

HOUSE OF LORDS

Tuesday, 30th March, 1965

The House met at half past two of the clock, The LORD CHANCELLOR on the Woolsack.

*Prayers—Read by the Lord
Bishop of Manchester*

The Lord Sandhurst—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ROYAL

2.35 p.m.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (THE EARL OF LONGFORD): My Lords, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper:

“That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty to express the deep sorrow of this House at the great loss which Her Majesty has sustained by the death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal; to condole with Her Majesty on this sad occasion, and to express to Her Majesty the dutiful and loyal concern which this House will ever feel in all that may affect Her Majesty and the Royal Family.”

My Lords, as my Motion declares, anything that affects Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family is the immediate concern of your Lordships House. To-day, in common with another place, we join in expressing to Her Majesty our sincere condolences and our warm sympathy on the death of a senior and greatly respected member of her family, the Princess Royal. The only daughter of our much loved Queen Mary and King George V, Princess Mary was seventeen when the First World War broke out. She belonged, therefore, to the generation that bore the brunt of that merciless struggle. The war gave her many opportunities for activities which soon became the pattern of her life—a life spent to a degree exceptional even for the Royal Family, in public service. The survivors of the First War will remember how at Christmas, 1915, now just on fifty years ago, she organised “Princess Mary’s Gift Boxes” for every sailor afloat and every soldier at the front.

I will not recount in detail to your Lordships the variety of her interests and the multitude of causes that she helped. Many of them will be known to your Lordships from your own personal experience. But I ought particularly to mention with gratitude nursing, and especially the Red Cross; the Girl Guide movement; the Army, in which she was Colonel-in-Chief of many Regiments, both British and Commonwealth; her travels abroad on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen—and here I might mention, as an example of the way the Princess Royal did things, that in 1960 she visited every Caribbean island in the Commonwealth—and finally her many interests in the North of England, and particularly in Yorkshire.

Her involvement in any cause she took up was never perfunctory and she was never content to be anything like a figure-head. She was naturally shy and reserved, and if some who did not know her found her at first a little formidable, they soon discovered that she had a deep feeling for people, a great sense of humour and a formidable grasp of the details and the essential purpose of any cause that she espoused. She was completely at ease with young people. No wonder she was loved and esteemed in Yorkshire; and, above all, it was no wonder that Leeds University chose her as its Chancellor. She put much more into life than she took out, and I am sure that all of your Lordships would wish to join me in expressing to Her Majesty, and also to the two sons of Her Royal Highness, our profound sorrow on this sad occasion. I beg to move.

Moved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty to express the deep sorry of this House at the great loss which Her Majesty has sustained by the death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal; to condole with Her Majesty on this sad occasion, and to express to Her Majesty the dutiful and loyal concern which this House will ever feel in all that may affect Her Majesty and the Royal Family.—(*The Earl of Longford.*)

LORD CARRINGTON: My Lords, we who sit on these Benches would like to associate ourselves with the Motion which has been so well moved by the noble Earl the Leader of the House. All your Lordships in one way or another know of the

[Lord Carrington.]

countless organisations and activities in which the Princess Royal took part, and many of us will have first-hand knowledge of the interest and hard work she put into them. Yet I think it is true to say that the Princess Royal did not hit the headlines and was much less well known than one would have expected. This, I feel, was as she would have wished it. I do not suppose that it ever occurred to her that she deserved gratitude or fame for what she did. What she did, she did because it was her duty and inclination, and, in addition, she seemed to enjoy that duty because she was always interested in whatever she was doing. Her interests were wide and varied. I for one, like many of my noble friends, remember particularly her interest in farming and her cattle and in the many visits that she made to the Royal Show.

In all these activities she will be sadly missed, and not least by those whose privilege it was to serve her. Many years ago my mother had for a number of years the honour to be her Lady-in-Waiting and I learned at first hand from her how the Princess Royal was beloved by those around her. As I have said, there was no thought of reward for any of the countless activities in which she took part; yet something very important did emerge from those years of service. That was the respect, the love, the affection and the admiration of all those whom she served. I think she would have felt that that was the only worthwhile reward.

LORD REA: My Lords, it is with a very sincere sense of loss and sorrow that I associate myself and the noble Lords on these Benches with the humble Address to Her Majesty. Like many of your Lordships, if I am not out of order in saying so, I happen to be of roughly the same generation as the late Princess Royal and her Royal brothers; and it was natural that those of my generation should follow with special interest what information there was about the human, personal and individual characteristics of this happy and devoted Royal Family, apart from their high position and their public assiduity and duty towards their official responsibilities.

Much has already been written and said about the modest and conscientious way in which our Princess dedicated herself

to the demands on her time and her energies in a rôle which called for very much self-sacrifice and self-discipline, and I shall not enlarge upon those fine qualities. She fulfilled our ideas of what a Royal Princess and a great lady should be. But there is one aspect about which I think there is a particular poignancy. She must have known how highly she was regarded and appreciated, but I have a feeling that her own innate modesty hid from her the knowledge that she was greatly loved throughout the land, that those who met her, and those who did not have that privilege, all looked upon her with real admiration and affection, as a gentle and kind and lovable person, a beloved daughter and sister and mother, who somehow held all those positions in the hearts of the highest and the lowliest in the land. With our humble sympathy for Her Majesty, we add our grief for the Princess's sons and for their families, who suffer this great loss.

BARONESS SWANBOROUGH: My Lords, the tribute I would pay to Princess Mary is as a woman to a very great Royal lady. Hers was truly a purposeful life, dominated by a strong natural reserve and controlled by her belief in the obligations of her birthright. She had only one standard—the highest; and never to fall below it was her determined aim. Her thoughtfulness, her understanding, above all her thoroughness, were legendary among those who have worked with her. She travelled far and wide to fulfil public duties and never thought of sparing herself. But the happiest times of all were those spent with her grandchildren, or in her rose garden. She never counted the cost to herself, and she gave so generously that her contribution was accepted as the normal outpouring from a source that could be drawn on *ad infinitum*.

Her honours were many, her interests manifold and her responsibilities varied. As Chief Controller of the Women's Royal Army Corps, as Commandant-in-Chief of the British Red Cross Society, as President or Patron of the major national voluntary bodies, she gave leadership to the women of Great Britain. This she did so quietly and unobtrusively that the respect and honour she automatically commanded generated the bond of deep loyalty which everyone had for her.

Those of us who had for Princess Mary not only a great regard but a very deep affection learned much from her serene dedication to the country she loved so well. We learned from her that those who set standards can get them accepted by living them to the full. We shall never forget how truly her example convinced those who worked with her that to honour an unspoken obligation is even more binding than an agreement sealed and signed or an officially witnessed undertaking. The sadness of the women of Great Britain is for ourselves. I am sure that our gladness is that we have had the honour to know and serve a very great lady.

THE LORD BISHOP OF MANCHESTER: My Lords, I know that had his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury not been abroad, he would have been here to-day to associate himself with ail that has been said, and to express on the Church's behalf our sympathy for the Royal Family and our appreciation of all that the Princess Royal did for the country and for the Commonwealth. At every Sitting of this House, prayers are offered for the well-being of the Royal Family, and it is but natural that we here should feel a special sense of loss when death carries off one of its members out of human sight.

A familiar face will no longer be seen on our great and Regal occasions. I do not think that the Princess Royal herself would have chosen the great position which she occupied, for she was, as has been said, retiring by nature. All the more gratitude is due to her for the exemplary way in which she carried out all her public duties. And how manifold they were! In these, she was active right up to the end.

The years dealt kindly with her, for she seemed to grow in serenity, charm and quiet beauty. Deeply attached to her family and to Yorkshire, where she made her home, she will be sadly missed in that wide county. The manner of her going has been strangely characteristic: quietly, quickly, unobtrusively, she has slipped away, with a good day's work well done.

Her brother, King George VI, concluded one of his Christmas broadcasts by quoting Wordsworth's line on *The Skylark*. Wordsworth referred to it as a

"Type of the wise who soar
But never roam,
True to the kindred points
Of heaven and home."

These lines perhaps fittingly describe the plan and purpose of the noble life to which we now pay tribute. May she rest in peace and, by the mercy of God, may she inherit that everlasting Kingdom for which our prayers ever make request!

EARL ATTLEE: My Lords, as one of the oldest generation, I should like to add my support to this Motion. Her Royal Highness was an extremely good friend to me and to my wife over many years. My mind goes back 50 years ago, when a charming young girl came down to Salisbury Plain, where I was stationed, and I showed her over the trenches we were digging. That charming young girl was the Princess Royal. At that early age she had come all that way to see how a new armoured division was getting on. I would add my support to this Motion.

On Question, Motion agreed to, *nemine dissentiente*: the said Address to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

TURNHOUSE AIRPORT (EDINBURGH)

2.50 p.m.

LORD FORBES: My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question which stands in my name on the Order Paper.

[The Question was as follows:

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in existence or contemplated for providing a second runway at Turnhouse Airport, the airport for Edinburgh.]

LORD BESWICK: My Lords, the case for providing a second main runway at Turnhouse Airport rests on the fact that the present runway is not well aligned with the prevailing wind and, when the wind is strong, aircraft may have to be diverted and flights cancelled. However, the number of cancellations and diversions for this reason is very small. Last year they were fewer than 1 per cent. of all actual or planned flights, whereas cancellations and diversions due to other causes which would not be removed by

[Lord Beswick.]
the provision of an alternative long runway, such as bad visibility, were four times as many. My right honourable friend the Minister of Aviation is therefore not at present convinced that expenditure on a second runway, which is estimated to cost £2 million to £3 million, would be justified. Nevertheless, the line for a new runway is being safeguarded. He recognises that its provision may well be justified in due course, but the timing of its construction must depend on the growth of traffic, on operational, economic and other factors, and on the course of discussions with the Edinburgh Corporation, to which it is hoped that the ownership of the airport will soon be transferred.

LORD FORBES: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his reply. I should like to ask him whether he has taken into consideration the fact that Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland, and that there must be few other capital cities in Europe with only one runway. Secondly, is the noble Lord aware that pilots of Vanguard planes very much dislike landing at Edinburgh Airport, owing to the fact that it is seldom that the wind is dead on and it is difficult to land a big aircraft like the Vanguard unless the wind is right?

LORD BESWICK: My Lords, I do not think there is any difference between us as to the desirability of another long runway, and this is one of the matters which will no doubt come up in the discussions that take place between the Corporation and the Ministry. So far as the difficulties of pilots are concerned, my information is that sea mist is at any rate as big a menace as the cross-wind.

LORD BALERNO: My Lords, may I ask the noble Lord whether it is true that the rate of increase in traffic at Turnhouse Airport is of the order of 20 per cent. per annum?

LORD BESWICK: My Lords, that is possibly the order. But it still remains a fact that has to be taken into account that the loss of revenue in landing fees because of these diversions amounts to something like £2,000 a year. The annual capital charge for the provision of a new runway would be of the order of £200,000. So there is obviously cause for further consideration.

LORD BALERNO: My Lords, I thought the noble Lord implied that traffic was not increasing very rapidly.

LORD BESWICK: No, my Lords; I was not implying that.

RETIREMENT TERMS IN BASUTOLAND SERVICE

2.53 p.m.

LORD FRASER OF LONSDALE: My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question which stands in my name on the Order Paper.

[The Question was as follows:

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they can improve the terms under which non-designated officers in the Basutoland Service are now treated on retirement.]

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS AND FOR THE COLONIES (LORD TAYLOR): My Lords, the matter of terminal benefits for non-designated officers in Basutoland is still being considered. I hope, however, that it will be possible to announce schemes providing for these benefits in the near future.

LORD FRASER OF LONSDALE: My Lords, while that Answer is better than a negative and I therefore ask leave to thank the noble Lord, can he tell me when I may be in a position to get a more positive answer? And will Her Majesty's Government, in considering this matter, bear in mind that the difference between a designated officer and a non-designated officer is really a question as to where he was recruited rather than of the service he has rendered or the job he has done? Indeed, many of the two categories do exactly the same jobs. That being so, will the Government do what can be done to equate the "bowler hat" provisions for the non-designated types to those which have already been agreed for the designated types?

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I do not think I can go so far as that, although I accept that the difference between designated and non-designated officers depends in large measure on the place where they were recruited. I recognise that this is a question which arouses deep feeling,

and so do the Government, and I hope it will be possible to make an announcement in a matter of weeks rather than months.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, will Her Majesty's Government, in considering this subject, bear in mind what my noble friend Lord Fraser of Lonsdale has already said: that the undesignated, equally with the designated, have devoted their lives to the country which they served, and therefore any sharp differentiation between the two would be unjustified?

