

**Débat à la chambre (Londres) suite au livre de blanc de Passfield (1930), à la commission Simpson-Hopes et précédant la lettre McDonald**

[HANSARD 1803–2005](#) → [1930s](#) → [1930](#) → [November 1930](#) → [17 November 1930](#) → [Commons Sitting](#)

**PALESTINE.**

*HC Deb 17 November 1930 vol 245 cc77-210 77*

§ Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—[Mr. T. Kennedy.]

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

I wish to preface my observations this afternoon by welcoming the return of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Dr. Shiels), and by saying how glad we are to find that he has recovered sufficiently from his severe illness at any rate to enable him to attend the deliberations of this House.

We propose this afternoon to discuss the affairs of one of the most famous countries in the world and the association with that country of a gifted race which has made the story of that land immortal. It is a very difficult problem to discuss, because you have here two races involved, with both of whom we have the most friendly relations, and what we want is that justice should be done to the one without any injustice being inflicted upon the other. Our firm conviction is that justice should be done to both, but that the White Paper which has been issued by the Government is really unjust to both. May I, in order to enable those who are not quite familiar with the history of the present position in Palestine, summarise briefly what our obligations are in that great country?

There is, first of all, the Balfour Declaration. That was issued by Mr. Balfour, as he then was, in the form of a letter. He was then Foreign Secretary to the Government of which I was the head, but the present Foreign Secretary was also a member of that Government. He was a member of the War Cabinet, and the policy was decided by that War Cabinet of which he was a member before Mr. Balfour issued that Declaration. There were other members of the present Government who were also members of the Government that issued that Declaration. I am only calling attention to that fact in order to show that the Balfour Declaration was truly national in the sense that it represented the views of the three parties in the State. It was a

Declaration which was issued for reasons regarded by the Allies as paramount in that great conflict, and it gave an undertaking that if Palestine were conquered, a home, a 78 national home, for the Jewish people would be established in that country. Before the Declaration was made, it received the sanction of all the great Allied Powers and also that of President Wilson, representing the United States of America. Two years after the War, the representatives of the Allied Powers met at San Remo, and they considered how that Declaration should be incorporated in the Mandate which was given to our country for the government of Palestine.

It is rather important to consider the words of that Mandate. They were settled by all the Allied Powers and they are the words under which we are responsible for the Government of Palestine; they are the ruling words. Here is the preamble, and, oddly enough, it is not merely omitted from the White Paper, but any allusion to it is excluded: Whereas the principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the Declaration originally made on 2nd November, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights"— [Interruption.]

If anybody can point out that anything which has been done in the establishment of the home for the Jews in Palestine is an infringement of any civil right, it is the first time I have ever heard it mentioned— of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country; and whereas recognition"— these are very important words— has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country .... The reason why I think that those words are important and control the whole of the policy is this: It means that the idea was not to establish a Jewish colony in Palestine. The idea was not to give opportunities for colonisation and settlement by Jews in Palestine; the dominant idea was that there should be a national home for the Jews in Palestine, a recognition of the special 79 position of the Jewish people in the country whose name they have made immortal, and the conferring upon them of special rights and interests in that country. It was an opportunity for recreating a Hebrew culture which has already

rendered such eternal service to mankind, so that the contribution of the Jews to civilisation should no longer be sporadic and individual, but once more that it should be the contribution of a people dwelling in a home of their own. That is not colonisation; that is not settlement; that is a national home. That is what this country accepted at a critical moment in its fate for reasons which had to do with that crisis, and its successful emergence out of it. That is why the Allies accepted and endorsed it, and it is a pledge of honour by some of the greatest nations on earth, including the British Empire, which we are called upon to honour. The White Paper is almost universally regarded as a revocation of that Mandate—a practical revocation. The leaders of the Opposition have expressed their opinions; I as one of those responsible for the Mandate, have expressed my opinion. General Smuts, who is independent of all political considerations so far as this country is concerned, and who was also interested in the shaping of that policy, has most emphatically expressed his opinion. Not merely the Jews, but the Arabs take this view. The Jews regret, the Arabs rejoice. In their hearts, they believe that this means an end of the establishment of the national home for the Jews in Palestine. They say so; it is part of their cry in Palestine at the present moment, and, whatever it may mean, that is the impression it has made. It is vital that an opportunity should be given in this House, if there be any misunderstanding, to clear it up in such a way that no nation on earth, and certainly not the parties that are most directly concerned, should be under any misapprehension as to the meaning.

This document was issued without anyone being consulted, as far as I can see. The League of Nations were not consulted, the Mandatory Commission of the League of Nations were not consulted; the Allied Powers, in conjunction with whom we settled the Mandate, were not [80](#) consulted; the Dominions were not consulted. Unless there should be any misapprehension because there was supposed to be a consultation, in which the Leader of the Opposition and myself were concerned, with the Government when considering this question of policy for Palestine, I certainly was not consulted, nor were any of my right hon. Friends or hon. Friends; and I should be very surprised to hear if the Leader of the Opposition was consulted. We were invited at a very difficult moment for the Government to come in for consultation. It avoided discussion at that time, which was inconvenient for the Government, of course, but I do not say that that is why the

Government did it. We were called in for consultation, and we gave our advice. I am not aware that that advice was carried out, but, at any rate, the consultation came to an end at the point when the Paper was issued. It is a State document which, in our judgment, altered the whole Mandate. We were never consulted about the terms of that document. The Paper has been issued without consultation with anybody. I wonder whether the Prime Minister himself was fully consulted before this document was issued. It is a very difficult thing for him to answer that, but I have my own views upon that subject. I can hardly believe that parts of the document, particularly the latter two or three pages, would ever have been sanctioned by him had he not for the moment been occupied with other questions and had he been able to give the documents close scrutiny. I do not want him to answer, because it is an awkward question, but I cannot believe that he was fully consulted.

We are not in the same position in reference to Palestine as we are in reference to Uganda or Nigeria. This is not a British colony. We are mandatory, and Palestine is in a different situation from almost any other country on earth. It is more international in its interest; it is of interest to three of the greatest creeds on earth, and that is the reason why the nations of the world have always taken an interest in Palestine, such as they have taken in no other land. That is why, when you came to a mandate for Palestine, it is not even like [81](#) a mandate for the German Colonies. It is a mandate for a country which has international interests and international susceptibilities, and where you cannot do anything without running the risk of offending some susceptibility or another, appertaining to one creed or another, or one people or another. Therefore, it was essential that we should have kept here in touch with the League of Nations and the Mandatory Commission. What has happened I Before this White Paper was ever issued, the Mandatory Commission had issued the report which, to use the language of the Government themselves, was full of the most severe criticism of their administration. It is the first time that the Mandatory Commission has rebuked a Power to whom a mandate has been issued. What was the answer of the Government? The White Paper—a truly amazing performance. Their answer was practically to tear up the mandate. You are criticised because you are not carrying it out. You answer by saying, "Very well, tear it up." You cannot tear it up; it is an international document. It is a Treaty which has

been signed, and if we say that this mandate is so difficult and so delicate that we cannot carry it out in the sense of the words incorporated in it, there is only one thing for us to do, and that is to hand the mandate back to the League of Nations, and say, "Please appoint someone else; we cannot do it." But you have no right to alter it. 4.0 p.m.

This White Paper is a one-sided document. It is biased. Its whole drift is hostile to the spirit of the mandate. It breathes distrust and even antagonism of the Jewish activities. If it had been written by an anti-Semitic official, I could understand it. You have only got to look at one or two things with which they are dealing. Take immigration. There is criticism of the Jews because some of them went there temporarily and remained, attracted by the country. It is suggested that 7,000 people went there and remained there, without any certificate. There is no proof that they were Jews, but it is assumed that they were. There is not a word said about the thousands of Arabs who have been doing the same thing. Fourteen thousand Arabs had percolated through from Syria. Had they got certificates Why should there be this mention of the fact [82](#) when Jews managed to get in, and not a word about the Arabs getting in? But the most extraordinary document is that about the Jewish trade union—especially coming from a Labour Government. The Confederation of Jewish Labour are attacked. Why? For three or four reasons. The first is that they make it a rule that, in order to avoid industrial strife or litigation, you must first of all submit your disputes to arbitration, and they set up arbitral tribunals for that purpose. What is the second? It is that they inculcate better wage conditions than those which obtain in Palestine at the present moment, and are federated for that purpose. What is the third? This is rather an important point. They are extraordinarily anxious that the Jew with his capital behind him should not be tempted to become an effendi and exploit cheap Arab labour, of which there is plenty, in a way which is discreditable to the country—that the Jew should not come there with capital in his pocket, exploit cheap Arab labour and reap the profit. So they say you must not be allowed to do that. The next thing they say is that you must cultivate your own holding, do your own work if you are going to get capital from Zion.

The fourth thing they say is this, and it is very important.. They give a preference to members of their own union. Monstrous! It has never been heard of before. I am certain it does not occur in this country—never! And for these reasons a Labour Government, in a State document of

international importance, censures a labour federation. Could anti-Semitism go further than that? By Clause 2, I think it is, of the Mandate, not merely is the mandatory Power to permit, to tolerate, the establishment of a Jewish home and the settlement of Jews in the land of Palestine. It is to encourage it. Where is the encouragement? The report of the Mandatory Commission is severe. It is not as severe, if anybody would take the trouble to read the whole document, as the observations made by the members from time to time. Here is the Swiss member M. Rappard who is quite friendly to this country. He says: If the matter were looked at quite impartially from the point of view of the Mandate as it stood (and that was the law in this matter), the Government's method of encouraging immigration had been to [83](#) limit it, and that they had practically done nothing concrete, so far as M. Rappard could make out, to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land. In fact there is an impression, which you can see, on the members of the Mandatory Commission. It is the impression on the Jewish mind, which comes in contact with the administration there. So far from encouragement, there is a frigidity, no warmth, no help. They dare not try to kill Zionism directly, but they try to put it in a refrigerator with the door just ajar up to the present, but they are pulling it to, and they see a Government bewildered by a variety of problems, and they take advantage of it and close that door with a thud. That is what the White Paper means. There must be a complete change in policy. The door has got to be thrown open, or the mandate must be surrendered. That is the only course. What is the reason for this? There is no more room for the Jews; there is unemployment amongst the Arabs. There is unemployment here. Why? It is due to world conditions. In the United States of America, France, and in every land there is unemployment. In Palestine—the Jews. The Jews get murdered. They are to blame.

Now what are the real facts of the case in Palestine to-day? [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] From those cheers I gather that hon. Members opposite would like to hear them. If they hear them, I hope that they will weigh them. I have given them facts with regard to the mandate. The honour of this country is a fact. The mandate is a fact. The White Paper, unfortunately, is a fact. I am bound to remind this House of our obligations, which are the fundamental facts, before you come to the figures, and I am not going to permit hon. Members to forget those fundamental facts about the obligations we have undertaken. What are the

facts and figures with regard to Palestine? It is a country which, in Roman days, had a population variously estimated at between 3,000,000 and 5,000,000. I see from one of the members of the Mandatory Commission that they contemplate the possibility of, at any rate, 3,000,000 ultimately occupying that land. When we took it over, there were about 84 700,000 or 800,000, and, perhaps, another 300,000 in Transjordan. Since we took it over, the Jews have increased by 100,000 and so have the Arabs. The increase in both is about the same. So far, taking the last 25 centuries, the Jews are the only people who have made a success of this rather stony land. The fact of the matter is, that when the other races came there, they did not. Nobody goes there now without being impressed with the aridity and squalor of the land. That was not the case when it was entirely in the hands of the Jews—quite the reverse.

Jewish capital has been flowing into that country since the Peace, and Jewish capital has improved Arab conditions. You cannot pour capital into a country and simply confine its benefits to one section of the community. It is bound to irrigate the whole land. According to the chief Jewish banker there, since the War £40,000,000 to £50,000,000 of Jewish money has come to Palestine. I understand that the official view is that that is exaggerated, and that it is nearer £30,000,000. Let us take £30,000,000. I agree that there are losses. A good deal of this expenditure will, probably, not give a return, but you cannot restore a land so let down as this without a good deal of loss, and if these people, who have got an historic affection for this land, are prepared to sink their capital there, and to lose it—they are not people who will do it in every land as a rule—but if they are prepared to do it out of natural love and affection for this country, why should we hinder them?

The two organisations responsible for settling Jews on the land have collected and invested £10,000,000. People say, "Oh, rich Jews!" No. If they will take the trouble, which I have taken, to see how the money was collected they will find that it was collected very largely from poor Jews in America, and in sixpences here. The way they collected this money makes a very remarkable story—£700,000 a year coming from Jews in every land. The rich Jews, on the whole, are not Zionists, though there are some. The Jews are 20 per cent. of the population, and their contribution to the revenue of Palestine is between 40 and 50 per cent. That is what enabled the Palestine Government to raise a loan of £4,000,000 or

£5,000,000 85 —[Interruption]—£4,500,000 was raised as a development loan, most of which provided labour for the Arabs, it was not spent upon the Jewish settlements there. We are told the Jews are using their wealth for the purpose of driving the poor Arab fellaheen from the soil of their fathers. It is not true. Most of the land cultivated by the Jews is land which they have reclaimed from the wilderness. Here and there, no doubt, upon the fringe of a morass, a little squalid Arab village may have been disturbed, but there have only been 700 taken out in order that it might be possible to drain the land. Half of them have been put back on the land and the others have found some other work. Here is a phrase which I will quote to the House: Most of the land acquired by the Jews was swampy and malarial and required heavy expenditure on drainage before it could be made habitable. Much of the rest was sand dunes. What is the result? Not merely can you settle more people on the land, but you have improved the health of the community. Malaria is a very serious disease there, and it was slaughtering these poor people, and by this enormous expenditure of Zion and the other associations, such as the Colonisation Society, great tracts of territory have been drained in these areas and malaria has been eliminated. I would like somebody to take the trouble to read the eloquent description given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) when he was Commissioner of Palestine of this area. Its condition before the Jews went there was a swamp, a morass, created by the famous brook of Kishon. There were just a few miserable Arab villages right up on the hillsides, and not very many people there. The Jews spent £900,000 on draining about 50 square miles, and now there is a population of 2,600—probably it is more now. There are 20 villages, there are schools, there is a little forest in what was a treeless waste—this is very important in Palestine, as I shall point out—there is a training college for women for agriculture, and there are hospitals. That is a description of one valley.

In what respect are the fellaheen being deprived of the valuable farms and homes of their ancestors? a swamp 86 to be left undrained because you have a handful of people there who are eking out a very precarious and a very dangerous livelihood upon it, and that in a country which is under-populated? The Jewish contribution to the improvement of Palestine is incalculable. In their health services they are doing as much as the Government are doing. In hospitals, in medical services, in research

and in drainage they are doing far more than the Government are doing. It is the same in the case of education. Practically the whole of the education there is given to the Arabs; the Jews educate their own children. Afforestation! Everybody knows what that means in Palestine. Why is Palestine such an arid waste? Because the Turks cut down the trees. The result is a parched land away from the hills. The Jews have not merely planted a great number of trees themselves, but have provided millions of seedlings for the Government for the purpose of enabling them to plant as well. They are bringing a spirit of intelligence and brains into the regeneration of Palestine. I wish the same thing were possible elsewhere. I am not going into the other things, electricity for instance, by means of which they are creating industries which were non-existent before and which are helpful to the Arabs as well as to the Jews, and give better wages to the Arabs. Their wages have gone up by 120 per cent. since the standard was set up by the Jewish confederation.

But I am told there is no more land in Palestine, and the figures of the cultivable land in Palestine have been written down from 11,000,000 to 6,000,000 dunams quite recently—I will not say it has been done to make a case, but it has helped to make it. It is not true that there is no more land. There is the great district of Huleh, I think it is called, up in the North and there is the other district of Beisan, on both sides of the Jordan, where you may have poor miserable fellaheen living under malarial conditions and having to utilise 100 to 150 dunams in order to eke out a miserable existence, whereas if that land were drained you could put there thousands of Arabs and Jews. If there were any policy of development there at all, you could put twice as many Arabs upon the land which is now occupied by the Arabs.

