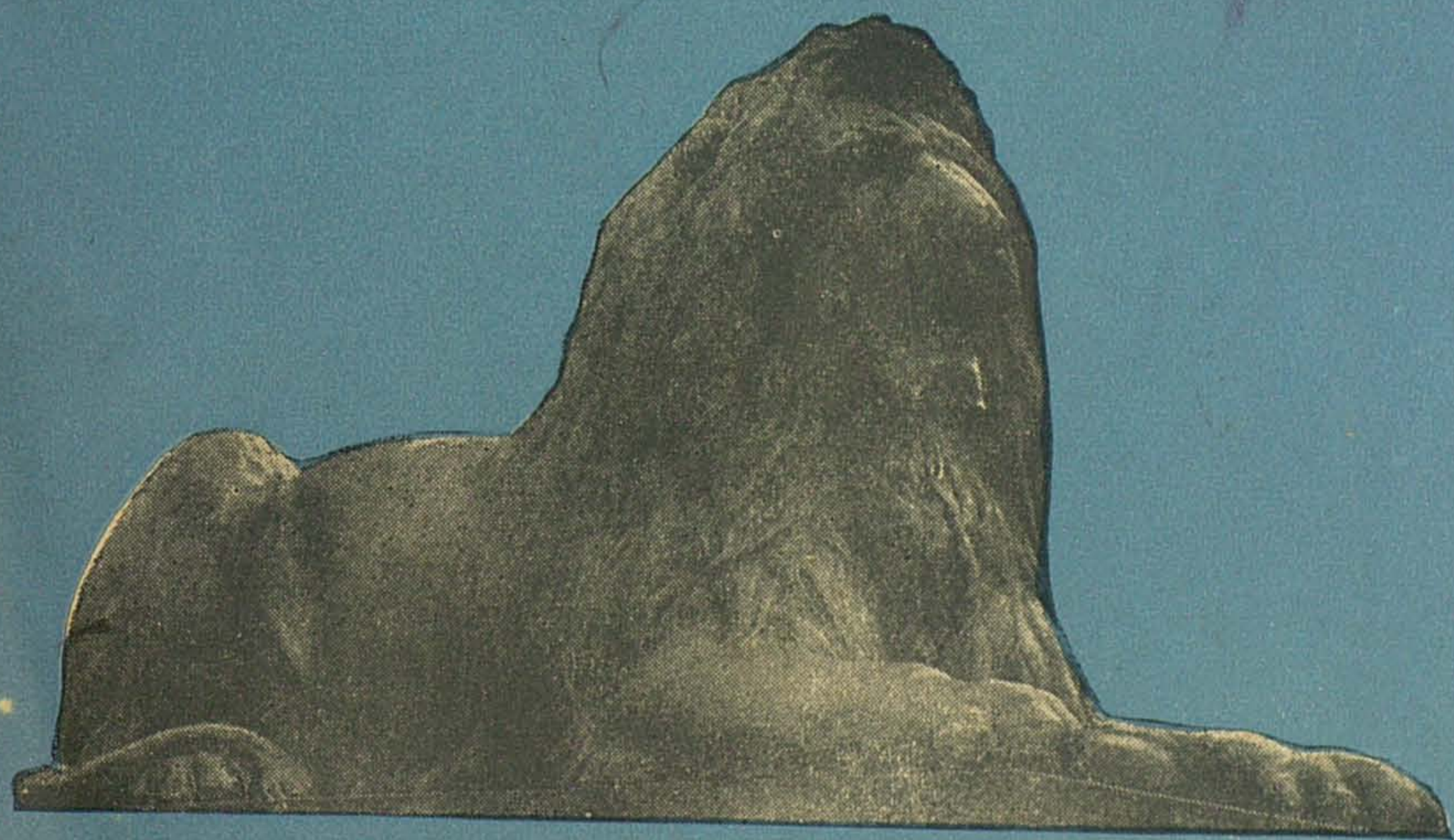


BRITAIN
Strong and
Free



A Statement of Conservative & Unionist Policy

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A STATEMENT OF CONSERVATIVE
AND UNIONIST POLICY

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BRITAIN Strong and Free

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This statement of Conservative and Unionist Policy is published now in order to help the electors to make up their minds on the vital issues of the day. Our views are here set out in more detail than is possible in an Election Manifesto or in the exchanges which election activity normally permits.

I hope that this book will help our candidates, speakers and workers during the course of the Election.

Herbert S. Churchill

Britain—Strong and Free

SIX YEARS AGO Britain stood high in fame and greatness. The British Armies, drawn from these islands and from all the lands of the Empire and Commonwealth, were victorious in Europe and the Middle East, in North Africa and Burma. On the sea and in the air we had won new glory. Our people had come through the long years of danger and sacrifice with courage and had emerged in triumph.

Trials of strength and spirit still lay ahead. War was over ; lasting peace, security and prosperity were still to be won. We had lost much, in human lives and in material wealth. But we had high hopes for the future.

The opportunities as well as the difficulties of our case had been foreseen by Mr. Churchill's Government. Careful plans had been made for demobilisation and for the rapid change-over to peace production upon which our livelihood was to depend. A policy for full employment had been agreed between the Parties and made known. Programmes and methods for building new homes had been prepared. Far-reaching legislation had been passed for the better education of our children and for the payment of family allowances. The creation of a national health service and the extension of social insurance had been planned.

If our treasure was low, our reputation was high. We had fought not only for our own freedom but for the freedom of mankind. We had said in a grave hour that we should go on alone, and to the end ; we had kept our word, and at the end all had come right. The name of Britain was honoured and respected throughout the world. Our leadership had been wise and strong. We were united.

THE SOCIALIST RECORD

Under Socialism, we have fallen far from those heights of achievement and expectation. How many of the hopes of 1945 remain unfulfilled, how many opportunities have been missed, how many of our plans misshapen and mismanaged ! The spirit

of endeavour has been hobbled by control for control's sake. Resources have been squandered on carelessly considered schemes and wasteful administration. Unity has been destroyed by words and deeds of partisan malice. Our place of leadership and trust among the nations has been weakly cast away. During these years, both our influence for good in the world and the long-term security of our social and economic life at home have been seriously prejudiced.

Socialists proclaimed that only they could speak to Russia in friendship. Instead, the understanding that there was in war-time has gone long ago, and an Iron Curtain now divides East from West. Socialists boasted that Socialism was not narrowly nationalistic. In fact, it has been the initiative of Mr. Churchill and his colleagues that alone has preserved for the British people some leadership in European and world affairs. Socialists sneered and still sneer at what they call "Imperialism", and think it no discredit that in their term of office countries have left the Empire for the first time since the eighteenth century. Yet they are aggrieved and puzzled that Albania, Persia and Egypt and States in South America should treat British rights with contempt.

