TIMES PAST THE TIMES

MONDAY FEBRUARY 9 1953

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WEATHER FORECAST

A trough of low pressure is crossing Great Britain. Many E. districts will have long bright periods, but there will be some showers. In the W. showers will be fairly frequent and will fall as snow on high ground. There may be icy roads in places at first.

Forecasts for period 6 a.m. to midnight:—

LONDON, S.E., E., AND N.E. ENGLAND, AND E. AND W. MIDLANDS.—Fresh W. wind, perhaps strong at times; long bright periods, some showers; chance of icy roads in places at first; midday temp., 40-42deg.

S.W. AND N.W. ENGLAND, N. MIDLANDS, WALES, S.W. AND W. SCOTLAND, ISLE OF MAN, AND IRELAND.—Strong W. wind, perhaps reaching gale in places; squally showers of rain or hail, snow showers on high ground, bright periods; midday temp. 42-44deg.

S.E., N.E., AND MID SCOTLAND AND ORKNEY.—Moderate W. wind; long bright periods, some showers, falling as snow on high ground; chance of icy roads in places at first, midday temp. 40deg.

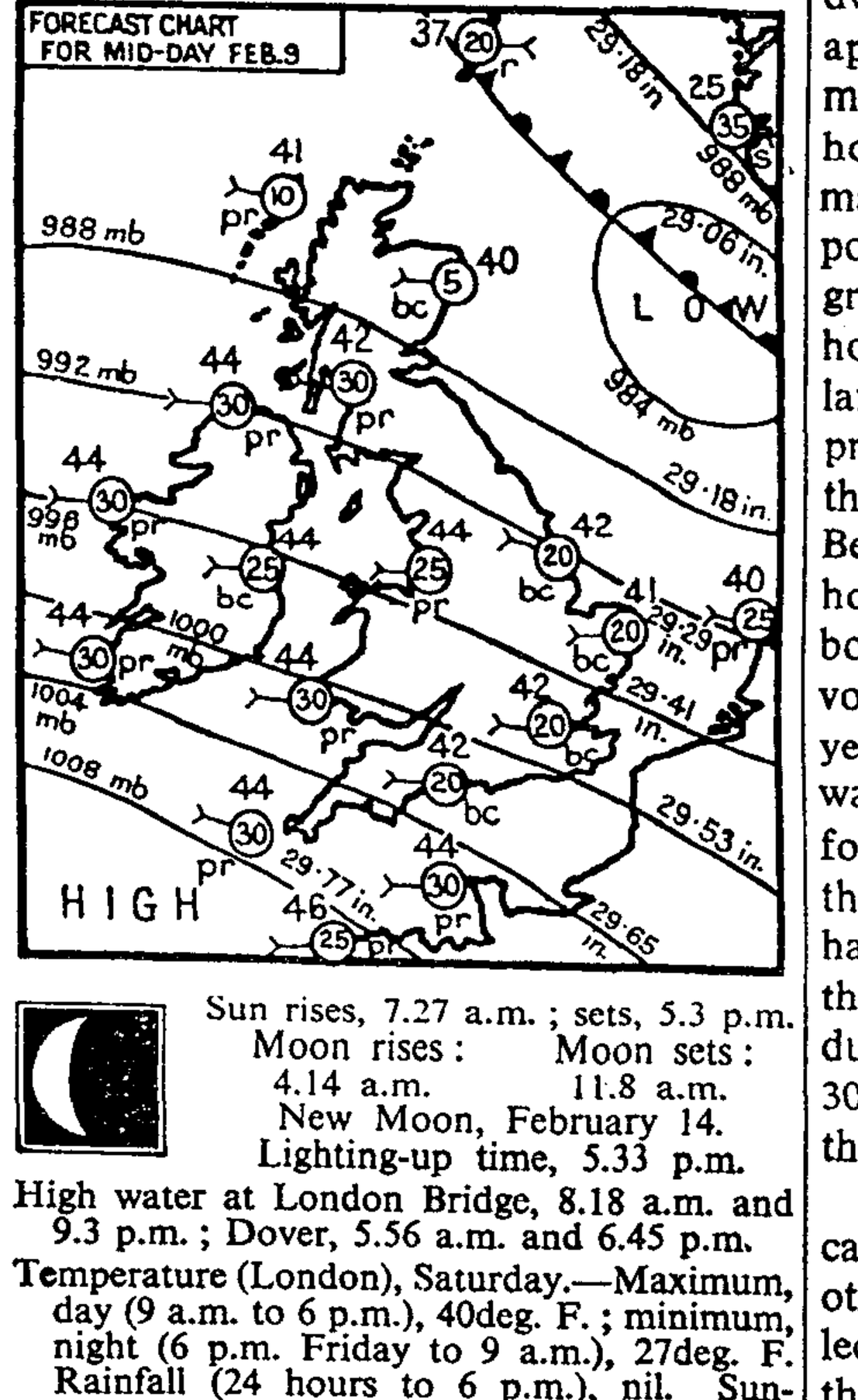
N.W. SCOTLAND.—Moderate or fresh W. wind; squally showers of rain or hail, snow showers on high ground; bright periods; midday temp. 42-44deg.

