

[MR. TOMNEY.] security. We know what happened in the case of Burgess and Maclean. I take the view that neither of these men should ever have been employed in the Foreign Office in view of the reports which were forthcoming about their conduct. I have inquired into this matter very carefully and have read much about it, and it seems to me that what was known about both Burgess and Maclean was more than enough to justify, not the penalty of resignation, but the penalty of their expulsion before they had held their posts for even a year. Maclean's habit of getting habitually drunk and of letting off steam in pubs and clubs are things which should not have been tolerated for one moment. They would not have been tolerated in some pubs and clubs that I have known. Maclean would quickly have been put in his place.

This country is faced with the responsibility of looking again at the method of recruitment to the Foreign Service from this numerically small circle of people coming from the public schools. From my slight contact with the foreign embassies, I cannot say from whence the different secretaries have come or to what kind of school they went, and neither do I know what sort of background they had; but to my way of thinking there is something wrong with our great public schools. For instance, I cannot understand why they do not send more men into the scientific industrial professions where they are so badly needed.

When these boys have gone through the schools and the universities, having received a good education in the arts and graces, and then look round for something to do, do they qualify by virtue of examinations for the Civil Service or the Foreign Service? Do they qualify on the basis of a desire to make a career; because of an impetus within themselves to do something good for the country? Do they wish to make a career for themselves, or do they qualify because they want something to do? If after they are trained in the skills and arts and graces, they enter the service for the sake of something to do, the country has no use for them, because inevitably they will fail in whatever job they take on.

If the accusations made by my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East

are substantiated, there is something seriously wrong with our methods of selection, recruitment, entry, promotion and general direction. I heard the Foreign Secretary, when discussing security arrangements, refer to reports from the ambassador downwards about his staff. Today the world is so locked in the conflict of a cold war that every possible contingency has to be covered. Who investigates the top man in the first place, or is he never investigated?

It is all very well saying, as has been said today, that our liberty is a precious thing which we must not discard when making sure that our freedom is not destroyed. But, in a world where such forces are ranged against us, can we seriously depend on our archaic laws in deciding whether or not we shall arrest or interrogate a person on suspicion? Does that position hold good in modern politics and in the atmosphere of a cold war as we know it?

History can teach us some sharp and potent lessons about what has been going on in international modern politics since 1939. The United States have been mentioned several times in this debate. Let us take the case of Alger Hiss. He was first brought to the notice of President Roosevelt in 1939 by Adolph Berle, and at that time President Roosevelt poo-pooed the idea and said that it was impossible. The activities of Alger Hiss were further brought to the notice of President Truman and the same thing happened. But who or what was Alger Hiss? He was one of the First Secretaries in the American State Department.

When we realise what tremendous power these people can wield, when we remember what happened at Yalta and how it affected the politics of Europe and elsewhere, especially the United States and Britain, when we remember the penalties that Yalta imposed on the foreign policies of the Western world, and when we realise that behind President Roosevelt sat Alger Hiss—a self-confessed perjurer and Soviet espionage agent—that is a very sobering thought.

We do not desire McCarthyism in this country. But, in defence of our liberties and our people, we have the right to ask for an inquiry into the Foreign Office and our security services and the way they work. I do not think we can depend any longer upon the established system and

the methods we have known. One can trace back to 1951, when the Burgess and Maclean case first broke, a period of three or four years when the matter was sponged down. Nothing was heard about it until the Petrov trial in Australia, and one begins to wonder why this matter was not dealt with in the meantime.

Inquiries may have been conducted by our security services. Inquiries may have been conducted by the F.B.I. in the United States. Although the advice of Adolph Berle was not taken, they may have been going on. But it was the Petrov trial which brought the Burgess and Maclean case to the light of day, and let no hon. Member imagine that Petrov was not a brave man. The Soviet espionage system does not forget its enemies. The clearest example I can give to the House is that of the murder of Trotsky in Mexico. After fifteen years of patient waiting on their part a manservant in his house, an employee of the Soviet espionage system, took a pickaxe and murdered Trotsky.

Other murders have taken place throughout Europe, because we are dealing with a Government which does not recognise the sanctity of human life or the human soul, a Government which has condemned people to death, not by hundreds but by millions, a Government which has forced through policies that have resulted in the death of millions. That is the kind of thing with which we are faced in the world today. That is why I cannot speak too strongly in condemnation of the Foreign Office and their handling of this matter.

Whoever is covering up whom and on what pretext, whether because of the membership of a circle or a club, or because of good fellowship or whatever it may be, they must think again and think quickly. Make no mistake about it, the Soviet protects those it values. Although my right hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. H. Morrison) read out a letter from a friend of his who dined with Burgess and Maclean the night before they escaped and who at that time had no idea, nor was he given any idea, that Maclean was going to escape, this escape had been engineered for at least a month in advance. If a man who is valuable to the Soviet services might talk and give

11 D 5

people away, he is taken care of and got out of the country. This thing did not just happen in a day. That is where our security services were wrong. The escape must have taken at least a month to organise.

Mr. Daines: Surely my hon. Friend would agree that before Maclean went he would have to get permission from the Party in order to make sure that he would gain entry into Czechoslovakia or Russia?

Mr. Tomney: That is right; so the escape was not organised overnight. It must have been organised one or two months in advance.

I have seen the same pattern repeated all over the world. I was in Japan with the hon. Member for Farnham (Mr. Nicholson) at this time last year. We saw a strike of municipal employees. I watched them march along the streets, and I saw the same technique used there as in Western capitals—the cheer leaders; the coaches going along; the loudspeaker vans; the band at the assembly point; the full battery of loudspeakers; the flags and bunting. I have known of the valuable work done by labour attachés in that part of the world because they understand the forces at work.

The labour attachés, introduced by the late Mr. Ernest Bevin, were probably the last and best innovation of the Foreign Office reform in 1947. I should like to see them established in all our embassies. If we are to have a balanced view about the forces with which we must contend, it is essential that we consider statements of persons who know the point of view of the man-in-the-street. Otherwise we shall not obtain a proper assessment of what is going on. In my view, it is absolutely essential that the Foreign Office consider this. It should establish labour attachés in every capital. That is an urgent and absolute necessity; not just in order to study labour problems or give advice about industrial problems, but in order to keep a matter-of-fact workaday eye on the world at large.

I now want to say a word or two about Burgess and Maclean and their conduct in the Foreign Office. I am not going to take part in any witch-hunting, but I will give the Under-Secretary, if he will

[MR. TOMNEY.] ... see me privately, the names and sources where I got my information. My first question is this: is it or is it not the fact that, on the first day when Maclean entered the Foreign Office, he declared to a colleague that he was a member of the Communist Party? My second question is this: why have M.I.5 not yet interviewed members of the Washington staff of the Foreign Office who were directly associated with Burgess and Maclean? Why have they not been interviewed? [AN HON. MEMBER: "And grilled?"]

The third point, and on this I am prepared to give names and dates if necessary, is that I have always taken the view that a secret service should be absolutely secret and that most of its members should not be known to each other. To be successful, it has to work in an atmosphere of great secrecy. I do not know, and the public at large do not know, how the members of M.I.5 are recruited, whether they are more military or more intelligence, whether they are ex-policemen or retired generals, but, if they are, it will not do.

In the circumstances of the ideological war with which we are now dealing, we want a new type of man, the type of man who understands the principles and ideology of Marxism, a man who can interpret and read the minds of the men with whom he has to deal. When Petrov finally defected, the man with him was a member of the Australian Secret Service, who had worked for two years to get the desired result—and got it. That is why I want to know more about M.I.5.

I take the view that this service would be better vested in a special branch or super-special branch of Scotland Yard. I cannot for the life of me see how any Department in Whitehall can use its own security forces which are attached to each particular Department. It is tantamount to saying that each atomic plant in this country shall have one security man in each department, all perhaps conflicting, all having different friendships and loyalties. I take the view that this job should be a professional job, that the pay and pensions should be adequate, and that the staff should be recruited from the best type of man available.

This Service is supposed to be secret. I travelled back from Thailand last year by air, and we had to stay in Rome overnight. On the same plane was a man

who had been to China. He was the general manager in London of a large mercantile and commercial bank. I know nothing at all about mercantile and commercial banking, but I struck up an acquaintance with him and I had a long talk with him while flying half-way across the world. When we stayed in Rome, at the breakfast table next morning, he said "The man at the next table is M.I.5." "How on earth do you know?" I asked. "Because he told me," he replied.

If that is so—and this information can be checked, because the details of the flight can be checked—it is stupid police folly. Let us make no mistake about it. Our military destiny is tied up with N.A.T.O., and the United States is the strongest and most permanent member of N.A.T.O. The Burgess and Maclean issue has made a tremendous impact on the United States security service. Unless we are prepared to put our house in much better order than is envisaged by the Foreign Secretary, I am afraid that our journey from now on will not be very happy.

6.55 p.m.

Mr. Peter Rawlinson (Epsom): I have been chiefly impressed in this debate, apart from the length of the speeches, by the loyalty, which I have always heard of and read about previously, of political chiefs to the Service they represent or the Department to which they are responsible. The loyalty which they have shown, tributes to which I have listened to here today for the first time, has impressed me, although I well appreciate the constitutional position of the Minister who is responsible for the Department.

I have wondered sometimes if some of the more junior civil servants—not the heads of Departments, with whom I have no acquaintance whatsoever—who make criticisms of their political chiefs should not sometimes take a lesson from those political chiefs who have to stand here and answer for some of their misdoings. No one in this House desires that there should be any witch-hunting in this matter. As has been said by many speakers, no one supports the kind of system which is found in other countries, under which individuals can be harried and bullied by committees set up to investigate their behaviour; but the ramifications of a conspiracy are extremely

difficult to trace. They might range throughout the whole body politic.

Therefore, there must be a sufficient, sensible and proper investigation into the background of those persons who have undertaken the Government's service. There must be—and I was glad to hear the Foreign Secretary say so—these positive checks, but I wonder whether, in the positive checks that are now made, when inquiries are made about certain people, answers in writing are obtained, or whether they are purely oral. That is something which, I feel sure, would add further to the investigations which must be made into a person's background.

We cannot escape the obvious conclusion that this is a story of incompetence. The law has been mentioned on several occasions, and it has been stated that there is no law by which these people could have been prevented from leaving the country. It was said by the hon. Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman) that there was no law to prevent them leaving the ports. Why was there no guard on the ports? Is it really seriously suggested, if somebody had been guarding the ports, had been looking out for these people and had been warned that they might take it into their heads to try to escape, that when they arrived at Southampton to board the packet for St. Malo and were approached by a security officer and asked their business, they would have been able to march on board and sail away to St. Malo, having informed the security officer that that was what they intended to do?

Is it seriously suggested that no pretext could have been made whereby these people could have been taken back to London and have been required to answer questions on certain matters of which, by their flight, they had shown they were guilty, and which we now know to be treasonable activities? Surely, the technicality of arrest, mentioned by my right hon. Friend, is not in this case a real answer. The real answer was that no one thought that these men were going to flee. It was thought that security had been such that these men were not aware of what was happening. It was a grave story of incompetence.

Mr. Speir: Will my hon. Friend allow me? Is it not the case that only one of these individuals was suspect, and that the other was not under investigation at all?

11 D 7

Mr. Rawlinson: My point is that, in these circumstances, the ports should have been watched. If it was thought that these people might flee, if they were known to have had some association, these steps should have been taken.

Mr. Daines: Would not the hon. Gentleman agree that, as the interrogation had been ordered by the Foreign Secretary, even the fact of applying for a week-end pass was suspicious and should have sounded the alarm?

Mr. Rawlinson: I agree to this extent. If there had been this thorough investigation and one had eventually reached the conclusion that this man out of some 6,000 should be investigated, then not to have taken the proper and sensible precautions seems to be an incredible piece of bungling.

It is quite clear, from what has been said by some people who seemed to know them or their acquaintances well, that these two persons were people who must at all times have been an extreme risk. Apparently, they had "chips on their shoulders" of various kinds which one would have thought straightaway would have led their superiors to suspect that they were persons who were not proper or suitable to hold such responsible jobs.

Our good fortune has been that in the immediate past we have not had persons who have been in control of various public matters, or in responsible positions, whose loyalties have not got across the frontiers. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that since 1689 and the wars of religion there have been no such circumstances; but in fact there have been. In the history of our relations with Ireland there were persons such as Erskine Childers. There always have been, and always will be, people whose loyalties conflict, who do not put patriotism as the highest of loyalties. In this House it seems wrong to suggest that, because it is only a new phenomena, people might in fact be putting disloyalty ahead of patriotism, and that the security people were not in fact aware of the matter.

Then after the flight comes the story, which has been adequately dealt with, of the information which was being supplied. It seems to me that what must be hidden is the source of the information or knowledge about what the Government may know of Burgess and Maclean—that

[MR. RAWLINSON.]  
is, of course, vitally important—but not to the extent. Surely, if inevitably we compromised the source by revealing the extent, that would be dangerous; but what danger was there in telling the House or the country immediately after the flight all the matters that have now been told us so very much later on.

The inadequacy of the White Paper has also been discussed. Mention has been made of how in paragraph 3 it talks about Maclean being the head of the American Department and says that it does not deal with major problems of Anglo-American relations. Paragraph 11 says that one explanation may be that Maclean observed that he was no longer receiving certain types of secret papers.

It appears, once again, to hon. Members on both sides of the House and to the people in the clubs and pubs that here there has been some covering up by bureaucracy. The story has been heard, and read of, of Departments where the bureaucrats have attempted to "cover up" after initial mistakes have been made, and it has been suggested that there is a feeling among the people who are in the same Service that they must assist those who have made the error to prevent them being entirely shown up.

I agree that we cannot have, and would not want to have, in this country a secret service having any executive power. It must rest upon the criminal law and the executive power of the police. If we had a secret service which had full executive power obviously it would degenerate into something which nobody in this country would want. Security is the real part of the problem, and this is a matter in which security was bad. I have listened to what most hon. Members have said about the Foreign Service and these people who are members of it. I do not agree with much that has been said.

It appears to me that security is the failure here. In security it is not so much money or measures that matter. What matters is having the right man at the head of the security service to ensure that the best security this country can have is provided.

7.5 p.m.