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, all the relevant points in this matter will be considered.

PORT OF LONDON BILL [H.L.]

Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

CENSUS ORDER 1965

2.57 p.m.

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. I have a great many data about the Census and about the background to this Order, but I do not propose to weary your Lordships with a very detailed account. The rather unusual form of the Order arises from the provisions of the Census Act, 1920. This Act provides that the date of the Census (which on this occasion will be Sunday, April 24, 1966), the persons by whom and about whom returns are to be made, and the information to be collected, must be prescribed by Order in Council, subject to the Negative Resolution procedure in the ordinary way.

The Act also allows additional information, beyond that specified in the Act, to be collected, but these additional items have to be approved by both Houses of Parliament by Affirmative Resolution. All the items in the Order requiring Affirmative Resolution are in Schedule 2 to the Order. There are nine of them, though some are sub-divided, and they are set out in italics in Articles 2, 7, 9, 10 and 11. I think it will be found that they are all non-controversial and of obvious practical utility in our social and economic life. There is a further Parliamentary

stage in the process. In due course, regulations have to be laid covering precise details of the Census questions, including the actual forms of return, and these are subject to the Negative Resolution procedure.

The 1966 Census will be novel in two particulars: it will be quinquennial, instead of decennial, and it will be a 10 per cent. sample Census, instead of the usual complete enumeration. These proposals were announced to your Lordships over a year ago, on December 16, 1963, by the noble Lord, Lord Newton, and there was some discussion of them at the time, though they were agreed to be generally acceptable. The case for a quinquennial Census, in view of the rapid changes in population distribution, employment and housing, is overwhelming. The case for a sample Census is, I think, equally strong. It more than halves the cost, from £5½ million (which is what the full Census would cost next year) to £2¼ million. It enables the main results to be obtained much more quickly—within two years instead of well over four years—and the degree of accuracy of the results is such that reliable figures will be available for the country as a whole, and for all the larger areas where the main problems of social and economic development are likely to arise.

The 10 per cent. sample method was, in fact, applied in the 1961 Census for questions about occupation, education and migration, and many valuable lessons about sampling were learnt. A pre-test for the new sampling procedures to be used for the present Census—which differ considerably from those employed in 1961—was carried out last April and proved quite satisfactory. There will, however, be six relatively small areas in Scotland, with a total population of less than 250,000, where the population will be counted in full. These are areas where special economic studies are in progress, and they are listed in Schedule 3. With two exceptions, they are areas of depopulation, where the sampling method would yield too low figures. The two exceptions are Fort William and the town of Livingston. Unless your Lordships wish it, I do not propose to discuss details of the sampling method, nor shall I discuss the more routine items of information covered by the Order.

[Lord Taylor.]

The nine special items for which an Affirmative Resolution are required are as follows. The first covers those persons who are not related to the head of the household investigated—that is, for example, whether a person in a hotel is a guest or a member of the staff. These are all italicised in the Schedule. The second seeks to measure the extent of migration within the last five years. In 1961, the person's address one year before the Census was asked for. This time the same question will be repeated, but his or her address five years before will also be asked for. This may be a little difficult for some people to remember and to answer precisely, but they will have time to think things over, and to talk things over, because the forms are normally delivered on Sunday and collected a week later. Moreover, this is precisely the time when the previous Census returns were filled in.

The third item clears up a problem which arose in the 1961 Census about the number of rooms occupied. Then, only a kitchen used for meals counted as a room. This time sculleries with cooking facilities will be counted, but kitchens used for meals will be counted separately. The Census in this country is not merely a population Census; it is also, by tradition, a housing Census, and the next three items, which are virtually the same as in 1961, ask about house tenure and ownership, and cooking and sanitary facilities.

We come now to Article 9(e), an entirely new item of the Census, and one with vital importance in transport and town planning policy. There will be questions about car ownership and the use of cars made available by employers, and about where people keep their cars at night. Questions about employment have been asked since the very beginning of Census-taking in 1801. Most of them are covered by the main Census Act, but one, in Article 10(c)(iv), an entirely new one, inquires about the journey to work—obviously a matter of growing importance.

Another new employment question, in Article 10(d) (which is not, however, subject to Affirmative Resolution), deals with people having more than one job. The final item requiring Affirmative

Resolution is Article 11. This deals with higher education. There was a similar, more limited, question in the 1961 Census covering technological and scientific qualifications. This is now being extended to cover all higher educational qualifications. I do not think I need argue the importance of these new items in detail, but I shall be happy to do so if your Lordships wish.

Your Lordships may remember that on the last occasion most of the discussion concerned questions relating to fertility. There are none of these special fertility questions in this quinquennial Census. The reason is that the necessary information obtained in 1961 can be supplemented by the annual returns of the Registrar General, so there is no need to include these questions this time.

There are only two more points that I ought to mention. First, the formidable list of items in the Schedule will be translated into as simple a style and language as is possible; and some of these simplified questions have already been tested on the public to make sure that they can be properly understood and properly answered. Many possible questions to which Government Departments would have liked answers have already been excluded simply because some people could not understand them, or had only a vague idea of the answers. The second point is this: the Census is compulsory, but it is also confidential. Worthwhile results can come only from a willing public, so, as with previous Censuses, everything will be explained as fully as possible to the public in advance: why the questions are asked; how the sample is drawn, and how confidentiality is achieved.

Those who wish to do so—lodgers or guests in a house—may hand their forms direct to the enumerator or Census officer. Census returns are used for statistical purposes only, and there are heavy penalties for improper disclosure of information by anyone employed in making the Census. The Registrar General does not give recognisable details of individual citizens to other departments or, indeed, to anyone else. There is, then, no reason why any citizen should be unwilling to co-operate fully in the vital work of Census taking. In 1961, fewer than one in 75,000 householders refused to co-operate. This is clear

evidence that people realise that the Census is something that is entirely necessary, and something in which they should play their full part. Training of the field staff will be more extensive than ever before, and more emphasis will be laid on the need to win the co-operation of the people sampled. I beg to move.

Moved, that the following parts of the Second Schedule to the Draft Census Order 1965 (laid before the House on the 4th March) be approved:—

In Article 2, the words “or other person by whom the return is made, or position in establishment”;

Article 7;

In Article 9(a), the words “and if there is a kitchen or scullery, whether it is used for meals”;

Article 9(b), (c), (d) and (e);

Article 10(c)(iv);

Article 11.—(*Lord Taylor.*)

3.8 p.m.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, I should like to express my thanks to the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, for the brevity and lucidity with which he has explained the purpose of his Motion. For my part, I certainly agree that it was not necessary for him to enlighten us with the considerable amount of background information on the matter which he said he had available. I should also like to express my gratitude to him for explaining to us why the House has to signify its approval of comparatively minor Amendments to the Order where, so far as the Order itself is concerned, silence is sufficient.

I certainly have no objections to voice to any of these Amendments to the second Schedule, but I wonder whether there is really much point in asking whether kitchens and sculleries are used for meals. I daresay that a good many of the answers to that question will be, “Yes”, and a good many will be “No”, but I suspect also that there will be a good many answers which say, “Sometimes” or, “For some meals.” Furthermore, this particular question was asked in almost exactly the same form in the 1961 Census. Then the use of kitchens for meals was the criterion by which to decide whether or not the kitchen was to be counted as one of the rooms in the house. But we have been told—and I think it is readily admitted—that in

fact the answers to that question in 1961 were not particularly satisfactory. As I understand it, in this next Census a kitchen or scullery will be counted as a room in the house if it is used for cooking; and for the purpose of making that decision it will not matter whether or not the kitchen or scullery is ever used for eating purposes.

But the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, has explained to us that the question about meals is still going to be asked, for the purpose (the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, did not explain this, but his honourable friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health did, in another place) of making comparisons with the 1961 answers to the similar question. As I have just told your Lordships, it is admitted that the answers to that question in 1961 were not satisfactory, and I cannot see any particular reason for believing that next time the answers to that question will be any more satisfactory than they were in 1961. This then is the point. What is the use of comparing two sets of unsatisfactory information? Perhaps the noble Lord can later on explain what is to me an apparently illogical proposal.

I certainly hope that the taking of this first ever quinquennial Census will, in the event, turn out to have been a worthwhile operation. I gave considerable thought to this in the past when I had a good deal to do with the General Register Office; but I am not entirely convinced that it will so turn out. I know that many Government Departments are very keen to get the information, and I am quite certain that it is worth trying to obtain it, though I was interested to hear from the noble Lord that many questions which they wanted to ask will not be asked because people would not understand them. I have the feeling that nothing short of a biennial Census would fully serve the purposes of many of the Departments that want the questions asked, and that, of course, would be open to many objections, of which one would be uncertainty about the tolerance of the public.

It is evident from the proceedings in another place of March 18 that the Joint Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, Mrs. Hart, has not any doubts about this. I think it is in order for me to do so and I should like to quote some

[Lord Newton.]
of her observations on this point. Mrs. Hart said:

" . . . it seems to me that the public reaction is much more that of slight annoyance not to be the one in ten selected".—[OFFICIAL REPORT, Commons, Vol. 708 (No. 81) col. 1637, March 18, 1965.]

She went on:

"From a slightly different point of view, one is not trying to justify something one is imposing upon them, so one is encouraged in the whole process of educating the public in the use of inquiries of this kind and if one has an unsatisfied demand, one can use the emotion that unsatisfied demand has created quite confidently to go forward with further inquiries, if one wishes to do so, which is a very satisfactory position to be in."—[col. 1638.]

And right at the end of her speech the honourable Lady said:

"I think that the public likes learning about itself and enjoys the opportunity to give information. . . ."—[col. 1642.]

It may well be that there are those who enjoy the opportunity of giving information about themselves, but I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, and Her Majesty's Government, will take it from me that there are also a great many who do not enjoy the opportunity. I should have thought it was beyond dispute that many people cordially dislike having to fill in long and complicated forms.

I also hope that the Government will not accede to a further suggestion that was made in the same debate in another place, by the honourable Member for King's Lynn, who was so concerned (and I shall not do more than paraphrase him) about the insufficiency of information about fertility in this country that he suggested that married couples should be asked to what extent the actual size of their families coincided with their intentions, what measures they had taken to try to achieve their intentions, and to what extent their efforts had been successful. The only other comment I would make about this suggestion is that I do not share the view of the honourable Member for King's Lynn that the vast majority of people would be only too willing to give that sort of information.

Finally, may I ask the noble Lord one question relating to the confidential nature of the answers which people give? He explained to us very carefully the importance which the Government attach

to preserving the confidential nature. In the debate in another place the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Mr. Loughlin, on this point of the confidential nature said this:

" . . . the census returns are treated at all stages as absolutely and completely confidential."—[col. 1625].

Shortly after that, in the course of his speech he said:

"There are penalties for people refusing to make returns or wilfully making false returns"—[col. 1625.]

This is my question: how does "X," a member of the staff of the Registrar General, know whether or not "Y" has made a false return unless "X" consults a third person, "Z," who is presumably a neighbour of "Y" and whom he expects to know the true answers. If "X" does consult "Z," he is committing a breach of confidence. One cannot have it both ways. Is then the penalty for wilfully making false returns just a bit of bluff? If not, what is it? I recognise, of course, that the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, can make a "*tu quoque*" retort to me about this. All I can say in advance is that until I read what Mr. Loughlin said in another place the point had not previously occurred to me. My Lords, I think that those are all the observations I need make.

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I shall do my best to answer the noble Lord, Lord Newton. I thank him for the clear way he has presented his points. May I start at the rear end of his speech with the question of confidentiality? Refusal to make returns is, as the noble Lord says, a perfectly simple thing and it arises in a very small number of cases, usually with people who are cranks. Some of these people have been prosecuted in the past and almost always the prosecution has succeeded. It is rather sad when this happens. It is inevitable, but such people form a minute percentage of the total.

With regard to a person making a wilfully false return, it may be apparent on examining the form that there is something peculiar about it, that it just does not look right and does not ring true. Then it is perfectly right and proper for the Census enumerator to return to the house to see whether there is something wrong, but I would not suggest for one moment that he should go snooping around asking "Z" if what "X" has

said is correct. I think that would be most improper and, indeed, that it would be quite unnecessary.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, I am sorry to intervene. Am I not right in thinking that the householder or anyone who has to complete a form is entitled to hand the form in a sealed envelope to the enumerator, so that the enumerator does not know the contents of it?