SHETLAND.—Strong or gale S.E. wind; periods of sleet or snow; midday temp. about 32-35deg.

FURTHER OUTLOOK.—Changeable, with rain or showers in many places, but with some bright periods. Sleet or snow on high ground. Rather cold.

SEA PASSAGES

ALL PASSAGES.—Strong W. wind, perhaps reaching gale at times; showers; good visibility; sea rough.



Sun rises, 7.27 a.m.; sets, 5.3 p.m.
Moon rises: 4.14 a.m. Moon sets: 11.8 a.m.
New Moon, February 14.
Lighting-up time, 5.33 p.m.

High water at London Bridge, 8.18 a.m. and 9.3 p.m.; Dover, 5.56 a.m. and 6.45 p.m.

Temperature (London), Saturday.—Maximum, day (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.), 40deg. F.; minimum, night (6 p.m. Friday to 9 a.m.), 27deg. F. Rainfall (24 hours to 6 p.m.), nil. Sunshine (24 hours to 6 p.m.), 3.6 hours.

Barometer (at mean sea level) at 6 p.m., 1017.4 millibars (30.05in.). Steady.

YESTERDAY

Temperature (London). — Maximum, day (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.), 36deg. F.; minimum, night (6 p.m. Saturday to 9 a.m.), 26deg. F. Rainfall (24 hours to 6 p.m.), 0.06in. Sunshine (24 hours to 6 p.m.), nil.

Barometer (at mean sea level) at 6 p.m., 1006 millibars (29.71in.). Falling.

TO-DAY'S ARRANGEMENTS

Church Assembly, Church House, Westminster.
The Ruskin Society and Friends of Brantwood: Luncheon to commemorate the birth of John Ruskin, Dorchester Hotel, 1.
Tree Preservation in Kensington: Inquiry, Kensington Town Hall, 10.30.
Requiem Mass for those who lost their lives in the floods, Westminster Cathedral, noon.
University of London Institute of Education: Mr. C. T. Cape on "Punishment and the young offender," Assembly Hall, 5.30.
Institute of Public Administration: Dr. A. B. Badger on "The gas industry," Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, 6.15.
University College: Lectures—"The western hemisphere idea and Pan Americanism, 1800-1950," 5; "Shakespeare's tragedies—their interpretation" (II), Gower Street, 5.30.
Sylvan Debating Club: Debate—"It is more depressing to contemplate the future than to reflect upon the past," 7.
Institution of Electrical Engineers: Discussion on "Is technical advertising necessary or desirable?", Savoy Place, 5.30.
Insurance Institute of London: Captain J. H. Drew on "Let go for'ard," 20, Aldermanbury, 5.30.
Institute of Transport: Mr. P. G. Masefield, Jarvis Hall, 66, Portland Place, 5.45.
Gresham College: Professor L. M. Milne-Thomson on "Inversion," 5.30.
Publicity Club of London: Special general meeting, Waldorf Hotel, 6; meeting on the future development of advertising, 6.15.
Royal Academy Winter Exhibition of Dutch Pictures, Burlington House, 10-7.
City of London Art Exhibition, Guildhall, 10-5.
Manchester Chamber of Commerce: Annual meeting, Ship Canal House, King Street, Manchester, 11.30.
British Society for the History of Science: Dr. G. Kreisel on "Formalization," University College, Gower Street, 5.30.
Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain: Presentation of the Hanbury Memorial Medal, 17, Bloomsbury Square, 7.30.
Ecclesiological Society: Mr. H. S. Goodhart-Rendel on "George Edmund Street" (illustrated), College of Preceptors, 2, Bloomsbury Square, 6.
St. Michael's, Cornhill: Organ recital by Dr. Harold Darke, 1. St. Anne's House, Dean Street: Mr. John Heath-Stubbs on "Images in literature," 6.30.
Irving Theatre: *The Drunkard*.
Festival Hall: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra—Friedrich Gulda—Harry Blech, 8.
Memorial services: Brigadier-General D. J. E. Beale-Browne, St. Mary the Virgin, Ringmer, near Lewes, 2.15; Mr. Claud W. Dennis, St. Clement's, Clements Lane, King William Street, noon.
Funerals: Mr. R. K. Bacon, Golders Green Crematorium, 1.15; Professor N. A. V. Piercy, Golders Green Crematorium, 11.15.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

HOUSE OF LORDS

TO-MORROW AT 2.30

Consolidated Fund Bill, second reading; motion by Lord Wise on the de-control of cereals and feeding-stuffs.

WEDNESDAY, at 2.30

Motion by Lord Pethick-Lawrence on equal pay for equal work. Consolidated Fund Bill, third reading.

THURSDAY, at 2.30

Therapeutic Substances (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, second reading; University of St. Andrews Bill, committee; Lord Ogmore, motion on the manufacture and supply of military and civil aircraft.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW, at 2.30

Transport Bill, report.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, at 2.30

Iron and Steel Bill, committee.

FRIDAY, at 11

Private members' Bills.