87 There is no irrigation, practically, done by the Government there. Look at what has been done by the Greek Government for the Greek settlers in Macedonia and elsewhere. You may say that there are no streams, but up to the present there has been no attempt to follow the example of the Greek Government in boring artesian wells for the purpose of seeing what water there is in the sub-soil. Nothing has been done. What is the result? You are using the fact that you are doing nothing for the Arabs as an excuse for forbidding the Jews to do something for themselves. That is a policy which is utterly stupid. You do not avoid jealousies by that means. You could do twice as much for the Arabs, and you would do it all the better if you had undertaken this work, which would be supported

by capital outside and would be the basis of a development loan for the purpose of helping the Arabs as well as the Jews.

It is not a question of not doing the best for the Arab. One of the criticisms of the League of Nations is that we have done nothing for the Arabs and that we are discouraging the Jews. The only answer of the Government is, "All, well, if we cannot do anything for the Arab, we will stop the Jew doing anything." That is a silly policy. When we come to the question of whether there is land for the Arabs, I would point out that Transjordan has never been taken into account, and that is in the Mandate. In Transjordan you have got as large a cultivable area as you had in the whole of the rest of Palestine. It is in the Mandate, but it is excluded from the national home for the Jews. There is a great tract of territory which is open for the purpose of settling the Arabs if there is a surplus population needing land, but you must have it properly developed. I admit that it is a difficult task. We ought to have considered that before accepting the Mandate. [Interruption.] I am not in the least repentant. I was as responsible as any man in this House for the framing of the Mandate and for undertaking it, but if the House of Commons say that they cannot carry it out, then we must return it. There are people on earth who are courageous enough to face responsibilities. If there is a Government in this 88 country that cannot face the responsibility, let it be passed on to some other country.

It is a great experiment. It is an experiment which will leave its mark on history. The Jews left their mark on history when they lived in that land. They have still got the same gifts, and by cultivating them under conditions which will intensify their gifts through a spirit of patriotism for their native land, they are capable again of rendering service to humanity as a whole. We thought that that opportunity ought to be afforded them. The nations of the earth in council assembled came to the same conclusion. If the Government of this country say they cannot carry it out, for Heaven's sake let us give an opportunity to somebody else that can do it. [Interruption.] Oh, no, I am certainly not advocating it. I do not think this country's capacity is so low as all that. It needs judgment, it needs courage, it needs perseverance. The Government are too apt to regard difficulties as an excuse for the postponement of a task. After all, the eyes of the world turn very readily to Palestine. If Arabs and Jews had fallen out around the ruins of Carthage it would not have attracted much attention, but there is a brilliant light shed

on this small country, by the genius of some of its great sons in the past, so that every hamlet and hill is distinguished, and every episode is prominent. If we fail in Palestine our failure will be visible to the nations of the earth. If we succeed it will restore confidence in the gift of Britain to govern an empire.

§ The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Dr. Drummond Shiels)

I welcome this discussion to-day. It deals with a subject which has always been difficult and which has been specially so for the last year and more. It has caused considerable anxiety to the Government, and especially to that Department of it which is particularly responsible. I appreciate the fact that the form of the discussion will enable us to speak frankly this afternoon, and I can say that the Government will be pleased to have any help which the collective wisdom of the House can offer. There is one general observation I would like to make at the beginning and that is that we should try and see this [89](#) problem as a whole and not merely the viewpoint of one side or another. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) has spoken strongly, but I feel that he has failed to observe that desirable method. His speech contained a number of serious misrepresentations which was very disappointing in view of the high position which he occupies and the weight which attaches to his words.

The right hon. Gentleman said something about the origin of our connection with Palestine. I would like also to remind the House of some facts in the same connection because I feel that we must take a broad and a long view of this subject to understand it properly.

Palestine is a small country and when its size is mentioned it is frequently compared with Wales. Formerly Palestine was part of the territory of Turkey. After a period of military and then civil administration a mandate was granted in 1922 to Great Britain and under this mandate Palestine has since been administered by Great Britain. That mandate incorporated the Balfour Declaration of 1917 in favour of the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. At the time of the establishment of the mandate there were in Palestine something like 84,000 Jews while the Arab population numbered 590,000.

The Arabs objected to the mandate from the beginning. In the first place they claimed that Palestine should have been included in the

territories handed over to be part of an Arab Kingdom and we have had an echo of that controversy in the House of Commons in the discussion on the McMahon correspondence. In the second place the Arabs objected to the terms of the mandate itself. Their argument was that the mandate was nominally an A mandate like that for Iraq, where practically the whole stress is laid upon the development of self governing institutions. By the introduction of the sections relating to the Jewish National Home it had, the Arabs claimed, become in effect a B mandate, where the stress is laid on trusteeship and where the development of full self governing institutions on the line of Iraq was impossible. The Arabs have maintained that attitude of protest, and have so far refused to co-operate by taking their place in a Legislative Council—[90](#) offered in 1922—or by forming an Arab agency corresponding to the Jewish one. The Arabs have always opposed any systemised Jewish immigration. The Palestine Government has done what it could to effect a change in their attitude and there have been signs that a number of the Arab leaders are prepared to face the realities of the situation and to consider some form of co-operation with the Government.

To multitudes of Jews throughout the world on the other hand the establishment of the Mandate was the happy or the partial fulfilment of the dreams of centuries. Not all Jews are Zionists however and especially in Britain and America there is a number who are indifferent or opposed to a political Jewry which finds expression in a National Home for Jews in Palestine. This section consider religion and not a political outlook as the fundamental and distinctive thing.

There is also a considerable section amongst the Zionists, vigorous and vocal, who have never accepted the limitations in the Mandate in the nature of the National Home, and who desire, not a Jewish National Home in Palestine, but a Jewish State of Palestine. The latter have been severe critics of the Zionist Executive who accepted the limitations of the Mandate and who have directed their efforts to keep within its terms. As was pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs a great deal of money has been and is subscribed by Jews all over the world to be devoted to the purchase of land to develop land settlement in Palestine. Jews are said to be similar to Scotsmen in that they like to see a good return for their money and there is naturally considerable pressure put on the Jewish Agency to see that the British and the Palestine Governments are kept up to the mark and that the influx of Jews

into Palestine is as large as can be obtained. The bulk of the Jewish immigrants into Palestine come from Eastern Europe where the conditions of the Jewish population are not good, and where there is chronic unemployment. While it is true that differences of opinion exist it is only accurate to say that world Jewry is keenly interested in the success of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

91 Since 1922 various British Governments have striven to carry out conscientiously their mandatory duties. There are dark chapters in that history on which I do not wish to dwell but which have left an aftermath of bitterness and difficulty. The present Government shortly after coming into office had to deal with the tragic events of August last year. A Commission of three Members of this House with Sir Walter Shaw as chairman was appointed to visit Palestine to investigate and report. Their report was considered by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in June this year. The Jewish authorities did not like the Shaw Report, which they considered did not do justice to their position, and they took steps to voice their objections to it to the Mandates Commission and they included in their representations various strong criticisms of both the Home and the Palestinian Governments.

The Shaw Commission laid particular stress on the danger of the development of a class of landless Arabs as a result of the land and settlement operations of the Zionists and they strongly advised that expert investigation should be made so that immigration and development could be conducted if possible on more scientific lines.

The Government acted at once and sent to Palestine Sir John Hope Simpson whose qualifications for the task are generally admitted. The Permanent Mandates Commission, in their report of September last to the League of Nations, also emphasised the importance of more interest being taken in the Arab cultivator to secure his position and welfare. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs seemed to think it an ominous thing that the Arabs rejoiced in the White Paper. If they did so, it had doubtless nothing to do with the Mandate or any departure from it, but rather that they welcomed the indication in the White Paper that a class which has been dispossessed and who had been neglected by previous Governments were at last going to have something done for them. I think if the right hon. Gentleman reflects he will find that this is probably a more accurate explanation than the one he suggested. Whilst His Majesty's Government

found it necessary 92 to dissent from certain of the criticisms made by the Permanent Mandates Commission they felt that those particular recommendations afforded additional justification for Sir John Hope Simpson's subsequent investigation. The report and recommendations of Sir John Hope Simpson have been in the hands of Members for some weeks and I think they will agree with me when I say that these form an important and a weighty document. There was published simultaneously with that report a White Paper giving the outlines of the policy of His Majesty's Government but the White Paper has not found favour with the Jewish leaders. There seems to have been some obvious misunderstanding of its meaning and many voices in high quarters have been raised in protest. I trust that this discussion will bring about a better understanding and more general agreement.

The main line of criticism developed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs is that the White Paper marks a departure from the Mandate, and some of the distinguished statesmen associated with its origin as well as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs have sounded notes of alarm. I say quite seriously that any departure from the Mandate was certainly never our intention and I hope to show that these criticisms are based on entire misunderstandings. I would like to say a word or two about the Mandate itself. However excellent the intention of the promoters of the Mandate its draughtsman-ship leaves something to be desired. The vagueness and qualifications of its terms have been a source of difficulty from the beginning. There is to be a Jewish National Home, there is to be safeguarding of the rights and privileges of the non-Jewish inhabitants and there has to be the development of self governing institutions. No order of precedence is stated. Extreme Jewish opinion holds that the main purpose of the Mandate is the establishment of a Jewish National Home, and that everything else is secondary or supplementary; or, as it is sometimes put in another way, the injunction regarding a Jewish National Home is positive and everything else is negative.

On the other hand, a small but vigorous section of the Permanent Man 93 dates Commission, as well as the Arabs, holds that the development of self-governing institutions should be regarded as the leading consideration in the Mandate. The vagueness and qualifications of the instructions in the Mandate have tempted each side to overstate and over-press its case, have created an atmosphere

of suspicion, and have laid the Government open to imputations of bad faith whenever it made any important decision. I was acting as British accredited representative to the Permanent Mandates Commission in June, and I mildly suggested that the Mandate which the League had entrusted to us was not an easy one. I was promptly reminded that the Mandate was presented in its present form to the League by us for approval, and that all that they did was to approve; and the right hon. Gentleman has reminded us that he was Prime Minister at that time. I fear, therefore, that the elder statesmen who criticise must themselves accept some responsibility for the difficulty which there has been in following the right path.

Owing to this difficulty, it was found necessary in 1922, 'when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) was Colonial Secretary, to publish a notable White Paper giving the interpretation of the Mandate as it seemed to the Government of that day, and indicating the lines which would be followed. This White Paper has been the basis of administration since that time, and, as we have clearly stated in our White Paper, is the one which we have ourselves followed and which we intend to continue to follow. It will be realised, however, that, as the population of Palestine increases—and the right hon. Gentleman has reminded us that the population has considerably increased—and as the area of unoccupied man land diminishes, the questions at issue between the two peoples become more acute. There are now in Palestine 690,000 Arab Moslems, 162,000 Jews, and 90,000 Christians, most of whom are Arabs. In view of the greater acuteness of these questions, and of the dangers disclosed by the Shaw Commission and by Sir John Hope Simpson's report, it has become necessary to define more clearly and in more detail than was necessary in 1922 the implications of both sides of the Mandate. That is all that we are attempting to do. The White Paper contains general statements and not detailed proposals, and it has always been the intention of my Noble Friend that, before any legislative or administrative action was taken, the Jewish Agency on the one hand, and the Arab representatives on the other, would have the opportunity of submitting their views. It is unfortunate that this was not more clearly understood, as it would have obviated a great deal of the criticism.

We have repeatedly affirmed our intention of carrying out the full Mandate, and we stand by

that. We have also stated that we regard the two sides of the Mandate as of equal weight and importance, and that is still our position. It was also, as is pointed out in the White Paper, the view of the Permanent Mandates Commission expressed in June this year. We are simply getting down to more detail. The broad principles of our policy and that of former Governments remain the same.

After all, as I have said, Palestine is a small country. Its cultivable land is limited. The right hon. Gentleman gave some figures. I do not intend to give many, especially as they are in a somewhat unfamiliar denomination. The estimated total of cultivable land in Palestine is 6,544,000 metric dunams. Of that total, 1,250,000 metric dunams are in Jewish possession. Of the total in Jewish possession 270,000 metric dunams are held by the Jewish National Fund. Of this holding, 155,000 metric dunams are still unsettled, and it is estimated that, with a normal rate of development and immigration, it will be a number of years before that reserved land in Jewish possession is all taken up.

One of the reasons which make it necessary to take stock at this time is that to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, although he did not refer to it in a very sympathetic way. That is the remarkable discrepancy between the estimate of the amount of cultivable land previously accepted by the Palestine Government—the figures given by the Jewish authorities were even higher—and the estimate given by Sir John Hope Simpson. This shows a discrepancy of over 4,000,000 metric dunams and makes the problem more <sup>95</sup> urgent than we thought it was. Whatever be the opinion about the reliability of these figures, we must have regard to them in view of their source. There still remains, of course, the large area of Beersheba, which all the figures I have quoted leave out of account. The possibility of a water supply there is now being explored, and I am glad to say that I understand that the borings the right hon. Gentleman suggested are being proceeded with.

The White Paper announces a development scheme, and I am now able to give some further information in regard to it, and, in view of what the right hon. Gentleman has said, I am glad to think that he will welcome this information. Having regard to all the elements of the problem, His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that to achieve the object in view it is necessary to provide for an expenditure not exceeding £2,500,000, a large part of which would



be devoted to works of a productive character, such as the right hon. Gentleman referred to, namely, irrigation, drainage, and other schemes designed to increase the general productivity of the country, and which it is estimated would provide for the settlement on the land of approximately 10,000 families. In view of the present financial situation in Palestine, the only way in which a sum of this magnitude can be provided is by means of a loan under the guarantee of His Majesty's Government. During the first years of the development scheme it will be necessary to provide from British Votes such annual amounts as may be required to meet the interest and sinking fund charges upon the loan.

It will be admitted that it would be useless to attempt any development scheme except on a scale which would enable material benefit to accrue to the Palestine population, and at the same time would provide a reasonable prospect of a great part of the money expended being repaid as the result of the greater productivity of the soil. It is proposed to introduce into Parliament after Christmas a Bill authorising the Treasury to give the necessary guarantee for the raising of this loan. This will ensure that the House will have a full opportunity of discussing the project before it is put into execution. The scheme intended, in the first place, to provide [96](#) for those landless Arabs who can be shown to have been dispossessed as a result of land passing into Jewish hands, and any balance will be available for both Jewish and Arab settlement. This development scheme is surely a proof that the Government is not only attending to the needs of the landless Arabs, but is making further opportunities for Jewish land settlement. For this and other reasons it is obvious that the suggestion that this Government is seeking to crystallise the Jewish National Home in its present position is without a shadow of foundation.

§ *Sir HERBERT SAMUEL*

May I ask the hon. Gentleman one question? With regard to the finance of this proposal, he said that the interest and Sinking Fund would be met for the first year or two from the Votes of this House. Will that be a new expenditure, or will it be part of the moneys already provided under the loan?

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

As far as I understand, it will be new, but, as I say, I am only just giving an outline of the scheme today and when the matter comes before Parliament of course these details will be more fully explained.

The right hon. Gentleman has said something about immigration, and I would also like to say a word about that, because there has been a great deal of strong criticism against us in that connection. It has been suggested that regulations were to be launched which would put new obstacles in the way of the entry of more Jews into Palestine. The White Paper certainly says that examination has revealed certain weaknesses in the existing system. An example is given to the effect that during the last three years 7,300 persons who had entered Palestine with permission to remain for a limited time had stayed on without sanction. The policy of the 1922 Paper was that immigration into Palestine should be related to the economic capacity of the country to absorb it. The Palestine Government is responsible for seeing that that policy is carried out. Surely it is obvious that, unless they have complete control by proper regulations, they cannot satisfactorily carry out that duty. These new regulations may be efficient without imposing any illegitimate or unreasonable restrictions. That is what we intend.