Mr. Malcolm MacPherson (Stirling and Falkirk Burghs): I must say that after a beginning with which I did not agree I found much in what the hon. Member for

Epsom (Mr. Rawlinson) said later with which I did agree. I thought that the statement by the Foreign Secretary on the rights of a person under suspicion was much preferable to the opening statements in the speech of the hon. Member. However, my remarks will be concerned not with the security side of the matter but with the question of the personnel with whom we are concerned in the Foreign Office.

It has already been suggested that the Foreign Office ought to be grouped together with the Civil Service as a whole. As a matter of principle, I am inclined to agree with that suggestion. I take roughly the same line about the wartime reforms as that taken by my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman). In principle, it is a sound idea that the Foreign Service should be part of the Civil Service as a whole; but there will be practical difficulties. One of the difficulties which has faced the Civil Service as a whole in recent years has been that of getting the right people for the administrative class, which corresponds to the branch in the Foreign Service—Branch "A"—to which Maclean belonged. The situation has already been stated by the Civil Service Commissioners to be one of considerable difficulty, but if I can believe recent reports it has this year become extremely bad, so bad that the number of candidates acceptable has not been equal to the number of vacancies.

In the Foreign Service, on the other hand, if one can take the evidence of an article in the *Observer* yesterday, there seem to have been this year quite sufficient candidates for the vacancies. Even if one skims away half of them with the first qualifying examination and assumes that they were not serious candidates, there were still ample to fill the vacancies. If we merge the Foreign Service with the Civil Service as a whole, let us make no mistake that very shortly we shall run into an acute problem of staffing the upper branches of the Foreign Service.

This difficulty is not confined to the Civil Service. It is one that concerns all, or nearly all, the public services. There are just a few exceptions. When business is booming and attracting people with the offer of high salaries and extraordinarily good prospects, we find difficulty in attracting scientists to the public services and administrative people

to the first division of the Civil Service. There is difficulty in attracting all the officers we need for the Armed Services. There is difficulty in staffing the local government services. We cannot get sanitary inspectors, and we cannot get the specialists such as tax inspectors for the Civil Service, because industry and commerce are booming and offering far better prospects. That is the difficulty behind the whole question of staffing. That will be immensely emphasised for the Foreign Service once we link the Foreign Service with the Civil Service as a whole.

What I wanted to talk about was not so much that general problem which the public services in general are facing as a result of the present economic situation, but rather the intake of the upper branch of the Foreign Service. They are, of course, university recruits like those for the first division of the Civil Service. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East I was struck by the articles that appeared recently in the "Manchester Guardian." One of the points they made was the extreme variety of interests for the Foreign Service now. They used a phrase like "Atoms, oil, international payments" to illustrate the new and highly technical interests that the Service now has to deal with. Again, like my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East, I was struck by the fact that the reforms of the war years had destroyed a number of sources of expert knowledge without replacing them properly. But, in general, we have been producing rather more of these experts in languages and the affairs of particular regions, and these experts in matters of "atoms, oil and international payments," than we formerly did. Since the war the universities have given far more attention to these things, with the establishment and development of the schools of African and Oriental languages—at London University, for instance—and more attention to the Slav languages and cultures elsewhere. We have far more people who can be considered as replacements than we had formerly.

There is, however, very little sign that the Foreign Office has been making use of these new sources. Since the war recruitment to Branch A seems to have been exactly of the sort that would justify the accusations of inbreeding and so on

that are currently being made. I have not the figures for this year, but from 1945 to 1954—up to and including last year's intake—426 appointments were made to the senior division of the Foreign Service. Leaving aside figures and turning to percentages, I find that 77 per cent. of those appointments were to graduates of Oxford or Cambridge; 5 per cent. to graduates of London; 5 per cent. to Scottish graduates; 1 per cent. to graduates of all provincial universities; a very small percentage to graduates of universities outside this island—Ireland and New Zealand, for instance—and 8 per cent. to candidates who had no university education at all.

Mr. Godfrey Nicholson (Farnham): To present a fair picture, perhaps the hon. Member would give similar figures of the candidates?

Mr. MacPherson: That point was made previously, and the Joint Under-Secretary answered it in a way which completely destroyed his own case. He said that the high Oxford and Cambridge figures reflected the high number of applicants from those universities, but the figures he gave for 1954 proved exactly the opposite. In 1954, of 30 vacancies in the senior branch, 28 were filled by Oxford and Cambridge graduates. The hon. Gentleman stated that there were 287 applicants, of whom 221 came from Oxford and Cambridge. Now, 221 is not to 287 as 28 is to 30 but as 23 is to 30. In other words, the proportion of Oxford and Cambridge appointments in the one year for which we have figures was very much greater than the proportion of Oxford and Cambridge applicants. I think that that answers the hon. Member for Farnham.

I mention those figures because they give some shadow of backing to the suggestion that the Foreign Office is a kind of club, that there is a certain exclusiveness about it. After passing through a university one assumes that one will be thrown among people of all sorts of different types of education and coming from other types of universities. In the Foreign Office, however, appointees come from Oxford and Cambridge and are put right into the middle of a group of people who also come from those two institutions. That must lead to some possibility of inbreeding, of narrowness of interest,

[MR. MACPHERSON.] of loyalty to the club from time to time—to put it mildly, becoming an obstacle to one's greater loyalties.

I must say that I do not think it at all likely that this intake reflects in any serious way the intellectual requirements of the Foreign Office. I should not imagine that there is all that difference, intellectually, between the products of Oxford and Cambridge on one hand and those of London University and the provincial and Scottish universities on the other. Nor would anyone suggest that there is any ground for thinking that there is any wide divergence in the moral qualities and characters of the graduates. But, despite the fact that recruitment is farmed out to the Civil Service Selection Board—as it should be—there is still far too narrow a range of intake. That must be bad for the Service and must have played some part in creating some of the difficulties to which we have been addressing ourselves this afternoon.

During the period from 1945 to 1954 to which I have referred, there has been a great influx of people from the elementary schools, and the maintained secondary schools coming under the public authorities, into the universities generally—but mainly into the provincial and Scottish universities. In spite of that huge influx, the high figures for Oxford and Cambridge have continued. No sign of it has been reflected in the appointments to the Foreign Office. I regret this. I think that it is one of the things that make a case for an inquiry into the methods of appointment, the sources of appointment and, indeed, into the methods of training after a man has entered the foreign service.

On the previous occasion to which I have referred, the Joint Under-Secretary seemed to be rather complacent and said that he was quite sure that the best candidates were obtained. I suggest very strongly that, however good the present candidates are, the Service would be improved as a whole if they came from more varied sources, had more varied experience, were of more varied types and had more varied backgrounds. The hon. Gentleman said that there was no need to widen the source of recruitment. I doubt it. I think an inquiry might well look into the possibility of widening the sources of recruitment.

11 D 10

We have to remember that the reality of some of the popular feeling about these things lies in the fact that it is popular feeling. If people think that the people in the Foreign Service spend a lot of time drinking cocktails and that sort of thing, and are the type to whom this comes naturally because of their social background, the habit is developed of thinking of diplomats, and of the Foreign Office generally, as being rather different from the rest of the people. That is rather unhealthy. If there were two universities dominating the intake into the Foreign Service, I would far rather they were Liverpool and Bristol, for example, than Oxford and Cambridge.

Admirable institutions though they are, of our 16 or 17 universities Oxford and Cambridge are the two which, to the ordinary man in the street, are a little more distant and represent a life rather different from his own—much more than do the provincial universities. There is undoubtedly a great deal of loose talk about the way in which diplomats live, but there is a strong case for trying positively to improve the understanding of diplomats by the people in general and of the people in general by diplomats. As long as we adhere to the present very narrow intake, there are potential difficulties. In addition, we are losing an immense amount. The wider our net is cast—I do not think that it is necessarily a matter of democratisation, which the hon. Member for Coventry, East, was talking about—provided we keep to the approved standards, the more variety and the better and stronger as a whole will be the Service that we shall build up.

7.20 p.m.  
Mr. Godfrey Nicholson (Farnham): The hon. Member for Stirling and Falkirk Burghs (Mr. Malcolm MacPherson) made an exceedingly thoughtful speech, with much of which I am in full agreement. He said that the wider our net is cast the better service we would get. But I reach different conclusions from those that he reached. For instance, I am quite certain that the Foreign Office is making every effort to cast its net wider. Then is the hon. Gentleman really saying that the Civil Service Commissioners, are actively prejudiced in favour of Oxford and Cambridge? I know that he is not saying that, so he need not trouble to deny it. I

57

am sure that he would not dream of saying so. If one admits that only educational examinations and personal qualifications are taken into consideration, if one admits that examinations are conducted fairly, and efforts are being constantly made to interest the provincial universities, I do not think that the burden of his charge is so heavy as he makes it out to be.

With regard to Oxford and Cambridge, I do not know exactly the proportions, but the vast majority of the undergraduates of those universities are maintained by grants from Government or public bodies. My experience of the Diplomatic Service is not extensive, but I certainly know a number of its members. Last year, I went with a Parliamentary delegation to the Far East and saw a great deal of three Embassies in Tokyo, Bangkok and Rangoon. I was deeply struck—and I am very glad to have an opportunity of paying this tribute—by the exceedingly high standard of integrated efficiency typical of each of those three Missions, and I was immensely struck by the wide variety of social background of the members of those Missions. I am talking not only about the senior branch. I could not have been more favourably impressed than I was.

My opinion was backed up in each of those three capitals when I talked to English businessmen and British citizens resident there. All of them said that the foreign nationals there were constantly expressing envy of our Foreign Service and saying that they wished their missions were as efficient and as representative. I am sorry that this debate has so much taken the tone of an attack on the Foreign Service. We must avoid complacency, but

Mr. Malcolm MacPherson: I am sure that the hon. Member will not take it that I am attacking the Foreign Service. I am trying to suggest how we can improve it. We are continually doing that in public life in this country, without necessarily attacking something which we want to improve. It is not simply a matter of the social background when one talks about Oxford and Cambridge, although that is important. I think that the proportion of maintained scholars is probably less at these two institutions than the hon. Member thinks. Apart from social questions, there is the purely

intellectual question of people coming from the same kind of intellectual channel. These two universities are like each other and different from the universities of Leeds or Glasgow. The channel they come from is the same kind intellectually, apart altogether from the social side.

Mr. Nicholson: The hon. Gentleman is very disarming. I was not accusing him of making an unfair or unreasonable attack. I was thinking of the speech made by the hon. Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman), which I regarded as most unhelpful. I do not want to be led away by the hon. Gentleman into the question of intellectual channels. I think that everyone bears the stamp of the institution at which he was educated, but I think that social background is perhaps one of the most important things.

I was saying that I believe that it is the experience of hon. Members in this House that wherever they go, or almost everywhere they go, they find that the British Mission in a foreign capital has the highest reputation of any Mission. It is a great pity, as I have said, that this debate has taken that particular trend.

While we must avoid complacency, it is not only unjust and unfair but short-sighted and inimical to the best interests of this country if it goes out to the world that the House of Commons has spent the best part of a day in attacking a service that is the envy of every other nation in the world. There have certainly been these mistakes over Maclean and Burgess, but the fact remains—and I say it categorically—that our Foreign Service is varied in its personnel, is democratic in the sense that in all ranks its members are drawn from the most diverse social background, is efficient, and is envied. While not attempting to cover up what has happened, I do beg the House to keep a sense of proportion and a sense of balance.

Something was said by the Foreign Secretary about members of the Foreign Service having fewer of the rights of the ordinary citizens than did members of the rest of the Civil Service. He referred to the committee which gets rid of people who are considered unsuitable. I believe that if the confidence, which has been a little shaken, is to be fully restored, the work of that committee will have to go further, and I think that members of the

[MR. NICHOLSON.]  
Foreign Service will have to accept a further diminution of their rights.

I was struck by the fact that the Foreign Secretary seemed to think that there was very little intermediate stage between retaining a man in the Foreign Office and prosecuting him. I believe that more use should be made of transfer to other branches of the Civil Service. There are two criteria. The first is reliability, and the second is vulnerability. I am not talking about political reliability, but about reliability of character.

In the course of our lives we meet many people—we are probably very often of that type ourselves—who are very well-meaning, but are not of the strongest character, and because of that they are bound to be weak links in any chain. They may be indiscreet; they may contract unfortunate marriages, and they may mix in questionable circles in foreign capitals. I believe that members of the Foreign Service, because they have a position which is highly responsible and exceedingly honourable, must be prepared to accept to a greater extent than they do at present transfer to other branches of the Civil Service if their characters are thought to be weak.

So far as vulnerability is concerned, there have been references to the unfortunate habits of Burgess and various people. Without delivering moral judgment, we must face the fact that people who are perverted in their tastes are extremely vulnerable to blackmail. I did not know Burgess well. I met him once or twice. At one time, he was the B.B.C. representative who arranged the speakers for "The Week in Westminster." One had only to look at his eyes to see that he was an unreliable and shifty type, brilliant though he was. I believe that if in those days there had been the same careful scrutiny of people's character, habits and background as there is today he would not have been in the Foreign Office for one week.

Apart from that trend in the debate, which I deplore, there has also been the undertone, voiced by the hon. Member for Hammersmith, North (Mr. Tomney), of general anxiety so far as our Security Services are concerned. This debate may indeed have done good if it calls the attention of the Government and of public

opinion to the grave uneasiness which is felt by people who "know their stuff" about the way in which we are dealing with the Communist menace in this country. By "people who do know their stuff" I mean people like the hon. Member for Hammersmith, North and many of his friends. Our Security Services are necessarily shrouded in secrecy, and no one demands an open inquiry to bring all their methods to light.

This debate will have done good if it shows the Government that there is keen anxiety. It will have done harm if, to public opinion throughout the world, it reflects serious anxiety over the Foreign Service. I start where I began: do not make any mistake about it, we have the finest Foreign Service in the world. It is democratic, varied, efficient and the envy and object of respect of every other people.

7.30 p.m.

Mr. A. J. Irvine (Liverpool, Edge Hill): I did not have the advantage of hearing the early stages of this debate, but I am tempted to intervene by certain observations which I heard in the speeches latterly delivered. I listened with great interest to the observations of my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling and Falkirk Burghs (Mr. Malcolm MacPherson), and with a great deal that he said I agree. But I found difficulty in finding the connection between what my hon. Friend had to say and the particular issue of security with which, I understand, the House is concerned in this debate.