TO-DAY'S NEWS

IMPERIAL AND FOREIGN

Our Washington Correspondent reports that the United States Government is considering the possibility of a blockade being imposed on the Chinese coast. (p. 8)

Another European settler has been murdered by a Mau Mau gang on a farm 17 miles from Nyeri. (p. 8)

Contracts worth £10m. have been secured by British firms for supplying equipment to build new steel works in Spain. (p. 8)

HOME

The total of contributions to the Lord Mayor of London's National Flood and Tempest Distress Fund so far checked is £165,000. (p. 8)

A project to pump coal to London from the Midlands through a pipe-line is being considered by the Ministry of Fuel (p. 5)

Memorial services were held yesterday for the victims of the Princess Victoria disaster. (p. 8)

300,000 HOUSES

The testing time for the Government's house-building policy will be this year. The bulk of the 240,000 houses and flats completed last year had been started under Labour rule; the houses built this year—most of them started in 1952—will be entirely the products of the Conservative programme. The housing statistics that have just been issued leave no further doubt that the Government have taken the plunge and have committed themselves to producing in 1953 the 300,000 dwellings of their election pledge. During 1952, which began with 226,000 houses under construction, no fewer than 294,000 further dwellings were started. Since 240,000 were completed, 280,000 are left over for completion in 1953. At the current pace of building these unfinished dwellings represent at most eleven months' work. On average, council houses are now taking eleven months, or a little less, to build, against twelve months in 1951; while the average private house is now being built in as little as eight months. A full year's work, even without any improvement in building efficiency, is bound to yield just about 300,000 houses in 1953.

The Conservative election pledge was not dated. It did not go beyond a promise to work towards the magic figure as quickly as the claims of defence would permit. It seems as if circumstances have encouraged the Government to play their political trump card sooner rather than later. Twelve months from now it will have been shown that Conservatives are capable of producing a 50 per cent. greater flow of well-designed dwellings—in no sense jerry-built rabbit hutches—than could the Labour Party when in office; and that this will have been done by increasing the building not only of private houses but also of subsidized council dwellings. The typical Macmillan house apparently needs only nine-tenths of the materials taken by the typical Bevan house. An economy of the same order may be derived from the fact that the proportion of three-bedroom houses has been greatly reduced and the proportion of houses with two bedrooms greatly enlarged. It may well be possible in 1953 to produce 115 to 120 Macmillan houses with the resources required in 1948 for 100 Bevan houses. Yet "permanent" house building at this year's rate is bound to demand a larger total volume of materials and labour this year than at any time since the war. In an industry whose labour force is, if anything, tending to shrink, the number engaged on house building has risen steadily for over a year. Unless there is a marked improvement in productivity the number is likely to reach 300,000 men this year, or 28 per cent. of the whole building force.

It is still not clear that house building can take so large a share without harm to other forms of building, including the neglected maintenance of the older third of the nation's houses which is the most urgent housing problem. The steel shortage which justified restrictions on many kinds of industrial, commercial, and social construction is passing, and it is likely that the housing programme will now begin to impede much work of other sorts that is necessary for economic efficiency. Perhaps it is argued that the value of the enlarged output of new houses outweighs the damage suffered by neglected old houses and by vital industries too slowly re-equipped, as well as by a road system barely maintained in near-repair, by schools too slowly expanded, and by a hospital service prevented from replacing its costly load of outworn buildings at anything approaching even the low prewar rate. The reckoning is intricate, but no dispassionate judge of the country's pressing economic requirement could easily accept so sweeping a conclusion. Certainly the present housing boom would be impossible were not the authorities prepared to incur heavy and mounting losses on the dwellings—five-sixths of the total—which they themselves provide.

A Reassuring Tour

On his tour of western Europe MR. DULLES came and went more quickly than the international implications of the change of Administration in the United States could be fully taken in. About many matters of detail he leaves uncertainty behind him—this was inevitable—but he has left no doubt that he came as a friend. MR EDEN spoke in the Commons of his "strong impression during our discussion . . . that there is a sincere determination on both sides to reach and to maintain a really close understanding." In Paris and in Bonn (where the pitfalls awaiting the SECRETARY OF STATE were worst) relief at the helpful tenor of the conversations has been almost audible.

The readjustment and clarification of American foreign policy by a new Administration are unusually difficult, for domestic American reasons. Weariness and disgust with the Korean war, resentment of high taxation, impatience at the superficial absence of quick results to show for a heavy investment in Europe—these feelings are widespread and strong among Americans. To meet them, PRESIDENT EISENHOWER has promised a more active foreign policy. Such a policy cannot be improvised or conjured out of the air; it has to be worked out painfully, with close attention to the existing facts. There has been apprehension in Europe that out of an anxiety to show quick results the new PRESIDENT and the new SECRETARY OF STATE might pay insufficient regard to this duty; and MR. DULLES's broadcast of January 27, just before he set off for Europe, reinforced the fear.

In that broadcast, however, MR. DULLES had to reassure first of all the people of his own country to whom he was speaking. Some words were extraordinarily revealing. Thus he told his American audience: "You need not be afraid that we are working against you and for others." Clearly, in his judgment, it was necessary to disarm a prejudice against foreign policy as such. In the new Congress, at least, this includes a prejudice against European policy in particular. In such a situation it was mere prudence to take the first opportunity of telling the European allies of the United States what kind of developments American policy desires to see in Europe this year. These developments, as is known, are in the direction of west European unity through the European Defence Community and the other institutions which, once in existence, the community may bring in its train. But no evidence exists that MR. DULLES is being rigid and formal in these requirements, that he overlooks the difficulties, or that his visit has shown him willing only to talk and not to listen. The evidence is the other way, and the effect of his tour is reassuring.