[97](#) Then the connection between Arab unemployment and immigration has caused some concern, and has led, if I may say so, to a great deal of misrepresentation. We are told that as long as one Arab is unemployed, no Jew will be allowed into Palestine, and so on.

The proposals of the Government in this connection, and in others which have also been criticised, are based on the recommendations of the Hope Simpson Report. It is remarkable that, in spite of the large amount of criticism of this White Paper, little reference is made to the Hope Simpson Report. As a matter of fact, our White Paper is very largely made up of quotations from the 1922 Paper and of expressions of our intention to adhere to the policy explained therein and of recommendations and quotations from the Hope Simpson Report. It is clear to me that many of the critics of the White Paper have never read the Hope Simpson Report. It is a large and weighty document and, in regard to many of the subjects on which we have been criticised, there is there an informative and a full discussion and many arguments given which it was not possible fully to reproduce in the White Paper.

5.0 p.m.

The White Paper says that the capacity of the country to absorb new immigrants must be judged with reference to the position of Palestine as a whole in regard to unemployment as well as to the amount of labour which can only be regarded as

temporary in character. This does not mean, as has been suggested, that as long as any Arabs are unemployed no Jews will be admitted. Any such regulation, we must presume, will be carried out with commonsense. Otherwise, it is clear that matters could be so arranged that no Jewish immigrants were admitted at all. We also fully recognise that a good deal of Jewish capital is put into enterprises with a view to providing Jewish employment which otherwise would not be invested at all. The Labour schedule for the next six months which has just been announced has been prepared with that consideration in mind, and the figure of 1480 which has been intimated includes a number who are in this category. I hope, therefore, it will be clear that the fears which have been expressed in this connection are unfounded. Further, it must be remembered that the coming in of other classes of Jewish immigrants, apart from the Labour schedule, has never been suspended and these are still being admitted.

The right hon. Gentleman was a little humorous about our supposed attitude to the General Federation of Jewish Labour. It is the case that some resentment has been expressed at certain reproductions in the White Paper of opinions of Sir John Hope Simpson on certain aspects of the policy of the General Federation of Jewish Labour. I do not think there is any evidence in the White Paper of any criticism against the General Federation of Jewish Labour itself. It has been inferred that the Labour Government is unsympathetic with the aims and objects of the Federation. That would suggest that this Labour Government was inconsistent, which I am sure no one would suggest. I have met most of the members of the executive of this Federation in London and also in Palestine. I saw a good deal of them in Palestine. I was impressed, as every one who comes in contact with them would be, by their zeal and energy, by the clearness of their aims, and by their remarkable achievements in Palestine. The fact that they stand for a new social order naturally commands the sympathy and respect of my colleagues and myself.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

It does not say so in the White Paper.

§ Dr. SHIELS

The right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the White Paper. What I specially appreciated in Palestine was the work they are doing in pressing upon the Government the importance of industrial and social legislation which is much required. 1

often wish we could get these political issues put into the background and get on with the work that is really needed.

At the same time, in regard to the particular point of policy of the Federation with which the White Paper deals. I have myself previously made it clear that I believe there is some danger in the policy of restricting employment in Jewish enterprises to Jewish workers. No doubt their primary idea of every man working for himself is a good one, but whether it is possible to always have such a system is doubtful, and it is a serious consideration of some seriousness if it comes about that no Arab worker can ever find employment on any piece of Palestine territory which has passed under Jewish control. I visited a number of the older P.I.C.A. colonies where that principle is not carried out and in one of these, where a reception was held, a considerable number of Arabs was present, and the speeches were translated into Hebrew and Arabic. One could not but feel that this association must be helpful to good racial relations, and I consider it would be wise for the Federation of Labour, if they are really responsible for this principle, to consider whether it could not be applied less rigidly.

There is one criticism that has been made against us to which the right hon. Gentleman did not refer but which is of some importance. It was referred to in the letter which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bewdley (Mr. S. Baldwin) and two other Members of the Opposition Front Bench sent for publication. That is the question of a round-table conference. It was actually suggested then that a round-table conference had been suggested to the Government and that the Government had shown no sympathy with the anxiety of Jewish leaders to come into better relations with the Arabs. So far as I am aware the suggestion related to a specific conference about the question of a Legislative Council, though no doubt that might have been expanded into something more. So far from being unsympathetic, this matter has been explored repeatedly by the Palestine Government. Nothing would please us better than the possibility of such a round-table conference. The Prime Minister reminds me that when the Arab delegation was here an attempt was made then, and it was not found possible. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] Because we could not get the parties to come together. [HON. MEMBERS: "Which party?"] Sometimes it may have been one and sometimes the other.

§ Mr. ORMSBY-GORE

Have the Jews ever refused?

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

I really think, since the hon. Gentleman makes such a great point of this, that it is very important that we should know who is [100](#) responsible for failing to respond to the invitation. Was it the Arabs or was it the Jews? It is important that the House should know that.

[§ Dr. SHIELS](#)

I do not know whether there was any case where the Jews failed. I have made it clear that the Arabs have been unwilling. I am not mentioning this point with a view to allocating praise or blame to one side or the other. I am mentioning it to give the House a better idea of the real state of things in Palestine and the problems that we come up against. A good example at present is the case of the Wailing Wall dispute, a subject which is very serious and a settlement of which would be a tremendous help towards peace and order. The subject, though, as I say, very important, is circumscribed, yet the High Com missioner has found it necessary in conducting negotiations to deal with each side separately. Whoever is to blame, the point is that such a state of things has a significance which it is well for the House to note.

I do not propose to go further into the criticisms that have been made of the White Paper. I trust that they are largely, if not entirely, met by what I have already said, namely, that before detailed proposals are put into force consultations with both sides will take place.

The Zionist movement is one of idealists applying their ideals in a very efficient and business-like way. No one who, like myself, has seen the happy and healthy faces in the various colonies and communities in Palestine can have anything but admiration for the vision and the reality which these proclaim. The effective use of land also by modern and intensive methods, the large development of poultry farming, and the flourishing vineyards and orange groves prove the increase in the productiveness and wealth of the country which these settlers are producing. -We are all in agreement with the value of what has been done in that way. The Jewish town of Tel-Aviv again, is not only attractive but is a centre of energy and progress. I was much impressed by it. The Hebrew university also in Jerusalem was a surprise to me. It is splendidly sited and is a scientific and finely equipped university develop-[101](#) ing on most modern lines. It has an admirable Chancellor. With the merit of all these things

anyone who knows the country must agree. I have said that Zionists are idealists. The difficulty about the idealist is that he is generally impatient, and keen Zionists in their eagerness for the development and progress of the Jewish National Home are impatient at any restrictions. We have experience of idealists in our own parties. It is natural that enthusiasts should wish for short cuts, but the longer way is often the quicker in the end.

I would like to point out, moreover, that in regard to this matter of the Jewish National Home in Palestine really remarkable progress has been made. My figures are not so high as those of the right hon. Gentleman. I may, if anything, be understating the case in regard to the progress of the Jewish National Home. The right hon. Gentleman says that there is a net gain of 100,000. My figures are not so high. The figures which I have show that since Britain was responsible for Palestine over 100,000 Jewish people have been admitted, and the net result is that over 80,000 Jewish immigrants have been added to the population of Palestine.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

Since what date?

[§ Dr. SHIELS](#)

Since the mandatory powers have been in operation.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

The only difference is that I gave the figures of 1918.

[§ Dr. SHIELS](#)

They, at any rate, mean the same. The interesting thing is that practically every one of these immigrants has been settled in Palestine comfortably and happily. It is often suggested that the Mandatory Power, not only in the time of this Government but even in the time of the Conservative Government, and perhaps even in the time of the Coalition Government, has simply looked on passively while the Jews came into Palestine, and that all it has done has been to stop them coming in from time to time or to reduce their numbers. Everyone knows—everyone in this House knows, as the matter has been discussed so often—how difficult it is to settle immigrant populations in a new [102](#) country. We all know what the question is in Canada and Australia and how difficult it is to get new people settled. The figures which I have given, and which the right hon. Gentleman has given, probably show results unexampled, proportionately, in any other part of

the world. While no doubt the credit goes to the Jewish people themselves, the Mandatory Power cannot have been quite so passive and so inactive as has been suggested. This Government, and I am sure all British Governments, will afford all the facilities for the development of the Jewish National Home which are consistent with their obligations, which are equally sacred, in connection with the other side of the mandate. For, although the right hon. Gentleman did not say much about it, there is another side.

I have dealt almost entirely this afternoon with the criticisms relating to the development and progress of the Jewish National Home. I should, however, be failing in my duty to the House if I did not remind it that we, as a Mandatory Power, have other considerations to face. Members of the House hear a great deal of the Jewish side of this controversial subject, and practically nothing of the other. But the High Commissioner has to face the fact that four-fifths of the people of Palestine are Arabs and that they are apprehensive—and especially so since this agitation arose—about their future and about their country. The right hon. Gentleman asked why should not the Arab in Palestine go into Transjordan.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

No; on the contrary, I said, first of all, that you could put in Palestine itself double the number of Arabs if there were proper development, and I said there was always Transjordan where a surplus, if there were a surplus, could be sent, because that is excluded from the purview of the Jewish National Home. But I first of all dealt with the possibilities in Palestine itself, and it is only in the event of there being a surplus that I mentioned Transjordan.

*§ Dr. SHIELS*

The House will understand that I have not the least desire to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman, and I am very glad to accept his explanation. At any rate, something of the kind has been said by others. It is often [103](#) emphasised that Palestine is a sacred land to the Jews, and the right hon. Gentlemen has rightly reminded us of the age-long associations and traditions which make it so dear to them. Palestine is also a sacred land to Christians, of whom there are something like 90,000 in Palestine, mostly Arabs. It is often, however, forgotten that Palestine is also a sacred country to the Moslem Arabs in Palestine and to Moslems all over the world. I read in a Jewish publication to-day that Palestine was only the tail-

end of the Arab Kingdom and was of no particular interest to Arabs in general. That is not true. Jerusalem has associations with the founder of the religion of Islam and it is associated with Medina, after Mecca, as the most sacred of all Moslem shrines. The country, therefore, is to the Arabs and to the Moslem something more than a mere geographical area.

There are two good reasons why we must not forget our obligations to the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine. The first is that our national honour and our international obligations pledge us equally as we are pledged to the Jewish people. In the second place—and I put a great deal of stress upon this—the wisest and the sanest leaders of Zionism realise that without a contented Arab population, the full success of the Jewish National Home cannot be assured and that anything we do to carry out our mandatory duties to the Arabs is, at the same time a contribution to the success of the Jewish National Home. We must give a square deal to the Arabs, as well as to the Jews.

I was impressed during my recent visit to Palestine to find the number of reasonable people on both sides. It is always a great joy to find reasonable people. I hope the reasonable people in Palestine on both sides will be given a chance. In my opinion, rules and regulations, machinery, Governments and mandates, will all fail unless we can get better racial feeling. I have previously said how unfortunate it is that the Governments—both the Palestine Government and our own—have so often to act in the position of umpire instead of getting on with the constructive work which is so much required in Palestine. The cost of the increased [104](#) military forces in the country is heavy, and we could apply the money to better purpose. I urge the need of toleration at least. One of the main difficulties to which the right hon. Gentleman referred—it is one I cannot now go into and one upon which a great deal might be said—is the fact that the destinies of Palestine are so largely affected by factors outside the country. It is important that those who exert influence in Palestine, as well as the people of Palestine, whether Jew or Arab, should be assured that this British Government and all British Governments will give both sides a square deal, and act always in honour and good faith. I trust that what I have said will assure the House that this is our determination.

*§ Mr. AMERY*

I think we all heartily congratulate the hon.

Member upon his return to the House, and, I think, I can also congratulate him upon the vigour and the ability with which he has defended proceedings for which he himself was not in the least responsible and which many of us in this House of all parties feel to have been unnecessary. Naturally, we welcome the assurances which are given that there is no intention of going back upon the full policy of the Mandate nor any effort to crystallise the development of the Jewish National Home in its present form. Of course, this House will give favourable and, as is necessary, careful consideration to the scheme of development which he has outlined. I do not think that I need deal with that at this moment. It would obviously require a great deal more to be said about it than can be said on the information we have received from the hon. Member. As to the rest of his speech, I confess that as he went on it reminded me more and more of a story of Miss Florence Montgomery over which I wept occasionally in my youth, the story entitled "Misunderstood." The Government have been misunderstood. It is necessary to point out, without undue partisanship, that this misunderstanding was inevitable, and, if I may adapt a favourite phrase of the present Colonial Secretary, it is an instance of "the inevitability of tactlessness." I should like to echo the closing sentences of the speech of the hon. Member. Obviously, we have to give a fair and a square deal to both sections of the population of Palestine.

**105** That consideration was fully in the mind of the British Government which first confirmed the Balfour Declaration. The position of the Arabs, the whole of the kind of problem which has arisen since, was discussed for months by the Government, and the whole of 1917 was occupied with intermittent discussions of that very problem. If I may add a word to what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) said, it is not only reasons which had to do with the War which influenced the framing of the Declaration. There was permanent consideration of the development and welfare of the country for which strategical reasons connected with the Suez Canal were bound to make us responsible. There was a belief that satisfying this age-long dream of the Jewish people would not only benefit themselves but bring a new contact, a new light, a new spirit of the whole of that region of the Middle East from which all our civilisation has sprung but which had been derelict for a millennium, which we in this country have a certain bounden duty to help forward. All these considerations were present in our minds not only

in 1917, but in the years that followed.

Before we accepted the Mandate, whatever vagueness there may have been, as the hon. Member suggests, in its terms, we did put out to the world our interpretation of the matter in the 1922 White Paper. That preceded our acceptance of the Mandate. The world was told and knew fully the sense in which we accepted it. In that Paper we made it quite clear that we were not taking up the Mandate with a view to establishing a nationalist Jewish State in Palestine at the expense of the Arabs, nor did we support that type of intolerant, exclusive, racial nationalism which has been so responsible for the disasters of Europe in the last generation. What we were aiming at in that White Paper and what we made clear in it was that we wished to give an opportunity to Arabs and Jews each to develop in the truest sense their national home in that country and to combine it with a common patriotism for the Palestinian State, just as French and English-speaking Canadians have their national home in Canada and combine it with a common Canadian patriotism.

**106** From that point of view, we were obliged to insist that the development of the Jewish national home in Palestine was one of right and that that right should not be left to the discretion of conflicting Arab nationalism. We made it clear that while we were bound, in the interests of the community as a whole, to control immigration, the only limitations upon that control were those that genuinely arose out of the economic situation. That policy was one which under four successive Governments of different political complexions was carried out with remarkable success for seven years. The whole essence of the appeal that I would make to all sections of the House to-day is, that, whatever the difficulties of such a policy may be, it can only be solved by consistency, by the common agreement of all the parties in this House, and that anything like inconsistency or fluctuation aggravates ill-feeling not only in Palestine, but between Moslems and Jews throughout the world and turns the feeling of both against this country.

That interpretation was undoubtedly a disappointment to the more advanced section of the Zionists. The Zionist Executive accepted it, under Dr. Weizmann's leadership, with unquestioning loyalty. I have had experience in recent years, on more than one occasion, of having to disappoint Dr. Weizmann and to make clear to him that the things he would like to see done were impossible to execute for the time being, but I have always found, passionate though his enthusiasm is

to the cause to which he has given his life, that he was prepared to be reasonable, always prepared to recognise the difficulties of the British Government, and always prepared to face the immense unpopularity which has sometimes confronted him when dealing with his own people in conference. For years he co-operated with us, and I do sincerely hope that the Government may yet be able to see their way to make the situation so clear that he can resume that co-operation which has been so valuable for us. Of those years the first three were years of prosperity. The years from 1926 to 1928 were undoubtedly years of depression. So far as the general situation in Palestine was concerned, there was depression due to drought in 1926, earthquakes in 1927 and locusts in 1928. So [107](#) far as the Jews were concerned, it was undoubtedly due in considerable measure to over-optimism, both in regard to immigration and in building in the previous years, but there is very little evidence to suggest that the Jewish unemployment, the burden of which was mainly borne by the Jews themselves, did in fact reflect upon the general depression among the Arabs, more than in the sense that any cessation of large expenditure naturally affects the whole country. So far for economics.