They have sought to put the whole blame for rising prices at home upon the Korean war. In fact, the £ has bought less and less each year since 1945, and much of this loss in value has been due to Socialist blundering. They have allowed us to drift from one economic crisis to another. They have clung obstinately to clumsy and wasteful methods of State trading. Nationalisation, their cure-all, has proved a costly failure. Socialists have spread the wicked lie that Conservatives want to cut the social services. They have done this to conceal the effect of their own policy which has been to cut the value of every social service payment, including pensions, as money buys less and less.

SOCIALISM HAS FAILED THE PEOPLE

Socialists hate criticism. In their own eyes they can do no wrong. Their mistakes and follies are always somebody else's fault. If only wars left no problems, if only other countries were more reasonable, if only the weather had been better, if only the Press were more understanding, if only the Opposition would stop opposing them—then everything would be all right. This has gone on for six years.

The Socialists have no cause to complain. On the contrary, the British people have never given a government a fairer chance.

The tolerance and good temper of the nation through all these bleak years have been beyond praise. We have given the State fivepence out of every shilling we have earned. We have paid more and more for what we need until we now find that the money "goes nowhere". Our young people, wanting homes of their own, have watched their hopes fade as the waiting lists grow. Our housewives have gone on bravely trying to feed families on two ounces of this or ten pennyworth of that. We have laughed off the slate in the coal bin, the gas that fails while the Sunday dinner is cooking, and the electricity that is cut at the most awkward moment.

Britain has deserved better than this.

THE CONSERVATIVE PURPOSE

In the following pages are set out the objects of the Conservative Party, the kind of society we seek to build and the priorities which we shall establish when returned to power.

First we must be able to defend our *life*. National survival is the condition of every other boon. Our paramount need is to carry out an effective defence programme to enable Britain both to defend herself and to play her full part in collective arrangements to preserve the free world. The Socialists have muddled and mismanaged rearmament, discouraged hopes of European unity, allowed rifts to develop between the United States and Britain, and failed to maintain our prestige and influence as a great nation.

Secondly, we must safeguard our traditional *way of life*. Conservatives believe in a society in which men and women from every section of the community and in every calling have a real chance of personal achievement. We do not believe in an egalitarian society centrally planned, nor in an economy dominated by State monopolies or private combines. Socialists have shown again and again their belief in an all-powerful central planning and organising authority governed by countless Rules and Regulations and ordering how the simplest of actions are to be carried out by the individual. Conservatives on the other hand hold that while the Government should guide, and establish general objectives and priorities, it should be the servant and not the master of the people. A worthwhile society cannot be established by Acts of Parliament and Government planning. Adequate rewards for skill and enterprise and for the creation of wealth, belief that

saving and investment are worthwhile, diffusion of property, home ownership, the rule of law, the independence of the professions, the strength of the family, personal responsibility and the rights of the individual—these are the true foundations of a free society.

Thirdly, we wish to maintain and improve our *standards of life* and to maintain full employment. We must not only survive and live in freedom, but make life more worth living by providing, so far as lies within human power, steadily rising standards of life for all sections of the community. The aim and consequence of Conservative policy will be to increase the productivity of our industry and agriculture. Therein lies the real hope for the future. Nevertheless, to carry out the rearmament programme necessary for survival, sacrifices by all are inevitable. Until our security is assured, these sacrifices must be made and hopes of higher standards postponed. Anyone who says otherwise to win votes is deceiving the people. But, given sacrifices and hard work, the ultimate improvement which is our firm objective will be within our power.

Peace through Strength

AFTER THE WAR it was our earnest hope that all men in all lands might make their way forward together to better days and happier lives. The fighting qualities of the Russian people had won our deep admiration, and we hoped for their lasting friendship. That hope has been frustrated, our friendship spurned. To-day over a wide expanse of Europe and Asia we are confronted with the spread of Communism by subversion or attack. Millions of men and women dwell again in the shadow of the police state. Millions more face aggression.

Communism is a hateful creed. It crushes independence. It perverts free thought. It fears and attacks religion. It destroys family life. It rejects every moral and humane principle.

Rightly led, the British people can withstand the challenge of this alien doctrine. Only in weakness does Communism find its temptation and its opportunity. It leaves strength alone. Britain must, therefore, speak from strength. She must be strong in arms. She must also be strong in faith and spirit.

The Socialist Government have frequently tried to cover up their own mistakes and gain political advantage by accusing the Conservatives of being warmongers. They are lying and they know they are lying. No man in his right mind could wish to plunge the world again into the horrors of war. Conservatives passionately desire peace. But peace can come only from strong defences and a firm foreign policy. The overriding purpose of the rearmament programme is, while avoiding provocation, to build up a position of strength from which to negotiate with the leaders of Soviet Russia. This is the true way to peace.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Britain has world-wide defence commitments. If we are strong and united we shall not lack allies in meeting them.

We shall do our best to make the United Nations an effective instrument of the rule of law. We fully support the intervention of United Nations' forces in Korea and we still hope that a just and honourable peace may bring an end to the present hostilities.

But in a world threatened by Soviet imperialism, the surest hope for peace must lie in the close association of the British Empire and Commonwealth and the United States of America. The aim of Soviet Russia is to divide us. Those in either country who distort and magnify our differences are playing the Communist game. Frequent contacts between those responsible for policy may resolve many difficulties and prevent more. In addition we wish to establish an organisation on the general lines of the wartime Combined Chiefs of Staff, designed to achieve better and speedier co-operation. Given the necessary political direction, this organisation would be able to review world strategy as a whole and weigh the conflicting claims upon limited resources of one area against another.

Under the Atlantic Pact, which is the focus of Western plans for effective security, we shall make a full contribution of arms and men. Simple and flexible methods of co-ordination must be established so that productive capacity and the allocation of raw materials shall match the contribution expected from each nation. Western Europe remains the main bastion of world peace. Defence in depth in Western Europe is essential to the defence of Britain. No one who experienced the flying bomb attacks on Southern England will doubt that. So long as a threat of invasion of Western Europe continues, that threat must be met by organising a European force containing contingents from all the countries to be defended.

The Council of Europe must be able to perform its proper function in bringing the Western peoples closer together. In this context we welcome the initiative displayed by France in economic collaboration with Germany.

We cannot accept as permanent the loss of political freedom imposed by force upon the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These peoples must be given the hope that their rightful place awaits them among the free nations.

The voice of Britain has been heard too little, whether in Europe, the Middle East or the Pacific area. Chances of giving a lead or stabilising a situation, whether by effective propaganda or strong policy, have been lost. We have forsaken our traditional rôle of restoring confidence by our words and of defending British interests by our actions. While allowance must be made for the tide of nationalism which is sweeping the countries of the Middle East, the way in which British rights have been flouted, notably by Egypt and Persia, is a direct consequence of this Government's

weak and vacillating foreign policy. Throughout the Persian oil crisis we have persistently counselled moderation and the closest possible working with the United States, but we insist that there should be no surrender of our legitimate interests and no infringement of the ruling of the International Court of Justice.