The Dutch Floods

Terrible as were the ravages of the sea in eastern England, the Netherlands have been more sorely stricken. It is not merely that the lives lost, according to the present imperfect estimates, are nearly five times as numerous as here; the means of bare existence have been suddenly swept away from a great population now left homeless. For many centuries there has been an instinctive fellow-feeling between the peoples of the low-lying shores on either side of the North Sea, who dwell in peril of the same waters. The inhabitants of English fenlands owe much to the skill of the Dutch advisers who helped their ancestors to make the land secure, for the Dutch, with their land perpetually in danger, have always been masters in the art of reclamation and defence. In times of rare calamity like this, the inrush of the sea upon England, however deadly, is but a foray; in most places the waters will recede and the dry land reappear. In the provinces of Zeeland and South Holland, chief victims of the great disaster to the Netherlands, the sea sweeps in as an invader; these lands have been won acre by acre by the labours of past generations; if the sea reconquers them, it can only be expelled by the slow repetition of the same vast effort.

Less than a decade ago, by the cruel necessity of war, the British liberating forces were compelled to break down the dykes and let in the sea upon the great island of Walcheren, which disappeared almost totally beneath the waters. Patiently the Dutch people bent to the task of winning the land back, and in three years, though its fertility was much impaired by salt water, the island was once more habitable. Now it is all to do again—and Walcheren has suffered less severely than the island of Overflakkee some distance to the north. Hundreds of thousands of people have escaped with nothing but their lives. The world, and not least the English people, will be eager to succour them; but the recovery of the Netherlands from this blow will be achieved by the proved qualities of the Dutch people themselves. The old note of resolution sounded in QUEEN JULIANA's broadcast yesterday: "The spirit of unity of the war years has suddenly come again over this nation. At one stroke our community forgot its differences. We all feel the goodness of working together again in a struggle for one great cause."

Mistrust Across the Frontier

Clashes on the frontier between Israel and Jordan are all too common. Lately they have become serious enough to cause anxious concern in this country, which has friendly relations with both. Mistrust between the two countries is the chief cause, but another is the way in which the present frontier was drawn when the Security Council insisted on fighting being stopped. It follows neither natural features nor demographical limits and marks only the line between the two sides when the armistice agreements were concluded. It severs Arab villages from their land; it cuts off their water supply; it encourages them to make common cause with refugees rendered desperate by hunger or by desire for revenge. It is long and difficult to patrol effectively. So it offers full scope both for trouble-makers and for criminals, some of them, like the hashish smugglers, highly organized.

The trouble is that relations between the two Governments are bad. Most of the raids could be quickly dealt with by the two police forces if Jerusalem and Amman were really willing to work together. Israel complains that since November the attitude of Jordan has been more and more uncooperative. An effort was made to establish better working relations by an agreement signed on December 30, but trouble continued and the Israelis threatened to denounce the agreement unless Jordan released some people who had crossed the border in error. In reply, Jordan herself denounced the agreement. The Amman Government accuses Israel of deliberately violating the frontier with regular forces and of indulging in acts of terrorism against ordinary villagers and denies the accusation that raids into Israel territory are encouraged. Both GLUBB PASHA, Chief of Staff of the Arab Legion, and MAJOR-GENERAL MAKLEFF, Chief of the Israel General Staff, have recently condemned the present frontiers as unworkable, but each maintains that his own forces are behaving with restraint. MAJOR-GENERAL MAKLEFF says that the frontier is not properly patrolled on the Jordan side, and that the main sources of trouble are the partisan activities of the Palestinians inside Jordan and the irresponsibility of the Arab National Guard. GLUBB PASHA contends that most of the raids could perfectly well be dealt with by the police, instead of being made the occasion for punitive expeditions by heavily armed Israel forces. Incidents may be unavoidable, so long as there are Arab refugees along the border, but at bottom the problem is a question of confidence, which in different circumstances could be settled simply enough by these two soldiers working together.

The Oldest Party

Shaking a minatory and provocative finger at the grumbler, a poet has said of him that, just because a snowflake falls on his forehead, he must go and fancy that it is winter all the year round. But, replies the shivering culprit, impenitently, who has proved more often to be in the right—he or the professional lookers on the bright side of things? They claim to find a silver lining to every cloud; he turns up his rainproof collar as, blown along by the nipping wind, the cloud scurries overhead. They urge him to pack up his troubles in his old kitbag and to smile; but it is he and not they who, before the exercise is finished, will feel the weight of the thing on his shoulder. They may be right or left in politics, but he belongs to the oldest—and always the majority—party in our history, the Grumbletonians.

This typically British body flourished under its own name for so brief a time that Whigs and Tories and other upstarts have caused it to be forgotten. "The great Sect of Grumbletonians in the countrey whom nothing will satisfie" had the satisfaction in Stuart days of being attacked in their own right and of having hard, rude comments made about them by their rivals of the Court party. That was merely an episode in a long career that began when some ancient Grumbletonians complained—and probably with perfect truth—that woad was no longer what it had been before the Druids' merger. Members of the party were, we may be sure, present at Agincourt saying that it was all very fine for the mounted knights, but what could a man be expected to do with arrows that his grandfather at Crécy would have thought more fit for firewood than for using as ammunition?

