~ ^{inexperience}.

of many of its members. This political and industrial inexperience of some of its members - which you would not find in most of our other unions because of their day-to-day political and industrial contacts - meant that a small number of articulate, intelligent and well-briefed members, could exercise an influence far beyond their numbers.

If I have to refer to Mr. Joseph Kenny and Mr. James Slater, *neither of whom is a member of the C.P.* I must acknowledge their political and argumentative skill.

I have had ~~...~~ meetings with the Executive Council or with Committees appointed by that Council and I can testify to their ability, to their mastery of the details of Seamen's complaints, ~~to their ability to absorb the skilled briefing they have been given, and to their dominance among their colleagues.~~ ~~They live in Liverpool and South Shields respectively and when they attend Executive Council meetings in London they stay at the flat of a veteran Communist, known in Party circles as (Miss or Mrs.) Nan GREEN. Residing at the same flat is Jack COWARD and during the strike RAMELSON was seen on several occasions late at night to visit this flat when KENNY and SLATER were ~~staying there.~~ It is idle to pretend that they have not been in ^{frrequent} continuous contact with Mr. Ramelson and his representatives and of course Mr. Norris.~~

I need no evidence other than my own eyes and ears to recognise that these two have dominated the Executive Council throughout the negotiations. Certainly they were predominant in the Executive's brusque and unanimous rejection of the appeal which my Right Honourable Friend and I made to the Executive a week last Friday.

The House may well ask how influences of this kind, even exercised through a small number of highly articulate and experienced members of the Executive, could have so long secured acceptance, unanimously and almost without rebuttal, from a Council of 48 members. But first let us recognise that ^{the and other militant} these articulate members were expressing views which were advocating policies which fell on fertile ground because all their colleagues were aware of the strong feelings of the sea-going community. And let none of us underrate the extent to which moderate members of the Executive Council, no less militant in their objectives than their militant colleagues, would be subject to pressures which any of us would find distasteful and perhaps almost irresistible. We are used to hecklers, but the treatment anyone who in the past six weeks advocated a return to work on almost any terms would have received from Strike Committees, and the more vociferous members of strike meetings, would have daunted the toughest of us. I had it in Liverpool 10 days ago, but I suppose I am an old hand, but it was not pleasant and those who through the history and organisation of this Union are less experienced might find this treatment almost intolerable. An article in The Guardian last Saturday indicated the pressures to which any moderate member might be subjected in his Strike Committee, in his home port, and, let us not underrate this, in the treatment he might receive when he returned to his ship. That article referred to the fact that at many of these meetings, they will recognise "men who are not in the N.U.S., but are members of other Unions ..." that "their aim - and an

temperature of meetings running high; to enflame the legitimate grievances of seamen by intervening with abrasive slogans shouted at appropriate moments." All of us who represent the great sea ports of this country know how true this is. I would commend to Honourable Members all the evidence produced in that article, the telephone calls to branches, the organisation of brutal slogans, placards, interjections, the implications and suggestions - whether on the Executive - and this certainly took place - or at Strike Committees or at any other level that anyone who advocated negotiations up to a few days ago was a traitor to the men who elected, and a marked man in the next election; we know this is true. The members of this Union are not in the main armchair warriors in the industrial struggle. They are sea-going mariners. And there is no more tightly knit community than a ship; from a ship there is no escape; no happier hunting ground for the sea lawyers who could make the life of any man a misery who had been marked out as a black-leg even for exercising his democratic duties on an elected body, than a merchant ship on the high seas.

Time and again
At every point in this dispute the Party's objectives have very rapidly become the policy of the Executive. This is particularly true in relation to the determination of the Party to spread the strike. This was, it is true, the policy of the N.U.S: it was not the policy of the T.U.C. or of any of the other Unions affiliated to the T.U.C. When the State of Emergency was declared, the Morning Star, whose well-informed articles I do not consider derive from any process of a priori reasoning on the part of its editorial staff declared "no self-respecting Trade-

Unionist will work in co-operation with the Army and Navy" and "every Trade Unionist must rise in solidarity in support of the seamen". This was a clear invitation to extend the dispute and obviously the most likely area of extension was the Docks. This was in fact the policy pursued by Mr. Ramelson and his colleagues: it was not the policy of Mr. Hogarth who, though his presence at the dock meeting had been announced, knew that in accordance with the usual rules with which

the T.U.C. would be concerned

the T.U.C. would be concerned, it would be utterly wrong for him to appeal to the members of another Union except with the approval of the Executive Committee of that Union. The policy was however, conducted by Mr. Ramelson, Mr. Goodwin, and a number of other influential Communists whose influence extended to Unions ~~far~~ beyond the ^{NUS} Seamen. The most prominent of these was Mr. Harry Watson, the President of the Lightermen's Union, and such well known figures as Mr. Jack Dash and Mr. Danny Lyons who are both members of the Unofficial Liaison Committee in the London Docks, together with Mr. Gordon Norris and Mr. Jack Coward representing the seamen.

I have referred to Mr. Dash who, as his numerous speeches in the docks indicated, ^{took a more moderate line because his} was torn between his loyalty to the Party and his loyalty to his Union who ^{is} ~~was~~ were resisting all pressures to take the Communist line.