LORD TAYLOR: It is where somebody else is making a return so that the householder does not know the contents of it that confidentiality in that respect comes in. The form is checked for proper filling in when it reaches the office from which the enumerator is working. There is a further check; there is a follow-up survey which takes place a little later. This is primarily directed to seeing that the sample itself is satisfactory, not so much to seeing that false returns are detected. I would emphasise that experience over the years has been that people do not in fact falsify returns; they do take it seriously. If it were to become widely believed that false returns were made and there was nothing wrong in that, the whole of the Census procedure would be brought to a state of farce. In fact, people do realise its value. In addition, all households which are going to be sampled will receive in advance a circular setting out quite shortly what is required of them and why they have been picked; I think this will help to ensure their co-operation, and I do not believe there will be any trouble.

With regard to the noble Lord's remarks about my honourable friend Mrs. Hart and the attitude of people who are not selected, I think Mrs. Hart was speaking about social surveys in general. May I say that I entirely agree with her that where social surveys take place it is the experience that people frequently ask why they have not been selected to give their opinion on this or that or to give information about this or that. But with regard to a Census only time can show; we can only see what happens and whether people resent being selected or not being selected. I do not think there will be any trouble; I think it will go perfectly smoothly, as I take it the noble Lord thought when he himself proposed this sample Census.

His third point is in relation to kitchens and sculleries. He is quite right.

We want to know how many rooms there are in a house. Does a kitchen or scullery count? There are two possible criteria for counting the kitchen or scullery as a room: is it used for meals or is it used for cooking? In the 1961 Census the criterion used was: is the room used for meals? This criterion is not satisfactory because it may leave out rooms which are used for cooking, and this produces an entirely false picture. We must ask both questions this time so as to get a bridge in order that the results of the two Censuses are comparable. I think the noble Lord is making a mountain out of a molehill here. It is a perfectly fair question. It would give an inaccurate picture if we excluded kitchens and sculleries which are not used for meals.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, I am sorry to come back to this. May I call to the noble Lord's attention what his honourable friend said in this connection in another place when talking about what happened in 1961. It is in column 1622. He said:

"... the information obtained was not altogether satisfactory because the decision was often governed by family habit rather than the size of the kitchen. It is proposed to overcome this problem in 1966 by counting a kitchen or scullery as a room if it is used for cooking, but comparison with the 1961 statistics will still be necessary and this can be obtained only by finding out whether kitchens are used for meals."

Faced with this admitted fact, that the information obtained from this question in 1961 was unsatisfactory, why does the noble Lord think the information obtained in 1966 will be any more satisfactory? What is the point of trying to compare two groups of unsatisfactory information?

LORD TAYLOR: The information was unsatisfactory last time, as I understand it, because the two questions were not asked and because in fact some rooms which were perfectly adequate as rooms were excluded because they were not used for meals. Therefore, the count of rooms was false; this time the count of rooms will not be false and the comparison will, I believe, be perfectly satisfactory. I have done my best to answer the noble Lord's points. I will not say I have satisfied him completely. But I think this Census will go off perfectly satisfactorily, and I hope

[Lord Taylor.]
your Lordships will give the Order due approval.

BARONESS SUMMERSKILL: My Lords, may I ask my noble friend a point about sculleries and kitchens? It seems to me quite an amazing state of affairs. Do the people who compile these questions know that in the congested areas of the country many women are compelled to cook on the landing, and in many slum dwellings the landing is better lighted, more comfortable, more airy, than the scullery, which in the old days, of course, may have been built simply for washing in a big copper? Would my noble friend tell me, therefore, whether, if the cooking accommodation on the landing is perhaps better than in the scullery, the landing will be scheduled as a room in precisely the way that the little scullery will be scheduled? If they do not do this, there will be a feeling of discrimination.

There is another point—this is an amazing thing. Apparently it will now be implied that the woman who has been using a scullery for her cooking—which may mean only that there is room for a gas stove and a few saucepans—has been rather wasteful with her accommodation, and, indeed, that there is another room in her house which has not been used. I would ask my noble friend to consider these matters. Perhaps this Census will not give the true information, the honest information and the comfortable information which the noble Lord is seeking.

LORD MACANDREW: My Lords, I should like to ask the noble Lord, Lord Taylor, a question about cost. If the work has been reduced to one-tenth and the cost by only a half, surely there is something wrong.

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, the cost is not reduced proportionately with the size of the sample. The computer costs much the same to acquire and operate; the staff is not reduced proportionately. Indeed, this was dealt with fully by the noble Lord, Lord Newton, when he had to give slightly different figures from those which I gave. One wishes that it were possible to reduce automatically, but it is not so: it does not work out that way. The overheads, as it were, of running a Census remain disproportionate to the size of the sample.

With regard to the point raised by my noble friend Lady Summerskill, a landing certainly will not count as a room even if it is used for cooking. It is not a room, and the object is, of course, to assess the number of rooms. I agree with her that there are a number of poor houses where cooking takes place on the landing. But the basic problem is to enumerate the number of rooms, and not to enumerate the place where cooking is done if not in a room.

BARONESS SUMMERSKILL: My Lords, in that case should not the noble Lord define what is a room—that it is not a landing, partitioned or curtained off—and say that a little place like a dog kennel, with a stone floor and holding a gas stove, is not a room fit for human habitation?

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I think this is making a mountain out of a molehill—

LORD NEWTON: It is making a kitchen out of a landing.

LORD TAYLOR: It is making a kitchen out of a landing. If the place is partitioned off, then it may conceivably be a room. But if it is not partitioned off, in my view, without taking expert advice, I would say that it should not be counted as a room.

BARONESS HORSBRUGH: My Lords, would the noble Lord say whether, if people have their meals in a large hall in a large house, and look upon it as their dining room, that is or is not a room?

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I am giving this answer without seeking advice, but I should say that it certainly is a room if it is used for dining.

LORD SALTOUN: My Lords, I do not want to bully the noble Lord or the Government any further. But, remembering the last Census, I think that people are a little puzzled about the term "rooms". I know of a Polish castle in which there was such an enormous room, with alcoves, on the ground floor that it made at least nine different rooms without any separation by a door or anything else. That is one extreme. I know of no house in this country which would be treated like that. On the other hand, I have known of a house which was a

portion of a high tower, and room after room was reached only by a winding staircase, with no amenities at all. It could not possibly be used for living in; it could be used only for refugee shelter. People have been quite puzzled whether to include this in the Census return or not, as for practical purposes the rooms were useless as such.

LORD TAYLOR: My Lords, I think the fact that a room is regarded as useless as a room is not an excuse for not calling it a room; and, thank goodness! the Census will not be carried out in Poland.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES

3.33 p.m.

Order of the day read for the consideration of the Second Report from the Select Committee.

The Committee's Report was as follows:

1.—LIBRARY

The Report from the Library Sub-Committee for the year 1964 was laid before the Committee.

2.—PICTURE OF THE HOUSE IN SESSION

A coloured reproduction of the picture is now available for sale to Peers at a reasonable price; proofs will be displayed and a notice circulated giving full details.

3.—HANSARD INDEX

The Clerk of the Parliaments informed the Committee of a proposal from H.M. Stationery Office for the improvement of the present system of indexing by the publication of a cumulative index at intervals of four to six months*. The Committee recommended that this proposal be adopted.

4.—LORD CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

The Committee sanctioned an increase in the annual salary of the Lord Chairman of Committees with effect from the 1st April 1965.

5.—REVISED SCALES OF PAY

The Committee sanctioned the application of the following Establishments Circulars:—

- (a) E.C. 28/64 Clerical Classes.
- (b) E.C. 29/64 Principals &c.
- (c) E.C. 30/64 Executive Classes.
- (d) E.C. 31/64 Central Pay Increase.
- (e) E.C. 6/65 Typing Grades and Proficiency Allowances.
- (f) E.C. 5/65 Conditioned hours of the Messengerial and Paperkeeping Grades.

*Should be weeks. See col. 962.]

to analogous grades of the staff of the House of Lords.

The Committee sanctioned consequential increases in eight awards under the Superannuation Acts.

6.—ESTIMATES

The Committee authorised the consequential increase in the Estimate for 1965-66 and the increased provision for Peers' expenses.

The Committee approved a Supplementary Estimate for the year 1964-65.

7.—DEPARTMENT OF THE LORD GREAT CHAMBERLAIN

The Committee authorised the employment of additional temporary assistants in the Lord Great Chamberlain's Office.

8.—RETIREMENTS

The Committee sanctioned the payment of the following Superannuation awards under the Superannuation Acts:—

(a) Pension and additional allowance to Mr. A. E. Green, Custodian Fireman, on his final retirement on 23rd February, 1965.

(b) Gratuity to Mrs. L. Shortland, Head Housemaid, on her resignation on 31st January, 1965.

(c) Gratuity to Mrs. S. E. Henry, Housemaid, on her resignation on 13th December, 1964.

9.—PALACE OF WESTMINSTER CONTROL AND CUSTODY

The Committee considered the statement on the Palace of Westminster made on Tuesday, 23rd March, and have appointed a Sub-Committee to consider and report upon the administrative problems of the House and to make recommendations.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (LORD MERTHYR): My Lords, I beg to move that this Report be now considered.

Moved accordingly, and, on Question, Motion agreed to.

*LORD MERTHYR: My Lords, I am sorry to say that there is a rather important misprint in the third paragraph, under the heading *Hansard Index*. There the word "months" should be "weeks". The wording should be:

"at intervals of four to six weeks".

I regret and apologise for this mistake, which I noticed only this morning. I beg to move that this Report be now agreed to. If there is any point upon which any noble Lord wishes further information I shall be glad to try to provide it.

Moved, That the Report be now agreed to.—(*Lord Merthyr.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

DANGEROUS DRUGS BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (on Re-commitment) (according to Order).

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: My Lords, this Bill has been amended by the Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills. I understand that no further Amendments have been set down for this afternoon. The Question, therefore, is that I report this Bill to the House without further amendment.

Moved accordingly, and, on Question, Motion agreed to.

House resumed: Bill reported without further amendment; Report received.

RIVERS (PREVENTION OF POLLUTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Read 3^a (according to Order), with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

CEREALS MARKETING BILL

3.37 p.m.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD BESWICK: My Lords, I beg to move that the Cereals Marketing Bill be now read a second time. The object of this Bill is to make possible the more orderly and efficient marketing of home-grown cereals. It will lead to the creation of a valuable system of market intelligence for the growers; it will encourage research and demonstrations in the handling and storage of these cereals, and it provides certain carefully defused trading powers for the new Home-Grown Cereals Authority. At a time when so many newspaper headlines are magnifying the differences between the farmers, or some of them, and my right honourable friend the Minister of Agriculture, we have here an example of the way in which the Minister is quietly pressing forward with positive and constructive plans to give the agricultural industry a more sound and profitable basis on which to work.

The Bill is based upon and implements an agreement reached last September with the farming and trading interests concerned. My right honourable friend has

readily and fully acknowledged the skill and patience displayed by his predecessor in office, in the negotiations which led to this agreement. I am sure your Lordships would like to record a similar acknowledgement. As would be expected with this background, the Bill enjoyed a wide measure of support during its passage through another place, and the agreed Amendments which were made have meant useful improvements to the original draft. I trust that the Bill will be afforded a similarly happy treatment in your Lordships' House.

Clause 1 provides for the establishment of the Home-Grown Cereals Authority. The Authority will be made up of three elements—three to five independent members including the Chairman and Deputy Chairman who will represent the general national interest and the important interest of the consumers; nine members to represent the interests of producers, including those producers who feed grain to their livestock; and nine members to represent the interests of the trade. The Authority will be a United Kingdom body and the members will be appointed by the three Ministers responsible for agriculture in their respective countries, acting jointly. The Bill as originally published did not provide expressly for representation of growers' interests in Scotland and Northern Ireland. I believe your Lordships will welcome the specific provision which has now been made for this.

The Authority's first main objective will be to encourage a better phasing of supplies coming on to the market throughout the season. Much has been done already, under the seasonal scale for wheat and the Barley Incentive Scheme as part of the cereals deficiency payments arrangements, to encourage growers to hold their grain off the market for varying periods of time. But there is still a tendency towards shortages at certain times and excessive supplies at others. There is still need, in the interests of growers and commercial users alike, to ensure that supply and demand are more evenly matched. Forward contracts meet this need; they provide specific dates of delivery and thus enable it to be known at what times supplies will be coming on to the market. For this reason

the encouragement of forward contracting is given great prominence in this Bill.