The Grumbletonians deserve more thanks than they get from whichever party is, at any given point of time, in power. They are the salt of politics and the perpetual ginger group. Tell them that free enterprise has made us what we are and they point, promptly and unanswerably, to all manner of grievances and injustices. Bestow on them the blessings of nationalization and they object to coke that does not heat the boiler and to crawling buses. Whatever the weather, some section of them has a case against it and there are seasons, such as the present, in which even town workers and farmers unite in reasoned grumblings. The basic strength of this grand old party is rooted in paradox. A good grumble is a wonderful breeder of cheerfulness. "Any complaints?" cry the orderly officers of life hoping for an answer in the negative and hearing more than they bargained for on the other side. The reaction is healthy for them as for the Grumbletonians. ARNOLD BENNETT was understating when he said that pessimism, if you get used to it, is as agreeable as optimism.

HOUSING POLICY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—As a member of a borough council which has its own peculiar housing problems—serious enough, but less so than those of the London boroughs—I have been sympathetically interested in the letters setting out the dilemma facing Holborn and Paddington. Undoubtedly Mr. Burrell's suggestion that the solution rests largely with the existing (and additional?) new towns is reasonable and logical. But I would question his assertion that the new towns "are in danger of becoming mere planning and architectural spectacles, and it is high time they began positively to help the big cities and to fulfil their *raison d'être*."

They have become, and rightly so, planning and architectural spectacles, and interest in them is world-wide. But the real danger, in so far as present new towns are concerned, is that enlightened planning for harmonious development and the maintenance of high architectural and constructional standards are becoming comparatively minor considerations, while a disproportionate amount of resources is being used for the building of cheaper quality houses. The danger is, in brief, that the new towns will become collections of slightly superior housing estates sadly lacking the amenities essential to the development of social and cultural life.

In Hemel Hempstead houses are being built at the rate of 1,200 a year, which means that three London boroughs are reducing their joint population by 4,000 a year. But the school building programme has fallen more than a year behind the actual needs of the town. One result of this is that a new so-called "secondary" school, only two-thirds completed, has to provide for children from five to 15 years, and will continue to do so until near the end of this year. There is no prospect of the town having a new cinema in the next few years. We shall be fortunate if the much-needed public hall in the town centre is built by 1955, and even so its provision will depend mainly on the good will of bodies other than Government departments; the Treasury will not allow more than £5,000 to be advanced for the building of a "place of entertainment."

Small wonder that a few people have expressed a regret that they ever left London, and I believe Hemel Hempstead is better placed in most respects than the other new towns. Mr. Burrell is right when he says the new towns are not fulfilling their *raison d'être*, but they are not failing in the way he suggests. Mr. Macmillan may get his 300,000 houses this year, but he may well turn a wonderful idea into a magnificent white elephant in the process.

Yours faithfully,
WYNDHAM THOMAS.
25, Adeyfield Gardens, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

PERFORMING LIONS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Your correspondent may know of instances where performing animals have been brutally treated, but I do not believe this is the general rule, and certainly there can be no question of their being "flogged into submission." Apart from the practical difficulties inherent in beating up lions and tigers, and the fact that violent whippings would ruin an animal's coat, violence is not the most efficient way of getting the best results. The first task of the trainer is to remove the inherent fear in a wild animal which causes it to attack; though in its place he will try to establish a proper fear and respect, much as a parent will teach a child obedience. Firmness, and frequent rewards of meat, will accomplish far more than brutality, which will only make the animal terrified, mean, and therefore far more dangerous and unmanageable.

It is an interesting fact that cat trainers prefer to work not with bottle-fed animals, which are "spoilt" and therefore less amenable to discipline, but with those born in the wild state; and there is evidence for believing that many of them enjoy performing. As for the idea that animals deprived of their liberty are wretched it is now an accepted fact that carnivora—and the lazy lion in particular—infinitely prefer regular meals and comfortable quarters to the uncertainties of existence in the wild state, where they kill not because they enjoy it but because they have to.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY SCHOMBERG.
102, Drayton Gardens, S.W.10.

IN THE WAKE OF THE STORM

CLEARING UP AFTER THE FLOODS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I was the engineer in charge of the sea defences for the North Norfolk Rivers Catchment Board from 1932 until I retired in 1945, and since then have resided in Snettisham. I feel, therefore, that I ought to be able to speak with some knowledge on this part of the coast of The Wash. In all matters pertaining to large rivers and to the sea one must speak with all humility. This disaster is the second that has occurred since my retirement.

Lack of funds made the efforts taken by the authorities after the last disaster in 1949 appear almost childish to most people with any experience of angry seas, and I write in the hope that something really effective will be done now. I may say that this is the opinion shared by the local inhabitants and farmers who have suffered severely from the sea floods.