It may well be that the Foreign Office suffers from not having as widely representative an establishment as one would wish, but I should have thought that it would be a difficult case to argue that one consequence of that was that its position in terms of security was, by that circumstance, in any way endangered or diminished.

Mr. Malcolm MacPherson: I do not think there was any suggestion at any time that the debate was concerned entirely with security. Indeed, it seems to me that one of the advantages of a debate like this is that we can try to look forward and deal with positive suggestions for reform rather than concentrate simply on the individual issue that causes the debate. On the question which my hon. Friend has raised about the connection

between the type of personnel in the Foreign Office and security, I think he probably did not have the advantage of hearing the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman) who went into that fairly fully.

Mr. Irvine: I am obliged. I made my observation regarding my hon. Friend's remarks only in order that the position might be made clear.

In considering the whole extraordinary and almost incredible story of Maclean and Burgess, I feel that it is a great mistake to attach too much importance to the detail of their escape and to the detail of the manner in which they were able to evade the authorities. There was, obviously, some bungling. There was, quite clearly, a failure to keep the watch that should have been kept and to put upon them the restraints which, in the light of events, it is quite clear would have been desirable.

But there is another side of the picture which compels us to recognise how extraordinarily difficult it must be to ensure that two people of that type and character and with those objectives are not able to escape. It is a task involving considerable difficulties indeed. I am reminded of the story of Gilbert Chesterton—I think it is "The Man Who Was Thursday"—which begins, if my recollection is aright, with a picture of twelve anarchists, or it may be more. One by one, as each chapter of the story unfolds, an anarchist turns out to be a detective. In the last and culminating chapter the position is reached where they are all standing at the end of a pier at some point on our coast. The last anarchist who has been discovered to be a detective looks round upon his colleagues and says, "But where are the anarchists?" The reply comes back, "There aren't any anarchists. We are just a lot of bally policemen looking at each other."

There is no doubt that in all these affairs it is easy to criticise and deride the forces of security. The advantages are with the culprit who is seeking to get away and the disadvantages are with those who are trying to prevent him from doing so and who, at the same time, are obliged to keep within the law and obliged to avoid the danger of letting it be known prematurely that a man is suspect. Therefore, for my part, I would think it

is quite wrong to found any serious criticism of the Security Services upon the details and circumstances of the escape of these two men.

The anxiety that I feel about this whole affair relates not to that but to what appears to me to be a far more important matter, namely, the breakdown which the incident appears to reveal in the intuitive sense and judgment of the associates and superiors of these men in the Foreign Office. That is what causes anxiety, not any trouble in the mechanics of the matter and not, in my view, any particular detail of the Security Service. But that it should have been possible for two people of this kind, of whom we now know all that we do, to remain so long in the Foreign Office and hold at one time or another positions of considerable importance, suggests that there was the most astounding breakdown in what one had always liked to think was the traditional faculty in the Foreign Service to distinguish between the good and the evil and between the sensible and the foolish.

Mr. Nicholson: Judas amongst the Apostles.

Mr. Irvine: That is a parallel I do not intend to follow. That is the matter that gives rise to anxiety.

I can only conclude, however, that the breakdown of intuitive sense in the Department cannot have been as bad as at first sight it appears to have been. It must have been widely known within the Department that these two were undesirable men.

If one takes that view, if one takes the view that it must have been apparent long before these two men escaped that they were undesirable types—if one takes the view, in other words, that there cannot have been such a complete breakdown in the intuitive perspicacity and judgment of the Department that their true character was not known within it—one turns to the reason why the judgment which must have existed about these men was not exposed and made public and why action was not taken. I can only assume that the reason for that was the deeply rooted desire in the Department amongst the civil servants there to be loyal to each other.

One feels, then, that the real lesson to be learnt from this incident is not that the Security Services were necessarily

[MR. IRVINE.] ... gravely at fault, or necessarily that there was as complete a breakdown in the intuitive perspicacity and judgment of members of the Service as at first sight appeared, but that we are dealing with the consequence of men in a great Department feeling that their obligations to each other and to the Department were such that the truth should not be revealed. It is a difficult thing, of course, to suggest what is the proper remedy for that. It may well be that in this context the observations of my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling and Falkirk Burghs have particular relevance.

Mr. Nicholson: Would not the alternative explanation, and the more reasonable one, be that there was anxiety to secure evidence for a prosecution? Is not that conceivable?

Mr. Irvine: I should have thought that that was an unlikely explanation of what occurred. The suggestion that crimes can go on being committed indefinitely because it is thought undesirable to check them for fear that there is insufficient evidence is a line of thought, and of inaction, that is full of danger. We are speaking about conjectures here, and for my part I do not know any of the persons concerned, but I should certainly say that it is very unlikely that the explanation for this incident is to be found in the reluctance of persons to take action before there was sufficient accumulation of evidence. It may have played a part, but it does not seem to me to go to the root of the matter.

I think that, on the last analysis, when the matter is traced to its source, probably the real root of the trouble here is a kind of inverted virtue on the part of the Department. I think that the sense of loyalty and of keeping together was carried to the point where things which should not have been allowed to continue in the public interest were allowed to continue. It may well be that the observations of my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling and Falkirk Burghs are particularly relevant to this point, and that the mistake—because that is what it is—of too intense a loyalty to a Department and to one's colleagues in a Department, to the point where it is not compatible with loyalty to the highest national interests, can be treated best by expanding the sources of recruitment into

11 D M

the Department. To find the remedy for that is a very difficult task, and for the moment I am not able to think of another than the remedy which my hon. Friend has suggested.

I would say, in conclusion that one further lesson which, I have no doubt, is felt in all parts of the House, of all this is that an incident of this kind must not be allowed to be made the occasion of the excuse for any kind of illiberal witch-hunting and pursuit. I am not at all sure that the most valuable outcome of a debate like this may not prove to be the insistence by the House as a whole that that shall not be. I speak as one who prefers contention in political life, but perhaps we are discussing today a theme upon which Members in all parts of the House can find a very large measure of agreement.

We do not want in this country any processes which can be regarded as witch-hunting. At the same time, we can, perhaps, agree that an example has been provided here of how loyalty among colleagues in a Department has been carried to the point where the national interest has been adversely affected. If there be any substance in that view, offered to the House only after consideration of all the aspects of this extraordinary case, we may be confident that no section of the community will be quicker to learn the lesson than the Civil Service itself and the Foreign Office in particular.

7.45 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel J. K. Cordeaux (Nottingham, Central): The hon. Member for Edge Hill (Mr. A. J. Irvine) has, I think, exonerated the security services, although possibly he may have been referring to this case only. I do wish I could agree. All of us who have had the honour to serve in any of the security services of this country—and two have already spoken today—would like to take that view. I cannot, and it cannot be doing any service, I am sure, in the long run to the branch of this great Service whose reputation is at stake in this debate to try to minimise what I feel is the seriousness of the matter.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Speir) and the Foreign Secretary both referred to the extreme new difficulties which are now faced by our security services thanks to the fact that agents can now often be recruited not

only by giving them money, not only by threatening them, not only by any of the old-established ways, but by appealing to their ideology. It is very true indeed. What I contend, what has been suggested by many hon. Members in the debate, and what is certainly suggested in the White Paper, is that since the war, at any rate, our security service has been going the wrong way about it to detect those people.

This particular failure by the security service in the case of Burgess and Maclean is bad enough in itself, but I maintain that it cannot be considered in isolation. As I see it, it is the culmination of a series of failures, which were far more damaging to the safety of this country than this one. I refer to the cases of the three Russian agents engaged on atomic research in this country, that is to say, Dr. Alan Nunn May in 1946, Dr. Fuchs in 1949, and Professor Pontecorvo in 1950. I hope that the House will bear with me for a few minutes while I say a few words about each of them, for that leads to the point I am anxious to make.

The first of these three agents and traitors, the least considerable and the least harmful, was Alan Nunn May. At Cambridge he was definitely recognised as a Communist. When he left there he went to Russia on a visit, and when he came back he joined the editorial board of the "Scientific Worker," which is the official journal of the National Association of Scientific Workers, and which at that time, I think it would be quite fair to say, included many Communists amongst its directors.

I am not suggesting that for these reasons Nunn May should not have been employed on atomic research in this country. After all, in those days, in the 'thirties, it was not so very uncommon to have those views when one was an undergraduate. What is more, when Nunn May was engaged by Tube Alloys, the cover name used for atomic research in those days, any person who was a strong pro-Russian was considered also to be a strong anti-Hitler. When, however, after the war our actual enemy, Germany, changed to potential enemy, Russia, men like that in such vital positions should have been considered by our security services not, perhaps, with suspicion but, at any rate, with a very inquiring eye.

I do not think that too much blame can be attached in the first case, but the

point is that, as a result, our security services apparently made no sort of inquiries about the antecedents and background of other atomic scientists who were working for us. If they had done so, they would have found a very much more important man, Dr. Klaus Fuchs. They would have found that he was a refugee in this country from Nazi persecution in Germany in his youth, that he had been a member of the Communist Party all his adult life, that all his brothers and sisters were Communists; that he had been reported to the Chief Constable of Bristol as a Communist, and that his name had been found in the note-book of one of the chief suspects in the Canada spy trial. Yet, apparently, none of these facts was discovered by our security services, and it was only three years later, when word came from America, that we were able to get busy on him. One would have thought that after that, at least, our security service would have been alerted in this kind of case, but not a bit of it.

We then come to the worst of the three cases, that of Professor Pontecorvo which followed very soon afterwards. Professor Bruno Pontecorvo, like Fuchs, was in his youth a victim of Fascist persecution, this time in Italy. He had a brother there who was a well-known and active Communist. He had a sister who was married to a professed Communist, and his first cousin was a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party. After those two earlier examples, it was nothing short of shameful that our security services knew nothing at all about this.

After Pontecorvo had escaped and Questions were raised in the House, these were the kind of replies that were given. On 23rd October, 1950, in answer to a supplementary question by my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Mr. Erroll), the then Minister of Supply, the right hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. G. R. Strauss) said that Pontecorvo

"... has been screened several times during the last few years by our security officers."

In answer to a further question, the right hon. Gentleman said:

"... according to the security officers, the screenings were particularly satisfactory."  
[OFFICIAL REPORT, 23rd October, 1950: Vol. 478, c. 2489.]

[LIEUT.-COLONEL CORDEAUX.] How easily satisfied some people can be, particularly when we recall that, according to a further reply by the right hon. Gentleman that day, there had been since the Fuchs case a certain tightening up of the system. I wonder what it amounted to. Heaven knows what it was like before.

Early in 1950, apparently alarmed by the Fuchs trial, Pontecorvo himself went to some of the security authorities and told them that he had Communist relations in Italy and had recently seen them when he had been over there. At about the same time we received a report from Sweden saying definitely that both Pontecorvo and his wife were Communists. Pontecorvo continued to carry out his highly secret work, and in July of that year he blithely set forth with all his family for a motor tour of Italy. He did not come back on the day that he was due to return. Instead, he wrote a letter to the atomic station at Harwell, where he was employed, telling those in authority there that he could not come back on time because his car had broken down. The reply given by the right hon. Member for Vauxhall in the House of Commons on 6th November, in answer to a Question, was

"Dr. Pontecorvo's leave expired on 31st August. On this date he had written a note to Harwell, received on 4th September, saying that he had trouble with his car."

In reply to a further Question, the right hon. Gentleman said of Dr. Pontecorvo,

"... the reasons for this man over-staying his leave seemed quite normal. He had a motor-car breakdown, and was asked to visit some people in Switzerland, and it was, naturally, only about a week afterwards that those at Harwell became worried about him."  
—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 6th November, 1950; Vol. 480, c. 567-8.]

"Normal" and "natural." Ye gods! All I can say is that if our security authorities consider that sort of behaviour in the case of a man of Pontecorvo's antecedents and background normal and natural, none of them is fit to hold his job.

I am sorry to have inflicted this old history on the House at such length, but it leads me to the point that I want to make—that these three top-grade Russian agents, all atomic scientists, men varying very widely in every way, in character and upbringing and so on, had one thing in common. It is that if, when the poten-

tial enemy became Russia instead of Germany after the war, our security authorities had carried out even the most cursory investigations into their backgrounds, all three would have been found utterly unfit for their jobs. It seems barely credible to me that, after all that, the same thing should have happened in the case of Maclean; but in fact it did.

Maclean was of about the same age as the three and was at Cambridge with Nunn May. He was then recognised as a Communist. He went into the Foreign Service immediately afterwards. But although we are told in the White Paper that in January, 1949, knowledge came to those concerned that information was being sent from our Foreign Office to the Russians and

"highly secret but widespread and protracted inquiries were begun," those widespread inquiries were not spread widely enough even then to include Maclean's background just before he joined the Foreign Service.

A year and a half later, in April, 1950, the inquiries were not even spread as widely as that, when, in fact, the suspects had been narrowed down to two or three, of whom, of course, he was one. They were not even spread widely enough to include his background immediately before he joined the Foreign Service when the suspects had been narrowed down to one—he himself—because paragraph 4 of the White Paper states that the information was obtained only after Maclean had escaped.

Therefore, it amounts to this—that all this time the security services have been neglecting what should be the chief channel of their inquiries, because, as has been said, these spies are now recruited very frequently for ideological reasons rather than for what I might call the old-fashioned reasons. These facts are not in doubt. They are stated in the wretched White Paper, but the White Paper also discloses that in many other ways our security services did not prove up to the job. Paragraph 26, which has been enlarged upon in the debate today, states that no watch was set on Maclean, except in London, as it would have been too dangerous and would have been likely to have alerted him, because he lived in a quiet country area. Surely our security service is not going to confess that its trade craft has fallen to that level?