The Authority will be empowered, under Clause 2, to prepare schemes for bonus payments to growers in respect of forward contracts, and as soon as possible after their establishment will be required to prepare schemes for wheat and barley. The financial incentives which the Authority will be able to offer should do much to encourage the development of forward contracting. The clause will also enable the Authority to make arrangements for loans to those growers who are prepared to enter into forward contracts. This will help growers who could not otherwise afford to hold their grain off the market. It was part of the September agreement that information about loans to growers made by the Authority should be made available in order to safeguard the interests of agricultural merchants and others providing credit to farmers. There was a good deal of discussion in another place on the best way of giving effect to this. The amended wording of Clause 2(5), now before us, was generally acceptable in the other House as implementing the September agreement but, at the same time, safeguarding the privacy of the grower.

In addition to their powers under Clause 2 to encourage and facilitate forward contracting, the Authority will be able, under Clause 3, to bring in schemes for bonus payments to growers linked to deliveries at specified times of the year, irrespective of the form of contract. Our experience with the Barley Incentive Scheme has shown the value of arrangements of this kind. The Authority will be under no obligation to introduce schemes under Clause 3, but if they find these would be a useful adjunct to their schemes under Clause 2 they will be able to provide accordingly.

The Authority's second main objective will be the promotion of better market intelligence, research and demonstration and improvements in trade procedure. I need not emphasise the importance of prompt and accurate information about the state of the market and the prospects ahead in enabling growers to plan their sales over the season to the best advantage. Clause 6 will enable the

Authority to provide a market information service, and this should be of the greatest value to farmers and traders. The Authority will also be able to take over, if they so decide, the valuable work of the unofficial Working Party under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Norman, and to continue the system of guide prices. Apart from encouraging improvements in trade procedures, the Authority will also be empowered under Clause 6 to undertake or promote research and demonstration in connection with the storage and physical handling of home-grown cereals. This would enable them to promote the development of bulk handling and storage and to encourage other improvements in the physical collection, distribution and condition of home-grown supplies.

So far I have been dealing with the Authority's non-trading powers under Part I of the Bill. These powers could and should, on their own, bring about significant improvements in the marketing of home-grown cereals. But it is possible that a situation might still arise where, although the price of imported supplies was held by the minimum import prices, the market price of our own grain might fall below the fair equivalent of those prices after allowing for the normal quality, handling and transport differentials. This is the possibility which Part II of the Bill is designed to cover by providing, in certain clearly defined circumstances, for the exercise of trading powers by the Authority.

These are reserve powers and the initiative in seeking them would have to come from the Authority. If they could satisfy Ministers that the powers were necessary to carry out the objects of the Bill, Ministers could make an order conferring trading powers on the Authority. Under Clause 8(6) of the Bill the Order would come into force immediately, but would lapse after forty sitting days unless approved by each House under the Affirmative Resolution procedure. This provision in the Bill gives effect to the agreement reached last September. The Authority would need to weigh the factors in the situation very carefully before approaching Ministers, and Ministers would have to satisfy themselves that the case had been made out. But, if that position were established, it clearly would be essential for the Authority to be able to proceed without delay, but without prejudice to

[Lord Beswick.]
proper Parliamentary consideration of the necessary Affirmative Resolution.

The Authority would be free to buy grain only when the average market price had been below a prescribed level for a stated period, and they would have to cease buying when the average market price had risen above that level. Under Clause 9 the prescribed level would be a price derived from the relevant minimum import price after due allowance for quality, handling and transport differentials. The purpose of the trading powers would be to help further, if necessary, the matching of supplies and requirements over a particular cereal year. Under Clause 11 the Authority would be required to dispose of all the grain they had bought, either within the same cereal year or at latest within a month thereafter. This provision is intended to ensure that there is no carry-over of stocks from one year to the next, which could only serve to disrupt the market in the following season.

I turn now to the financing of the Authority. This is dealt with in Part III of the Bill which also contains supplementary provisions. The main beneficiaries of the improved marketing which this Bill is designed to bring about will be the cereal growers. The greater part of the Authority's revenue will therefore be raised by levies on growers. At the same time the Bill will authorise my right honourable friend to make an Exchequer contribution towards the Authority's administrative or other expenditure on their non-trading activities under Part I of the Bill, excluding actual disbursements on bonus payments, loans and loan guarantees. The Exchequer contribution is dealt with in Clause 12.

Under Clause 13 the Authority will be required, before the beginning of each cereal year, to submit to Ministers their estimates of the amount required to be raised by levies on growers in that year. There will be separate estimates for non-trading purposes and for trading purposes, if any. The effect of Amendments made in another place is that the Authority will have to submit, with their estimates, proposals for the apportionment of the amount or amounts shown as between the different kinds of home-grown cereals. It will then be for Ministers to determine the rates of levy

for each kind of cereal. Their decisions will be embodied in annual orders prescribing the levies, and will show separately how much is attributable to the non-trading functions and, if any, to the trading functions. These orders would be laid before Parliament and would be subject to Negative Resolution procedure. The normal method of collecting the levy would be by deduction from the cereals deficiency payments to growers. The Bill sets out the machinery for this and also provides, should the occasion arise, for the alternative method of direct collection of the levy by the Authority.

As I have said, the Bill gives effect to an agreement reached between the farming and trade interests. It embodies a programme of action which has the support of all the interests primarily concerned with the production, marketing and first-hand processing of home-grown cereals. These interests will be represented on the Home Grown Cereals Authority and the Authority will be able to count on their good will and co-operation. This good will may well prove the Authority's greatest asset. With this good will, and constructive co-operation all round, there should result benefit and advantages to all—producers, traders and consumers. I beg to move.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^a.
—(Lord Beswick.)

3.50 p.m.

LORD ST. OSWALD: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Beswick, for his exposition of the Bill, and I am happy to welcome him face to face across this Table for the first time on my part. The fact that his former experience in the aviation industry is now being applied to agriculture is not as curious as it might at first seem. They are, in fact, the two most adventurous and technologically advanced industries in the country, and neither of them appears to be getting a great deal of encouragement from the present Government. However, to-day is an exception.

Last Thursday when we were debating the market development scheme, the noble Lord, Lord Champion, after a little light prompting from me, said that he was pleased to be able to pay occasionally a compliment to the previous Government for some little thing which they did, by

which he meant some bequest of which the present Government has become the fortunate beneficiary. Now, 120 hours later, he will have yet another cause for pleasure in the form of the present Bill which also concerns marketing. It seemed a trifle curious to me last week that he should regard marketing as a "little" matter. I recall that when in Opposition the noble Lords now occupying the opposite Benches did not regard marketing as a "little" matter. Columns of *Hansard* were filled, notably, for instance, by the noble and indefatigable Lord, Lord Stonham, in catechising me, quite properly, on the Government's intentions regarding marketing, both agricultural and horticultural. Now it becomes a "little" matter. There is nothing, I think, unexpectedly inconsistent in this. It is purely a Parliamentary admission of the way in which, when examining the interests of agriculture, the present Administration reverse the telescope and peer with great absorption through the wrong end. However, in this case they have not chosen to change seriously the scale or structure of this bequest, as now presented to Parliament.

I remember well the background and the special character of this achievement. For some years our support system had been under an increasing strain, resulting in ever greater deficiency payments. It stood to reason, though the Opposition of those days was sometimes loath to observe the reason, that a system which made up the difference between the guaranteed price to our farmers and the world price of grain would become intolerable and unrealistic as, on the one hand, the efficiency of our own growers increased, while on the other, we remained an unlimited market for the grain producers of the world. My right honourable friend the previous Minister therefore determined that the open-ended character of our support system, at least as applied to some agricultural commodities, would have to be adapted to modern conditions. This was done for cereals last year, as noble Lords will remember, in time for the Price Review.

It required a twofold operation with two quite separate, equally delicate, chains of negotiation. There were import controls, a completely new conception for this country, which had to be agreed upon by our various suppliers. There

were Standard Quantities, in a form also new to our own industry, which had to be agreed upon by the unions on behalf of our own producers. Neither one of these could be obtained by agreement without the other. Once they were achieved, then it became possible to introduce a system of more orderly marketing, as the noble Lord, Lord Beswick, has said, and the present Bill is, in fact, the promising child of that main achievement in cereals. It is a child of truly distinguished parentage.

However, the third agreement which made this Bill possible did not emerge like Jupiter from a shower of gold. It was achieved in the last weeks of August and part of September by the determination and patience of my right honourable friend the previous Minister, to which the noble Lord who introduced the Bill has already paid graceful tribute, for which I thank him. When one remembers that at this time my right honourable friend was lying in hospital with a broken pelvis, with his legs suspended on pulleys and in considerable pain, I think most Members of this House would be prepared to pay him particular tribute. It was a time when most men would have contracted out of any sort of effort, political or otherwise. But, regarding himself, as he always has, as the servant of agriculture, such inactivity and withdrawal from his duties was not in his character. It was, in fact, in his hospital room that much of the negotiation took place which bore fruit in the agreement signed on September 22.

My Lords, many people, as the noble Lord has said, contributed to this agreement, and to all of them the industry and the consumer may well give thanks. But I think it is worth alluding to the wise and broadminded approach of the trade to this original proposal. The Bill ensures that the grain will be sold at the maximum price feasible with regard to the size of the crop. At first sight, this would hardly seem to be to the advantage of the trade. But the encouraging aspect of those discussions was the willingness of all to appreciate a common interest, and the basic objective of this common interest has been retained in the Bill now before us. Better marketing suits everyone, but it does not always happen that those representing individual and distinctive interests are able to see that,

[Lord St. Oswald.]
by apparently giving in one direction, they themselves will benefit from the general improvement obtained thereby.

I am not going to score Party points by painting in at this juncture how this conception differed from that of a commodity commission, the beau-ideal of the Labour Party's manifesto. Suffice it to say that, in this instance, they perceived the wisdom of our approach and turned to good account the work already done. I sincerely congratulate the noble Lord and his colleagues, reflecting across the Floor the pleasure of the noble Lord, Lord Champion, last Thursday, in his glow of political gratitude to ourselves. I would say, however, since he qualified it as only an "occasional" pleasure, that he will now have experienced it for a second time within two Parliamentary days, and to expect to win approval with greater frequency while sitting on that particular Bench, and in this particular Parliament, appears to be just a trifle optimistic.

Before sitting down, I have one or two questions to ask the noble Lord. The farming industry, in general, breathed a great sigh of relief on learning that this conception would be adopted instead of having a commodity commission imposed upon it. It will breathe even more easily, if the noble Lord would tell us to-day, that the Home Grown Cereals Authority, to be set up under this Bill, will not become a kind of sub-office of a future commodity commission. If that particular ghost could be well and truly laid, then farmers would be able to enjoy a deeper and more tranquil sleep at night, well earned after their day's labour.

My second question concerns the composition of the Authority itself. As the Bill reaches us after its Third Reading in another place, the Authority will consist of nine N.F.U. members— including not less than one from Scotland and one from Northern Ireland, as the noble Lord pointed out—nine from the trade and three independent members. The question I have to ask concerns the nine producers' members who at present, as I understand it, are to represent statutorily and exclusively the growers of cereals. There is to be no one specifically representing the feeders of cereals, and there seems to be some oversight here. I am aware

that the noble Lord, Lord Beswick, mentioned those who feed grain to their animals, as if they had some *ex-officio* place on the Authority. I have not discovered that in the Bill. If I am wrong, I shall be very glad to be corrected; but if not, I wonder whether the noble Lord will undertake to look at this point and will extend some hope that, at a later stage of this Bill, this omission will be rectified, preferably by the Government.

Thirdly, I should be glad if the noble Lord could be clearer or fuller in describing the point at which the Authority would intervene in the market. His noble friend said the Minister was bound to be satisfied; but if the Minister is satisfied with this year's Price Review, as he appears to be, this is an alarming assurance rather than otherwise. The noble Lord in fact gave more of an explanation than that, I am aware. He mentioned the prescribed level; but I thought his description—and I do not want to be unfair—of the prescribed level was a little cloudy, at least to me. Perhaps I ought to have understood it better. The process of raising money, as described in Clauses 8, 13, 15 and 16, is complicated, though I think necessarily so, but it would interest us to understand better in what circumstances the Government propose that this whole process would be set in motion.

The other purpose for which the levy or levies are required is for market research. This is a most praiseworthy purpose, visualised in the original agreement, but it carries, of course, the danger of duplication and overlapping with other research bodies. I am thinking, for instance, of that remarkable institution, the National Institute of Agricultural Botany at Cambridge, which I was fortunate enough to visit on certain occasions during my own term of office; but there are others doing equally important work, all fully occupied. I am sure that many of my noble friends would thank the noble Lord for an assurance that the Government will be on their guard against any duplication of their efforts.