The defence and stability of the Middle East depend primarily upon Britain standing firm in close alliance with the United States and creating with Greece, Turkey and other Middle Eastern States an effective defence organisation. Nothing could be more fatal to the prospects of such an arrangement, or more likely to invite Communist aggression in the Middle East, than a continued decline in British prestige.

In the Far East, similar arrangements to those already existing in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation should be made. But as well as providing for the needs of defence, we of the British Commonwealth must play our part, in close co-operation with our allies, in developing the economic resources and raising the standards of life of our friends in Asia. Upon this depends to a large extent the political stability of these vast areas. We therefore welcome and support the initiative of the Australian Government in launching the Colombo plan.

In short, we believe that peace can be preserved by a firm foreign policy based on sufficient strength and capable of inducing in others a respect for our position as a major world power.

DEFENCE

Our defence programme has been handled with ineptitude and indecision. There are at present 827,000 men and women in the three Services. The number of fighting formations provided is far below that which we should expect from such numbers. We believe that after close scrutiny and the pruning of non-essential administrative units our fighting strength could be increased.

In the Army and Air Force there is a marked deficiency of young regular officers, senior N.C.O.'s and technicians. The gradual decline in the number of long-service regulars has resulted in excessive dilution and in the wasteful expedient of sending National Service men to the Middle and Far East.

Present manpower difficulties are due to the indecision and lack of foresight of the Socialists. National Service, originally introduced for eighteen months, was changed to a year, changed back to eighteen months, and then put up to two years. Such

rapid and unpredictable changes made planning in the Service Ministries impossible.

Despite repeated promptings from the Opposition, the Government delayed any realistic increases of pay until far too late. Had earlier steps been taken, many valuable and skilled regulars, who drifted out of the Forces, might have stayed on.

Conservatives pressed for the recent pension increases and believe that much can still be done to help recruiting by adjusting conditions of service, improving accommodation and providing better educational facilities for Service families. Much more attention must be paid to county and local connections. The traditions of our regiments must be fostered and local pride in territorial units strengthened.

There are urgent and serious shortages of essential equipment, particularly of jet aircraft, transport planes and tanks. Machine tools and even weapons have been sold to foreign countries, and have now been replaced, with delay and at far higher cost. Jet engines were even sold to Soviet Russia.

The over-burdened organisation of the Ministry of Supply and the reckless nationalisation of the steel industry aggravate our difficulties. Nearly £5,000 million are now to be spent on rearmament in three years. To complete such a programme effectively and economically will demand new methods of administration and more skilled judgment in allocating resources and using industrial capacity. If we are to avoid waste and dislocation, experienced and qualified men must be brought in to supervise and direct the programme.

Part-time volunteers in home defence have received no encouragement, and far too little information, from the Socialist Government. Conservatives would begin by establishing a Home Guard cadre. We should nominate battalion and company commanders and distribute weapons to local depots. Drive and leadership must be imparted to civil defence preparations, and local authorities must know where they stand on shelter policy and other important matters.

EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH

To retain and develop the great and unique brotherhood of the British Empire and Commonwealth is a first task of British statesmanship. The Conservative Party, by long tradition and

settled belief, is the Party of the Empire. We are proud of its past. We see it as the surest hope of our own day. We proclaim our abiding faith in its destiny. We shall strive to promote its unity, its strength and its progress.

UNITY

Much of the machinery for joint consultation and action needs to be repaired or renewed. Frequent meetings of chief Ministers from the countries of the Commonwealth are essential especially since India, Pakistan and Ceylon have now become members of the Commonwealth. Their approach to some problems will be distinctive. We must develop the habit of discussing our problems together as partners. To this end a permanent civil liaison staff may be required.

New ways of informing public opinion at home and overseas must be sought. The story of the Empire should figure more prominently in the teaching in our schools. We want to see closer social and cultural contacts between teachers, scientists, writers and students. Our unity must be a unity of peoples and not only of leaders.

STRENGTH

We should discuss with our partners in the Commonwealth better methods of military co-operation, including the establishment of an advisory Commonwealth Defence Council, a Combined Staff, and the standardisation of equipment, organisation and training. More efficient communications, including air services, are vital to the Empire. We must combine in ensuring the resolute maintenance and protection of our strategic key points. We welcome the willingness of the Colonies to assume a larger share of responsibility for defence and we believe that greater numbers of their peoples should be given the opportunity of joining the Forces.

PROGRESS

Progress in developing the rich and varied resources of the Empire and Commonwealth can bring increasing prosperity and plenty to all its peoples and to all its friends. Private and public capital have each a part to play in this great task. British firms should be encouraged and helped to set up factories, assembly plants or branch establishments in Empire countries, and we should welcome American investment to share in the task. Surveys

of resources need to be pressed forward and research into the production and use of raw materials supported.

We should encourage emigration from the United Kingdom to the Commonwealth, provided that the flow is steady and that those who go represent a fair cross-section of our population in age and occupation.

We should aim at the greatest possible volume of trade within the Empire and Commonwealth. Making consumer and capital goods available in the greatest possible quantities to the Colonies in exchange for food and raw materials would in many cases be as valuable as direct dollar sales. We shall retain Imperial Preference and uphold the right to grant and receive such preferences as are mutually agreed with Empire countries. The Empire producer will have a place in the home market second only to the home producer.

In order to reach and pursue an agreed policy on all these matters—investment, research, migration and trade—it is our intention to call, as a matter of urgency, an Empire Economic Conference including representatives from the Colonies. The standard of living of the Colonial peoples depends upon far-sighted schemes of food production and development of natural resources.

But material well-being is not enough. The Colonies are already feeling their way towards greater political independence. There is a danger that these expressions of Colonial nationalism may be attracted by specious offers of Communist sympathy and support. We must counter the flood of Communist promises and propaganda by convincing the Colonial peoples that true progress rests upon the principles of individual freedom, democracy and the rule of law. It will be our purpose to guide them, in accordance with the desires and conditions of each Colony, along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire.

Strength through Enterprise

ALL HOPES FOR security and social progress depend upon our economic strength. As we have stated, rearmament cannot be achieved without still harder work and sacrifice by every man and woman. There are no easy times ahead for anyone. Any political party or pressure group which says otherwise is either fooling itself or trying to fool the people.