Honourable Members will have followed with interest the course of events in the week in which the Pearson Report came out. ^{All the evidence suggests} ~~I~~ believe that the N.U.S. Executive's rejection of the interim report was a fait accompli before the Executive had even seen the text of the Report. Inaccurate accounts of what the Court of Inquiry was likely to recommend were circulating on the night of Tuesday, June 7 and were almost certainly known to some of those I have mentioned. On the Wednesday morning the Executive received the text of the Report and rejected it, with their then customary unanimity and with ^{the most profusion} very little discussion or regard to the broader issues raised by that Report. 7

From then on the emphasis was on widening the strike. On June 13 a meeting of about 1,500 dockers, chaired by Mr. Jack Coward, was held in the London Docks and was addressed by Mr. Watson, Mr. Norris and Mr. Dash, the first two of these with great enthusiasm and the third with lesser enthusiasm commending a resolution to black all British ships in the London docks. But a fourth speaker, ^(Mr Mundy) the official representative of the Transport and General Workers' Union, took the opposite line. In the event the resolution was carried and two hours of confusion in London's docks followed, while the dockers sought advice from those able and competent to give that advice. And because of the resolute advice given by Mr. Mundy, on behalf of the Transport and General Workers' Union, the very dockers who had passed the resolution were by 12 o'clock hard at work on the ships. This was a turning point in the history of the strike. But another turning point was the rejection by the International Transport Federation, whose British representatives include all Britain's transport unions, the railway unions, the T. and G., the Merchant Navy Officers' Association as well as the N.U.S., of the N.U.S. request that they call on foreign seamen's unions to take corresponding action to prevent the movement to Britain of foreign owned ships.

∟The last hope of those who sought to extend the strike, to extend the damage to Britain's economy, let alone to bring the nation and the Government to a state of surrender, was the meeting two days ago of the ^{Management Com. of the} International Transport Federation where once again the

Once June 13 had passed, the emphasis shifted to the talks which my Rt. Hon. Friend and I had with the Unions and with the employers. -I believe the Union made a great mistake particularly in terms of their appeal to the nation, in rejecting the Report of the Court of Inquiry. I think pretty quickly after that rejection the extent of this mistake was realised, and not only in Union circles. I believe that there was a wide-spread recognition that this strike had reached the point of diminishing returns, not only in terms of the support of the rank and file but in terms of what it was likely to achieve with each succeeding week of unemployment and hardship for N.U.S. members.

The purpose of my Rt. Hon. Friend and I was to ^{meet their} give ~~them~~ ^{concern about their} that little extra achievement - at no additional cost beyond what was contemplated by the Court of Inquiry, and at no additional cost in terms of a national incomes and prices policy. But political rather than industrial counsels won the day. What my Rt. Hon. Friend and I sought to achieve, what we outlined in our appeal to the Executive, again met the most brusque of rejections.

[This may have been connected with the intense and active canvassing of a substantial number of Council members on the night of Thursday, June 16. However that may be, that rejection which followed the most persuasive table banging by the leading militants on the Executive Council, was decisive and as I have said, unanimous.]

These are the circumstances in which I reported to the House on June 20. There were those who thought that when I spoke frankly to the House about some of the influences operating on the Union, I would set up resistances which might prolong the strike. I can understand this feeling which was expressed in this House, the danger that it might be a consequence of my action was naturally one of the possible consequences I had to weigh most anxiously. I believe that the fact that for the first time last Friday, the moderate members of the Executive took their courage into their hands and voted against the strongly-pressed advice of their most militant colleagues, suggested that I was not ill advised. There was good reason to think, and I am not saying this without good reason, that a large proportion of the Executive, almost certainly a majority, on the previous Friday, if they had voted according to their considered opinions, would have voted for a return to work or at least a return to negotiation on the basis of what my Rt. Hon. Friend and I had said to them. I believe that one result of what I said last Monday is that the moderates ^{become} have/articulate, and that in so doing they represent the views of the majority of the rank and file members of the union, particularly those who have - and I pay every tribute to them - suffered great hardships for the cause in which they believe.

I know, Mr. Speaker, there will be those who will say that it is not the duty of the Government or of

be concerned with such matters, that our duty is to remain aloof. Having regard to the ^{great} extreme economic dangers to this nation, in the determined battle we are fighting, for economic solvency, I feel that it was my duty ~~knowing what I knew~~, to take this action.

They are wrong, who believe that what I did then or what I have done today, is an attack on militant trade unionism. Having regard to the history of this union, and to the grievances which I, and I believe so many Honourable Members, consider are so deeply felt, by seamen in every port of Britain, I could not conscientiously ~~deny the need for union to form the backbone of the industry as they judge right~~ oppose militancy in this union. It is an inevitable reaction from the Union's past, but we have the right to ask that militancy should depend upon the representation of the democratic views of the Union's members, and should not be artificially exploited ^{by} ~~from~~ those whose motives, while partly directed to the seamen's interests, are also inspired by a desire to secure power within the Union, and at the same time, more widely, to destroy a policy, which is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, on prices and incomes and which this House will shortly be asked to ratify. Mr. Hogarth ~~is reported as having~~ ^{said} ~~told the General Council of the T.U.C.~~ that this dispute is not fundamentally about hours or pay but about a struggle for power within the Union. ~~He was more than~~ ~~frank.~~ It is in fact about both. But in so far as this strike has been artificially prolonged because of this power struggle, I believe it was my duty to speak out.