Still more interesting is the fact that we had during those years profound peace in Palestine. While our neighbours the French could hardly hold their own, with a force of 40,000 troops in the country, we gradually got rid of every unit of the Army, and had but a single squadron of the Air Force divided between Palestine and Transjordan. While, undoubtedly, the Arab political movement was not prepared to accept the Mandate and was not prepared to co-operate in the legislature that we offered, there was a very considerable measure of acquiescence and even of co-operation among the general Arab population, and the development of municipal institutions gave a happy prospect of co-operation between the two sections. Under these conditions, in my anxiety to help the Chancellor of the Exchequer—naturally every Minister was bound to try to help him—and in my anxiety to show that Palestine was already standing by itself, without any help from the British Exchequer, I was prepared, after consultation with the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) and Lord Plumer, to reduce the purely British gendarmerie, the independent British gendarmerie of 500 personnel, to half its strength, and to distribute that strength amongst the general police of Palestine. In my opinion, that proved completely successful and adequate for over three years, but I

should like to say to the House that it was a mistake it was the absence of a purely British impartial police force of sufficient strength which allowed what otherwise might have been a purely local riot to spread itself into massacres and outrages which took place a year ago. For that, if anyone was responsible, I am the person, and I should feel it less than my duty if I did not make that point perfectly clear to the House.

[108](#) It was after years of peace, with this absolutely minimum provision for police equipment, that the business of the Wailing Wall suddenly broke out and resulted in outrage and massacre. I am not going into the details of that matter. After the most careful study, I can only regard it as a purely religious outbreak, arising near a religious centre, with nothing in it either in the character of those who took part in the outbreak or in the character of those who were victims, to suggest an agrarian riot by landless and unemployed Arabs. It was an old-fashioned religious outbreak of the type with which the Indian administration is only too familiar. The Shaw Commission, influenced as it naturally must have been by all the representations made to it on the Arab side, with a view to the exculpation of their co-religionists, while making clear its emphatic condemnation of the outrages, took the view that there was an underlying political and economic substratum of grievance. Naturally, the Government were bound to take that view of the Commission into serious consideration, and I think they did the right thing in sending out a Commission to inquire. Whether it would have been better to have had a Commission of several members, I am not prepared to say. What is certain is that the member they chose, Sir John Hope Simpson, is a man of wide experience and high ability, and his report is a most able, lucid and valuable document. There is one point which dominates the whole report, and that is his reiterated conviction that—I prefer to quote his own words—The sole way in which the Mandate can be carried out is by the intensive development of rural Palestine. He points out many other things which are interesting and very important. There is one thing which he points out in the interests of the Arabs, and I should like earnestly to endorse it, and I would draw the special consideration of the Government to it. For years we were entreated by all sections to commute the old Turkish tithe with its inconvenience and its occasional unfairness of incidence, into a flat-rate tax. We did so, and I think the change has been practically completed in the last year or so. Unfortunately, we adopted a basis of prices which has been completely

destroyed by the great fall in world [109](#) prices in the last year or so. That, undoubtedly, has added grievously to the taxation borne by the Arab cultivator to-day, and of the steps to be taken to benefit the Arab population of Palestine as a whole, none could be more important than the prompt reconsideration of the basis of that title. Provision might even be taken for it, if funds were not otherwise available out of the ordinary revenue in the immediate future, by utilisation of some of the proposed loan.

There is this further point about Sir John Hope Simpson's report, and that is that he went out at a time when the whole of agriculture throughout the world was under grave depression, and his view of the position of the Arab cultivator at the moment could not be otherwise than pessimistic, thereby giving a certain negative colour to his report. Another thing that struck me in his report was that he could not have known Palestine before the War. I had the advantage of travelling a good deal in various parts of the Turkish Empire before the War. I saw Palestine four or five years ago, and no one can tell me that it resembled a country under Turkish Government, or anything resembling Turkish Government. An immense amount of fruitful, creative work has been done for the benefit of Arabs as well as Jews, and the Under-Secretary scarcely did justice to what we have done for Arab education, for Arab agricultural education, for the dissemination of better stock, and the provision of better seeds. All these things have helped to what has been the most remarkable economic development in any territory that has changed hands since the War.

Certain criticisms about the effect of immigration on unemployment were made by Sir John Hope Simpson. About those criticisms I want to say something when I come to the White Paper. I would say now that his criticisms were well balanced, he saw the pros and cons of the situation, and he came to a general conclusion that if you allowed for the direct and indirect influence of Jewish immigration on increased employment it would probably more than counterbalance any conceivable unemployment caused by the actual entry of Jewish immigrants. However, he does consider the situation as regards unemployment seriously, and it is worth while [110](#) looking at the actual figures. The figures given by the Palestine Government of Arab unemployment is 2,600. He thinks they must be more than that. On the other hand, he discards the Arab Council's estimate of 30,000 to 35,000. Suppose we take a figure between the two and say 15,000, out of a

population of very nearly 800,000 Arabs, Moslems and Christians, that is about 2 per cent. unemployed, less than half the unemployment in this country. And it must be remembered that that is the unemployment which exists in a period of grave depression side by side with the fact that in the last eight years the Arab population of Palestine has increased by 112,000 persons, an increase comparable to an increase of 7,000,000 in this country.

Surely with such an increase of population there must have been a great increase in the employment available for the Arab population. The large increase of population has been due undoubtedly, apart from a considerable Arab immigration, to the measures we have taken, in which the Jews have helped, to improve the health of the country, but its absorption can only have been made possible by the fact that the policy of improving agriculture has enabled the Arabs to grow a better type of crop and the policy of road-making, for which the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) was responsible, has enabled them to bring those crops to market. You cannot say that this immense development, to which there is no parallel in any other neighbouring country, must have taken place in spite of Jewish immigration. It must, obviously, have been closely connected with that immigration.

It is quite true that Sir John Hope Simpson's report was, in large measure, bound to create a certain disappointment in Zionist circles. But Zionists were bound to take serious cognisance of it. They are quite prepared to do so, and they have made it quite clear that they are only too anxious to, say this report, with the Government, and to find in it, to quote Dr. Weizmann, "common ground upon which co-operation is possible." Surely, if the position of the Zionist Agency under the Mandate means anything it means that on such a question affecting the whole future continuance of the Mandate the Jewish Agency should be taken into consultation [111](#) and, indeed, the Arabs as well.; and Dr. Weizmann vainly asked, before the White Paper was issued, for a Round-Table Conference to bring all parties together.

What was the action of Lord Passfield? Instead of consulting with anybody he suddenly produces this White Paper. From internal evidence it is a document of rather peculiar structure. It falls into two halves. The first part is a repetition of certain passages in the White Paper of 1922, with which we all agree and accept. Even the Zionist executive

accepts it as governing the whole conduct of our affairs in Palestine. The second part consists of a transcript, more or less, of certain passages in the Hope Simpson report. The hon. Member was quite right in saying that what is found in the White Paper mostly comes out of the Hope Simpson report. Yes, but what is significant is that it is only the negative passages which have been extracted; all the balancing passages are carefully omitted. After the very full speeches which have been made by the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs and the Under-Secretary of State, I will not dwell at length upon these points, but I have analysed very carefully the White Paper and the Hope Simpson report, and have compared the passages taken from the report and the passages which have been omitted.

Take one or two examples. On the general question of land settlement the Hope Simpson Report says, very significantly and very strikingly, that in the development which can take place there is room for not less than 20,000 families, settlers from outside. No one reading the White Paper would dream that such a thing could ever happen in Palestine. Again, he excludes from his estimate of a cultivable area of Palestine the whole of the Beersheba region, but he says in a most significant passage: Given the possibility of irrigation there is practically an inexhaustible supply of cultivable land in the Beersheba area ... If there prove to be such a supply the problem of providing agricultural land for the Palestine population and, indeed, for a large number of immigrant settlers, will be easy of solution. No such possibilities are referred to in the White Paper. Again, on the question of immigration the Hope Simpson [112](#) Report suggests ways in which excessive Jewish immigration might prejudice the Arab position, but it also deals in a most important passage with what Sir John Hope Simpson calls the "derived employment" which Jewish immigration creates, even when the money is entirely spent on employing Jewish labour, because the capital that employs that labour has come into the country with it. He insists that it should be permanent labour if it is to benefit the whole of the population. We have no reference to that in the White Paper. Take another point, where the White Paper adds in a curious fashion to the criticisms of the Hope Simpson Report. The Hope Simpson Report criticises the action of the Jewish Federation of Labour and the Jewish Land Agency in wishing to employ none but Jews on the land which they secure. It may well be that that policy is carried out too rigidly, but that there is

justification for it no one will deny who has ever been in a country like South Africa, where you have two races living side by side with a differing original standard of living and of wages.

Unless you insist at the outset that the race with the higher standard of living shall be prepared to undertake every task, from the humblest, you soon get a tradition established under which one race become the hewers of wood and drawers of water and the other the capitalists and the skilled artisans. Surely, in the permanent interests of the Arab population, in trying to raise the Arab standard of wages, is it not a good thing that there should be established in Palestine, at any rate on that fraction of the total area which is represented in the dunams purchased by the Zionist National Fund, an actual population of working Jews setting not only a standard of efficiency but also a reasonable standard of living. Unless this had taken place do you think we should have had a Workmen's Compensation Act, as we have it in Palestine to-day? The presence of a Jewish working class is a very material element in lifting up the standard of the whole population, and yet all that the White Paper has to say about that is to go a long way beyond the Hope Simpson Report and to treat it as being contrary to the spirit of the Mandate, as something which is giving offence to the Arab [113](#) people, something which is inconsistent with the declared desire of the Jews to live with the Arabs in relations of friendship and mutual respect.

Surely no one who reads the White Paper and knows the history of what has preceded it, can but regard it as being animated by an entirely different tone to that which has animated every public utterance of statesmen of every party hitherto. More than that. In the opinion of high legal authorities like Lord Hailsham and the right hon. and learned Member for Spens Valley (Sir J. Simon), it is a question whether there are not things in the White Paper which are in direct conflict with the expressed terms of the Mandate. Be that as it may, undoubtedly, the impression created in the mind of the ordinary reader, Arab or Jew, or Englishman at home, was that the whole operation of the Mandate for an indefinite period of years was to be crystallised at its present standard, that Jewish development should only take place on the land they have already bought and that Jewish immigration should be severely cut down as long as a single Arab was out of work. No wonder that there has been an outcry all over the world—



Now we are told that all this was premature; that the Arabs' rejoicings were premature, and that the idea that Jewish immigration is to be stopped, is an obvious misunderstanding. The Prime Minister has already given General Smuts an assurance that everything is as it was before. Unfortunately, everything is not as it was before. Feeling on both sides has been inflamed, Arab and Jewish feeling has again been strained; and we had all hoped that the outbreak of last year was the last of such outbreaks. Moslem feeling all over the world is being mobilised against the Mandate itself, not against the details of its application. Jewish feeling all over the world has been mobilised against this country. Is not that a disaster which a little prudence and forethought, a little psychology and a little tact, might have averted?

This is not the first White Paper of this kind that has appeared. From the banks of the Zambesi to the shores of Lake Galilee there are unrest, perturbation and anxiety, because of the White Papers which are poured out from the Colonial Office and which we are after [114](#) wards told do not mean what they appear to say. I am not making that charge against the hon. Member. I make it essentially against the right hon. Gentleman who is responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the Colonial Office; but I am not quite sure whether I am right. There is considerable doubt as to the paternity of this document and other documents. There are rumours that the East African White Paper emanated, not from the Colonial Office but from other sources, and certainly the tone in which the Colonial Secretary referred to it in the other House a few days ago was not the tone of a proud parent, but much more the tone of someone apologising for a misshapen waif that he had got to foist on others and he was only too glad to suggest. that if there was anything amiss in the language of the White Paper it was due to misunderstanding. As for the Palestine White Paper the impression created in wide circles was that this document was as much a bombshell to the Cabinet as to the Jews. But I find, in an interview which the Secretary of State for the Colonies gave on 7th November to the "New York Daily Forward," this passage: in the course of conversation Lord Passfield made an astonishing remark as to the authority of the White Paper. He said, 'It is not my document; it is the Cabinet's document: I am only technically responsible.' He said this as an excuse why the White Paper made a much worse impression on the Jews than he intended and why it was not as explicit on many points as it was then. This remark sounded somewhat funny, for the Cabinet, I

understand, claims that it had nothing to do with the White Paper and puts the blame on Lord Passfield. It seems that no one wishes to acknowledge the parentage of this undesirable child. I do not suppose that the Prime Minister is prepared to elucidate this problem of disputed parentage. We can hardly expect him to do so. We can hardly expect him, either, to produce a revised edition of the White Paper cancelling previous issues; but at any rate we can ask for the fullest and clearest statement, on his authority as well as on that of the representative of the Colonial Office, that there is no departure intended from the policy pursued with such success for so many years, and that if the fatal mistake has been made of not consulting all the interests concerned before action was [115](#) taken then that mistake shall be remedied as the Under-Secretary suggested.

Leaving the White Paper on one side, let the Government come back to the Hope Simpson Report, an obviously valuable, fair and unprejudiced document, and consider that report in all its bearings with the representatives both of Zionists and of Arabs. No one in this House wishes to quarrel for one moment with any precaution with regard to immigration that may be necessary to prevent the spread of unemployment in Palestine. Our duty must be to consider the interests of the population as a whole. Still less do we want to do anything to create a large, landless, unoccupied Arab population. By all means let us take every measure that secures that those Arabs who have sold their land shall be found either alternative land which they may cultivate more closely, or alternative employment. But what the House is entitled to is an assurance that the difficulties of the situation, real as they are, and earnestly as they call for sympathetic and able and energetic handling, should not be made an excuse for going back upon a policy persistently pursued with success by every Government in recent years—a policy to which we are bound not only by our own pledges and our own reputation, but by solemn international obligations; a policy which, difficult though it may be, has in it the seeds of a fair future for Jew and Arab alike; a policy full of hope for the Jews and the Arabs; a policy which can bring security and credit to this country.

§ The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald)

I will respond at once to the appeal made by the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken. I find it very difficult to disagree with a great deal of what he has said. I think his history was somewhat

cursory, but that is not the subject of serious quarrel. So far as the Mandate is concerned I have said again and again and I say now that the Mandate is to be carried out. But when we come to the condition of Palestine we must admit that the Mandate has to be carried out in such a way that civil disorder is not going to result from its operation. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State who replied for the Government made a statement which was full, candid, and important, and for every [116](#) word he said I accept responsibility. I was rather surprised to find the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken using this sort of argument: Before the Balfour Declaration was made we had considered it in relation to the difficulties that might arise out of it between Jews and Arabs; everything that has happened since we considered; before the Mandate was drafted a similar consideration was undertaken. My comment on that is this—that we did not come in for 12 years after 1917, not counting 1924, but as soon as we came in we found the troubles of August, 1929, and every inquiry that has been made assigns those troubles, at any rate in part, to the previous Government not having made proper arrangements for the maintenance of law and order. Therefore if all those things were considered, all those difficulties, I do not congratulate our predecessors on their foresight.