Of course nobody who knows anything about this subject imagines that such a watch is kept by the village policeman doffing his uniform and putting on a bowler hat and a tweed suit above his uniform boots and following somebody down a country lane. There are other methods, and the fact that apparently no watch of any kind was placed on Maclean during the week end in which he escaped is nothing short of shameful.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. H. Morrison) agreed to the interrogation on that Friday morning of 25th May. Maclean has asked for and obtained leave for the following Saturday morning. Therefore he was not due in the Foreign Office between the Friday evening and the Monday morning. Whatever may have been the reason why he went when he did, whether it had been arranged long before or suddenly we do not yet know, but it must have been obvious to our security authorities and those in charge that this week-end was the danger period. Yet, as I said, not a step was taken to keep any surveillance on him throughout that period.

It has been said once or twice in this debate that the chief value of a secret service is that it should be secret. Unfortunately that excellent maxim has been so consistently flouted since the war by amateur authors cashing in on their experiences and breaking into print as a result of two or three years' temporary service in one of our great Services in wartime that we can well afford a slight risk of loss of secrecy once more in a good cause. The cause I am suggesting is an inquiry into our security service.

I do not feel that whitewashing will satisfy the people of this country about this case. Their faith in our security service has been sadly shaken, and it must be our first resolve to try to restore it at all costs. The same thing applies to their faith in our Foreign Service. My hon. Friend the Member for Farnham (Mr. Nicholson) said that the public confidence had been a little shaken for the first time by this case. That was a triumph of understatement in view of what people are thinking.

Our Foreign Service has always received the criticism from which, to a large extent, our security service has been free. It has been accused of being too much

divorced from reality, of having too many receptions and cocktail parties, of being staffed by too many old school ties. Yet even its more severe critics in their wildest moment have never before this case suggested that it harboured traitors, and now people know that it did and they believe that it still may do so.

The only way in which we can be fairly sure of reassuring the people of this country, both as regards the efficiency of our security arrangements and about what has happened in this case, is to appoint a committee of inquiry. I would suggest that it should be a committee formed of the judicial members of the Privy Council, sitting in secret and reporting to the Prime Minister. That would go far to reassure our people who deserve reassurance. Therefore most earnestly I ask my right hon. Friend to reconsider the decision that it is not necessary to hold any such inquiry.

8.5 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel Marcus Lipton (Brixton): I find myself in cordial agreement with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux). I hope that there will be a judicial inquiry along the lines he advocated and mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. H. Morrison) earlier in the debate. This debate will be a sham exercise unless it is followed by such an inquiry.

We want an inquiry into the recruitment and staffing of the Foreign Office. We also want an inquiry into the efficiency of our Security Service. Those should be two separate and distinct inquiries. It may be found necessary to have a different form of inquiry in each case since exactly the same security considerations do not apply to an investigation into the staffing and recruitment of the Foreign Office as would obviously and necessarily apply to an examination of our Secret Service. Unless there is an inquiry people will remain profoundly dissatisfied with the official pronouncement made on the subject by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I will not go as far back as did the hon. and gallant Member for Nottingham, Central. I will only go back to 1951. In the light of what the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said today, I

[LIEUT.-COLONEL LIPTON.]  
 have come to the conclusion that if Burgess and Maclean had not left the country all that would have happened would have been that Burgess would have been asked to resign on pain of dismissal and would probably have resigned in that way. Maclean might still have been carrying on in some capacity in the Foreign Office because, up to the time of his disappearance, there was still no evidence against him to justify proceedings under the Official Secrets Act.

When these two men disappeared, the first statement on the subject was made on 11th June, 1951, in this House. I suggested on that occasion that it looked as if perhaps their immediate dismissal might be justified. I was told that it would be premature to come to a conclusion about it one way or the other. The House seemed to accept that, and as the White Paper reveals, one year afterwards these two men were suspended—almost a week after they had disappeared. It took a week for somebody to make up his mind that they ought to be suspended. After they had been suspended they were still kept on the Foreign Office list because a decision to terminate their appointments was not taken until 1st June, 1952, with effect as from 1st June, 1951.

That struck me at the time as very odd and I asked a Question about the delay of one year and when it was finally decided to dispense definitely and permanently with the services of these men. This is the reply I received from the right hon. Gentleman who is now Minister of State at the Foreign Office:

"It is because the search of them was continuing. Indeed, the search is still continuing. But, having been absent without leave for a year, my right hon. Friend has considered that as a disciplinary measure their appointments should be terminated and that they should be dismissed the Service."—(OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd July, 1952; Vol. 503, c. 417.)

In July, 1952, a year afterwards, somebody had taken the terrible decision that the time had come when the appointments of these two men should be terminated.

I merely mention that because it is symptomatic of the attitude, atmosphere or spirit which apparently prevailed in the Foreign Office at the time, and still

prevails. As a matter of fact, I was so flabbergasted and breathless at that reply that I was unable to ask another Question about the subject for eighteen months.

On 25th January, 1954, I decided to take the plunge again. I asked the right hon. Gentleman who is now the Minister of Supply what was going on, and he said that investigations were continuing, but no detailed account of their nature could be given without prejudicing the chance of their success. I was then told, in another blinding revelation of the obvious, that if I presumed that these two men were behind the Iron Curtain I should probably be right. It will be noted that even then the right hon. Gentleman was not committing himself to anything.

Anyhow, I waited another year. On 31st January, 1955, I asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what was going on. The right hon. Gentleman who is now the Minister of State replied that he had no statement to make at that moment—this is the illuminating sentence—the reason being that he would not wish to make a statement based on inadequate information and insufficient researches seeing that the investigation was still being pursued.

So at the beginning of this year no statement could be made, research was still going on, the information was inadequate, and there was "nothing more to say at the moment." The Foreign Secretary was asked about it on 27th April; "Nothing to add." One of the Joint Under-Secretaries was asked about it on 20th June; "Nothing to add."

Then we got a White Paper which virtually had nothing to add to what everybody already knew, and we have today had an eloquent speech, full of interesting political philosophy, by the Foreign Secretary which adds nothing at all to what anyone who has been following this matter with his own unaided resources has been able to discover.

In those circumstances, it is not at all surprising that the White Paper has met a unanimity of obloquy rare in the history of White Papers issued by any Government since White Papers have been issued, whatever that date might have been. It has been condemned everywhere. I will not weary the House by detailing the journals from which these

comments on the White Paper have been extracted:

... disingenuous reticence ... buckets of whitewash ... paucity of information ... cover-up to protect men guilty of supplying successive Ministries with incomplete information ... admission of failure ... an insult to any reasonable man's intelligence.

Those are quotations from comments made by papers representing almost every shade of political opinion and thought in this country. I quote them because they bear out what I believe every speaker in the debate has tried to adopt as the tone of his speech—the non-party political approach that we have been trying to make towards the very serious problem which has been exposed by the events in the Burgess and Maclean case. Very many Governments are involved, perhaps ever since the time when Maclean entered the Foreign Service. It is idle and unprofitable now to apportion blame, and I am glad we have not wasted our time trying to do so.

There is one quotation which I should like framed and hung in every department of the Foreign Office. It is from "Gulliver's Travels":

"Providence never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery to be comprehended by a few persons of sublime genius."

I should like that quotation hung in every Government Department, but particularly in the Foreign Office, because there, over the years, has been created a kind of order which I can only describe by saying that they have tended to regard themselves as a new Samurai of twentieth century England. It is an attitude of mind which has been stressed by previous speakers. What is wrong with the Foreign Office is not only the inefficiency of its Security Services—that is one of the issues—but the attitude of mind and spirit of the place, which makes it an extremely awkward problem for any Government to deal with satisfactorily.

The point that I want very seriously to make is that there is a reluctance, from which many Governments have suffered—the present Government suffer from it—to tell the people the truth and the whole truth. The people will know how to judge all right if they are told what the truth is. Never was there a more intelligent or fair-minded public than is now to be found in this country. What have we to be afraid of? Why not on every possible occasion give the benefit of the doubt

to the principle that, as far as possible, the people of this country should be told the truth and the whole truth?

One of the difficulties about the matter over the past few years has been the reluctance to tell the people the truth. That is responsible for all the omissions from the White Paper, the evasions in answers to Questions in this House and in another place, and the stupid situations in which successive Governments have found themselves involved as a result of following the Foreign Office tradition that the world will come to an end if ordinary people are told a little too much.

I will not go through the White Paper in detail. That would be a waste of time at the present stage. I merely want to draw attention to two or three points, and I will do so very briefly. On the Friday before Maclean had his Saturday morning off, just at the time when everything was approaching a climax, and after it had been decided that there should be questions—incidentally, it was not even known that Maclean was missing until the Monday, as has been pointed out by previous speakers—the senior security officer, who knew that Maclean was under observation, saw him go off in a taxi-cab but had no instructions to stop him. What sort of security arrangement is that?

We now learn from the White Paper that the Foreign Office was aware for two years and three months before the disappearance of the two men that secret information had leaked out. Then suspicions narrowed down to two or three people, and somewhere about that period, so careful were those concerned not to give Maclean any warning that he was under observation that it was decided to deny him access to secret papers which would normally have gone to him in the course of his duties. Of course, anyone as intelligent and as competent as Maclean had been certified to be by Sir Roger Makins and others who had had him under observation, would have easily smelled a rat, to put it no higher, as soon as secret documents were being withdrawn from his observation.

Even when Maclean has disappeared and investigators rushed to his home at Tatsfield, they did not trouble to examine the mass of papers which he had left behind. It may well be that Maclean had extracted anything that might be of value

(LIEUT.-COLONEL LIPTON.)  
 or which might have created suspicion. After Burgess was recalled to London and was on the way out, as has been made clear by preceding speakers, he made a telephone call to the United States and talked to some unknown person. That is known because he left a friend of his to pay the bill of £7.

Here was a man in that very short period since his return to this country with a view to having some disciplinary action taken against him making a long telephone call to the United States to somebody or other and apparently nobody was concerned about what he was doing or what his intentions were.

I will say for the British Security Services—and I agree with a great deal of what was said by the hon. and gallant Member for Perth and East Perthshire (Colonel Gomme-Duncan)—that within a few days of the disappearance the British Security Services had all the facts of the tip-off.

I do not want to take up the time of the House, but let me now come to the situation that existed in the middle of April, 1951, when, according to the White Paper, the field of suspicion had been narrowed to two or three persons. The Government cannot even make up their minds whether it was two or three. Why is there this "or"? Either the field had been narrowed down to three persons, or it had not. Let us have a little more precision. Let us at last depart from the verbal gymnastics in which, whoever it is who draws up these documents, is so proficient. Had the field of suspicion been narrowed by mid-April to three persons? That is a simple question which I hope can be answered. Why play around with "two or three"?

I said that but for the fact that Burgess and Maclean disappeared, the Security Services might still have not had any firm evidence against them. The reason for that is very simple and is tacitly admitted by the White Paper. It is that even by April, 1951, and possibly since, there was "no legally admissible evidence to support a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act." That is from paragraph 10.

Are we to allow the security of the country to hang in the balance until legally admissible evidence to support a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act is available? It is quite obvious that the

Foreign Office Security Service and the Foreign Secretary himself could have had powers and sufficient information on which to act which would have enabled the Foreign Secretary, without any prosecution under the Official Secrets Acts, to take steps to ensure that the security of the country was not endangered in future. If we are to rely on prosecutions under the Official Secrets Acts, then goodness knows in what difficulties and imbroglios we shall find ourselves.

Mr. John Peyton (Yeovil): Is the hon. and gallant Member suggesting that these two men should have been arrested, without a charge being levelled against them under the Official Secrets Acts?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: No. All I am suggesting is that these two men, for reasons quite apart from the Official Secrets Acts, proved themselves unfitted to be in the Foreign Office. Why, therefore, do we have to wait for the accumulation of sufficient evidence under the Official Secrets Acts to get rid of some drunks, homosexuals, or people temperamentally unfitted by reason of their characters to occupy any position in any Government Department?

That is the point I am trying to make and surely it is not a point which is difficult to comprehend even by the most ignorant members of the general population who must not be told too much by the Foreign Office about what is going on. It is said that the field had been narrowed down to two or three persons. Let us assume that what the White Paper means is that the suspicions had been narrowed down to three persons. We still do not know whether one of the three was Burgess. We have not yet been told that.

The Joint Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. R. H. Turton): The hon. and gallant Member for Brixton (Lieut.-Colonel Lipton) should remember what was said by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He said that no suspicion rested upon Burgess at the time of his disappearance. Clearly, the hon. and gallant Member did not listen to my right hon. Friend's speech.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I did hear him say that, but I hope that the Under-Secretary will also recall that I referred to that point earlier when I suggested that had he not disappeared, Burgess would

still be in the country and probably re-employed in some other Government Department. All that would have happened would have been that he would have been asked to resign.

We are now left with two people whose identity is not yet disclosed. Three people came under suspicion, one was Maclean and the other two did not include Burgess. Why is there such great reluctance by the Foreign Office to say what has happened to those two people?

Mr. George Thomas (Cardiff, West): Does my hon. and gallant Friend think that it is the job of a Government Department to smear people on suspicion?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I will come to that point in a moment. There is a very simple answer to it and hon. Members will have an answer to that criticism. I am not asking the Foreign Office to mention any names, but why is it that they will not disclose and have not yet disclosed how many people have been asked to resign, have been dismissed, or transferred to other positions as a result of, or following, the inquiries arising from the Maclean-Burgess disappearance.

Mr. Turton: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave the exact number in his speech. Perhaps, again, the hon. and gallant Member for Brixton was not present when the speech was made.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I listened as carefully as I could to the speech of the Foreign Secretary, and I apologise if I did not catch that figure. However, the right hon. Gentleman has added one little crumb of information to the inadequate information provided in the White Paper. When the speech of the Foreign Secretary is carefully analysed, as it can only be carefully analysed when we see it in print tomorrow, the general public will see how very little he added to what was already known to anyone who has been following the matter.

I now come to the remarks made by the Foreign Secretary about Mr. Philby, but before dealing with them I will deal with the question of smear referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. G. Thomas). One of the things which deliberately encourages the spreading of what we all deplore and know as McCarthyism is the reluctance on the part of the Government to disclose informa-

tion. The withholding of information creates the very risks which we all want to avoid and which every decent-minded person deploras, the risk of suspicion and distrust in which McCarthyism flourishes.

If only the Government had had the courage to take the people of this country into their confidence four years ago! There is nothing in the White Paper, except the disappearance of Mrs. Maclean, which could not have been disclosed four years ago. As my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman) pointed out, the Petrov trial added little or nothing to the known facts. Nothing has happened in the past four years to suggest that it would have been contrary to the public interest if this White Paper had been published four years ago.