My Lords, I end by saying again that we like this Bill. We felicitate the noble Lord upon its introduction. I should like to think that to-morrow I shall be able to be equally uncritical, but the more I study the Price Review White Paper, I must mournfully admit, the

harder I think this is going to be. However, to-day he may wear his inherited halo with welcome and well-deserved panache.

4.3 p.m.

LORD WISE: My Lords, when I put my name down to speak on this particular Bill I noticed that the noble Lord, Lord Digby, was to make his maiden speech on it, and I was hoping that I should have the opportunity of following him. However, as I am in front of him on the list, I want to assure him of a very warm welcome in your Lordships' House, as so many of us knew his father and respected him very much indeed. He was an old friend of mine, and I am very glad to welcome his son.

My Lords, the Minister has explained the purpose of this particular Bill, which is to improve the marketing of home-grown cereals. At the moment, it appears that wheat and barley alone are mentioned, but I gather that later on, or even when it comes into operation, oats also will be included. The improvements foreshadowed by this particular Bill are long overdue in cereal marketing. The marketing of cereals and other farm products is unreliable, unsatisfactory and subject to week-by-week, and sometimes perhaps even day-by-day, fluctuations. In most agricultural marketing stability and orderly standards are, for the most part, unknown. It is perhaps a matter of some wonderment that efficiency in farming has been maintained, and even increased, when one remembers that an important part of the farming business is left to the manipulation of grain market bidders or buyers on the farm or at the granary, who very often pay no heed to the welfare of the producers if they themselves can prosper at the expense of others through their lack of knowledge or toil. If other businesses were carried on in the same haphazard way as agricultural marketing and we all tried to score off others, what a discredited business nation we should become.

Agriculture has suffered from this marketing inefficiency and incompetence for all times in living memory. I hope we are at last about to remedy the deficiencies. Here is a Bill which may bring about improvements and stability in cereal marketing and disposal. Whatever may have been its inception or its distinguished parentage, as was men-

tioned by the noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, and its later progress towards the Statute Book, it merits support from all sides of your Lordships' House. It will serve a purpose for a trial period, but in my view it is only a stop-gap as it covers only home-grown products of a certain kind, and leaves us still to some extent at the mercy and competition of imported cereal. I do not believe you can effectively deal piecemeal with the marketing difficulties of cereals without joining home-grown and imported together under the jurisdiction and organisation of one cereal authority. This Bill takes one step, but we may find that the next steps are the more important and effective ones. Whatever we do in the future must be done in the national and consumers' interest, and for the betterment of the conditions and prosperity of our food producers. Other interested parties are organised, and can look after themselves.

The noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, mentioned the debate which takes place to-morrow. I do not want to trespass upon what may be said or discussed then, but now that a start has been made for the improvement of cereal marketing the door is wide open for extending our future experiences into other agricultural products. The noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, put one or two queries to my noble friend who is to reply, and, very briefly, I should like to do much the same. The question of market intelligence has been mentioned, and I am wondering what procedure will be adopted, or what method of circulation will be used, to notify farmers as to the prospects of the markets, or when and how they should sell their grain advantageously.

The question of the levy has also been referred to. As has been said, the procedure in regard to the levy is very difficult to follow. It refers to registered growers, and I am wondering (perhaps it has already been dealt with) whether the levy will be raised on all the registered growers or only on those who sell their products either to the Authority or to the merchants. It is suggested also that the Authority may in certain seasons make a profit, and I am wondering whether the levy will be automatically imposed in the particular year when profits are made or whether those

[Lord Wise.] profits will be put on one side and used to establish a reserve fund. Has any estimate been made as to what the total annual amount of the levy will be? This Bill refers only to the farmer, and the levy apparently refers also to the farmer alone at the present time. I am wondering why it would not be possible to join the merchants in the particular amount of the levy and let them share with the farmers a portion of the levy, so as to ease the burden which may fall upon the producer.

The question of the purchase of cereals by the Authority has also been raised. If the purchase has to be made and the grain stored for any length of time before it is resold by the Authority, I wonder what arrangements will be made for storage purposes. Those are just a few comments which I thought I should like to make on the Bill, but I commend the Bill and hope it will have a quick passage through your Lordships' House and so reach the Statute Book at an early date.

4.11 p.m.

LORD DIGBY: My Lords, I am prefacing my first words in your Lordships' House with a declaration of interest. While I have not been elevated as a "barley Baron" and, indeed, would vehemently deny that title, cereals marketing affects my activities as a typical West Country mixed farmer, in that I grow cereals, I dry cereals, I store cereals and I sell cereals, either to brewers or millers, and then I change my hat and I buy back those cereals in the form of brewer's grains or dairy cake for my cows.

Cereal growers fall roughly into three groups. First, there are those with no drying or storage facilities, who must sell at harvest time consequently causing a glut, leaving themselves at the mercy of the corn merchant, who, though making the most of the situation and offering the lowest possible price, yet is in very genuine difficulties in coping with the vast flood from the combines. It is worth noting that there is an increasing acceptance that these farmers are following the best policy, bearing in mind that they are not carrying large stocks financed by a 7 per cent. overdraft and that the capital otherwise tied up in a grain drier can be used for the purchase of livestock.

The second group have what might be termed "Heath Robinson" facilities, converting their existing buildings with much ingenuity and little expense to store limited amounts of grain on the floor and in sacks. Provided they have a reasonably dry harvest and the considerable labour required to move the grain, this group can store until the price rises after the harvest glut; but, due to high moisture and vermin troubles, they are unlikely to be able to store for more than two or three months and therefore must sell before Christmas.

The third, an increasingly large group, have invested considerable capital in drying and bulk storage plant. As they can store indefinitely, their only criterion for time of sale is a financial one. They must offset the cost of their bank overdrafts against a possible price rise on the market and any Government incentive payments. Once in three or four years the price of barley rises high—as is the case this year, due to the American dock strike. Many farmers feel, having invested the capital, that they must retain the chance of a big return in certain years by holding barley until the Spring. Thus we see the pattern emerging of a torrent at harvest, a steady stream in Autumn, reducing to a trickle in mid-Winter and a final disposal rush which is very hard to predict.

This is contrary to the wishes of the compounders and the exhortations of Governments. They say, very reasonably, that they cannot be expected to take all the home-grown cereals unless they can be assured of a predictable quantity evenly spread over the season. For several years the Government have exhorted us to arrange forward contracts. I have tried this, but the forward price offered has never been high enough to constitute a reasonable gamble for the seller. In fact, the only two forward contracts that I have made have resulted in my selling grain at £2 below the current price.

The bonus payments and loans in Part I of this Bill should go far towards levelling out deliveries of cereals, thus simplifying the job of the trade and helping them to use all supplies of home-grown cereals. But let us remember that these loans and bonuses must be paid for and that it is the grower who has to pay, not the trade and not the Government. In fact, the bonuses will be paid

to the "wise virgins" who have spent capital on grain driers, at the expense of the "foolish virgins" who have spent all their available capital on livestock. These are the farmers who will be penalised, not only as at present by low prices at harvest time but also by having to pay a levy to subsidise the capital expenditure of the "barley Barons". This is quite right in terms of orderly marketing and balance of payments, but I cannot accept that anyone can be foolish who prefers a herd of cows to a gleaming grain drier.

We may well find that this Bill will put an end to the attempt of West Country dairy farmers to maintain their income in the face of rising costs and wages by growing a few fields of barley. Again, it may well be right that the less efficient producers should revert to grass and stock; but rest assured that if forced out of grain these farmers will fight even harder to force an increase in the penny a gallon on milk announced by the Minister, which is reduced by the computers of the Milk Marketing Board to a halfpenny.

This Bill sets out to help growers with limited capital to take advantage of these schemes by providing loans; but this is of no use to the grower who cannot dry and store. I hope the Authority will take positive steps to encourage co-operative drying and storage schemes, so that it is only the unenterprising who pay the penalty of harvest-time marketing, and not the smaller farmer with a shortage of capital. Consequently I would ask your Lordships to consider an Amendment at a later date to permit the Authority to make loans to *bona fide* co-operative grain drying syndicates to encourage erection of grain drying and storage plants. If the Authority succeeds in achieving the object of this Bill, the return on these plants should be ample for servicing these loans and the Authority would have a good security.

I am optimistic enough to believe that Clause 6, which provides for market intelligence, may be the best safeguard of small producers, as I take an unflinching joy in each new year's crop of stories about Russian barley coming in with "snow on its whiskers" to depress the price. Thus I welcome this Bill as a measure to help millers and farmers who use cereals, because it "falls over back-

wards" to ensure that it does not artificially raise the price and because it gives them some stability for forward planning. I welcome it as a help to the Government to keep down deficiency payments and to effect the maximum saving on the balance of payments by full utilisation of home-grown cereals. Finally, on behalf of the grower, I welcome the provision of a stable framework and the information required to strengthen his weak bargaining position.

4.20 p.m.

LORD INGLEWOOD: My Lords, when I saw the noble Lord, Lord Champion, this morning and gave him notice that I was going to ask him a question, to which I hoped he could reply at the end of this debate, I did not know that I was also going to have the unexpected opportunity and pleasure of congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Digby, on his maiden speech—a most lucid and knowledgeable speech. I am sure that many of your Lordships who knew his father much better than I did (I had the pleasure of knowing him but not very well) will be delighted to know that he is following in his distinguished parent's footsteps, in the sense that he not only has a real interest in agriculture but obviously has also had a wide experience of it. I hope that we shall often have the pleasure of hearing him again on many occasions. The noble Lord has been skilful in choosing this occasion to make his maiden speech, because if he does not receive satisfactory answers to his points this afternoon, he will have a chance of putting them again to-morrow, on which occasion I hope that he will put them with still greater force.

I should like to follow up one point in his speech, in regard to the problem of the smaller grower. I wonder whether the noble Lord, in his reply, can give us any idea of the size of the levy and the amount of the bonus which the Government may have in mind. I know that he cannot say accurately, but whatever he can say will be a great help, particularly to the smaller grower.

The original question about which I spoke to the noble Lord this morning concerns the rather roundabout drafting of Clauses 2 and 3. Unless anyone reading this Bill knew a little about the agricultural background, he might

[Lord Inglewood.]
wonder what it is all about. The Government draftsmen left out two words—"oats" and "Scotland". If both of these were inserted in the Bill, the intention would be much clearer. If, at a later stage, we should pass a scheme covering the problem of oats in one part of the United Kingdom, may I ask the noble Lord not to assume that he has met the problem by authorising a scheme which covers Scotland only, because oats are as much a crop immediately South of the Border as to the North. From the point of agrowing oats, the area is really one, and it is thoroughly bad administration to provide, by Government action, different forms of administration North and South of the Border when there is no good reason for so doing. It has happened all too often, and I hope that the noble Lord will see that, if there is to be a separate scheme covering oats, at least its boundary includes all parts of the North where oats are important and does not just follow the Border between England and Scotland.

My second and third points, which have arisen since I have been listening to this debate, are both very short. Does the noble Lord really think that an Authority of 21 or 23 is the most efficient? Is it not much too large to get any business done speedily? What I should like to see is a body of 12 or 15 members, which I think is large enough to cover all the interests likely to be affected and would be much more efficient and speedy in action. My third point follows what the noble Lord, Lord Wise, said about importing cereals now and in the future. He made the very good point that we cannot consider home-grown cereals without also considering imports from overseas. Perhaps it would be more appropriate if the noble Lord left the answer till to-morrow, because I am sure he is going to be asked many questions about the outlines of his Party's agriculture policy. I shall not mind if the noble Lord does not say anything this afternoon, but I hope that, either this afternoon or to-morrow, he will try to tell us how the improved marketing arrangements will link up with imports from overseas, on which this country is, and always will be, to a certain extent dependent.

4.26 p.m.

LORD BURTON: My Lords, may I also add my congratulations to the noble Lord, Lord Digby? I was very pleased to see the considerable knowledge he brought to this debate and how lucidly he has expressed it. I had not intended to speak, and the noble Lord, Lord Wise, has commented on most of the points I wished to make. However, they are so important that I think they will stand re-emphasis. No one will argue against the ordinary marketing board, or, indeed, against anything trying to establish one. However, the new Authority appears to be horribly like the Potato Marketing Board, and we all know that this wretched Board has no control over imports. Even with comparatively small imports of potatoes, the price available to farmers can fall catastrophically.