Conservatives do not underestimate the difficulties. Britain is failing to pay her way in world trade. There is serious danger of a repetition of the crisis of 1949. The devaluation of British money to which the Socialist Government were then forced to resort has intensified the already painful increases in prices, which are not yet over. The Government are now trying to finance rearmament by inflation. In other words, by allowing prices to rise they seek to pay for rearmament out of the increased Government revenue that is the result of those rising prices. Inflation also involves the unobserved removal by the Government of an important part of the wealth of all its citizens. This is the worst expedient yet. Many will recall the misery caused in the past by inflation in other countries. Only the profiteers and the speculators flourish. The pensioners, the disabled and the sick, and all those living on their savings or small fixed incomes suffer most. Inflation is a weapon of Communism. Lenin himself once said that the best way to procure a revolution is to debauch a nation's currency.

SOCIALIST PROPOSALS

Can the Socialists be trusted to cure the ills which they themselves have done so much to create? They offer not remedies but political gestures. Their appeal throughout is to class prejudice. They imply that rearmament can be paid for by more taxation of unearned incomes. The extra yield to the revenue if the state took every penny of net personal income—whether earned or unearned—over £2,000 a year would be barely 4 per cent of the defence costs for this year. So this suggestion is futile and designed merely to inflame class feeling.

The Socialists wish to restore many price controls. Whatever the case may be for any particular control, this policy is in general merely dealing with the symptoms and not the causes of inflation. It is like trying to stop the kettle boiling by holding down the lid instead of turning off the gas. Inflationary pressure is diverted from one part of the economy to another in which prices continue to rise. Administrative expenses mount. Price controls have up to now failed to stop a steady increase in prices.

Socialists propose to limit dividends upon ordinary shares. This cannot halt inflation. It is admitted that its effect upon prices will be negligible and many suspect that it is a device to keep down wages. It penalises those who responded to appeals for restraint in the past. It discourages efficiency in production and it makes more difficult the raising of venture capital upon which industrial development and full employment so much depend. The excuse that it is necessary for psychological reasons is but the measure of Socialist false teaching about profits and dividends.

Finally, Socialists advocate more and more state trading which has already cost the taxpayers many millions of pounds and meant for consumers shortages of essential commodities.

In brief, the Socialist remedy is further and heavier doses of medicines which have been proved to aggravate and not cure the disease.

THE REMEDIES

Conservatives are prepared to attack the disease itself and not just its symptoms. Where Socialists propose to freeze, to control, to tax, and to mutilate, Conservatives propose to create wealth and to expand and liberate the efforts of the community.

Production must be increased and the costs of production lowered. Confidence in the £ at home and abroad must be restored. Waste and extravagance in Government spending must be eliminated. Nationalisation must be halted and public and private monopoly controlled. More efficient means of obtaining our raw materials and our food must be used. Only thus can we hope to control the cost of living, ensure full employment, and give hope of rising standards.

COST OF LIVING

Whatever the national importance of other issues it is no exaggeration to say that the rising cost of living is the main day-to-day

worry of ordinary men and women. A Government will be judged according to the effect of its programme upon rising costs and prices. We say at once that there is no single step that will of itself substantially reduce the cost of living. But each of the remedies proposed above is an essential part of a complete pattern. Greater production will mean more goods. Cheaper production will mean cheaper goods. Reductions in Government expenditure will make lower taxation more possible. The re-organisation of the nationalised industries should mean goods and services available in greater quantities at lower cost. The reduction of state trading will mean cheaper and better food and raw materials from overseas. The halting of inflation will check rising prices.

All these things will be achieved only by immense efforts and after some time but, carried into effect together, they will enable us to control and then, as we are determined, to reduce the cost of living for all.

PRODUCTION AND FULL EMPLOYMENT

The object is to produce more goods and services more quickly and more cheaply so as to ensure maximum production and the fullest possible employment. Many different methods must be applied. Again, there is no single solution to the problem. A fundamentally different approach and a new atmosphere is required. There are many detailed steps which should be taken. Above all the man who works hard must get the benefit of that work and be seen to do better than the man who does not give his best. These are primarily tasks for industrial leadership. But the Government can either help or hinder their achievement. Socialist policy has consistently hindered.

A NEW ATMOSPHERE

Greater and cheaper production demands a new atmosphere. Free enterprise should no longer be suspect and abused but should be encouraged. A business which produces what consumers want, markets it in an attractive manner, and renders good service to the consumer, and does all those things at a profit, should be regarded as an asset to the community. Controls should not exceed in number or in range the demands of the present crisis. They should hamper initiative as little as possible and be reduced as quickly as possible. We shall take care that the small individual

trader and manufacturer is not placed at a disadvantage with his rivals in taxation, in allocation of materials, or in the demands that complicated regulations and directives make upon his time and energies. The whole climate of opinion towards enterprise and hard work must be changed.

A PARTNERSHIP IN EFFICIENCY

There are many ways in which industry can become more efficient—more horse-power behind each worker ; the quality and quick delivery of raw materials ; better use of machinery ; an all-pervading spirit of competition stimulating managements, technical staffs and workers alike in rooting out inefficiency ; incentives both financial and non-financial ; a high level of research both by individual firms and by scientific bodies ; the general interchange of technical knowledge and, above all, continuous hard work by each individual.

The idea of industry as a battlefield of the class war is false and disastrous. Directors, managers, workpeople and shareholders are all partners in every economic enterprise. The question is not how much one side can win from another side, but how the total product can be increased so that the share of all these partners is larger. No one has a bigger interest in the profitability of industry than the wage earner. It is only a profitable business which, whether large or small, can provide high wages and security of employment. When profits were down unemployment was rife and wages low.

We believe that in normal times there should be the freest competition. Good wages and profits fairly earned are a public gain, both to the nation and to all in trade and industry.

Government must help by a taxation policy directed to reward extra initiative, efficiency and ability and to assist the necessary provision of new capital.

A Conservative Government will recast the existing system of taxation on industrial and commercial profits. Relief will be given where profits are ploughed back and used for renewal of plant and equipment. These reforms are essential for the restoration of our economy and greater prosperity.

But we are now confronted with a further problem. To spend nearly £5,000 million in three years on the rearmament programme must distort the ordinary working of supply and demand. It will bring fortuitous advantages to some firms, in orders, in the

allocation of raw materials and in other ways. Therefore we shall introduce, for this emergency period only, a special contribution in the nature of an Excess Profits Tax, to ensure that the burden of rearmament is fairly and evenly spread.

In framing the details of our plan, we shall be guided by past experience and by study of the American system.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Production is essentially a human problem. From the days of Shaftesbury and Disraeli, Conservatives have insisted that the age of machinery must not become the age of mechanical men. We assert the right of all to the conditions in which they can give of their best. There must be a sense of security. The status of every employee as an individual must be fully recognised. Opportunity must be provided for all to rise according to their ability, effort and character. More chance must be given for new businesses to be set up. There must be adequate incentives at all levels. The skilled worker should earn a just reward.