But there is something more. I happened to be in Palestine two years ago, and I went up and down the country. I must say that it is impossible for anyone who saw what I saw to be too extravagant in tributes to the Jewish colonisers in Palestine. I saw what was bog being turned into cultivable land. I saw the historical and very barren sides of the mountain of Jerboa being planted with olive trees. I saw the morass at the foot of the mountain—a morass that runs along the valley down which the defeated army of Saul fled. It was bog. I found it being drained and recovered. One very amazing scene will convey to the House the extraordinary transformation that was going on. I was with a friend, a very well known dentist who had gone out to join this labour colony as his heart was in Palestine and in this life there was no consideration for him that was superior to the consideration that he would like to be one of those who restored the stones of Zion. I was shown into a little place, a sort of dilapidated cabin. There I found him busily engaged in conducting his professional operations in a case that demanded emergency treatment. He took off his white overall, having performed his work of mercy, and

took me with him to the agricultural gang that was digging holes for the planting of olive groves. That was what was going on in Palestine. It was not only labour but spirit and generosity. Uni- [117](#) versity graduates were working alongside day labourers, their hands getting hardened with the stones that they were breaking in the making of those roads to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. It was a wonderful sight. It was work which every Government in this country must encourage as long as we hold the Mandate.

But even then there was this economic trouble arising. I spent a night at Haifa under the roof of our Commissioner. I was told before I went there that there was some likelihood of my being wakened in the middle of the night because there was conflict between Jews and Arabs—a conflict that had an economic basis. Those who have had the responsibility for the policy of the Jewish Labour Federation in Palestine, those admirable men, whom I had the privilege of knowing personally, sat down with me evening after evening as we went out on our way to Damascus and discussed this problem, and admitted that unless they could come to economic terms with the Arabs difficulties would be in the way. This very question of the wisdom of an exclusive Jewish labour colony on one side, and an Arab labour policy on the other, occupied hours of our time in a very profitable and pleasant interchange of views.

Whatever foresight may have been shown by those who drafted, first of all, the Balfour Declaration, and later on the Mandate, experiment after experiment had to be conducted afterwards, and when the trouble of 1929 came it showed that the experiments conducted up to that time had not been successful in solving the difficulty. We then had the Hope Simpson report. My visit to Palestine was very brief but in the course of it I received deputations. There is no one who has ever visited Palestine who has not been asked to receive a vast variety of deputations. Some I did receive, and it was perfectly evident then that the land question was going to give a great deal of trouble unless it was boldly faced. Sir J. Hope Simpson says: There is at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation, no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish Agencies hold in reserve. If during the last few years the administration had done its duty closer Arab settlement would have been established by now and further development [118](#) of the land would have been possible. That has to be considered. The

White Paper, quite truly, gives no details, or very few, but the White Paper does say, quite definitely, that the Government are to undertake a scheme, systematically worked out, of land development in Palestine. Since the White Paper was issued a good deal of attention has been given to the subject, and an arrangement has been made, in which the Treasury concurs, for financial assistance. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State explained what the financial assistance is. That will be done. The direction in which the money will be spent was indicted by a remark which my hon. Friend made regarding boring for water, irrigation, drainage, and so on. That will be carried on. Then, on the question of immigration, there is nothing in the White Paper which justifies the conclusion and the propaganda which has been carried on to the effect that the Government wish to stop immigration or that they wish to curtail immigration merely upon the figures of unemployed Arabs. Again, if I may refer to my visit, when I was at Tel-Aviv I saw on the seashore between Tel-Aviv and Jaffa, a place where immigrants were received, and, at that time, there was a very serious curtailment of immigration, on precisely the grounds indicated by Sir John Hope Simpson in his report and repeated in the White Paper. There is another consideration which has to be taken into account. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery)—I cannot quote his words—rather minimised the trouble in connection with the Wailing Wall.

§ Mr. AMERY

I hope I did not minimise it. I took the view, and still take it, that it was essentially the outcome of a religious quarrel and not of an economic quarrel.

§ The PRIME MINISTER

I quite agree, but who, administering Palestine, is going to separate those two causes? An economic trouble will immediately start a religious conflagration. It has been apparent all through these labour developments and industrial developments. A religious quarrel, such as undoubtedly the Wailing Wall trouble was originally, gives rise to economic troubles. The right hon. Gentleman commented on the fact that it is very difficult to under- 119 stand how easily these flames are lit. There is another fact that it is very difficult for us to understand when we are dealing with Eastern peoples—that the whole of their life is a unity. Touch it at one point, and it is bound, ultimately, to come round to what is the foundation of all Oriental life, and that is religious conviction. You cannot separate them, and,

therefore, in the development of the Mandate, in order that the Mandate may be successfully carried out, the Government has to keep its mind and its eyes vigilantly and warily upon civil order and economic harmony. It is absolutely essential that that should be done. The Jewish people, the Zionists, may be disappointed. They were disappointed, as has been said already, in 1922, but if they are disappointed because conditions render necessary a pull-up in the rapidity of the development and render is necessary to make it a little slower—if those admirable men like Dr. Weizemann, who have given the whole of their lives and their hearts to this work, are disappointed, yet the circumstances are such that the pull-up is necessary. But will they take our word for it, that the pull-up is in no sense an abandonment of the Mandate or a change in the policy that has been pursued in order to carry out the Mandate?

I think that that is really all I need say because that goes to the root of the disquiet which has been expressed not only in this House but outside. The Government will do their duty. At the present moment they are in consultation with the representatives of the Zionist movement, and they will be only too glad to keep in similar touch with the Arabs. The one mark of success, the one test of success will be how far the Mandate in its two aspects is carried out. I do not need to go the length even of saying that the aspects are. of equal weight, but the Government will carry out the Mandate in both its aspects and, in carrying out the Mandate, will bend every energy they have to enable the development of Palestine to be continued under conditions which will make the harmony between Jew and Arab closer and closer so that the Arab may continue to enjoy the benefits he has already got from Jewish immigration and Jewish capital, and the Jew, the devoted Zionist, may 120 see Palestine becoming more and more the complete embodiment of his ideal of a Jewish national home.

§ Sir H. SAMUEL

I doubt whether the speech to which we have just listened from the Prime Minister, or the speech delivered earlier by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, will go far to reassure those who have felt it their duty to criticise the White Paper lately issued. It is a good thing that the purposes of the Mandate have been reaffirmed by the representatives of the present Government, but, for my own part, I doubt whether that which has been said this afternoon will leave the position

very (Efferent from what it was before this debate began. It is well that the House should come to close quarters, in full discussion, with the difficulties which are undoubtedly inherent in the Palestinian situation and with which I had to live every day for a period of five years. There is a dual aspect—the creation of a Jewish national home, provided that nothing is done which will prejudice the civil and religious rights of the other sections of the population. These two aspects are embodied in the Balfour Declaration itself, and repeated in the Mandate and have been reaffirmed by each successive Government in turn: and I venture to say that if that qualification, with regard to the interests of other sections of the population, had not appeared in the Mandate at all, it would nevertheless have been necessary, and indeed essential, in the administration of Palestine to have observed that condition. If there were any question that the 600,000 Arabs should be ousted from their homes in order to make room for a Jewish national home; if there were any question that they should be kept in political subordination to any other people: if there were any question that their Holy Places should be taken from them and transferred to other hands or other influences, then a policy would have been adopted which would have been utterly wrong. It would have been resented and resisted—rightly—by the Arab people. But it has never been contemplated.

There are four reasons why such a policy would have been utterly impossible. In the first place—and this first reason alone would be amply sufficient—it would have been an unjust policy; and being [121](#) unjust and contrary to all the principles on which the British Empire is based, it would never have had the approval of English public opinion and of this House, or the support of the Dominions. Secondly, it would have been impossible of enforcement. The Arabs are a high-spirited people, with proud traditions, and they would have had the sympathy and support of the whole Arab world, the whole Moslem world, in resisting any such policy. Thirdly, the League of Nations, which is the organ of the opinion of the civilised world, would not have endorsed a tyrannous policy of that kind. Fourthly, and lastly, any such anti-Arab, ruthless policy, would have reflected the gravest discredit on the whole Jewish movement, and a Jewish national home that was animated by a spirit of that kind would not have been worth having. If, after a generation, it had been found that in Palestine the Arabs were there still as a helot people, with no advancement in their economic condition, or in their standards of

education and sanitation, the moral prestige of the whole Jewish people would have suffered thereby. The Jews have themselves suffered through centuries from oppression and it is inconceivable that they should have learned nothing from that oppression except how to inflict it, and that they should apply to others the injustices which they have abhorred in their own history.

Therefore, I say that if this provision for safeguarding the Arab interests had not appeared in the Balfour Declaration, it would, nevertheless, have been essential for the mandatory Power to have observed that condition, and for the Jewish people to have supported them in so doing. My Commission from His Majesty the King when I was sent to Palestine ten years ago, commanded me to observe that condition as an integral part of the policy of the Jewish national home, and I think I may claim that I never forgot it, even for an hour. But does this condition mean that the whole enterprise is therefore impossible? Does the presence of this indigenous population of 600,000, as it was then, mean that there is no room for and no possibility of a Jewish national home? I am convinced that with proper agricultural and industrial development Palestine could, in the very near future, support a population of 2,000,000, and there is no reason to doubt that in a generation or so it [122](#) would support a population possibly of 3,000,000. The presence of this population cannot be allowed to be regarded as an absolute barrier against this tremendous spiritual, racial, national urge among 15,000,000 of Jews throughout the world, this impulse to reconstitute a home in the land which their ancestors made illustrious and which, in turn, reflects upon them a distinction and a pride.

It is often thought and said that the Jews are a materialistic people, and that they are mercenary. Excluded, as they were for centuries, from many vocations, they were obliged to have recourse to the few that were left open to them. But, in spite of that fact, it was the Jews who, more than any others, through the Dark Ages kept alight the torch of learning. I think I may claim that through those centuries, and even in the present day, the Jewish people, out of all proportion to their numbers, have made great contributions to the common treasure-house of mankind in matters of religion, in philosophy, in science, in music, in the drama, in many of "the things that are more excellent"—[An HON. MEMBER: "And economics— "] Yes, and economics as well. If the Jewish people seek to recreate a national home in Palestine, a national centre, it is not out of any vague sentimental desire

to restore ancient glories, like rebuilding some old structure in a museum for antiquarians to admire: and it is not out of any mere political or economic motive, but it is in order that that centre may be a stimulus to intellectual and religious forces which have long been in partial abeyance, but are not yet dead. If in this country we seek, in Blake's words, to build a new Jerusalem

" in England's green and pleasant land," let us remember that still the old Jerusalem exists—the model, the ideal. Let us remember that on the hills of Zion there is a spiritual beacon still burning, perhaps dim and low in these days, but destined, who knows, to blaze out again, and for the third time to give illumination to all mankind. And I say to this Parliament that in handling the destinies of Palestine you are touching fundamental things.

Inspired by these ideals and by this enthusiasm, it is not perhaps surprising that some Zionists have under-estimated the practical difficulties and some of the [123](#) immediate political conditions that exist in Palestine. They have, some of them, been a little inclined to forget that the 600,000 Arabs are there, and are a fact, and that this population is rapidly increasing. Our Scottish friends would tell us: Facts are chiefs that winna ding, An' downa be disputed. But the extremists who ignore the importance of the Arab problem in Palestine are, after all, only a few, and they do not dominate the policy of the whole Zionist movement. They bear to the Zionist movement as a whole somewhat the same relation—may I say it with all respect—as the Independent Labour party bears to the Labour party, and those who wish to depreciate the majority sometimes quote the opinion of the minority as though it represented that of the whole body. So it is with the more extreme groups of Zionists and the movement as a whole. But certainly those ideas have never animated the mind of Dr. Weizmann, that wise leader and one of the ablest and most remarkable of the political figures of our time. Those, I venture to submit, are the general ideas which should be in our minds when we are dealing with the concrete practical problems of land, industry and immigration in Palestine; those are the background for our White Papers and our Blue Books.

I come to the report of Sir John Hope Simpson; a man of indefatigable energy, of wide experience, and of great perspicuity, and I am sure the Government could have found no better investigator and that no other man would have been likely to have presented a better report; but let it be remembered that this is an individual

report. He did not proceed—he was not asked to proceed—according to the ordinary methods of inquiry by Committee or Commission, hearing witnesses, the presentation of formal statements, examination and cross-examination, and let it be remembered that he was only two months in a country which he had never visited before, a country full of most difficult problems. I think we should hesitate to arrive at grave decisions of policy solely upon the individual authority of one investigator, after an inquiry which was necessarily, and not due to any fault of his, a very hurried one.

[124](#) I agree with many of the principal passages and recommendations in Sir John Hope Simpson's Report. I agree that there is very little in the point that the Government ought to have provided, and ought now to provide, large areas of State land for Jewish settlement. There is very little in that point at all. There is, as Sir John Hope Simpson points out, hardly any State land which is suitable for cultivation and which is not already occupied. When I was in Palestine I received a deputation one day from a group of young men who had served in the War in one of the Jewish battalions—Palestinians. In Southern Palestine, when it was occupied by Lord Allenby's troops, almost all the young Jewish population enlisted in Jewish battalions to help reconquer the rest of the country.

Some of these young men came to me afterwards and said that they would wish to settle on the land. They had friends who would provide them with the necessary money, and they would wish to have some State land for that purpose. I agreed that their claim was a strong one, and I said "Select for yourselves any piece of State land which is not already occupied, and is suitable for cultivation, and you shall have the first preference." They went away, and came back, and they chose a piece of land near Hebron which they said was not cultivated, because it was not irrigated. There was no water, but they were convinced that there would be, because there were signs there of ancient occupation, and they asked whether, as it was a large area of State land, the Government would go to a comparatively small expense in digging a well. We did so, but there was no water. They asked if they might be allowed, at their own expense, to continue digging to a much greater depth. They did so, but there was still no water, and the project had to be abandoned. I said to them, "Present to me any other piece of land anywhere in the country, and the same offer will hold good." They could select none. There was none, and the notion that

there are large areas of land which are unoccupied and which could be easily settled by Jews has been a mistaken contention from the beginning.

There has been a good deal of controversy over the large area in the North- [125](#) East of Palestine called Beisan, which is one of the problems with which I had to deal soon after my arrival. Legally and formally, that land was State property, but it was obtained by the Turkish Sultan from the people by a trick. They had been cultivating it for generations, and they were told that unless they registered their ownership by a certain date, the land would be regarded as belonging to the Sultan's own domain. They refused to register, because they did not want to be involved in expenses and legal difficulties which they did not understand. They let the date go by, and for that reason that land was regarded as national land; but they were there, on the spot, and to have taken that land away from them would have been flagrantly unjust. I appointed a Commissioner, a British official, to demarcate the land and to determine exactly what areas they should have. It may be that he was unduly generous, though, of course, he had to allow some margin for further growth of population, but in any case there could not have been there any very large surplus for other settlement. If it is found in future that others can be settled there, whether Jews or Arabs, then no doubt the matter may be open to some measure of reconsideration; arid in any case a certain number of Arabs are willing, on payment of some compensation, to move elsewhere, and have so declared themselves.

Let me give another illustration, however, of a different kind, of how land settlement does work out, and how Arab occupation cannot be allowed to be an absolute barrier in all cases. There is, in the maritime plain between Jaffa and Haifa, a large area of land which was swamp, the Kabarra swamp. The whole area is about two square miles, of which about one square mile was swamp. It was saturated with malaria, and it was a centre of infection for all the surrounding villages. There were living there, I forget the exact number, but my recollection is 300 or 400 Arabs, who had a few buffaloes, which wallowed in the marshes, and they conducted some very primitive agriculture. That population also was saturated with malaria.

There had been a Turkish concession there before the War, granted to the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association for the redemption of that land. When [126](#) it was proposed to put that into operation, a violent controversy arose, and it

was represented to me on all hands that there were these Arabs in the middle of this swamp area, that their removal was indispensable, but that it was contrary to the terms of the Mandate to prejudice their rights, and that they must not be moved. The Colonisation Association offered an area of better land in the neighbourhood, but legal proceedings were taken and strong representations were made that in no circumstances ought these people be evicted. Ultimately they agreed to move, and they have now been moved to an area not far away, where they are living happily, in good stone houses built with the money given to them by the Jewish Colonisation Association, with as much cattle as they had before, or more, and the whole of that great swamp of a square mile in extent has been redeemed, at an expense of nearly £100,000, and will permit the future settlement of a large and, we believe, prosperous community. That is the way in which the task can be accomplished, and is being accomplished in a very large degree, and Sir John Hope Simpson pays tribute to the fact that the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association has succeeded in that way in combining these two purposes which must be combined—the upbuilding of the Jewish national home, without prejudice to the substantial rights of the Arab population.