In the case of cereals there will be considerably greater imports, and therefore I feel that it is most important that something is done to give us at least advance notice of what cereals will be coming into the country. I wonder whether we can be given any idea of what notice will be available to us. Will the Authority have a potential seasonal knowledge of what will come in and will they be able to pass this on to the grower? Otherwise, as the noble Lord, Lord Digby, said, forward contracts will be extremely difficult. How can we possibly make forward contracts, when we do not know if there is going to be a sudden influx of Russian grain? Then the wretched farmer will once more have to meet the cost of this Authority. I shall be very pleased if the noble Lord could tell us how much this will be. My noble friend Lord Inglewood referred to Scotland. I believe that under the Bill we are allowed one member, but it is felt that this representation might be fairly small for the amount of grain grown in Scotland and I have been asked whether the Government would consider having another.

4.28 p.m.

THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (LORD CHAMPION): My Lords, this has been a useful debate. I am grateful to my noble friend for having moved the Second Reading of this Bill for me. The noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, started with the usual exchanges between him and myself. I

have nothing to say against these: they are always conducted on a friendly basis. When we were talking last week about the Agricultural Market Development Executive Committee, I think that I was surely right to say that it was a comparatively little matter. Here, we have a bigger question. I am grateful to the noble Lord for his exposition of the Bill, because what he said, added to what was said by my noble friend, has completely explained the Bill. The more I see the exchanges that take place between the "ins" and "outs"—and I have seen it happen a few times now in another place and here—the more I think of it, looking down upon it as from a great height, as, *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

LORD ST. OSWALD: Keep to that!

LORD CHAMPION: My Lords, I am not keeping quite to that, because I imagine that my approach to-morrow will not be quite so friendly as it is to-day. I feel sure that I shall have the answers to the points the noble Lord may make, and I may be able to toss back a few remarks which will not be quite so friendly.

I would pay tribute to the work of Mr. Soames in this matter. I know that he conducted many of the negotiations while he was still in hospital; and that took a bit of doing. I would also thank the merchants for the way in which they have approached this Bill, because they might have thought that this Bill was against them. On balance, they decided to come in; and I join with the noble Lord in the tribute he has paid to them.

The noble Lord asked me whether this new Authority was to become a sub-office of a commodity commission eventually to be set up; and the noble Lord, Lord Wise, clearly appeared to think that there ought to be some such commodity commission established in future which would have control over imports, as well as over the home market. The noble Lord, Lord Burton, who spoke last, seemed to me to make precisely the same point, and was arguing for a commodity commission. The noble Lord seemed to ask me to commit myself at this stage to something on this. I am not going to do so. The late Lord Morrison of Lambeth, whom I regarded as something of a

mentor in this matter of Parliamentary exchange, would, I am absolutely sure, if he were standing in my place to-day, say: "Let us see how we get on, and having seen how we get on, then take the decisions in the light of what actually happens." I think that in this connection this approach is the right one. At the same time, I recognise the fact, as we all do, that somewhere there has to be this linking up of the amount of cereals going on to the home market and the import. The last Government recognised this fact—and, indeed, entered into agreements with the cereals exporters to this country; and we shall have to see how those arrangements that were then entered into will work out.

The noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, then asked me whether feeders will have direct representation on the Authority, and in what capacity. The clause of the Bill which refers to this matter (and the noble Lord will know that they are specifically referred to there) provides for some flexibility. But I should think there is no doubt that there will be this representation; in fact, the Bill actually mentions the feeders in this connection. It will be for the Minister to decide, and I cannot imagine that he will leave out from the number of people who will form this Authority so important a section of the cereals aspect of farmers as the people who use their own grain for feeding.

The noble Lord also asked me, as did other noble Lords, what will be the amount of the levy.

LORD ST. OSWALD: I did not ask that. I agree that the noble Lord's noble friend went a long way to explain this, and I did not criticise the way he explained it. I merely asked for a fuller explanation of the point at which intervention would be made.

LORD CHAMPION: My Lords, this is a rather detailed point, and I should prefer to deal with it in Committee, if the noble Lord will raise it then. It is a difficult point, and I should not like to commit myself on the matters he has raised. However, I will carefully study his speech, and I hope to be prepared with the answer when we come to the Committee stage.

On the question of research, it seemed to me that the noble Lord rather hoped

[Lord Champion.] that the research would not overlap that being conducted by other bodies; and surely he is right about this. But I am sure that he, having to some extent accepted parentage of this Bill, will know that it is the intention that the research shall, in the main, be confined to distribution, storage and like matters. It will certainly not, I believe, wander into the wider fields the noble Lord mentioned, and will not go into matters which are properly the duty of the agricultural research body. I am fairly sure that this will not happen, and in any case we shall frown on any unnecessary overlapping in this field, while hoping to cover all the research that is necessary in the interest of the whole cereals marketing and the arrangements in connection with it.

The noble Lord, Lord Wise, raised the point about wheat and barley being mentioned specifically in the Bill as at present. As I understand it, the Authority will have power to make representations to the Minister to bring in other products later on, such as oats, which have been mentioned elsewhere. The noble Lord also raised the point, as I have said, about the commodity commission. He referred to the fact that this could only be a stop-gap, and unless you do something about controlling imports there will inevitably always be a difficult market in cereals. I can only give him the same answer as I have given to the noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald: that we shall have to see how we get on, and in the light of experience take any necessary decisions. The noble Lord, Lord Wise, also asked me about market intelligence and how this is going to be notified to the growers. This is precisely the sort of matter which the Authority will have to determine. They will have to make their own arrangements, and provisions will be made in the various schemes, and so on, for the Authority to provide the industry with the sort of information they will require.

On the question of the levy and how it will be raised, so far as I understand it, the levy will be imposed upon all growers who might receive support under the Government's scheme. But we cannot possibly at this stage have any idea as to exactly what sort of amounts the

Authority will decide to levy. This will be a matter for the Authority to consider in connection with the work they have to do. The noble Lord, Lord Inglewood, also asked a question about this. The fact is that sitting on this Authority will be the representatives of the very people upon whom the levy will be imposed, and it will be their job—and, of course, they will do this—to ensure that the levy is not too high for the purpose for which it is designed. I think they will be adequately safeguarded in this respect.

LORD BURTON: Surely they will be very much in a minority. There will be seven of them as opposed to twelve, altogether, against them.

LORD CHAMPION: But the fact is that they will be seven upon whom the levy will be imposed, and they will be the important seven in this regard. I do not have the same sort of fears in this connection as has the noble Lord, Lord Burton. I do not think the Authority will make too high an imposition upon the industry, because clearly there will have to be agreement within the Authority, and the Minister will eventually have a say in this matter.

The noble Lord, Lord Wise, asked me why we do not make a levy on the merchants. Why do we not spread the net so that they have to carry part of the financial burden? I can only say here that this system is not designed specifically to help the merchants. It is designed to help the producers, and we are grateful to the merchants for coming into it, despite the fact that, as I have said, to some extent this scheme might militate against their commercial interests. So I think it would be rather unfair for us to try to devise a scheme that would put some charge upon the merchants who deal in cereals. The noble Lord also asked me about the financial surplus that there might be in one season. Certainly the financial surplus, if it was considerable or of any size, would be carried over to the next season. I should imagine that if the Authority find their levy is too high for the purposes for which it is required they will alter the levy for succeeding seasons. That would appear to me to be the sensible thing to do, and I am sure it would be done by the Authority.

Next we had the extraordinarily good speech of the noble Lord, Lord Digby. He has been congratulated by the noble Lord, Lord Inglewood, who is something of a connoisseur of maiden speeches. He has listened to many in the other place, and congratulated many people from time to time.

LORD INGLEWOOD: My Lords, I have never had the opportunity before.

LORD CHAMPION: Why in Heaven's name does the noble Lord make that intervention when I am making an extraordinarily good point!—at least I thought I was. That is one of the little difficulties about these things. Nevertheless, I am sure that he has listened to many maiden speeches in another place, and indeed here, and would agree with me that this was an extraordinarily good maiden speech—indeed, he said so. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Lord Digby's father in this House, but I did learn, as a result of inquiries, that he was highly respected here and also in his own county, where he held very high office.

The noble Lord himself did what the House always likes: he spoke out of his personal knowledge of the problems we are discussing. How welcome this always is to this House or, indeed, the other House—that we should have people who are able to talk, and talk well, about the things they really understand. The noble Lord was fluent, easy, and he had a touch of humour in his speech, which we all appreciated. If I end with the usual statement, a cliché almost, that we shall be glad to hear him again in the future, I am sure that this is the case. We shall be glad to hear the noble Lord on any subject upon which he chooses to speak in the future, but surely upon this agricultural business which he knows so well. Having said that, I do not invite him to participate to-morrow. I gather that already we have 24 speakers, and to add to that list I would deprecate rather than welcome.

The noble Lord told us of the difficulties which arise from the fact that there can be a torrent of barley or wheat coming on to the market at harvest time, and then a trickle in winter, and a final rush at the end of the season. How well this describes the difficulties which this Authority is set up to mitigate. That is, as I understand it, the purpose of this

Authority, and if it does not work in that way we shall have to find some way of ensuring that we get over the difficulties consequent upon scarcity and glut.

The noble Lord is not satisfied with the forward contracting as it at present exists, and I can understand it. I gather that he lost £2 a ton on some of his barley last year, purely as a result of forward contracting. He went on to welcome the bonus arrangements for which this Bill provides. This, surely, is the whole point of the Bill: that we should provide for the difficulties which he knows, and about which he spoke so well. The noble Lord made a point about drying and storing equipment. I hope this Government will certainly encourage the provision, co-operatively, of drying and storage facilities. If I remember rightly, in past Bills, passed by both Parties, provision is made for covering this sort of problem. If not, I am fairly sure that it will be found in the White Paper as presented, which I dare not discuss or I shall have the noble Lord, Lord St. Oswald, on his feet. I believe there is no doubt that there will be a possibility of our ensuring that just such a thing as that about which he spoke will come to pass—that there will be a greater number of facilities for storage and drying on a co-operative basis, assisted by the Government. I hope I have not committed the Government too far in this connection, but I think not, because this is the sort of thing which we definitely welcome.

The noble Lord, Lord Inglewood, was good enough to tell me of the difficulties that he feels are inherent in the Bill as at present drafted. He mentioned a point which immediately struck me when I first looked at this Bill, and that was the size of the Authority. I must admit that to take something that looks like executive action I like a body that is of executive size, not mass meeting size. The Authority here is undoubtedly a large one. This was considered by the previous Administration, and it has been further considered by this Administration. Having regard to the interests which must find representation upon this Authority, we feel that we cannot have an Authority which is smaller than the one which the Bill sets out to establish and provide. This, I feel, is the only answer I can make in this connection, while

[Lord Champion.]
recognising the points which the noble Lord made.

The noble Lord, Lord Inglewood, also referred to schemes for different parts of the kingdom. The original Bill, as it was presented to another place, said that there should be schemes for different parts of the country. As a result, largely at the intervention of the late Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Soames, in another place, to the Interpretation Clause was added that the parts should be England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. I see the point that the noble Lord makes: that there is little difference in the growing, say, of oats as between the North of England and the South of Scotland. I should think that in a case like this the Authority, being made up of knowledgeable people, would not make separate schemes for oats for Scotland and England. If it did, it would do so only after taking advice and considering all aspects of this matter. I am not sure that this will wholly satisfy the noble Lord who, I think, is very much against the hiving off of Scotland from the general agricultural provisions which apply to England and Wales. The noble Lord nods his assent to this, and to some extent I agree with him. But, you know, this lot North of the Border are a pretty steady, difficult lot; and the noble Lord has been in the Ministry and knows well some of the difficulties that have to be faced in this connection! I hope I shall not get into trouble with the noble Lord, Lord Hughes, or the noble Lord, Lord Balerno, for having said that.

LORD BALERNO: The hackles are rising.

LORD CHAMPION: This provision is based upon precedent and, I suppose, if precedent has worked fairly well in the past you do not necessarily want an innovation in a Bill of this sort. The noble Lord, Lord Burton, supported the Authority, but he did not want it to be too much like the Potato Marketing Board. I am not at this moment going to defend the Potato Marketing Board. I have already spoken at some length in reply to points raised by the noble Earl, Lord Kinnoul. All I can say in this connection is that the potato growers would be in a pretty sorry position if

they did not have a Potato Marketing Board. I think the Authority which is proposed in this Bill is certainly a step in the right direction, and I feel fairly sure that your Lordships will support the Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

SALMON AND FRESH WATER FISHERIES

4.49 p.m.

VISCOUNT AMORY rose to ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration has been given to the Report of the Committee on Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries presided over by Viscount Bledisloe which reported in May, 1961; and when action is expected. The noble Viscount said: My Lords, it is an agreeable experience to me to find myself discharging a question in the direction of the noble Lord, Lord Champion, because in other days in another place he used to bombard me with the most lethal interrogations and, your Lordships will not be surprised to know, with that subtle charm which seemed to imply, "You are advised to attempt not more than three questions." To-day I want to make it clear that it is not my object to make a violent attack on the Government, but, on the contrary, on the eve of the debate to-morrow, by gentle words to lull the noble Lord into a sense of false security.