We set out in 1947 in the Workers' Charter a code of practice embodying some of these rights. When we have discussed them with the Trade Unions and employers we intend to bring our general proposals before Parliament for debate and approval. Then we shall give notice that, on the analogy of the Fair Wages Clause, public contracts will be given only to firms adopting certain standards contained in the Charter. We shall secure their adoption in Government undertakings and in the nationalised industries. Where practicable the Charter will be applied to agriculture.

We reaffirm the statement on Equal Pay made in our Election Manifesto of 1950, *This is the Road*: "We hope that during the life of the next Parliament the country's financial position will improve sufficiently to enable us to proceed at an early date with the application in the Government service of the principle of equal pay for men and women for services of equal value."

TRADE UNIONS

Conservatives believe that free and independent Trade Unions are an essential part of our industrial system. We welcome the public endorsement by the Trade Union movement of the need for effort to increase production and productivity. We shall consult the leaders of the Trade Union movement on economic

matters and discuss with them fully, and sympathetically, any proposals we or they may have for action on labour problems.

We hold the strongest convictions on the iniquity of the imposition of the "closed shop" by central and local government. In general it is in the interests of the country and of the individual that men and women should join Trade Unions and be active Trade Union members. But it is not right for an employer either to coerce his employees into joining a Union or to seek to prevent them from so doing. The worker should be free to decide whether or not to join a Union and to choose which Union he should join. It is vital to the health of the Trade Union movement that Unions should continue to be free associations of free men and women.

We shall retain and strengthen the British practice under which wages and conditions are negotiated by representatives of employers and employed. While we deplore the loss and injury to the community caused by strikes, we have since the days of Disraeli regarded the right to strike as fundamental both to the free working of this system and to personal liberty, subject to the obligation to give notice in the case of certain services essential to the life of the community.

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES

Enterprise must not be frustrated and production limited by unnecessary restrictive practices, either of labour or of employers. Socialists denounce monopoly practices by private firms : this is indeed Satan rebuking sin. Action against undesirable restraints of trade is more likely to come from a government not committed to monopoly as are the Socialists with their creed of nationalisation.

Conservatives will strengthen the Monopolies Commission and speed up its work. We shall do what the Socialists are afraid to do—bring the nationalised industries within its power of review.

FINANCIAL POLICY

CONFIDENCE IN THE £

Without a stable currency, private and public finances are made insecure. With the £ buying less and less each week the housewife finds the domestic budget cannot be balanced. No trade or business can plan ahead. To take an example from agriculture,

the whole system of annual reviews of farm prices is vitiated if the farmers' costs jump up owing to a falling £ between the date the price is fixed and the date when the money is paid.

Not only does the increased cost of living become intolerable, but thrift is discouraged and penalised. What encouragement to saving is there when the purchasing power of a National Savings Certificate bought in 1946 is less to-day, even with accrued interest, than when it was bought ?

Similarly, unless the £ maintains its value in terms of foreign currencies, imports become more costly and foreign confidence in Britain progressively diminishes. Our position as the financial centre of the Sterling Area and a central market of world trade is threatened.

The remedies are clear. The return of a Conservative Government will of itself do much to restore overseas trust. Confidence at home and abroad will be attained by expanding production by the means set out above, by making obvious our intention as a nation to live within our income, by sound monetary policy and by good management of our national finances.

A SOUND MONETARY POLICY

The pumping of too much money into the nation's system through excessive credit has been an important factor in the fall in the purchasing power of the £. The currency has been inflated. If first needs are to be met first, wants which are not necessities must be limited. Borrowing can be restricted in a variety of ways including changes in the rate of interest. This all Parties in the Coalition Government affirmed in the White Paper on Employment Policy issued in 1944.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

As a nation we are paying nearly half of all we earn in some form of national or local tax. The Socialists talked once of "soaking the rich". Now their policy is to "soak everyone". If we are to avoid still higher taxation and hold out real hope of a substantial reduction when we have crested the wave of rearmament, Government spending must be cut down.

Every day we see much of our money frittered away in Government extravagance and mismanagement. Millions of pounds have been wasted on groundnuts that never grew and eggs that were never laid. The Socialists spent in one year enough on Government hostels to buy a pair of shoes for every child of school age

in the country. It has cost four times as much to train a fireman as it does to send a boy to a University. The millions wasted on the groundnut scheme could have paid for 25,000 local authority houses. The money wasted on converting railway engines from coal to oil and back again could have paid a quarter of the railway workers' last wage increase for a year.

There is overlapping between Government departments. Other official boards and agencies have grown up in profusion. The Government Information Services are too costly.

We know that we can save many millions. A Conservative Government will undertake as a matter of urgency a searching inquiry into all branches of administration and a thorough overhaul of State spending.

SUBSIDIES

The present way in which subsidies designed to peg the cost of living are paid is becoming more and more vulnerable to criticism. The Government is imposing taxes on one range of necessities in order to pay subsidies on others. Our economy is being faked and distorted. The subsidies help not only those who are in need but those who require no help at all. To reduce the price of bread for an old age pensioner may well be necessary, but to reduce it for a millionaire or a Cabinet Minister is a waste of public money. The subsidies, which were originally introduced on a comparatively modest scale, have been allowed to rise to alarming proportions.

In present circumstances, when we are facing severe financial and economic difficulties and while we are engaged in a full-scale attack on the cost of living, it would clearly not only be unwise but impossible to make any radical change. As we make some progress in our fight to reduce the cost of living, and as economic circumstances permit, we hope gradually to recast our social and fiscal policy upon simpler lines. We should like to simplify the immensely complicated system operating at present and substitute for it methods which supplement the personal incomes of those most hit by living costs. Two examples of such methods are family allowances and differential rates of taxation.

THE NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES

Nationalisation has only added to our difficulties. Even some Socialists now admit the need for "new thinking". Yet we

must remember that if they had obtained a majority of any size in 1950 we should now have been in the throes of nationalisation once again and many other industries such as sugar, cement, water and insurance, would have come into the grip of the State.

The main charge against Socialism is that it has put political and party doctrine in front of Britain's interests. That we shall never do. We have accordingly carried out a close examination of each of the nationalised industries to see how best and how soon we can enable them to operate with maximum efficiency.

Our first step will be to call a halt to any further nationalisation.

IRON AND STEEL

We shall repeal the Iron and Steel Act and return the industry to private enterprise. The new steel works at Margam are a monument to what private enterprise has done and can do for steel. A Board representative of Government, management, labour and consumers, if need be with new powers, will supervise prices and development in the industry.

TRANSPORT

Both public and private enterprise will be needed in transport. Publicly owned transport, will be reorganised into regional groups of economic size. Private road hauliers will be given an opportunity of coming back into the business and the crippling restriction of the 25-mile limit of operation on private lorries will be modified. Any publicly owned road transport will be subject to the control of licensing authorities on the same terms as private hauliers. The existence of some genuine competition will make it reasonable to give those in control of publicly owned transport greater freedom in charging and in other matters than would be tolerable in conditions of monopoly. The proposals for placing passenger transport services now run by local authorities and local companies in the hands of Regional Boards will be abandoned.