When the scheme for re-aligning the King's Lynn-Hunstanton road (A 149) was proposed in the 1930s I suggested at the public inquiry the substitution of a large embankment topped by a concrete roadway to serve the dual purpose of sea embankment and public road. It would ease the summer week-end rush of traffic and serve the farmers well in winter for the haulage of sugar-beet, &c. The existing embankments are nobody's children and have been sadly neglected and allowed to be worn down where cattle cross them. A concrete road would be maintained to a stable level and would assist the inspection and maintenance of the outfalls of the Heacham, Ingol, and Babingly rivers, at present almost inaccessible.

There is abundance of shingle for the concrete, and material for the bank could be dragged from a canal on the landward side, forming a connecting canal to the three rivers above mentioned. I have taken the levels, and there is no difficulty in this. One advantage of this is that if one outfall became blocked the other two would function. Existing embankments could be enlarged and widened.

The height of the tide recorded on the night of January 31 was 31ft. above the dock sill, or 20ft. above mean sea level at Liverpool. The beach crests vary from 19½ft. above mean sea level at Hunstanton to 17½ft. at Wolferton. The tide banks, originally 18½ft. high, have been worn down in places to 16½ft. It is therefore easy to see what happened on that Saturday night. A boat was actually rowed over the tide bank.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN LESLIE.
The Bungalow, Snettisham, King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Sir,—Close on one million cubic feet of timber has been flattened on this estate by the tempest of January 31. The Forestry Commission estimate that not less than 20 million cubic feet has been blown down throughout north-eastern Scotland. This represents 10 years' felling quota for the whole of Scotland. I would like strongly to endorse Mr. Spence's letter of February 5 in which he urges prompt action on a national scale to ensure that this tremendous national asset is not allowed to be wasted. There is no time to lose, for if this blown timber—mostly softwood—is not cleared within 12 months it will be almost worthless and useless.

The extent and volume of the havoc have completely overwhelmed timber merchants in this part of Scotland. They cannot possibly cope with it. It seems to me that certain steps should be taken forthwith. First, no more felling licences should be issued until the markets have absorbed this blown timber. Secondly, the import of foreign timber should be restricted as much as possible for the present time. Thirdly, men and equipment must be provided without delay—from the United Kingdom, Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, or anywhere else—to effect the speediest possible clearance of this devastation. Fourthly, arrangements must be made for the preservation and storage over a period of years of that surplus quantity of blown timber which cannot be marketed at the present time.

Fifthly, all timber owners must be assured that they will be paid a fair price for its disposal—whether it be marketed now or stored for marketing at a future date—and that the price will be stabilized. If none of these measures is taken there is a serious danger that this valuable material will simply lie and rot.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
GAVIN ASTOR.
Tillypronie, Tarland, Aberdeenshire.

Sir,—Owing to the large surplus of clothing, blankets, &c., which was contributed at the time of the Lynmouth disaster I find many people are concerned in their minds to know whether on this occasion priority at the moment should be for clothes, blankets, and bedding, rather than for money. I feel convinced that if our people could be assured by those in charge of relief that all surplus clothes would be immediately sent to assist the Dutch, then the response would be very much greater, for every day it becomes clearer that the needs of Holland will be on a scale incomparably larger than our own.

Your obedient servant,
DORIS W. STAPLEDON.
The Manor, Teffont, Salisbury.

Sir,—I was much interested in Mr. Hayward's letter in your issue of February 7. In theory the London County Council warning system may be adequate: in practice it is unsatisfactory, as I think my own experiences as a river frontager show. About 15 months ago there was flood danger; I heard a loudspeaker warning to evacuate cellars. But on looking at the river I noticed the tide was ebbing and the danger was over. On the night of Saturday, January 31, I received no warning of any kind whatsoever and I discovered purely by chance that flood water was pouring into my basement.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
J. PEARCE GOULD.
15, Upper Mall, W.6.

ENTRY TO SANDHURST

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Many head masters of maintained grammar schools will be grateful for your Special Correspondent's recent article "Sandhurst and the Schools" for reminding them of the revolutionary change in the recruiting and prospects of Regular Army officers. From this school nine boys have entered Sandhurst since 1947; one of them, by winning the King's Medal last year, did more to convince our boys and parents that the ex-grammar school boy has the same chance of distinguishing himself at Sandhurst as a Wellingtonian or Etonian than any number of exhortations by head masters or liaison officers.

The initial difficulty where no such tradition has been established is to convince the ordinary grammar school parent and boy that an officer can live on his pay without being considered an oddity; that an officer in peacetime is fulfilling a useful public service; that opportunities of promotion and pension schemes are superior to non-military Government service; and that married quarters will be available for a reasonable period during a service career.

Scepticism on all these points is noticeably disappearing and an increasing trickle of Sandhurst entrants likely to make "better than average officers" should flow from the grammar schools of this country, particularly from those in which the combined cadet force is vigorous and efficient. Yours faithfully,

H. BROGDEN, Head Master.
Brighton, Hove and Sussex Grammar School, Dyke Road, Hove 4, Sussex.

DESTRUCTION IN THE AIR

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—My colleague Anthony Greenwood deserves every support in his plea for measures to stop the pollution of London air. If anyone should think the task impossible, may I draw your readers' attention to what was accomplished in the city of Pittsburgh? By means of municipal by-laws and public spirit alone they turned one of America's smokiest and dirtiest cities into one of the cleanest and brightest in five years. It could be done here.