Mr. Daines: Before my hon. and gallant Friend leaves the case of Mr. Philby, I would point out that in the course of a Question, which was greatly publicised, he made what was tantamount to a charge against that gentleman. The House is in a privileged position, and I think that my hon. and gallant Friend owes it to the House to give the source of that information.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I was saying that the information given by the Foreign Secretary in the course of today's debate has added little or nothing to what was already known, and that it is the withholding of information which creates an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust.

Mr. G. Thomas: Give the information and we shall all be satisfied.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: We had to wait four years before the Government made a statement. The hon. Member—

Mr. Daines: On a point of order. My hon. and gallant Friend has made what amounts to a charge against an individual who cannot defend himself in this House. I repeat that he owes it to the House to give the source of his information, or should withdraw the charge.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: The question of what I owe or do not owe to the House is a matter not to be decided by my hon. Friend the Member for East Ham, North (Mr. Daines), but by the House as a whole and by you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, and the general public outside. However, let us—

Mr. Peyton: Further to that point of order. Would you care, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, to enlighten the hon. and gallant Gentleman on what he owes to yourself and the House?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris): That is not a point of order. The hon. and gallant Member is himself responsible for any statement he makes in the House.

Mr. Tomney: Will you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, give the hon. and gallant Member directions that he should inform the House?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I cannot give any such directions. Every hon. Member is responsible for any statement he makes in the House, and the hon. and gallant Member is likewise responsible in this case.

Mr. H. G. McGhee (Penistone): You do not know him, Mr. Deputy-Speaker.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I am very glad, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, that you have helped to dispel the queer illusions which exist in the minds of some hon. Members as to what you can and cannot direct.

I made as careful a note as I possibly could of what the Foreign Secretary said in his speech. He said, "There are still inquiries being made. The name of one man"—I am quoting as accurately as possible—"has been mentioned, in the House of Commons, but not outside." I hope that I am not quoting the right hon. Gentleman inaccurately. My first comment on that is that in itself the statement is inaccurate, because the name of this man has been mentioned outside the House of Commons. Not only has it been mentioned, but it has appeared in print.

I have now had sent to me a copy of the American newspaper the *Sunday News* of 23rd October, that is to say, the Sunday before the House resumed after the Summer Recess, from which I extract the following quotation from a long article entitled, "Identify 'Third Man' who helped spying officials flee Britain." The quotation which I wish to extract from this article reads as follows—and do not forget that this article was published on 23rd October, that is to say, two or three days before the House resumed:

11 D 22

"Although the Foreign Office is dead sure Philby triggered the 25th May, 1951, flight of Burgess and Maclean, his only punishment was being fired."

In view of the fact that the name of Mr. Philby had already been reproduced in print outside the House, I do not think it is quite accurate for the Foreign Secretary, if he was sufficiently well-informed in the matter, to suggest that the name of one man has been mentioned here and not outside. That is just not an accurate representation of the position.

Mr. R. Brooman-White (Rutherglen): I wish to ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman to clear up one point. He has a great deal of information about this. Has that name been mentioned outside the House in this country in any circumstances which would leave the way open for legal action by the man whose name has been smeared?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: I am dealing with the statement of the Foreign Secretary. I did not know what he was going to say. All I know is that a little while ago the Foreign Secretary said, in a very carefully prepared part of his speech, that the name of one man has been mentioned in the House and not outside. I produce evidence to indicate that when the name of this man was mentioned in the House it had already appeared in print outside.

The Foreign Secretary went on to say that he had been privy to much of the investigation into the leakage. I do not quarrel with that. I expect that is an accurate statement of the case, because it was part of his duty, in the position he occupied at Washington, to discharge certain responsibilities in connection with security. But what the Foreign Secretary went on to say was that Mr. Philby was a friend of Burgess at Trinity College, Cambridge; that he had Communist associations during and after his university days, and that in those circumstances he was asked to resign from the Foreign Office on 1st July, 1951.

I suggest that this part of the Foreign Secretary's speech is on a par with the verbal gymnastics that were displayed in another place by a Government spokesman and is not as frank as it ought to be. The only interpretation I can place on these remarks—if I am quoting the right hon. Gentleman correctly—is that because of these Communist associations

with Burgess during their university careers, and their Communist associations after their university days, Philby was asked to resign from the Foreign Service on 1st July, 1951.

Then the Foreign Secretary went on to say that, since that date, he has been the subject of the closest investigation. I have no doubt that that is so. I have dealt with the point previously, namely, that if the Foreign Office is to keep on investigating people until it has sufficient evidence under the Official Secrets Act to prosecute, it may well be that all kinds of people will be able to get away with all kinds of things.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Anthony Nutting): As the hon. and gallant Gentleman has based a great deal of his case on the statement that certain statements appeared in the American Press before the House of Commons met on 25th October, can he confirm or deny that the statements from the American Press of 23rd October to which he has referred were based on disclosures which had already been made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman himself to newspapers in this country? I was myself in the United States on 23rd October, and read various Press reports which referred to Mr. Philby, and these Press reports were based on allegations made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman himself in this country.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: The very simple answer to that is this. While it is true that the name of an hon. Member is mentioned in this particular article, that hon. Member is not myself, and I do not know—[HON. MEMBERS: "What is the date?"] It is 23rd October, 1955; that is the date of the article. According to some articles in unspecified American newspapers on unspecified dates, the right hon. Gentleman has suggested that I mentioned the name of Mr. Philby. If that is so, I should be very pleased to examine these particular periodicals. At the moment, I personally have no knowledge whatever of any articles appearing in the American Press to that effect, and, therefore, I am not able to answer the right hon. Gentleman or make any withdrawal based upon the statement which he has just made.

What I was in the course of saying was that the Foreign Secretary himself has

said that since that date—1st July, 1951—Mr. Philby has been subject to the closest investigation, and that there was no evidence to show that he was responsible for warning Burgess and Maclean, but that, while he was in the Government service, he carried out his duties competently and conscientiously. I have given way far too much, but I am willing to give way once again.

Mr. Raymond Gower (Barry): Could the hon. and gallant Gentleman say whether he heard the name of Mr. Philby at any time before he happened to read it in an article in an American paper?

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: Yes, the name has been the subject of comment for months and months past in this country. The name has been literally hawked about. As a matter of fact, if the hon. Gentleman takes the trouble, he will see that one paper, the "Daily Sketch," published a special interview with Mr. Philby, which appeared, I think, in the issue of 3rd October last. It must not be suggested that the American article to which I have referred, while it may be the first mention in print possibly associating Mr. Philby with the third man, is necessarily the first mention or discussion of his name in this country.

The Foreign Secretary went on to say that he has no reason to conclude that Mr. Philby had at any time betrayed the interests of this country, or identified himself with the so-called third man, "if indeed there was one." Now we are entering into the field of imagination, because I am not quite sure what the Foreign Secretary meant when he talked about the so-called third man, "if indeed there was one." Everything depends on what the Foreign Secretary meant, or what he intended to convey, when he read out the very carefully prepared section of the speech which he gave to the House earlier today. Is he trying, or does he wish, to suggest that of the three people to whom the field of suspicion had been narrowed down by mid-April, 1951, Mr. Philby was not one? If so, will he please say so? A statement about that would help to clarify the position.

I am very sorry that after considering as carefully as I possibly could the note that I made of what the Foreign Secretary said, I cannot depart from the terms of the supplementary Question that I put

[LIEUT.-COLONEL LIPTON.] I spoke to the Prime Minister on 25th October last. That is a quite serious statement to make, but I make it because I am absolutely convinced that I am serving the public interest by forcing the Government, and in particular the Foreign Secretary, to provide much more information than has been provided hitherto.

It may be that I have some other information which, as it involves what was said by Secret Service agents, I cannot quote in this House. What I suggest to the Government is that the case for some inquiry, first, into the staffing arrangements of the Foreign Office, and, secondly, into our security services, has been made out. It will be found, if both these inquiries are embarked upon, that many people will be induced to give information, especially to a private inquiry which we hope will be made by a High Court judge into the Secret Service. Perhaps people will be more willing to give information than they have been up to now.

Mr. Nutting: May I ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman to be good enough to forward to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary the evidence upon which he is basing his charges against Mr. Philby? I quite understand the reluctance of the hon. and gallant Gentleman to bring that evidence before the House of Commons, but perhaps he would be good enough to forward it to my right hon. Friend.

Lieut.-Colonel Lipton: No. I am prepared to forward that information to a judicial member of the Privy Council—a High Court judge—who, as has been suggested from this side of the House, should carry out an investigation into the operations of the Secret Service and who should report to the Prime Minister in a private report. Surely that is not an unreasonable offer to make.

All I want to say, and I must rapidly draw to a conclusion. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Before I draw to a conclusion, I want to say that I will not be gagged by anybody in this House or outside in the performance of my duty. [HON. MEMBERS: "Say it outside."] Even Mr. Philby has not asked for it to be repeated outside. Let us leave it at that for the time being.

In the course of carrying out what I believe to be my public duty as a Member of Parliament I say quite deliberately—and I think that when the verbal niceties of the Foreign Secretary's statement are examined in the OFFICIAL REPORT tomorrow it will be found that I am justified—that I will not make any withdrawal at all at present. The whole tendency of the debate has been to stress the importance of this two-pronged inquiry, first, into the staffing and recruitment of the Foreign Office and, secondly, into our security arrangements.

The whole of the debate will have been a complete waste of time unless it is followed by one or both of the inquiries which quite a number of hon. Members on both sides of the House are very anxious to see instituted at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Daines: In spite of the intervention of the Minister of State, I think that my hon. and gallant Friend owes the House an answer. The only evidence he has brought against Mr. Philby is a quotation in the American Press which emanated, apparently, from a British Member of Parliament. He is a lawyer, and knows that that is not evidence, and I think he should withdraw what he said.

8.50 p.m.

Mr. R. Brooman-White (Rutherglen): The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Brixton (Lieut.-Colonel Lipton) has been somewhat diffuse, and a little difficult to follow. I shall turn my attention to one phrase only, in which he brushed aside the whole speech—which was welcomed on both sides—of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary as "interesting political philosophy." My right hon. Friend's main theme was that in the conditions of the post-war world we are again facing a security problem which has not had to be faced since the wars of religion. We are dealing with the extremely difficult and delicate balance which has to be struck between the needs of national security and the rights of individual liberty.

We must have constant and difficult decisions to make as to how far any action is justified on suspicion. After listening to the hon. and gallant Member, one is at least quite clear where he stands on that. He is in favour of acting on suspicion, of smearing on suspicion, by

71

directing public suspicion on to an individual against whom nothing at all has been proved. We must leave it to his own conscience to straighten out what that may cost in personal suffering to the wife, children and friends of the person involved.

Other and serious issues have been raised. The hon. and gallant Member, in his conclusion, stressed that, apart from the general question of balance between liberty and security, there were the problems of whether or not there should be an investigation into the efficiency of the security services; and whether or not there should be further investigation into personnel and staffing, promotion and security arrangements within the Foreign Service. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Brixton is in favour of both such inquiries. I differ from him. I do not see that any case has been made out for either.

There has been public agitation, and that public agitation is admittedly a serious factor. The aftermath of the Press comments, ably stimulated, or followed, by the hon. and gallant Member, has given rise to a public uneasiness and—I agree—a public demand for some kind of action. But is action justified just because there has been a good Press story? Has any stronger case been made out? Let us be very careful about the ground on which we are to act.

We know that public anxiety arising out of the Algar Hiss affair caused widespread uneasiness and was followed by disastrous repercussions in the United States. It is very easy to say that it cannot happen here. In a very minor way this is our Algar Hiss affair, and the remarks of the hon. and gallant Member have shown how near to the wind it is possible even for the House of Commons to sail.

Let us be quite sure before we embark on investigations. There are four quite separate issues, and they have been confusion in the public mind and in the hon. and gallant Gentleman's statement. Firstly, there is the question of Burgess and Maclean being Soviet agents—ought it to have been found out earlier? Then, that they had certain Communist contacts in the university—should more direct security action have been taken on those grounds? Thirdly, there is the case that they were personally undesirable—that

raises the disciplinary aspect in the Foreign Service. Finally, there is the question of whether or not the Government ought not to have said more, and said it earlier in their statements.

I will try quite briefly to deal with each of these four headings. The first is: what is the ground for demanding at the present stage that there should be an investigation into the security services? Public interest has been aroused, but let us try to see this in proportion. Surely, what the public has seen is only one corner of the battlefield on which there is unceasing conflict between the rival intelligence services of the great Powers. They have seen one corner of one action, and even in that we were not doing so badly. We have been told that a six thousand to one chance was just coming off. Out of 6,000 suspects, the security services were about to take action against one man to whom it had been narrowed down.

Reviewing the field as a whole, is the public interest in this sufficient grounds for demanding an inquiry into the security services?

Can one envisage, without knowing whether we are doing well or badly? Indeed, how well we may be doing nobody outside the smallest possible group ought to know. One sees from Soviet statements that many prominent people, members of Communist Governments and the like, who have fallen from popular favour have been, or are said to have been, in touch with the allied or Western intelligence services. Even if 1 per cent. of that is true, we are doing all right.

If there had been no recent public outcry or clamour about espionage cases, I should be a great deal more worried. If nothing had been heard of Soviet agents, I should have thought that there might be more cause for alarm. All this outcry has arisen because in one case there was a near miss. We have been told that the trap was just about to close on these people. If it had closed, it would have been a great success for us, because under interrogation they might have divulged a great deal of valuable information about the Russian security services. In fact, it just missed and they got away. Is that sufficient ground for demanding a searching inquiry into the security services? I do not think that it is.

[MR. BROOMAN-WHITE.]

We all know roughly what happens when there is a Government inquiry. The Department under investigation starts preparations to defend itself against the investigation to show that it has not done so badly after all. We all know that. We have seen it happen in various Government Departments. A great number of people start spending their time preparing to give evidence and to answer questions. And in order to do that they have to stop getting on with the day to day job which they should be doing.