COAL

We shall not de-nationalise the coal industry. As the result of years of Conservative pressure the National Coal Board has been reconstituted in such a way that it can concentrate on questions of broad policy and general financial control. This is an important advance and it must be ensured that it extends to the whole headquarters organisation and not merely to the Board itself. We

favour further reorganisation by the re-grouping of the collieries into districts of manageable size. District Boards, while conforming to national standards and guaranteeing the national minimum wage for the industry, would be free from day-to-day interference from functional officials higher up. These Boards would have the necessary autonomy to inspire local enthusiasm and local loyalties.

OTHER INDUSTRIES

In gas and electricity, as in other nationalised industries, excessive centralisation has fettered local initiative and autonomy and has caused unnecessary delay, and duplication of staff and expenditure. The former system of a Central Electricity Board and Electricity Commissioners should be restored and immediate consideration should be given to a scheme for decentralising control of generation. In both gas and electricity municipalities and private enterprise should have the opportunity to put forward their claim to re-enter the field.

For civil aviation we favour a combination of public and private enterprise.

CONTROL BY THE PUBLIC

As we have already said, the industries remaining nationalised must observe the standards of the Workers' Charter and will come within the purview of the Monopolies Commission. Public control will also be extended by stricter Parliamentary review.

FOOD AND MATERIALS

All our efforts depend upon abundant supplies of food and raw materials.

We realise how much hardship and inconvenience is caused by the poor quality and inadequate quantity of many foods. A nation that is to work hard must be well fed. We believe that the adoption of the proposals set out below will secure for this country a better and more satisfying diet.

In the same way, unless more supplies of essential commodities are forthcoming, even the present rate of production will not be maintained and there will be unemployment. The Government have failed in this field also. When dollars became more plentiful

the Government did not use them to buy urgently needed raw materials. They stored gold when prices were low and they should have been storing goods. Those goods are now much more expensive. Concerted action with the United States and other countries must now be pressed forward with renewed vigour. There must be a common policy on stockpiling and a fair division of supplies.

Nowhere will effort produce a greater yield than in developing Empire resources. British craftsmanship and management, British manpower and capital must be brought to the under-developed resources of our partners. The Empire and Commonwealth already supply a large part of the raw materials and food supplies of the world. They are responsible for about one-third of world trade. But scope for further development remains. In the untapped sources of the Empire and the untilled acres of the homeland lie great reserves of production.

STATE BUYING

The Socialist policy of State buying provokes State selling. It has fostered recrimination between nations. It has led to the purchase of goods which we did not want. It has failed to get goods which we badly needed and might otherwise have got. It has given us bad quality. Because of the closing of commodity markets it has lost us much valuable foreign exchange. It has deprived us of the insurance facilities against price fluctuations which the private enterprise markets afforded. It has caused dislocation and uneconomic use of shipping. It has resulted in the housewife having to spend a lot more money for the little meat she gets.

Except where obligations to our allies or long-term guarantees to Empire countries necessitate other means, we shall strive to restore private trading in food and raw materials.

The Liverpool Cotton Exchange will be re-established.

Free enterprise must be released to comb the world for greater supplies.

AGRICULTURE

We shall maintain our system of guaranteed prices and assured markets for farm products, and protect British horticulture from foreign dumping. Such stability is essential for a good wage for farm workers as well as for full production.

Efficient marketing is necessary if agricultural and horticultural produce is to reach consumers in the best possible condition and at reasonable prices. Conservatives are opposed to nationalisation of marketing. In every case in which nationalisation has been tried, prices to the consumer have risen. We believe that to nationalise marketing would raise prices to the consumer without giving any greater return to the producer. Instead, farmers and merchants will be encouraged and assisted to work together, through voluntary and statutory marketing boards, to improve markets and distribution, in the best interests of the consumer.

We cannot afford idle acres. Incentives should be given to restore the fertility of large areas of marginal land still in need of rehabilitation. Help to farmers for buying fertilisers would be a good investment. Adequate allocations of steel to the manufacturers of agricultural machinery are also vital if food production is to be maintained.

A review must be made of the opportunities afforded, under existing arrangements, for young people of proved capacity and experience to obtain farms of their own.

The private woodland owners and Forestry Commission must work together with the farmer to increase the production of the land. Their task will be to replant old forests and plant additional land whose agricultural development would be uneconomic.

Subject to the overriding needs of rearmament every practicable step will be taken to hasten the provision of better housing, water supplies and drainage, electricity, transport and telephones in rural areas.

THE FISHING INDUSTRY

The fishing industry must be protected from unrestricted foreign dumping. Quick-freezing plants and storage facilities are urgently needed at many fishing ports. To conserve fishery resources there must be a determined effort to reach an effective international agreement for the control of over-fishing in the North Sea and other areas.

Freedom and Security

THE PURPOSE OF a good society is to help and enable each of its members to develop to the full his gifts and personality.

Society is no mere collection of individuals. It is a partnership, in which the partners have duties towards one another and help one another when they are in need. The social services are an expression of this fellowship. Their purpose is to strengthen, not to divide society. The aid they give must be real, and must be given first to those whose needs are greatest. Society can afford to give such aid only according to its wealth. Unless we maintain and increase the national wealth, we shall not be able to retain and develop the important social programme which we have all helped to frame. The future of the social services—that is whether we are going to be able to shoulder the financial burden involved without extra crushing impositions—depends on our increasing productivity. We have already given this objective first priority. Thus, put bluntly, social security can be assured only by hard work, inventiveness and enterprise. By limiting and hampering enterprise the Socialists have reduced the amount of help that can be given. They have spent vast sums on the social services, but by incompetence and deliberate inflation they have cut the value of the benefits provided. The most urgent needs have often been the least well met. We shall not permit great social schemes, for which our Party has worked as hard as any, to be prejudiced by waste and inefficiency. As we indicate in the pages which follow, by doing first what needs doing most, we may well be able to introduce some desired improvement.

THE FAMILY

The family is the rock on which society is built. Social provision must aid family life without undermining family responsibility. To meet our need for more young people in the future, society must help the parents of to-day. As economic circumstances allow,

we shall seek by fiscal means to relieve the special burdens which fall on parents.

The age-distribution of the population continues to change. A hundred years ago there were in Britain, for every person over the age of sixty-five, a dozen working below that age. To-day there are six, and in twenty-five years there will be only four.

We shall make revisions in the law where it has ceased to correspond with the status of women in a modern society.

Above all, we shall regard it as our first social objective to ensure to every family a separate and proper home. Without a home, or the prospect of a home, independence and self-respect are impossible.