After this strike is over, no doubt many Honourable Members will be considering its lessons in terms of the general policy so far as the nation on the one hand and the rights of trade unionism on the other are concerned. I know that Honourable Gentlemen opposite ~~sincerely~~ hold views about the way in which these matters can be regulated and in particular about the way in which these problems can be dealt with by simple changes in the Law. As I have already told the House, after my experience of most intimate and detailed discussions with 48 men representing as they did 65,000 members who consider themselves pushed almost beyond the bounds of endurance, I feel that in this case we are dealing not with a simple legalistic matter, but with issues going to the very frontiers of human relations. My Rt. Hon. Friend, in one of the controversies which arose on these issues, said that industrial relations are human relations. I believe he was right, and to be fair, I believe he was quoting some words of the Right Honourable Gentleman when he was Leader of the Opposition. ~~The Right Honourable Gentleman was right.~~ This is not the moment to anticipate the findings of the Royal Commission which will be concerned with legal and constitutional matters but also with a problem of human relations. And they will be wrong who seek from this unique chapter in the history of industrial relations in this country to proceed to over-simplify and draw ^{hasty} conclusions, however plausible they might appear. Rather should they be left to the combined wisdom of the Members of the Royal Commission on which ultimately this House, ^{indeed the country,} and ~~this House~~ alone, will pronounce the final verdict.

Before I sit down I must refer to one issue about the responsibilities of this House and of any Member of this House, on whatever side he may sit, and be he Minister or Backbencher. Last Saturday, the Executive Council of the Seamen's Union indicated their regret about the Statement I made last week. ~~I cannot believe that what I have said today will be any more acceptable to them.~~ They have invited me to make public Statements outside on the lines of what I said in the House last week, ~~and presumably about what I have said today.~~ I have not attacked their integrity as I have said. I certainly do not shrink from any confrontation with them about the issues I have raised. Last week I indicated quite clearly to them that I was ready to meet them and discuss what I ^{had} said ~~last week.~~ ~~This equally applies to what I have said today.~~

But they have raised the question of Parliamentary privilege. There is no privilege adhering to individual Members of this House. It is the privilege of the House as a whole. It is time-honoured and it is essential to the rights of this House. This House can be a guardian of the public interest only to the extent that any Honourable Member can feel able to use the privilege this House traditionally has, and in the exercise of that privilege to raise any matter affecting the public interest. This applies to every Member of the House in whatever part of the chamber he may sit. Some of the classical battles for freedom in this House have derived from a judicious use of this privilege, for every Member who invokes it has a

responsibility, recognising that he has the power to inflict damage on any individual or group of individuals by the words he uses, secure as he is from the normal process of Law. No Honourable Member would lightly invoke that privilege but his first duty must be to the public interest. There will always be those who say that no Honourable Member should invoke any form of words in this Chamber that he is not prepared to use outside. *But this is*

~~As I have said I am prepared to justify the words I have used in direct confrontation with the Seamen's Executive or any group of that Executive.~~ I am not prepared to be silenced or to let any other Honourable Member be silenced in any proceeding which ~~was~~ ^{they feel right} considered ~~to be~~ in the public interest by the fact that the repetition of words used here and outside might lead to legal processes which would have the effect for a year or perhaps two of preventing any comment either by that Member, or by the Press, or even by the House itself of discussing these vitally important issues. Because, Mr. Speaker, under the rules which it is your duty to enforce, once a legal process is under way, not only would all public discussion be stifled, but because the issue would be sub judice, discussions even in this House would be stifled. I believe that the issues that have been raised by the pressure upon this Union, by outside influences, is a matter of vitally national interest and as I have said, it was only after the most anxious consideration that I felt it right to put these before the House. But this House is the custodian not only of personal liberties but ^{of the wider national interest} ~~in the~~ ^{but that}

~~national~~ ^{main interest} interest would be silenced if any one of us, whatever our individual responsibilities to this House, felt we were not free to raise matters of great national import except under conditions which had allowed those in our view who are working against the higher interests of the nation, to stifle public and Parliamentary discussion.

None of us would lightly invoke the powers that we as Members enjoy, least of all one who holds the responsibility that I hold. But I have felt, and I hope what I have said today will justify this thought, that as Members of this House, we have not only rights, we have also duties.

In asking the House to approve this Address and Reply, and approve the Regulations, I hope we will all feel that we are debating not only necessary and from the point of view of all of us, inevitably, in a personal sense, painful consequences of this dispute, that we are ready to learn the lessons, and that we are ready to assert the duties as well as the rights for the privilege of membership of this House. It is only in that spirit that I have addressed the House in the terms I have, after deep thought, chosen to adopt this afternoon.