Yours, &c.,
TED LEATHER.
House of Commons.

MIDDLE EAST OIL

I—RAPID GROWTH OF EUROPEAN DEMAND

From a Special Correspondent

The problem of Persian oil is not simply a question of the relationship between one sovereign State and the company operating on its territory. It has become a major international issue affecting the foundation of the international oil structure, the role which British interests will play in that structure and the balance of payments for the United Kingdom, for the Commonwealth, and for Europe.

There has been a big swing over to Middle East oil during the past 10 years. In pre-war years Europe imported mainly refined petroleum products, and of the total crude and refined imports in 1938 only 24 per cent. came from the Middle East. To-day the percentage has risen to nearly 80 per cent., largely crude oil to feed Europe's new refineries. Refining capacity in western Europe is already about 70 million tons a year, and the rate is scheduled to reach about 90 million tons a year by the end of 1953. Britain's share in this refining capacity will amount to about one-third of the total—a spectacular rise from its 1938 output of 2,500,000 tons of finished products. It is expected that with the completion of the present refinery programme western Europe will have an overall self-sufficiency in refined products, even including bunker needs, imports being required only in marginal quantities of special grades. This means that oil supply in Europe becomes entirely a matter of finding sufficient crude oil to feed her domestic refineries. As matters stand at present the Middle East, and only the Middle East, can meet this huge need.

In the past, crude oil production and refining capacity in the western hemisphere were sufficient to meet not only the needs of that area but to supply a large part of European demand. To-day the rise in the United States domestic demand has turned that country into a net importer, while the level of requirements in Europe has about doubled since 1938. The European refinery plan has been based on the expectation that up to 90 per cent. of crude requirements will come from the Middle East, Venezuela providing most of the balance. Europe is the main customer for Middle East oil, but the needs of other countries must not be forgotten. The new refineries in Australia, India, East Africa and Aden are all planned to work on Middle East crude oil.

RAPID INCREASE

The physical capabilities of the Middle East oil-bearing countries to meet these demands have never been in doubt. Crude production is to-day running at about 100 million tons a year, of which nearly 20 million tons is refined near the source for sale as refined products. These figures exclude the idle production and refining capacity of Persia. This production rate has been achieved extremely rapidly. In 1938 the area produced just over 14 million tons of crude oil—that is, 6 per cent. of world crude output. During the past three years output has risen from 84 million tons in 1950 to more than 100 million tons in 1952, that is to more than 16 per cent. of the world total. These figures are even more remarkable when it is realized that Persia contributed 32 million tons to the 1950 total and that the loss of this major element has already been more than compensated quantitatively by the rapid acceleration of development in Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The loss of Persian crude oil is, however, a serious factor in the European economy because it substantially reduces the availability of non-dollar oil.

From the European viewpoint two essentials emerge: that the continued supply of Middle East crude oil is vital to the European refining industry, into which immense capital and material resources have been sunk, and that the loss of non-dollar oil is a big factor in the balance of payments. Clearly the European consumer requires a solution of the problems which will both safeguard his crude supplies and minimize his dollar expenditure.

For the United Kingdom and for British interests generally the situation is, of course, one of more intimate importance, since the strength of Britain's hold on crude supplies has suffered a serious setback through the nationalization of the Persian oil industry. The entry of British interests in the Middle East dates from the beginning of the century, when William d'Arcy first acquired concessions in Persia for a period of 60 years from May, 1901. The rights later became the property of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which was formed in 1909.

By the end of the first decade of this century the British Navy had decided to abandon coal in favour of fuel oil. The problem of securing a safe, sufficient, and permanent source of supply became therefore a matter of national importance. It was now that the Persian venture got its real stimulus. On July 17, 1913, Mr. Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, announced to the House of Commons that the Government had acquired a majority interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, a decision which he later justified, writing in his memoirs, in the phrase, "oil had to be bought in a monopoly-ridden market." "It is a two-fold policy," he stated in the House.

> There is an ultimate policy and there is an interim policy. Our ultimate policy is that the Admiralty should become the independent owner and producer of its own supplies of liquid fuel, first, by building up an oil reserve in this country sufficient to make us safe in war and able to override price fluctuations in peace; secondly, by acquiring the power to deal in crude oils as they come cheaply into the market. . . . This second aspect of our ultimate policy involves the Admiralty being able to refine, retort, or distil crude oil of various kinds, until it reaches the quality required for naval use. This again leads us into having to dispose of the surplus production—another great problem—but I do not myself see any reason why we should shrink if necessary from entering this field of State enterprise. . . . The third aspect of the ultimate policy is that we must become the owners, or at any rate the controllers at the source, of at least a proportion of the supply of natural oil which we require. On all these lines we are advancing rapidly.

ANGLO-IRANIAN STRATEGY

Would it be an exaggeration to say that the directives contained in this statement, and the far-sighted thinking which inspired it, have determined the oil strategy of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, its attitude towards the owners of oil and its relations with other oil companies almost to this day? If not, this would explain the continual emphasis in the company's production programme on fuel oil, at a time when other oil companies increasingly developed motor gasoline. It would explain the concentration on one area of exploitation when competitors sought to cover the world, and it would explain the somewhat conservative attitude to structural changes in organization such as have been adopted elsewhere.