HOUSING

Nowhere has Socialist achievement fallen so far short of Socialist promises, or been less related to the real need of the people as in the provision of houses. In 1945 some Socialist Ministers boasted that they would build 400,000 houses a year. They have achieved no more than half this figure, a rate of building admittedly barely sufficient to replace the houses falling into serious disrepair. Between 1934 and 1939 under Conservative Governments, an average of nearly 350,000 houses was built each year. The Conservatives were clearing slums so fast that 1,000 slum dwellers were being rehoused every day. But now broken marriages, crime among children, spreading slums, the neglected ruins in the blitzed towns of Britain, all bear witness to the failure of Socialism to meet the crying need for homes.

The Conservative Party will give housing first priority after national defence, without which no home is safe. A year ago we announced our aim of building 300,000 houses a year. That figure stands. It will be reached as fast as rearmament allows. It could have been achieved if the Socialist Government had tackled the problems of getting materials and raising productivity with determination and without political prejudice.

Some simplification of building standards without a reduction in room area has recently been introduced. This is a step Conservatives have long urged, so that more houses at lower rents can be provided. By pre-fabrication and other methods, any local shortage of skilled labour can be mitigated. We shall also encourage the payment of extra rewards for skill and energy among

building workers. We shall tackle the problem of materials, ensure a smoother flow of orders in building, and give to the brick-making industry the confidence which comes from knowledge of a continuous and stable demand.

There should be no reduction in the number of houses and flats to let. This is a responsibility that local authorities will and must take. More freedom will also be given to the private builder. If a man wants to build his own home, we mean to see that he has the chance to do so.

The present system of restrictive licensing will be progressively reduced, but not so as to permit unnecessary building or jerry-building.

We shall review the Rent Restriction Acts. Rent restriction is essential to protect the tenant as long as there is a shortage of the particular type of house in which he lives. But the present law is chaotic and causes hardship to both tenant and landlord by allowing property to deteriorate. Without proper repairs and improvements, houses become slums. This is happening now.

Despite their promises at the last election, Socialists have simply postponed a decision on leasehold reform for two years. Conservatives favour permanent changes in the law relating to improvements, repairs and maintenance, and greater security for ground lessees during the present period of exceptional housing shortage.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

The sale of land for the building of houses and for development of all kinds has been hampered by the Socialist Town and Country Planning Act. This has brought the planning of land use into disrepute. Conservatives want to see that the land is used properly and that its beauties and amenities are preserved. Procedure for obtaining planning permission can be simplified and appeals must be heard by a properly constituted tribunal.

The Development Charge has worked very unfairly and has also impeded good development. The present scheme for compensation gives inadequate sums to many who suffer genuine loss, but at the same time it hands out taxpayers' money to others who would lose nothing.

This must be drastically altered. We shall proceed on the principle that for certain classes of property there should be no development charge and no compensation. For others there should

be full compensation and a corresponding charge. There must be a right of appeal against assessments.

EDUCATION

Many hopes were pinned on the successful operation of the Education Act of 1944. Great improvements have resulted from it, but it is now clear that there is danger of a serious financial crisis.

The high birth-rate of the war and early post-war years has resulted in a big increase in the number of children of school age. Despite costly building plans and a steep rise in local rates it has been found hardly possible to keep pace with this increase. Immense sums of money have been spent, but standards of schooling are not being everywhere improved. Many of the brightest children are being held back to the level of their slower companions. Classes are too large, and there are serious shortages of women teachers.

We can and must avert a breakdown. A review of the impact of the cost of education on local government finance should be undertaken. Resources will be limited and we must concentrate on essentials. The greatest effort must at the moment be directed to the primary schools. More women teachers must be recruited. By simpler building standards more good schools can be provided without increased expense. Unnecessary building can be avoided by keeping open as many village schools as possible at least for the younger children. The village school is an essential institution of country life, and must not be wantonly destroyed.

The voluntary schools have a great part to play in education. We shall discuss sympathetically with the Churches and with the other partners in education possible solutions of their present problems, within the framework of the 1944 settlement.

We must safeguard the independence, the high standards and the traditions of the Grammar Schools. We dispute the value of the over-large comprehensive school. We shall review the certificate regulations which hold back the talented pupil.

We intend to provide further opportunities for technical training. The Universities cannot cater for all who aspire to higher and further education. Without attempting unduly to expand existing Universities or to flood them with new entrants, we shall seek to create higher technological colleges with academic independence.

All through the educational system administration is becoming more complicated. As the responsibility of teachers is diminished, more men and women are attracted by higher salaries from teaching to administration. The voluntary services of school governors and managers are neglected and discouraged. In the counties, manpower is wasted by duplicating staff at the Director's office and in each Divisional Executive. Simplification of administration depends upon a major reform of local government boundaries. A sensible saving of manpower and money can be made now.

HEALTH SERVICES

A National Health Service should have two aims : to improve the future health of the people, by looking after the children and expectant mothers now ; and to cure, quickly and effectively, those who are ill. The Socialists have failed in both these tasks. They have now done exactly what they have always accused Conservatives of wanting to do. They have cut the Health Service, both by direct charges for spectacles and teeth and by limiting annual expenditure to £400 million.

For this immense sum of money, a better service can be given to those in need of it. We hold ourselves free to review and alter the present system of charges in order to establish proper priorities. We must meet first and fully, the needs of mothers, children and the really sick. Among the most important tasks is that of eliminating the scourge of tuberculosis.

The hospitals account for two-thirds of the Exchequer cost of the Service. Their present system of budgeting encourages extravagance. Systems of uniform costing should be encouraged. Over-centralisation and the consequent growth of administrative staff must be reduced. There must be better machinery for the medical staff to give advice on all matters of medical practice, through committees chosen by themselves. The main task in the hospitals is to bring more beds into use.

Too many family doctors are overwhelmed with work and forced by economic pressure to accumulate excessive lists of patients. They have to deal as much with paper as with people. In discussion with the profession, a way must be found to preserve the personal link between doctor and patient, and to devise a

system of payment which will enable the family doctor both to lead a more satisfactory professional life and to give better service to the public.

The general practitioner should be able to take part in hospital work. Beds should be made available where he can look after those of his patients not requiring specialist treatment. He should also have the right to visit his patients who are under specialist care, and the opportunity as clinical assistant of gaining specialist experience.

There are, and will be for many years, too few dentists to provide a complete service. The Socialist system of overwork and overpay has resulted in the neglect of the teeth of children and expectant mothers, while three-fifths of the money spent on dentistry has gone to provide false teeth. The School Dental Service is in ruins. A system must be devised which gives to mothers and children the priority they were promised, and which encourages preservative and preventive work. This cannot be brought about merely by imposing charges to keep costs below an arbitrary limit.