I entirely agree with everything that has been said on both sides of the House as to the need to give adequate facilities and the best possible personnel to the security services. I do not think that because they have failed to make an arrest in this case there are adequate grounds for an inquiry, which can do no other than impede their day-to-day work. This is not justified unless there is, over the whole field, a feeling that they are falling down on their job. That feeling cannot be found in this House or in the popular Press.

Mr. Daines: On that point, did the hon. Gentleman read a very interesting article in the "Observer" a week or two ago by a man who was a Russian espionage agent, according to the article, against Germany until 1947. He pointed out that the withdrawal of these men to Russia was quite contrary to the usual Russian practice, and he therefore suggested that it was because of fear of interrogation and break down and of information being given that they took that action. If that is so, surely it is a very important reason for an inquiry to be held?

Mr. Brooman-White: I do not agree that that follows. I said that we scored a near miss. It bears out my point that had we had these people in time it would have been a great success. Let us see this thing in proportion.

I am not concerned to protect the security services against the inquiry. I am only concerned to see that we do not lose more in trying to create efficiency than we gain. The Soviet services with whom the Western services are in competition, have great advantages. On the repressive side, they have the full machinery of a police state. On the offensive side, they have the system of a nation which sets the greatest virtue on

under-cover work. Their national heroes of the past were all men who, in Lenin's phrase, had "To know hunger, work illegally, and be anonymous." All their thinking is geared to that sort of thing. That gives them an advantage. They all understand that sort of work. Their Intelligence services probably have much more money and resources than our people.

But they have a weakness. Periodically, quite frequently, they indulge in purges and blood-letting, which must be just about as debilitating as medieval medicine. To knock off the heads of the Soviet Chief of Secret Police and his various assistants may be good for promotion, but it cannot lead to the efficient functioning of the Department. Unless a very strong case is made, I am not in favour of messing around in a similar though milder way in that Department of our own against whom there is no solid ground for suspecting that on balance it is not doing fairly well. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary paid the Security Services an eloquent tribute—and only he and the Chiefs of Staff and a few others are in a position to see the picture as a whole and to measure the successes it has been achieving.

Let me pass to the second point. During their undergraduate days, these men had Communist associates. There is no crime in that. Indeed, the only thing that has been proved against Mr. Philby is that he had Burgess staying with him and he had certain Communist friends. He may not have been very wise in his choice of friends, but what hon. Member of this House could say that all his friends were people against whom no shadow of suspicion could ever be cast? That point has been adequately dealt with.

I should like to come to the question of the staffing of the Foreign Office departments and the question, which has been cogently argued from both sides of of the House, as to whether at this stage there is a case for further investigation and reform of the Foreign Office administrative machine. I think it was the hon. Member for Hammersmith, North (Mr. Tomney) who said that there was public uneasiness because there was a feeling that the personal judgment of the senior members of the Foreign Office had been at fault.

Mr. C. R. Hobson (Keighley): Hear, hear.

Mr. Brooman-White: That is an important point. It is obviously true that the judgment was at fault.

Mr. Hobson: The record of Burgess was well known before ever he went into the Foreign Office. That is the gravamen of the charge of many hon. Members on this side and on the hon. Member's own side of the House. We want to know what people were doing ever to start the man.

Mr. Brooman-White: The point I was making is that after the war there was a great change in the whole system with the reforms instituted by Mr. Ernest Bevin—the great change in the whole structure of the Foreign Service, the bringing in of a consular service, and the rest of it. The numbers were vastly increased. In those circumstances, it is quite obvious that the senior personnel must have lost some of the contact which had previously existed between members of the Foreign Service and that they had lost the intimate touch with and the intimate knowledge of their subordinate staff. It may well be that the Foreign Office was slow in reorganising itself, in instituting the system of confidential reports and similar things which have now been instituted; but again one must say that the reasons which have been given today seem convincingly to carry the point that the necessary reforms have now been made. In present circumstances, the difficulties arising from that major reorganisation have been overcome. To my mind, no evidence has been advanced to the contrary. Time is running short and I must abbreviate my remarks.

The whole tenor of the debate has been to stress the extremely difficult problems in striking the right balance between security and individual liberty. I am sure that the feeling of the country and of the House is behind the Government in ensuring that we do not depart from our traditional attention to the rights of the individual and the maintenance of personal liberty.

9.5 p.m.

Mr. Alfred Robens (Blyth): The hon. Gentleman the Member for Rutherglen (Mr. Brooman-White) has resisted the proposal put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, South

(Mr. H. Morrison) that there should be a judicial inquiry into the Security Services, and he produced as his main argument for that that the Maclean incident was a "near miss," that the Security Service had narrowed down to Maclean an inquiry in which there had been 6,000 suspects, and that Maclean just escaped the trap at the last moment. I suggest that it is for that very reason that there ought to be a judicial inquiry.

It must be remembered that the attitude of our allies throughout the world, and particularly the United States of America, to the exchange of atomic secrets is conditioned by their fear of or confidence in our security arrangements and our ability to ensure that their secrets, imparted to us as friendly and co-operative allies, will not go to a foreign Power because of either the laxity or the inefficiency of our Security Services. Therefore, the proposal to have a judicial inquiry is one which, I hope, the Prime Minister will not lightly turn aside tonight. I hope that he will undertake to give it some consideration.

What we want is security without McCarthyism. I very much regret that one of my hon. Friends mentioned in the debate the name of an individual other than Maclean and Burgess, because that is exactly what happened in the United States. It was because the United States Administration refused themselves to inquire into a number of rumours and allegations about their security that McCarthyism arose, and if the Truman Administration had not brushed aside the allegations which were being made and had examined their own security arrangements, then McCarthyism could never have been born. McCarthy stepped into the vacuum created by the refusal of the United States Administration to look into their own arrangements. We ought to learn from the lessons of the United States and the case of Alger Hiss.

I agree with the Foreign Secretary that the standard of our Foreign Service is high, and that the Foreign Service is one of which we can be very proud. It is all the more to be regretted that we have the case of Burgess and Maclean. The case has often been referred to as the mystery of the missing diplomats, but it has not been a mystery for many years now, and reading the White Paper is rather like reading the back files of one of our daily newspapers. The story has not been

[MR. ROBENS.] added to today, except that the Foreign Secretary termed them "traitors," and that it has become clear that they are behind the Iron Curtain, and, presumably, working for a foreign Government.

The Foreign Secretary said he accepted the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility, and none of us would want to depart from that doctrine, but the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility, to be accepted to the full, presupposes that it is the duty of Ministers' advisers—and that it should have been the duty of Ministers' advisers in the past—to keep Ministers informed of what it is important they should know. It is strange that the Security Services can have investigated 6,000 suspects and yet the first time my right hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, South, who was then the Foreign Secretary, knew anything about this was on the very day Maclean and Burgess left this country.

I say there is something wrong about a security system that works within a vacuum and works without some consideration of the responsibilities of its political chief. About 6,000 suspects were being dealt with over a long period. Therefore, it seems to me that the Secretary of State should have been informed a very long time before that that this investigation was going on.

I agree entirely with my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman) when he says that Burgess and Maclean as such are not important any longer. What is important is the lessons to be learned from them. Two things emerge. One is the question of establishment within the Foreign Office. It does not matter what the Foreign Secretary may have said earlier today, or indeed what the Prime Minister will say later, the fact is that the public and many people in the House are quite sure that within the Foreign Office there is a close circle of "cover up" for one's friends.

Mr. Nutting indicated dissent.

Mr. Robens: The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but if that is not the case how can it be that a couple of drunks, a couple of homosexuals well-known in the City, could for so long occupy important posts in the Foreign Office? There is no commercial organisation anywhere that would not have fired them years ago. [Interruption.] The Prime Minister

11 D 28

appears to be asking who put them there. The right hon. Gentleman is making a mistake in turning this into a political party issue. Maclean went into the Foreign Office in 1935. This is not a question of when these people were engaged. This is a question of the establishment of the Foreign Office, because the Prime Minister does not make these appointments.

The Foreign Secretary does not make all these appointments. The appointments are recommended to Ministers on the basis of the advice of their advisers. The Minister does not go through the list and say, "We will now promote Jack Jones as head of the Department." He takes advice. I repeat that there is a feeling in the House and among the public outside that there is this "cover up" within the Foreign Office and I say that this is a matter which ought to be investigated.

Mr. Nutting indicated dissent.

Mr. Robens: The right hon. Gentleman goes on shaking his head. Let us have a look at Maclean and at one incident in Cairo.

What happened? What does the White Paper say happened? It says:

"In May, 1950, while serving at His Majesty's Embassy, Cairo, Maclean was guilty of serious misconduct and suffered a form of breakdown which was attributed to overwork and excessive drinking."

What are the facts about one case? I will not deal with all of them—about a fight that he had with an Egyptian guard, about the breaking of an Embassy colleague's leg on a boating trip.

Maclean and a friend, both in a drunken state, went into the flat of a girl who was the librarian of the United States Embassy in Cairo. She was absent. They forced their way in and then began to drink all that was available. Having done that, they pushed a lot of the girl's clothing down the lavatory, they smashed the table and they knocked into the bath a heavy slab of marble fixed as a shelf over the radiator. It broke the bath. They returned to a flat in the same building belonging to a colleague. Maclean was with a man friend, and he had homosexual tendencies when in drink.

As the Minister of State shook his head, I am now giving the facts. As I was saying, they returned to the flat belonging

to a colleague in the same building. They collapsed on a bed and fell asleep. It was here in the evening that subsequently his wife found Maclean and, with help from a sister, half-dragged a completely sodden husband downstairs to a car and took him home.

Is the right hon. Gentleman telling me that everybody in the Embassy did not know about that incident? Is he suggesting that this White Paper reveals one-half of that shocking story? It was not the only incident, but what happened to him? This poor, overstrained, overworked gentleman came back to this country, was given six months' leave of absence, and then was given the job in the Foreign Office.

**The Prime Minister:** Who was to blame?

**Mr. Robens:** I am not allocating blame to individuals. I am saying that within the Foreign Office there is a close circle of covering up. I repeat to the Prime Minister and to the Foreign Secretary that it does not matter how many times either stands at that Box and says that it is not so. I do not believe that the public will accept that this is not the fact.

Disgraceful behaviour of the kind in which Maclean indulged, not only in Cairo but in Washington and in this city, which was well known within the Foreign Office, ought to have been dealt with years ago and he should have been sacked. So I say that there is a need for two inquiries.

**Mr. C. Pannell:** Before my right hon. Friend leaves that point, will he ask somebody representing the Foreign Office whether the facts of that incident were ever brought to the notice of the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? If he was not acquainted with those facts it is wrong to ask the Minister to "carry the can" in the last resort. Ministerial responsibility depends upon knowledge being brought to the political head, and I say that it was not brought.

**Mr. Robens:** That is the point I have been making, that if the doctrine of ministerial responsibility is accepted, and I accept it, it is the responsibility of the Departmental advisers to keep the Minister fully informed. I was asking whether these facts were known to the individuals concerned, because I am suggesting that they were not.

I say, therefore, that there should be two inquiries. There should be one into recruitment for the Foreign Office. There should be an investigation of what has happened since the changes decided upon in 1943, whether they have broadened the basis of recruitment, whether a close circle exists or not and in what way covering up takes place. That kind of inquiry could be made easily by a number of methods which the Prime Minister can envisage for himself—either by Privy Councillors, by a Select Committee or by some other method. If we want to wipe out of the public mind the idea that there is any covering up inside the Foreign Office then we must have an inquiry in which these facts can be brought out.

The second inquiry should be in relation to security and this could not be carried out by a Select Committee of this House. We suggest that it should be done by way of a judicial inquiry, the judges reporting to the political head of security, who is the Prime Minister. If the right hon. Gentleman refuses such an inquiry, the report of which obviously would be private, other than to himself and his immediate advisers, then we shall fall into the same error as the United States Administration fell into, and we shall make things unhappy for many people for several years.

Of Burgess, what is it that the security people were able to say? Nothing at all. Indeed, but for the fact that he left this country, Burgess might easily be working at the B.B.C. today. He would have been fired from the Foreign Office because he was due to be fired. Here again, we had the same type of individual. All these things were well known.

I repeat that the Prime Minister should be prepared to have some sort of inquiry, not necessarily on the lines we indicate, although what we have advocated seems to us to be the best way to do it. We contend that only a searching inquiry can reveal why both men were not dismissed the Service as completely unreliable and unfitted to represent their country at home or abroad.

Another interesting thing is that while these men were protected and excuses were made for their drunkenness and perversions, ordinary working men who had Communist affiliations were kicked out of their jobs almost at a moment's notice. Does this mean that there is one law

[MR. ROBENS.]  
for a Communist sympathiser from Bermondsey and another for a Communist sympathiser from Cambridge University?

These are matters that trouble us and trouble the general public, and we believe that only inquiries on the lines that we have indicated will do anything at all to allay public disquiet about them. I hope that the Prime Minister will not turn them lightly aside, but will recognise that he has a duty to the House and the country, and will be prepared to accept the suggestions about inquiries made by the Opposition.

9.22 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden): I can at least assure the right hon. Member for Blyth (Mr. Robens) that I shall not lightly turn aside any suggestions which have been made in this debate, which, I must frankly say, is the one out of my thirty years' experience of the House of Commons in which I take part with the greatest personal regret.

It so happens that nearly all my public life has lain in work with the Foreign Office. For ten years I was Foreign Secretary, which is a long time by any standard. It was in 1926, just after the Locarno Treaties, that I first worked there. I have known individually, as many right hon. Gentlemen have known, many of the leading members of the Foreign Service. The right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Dalton) was one of my predecessors as Under-Secretary.

I must start by saying that this has been a very sad day for the Foreign Service, and a very sad day for our country, too, because the reputation of the Foreign Service is part of our national reputation. Personally, I think we could have done no other than offer and hold this debate in view of all that has happened.

I do not want to stress the personal side of it too much, but I should like to say how much I agree with one observation which fell from the right hon. Member for Lewisham, South (Mr. H. Morrison), that whatever mistakes there might or might not have been in this business, one thing which is quite certain is that nobody at the Foreign Office at any time, no senior official or other official, tried to cover up any form of disloyalty to the State.