I agree again with Sir John Hope Simpson that the fellahin in Palestine are in a state of great poverty, but the fellahin in the Turkish Empire generally have been in a state of great poverty, and as my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery) has pointed out, the great depression of this year from which they are suffering is due to the catastrophic fall in agricultural prices which is common to the whole world, and has no connection whatever with the question of the Jewish national home. Their unfavourable economic condition is largely due to usury. They are in the hands of moneylenders to a very great extent—

*Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY*

Arab moneylenders!

§ *Sir H. SAMUEL*

Yes, moneylenders of their own race, and it is very unfortunate that it has not been found possible yet to establish a land bank in Palestine for their assistance. There was a Turkish bank before the War, which was on a very small scale and which during the War ceased its operations. When the War was over, the military Administration induced the Anglo-Egyptian Bank

to advance them a large sum, which was lent to the peasants to restock their farms, which had been devastated by the War, but although I endeavoured in every way to induce the Anglo-Egyptian Bank to continue that assistance, they refused when the War was over, and the money was withdrawn.

I went to Egypt and interviewed the chairmen of the two great mortgage banks which had done so much for Egypt, to induce them to establish themselves in Palestine. One of them sent an agent to investigate conditions, but his report was unfavourable. On account of the uncertainty of land title, and other details into which I need not enter, his report was adverse, and the bank refused to act, although I offered them special legislation to facilitate their operations; and until this day there is no adequate method of providing agricultural credit for the fellahin, and, I sincerely trust, through the action of the Government, that that difficulty will be overcome.

But on some points I do not agree with Sir John Hope Simpson's report. He comments on some observations of mine with regard to the Valley of Esdraelon, as to its condition 10 years ago. I only wish he had seen that valley in 1920 as I saw it—a vast expanse, saturated with swamp, here and there some patches of cultivation, the production of the whole exceedingly small compared with what it should have been—and that has now been turned, after an expenditure of nearly £1,000,000, into a smiling and a prosperous countryside, such as my right hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) has described to the House this afternoon.

I regretted that Sir John Hope Simpson did not mention Transjordan. That also has been commented upon by my right hon. Friend and, I think, by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. Transjordan is, of course, under separate [128](#) at Arab Government, and it must be regarded as an Arab State, but there are now many Palestinians there, and there is a constant movement to and fro. Sir John Hope Simpson mentions that Arabs do migrate easily. On page 146 of his report, there is a striking passage saying that the Arab is quite willing to move where he can obtain better land or employment. Transjordan is a country which is very under-populated; it is in urgent need of more population. These are facts that ought to be taken into account when the House is considering the question as a whole.

Sir John Hope Simpson is properly cautious as regards the possibility of industrial development in

the future and the extent of population that Palestine will be able to sustain. I am inclined to think that he is over-cautious. The example of Tel-Aviv, which has been mentioned by the Prime Minister, is a very striking one. If Sir John Hope Simpson had been 20 years ago where Tel-Aviv now is, he would have seen a sandy waste without a single house, a few patches irrigated and cultivated with vines. Now there is a population of the size of Chester or Bedford—40,000 people with over 150 factories and workshops. The whole of that area then contributed to the Government £40 a year in tithes; now it contributes in house and land tax alone £30,000. No one having seen the country as it then was could possibly have foreseen what it would be in 1930.

Haifa has possibilities of immense growth; a great new harbour is being constructed, and there is the possibility that a railway and a pipe line for oil may come from Iraq, and debouch at Haifa. It gives a prospect for immense development, and it seems to me very possible that Haifa and Tel-Aviv within a generation may become great commercial and industrial cities equal to any others in the Middle East. The whole of the great maritime plain and the whole of the Valley of Esdraelon may become a garden, as great parts of Lebanon are already gardens, closely populated and with well-planned towns and villages. Sir John Hope Simpson criticises the newer Jewish colonies, although he says that in his view they will win through and succeed. If he had been in Palestine 20 years ago, he [129](#) would have found the older colonies in exactly the same position as these newer ones are to-day. They were then in the same stage of development, heavily indebted, repaying very little of the money that had been advanced, in arrears, and with a feature that does not exist among the newer colonies, many of the younger men in despair and leaving the country. These colonies were founded by the wisely directed beneficence of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. He has stood by them and has brought them on to their present prosperity.

Sir John Hope Simpson rather minimises the work that has been done for the fellah during the last 10 years. More has been done than he realises, and perhaps even my right hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs was not sufficiently generous in his appreciation in that regard. The first requirement for the fellah is the abolition of the tithe and the replacement by a proper system of land taxation. The next requirement, which is equally necessary, is the establishment of a land bank. Both of those depend very largely upon the

settlement of the titles to the land, because they are in such extreme confusion. A very large part of the soil is in common occupation, with a repartition every year or every two years, which makes it exceedingly difficult to adopt any proper system of land taxation or mortgage loans. The first and indispensable task is a land settlement which must be based upon a survey. That was put in hand in the early days of this Administration, and many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on the general survey of the land which, under the Turks, was wholly lacking. It takes time to complete it, but it has made great progress, and the land settlement which will take place within a short time from now is in fact the indispensable foundation to any large reforms in agricultural conditions.

The Agricultural Department of the Palestine Government has been exceedingly helpful to the fellahin. Education has greatly spread. Within two years I opened new schools in 125 of the Arab villages. There is a most eager desire among the people for education. I urged that villages should build their own schools, which they can do very cheaply with their own labour and the Govern- [130](#) ment trained, provided; and paid the teachers in the schools. I should have gone much further; I had intended to open schools in all the villages, and I had a programme proceeding year by year, but I was cut short by financial difficulties. That also hampered the work of irrigation and land development. In my first two years of administration my difficulties were political. In the next two years my anxieties were financial. The Budget did not balance. It was essential to make it balance, and therefore expenditure had to be very much restricted, but fortunately we were able to make the Budget balance, and indeed to accumulate a considerable surplus which was handed forward. Not only that, but in 1925 the taxation on the fellahin, which under the Turk was 12½ per cent. of the gross produce, was reduced at a stroke by one-fifth—the greatest relief which that peasantry had received within memory, for under the Turks their experience had been continually an increase of taxation. There had never been a decrease, but at one stroke we reduced the tithe by 20 per cent. It is an unfortunate omission that, Sir John Hope Simpson makes [J10](#) mention, of that very large relief of agricultural taxation.

Furthermore, there has been a 'vast expenditure on public work. It has resulted almost entirely in the employment of Arab labour, although the revenue for that purpose has very largely been provided

from the Jewish population. If the Jews had not come into Palestine, the revenue of the country would have been at least one-third less than it is to-day. Many people think more, and if that one-third was struck off the present and future revenue, it would mean a much slower development, a much less employment for the Arab population. Furthermore, the Arabs have benefited from the cessation of conscription, and their population has increased by nearly one-third in the short period of 10 years. For eight of those years the country was at peace. From 1921 to 1929 there were no racial disturbances, although no doubt the fundamental problem remained all the time in abeyance.

The report of Sir John Hope Simpson is a balanced report. I have commented on some passages in it, but it gives appreciation where appreciation is [131](#) due. Our criticism of the White Paper is that it is not a balanced presentation of the case. Sir John Hope Simpson pays tribute to the enormous effort, at the cost of tens of millions of pounds, that has proceeded in Palestine in colonisation, in industry, in promoting cooperation, education, agricultural research and sanitation—all this work done by Jewish effort. The White Paper says nothing about it except a few grudging words. Sir John Hope Simpson has this passage in his report: There can be no doubt that systematic and methodical development over a series of years will change the whole aspect of agricultural Palestine, and admit of a largely increased population. Who, reading the White Paper, would imagine that Sir John had reported in that sense? He says again: There is no doubt that the development which has followed Jewish immigration during the last nine years has provided additional openings for Arab labour. Why has that not been reproduced in the terms of the White Paper? I approached the White Paper with no prejudice whatever, but, on reading it and comparing it with the Hope Simpson report, the conviction was brought home to my mind that someone was instructed to write that White Paper and pick out of the Hope Simpson report the particular passages which would establish a case against Jewish colonisation. The representatives of the Government have said that they propose to maintain the Mandate, and they declare to the Jewish people that they may continue their work of colonising the people on the land. The White Paper, however, says in effect, that that will be subject to two conditions: first, that you shall have no more land, and, second, that you shall have no more people. Most remarkable of all in the White Paper is the censure of the Federation of Jewish



Labour for saying, forsooth, that they believe in a new social order based on communal settlements and the principle of self-labour.' I am not a Socialist, but I should not condemn these ideas, and it is amazing that it should be a Socialist Government which comments upon and seems to deprecate all principles of that kind.

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§ Colonel HOWARD-BURY

Does not that carry out the Hope Simpson report with regard to the employment of Jewish labour in Jewish colonies?

§ Sir H. SAMUEL

It is not only the employment of Jewish labour, but communal settlements of self labour that are criticised. I can appreciate the difference of opinion about employing Jewish labour on Jewish land. The Federation have a powerful answer to make to that criticism, but the passage which is contained in the White Paper is this: The Federation has adopted a policy which implies the introduction in Palestine of a new social order based on communal settlements and the principle of self labour', i.e., that each man should work for himself and avoid the employment of hired labourers. It goes on to say: Where self labour 'is impossible, it insists on the employment of Jewish labour exclusively by all Jewish employers. Why should the first part be objected to? It seems to me a most desirable thing, and the Jewish people are right in saying that they do not want the agricultural side of the Jewish National Home to be a system of large farms with a capitalistic system employing hired labourers who have no prospects—once a labourer always a labourer. They set their minds against that, and try to establish a new social order in that regard. There are many who think for that reason that the Jewish immigrants are revolutionary Bolsheviks. They are not, and that accusation in regard to them is entirely unfounded. The individual Communists among them are about the same proportion as individual Communists in this country among the British working classes.

This White Paper, if it were acted upon according to its terms, must have two consequences. The first would be a grave discouragement to the whole Zionist movement. The development of these enterprises, the inflow of capital and provision of funds, depend upon enthusiasm and hopefulness. It is a remarkable thing that by voluntary contributions all over the world, year after year, expecting no return, no less a sum than £700,000

a year has been collected; and not only, as my right hon. Friend said, from the wealthy, but the poor have given out of their poverty, and these are the most

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133 precious of all the contributions that are received. But this is only due to the ardent enthusiasm which I have described, and this White Paper would come on that enthusiasm as a chilling douche of cold water. The other result would be that, if the White Paper were acted on according to its actual terms, it must involve a real cessation of Jewish immigration. I am glad, indeed, that the Under-Secretary has disavowed that interpretation; but what other interpretation could be placed on these words: It may be regarded as clearly established that the preparation of the labour schedule must depend on the ascertainment of the total of unemployed in Palestine"—that is Jews and Arabs? That means that if there is Arab unemployment there must not be Jewish immigration.

§ Dr. SHIELSindicated dissent.

§ Sir H. SAMUEL

If that is not so, why did not the White Paper say that? Why has it left on everyone's mind the idea, reading the White Paper as a whole, that as long as there is this measure of Arab unemployment so long Jewish immigration must be restricted to the very narrowest proportions? That, indeed, would be an impossible position, and I am very glad it is disavowed. It would be obviously absurd to say that there are 40,000 Jews in Tel-Aviv with their industries, and that if they were not there there would be employment for a population of 40,000 Arabs. Clearly, such an assertion would be ridiculous, and I am very glad that it has been made clear since the White Paper that Jewish immigration is not to be stopped, and, indeed, that some 1,500 permits have been issued. I should like to make this one comment in passing. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies said, and it appears, I think, in the White Paper, that 7,000 or 5,000 Jewish immigrants have come in as travellers, and have remained. He suggested that that was a surplus immigration that was not authorised, and that it was really an infraction of the principle that immigration should be limited by the absorptive power of the country; but he has forgotten that it is stated in the Hope Simpson report that these people who have come in as travellers, if they are afterwards permitted to remain, are counted against the next labour schedule, and that there is

a correspond- [134](#) ing reduction in future immigration, and that therefore they have not raised the total of immigration above the economic absorptive power of the country.

I come, lastly, to the question of the future, which, after all, is the most important aspect. The Government have properly announced that their first duty will be to maintain order. Two steps have been taken which have proved to have been mistaken. One of them was mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook. The British Gendarmerie, which was an excellent force, was disarmed and no other force was sent in substitution. My right hon. Friend said that he had consulted me, and my successor Lord Plumer, on this matter. I think he has forgotten that when I was consulted I left on record my advice, that— If reorganisation proposals should involve the disbandment of the British Gendarmerie in Palestine, two infantry companies should be stationed in the country. If two companies of infantry had been in the country, they would probably have sufficed to check the recent outbreaks at their start. A small force can check at the start what will afterwards develop, if allowed, into a very large movement. So I am absolved in that regard, for he will find in the Colonial Office that Minute in the records. The other step which was unfortunate was in regard to the defence of the Jewish colonies. I established a system of providing each of those colonies, many of which are isolated, with sealed armouries, a number of rifles and ammunition in boxes under lock and key and seal, which could only be opened by the authorised head of the colony in time of great emergency. For several years, while that system lasted, there was no abuse in any one case, and it was never improperly used. Nevertheless, these armouries were withdrawn from almost all the colonies, leaving them in a very defenceless condition when the outbreaks took place. It is impossible to provide adequate defence, either by aeroplanes or armoured cars, or even by police; the colonies must be provided with means to maintain their own security. Now, I understand, these armouries have been restored, but whether their equipment is adequate I do not know.

[135](#) The worst feature of the whole of the present situation is that all these changes arise after massacre, and may lead it to be thought in Palestine and other countries that massacre is the road to obtain concessions. The outrages in August of last year were of a very horrible character. I have here a letter from an English lady, who visited 'one of the hospitals, and saw the women and children

and others horribly mutilated, some of them insane from the experiences which they had gone through. The letter is so shocking that I cannot read it to the House, besides which I do not wish to exacerbate feeling. The fact remains that there were most savage outrages, and I am bound to say that they do leave a blot on the Arab name. If those massacres should recur, and if the leaders do not stop them and obviate them, as I believe they could if resolved to do so, then the world will be obliged to place the Arabs of Palestine on a lower scale of civilisation than their natural qualities really entitle them to.

Before the troubles took place in August of last year, Sir John Chancellor, the High Commissioner, had already prepared proposals for establishing a constitution, and I do not think that the events that took place then ought to deter the Government from proceeding to put those proposals into force. I believe that you cannot continue indefinitely to govern that country without any formal constitutional representation of the people, to be a link between the Government and the population at large. When I went out there I was fortunate in being able to form an advisory council. As the Under-Secretary has said, there are many reasonable people in Palestine. The Council was nominated, but it was really representative of all sections and ideas. One of its members was the leader of the Arab Executive to-day. For two years I presided over that Council, every ordinance was submitted to it, every ordinance was passed, and, during those two years, a vote never had to be taken. All conclusions were reached with unanimity. If there had to be amendment, postponement, or alterations, the fact remains that that council worked with complete harmony. Of course, that would be impossible if any group was determined to be intransigent, but that need not be so, and the Government are right to [136](#) endeavour to set up a Legislative Council, largely elected, on the lines which I proposed in 1922, and which the Arabs then rejected.