By the end of the 1914-18 war interests in the United States were pressing for the right to enter the Middle East oil area. United States capacity to produce and refine crude oil was stretched to the limit. There was a real fear that the oil reserves of the country had been overtaxed and that the United States had spent its resources too lavishly in the cause of the allies. The fear went farther, that the British would pursue a "closed-door" policy which would, in effect, secure a world empire in oil to the detriment of American expansion.

The San Remo agreement of 1920 saw the end of German participation in what is now known as the Iraq Petroleum Company, a share being transferred to the French Government in return for concession rights to build a pipeline connexion to the Mediterranean across Syria. The American State Department and Standard Oil (New Jersey) demanded a share in the former German holdings, but it was some years before American interests were admitted to Iraq. This period saw much controversy between British and American public and private interests.

ALIGNMENT OF POWER

During the 1920s Anglo-Persian, Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Oil (New Jersey), Socony Vacuum, Gulf Oil Corporation, and French interests came gradually to an arrangement over the respective shares in the Iraq Petroleum Company, and the agreement concluded in 1928 gave the American companies a total participation of 23¾ per cent. From the late 1920s onwards feeling between the American and British interests died down, because by then American companies had not only joined with British, Dutch, and French interests in Iraq and with British interests in Kuwait but had also broken new ground in the Middle East, first on the island of Bahrein and later on the mainland of Arabia.

Thus the decade before the second world war saw the alignment of power in the Middle East oil areas. The British were established in Persia and held a share in Iraq and Kuwait. American interests held the exclusive rights in Saudi Arabia and Bahrein, a share with British, French, and Dutch interests in Iraq, and a half share with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Kuwait.

To be concluded

YOUTH AT THE TURNSTILE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—May I support Mrs. Agnew's plea in her letter in your issue of February 4 for a reduced entrance fee for children being taken by their parents to exhibitions at Burlington House? I, too, have found the cost prohibitive. I appreciate that the intrusion of noisy youngsters would be a great nuisance to the public, but parents who are interested in art know this very well and should be as capable as any schoolmaster of preventing children from behaving discourteously.

The loss of income to the Royal Academy would be less than in the case of school parties, since the percentage of adults would be higher, and the Academy would be helping to form the taste and judgment of what is, after all, its own future public.

Yours faithfully,
MARIANNE STUART-MENTETH.
Lombards, Edenbridge, Kent.

BRITAIN'S ROLE IN EUROPE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—I am afraid that Mr. Wyatt has missed both my point and M. Schuman's. The European Defence Community is essentially, as M. Schuman wrote, a supra-national authority and a step towards a federal Continental community. British membership of the European Defence Community is therefore out of the question. Mr. Wyatt suggests that Britain should seek voting power within the European Defence Community without submitting to its supra-national authority, *i.e.*, the rights of membership without its obligations. The rough treatment received by the so-called "Eden plan" at Strasbourg has shown that the Continent is united in rejecting British cooperation on these terms.

Personally I do not press for the abandonment of the European Defence Community. The Continental countries might benefit greatly from federation, so long as the sacrifices imposed by federation are understood and accepted by their peoples. And Britain herself can welcome the creation of such a federation, so long as it takes place as promised "within a constantly developing Atlantic community." But a Continental federation whose predominant member was kept outside the Atlantic community has serious dangers. That is why I want to see Germany inside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization like the other members of the European Defence Community. And federation is in itself no guarantee against the other dangers of Germany's predominance—after all, the American Civil War was fought between the two halves of a federal army. That is why, whatever happens to the European Defence Community, I want to see a closer integration of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in Europe.

I believe there is a growing feeling in France, which the forthcoming debates in Paris will underline, that even an inter-governmental or confederal framework which includes Britain and America is better fitted to contain German forces than a federal framework which leaves France locked up alone with Germany. But I do not feel that Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe is yet quite adequate for this purpose. That is why I hope the British Government will immediately ask the United States to take the next step forward. For it is on a strengthening of American ties with Europe that a satisfactory British guarantee to France, and any further progress with M. Schuman's policy, must depend.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS HEALEY.
House of Commons.

Sir,—In view of the present discussion about Britain's role in Europe, it is relevant to recall what General Eisenhower said on this question when he was Supreme Commander of North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces in Europe. Speaking at a Press conference in Paris on January 22 last year, he said: "Any attempt to include Britain immediately in a European defence force would be a stumbling block rather than a help. With the world-wide nature of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and with the strength of its ties demonstrated many times, a political and economic union already exists. It is part of our existence to-day, and I think it is a fine thing. How can you combine that with western Europe to-day? I can't see it personally."

Yours faithfully,
ROWLAND EVANS.
44, Hurlingham Court, S.W.6.

"FLYING SAUCERS"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Reports of "flying saucers" usually evoke a small crop of cynical replies that far more sensational objects were seen towards the end of the last century, &c. While going through some early manuscripts pertaining to Byland Abbey, in Yorkshire, I came across material for this sort of criticism which is surely unsurpassed. A document dated *circa* 1290 mentions a round flat silver object like a discus which flew over the monastery exciting "*maximum terrorem*" among the brethren.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
A. X. CHUMLEY.
Ampleforth College, York.

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