What I want to ask him to-day is whether he will tell us what the Government's intentions are in relation to the Report of the Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of my noble friend Lord Bledisloe which reported in 1961. I should like to ask him, if I may, whether he shares the opinion of the last Government, which certainly I do, that this Report was an able, authoritative and most useful one. If so, when do the Government propose legislation to give effect to the recommendations? I would also ask whether the noble Lord would tell us if the Government accept broadly the recommendations of that Report.

I must own, my Lords, that I feel a certain parental responsibility in this matter because it was I, when I was Minister of Agriculture, who had the

temerity to invite my noble friend, Lord Bledisloe, and his colleagues to undertake this task. Unhappily I understand that it is on record that I assured the Committee that their Report, when they made one, would not be pigeon-holed. Exactly the minimum effluxion of time that constitutes the process of pigeon-holing I am not quite sure—I do not feel a competent enough ornithologist to lay down the law about that—but I fear that four years probably does constitute pigeon-holing. It certainly seems to go beyond the process of “immediate consideration” or “urgent consideration” or even “active consideration”. I own that I feel a certain guilt complex here—a unique sensation, I hasten to assure your Lordships, in my case—but the members of this Committee were very busy people, and at the risk of bringing a blush to the cheeks of my noble friend Lord Bledisloe I would say that at the time we felt we were very fortunate indeed to secure their services, and I, for one, would deeply regret it if they had any reason to feel that their time had been wasted.

I understand that my noble friend the Duke of Devonshire may remind us of certain actions that the last Government took to give effect to several of the recommendations, and I understand that the last Government, had it not been for the fact that they have been temporarily superseded, intended to introduce specific legislation to give effect to the recommendations generally. In another place Sir Tufton Beamish recently tried to bring forward a Bill—it seemed to me an excellent one—to deal with some of the recommendations, in particular those dealing with the use of explosives, poisons and electrical devices and damage to weirs and sluices, but by mischance (the kind of mischance that the noble Lord, Lord Champion, will remember does occur in another place) that Bill failed, I think, to obtain the possibility of getting a Second Reading.

I do not propose to comment about the particular recommendations because my friends tell me that if there is a defect in my character it is that I am no fisherman; therefore, I should not feel qualified to do so. But I understand that one or two of my noble friends have some observations that they would like to make. Therefore I propose to confine myself to asking the noble Lord, as I have

said, whether the Government broadly accept the recommendations, and, if so, when they hope to be able to take action to give effect to them.

4.55 p.m.

LORD EGREMONT: My Lords, many anglers in England in all walks of life will be grateful to my noble friend Lord Amory for having asked this Question about the Bledisloe Report. As the noble Viscount, Lord Amory, has pointed out, my noble friend Lord Bledisloe and his Committee reported in 1961. Since then the Report has gone to ground; and I am a willing ferret to get something out. The task of the Bledisloe Committee was to review the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Acts, 1923 to 1935, and their operation, and whenever a question has been raised on the Bledisloe Report since then there has always been the same answer, that there was no room as yet in the Government's programme.

But there is one thing that urgently needs to be done now; that is, to protect the fisheries from a growing evil, that of poaching on a great and piratical scale. There is, for example, a poison called cymag, which I believe is officially approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for killing rabbits. For all I know, it may even carry a subsidy. Certainly there is no real hindrance to its purchase, and I think no regulation against its storage. It is, therefore, very easy for anyone to obtain this poison, either at first hand or at secondhand. It is very convenient stuff for a blackguard to put into a salmon river, where it kills every salmon within reach; and it does so silently. Not only does it kill all types of fish: it also destroys all forms of insect life upon which fish depend.

In Scotland, the authorities became aware earlier of the dangers of this sort of poaching. A new law was brought in by the last Labour Government which heavily increased the penalties for what I call “cymag-ing” in Scotland and enabled salmon suspected of having been caught by “cymag-ing” to be seized and forfeited. In a serious case, this law gave the court power to order the forfeiture of any motor vehicle or boat used in the commission of the offence. This last provision, of course, frightened people from lending their lorries to poachers. I understand that the general opinion in Scotland

[Lord Egremont.]

is that that Act has been almost completely successful in preventing this poisoning of rivers. But "cymag-ing" still continues in Scotland, partly, I think, because of the lack of any control on the sale of salmon in the open season.

Now we are getting "cymag-ing" of English rivers, particularly in Cumberland and other Northern counties. Here I must declare an interest in this matter. I own about 21 miles of salmon and trout rivers in Cumberland and, in addition, two lakes, Bassenthwaite Lake and Wastwater, and various mountain streams and tarns. But as a result I can claim to know something about this subject. There may be an impressiou that salmon fishing is a "perk" of noble Lords and Dukes and tycoons.

A NOBLE LORD: And Viscounts.

LORD EGREMONT: But this is not the case so far as my own fishings are concerned. I allot fishing on my rivers in Cumberland to about 1,100 rods, and of these about 1,020 are the workers, by which I mean 1,020 good working men—many of them miners who work underground. Fishing is their joy, and their joy is being ruined by these people coming and "cymag-ing" the rivers in which they fish.

Last year a gang came along and with cymag killed a multitude of fish. I cannot describe to your Lordships the distress this caused to all these good labouring people. Canon German, the Rector of the Parish of Egremont, spoke eloquently of the distress it had caused local people who work so hard. And the Minister of Agriculture himself is, I am sure, familiar with this problem, particularly in Cumberland. I am sure that he would want to do his best to put it right. There are also some of the more noisy poachers who use dynamite. There are others who use electrical devices; and yet others who may wreck dams, floodgates or sluices with intent to take or destroy fish.

What I am talking about is not poaching for the pot. In West Cumberland, which I know best, poaching has become a nefarious industry, run by disgraceful pirates, depredators, working against their own side. It has been said that every man, deep down, is a fisherman, and I think that, deep down, every man is a fisherman. Good old Izaak Walton wrote that anglers were quiet-spirited men

"free from those restless thoughts which corrode the sweets of life."

My object now is to make a plea for the protection of such people against the wicked corroding of their waters.

What such people want is the out-of-date penalties of the Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act, 1923, brought up to date to meet modern conditions. The 1923 Act contains penalties designed merely to stop the odd poacher who snatches the odd salmon. Quite a number of people have a sneaking regard for that sort of chap. But to-day the organised gangs—those, for example, who use cymag—are really criminals who need dealing with accordingly. Give our police and magistrates the necessary powers by implementing the recommendations of the Bledisloe Report in this regard, and these criminals will be dealt with as they are already dealt with in Scotland.

I speak in no Party political sense, and I am sure that what my noble friend Lord Amory has been saying, and what I have been saying, will have a large measure of sympathy from the noble Lord, Lord Champion, and from the Minister of Agriculture. I am trying to speak for all those who have fishing at heart. For their sakes, and for the sakes of the people in Cumberland about whom I have been speaking, and to achieve this end, Sir Tufton Beamish has introduced in another place a Bill to repeal and re-enact Section 9 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1923. The Bill has, I believe, support from both sides of his House, but it has got blocked. What the good fishermen of England need is protection against these criminal activities, and I venture to suggest that it is for us in Parliament to seek to find that protection for them.

5.5 p.m.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: My Lords, I, like my noble friend Lord Egremont, must also declare an interest in the subject we are debating. Indeed, I must declare an interest for a variety of reasons: first of all, because, although very unskilful, I am a keen angler and I like fishing a very great deal. Indeed, in this I differ very much from my noble friend Lord Amory, who said that one of the few faults in his character was that he was not an angler. I am constantly being criticised for spending far too much time fishing and not nearly

enough time on more serious and important matters. I must also declare an interest in that I have the honour and privilege of being a member of the Fishmongers' Company, so I am concerned, as it were, with the end product of angling. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have the privilege of being President of the Anglers' Co-operative Association, which represents the interests of half-a-million fishermen in this country, mostly, but not all, concerned with coarse fishing as opposed to game fishing. So with regard to anything to do with angling, I am in it up to the hilt.

If I may possibly anticipate what the noble Lord, Lord Champion, will say in reply, I think he may well say, "You ask us to find time for legislation. The noble Viscount, Lord Bledisloe, reported in 1961. Why did you not do it?" That, I think, is fair comment, and to try to anticipate that defence I would say that the last Government met a very considerable number of the recommendations put forward in Lord Bledisloe's Report. There were in the Report, I think, 151 recommendations, and a considerable number of the more important ones were met during the lifetime of the last Government. Recommendations 47 to 53, which are concerned with the very important matter of water extraction, were covered by the Water Resources Act, 1963. Recommendations 54 to 72, which are on the equally important matter of river pollution, were largely met by two Private Bills now on the Statute Book. Recommendations 73 to 83 which are concerned with the strengthening of river boards and setting up river authorities were also met by the Water Resources Act, 1963. So much has been done, though by no means all the recommendations have been met.

My noble friend Lord Egremont made reference to the great evil of "cymaging", and to defeat this evil I think legislation is required on the lines of Recommendations 1 to 3 of the Report. These make suggestions for the strengthening of the penalties against the use of poisons, explosives, and electronic devices in rivers and lakes. I would ask the noble Lord opposite most urgently to give serious consideration to bringing in legislation to meet these points.

In the weeks and months that lie ahead we are going to have much contentious and indeed acrimonious debate. Great and important matters are going to come before this House, such as the question of the nationalisation of steel, and whether the death penalty should be abolished. I am not suggesting for a moment that legislation to meet further recommendations of the Bledisloe Report are of that national importance. But I would just say this: whether or not steel is nationalised, important though it may be, will not add one whit to the sum of human happiness of the people of this country. And if hanging should be abolished, it is possibly true to say that that might add to the happiness of perhaps a condemned man and his close family, though I am not at all sure that it would; but it would make only a few people happier.

Fortunately, in this country there are still vastly more anglers than murderers, and therefore if the Government could find time for legislation, which would be entirely uncontroversial and would get through literally on the nod, it would make hundreds of thousands of people very much happier. Such legislation would not be to enable rich men to indulge in their expensive and privileged sport. I was not wholly sure that I was flattered when my noble friend Lord Egremont coupled Dukes with tycoons. I think if I had the choice I would rather be a tycoon, to be absolutely honest. But I can say, in all sincerity and with absolute truth, that the 500,000 members of the Anglers' Co-operative Association, which represents those who like coarse fishing, above all else would back 100 per cent. any legislation along the lines of Recommendations 1 to 3 that could be introduced.

It is not for me to offer advice to the Government—indeed, the last thing that I should wish them to do is to win the next Election—but I wonder whether they could see their way to introducing this legislation. Perhaps it would not mean that more fish would be caught, but it might catch them a few votes. I leave that to the noble Lord, Lord Champion, to put to his colleagues. All I would say is that this evil exists and legislation would not protect the interests of the privileged. A Bill is something that would find support throughout the

[The Duke of Devonshire.]
country; it would add to the sum of human happiness, and would take up virtually no Parliamentary time at all.

Before closing, I should like to add my own tribute to my noble friend Lord Bledisloe for his Report. It is not often that I read a Government Report through from cover to cover, but I have done this one, and I can say that it is a most interesting document. I can say that all of us who like angling and country and rural pursuits are deeply grateful to him and to his Committee for all the trouble that they took. I think they sat for three and a half years compiling this Report. I would say that the least we can do is to see that all the recommendations are duly implemented. I hope that the Government will see their way to bringing in legislation that will at least meet some, if not all, of the recommendations in the Report.

5.13 p.m.

VISCOUNT BLEDISLOE: My Lords, I had not intended to speak this afternoon on the Report of my Committee, but I should like to take this opportunity to thank my noble friends Lord Amory and the Duke of Devonshire for the kind things they have said about the work of the Committee. We did sit over a period of three and a half years. The members of the Committee had various, and to some extent conflicting, interests. They minimised their differences and they produced a unanimous Report, which was rather surprising in the circumstances. I think it was a Report that commended itself to those interested in fisheries.

I would remind your Lordships that fishing is certainly not a rich man's sport. As we saw from the evidence we had called before the Committee, a large number of working-class people find great relaxation in fishing, and they were perhaps the people keenest to give evidence before us. I do not wish to address your Lordships on the Report. As I was Chairman of the Committee, I think it would be improper for me to do so.

5.15 p.m.