11 D 28

77

It is very important that we should have that clearly in our minds. I do not think that anything the right hon. Gentleman said was meant in any way to deny that, but this is something that goes out beyond the confines of our discussion, and I think that for the reputation of our Service, which is still very high in the world, we ought to make that absolutely plain. If mistakes were made, they were not that kind of mistake; they were not mistakes even remotely tinged with disloyalty.

Before I come to the subject of the debate, I want for a moment to refer to what was said by the right hon. Member for Lewisham, South at the beginning of his speech. From our side of the House I should like to say a word about Will Whiteley, because although he was Chief Whip of the Opposition and earlier Chief Whip of the Government, I am sure that it would be true to say that he had countless friends on this side of the House and not a single enemy. It is men like him who do the toiling and work in this Chamber quietly who do so much to make our Parliamentary institutions possible. We should salute his memory from both sides of the House in that spirit, a great Parliamentarian though he was silent.

Now I return to the questions I have been asked and to the debate. The right hon. Member for Lewisham, South said something about the duties of the Foreign Secretary and how heavy they were. I do not at all deny that. How could I? But they are heavy in a way somewhat different from other Departments of State. The Foreign Office is essentially a policy-making Department and therefore the Foreign Secretary's duties are a strain, because at any hour of the day and most hours of the night he may be asked to make some decision which affects policy. That does not happen in the same way in other great administrative Departments.

I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman meant to give the impression—if he did, I should like to correct it—that on that account Foreign Secretaries do not give pretty close attention to the personnel of their office, both at home and abroad. They do, and all important appointments both at home and abroad, certainly in my experience, were brought to me. That brings me to say a word on the subject of the Foreign Service as it is now and the reforms of which the

hon. Member for Coventry, East (Mr. Crossman) spoke.

Perhaps the purposes or the context of those reforms are not yet entirely understood. What happened was that before 1919 there was a Foreign Office in London and a Diplomatic Service, entirely separate. In that year they were brought together. Before they were brought together, it can be fairly said that they had a certain fairly close affiliation with the rest of the Civil Service. They were as part of the Civil Service before the two joined together. Then in 1943 we added to those two organisations—the Foreign Office as it then was and the Diplomatic Service—two numerically very large organisations, the Consular and Commercial and Diplomatic. We made the whole into one single service.

One or two hon. Members in the debate have suggested that that was not a very good plan and that we should go back to considering putting the Foreign Service as it was, making it part of the Civil Service. Frankly, I think that that is absolutely unworkable, and I should like to tell the House why. The first reason is that members of this amalgamated Foreign Service undertook thereby to accept service either at home or abroad. That is something which cannot be asked of anybody who is in the Civil Service today. In fact, at the moment in the Foreign Office there are three abroad to one at home. The larger proportion is still overseas. So any question of merging them with the Civil Service more closely must be ruled out.

As a matter of fact, there are very considerable temporary exchanges—and that is all to the good—exchanges with the Commonwealth Relations Office, with the Board of Trade and with the Ministry of Labour. Those are all helpful and, over and above that, today individuals do sometimes transfer from the Foreign Office to other Departments, or vice versa. That has been going on ever since the reforms were instituted. I am frankly a believer in those reforms—naturally—and I think that they are having their effect on the working of the Foreign Service.

When I asked the Cabinet to approve those reforms, my main concern then was to prevent the continuation of the Foreign Service in its various Departments, to prevent having a Foreign Office that did

not go abroad, a Diplomatic Service which operated entirely abroad, a Consular Service again abroad and a Commercial Service yet something else. That seemed utterly wrong in these modern times and that the thing to do was to bring all four Services together and to make it possible for members of all four to move from one to the other according to where they were best fitted to go.

I am quite sure that that conception is still the right one, and that it is right for someone in the Consular Service, if he shows the particular quality, to become an ambassador, as some have in recent years, or for someone in Grade A of the Foreign Service, who did a good consular job in some post, probably learning a great deal more of the aspect of commercial matters than he would otherwise be able to do.

Therefore, my strong advice to the House on all that is not to touch these arrangements yet. We must give the matter a little time to see how it is going to work out. I do not want now anything in the nature of a formal review of how these changes—some of which have only been in force for a very few years—are, in fact, working out. But that does not prevent us from taking any action we think fit at any time to make adjustments as they seem necessary as these reforms develop.

I say frankly that I deeply regret—and I know that the whole House does—that Mr. Bevin is not now here to take part in this debate tonight. I am revealing nothing which is not known to many people when I say that we had many discussions on this question of reforms when Mr. Bevin succeeded me at the Foreign Office. I believe that they must be given a full trial. When that has been done, and, if the House is not satisfied with their working, then by all means let us have a review, but I do not want to have that review now after such a short spell of experiment.

I will now deal with some of the questions which have been asked about Maclean, and to which the right hon. Member for Blyth added. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Perth and East Perthshire (Colonel Gomme-Duncan) asked whether there were any reports on Maclean. Yes, most certainly there were, and they were uniformly good until

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]  
Cairo, in May, 1950, that is to say, until he had been 18 months in Cairo.

Several people have said tonight that the behaviour in Cairo was so bad. There had been the drinking bouts, which the right hon. Member for Blyth described with a wealth of detail. I, of course, did not know about them at the time. I was not in the Government. I make no complaint; there is no reason why I should. Several right hon. and hon. Members have asked why after all that he was not dismissed the Service. That is an arguable proposition, and I have no doubt that it was weighed very carefully in the Foreign Office at the time.

I am not going to say what I would have done if I had been Foreign Secretary and had had to take this decision. I think that it would have been an appallingly difficult decision to take. The House must remember, in all fairness, that up to that time there was no hint or the remotest suspicion of treason, or of anything remotely resembling it. Therefore, what the House is asking us to say is, was it wrong that this man who had a brilliant record should be given a second chance? It is a subject on which I should hate to be dogmatic in the abstract now, just looking back on what has happened since. I believe that there are a great many employers who would take on a man a second time. I have known in regiments somebody who had a pretty bad go and who, perhaps, lost a stripe as a result. But he may come back not so long after and prove himself in action with his comrades.

I am not asking the House to judge this—thank God I do not have to judge it—and all I can say is that I think it is rather harsh to say that there is nothing to be said at all in favour of giving anybody a second chance. I think that is a doctrine that this House should hesitate about before it lays it down. As for his leave, it was not three months, as someone said, it was five months' leave that he had; and after that a medical examination.

I have been asked a number of questions about the private contacts of Burgess and Maclean. Many of them I cannot answer, because I do not know the answer. But this I can say. It was as a consequence of this which led us in 1952, following on the examination which, quite

rightly if I may say so, was set in train by the previous Government, to adopt these whole series of measures which we have taken.

I was interested to watch the mood of the House this afternoon as my right hon. Friend described those measures—the "positive vetting," as it is called. Personally, I think it is right, and I think it is inevitable. But I do not pretend that I like it very much—going along to the tutor of someone and saying, "What did you really think of So-and-so when he was in your college at So-and-so?" It is very disagreeable to the ordinary British instinct. But I think we just had to do that much.

Mr. C. Pannell rose

The Prime Minister: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not interrupt me, unless it is very important. Let me get on a little further and I will then give way. I am sure that I shall be able to finish tonight—not like the other night when I could not; but that was my fault.

What I was saying was that I think this the minimum we had to do, and also the maximum, in fact, that we could do within the existing law. And therefore I believe that we have acted rightly in the spirit of what the House would wish.

Now let me answer another question that I was asked. There is no reason to suppose, I am told, that there is any connection between the departure of Burgess and the defection of Otto John. That does not mean to say that we know everything about these things, but that is our information. I was asked also something which is more important—and I think that we must get this clear if we can—why was not the Fuchs treatment applied to Maclean? My answer, after elaborate researches, is that I think it was applied to Maclean in exactly the same way. As I understand it, what the Government at that time, the Foreign Office at that time, were trying to get was evidence with which to confront Maclean as Fuchs was confronted with evidence—not complete evidence, but enough evidence to have a chance to get him to confess more.

As I understand it, the trouble about Maclean was that there was not anything like the amount of evidence to enable him to be treated on that subject as

Fuchs had been treated. But it was hoped by using this method, to get enough evidence against Maclean to treat him specifically as Fuchs was treated, and that the intention was exactly the same in the Maclean case as in the Fuchs case. I think that is right, and I think that is necessary, but what the hon. Gentleman was—

Mr. Crossman: Surely, the trouble is that Fuchs was not "tipped off," whereas in the case of Maclean, if we understand aright, the denial of secret papers to Maclean gave him warning?

The Prime Minister: I wonder. I know the hon. Gentleman said that—I am afraid that I am not familiar with all the details of what secret papers were stopped and what were allowed to go through. It could have tipped him off, but I imagine that it was very intelligently done. I would rather doubt—though I do not know—whether that was what tipped him off. I was rather puzzled when the hon. Gentleman went on to ask why the Government at that time did not warn the ports and withdraw the passports.

Mr. Crossman: No, I did not say that.

The Prime Minister: Well, somebody else did. That, most certainly, would have alerted him completely. It would have been a most fatal step to take, because if we had alerted the ports all round the country—and they are very numerous—it must have been known to a very large number of people, and would certainly have got back in due course to Maclean. Personally, if I may put my view, I think the Government were right not to warn the ports and not to withdraw the passports, but were right to try to treat him as they treated the Fuchs case. I am sorry that, though it worked in the Fuchs case, it did not work in this one.

I should like to say one final word about the question of the present arrangements in respect of the Foreign Office. I say this deliberately, after having spent, I can assure the House, very much more time on this topic than I would have wished over the last year. I am convinced, as Prime Minister, that the Foreign Office is now following a correct and careful security procedure, and that its standards are of the very highest

either in this or any other country. That does not guarantee us against future disasters, but it does give the strongest assurance that I can give to the House, with all the responsibilities that rest on me, that we have done all that we can do within the law.

Now, I want to connect with that the Security Service and say something about it. My right hon. Friend spoke of the creditable piece of detection by which the Security Service got on the trail of a spy. Unfortunately, I cannot explain in detail how the Security Service followed Maclean's activities and eventually detected them. I admit—and one has to say this to the House—that this is something that has been concealed from the House and must continue to be concealed, for good reasons. I cannot and I shall not reveal the methods and sources on which our Security Service relies, but there is one thing that I can say that might help the House about this.

The Foreign Secretary mentioned the initial information on which the Security Service was working in 1949. I think it is quite true that the right hon. Gentleman was not informed until the spring of 1951, the reason for that, as I understand it, being that even then—and I have to be careful how I express this—the shred of evidence was pretty thin when they informed him. Before then, it was of very little value. However that may be, my right hon. Friend referred to the fact that during that period after 1949, over a long period, a field of investigation was opened which covered 6,000 people and they narrowed it down to one. That indicates the complexity of the inquiry and the care and patience with which it was pursued. It also indicates the continuing information on which it rested. More than that I am not prepared to say.

In this case, as in every other case of counter-espionage, it is, of course, essential not to let the others know what you know. As one hon. Gentleman rightly said, we must not let them know all we know lest that might guide them to know how we know it. That was the problem which there has been throughout this case. I cannot say any more about that than that this consideration played a continuing part throughout all the years when we have been dealing with this case.

Some hon. Members of this House may have had the experience which I once had

[THE PRIME MINISTER.] of dealing in military operations, as I think the right hon. Gentleman had, with mining and counter-mining. You try to do the best you can so that the other fellow shall not hear or see what you are doing, and he does the same. That is the closest parallel to espionage and counter-espionage, and in both exercises silence is the essence of success. I still look forward, though without much confidence, to a debate in the Soviet Parliament on the defection of Mr. Petrov.

The truth is that there are one or two Ministers who are responsible and who can judge the current record of the Security Service on the basis of facts and figures; but, in the nature of things, we cannot disclose all that. Too many people would like to know, but there is one test which can be applied, and I think the House would perhaps like to have it applied. It was touched on gently earlier in the debate—what they achieved in the war.

Curiously enough this record can be quite accurately assessed and measured, because, of course, it can be checked against the German records captured at the end of the war. Unfortunately, we cannot do that in the other case. It may be discussed because it is a closed chapter. I can say in general terms that, as checked against German intelligence, the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct. The counter-espionage achievement of our Security Service during the war was quite outstanding.

I want to give a practical illustration of this which may interest the House. The Normandy landing in 1944, in which some hon. Members probably took part, achieved a complete tactical surprise. We know that not only because of what happened at the time but from the German records which now make it quite clear. That could never have happened if our Security Service here had not achieved such outstanding success in purging away enemy spies from the home base from which it was launched. Hon. Members know—hon. Gentlemen have referred to it—how many people, how many soldiers, knew; yet the base was so purified that in fact nothing at all was gained by the enemy.

That is perhaps the greatest tribute to the Security Service that there has been,

and it deserves credit for it. It is a remarkable record. I do not know—I cannot go into our record against Communist spies since the war, but I think on the whole that the result will compare not unfavourably.

Now I come to the question of an inquiry into the Security Service. I do not think that there is need for such an inquiry, but I will make a suggestion. I should like to say why I do not think it is really necessary. Following the Fuchs case, and in part as a result of the criticism of our security organisation, an official inquiry was made in 1950—that was not referred to by my right hon. Friend—when the Socialist Government were in office. It was a secret inquiry. Its report was secret, but I think I can tell the House that the conclusion of the report was that the Security Service was found to be well equipped, well organised and capable of adapting itself to its admittedly quite different tasks, as several hon. Members have said. I have no doubt that that is true and that we can have confidence in the Security Service.

As the Foreign Secretary explained earlier this afternoon, for many generations past, perhaps for centuries past, it has happily been unnecessary to question the loyalty of men and women in the public service. Perhaps—and I admit this to the hon. Member for Coventry, East; I think perhaps there is something in this—that induced a certain tendency to feel that it cannot happen here. That, I think, may well be true. Perhaps we were a little laggard to realise the danger for that reason, but there is no doubt at all, and I really can assure the House of this, that any such comfortable illusion was finally shattered by the disappearance of Maclean.

No time was wasted once the extent of the threat was understood. There has been a progressive tightening of security measures throughout the public service. The Foreign Secretary has described the positive vetting, and I do not want to go into that any further, except to say that I think those proposals go as far and are as stringent as this House would be willing to approve without encroaching on those principles which hitherto Parliament has most jealously guarded, and, I think, rightly guarded.