THE ELDERLY

Socialist claims to have benefited the elderly are false. Increases agreed by all parties in 1945 have been filched by successive Socialist Chancellors. Only the restoration of a policy of honest money can ensure to pensioners, and to others living on small fixed incomes, the standard of life which they have been promised. What matters is not the nominal amount of the payment but what the money will buy.

But the provision of money is not the only problem of old people. Their health needs special care, so that they can remain active and independent for as long as possible. Those who wish to remain at work must have the opportunity to do so. The needs of welfare services must be met by closer co-operation between families, voluntary bodies, and the agencies of central and local government.

The care and support of the sick and dependent is being hampered by divided responsibility between authorities. Encouragement must be given to new methods of treatment which can prevent chronic sickness and thus also free hospital beds. The building programme should provide more small dwellings in

which elderly people can live alone, and far more accommodation in which those in need of attention can be properly looked after.

Many people over the age of fifty have difficulty in getting work. The Ministry of Labour must tackle this problem, and provide an Employment Service for these people no less effective than that for the young. Rigid age-limits and the question of incentives to remain at work should be reviewed. There is a need for agreements by which superannuation rights may be made transferable on change of employment.

When in office we shall review the whole position of pensioners, including war pensioners, as part of our policy of seeing that the hardest needs are met first.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Only local interest, and a wide measure of local control, can make the social services work humanely and effectively. The Socialists, by removing important functions from local government and by detailed interference in many others, have gone far to make local authorities mere tools of Whitehall.

All are agreed that reform of local government is essential. The Socialists have prevented the reform of boundaries and the proper re-allocation of functions, by dissolving the Boundary Commission without producing an alternative. There must be legislation to re-allocate the functions of local authorities and to create a new Boundary Commission to review boundaries on principles laid down by Parliament.

We are aware that some of these reforms may provoke controversy. Parliament must lay down the principles on which reform is based ; but only an independent Commission can remove the determination of boundaries from the squabbles of political pressure groups. In doing this work, it must have regard to local conditions and traditions.

Methods of raising local revenue, including the new basis of valuation for rating and the system of central grants and control over expenditure, must then be overhauled. There must be the minimum of interference from Whitehall in matters of detail.

These reforms will enable some of the social services to be restored to the smaller local government authorities. The personal health services should be returned to Borough and District Councils

and to the Metropolitan Boroughs in London. Local representatives should be given a greater share in the management of hospitals.

Local government can attract the best and ablest men and women. They must be given more responsibility for the matters which most closely affect the daily lives of those whose representatives they are.

Constitutional Questions

WE BELIEVE IN the maintenance of the unity of the United Kingdom, particularly at a time when it is realised that the strength of the free world must depend on unity between the free nations. Socialism, which continues to centralise control in Whitehall and to ignore national characteristics, has resulted in many justifiable grievances which require immediate correction. So long as a Socialist Government is in power excessive interference from London will grow. The first step must be the removal of the Socialists from office.

SCOTLAND

Our detailed proposals for the better management of Scottish affairs were published separately in 1949 under the title *Scottish Control of Scottish Affairs*. We reaffirm our intention to carry them into effect. Our policy includes the appointment of a Royal Commission to review the economic relationship between England and Scotland, together with other important issues. It also includes measures designed to give Scotland greater control of Scottish affairs and to enable her to maintain and develop her own national way of life.

WALES

Our plans for Wales were separately set out in 1949 in *The Conservative Policy for Wales and Monmouthshire*. We acknowledge again the national aspirations and special problems of Wales and reiterate that the responsibility and title of Minister for Welsh Affairs would be immediately assigned to a member of the Cabinet.

NORTHERN IRELAND

We reaffirm our resolve that the position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom and of the Empire shall

not be altered in the slightest degree without the consent of the Northern Ireland Parliament.

SAFEGUARDS OF LIBERTY

A free society cannot exist without free institutions. Our system of a constitutional monarch, an independent judiciary, a responsible Government under the law and a Parliament of two Houses is an indispensable safeguard of personal liberty. Each part of the Constitution should so check and balance the others that the stability of British democracy is assured.

The Socialists have upset the balance of this system. They have increased beyond all reason and need the system of government by Order, and have used it to enact behind the back of Parliament and people matters of major importance. The ability of Parliament to supervise and control the Executive has been impaired. New regulations and new offences have been multiplied far beyond the knowledge and understanding of the citizen. New tribunals under ministerial control wear down the power of the Courts.

HOUSE OF LORDS

Under the Constitution of the United Kingdom, vast and irrevocable changes can be made on a simple majority vote in the House of Commons, which might represent a minority of votes in the country.

It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that the power of delay which can be exercised by the House of Lords, so that the will of the people can be given time to find expression, should be preserved intact by a House which commands the respect and assent of the nation. Conservatives adhere to the proposals for the reform of the composition and powers of the House of Lords which we set out at the last election.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Socialists broke the constitutional understanding that changes in the composition of the House of Commons should rest upon the recommendations of a Speaker's Conference. We intend to repair this breach by restoring the University vote and constituencies.

EMERGENCY POWERS AND REGULATIONS

No Government should have powers greater than those required for the immediate business in hand. The war-time emergency legislation must be thoroughly overhauled. Such powers, but no more, as are required for the present critical situation should be incorporated in new Statutes requiring annual renewal. New Orders will have to be made under these new Acts, and thus all the Regulations and Orders under emergency powers will have to be reviewed by Parliament. Parliament should exercise much more rigorous control of all delegated legislation.

JUSTICE AT TRIBUNALS

Outside the Courts of Law there are many tribunals whose rulings are binding on the private citizen. The system has grown up over a long period and in a haphazard fashion. The practice of these tribunals must be brought into line with the best principles of justice. The private citizen must have the right to an oral hearing and to be represented. Justice must be publicly administered and reasoned decisions given. Appeals on matters of law must go to the Courts of Law.

The Road Ahead

BRITAIN now has the opportunity to choose a new Government and to show with what spirit she will meet this crisis of her destiny.

Our Conservative theme and purpose are clear. The first task must be to make peace safer by making Britain stronger. If we are to do this without permanent damage to our standards of life and welfare, redoubled efforts are needed to increase production and a fundamental change must be made now in the economic and social climate of the country. Without strength we cannot be free. Without freedom we cannot be strong.

Enterprise, inventiveness and energy must be encouraged and rewarded. Jealousies and strife must be laid aside. There must be drastic decentralisation of many powers assumed by the State in recent years. Local opinion and local responsibility must help to bring the personal touch back into the social services. Aid must be given first to those who need it most and in ways which help the individual to help himself. The rights of the subject against the State and the powers of Parliament over the Executive must be strengthened and reaffirmed.

The whole nation must again be inspired with the sense of mission and adventure which has taken the British people into distant lands and enabled British leadership to bring peace, justice and rising standards to many peoples.

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BRITAIN
Strong and
Free



A Statement of Conservative & Unionist Policy

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