The difficulty in Palestine in the near future is likely once more to be one of finance. Sir John Hope Simpson proposed further expenditure in many directions, and reductions of revenue in other directions. There was a French financier who once said that The best principle of finance is more from the Treasury and less from the taxpayer. That, frequently, is impressed on the Government, whatever Government may be in power, by Members of the House of Commons. It cannot be done, and I fear that in the present conditions the Government will find great difficulty in balancing

the budget in Palestine. I do not think that deficits ought to be made good by the British taxpayer. I was rather sorry to hear the suggestion of the Under-Secretary that when a loan is floated for development purposes the interest and sinking fund of that loan is to be provided by a fresh Vote from the House of Commons. Hitherto, the British taxpayer has paid nothing for development in Palestine—from beginning to end not a penny. There have been charges for garrisoning, but not for the actual conduct of affairs, and it is important, if possible, to maintain that principle. I would rather see the British Government bearing a larger cost for the defence of the country, which is more in the nature of an Imperial charge, than to pay interest and sinking fund charges on this loan. If it has to be found, why cannot it be found out of the Colonial development fund, which already provides £1,000,000 a year, and part of it might be devoted to Palestine, without imposing any addition to the present Votes of the House of Commons. Let me remind the House, in passing, that Palestine has repaid to the British Exchequer £1,000,000 in payment for railways and other assets left behind from the War: a windfall unexpected by the Treasury which, I think, should stand to Palestine's credit.

Lastly, with regard to Arab-Jewish relations in the future: I am convinced that the two purposes of the Balfour Declaration—the Jewish National Home 'arid the safeguarding of Arab rights—are [137](#) not irreconcilable, as the Under-Secretary stated to the Mandates Commission, last June, and as the Mandates Commission endorsed.

There should be an active policy for Arab advancement, and I am delighted to hear that the Government are not postponing or modifying that part of the Hope Simpson recommendations. An effort should be made to protect the tenants from eviction. One of the first ordinances which I passed on my arrival in Palestine in September, 1920, was for the protection of tenants from eviction, whether the land was purchased by Jews or anyone else, and the Hope Simpson report mentions that and points out the manner in which it was evaded. It will be exceedingly difficult to pass any law which cannot be evaded, but I hope that the Government will endeavour to overcome these difficulties and to provide effective legislation. I implore the Government not to lend colour, in any future Declaration or White Paper, to the idea which is so prevalent, and which I am sure is wrong, that any Jewish gain must be an Arab loss. It is true that it may be so in some cases, but the White Paper does suggest that it is so as the

general rule, and that is the great fault in the tone of the White Paper. Equally, let Zionists not think that any Arab gain need be a Jewish loss. It is not so. The more prosperous, the healthier, and better educated the Arabs are, the greater credit it will be to the Jewish National Home.

The Government has to pursue a policy of equilibrium, but in endeavouring to pursue a policy of equilibrium let it not persue a policy of oscillation, which is a very different thing. There is co-operation among Jews and Arabs already in many spheres: in Government Departments, in the 'police, the railways, the municipalities, and in the relations between many Arab and Jewish villages. It is by the increase of that co-operation among the people that the wounds can be made to heal. If there is a wound in the human body, it is not only by surgical stitches that it can be made to heal; stitches may be necessary, but the wound will not heal unless the individual cells cohere and grow together. That is what is essential in Palestine. Quietly and resolutely let the Government fulfil all the obligations of the Mandate.

[138](#) When I was in Palestine I met only one man who declared to me that he thought that the British should withdraw from Palestine, and, that was Lord Beaver-brook, when he was visiting the country. Let the Government proceed with what is, after all, a great task. This Parliament, sitting here for 600 years on the banks of the Thames, has seen its tasks change again and again as the centuries have slowly gone by one by one. The Empire has changed—changed in its provinces, in its character, in its functions. The greater part. of the American colonies separated, new colonies were acquired which have grown now into great Dominions. They are equal partners, their affairs are withdrawn from the control of this House. India is proceeding along the same path. But as old tasks have been accomplished new tasks arise, such as this duty here in Palestine. This Parliament, venerable as it is, is not aged. It will not out of weariness abandon this task. Palestine is only a small country, but it is illustrious in the history of the world. None is more illustrious. Even for the British Crown, even for the British Empire, it is an honour, an added glory, to be charged with the care of the Holy Land.

#### [§ Colonel HOWARD-BURY](#)

I am faced with a somewhat difficult task in following such illustrious Members. The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has a great knowledge of Palestine and he addressed the House in a speech full of interest. With regard to

the White Paper which has been so much criticised by hon. Members on this side, I wish to say that I believe in giving credit where credit is due, and I believe the Government have acted very courageously and impartially in producing that White Paper. It is the first real opportunity there has been of reviewing the conditions in Palestine after eight years of our Mandate. During 'those years we have seen no less than three separate outbreaks. In 1920, in 1921 and again last year, 1929, there were these riots' and these massacres. There must, therefore, have been something radically wrong with that government during those years. During the previous 80 years of Turkish rule there was good feeling throughout between the Jewish and the Arab inhabitants, and if there were Jewish colonies there at that time, [139](#) set up by the Palestine Jewish Colonies Association, there was good feeling between both the Jews and the Arabs; and I do hope and wish that a similar feeling will be shown in the future between the Zionist colonisers and the Arabs. A White Paper was issued in 1922. It explained what the Mandate was, and defined what the Jewish National Home was, in clear and unmistakable terms, and it is on those lines that the present White Paper is founded.

There is, therefore, no change whatever in policy at the present time. Had that White Paper been adhered to in the past, had its terms been carried out, we should not have had the present trouble. The whole trouble has been that its terms were ignored, and that in the Governments of the past very little attention indeed has been paid to those conditions which are carefully laid down in that White Paper with regard to the Jewish National Home. I am afraid that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) has shown that the Zionists have greater aspirations — many of them—than are within the terms of the Mandate, and it is those aspirations which are frightening the Arabs and causing the unrest. We have only to read some of the Jewish papers to see what their aspirations really are. The "Jewish Chronicle" has told us: Zionism is a political movement: every aspect of it is necessarily political, and so is every purpose of everyone who urges it in the name of Zionism. And again it says: We Jews want to be in Palestine not for mere colonising purposes or for making the place a cultural, or even a Jewish cultural centre, except so far as these may be helpful towards gaining our ultimate aim. And we desire state or commonwealth for Jews. That is very important. There it is openly proclaimed. Again, they say: The

British Government cannot expect Jews to build up Palestine unless in Palestine they can build up a Jewish commonwealth. The object of Zionism is not the establishment of a bi-racial Palestinian nation. Those articles show what is at the real back of Zionism, what the Arabs in the country to-day feel they are up against. If it was merely a case of the colonisation of Palestine as was done in the past there would not be this ill-feeling that [140](#) exists to-day, an ill-feeling, I am sorry to say, which is not growing any less. In 1922 the leaders of the Zionist party gave lip service to that White Paper, and when I turn again to the "Jewish Chronicle" of 24th October of this year I read with reference to the 1922 memorandum: The memorandum was an undoubted danger and the manner in which the Government now appeals to it, in order to justify and excuse its new policy, is abundant testimony to the acumen of Mr. Sokolow, who assured us that the memorandum was evanescent; to the foresight of Dr. Weizmann, who declared it no more than a passing phase; and to the political ingenuousness of Sir Herbert Samuel, who, I have been told, urged, with some ominous threats, its acceptance on the part of the organisation, with the assurance that it was but a formal matter.

#### § Sir H. SAMUEL

As my name has been mentioned I would like to say that there have been no "ominous threats" and the "Jewish Chronicle" represents no one but the opinion of its editor.

#### § Colonel HOWARD-BURY

But it has a wide circulation. It is read very widely. [Interruption.] It may be one man writes it. One man writes the "Daily Express"—but it has a large number of readers. In the policy of the last eight years in Palestine the Arabs have always felt that the scales were weighted against them. We know that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery) and the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies feel very strongly on this question of Zionism. They have felt very strongly all along, and therefore it has been very difficult indeed for the Arabs to get their case really genuinely put forward. They have always believed that their word would not be taken against that of the Zionists. They have always believed that they were not given a really fair deal, and now, at last, for the first time they have been able to get a full examination made of their case. As they said the other day, "Gradually year by year the cup of our bitterness was filling up, until at length a time came when it overflowed." As has always been the

case in the East, when a grievance cannot be properly ventilated you have massacres and riots in order to draw the attention of the world to what is going on.

§ Mr. HAYCOCK

Is it the right way to do it? Is it the right way to massacre [141](#) helpless women and children? Is that the way to settle the problem?

§ Colonel HOWARD-BURY

Naturally, I hold no brief whatever for that action, but, as I say, it has been the custom in the East when a grievance cannot be remedied to have riots and insurrection in order to make their case known. I deprecate it, I think it is a horrible thing that it should have happened, but very often when a grievance cannot be ventilated that is the only method resorted to in the East. In this country we have our Parliamentary institutions, we can bring forward what we desire in this House, we can have our grievances ventilated; but they have not the propaganda which the Jewish organisation has to put forward their case. The latter have had good propaganda, and for years the world imagined that everything was going on well in Palestine and that there were no grievances whatever; and then suddenly the world woke up one morning and read in the papers of these horrible massacres and the world began to realise that there must be something wrong.

The Shaw Commission was appointed and went out to Palestine. The members of it were not prejudiced either one way or the other. If I may say so, they had very little knowledge of conditions in Palestine before they went out, and so they went there with absolutely unbiased minds in order to judge on their merits what were the causes of those riots. They presented a most excellent report. They went into the fundamental causes of those riots, they reported, and the White Paper to-day is a result of their report. They reported that it was necessary to go into the question of land settlement and immigration, which were matters of very great import to the Jews and were a cause of grievance, and, Sir John Hope Simpson, who was a most excellent investigator, thoroughly impartial, went out and made this report, in which he goes into all the details of land settlement, how much land there remains for cultivation, where irrigation should be employed and all the kindred questions which so agitated both the Arabs and the Zionists. During those few years some million and a quarter dunams of land have been acquired by the Jewish colonies. Of those 156,000 [142](#) are, I

think, still undeveloped, which leaves a considerable amount of land for the Jewish settler to colonise, to irrigate and to make fertile, without encroaching for the present on any further Arab land. It was also reported that there was undoubtedly a large landless population of Arabs to-day. It was not said exactly how they became landless, but we were left to infer that in a good many cases it was caused by the lands being bought over their heads. There was the big Sursock property, where there was an absentee landlord. The land was sold, and tenants who had been there, in many cases, for generations, were turned out. Those men were landless.

§ Mr. de ROTHSCCHILD

They got £30,000 from the Zionists.

§ Colonel HOWARD - BURY

The owners?

§ Mr. de ROTHSCCHILD

No, the tenants themselves got £30,000. [Interruption.]

§ Colonel HOWARD-BURY

I quite agree that the Arab is a very thriftless man indeed. You get him out of his land and give him a good price for it—and I do not say that this organisation did not give an excellent price for the land—

§ Mr. de ROTHSCCHILD

It was not for the land but for the tenants themselves, ex gratia.

§ Colonel HOWARD-BURY

I have explained their thriftlessness. [In a few years or months they would have spent the money and be worse off than they were before, and, as the report says, legislation ought to be passed to prevent the alienation of land, in order to keep the people on the land at the present time. What thanks have the Government got for what they have done in Palestine? The biggest concessions have been given to the Jews. There were the Rutenberg concessions—the whole of the water power electricity rights have been given to Mr. Rutenberg. Then you have the Dead Sea concession, and you also have 1,000,000 dunams under the Zionist organisation. They have their own language, they have a university, and they are founding a national home. There is no objection to this, but the new settlers are now refusing to employ any other labour except Jewish labour in those colonies. In former days, the old. [143](#)

Colonists helped the Arabs, and they got on very well with them. They benefited the Arabs, but these later colonists in no way have benefited the Arabs who have been displaced, and have had to go elsewhere, and you have as a consequence this landless population. The White Paper which has been so much criticised seems to me to be simply carrying out the past policy of the Government as enunciated in 1922. You have the dual terms of the Mandate. First of all, you have to establish a Jewish National Home, but at the same time you have to safeguard the civil and religious rights of the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

The first part of Article 6 of the Mandate secures that the rights and possessions of the other sections of the population are not prejudiced by Jewish immigration, and both reports testify how necessary it is in order to prevent unemployment in that country that we should prevent an extra number of people coming to take away employment from those already there. I would like to point out to hon. Members that Palestine is a country about the size of Wales, or half that of Scotland. How would hon. Members like 100,000 Polish, Rumanian, or Russian people to be settled suddenly on their best farm land? Would they not object, more especially if they were told that no labour, whether Scottish or Jewish, was to be employed on those farms? Here you have 100,000 people in the last in years brought in with no idea of agriculture, and no idea how to work farms. They drift back into the towns, and cause more and more unemployment. I think there are very few hon. Members who would care to see a vast influx of population such as that into this country.

I come to the issue of the White Paper, and to the letter written by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spark-brook, a leader of our party, and the late Foreign Secretary, with regard to the policy in Palestine. I am sorry for those letters because they put Palestine in the future at the mercy of political parties. What we want is some united policy with regard to Palestine. I am an Irishman and I have suffered under Liberal and Conservative Governments, each with their own different policy in regard to Ireland. It means that on [144](#) each change of Government there will be a change of policy. I am afraid that in Palestine we are to be committed to a Zionist policy, and it will mean that, whenever our party comes into office, pressure will be put upon us by Jewish organisations throughout the world to carry out a policy favourable to them. When hon. Members opposite are in power, there will be a great

agitation on behalf of the Arabs for a policy favourable to the Arabs, and we shall never have peace in that unfortunate country until we come to the time when there will be an agreed policy with regard to Palestine and that it shall not be made the play of party politics.

The Arabs at the present time have a real and genuine fear of Jewish domination. They are afraid of the immigration, and the statements which they constantly see repeated by Zionists that they aim at making Palestine a Jewish State. The Arabs comprise four-fifths of the population, and as they see Jewish immigrants coming into their country those fears are increased. Until politics can be taken out of Zionism, I see little hope of peace in Palestine. I hope that those who are Zionists will not make this movement a political one, but make it a cultural movement and turn Palestine into a cultural home, the centre of their learning which they can look up to as a spiritual home, the same as Roman Catholics look to Rome as their spiritual home. On lines like that you can live at peace with the Arabs, but as long as you make it the play of party politics so long will there be no peace in Palestine. I beg the Zionists to reconsider their political movement and make it a cultural and spiritual movement, and then they will have the support of everyone.

§ Mr. SNELL

The House will probably expect that I should make a short contribution to this debate, and in doing so I shall try to confine myself to restrained language and feelings which I feel is very much required by the nature of this discussion. What we may call the Arab case has been put before the House by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Colonel Howard-Bury)...I think he put his case with very great modesty and great balance. It is only natural that I should ask the House to listen to a word or two about Palestine, [145](#) because of my connection with the official inquiry. That Report is now superseded, but it is nevertheless necessary to understand it if we are to form a fair idea of the present situation. As a result of that inquiry, it was my misfortune to arrive at conclusions which my colleagues did not share, but I wish to say at this moment that throughout the whole of that protracted and difficult inquiry my relations with my colleagues were of the nature of complete and unbroken cordiality and they have remained so. It is not possible for me to criticise decisions that differ from my own, but I may be allowed to say that I have no doubt whatever of the sincere judgment of my colleagues, and I hope they

will have the same feelings in regard to my own views.

It is not possible for me to criticise their conclusions, but I am sure they will allow me twenty words of defence of the position which I felt it necessary to take. They were all lawyers, and I am not a lawyer. They were therefore at home in an environment to which I was a complete stranger. There were times when I felt like an unfortunate fly in a spider's web, but I believe, with all my shortcomings, that in me the jury system was vindicated, and that I took a view which, if not legal, was, I believe, sound and in good proportion. Although the Government did not see fit to accept my conclusions, and accepted those of the majority; and, although modesty is the only charm I have left, I venture to say, in spite of that, that I feel as certain that the view which I put was substantially as true and just as I am speaking here to-night, and, if I had to rewrite those reservations, I would not modify or change a line of what I then wrote.