LORD FRASER OF LONSDALE: My Lords, my friends say that my two hobbies are arguing and fishing, and to that extent I declare an interest. But I have not the privilege of being a Duke

or a tycoon, and I do not own a river. Nevertheless, I know many rivers, and fish on a good many also. I think all those of us who are interested in angling and in rivers owe a debt of gratitude to Lord Amory for raising this matter. But I did not think he needed to be quite so depressed as he seemed to me to be about the fact that Lord Bledisloe's Report has been in the cupboard for four years. I sat in this House for day after day, when I think Lord Amory was doing his signal duty in Canada, when we dealt with the Water Resources Bill. Surely that Act did a great deal to implement many of the aspects of the Bledisloe Report. It gave powers to the new authorities which were set up to deal with a great many of the subjects, such as abstraction and pollution and so on, and the rationing of water when the minimum level was not available, and all the rest of it.

I should like to ask the Government to what extent the Act is operating, and how far this minimum level, which is so important, is being maintained, and whether complaints are being received that water is being abstracted so that the minimum level is not being maintained. Perhaps one of the most important things about abstraction is to try to abstract the water from the bottom of a river instead of from the top. That was one of the recommendations of the Bledisloe Committee. It has a true ring in the ear for me, thinking of Lake Windermere and some of the rivers in the Lake District, when the Manchester Corporation now propose to come to Parliament for powers to abstract water from the top of some rivers and even from some of the lakes. I sincerely hope that the Government will set a stern face against this proposal, and will tell them to look again to see whether they cannot get the water from the bottom of the river. Whilst it would be a little more expensive, they would get just as much water. As I say, there is no reason why the thirsty millions of Manchester should not have their water, but there is also no reason why they should not pay for it and get it from places so as to damage the countryside least.

About pollution, I should like to ask whether the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is satisfied that pollution is being slowly brought under control and

the position is improving. I should like, too, to refer to the Bill which my old friend Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish brought to the House of Commons and which, so I have heard to-day, was blocked by time or some other reason about which I know not. As is known to those of us who have been in the Commons, it is exceedingly hard for a private Member to get a Bill through its courses. In my time there I had one or two small Bills which I managed to persuade the Whips of both Parties to agree to. I got them (I think the term is "starred", which means that the Government have adopted the Bills. As a change from the terrible controversy that I am sure is going to arise in another place, and perhaps here, in the next two months, why do not the Government star this little Bill of Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish and give themselves at least one day of peace and unanimity in a House which I am sure will greatly need it?

I do not want to delay the House. I want only to say that any steps that can be taken to preserve and maintain this heritage of ours of beautiful rivers—I would stress that rivers have a beauty not only for the angler but for all who live near, or on, or by them, or who can go and enjoy them—and our fishing, will not only be a fine contribution towards the economy of the country, but also a good contribution towards its health and happiness.

5.18 p.m.

LORD CHAMPION: My Lords, I certainly could not complain about the tone of the debate that has arisen on this Unstarred Question. Indeed, if noble Lords will keep it over to-morrow I shall be most happy. I rather fear that that may not be the case, but I shall have to do my best at any rate to keep it so, so far as I personally am concerned.

The noble Lord, Lord Fraser of Lonsdale, referred to the Water Resources Act and the Authority set up under that Act. I am afraid that they have not yet begun to work. They do not start their job properly until April 1; but of course, the point that he has mentioned is one which must be much in their minds, because they were set up to do precisely the sort of job that the noble Lord has mentioned, and I am

fairly sure that we can leave it to them to do it. I hope to reply later in my speech to the point that he has made about pollution. This, too, is an extremely important point in this connection. I am delighted that the noble Viscount has raised this matter to-day. He said at the outset that he is not an angler, but I have a long experience of the noble Viscount and I certainly know that he knows how to fish for a reply. If it is possible for me to give a reply to his Question to-day, I certainly will attempt to give it.

I have listened with tremendous interest to what noble Lords have said—the noble Viscount, Lord Amory, the noble Lord, Lord Egremont, the noble Duke and the noble Lord, Lord Fraser of Lonsdale, and also the Chairman of the Committee which sat upon this matter. On behalf of Her Majesty's Government I must pay a tribute to the Committee which sat under Lord Bledisloe's chairmanship for the thoroughness with which they performed the task given to them by the noble Viscount, Lord Amory. With the noble Viscount, I have a lot of sympathy with the general principle that when a problem has been examined in great detail by a Committee of Inquiry it is desirable that any consequential action which ought to flow from it should be taken without any undue delay. I hate, as he does, the practice of pigeon-holing, but of course this has to be done from time to time, and I suppose the last Government thought that they had to pigeon-hole the matter for a period. Now it is our job to pluck this out of the pigeon-hole, give it consideration, and then decide what to do, and eventually to present to Parliament what we hope will be the solution to some of the difficulties which still remain, even though we have had certain action on it.

I think I may be permitted at this point to remind your Lordships of the scope of the inquiry and the nature of the recommendations made by the Committee. The Committee, which was appointed by the noble Viscount when he was Minister of Agriculture, was asked to review the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Acts and their operation. The principal Act was the Act of 1923, which contains the main code by which the salmon and freshwater fisheries of this

[Lord Champion.]
country are regulated. The Committee was also asked to take into account the River Boards Act, which deals with the machinery of the administration of the fisheries by the river boards.

Considering the time which had elapsed since the principal Act reached the Statute Book and the fact that much of the current law which governs fisheries in this country dates back to years very much before 1923, clearly there was a case for such a review. The Committee found that very much had happened since 1923 which had had repercussions on fisheries: the increasing demands for water by industry; the increasing problems of sewage works and of factories discharging their effluents into rivers. In addition, since 1923 there has been a wholly desirable increase in angling as a sport. I agree with those who have praised angling as an enjoyable and worthwhile activity, and it is our job to try to improve the facilities and the waters available for it.

In this connection I would specially welcome the words of the noble Lord, Lord Egremont, for I must admit that I was very much under the impression that, as he put it, salmon fishing was the "perk" of noble Lords, Dukes and tycoons. I rather thought this was the case, and I certainly liked his assurance in this connection that out of some 1,100 rods on his Cumberland rivers he lets 1,020 to good working men, as he called them. I am one of those "good working men", but unfortunately do not live near enough to his area to participate in these advantages of the rivers which he throws open to those among whom I would number myself. As we know, the Report also deals with all types of fresh-water fishing, not only salmon fishing.

Perhaps I may be permitted to summarise briefly the Committee's findings on this point. First, they said that conservation must continue to be the guiding policy and fisheries must be guided to this end. Secondly, a number of the provisions of the existing law are obsolete and must be changed. Thirdly, the river board must continue to be the regulatory body subject to the Minister's control, and the Minister should devolve some of the detailed control to river boards. Fourthly, the various statutory restrictions and regulations, such as those

provided in Clause 2 and for particular methods of fishing, should be replaced by local by-laws, thus making for greater elasticity. Finally, they recommended that the penalties for certain serious offences should be increased.

I hope that my brief summary will give offence to no one, particularly to the noble Viscount, Lord Bledisloe, for the summary is very much of a general character. As one of your Lordships has mentioned, the Committee made no fewer than 151 recommendations, of which 90 would involve legislation. If action on those recommendations has been delayed it is not wholly the responsibility of the present Government. I say this in no critical spirit and I have no desire to make a Party point, but this is the fact. This report has been available for a fair time, and there has been no specific legislation on it, but as I shall mention later on, they did certain things some of which have been mentioned by the noble Duke himself.

In connection with possible future action, we must remember that the Report did not disclose serious difficulties in the existing legislation which called for an urgent remedy. They did not find, for instance, that the fisheries were in a state of decline due to inadequate legislation. They pointed out that despite the dangers from pollution and water abstraction, the practice of returning fresh water coarse fish to the water had effectively preserved the stocks. They found no evidence that the present stocks of salmon and sea trout are declining. They also considered that the administration by the river boards had brought considerable benefits to the fisheries, both because they had wider powers than the old fisheries boards and because they had more funds at their disposal.

All this is no reason for doing nothing, but I think it fair to say that, taking the Report as a whole, its recommendations are not of such a character as would justify a high priority when there are so many demands on time. I have noted the advice of the noble Duke. He rather thinks that if we did something about this we should come back with an even greater majority than we had last year. I will pass his advice to my friends who might be considering when to go to the country, as to whether we ought not perhaps to delay it until after we have introduced this legislation. But,

my Lords, I feel that the House will agree that this is not the sort of matter which should have a very high priority.

There is, too, the fact—and this was pointed out by the noble Duke—that since the Report appeared there has been important legislation in connection with pollution and water abstraction. Your Lordships will remember the Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) Act, 1961, and the Water Resources Act, 1963, both of which will undoubtedly improve conditions in the fisheries, and will directly meet certain recommendations contained in the Report. In addition to those Government measures, one of the Committee's recommendations relating to salmon netting has been dealt with as a result of a Private Member's Bill, and there is at present a Bill before another place with Government support. I mention this point because it was particularly raised by the noble Lord, Lord Fraser of Lonsdale. The Government are certainly supporting this Bill and would like to see it passed. If, for some reason, the Bill does not have a Second Reading in another place, I rather hope that lack of ingenuity will not prevent someone from bringing in such a Bill here, where it may go through fairly easily, and then perhaps more easily get through the other place, having passed through here. But I am not issuing invitations.

LORD FRASER OF LONSDALE: My Lords, would the noble Lord say whether the Bill which is receiving Government support is the Tufton Beamish Bill or another one?

LORD CHAMPION: My Lords, I am sorry that I did not make that as clear as I ought to have done. The Bill before another place is to strengthen the law against poaching by means of the poisoning of water. That is Sir Tufton Beamish's Bill. This has Government support, and we are very much hoping that this Bill will somehow find its way on to the Statute Book during this present Session of Parliament. I hope that we shall use our ingenuity in this House, if they fail to get it through in another place, for on this matter of the poisoning of waters I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Egremont, who used strong words—and justifiably.

I must admit that I have a certain amount of sympathy for the poacher; and perhaps this, too, is a result of my own

background. But I like poachers who use what I call "clean methods", and I hate the thought of poaching by means of poisoning the waters and destroying the fish. On this I am certainly in agreement with the noble Lord. I gather that he did not look with such a stern eye upon the clean poacher, the decent one, but he certainly did on the other one and, as I say, I am quite with him on this. Incidentally, I must admit that I liked his reference to Izaak Walton. I took *The Compleat Angler* with me on a speaking tour during the last election, and found that the book itself freed me from "those restless thoughts which corrode the sweets of life" when I got into bed after a day's speaking, even if angling did not do that at that time. I thought it right to remind the House of the developments which have taken place, and to demonstrate the fact that the Committee's recommendations have not been without influence on Government policy.

What about the recommendations that still remain to be acted upon, which is really the whole point of the noble Viscount's Question? My right honourable friend appreciates the desire which has been expressed for an early formal statement of the Government's decision. Last November he saw a deputation from the interests concerned, and he was then urged to introduce early legislation. After careful consideration, my right honourable friend informed the three bodies concerned that, owing to the pressure on Parliamentary time, he could not promise very early legislation on the remaining recommendations. He feels that the next step should be a Government statement, which he will make as soon as practicable, upon the Government's conclusions, and that this will enable the interested bodies to make representations upon the statement and enable consultations to take place with them on the matters necessitating legislation.

As regards the timing of the announcement, my right honourable friend thinks it would be advisable to wait until he has had time to study the contents of the Hunter Committee's Report on the Scottish fisheries law, for as noble Lords will recognise, there must clearly be common ground between the problems in both countries. The Hunter Report is expected within the next two or three months, and I should think, my right

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honourable friend having the advantage of that Committee's Report plus the Bledisloe Committee's Report, upon which there has been a considerable preliminary examination, that should lead to a not too long delay in the announcement and, I hope, the subsequent legislation which should flow from it.

WRITTEN ANSWER

PRISONERS' EARNINGS

BARONESS GAITSKELL asked Her Majesty's Government:

What proposals they have for increasing prisoners' earnings.

THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE, HOME OFFICE (LORD STONHAM): My right honourable and learned friend is reviewing prisoners' earnings generally. Meanwhile, since the present rates were fixed some years ago, increases will be introduced on the 1st April varying from 6d. to 1s. 3d. per week for prisoners, and 6d. to 1s. 0d. for inmates of borstals and detention centres. Prisoners' earnings will now range from 3s. 6d. to 11s. 3d. a week; those of borstal inmates from 1s. 6d. to 8s. 0d.; and those of detention centre inmates from 1s. 3d. to 2s. 6d.

House adjourned at twenty-four minutes before six o'clock.