Let me conclude with this observation. This debate has shown that this is not a

matter which concerns only the political party which happens to be in office. We are all agreed about that. We all agreed to see that every justifiable precaution is taken to ensure that men and women in the public service shall not work against the security of the State. I would, therefore, propose—as I have proposed to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition—that we should convene a small, informal conference of Privy Councillors from both sides of the House.

I say Privy Councillors not, I beg the House to believe, because we think that we are better than any other people, but because it is those who actually dealt with these matters who, I think, can now usefully discuss them further. I propose that we should examine together—if the House were willing that we should do so—the security procedures which are now applied in the public service; and also consider whether any further precautions can properly be taken to reduce the risk of treachery such as that which we have been discussing today.

That is the offer I make. I do not ask for an immediate answer, but I would ask the House to ponder it. In certain measure, I think that it covers all the suggestions made this afternoon, but behind it there is a larger question, and I want to close by putting this to the House.

Mr. Tomney: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean that all the Privy Councillors connected with the Foreign Office would be on that Committee?

The Prime Minister: No—that would be discussed between the two sides of the House. What I suggest is that a number of Privy Councillors who have had experience of this—not necessarily Foreign Office experience, but other experience as well—should be appointed, perhaps two or three, as would be agreed on both sides, to examine this matter together to see whether there is anything further we can do within the law—or whether, in fact, there are any changes in the law which Parliament must be asked to face.

That is the concluding comment that I wish to make in the last few minutes, because I have given a great deal of thought to this very difficult question. Behind all that the House has been discussing this afternoon, behind the anxieties, the fears—to some extent the confusion—there is a larger question, and it is this. How far

are we to go in pursuit of greater security at the cost of the essential liberties of the British people? That is why I have suggested Privy Councillors—who are not judges. This is not, I think, a matter for judges, but for Parliament. The only reason that I said Privy Councillors is that they are Members of Parliament. It is essentially Parliament's decision.

For instance, it has been suggested that Burgess and Maclean should not have been allowed to escape. All right. Under the law as it stands today they could not have been prevented from escaping, unless a charge could have been preferred. No charge could be preferred. Now, would the House like that law altered? Would the House agree that the law should allow any British subject to be detained on suspicion? [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] But we have to face these questions. When there is no evidence on which a man can be charged, would the House be willing that people should be held indefinitely by the police while evidence is collected against them? In this case, as we now know, detention would have been justified; but some hon. Gentlemen think, too easily, that because that was so it would always be justified. It is not so in the least. Who could tell then, at the time when the right hon. Gentleman rightly took his decision to take the action he did, whether Maclean was innocent or guilty? No one knew. British justice over the centuries has been based on the principle that a man is to be presumed innocent until he can be proved guilty. Are we going to abandon that principle? Perhaps, worst of all, are we to make an exception for political offences?

In this debate I have said something in defence of the Security Service because I think that they have been criticised, but the last thing that I would wish to see in this country is the Security Service having the power to do some of the things which some of our friends of the Press do not seem to realise would flow from what they advocate.

It may be true—it probably is true—that if the Security Service had those powers, Burgess and Maclean would not be where they are today. I think that is true. I think that if the right hon. Gentleman had had the power—and Burgess and Maclean is not the only case; we have had problems of this kind, he and

[THE PRIME MINISTER.] I certainly I have had them many times arise—if he had had those powers, they would not be where they are today. But what would have been the consequences, if he had had these powers, to British freedom and the rights which this House so far has always been determined to defend? I want to make one thing quite clear before I sit down. I would never be willing to be Prime Minister of a Government which asked those powers of this House.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. P. G. T. Buchan-Hepburn): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE BILL

Read a Second time.

Committed to a Committee of the whole House.—[Colonel J. H. Harrison.]

Committee Tomorrow.

### EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE [MONEY]

Considered in Committee under Standing Order No. 84 (Money Committees).—[Queen's Recommendation signified.]

[Sir CHARLES MACANDREW in the Chair]

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to continue certain expiring laws, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of such expenses as may be occasioned by the continuance of the Cotton Manufacturing Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1934, the Road Traffic Act, 1934, and the Population (Statistics) Act, 1938, until the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and fifty-six; and of the Rent of Furnished Houses Control (Scotland) Act, 1943, the Furnished Houses (Rent Control) Act, 1946, and the Licensing Act, 1953, until the thirty-first day of March, nineteen hundred and fifty-seven, being expenses which under any Act are to be defrayed out of such moneys.—[Mr. H. Brooke.]

Resolution to be reported Tomorrow.

11 D M

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE, BEDFORD COLLEGE

Motion made, and Question proposed. That this House do now adjourn.—[Colonel J. H. Harrison.]

9.59 p.m.

Mr. Austen Albu (Edmonton): The matter which I wish to raise is, I think, a most extraordinary gloss on the debate which we have just conducted. I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary, in his reply, will deal with the matter in the same liberal terms as those used by his right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister, because the matter with which we are concerned is a very similar one. It might, in fact, be said that this is the Burgess and Maclean case in reverse. I hope, therefore, that the Parliamentary Secretary will adopt the same sort of attitude towards it as was adopted by the Prime Minister in his peroration a few moments ago.

To put the House in possession of the facts, may I say that this arose out of a conference held on 28th September on regional planning and development at Bedford College. This conference had its origin in a symposium—

It being Ten o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

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

Mr. Albu: The symposium at the Imperial Institute in 1953 was attended by about 100 persons with academic and professional qualifications in the fields of architecture, sociology, economics, agriculture, community development and town planning. The purpose of the conference was to try to set up a centre to improve the means of co-operation and exchange of information between people engaged in the very broad fields of regional planning and development throughout the world.

As a result of the symposium there was set up a preparatory committee, which finally consisted of 16 persons. In view of the accusations which have been implied by the Government against the persons organising the conference, may I say right away that at the most there were three members of that committee

Office Memorandum

UNITED STATES

GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: July 17, 1956

FROM : Legal Attache, London

SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MAC LEAN  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

Reference my letter 6/27/56 and previous correspondence re other recommendations in the White Paper recently submitted by the Privy Councillors who looked into the question of British Government security measures.

84

SAC, New York ( [REDACTED] ) (Orig & 1)

September 10, 1956

Director, FBI ( [REDACTED] )

RECORDED - 76 DONALD DUART MACLEAN;  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

Attached is an extract from the British  
"Sunlay Dispatch" dated 8-26-56 which reports that  
Melinda Maclean, wife of Donald Maclean, has paved the  
way for her mother to visit her in the U.S.S.R. ( [REDACTED] )

85

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

SEP 22 1956

TELETYPE

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Boardman
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Harbo
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Egan
Mr. Gurnea
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn
Mr. Nease
Tele. Room
Mr. Holloman
Miss Gandy

WASH AND WASH FLD 1 FROM NY 22 12-19AM  
DIRECTOR AND SAC WFO URGENT

DONALD DUART MACLEAN, GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS, ESP-R.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] STATES HE AND WIFE WERE SERVED WITH SUBPOENAS  
SEPTEMBER NINETEEN LAST TO APPEAR SEPTEMBER TWENTY SIX NEXT AT TWO  
P.M., WASHINGTON, D.C. BEFORE JUDICIARY AND SUB-COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL  
SECURITY /EASTLAND COMMITTEE/.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] CLAIMS ABOUT SIX WEEKS  
AGO EUROPEAN PRESS WAS FULL OF STORIES RE TRIP OF MRS. BASSETT FROM  
ENGLAND TO RUSSIA WHERE SHE VISITED HER SON, SUBJECT BURGESS. ARTICLES

END PAGE ONE TWO COPIES WFO 86

PAGE TWO

STATED THAT UPON HER RETURN TO ENGLAND MRS. BASSETT REFUSED TO TELL ANYTHING ABOUT HER TRIP. [REDACTED] IS ANXIOUS TO FIND OUT WHETHER HEARINGS BEFORE EASTLAND COMMITTEE WILL BE PUBLIC OR IN EXECUTIVE SESSION. NO ADVICE OR PROMISES GIVEN TO [REDACTED]

END [REDACTED]

KELLY

PLS HOLD

DEL 57 53 41 20

L O T

CONFIDENTIAL

87

## Office Memorandum

M • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont

DATE: September 12, 1956

FROM : W. A. Branigan

SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MACLEAN;  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

By attached letter dated 8-28-56, WFO furnished a list of 20 names which was submitted to the State Department by the Senate Internal Security Committee requesting all passport and/or visa information contained in their files be furnished to the committee on such individuals. Bufiles reflect that 13 of the individuals listed are either relatives or contacts of Burgess or Maclean. As you know, both subjects disappeared from England in May, 1951. Their whereabouts was not definitely established until February, 1956, when they appeared in Moscow. Names contained on the list are identified as follows: The first 13 are those which have in some way been connected with this case.

(1) Donald Maclean.(2) Guy Burgess.

(4) Melinda Maclean, wife of Donald. <sup>Mr. Duart Maclean</sup> She disappeared Switzerland, 1953, and is now in Moscow.

## Office Memorandum

m • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont

DATE: September 12, 1956

FROM : W. A. Branigan

SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MACLEAN;  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

By attached letter dated 8-28-56, WFO furnished a list of 20 names which was submitted to the State Department by the Senate Internal Security Committee requesting all passport and/or visa information contained in their files be furnished to the committee on such individuals. Bufiles reflect that 13 of the individuals listed are either relatives or contacts of Burgess or Maclean. As you know, both subjects disappeared from England in May, 1951. Their whereabouts was not definitely established until February, 1956, when they appeared in Moscow. Names contained on the list are identified as follows: The first 13 are those which have in some way been connected with this case.

- (1) Donald Maclean.
- (2) Guy Burgess.

(4) Melinda Maclean, wife of Donald <sup>Mr. Duart Maclean</sup>. She disappeared Switzerland, 1953, and is now in Moscow.

*Branigan memo for Belmont*

(12) ██████████, an American, met Burgess on the "Queen Mary" en route to England in May, 1951. After arriving in England, he met a number of Burgess' friends. Claimed that Burgess gave no indication of being disloyal or pro-Russian.

(13) ██████████, picked up as a hitchhiker by Burgess in April, 1951, in Virginia and was with him when he was arrested for speeding. Burgess made homosexual advances toward ██████████ and a number of statements indicating sympathies for Russia. ██████████ and has been described as a braggart and a liar.

90



Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI [REDACTED]

DATE: 9/27/56

FROM : SAC, WFO [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MACLEAN;  
GUY FRANCIS DE MOICY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

ReBulet 9/17/56 and mylet 8/28/56 concerning request by the Senate Committee on Internal Security for passport data on twenty individuals.

WFC [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] further advised that no files were located in the Passport Office for the three aliens, GUY BURGESS, DONALD MACLEAN, and [REDACTED].

no 1 2 3

93

Date : November 1, 1956  
(original and one)

To : ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
Office of Security  
Department of State  
515 2nd Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

From : John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: DONALD DUMET LACIMAN;  
GUY FRANCIS DE KONGY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

Letter to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Office of Security  
Department of State

**NOTE:** Subjects former British diplomats who fled from England May, 1951. Melinda Maclean fled with her three children from Switzerland in September, 1953. Subjects publicly appeared in Moscow February, 1956. Maclean and Burgess have been in communication with relatives in this country and England since the latter date.



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

Date: November 19, 1956

To: Director, FBI [REDACTED]

From: Legat, Paris [REDACTED]

Subject: DONALD DUART MACLEAN; *mb*  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS }  
ESPIONAGE - R }  
[REDACTED]

Reourlet 10/3/56.

This office has reviewed a series of articles written by TOM DRIBERG concerning GUY BURGESS which recently appeared in L'Aurore, right wing Paris daily.

UACB, these articles are not being transmitted to the Bureau, since it has been indicated that they will appear in book form. Undoubtedly, this book will be in the English language and will probably be transmitted to the Bureau by the London office.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: December 28, 1956

FROM : Legal Attache, London

SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MacLEAN  
GUY FRANCIS de MONCY BURGESS  
ESPIONAGE - R

Reylet 10-19-56, and Parlet 11-19-56.

Enclosed is a copy of Tom Driberg's book captioned, "Guy Burgess."

97

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A. H. Belmont *ah*

DATE: January 17, 1956

FROM : W. A. Branigan *WB*SUBJECT: DONALD DUART MACLEAN; <sup>①</sup>  
GUY FRANCIS DE MONCY BURGESS...  
ESPIONAGE - R

A copy of the book has now been furnished by the Legat, London and has been reviewed. Generally it purports to portray life history of Burgess and his knowledge of and participation in international affairs from the early 1930's until October, 1956. He is pictured as an ideal who since college days has believed in Marxism and has strived for better anglo-Russian relations. Burgess says that although he would like to return to England some day when the hysteria has died down, he prefers living in a Socialist country. He claims that Maclean is more Russianized than he. The book clearly shows it was written from a Russian point of view and is very critical of England, U.S. and to some degree of France. Specifically, the book states:

(1) Burgess and Maclean were both communists at college but resigned their membership in CP and abandoned their political activities not because they disagreed with Marxism but because they thought they could put their ideas into effect better in public service.

(2) Burgess did not admit being recruited as a Soviet Agent or acting as such.

(3) Burgess maintains his flight from England was not planned by Moscow. Claims he met Maclean shortly after returning to England from U.S. as he wanted Maclean to see a paper he had written on Far Eastern policy. Maclean told Burgess he was under surveillance and indicated he might go to Russia. Subsequently, Burgess decided to go with him.

Memorandum to Mr. Belmont  
Re: Donald Duart Maclean;  
Guy Francis DeMoncy Burgess

Burgess claimed that when they arrived Prague, they went to the Soviet Embassy and applied for visas to Russia but were kept waiting for almost a week.

(4) Burgess admitted that on one occasion during the late 1930's when he was carrying secret papers from Prime Minister Daladier of France to Prime Minister Chamberlain of England he allowed a friend of his to make Photostats of the letters before delivery and on another occasion admitted he did not deliver a letter because he did not agree with its contents.

(5) He denied advising the Russians or Chinese communists that United Nations action in the Korean War would be confined to Korea and would not extend to China.

**ACTION:**

For your information. Nothing contained in book warranting any action by Bureau.