My position in regard to the Palestine problem is quite clear. I care just as much for the Arabs as I do for the Jews, and the last thing that I want the Arabs to suffer is to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for any kind of capitalists, Jewish or Gentile, or any other. I want to make myself perfectly clear. My case was that my country has undertaken this Mandate, and I want her to make a success of it. I do not wish to see any failure of judgment which would cause them to repeat the tragedy of the thirteen colonies. I will not criticise the Government policy on [146](#) the Shaw Report, because it is advisable that a member of the Commission should be silent in regard to the judgment passed upon his work. But I gave some very close attention to the Palestine problem, which may not be very easy to the House at the present time. First of all, I would remind people who have spoken in the House to-day that the present Government had only just assumed office when the riots of 1929 broke out, and those riots were the outcome of the policy of previous Governments. It is not quite fair to assess the present Government with the blame for the situation which caused that dreadful outbreak. I have always understood that it was a principle of prudent statesmanship that you should not offend either the Pope of Rome or the Jews, but the Colonial Office has succeeded in doing both.

When we have passed from the temporary difficulties there are certain fundamental difficulties which we have to face. The fear of an

increased flow of immigration into Palestine represents a very real fear in the Arab mind, and that fear may be dealt with in two separate ways. We may seek to allay the Arab anxiety by the easy device of restricting Jewish immigration, in which case you lay yourself open to a suspicion of evading the Mandate, and you bring upon yourself the criticism of the world. The second possibility requires a longer view. It is that you should rescue the Arab farmer from his situation of indebtedness, that you should give him better training, a training that will enable him to win greater wealth out of a smaller area and to make better use of the soil, raise a better grade of cattle, and so on. This work has scarcely begun, and, until it is begun, there can be no real development in Palestine. We say that the Arab's anxiety about an increased Jewish immigration is not foolish, judged from the standpoint of his own experience and his own view. He believes that the capacity to support an increased population can be ascertained by the simple plan of dividing a given area into farms of the maximum size sufficient to support a family under the prevailing primitive system of Arab culture. In my belief, there is no economic justification for that anxiety, because what the land will bear depends [147](#) in great part upon the way in which it is treated and in which it is developed. Let it be remembered always that a carefully selected and well trained Jewish immigrant is something more than an additional unit to the population. He brings with him energy, creative ability, and some knowledge of modern processes, and he is, therefore, able, probably, to create a great deal more wealth than the Arab generally believes.

There is another point that I would like the House seriously to consider. The resentment of the Arab is not fundamentally against the Jew; it is against the stranger who comes into his land; and, if it had happened that a chartered company had been called upon to develop Palestine, and its workmen had been British or American workmen, there would still have been the Arab resentment of the stranger coming into that land. The Jew has been the lightning conductor of Arab anger, and the Jew certainly did not merit that. I want to say with all the conviction that I have that in my judgment the Jewish immigrant has not impoverished Palestine, but has enriched it. He has not reduced the Arab's chance of a higher standard of life, but has increased it; and, if we are going to try to be fair to the Arab, and we must, we must also try to be fair to the Jew, and we must not think it right to exclude the Jewish immigrant without at the same

time seeing to the Eastern and Northern frontiers, to prevent the infiltration of Arabs to swell the population.

I do not wish this evening to enter into the question of the relationships of the Jewish Federation of Labour with Palestine, nor into the criticism that has been based upon it, but it must be said, as far as my knowledge of it goes, that the Jewish Federation of Labour in Palestine has a statesmanlike view, not only of what is required, but of its responsibility to its Arab neighbours, and, if that view prevailed throughout the whole of Palestine, the troubles before us would be less than they are. But the outlook for the population of Palestine is really in the question of development and in Sir John Hope Simpson's report there is one paragraph [148](#) which seems to me to illustrate the precise difficulty. On page 78 he says: There is a small Jewish village called Motzn, close to Jerusalem, where a farmer of the name of Broza has planted an orchard on what seemed to be sterile and barren rock. The trees and the vines have flourished, and what was a wilderness without vegetation of any kind is now a fine orchard producing a large income for its proprietor. The result is the more praiseworthy in that the planter received no assistance from any Jewish or other sources, but created the property by his own exertions. Another instance of development on the same lines is the orchard planted by the Zionist Organisation at Dilb...The land on which that orchard has been planted was similar to that of Motza. The trees were not irrigated, but they have succeeded wonderfully. A similar instance is to be found in the Jewish suburb of BethHakarem, close to Jerusalem, where a hillside which appeared to be hopelessly bare and arid is now covered with gardens containing trees of every kind. That is the only way in which Palestine is going to be rescued by this new energy, this new ability to create wealth in new ways and to bring a new spirit into cultivation there. It has been said that these Jewish enterprises are not self-supporting, that they depend upon subventions from outside sources. Supposing that that were true, supposing that we accept the fact., Palestine would be in no worse condition than Australia, Canada, New Zealand and America were in their early days. All had to draw upon outside sources until they could stand upon their own feet. When the Jewish people put money into Palestine, they were casting their bread on the waters so that it might return after many days in the shape of a re-established Jewish life in the country of their origin. I do not know Why we should be so anxious

about whether the Jews are using their money well in this way or not. The Jew may have many failings, but nobody has ever accused him of not knowing how to use his own money, and, if he feels that he is putting it into Palestine for the recreation of his race, I think we may leave it to him to decide whether it pays him to do so or not.

Of course, in the change that has taken place, there have been hardships. Hardships are always associated with change. There is not a Bill that comes before this House concerning which I personally do not receive petitions that somebody's interests are being affected, and I am [149](#) asked to put his interest before those of the nation. We have to do the best we can for the nation, without injuring more than is possible the feelings and interests of individuals. In regard to those hardships, I want to recall to the House that, in the reservations which I made, I expressly recommended that, where Arabs had been thrown off the land through any fault of the Government, it was our duty and responsibility to re-establish them on the land at public expense; and it was my desire to recommend that Transjordan, which is a country that is riot so densely populated, and which is better watered, might provide an opportunity for an Arab colonisation scheme which would serve as an illustration of what a modernised Arab colony should be. It was only because I felt that if I did so the Arabs would say, "This Labour man has nothing to suggest except that we should be exiled from our native country in order that strangers may conic in," that I did not make that recommendation; but I nevertheless have the courage to say to the House today that it might be considered whether it would not be possible to take these Arab people who are without land, and, under a proper system of colonisation, with proper scientific help, give an illustration which would serve as a useful one to the whole Arab world.

I should like to say a word or two about finance and Sir John Hope Simpson's report. That report is as able as those of us who knew Sir John Hope Simpson when he was in this House expected that it would be. It has all the virtues of his long training in the Indian Civil Service, and, if I might say so without offence, it has also one or two limitations. It does not seem to me to envisage the economic effect on Palestine of the full adoption of his policy. It is proposed, as I understand it, to settle Arabs on five-sixths of the land in Palestine on the basis of existing Asiatic farming. The land at present is very poor, and one can foresee under that scheme a population of 1,000,000 Jews,



Arabs and Christians, with no great industries to support them, with only two small ports available, and with small additional help from tourist and religious sources. That would be the economy of the land. Consider, in the light of that, [150](#) what the Government of the country is. There is a Governor, with a personal staff and a full secretariat; there are officials who help and advise in development; there is a British police force, and there are some military. The cost up to the present has been met in great part from Jewish sources, but what would be the effect of the stoppage of those sources? Nobody can suppose that the Jews of the world would go on subsidising Jews in Palestine to keep up an expensive British administration which was engaged merely in running a primitive Arab State. That is impossible to conceive. If the Jew "stays put," as the Americans say, and simply does not co-operate, all the expenditure on health, education and so on will fall upon the Government, and that Government would have to be reduced to the size and efficiency of that which runs an ordinary Indian Province, with a Governor and one or two district commissioners. We cannot look forward to that being the outcome of our responsibilities in Palestine. If we do, the outlook, in my belief, is that of bankruptcy. I ventured, in the reservations that I made in our report, to use these words: It is my considered opinion that the prosperity of Palestine, for the next few years at least, depends upon the successful development of agriculture and the improvement in the method of farming. I can see no way by which this can be brought about other than through Jewish enterprise. Looking at the situation to-day, I repeat those words. If we desire the economic improvement of Palestine, we have to look for it in the creative energy of these people, who are putting both that and wealth and love and enthusiasm into the land from which they sprang.

There is only one other theme on which I desire to ask the House to listen to me for a few moments. It is that of racial co-operation. My interest in this matter, very frankly, is that I want these two peoples to live in peace side by side, and I believe that they can do so. My complaint about the White Paper, and it is the only criticism I make of it, is that it arrested the development of this essential work. The Jew felt that he had to fight that White Paper, and the result was that the Arab, in consequence, assumed that the White Paper must be heavily weighted on his side. We have to look forward from that position to the future. In regard to racial [151](#) co-operation, a great deal has already

been done and the outlook is much more promising than most people believe. The Jews, by their provision of hospitals, clinics and schools, have laid the foundation of this essential relationship between themselves and their Arab neighbours and, since the Commission of Inquiry reported, owing to certain suggestions which I made in my reservations, I am happy and thankful to say the matter of racial co-operation has been taken up with very great enthusiasm and zeal by far-seeing people who desire to make it succeed. One society has put forward 42 propositions for relationship between themselves and the Arab people, and out of that I believe there will grow the most advantageous relationship in the future. Much more has been done than we think in that direction. One of the latest developments has been the cooperation between Arab and Jewish farmers in relation to a plague of field mice, a small matter, surely, but not without its significance under circumstances such as we are considering and, although we are told the "best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley," it may, nevertheless, be that this "cowerin', timorous beastie" of the fields is playing its part in the removal of racial misunderstanding. In addition, conferences have taken and are taking place between Arabs and Jews feeling their way to better relationship. There is one conference that took place from whose report I should like to read because I consider it so precious that I should like to get it upon the records of the House. It took place this summer between the village of Beit Safafa and the Jerusalem suburb of Mekor Haim. It is one of the villages that was attacked during the rioting a year ago. This is the full text of the interesting agreement:

8.0 p.m. Whereas for many years past peace and calmness had reigned between the two peoples, the Jews and the Arabs, and neither side had done the other any harm; and whereas on Friday, the 23rd August, 1929, an attack took place on the Mekor Haim quarter on the part of a section of incited Arabs; and whereas the elders of Beit Safafa and all the inhabitants of the village regret what has occurred and condemn the assault; and whereas the two sides have now agreed to conclude a pact of peace between them this being to their mutual benefit, so that they might henceforth live in peace and amity for ever, and [152](#) they do herewith declare that peace is considered as re-established by the conclusion of this Pact, now, therefore has the present agreement been signed by the notables and elders of the village of, Beit Safafa from the one part and the heads of the Jewish quarter of

Mekor Haim from the other part, to live henceforth in peace, they and their descendants, and that no man nurture vengeance against his neighbour, but all should live in relations of peace and goodwill. That is the spirit we want to encourage in that beloved land. I close by expressing my own belief that the Palestinian problem is neither unique nor insoluble. There are races growing up side by side in our own Empire which have racial difficulties to settle which are more acute, which are quite as difficult, and if they are solving them, I think two noble peoples so racially akin as are the Arabs and the Jews will find a way to settle those difficulties also and live in mutual tolerance within the framework of a bi-racial Palestinian State. Our duty in this House is to co-operate as far as we can in this development of better relationships. Our country has undertaken this very difficult task, and she would be shamed and humiliated before mankind if she either abandoned, betrayed or failed in her trust. I cannot believe she will do that. She cannot abdicate and she may not retreat. The task before us is hard indeed. No one can quite see the way out of the difficulty, but we know in spite of that Tasks in hours of insight willed In hours of gloom must be fulfilled. If we proceed upon our work upon those lines, the light may come to us more quickly than we believe.

§ *Mr. MORRIS*

It is one of the misfortunes attaching to this subject that one cannot intervene in a debate of this kind without being at once assailed as either an anti-Zionist or an anti-Arab. It is not often that I agree with the Noble Lord the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton), but I certainly do agree with the letter he addressed to the "Times" early this year, that Great Britain, as the mandatory for Palestine, should strive to the utmost to keep clear from taking up a pro-Jew or a pro-Arab attitude, that it should strive to take up a neutral position and make a just administration of the Mandate. That is not so simple as it looks at first sight. What this Mandate for Palestine means [153](#) I doubt whether anyone can state authoritatively in any part of the House. No Government has ever attempted to define the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. This debate has been most interesting. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) has said the White Paper just issued by the Government tears up the Mandate. I do not know whether he is right or wrong. It is not for me to inquire at the moment. But, if he is right, he has come to the conclusion that the White Paper

means one thing and the Mandate means another and they are totally inconsistent. I understand the former Colonial Secretary takes the same view. He has been Colonial Secretary for a number of years. He has not told us what the Mandate means, he has not told us what the Balfour Declaration means, and you cannot determine whether this White Paper is or is not a departure from the Mandate until you know really what the Balfour Declaration itself means.

We are told to-day that it is either extreme Zionists on the one hand who are guilty of a travesty of the Balfour Declaration or extreme Arabs who misinterpret it. That is not the position. The position is even that no one on the permanent Mandate Commission is able to say what it means. Take the report of the permanent Mandate Commission at the 17th extraordinary session when they considered the report of the Shaw Commission. You have the chairman of the Commission putting this question to the accredited representative: The chairman asked whether the Mandatory Power had formed any idea as to when the national home for the Jews would be established. Was it possible to say when the Jews themselves would consider that their National Home had been established? That is the crucial question of the Balfour Declaration. The answer to the accredited representative is this: Dr. Drummond Shiels said he would prefer not to express an opinion on that point. That is the vital point to determine before you can say whether Great Britain is carrying out the mandate faithfully or not, because the charge against Great Britain is that she is not faithfully discharging her obligations under the mandate by the issue of this White Paper. Take another illustration, on page 49, [154](#) Where you have two members of the Mandate Commission expressing diametrically opposite views about the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. They are discussing which of the obligations is to be placed first: The chairman observed that in considering the two parts of the mandate to which M. Rappard had referred, it was necessary to bear in mind the fundamental principle of a/1 the mandates. The purpose of the mandates as described in Article 22 of the Covenant was the development and the welfare of the inhabitants of the mandated territory. It was said that in this case the Mandatory must establish a National Home for the Jews, and set up self-governing institutions. Which of these obligations came first? In his view it was necessary to insist that the establishment of the National Home for the Jews must be made compatible with the

introduction of autonomous institutions. I am not for a moment saying which is right and which is wrong. My point is that these are totally different views. The accredited representative had referred to the English saying that a horse might be brought to the water but it was impossible to make him drink. The horse might, however, in this case have come to the conclusion that the water was unwholesome and that he had very good grounds for refusing to drink it. Then you have M. Rappard saying what his view of the relative position of these two parts is. He says he insisted that it was necessary to find an interpretation of the two parts of the Mandate which were mutually consistent and could be read as a logical whole. The Mandatory must set up self-governing institutions in so far as their establishment was compatible with the establishment of the National Home for the Jews. The Chairman had reversed this proposition. Exactly, and that reversal of the proposition shows how impossible it is to hope to govern a mandated country until the Government first of all makes up its mind what is the precise policy it is going to pursue. This White Paper is not the first step taken in that direction, but the first clear step with regard to the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was made in 1917, and it promised two things: It promised a national home for the Jews on the one hand, subject to the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish population on the other. There is no question that the Zionists are making a charge against the British Government that it is guilty of betraying them. I think that is a perfectly good charge and could be substantiated. There [155](#) is no question at all that, after the Declaration was made in 1917, the Zionists were led to believe that they were to have established in Palestine a Jewish State. I have carefully looked up the speeches and the articles written by the late Lord Balfour, and all his references to the Jewish national home are so well balanced that you cannot say that any part of his writings or speeches contains anything in the nature of a promise of a Jewish State. That is not true of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), who was Colonial Secretary. He spoke in terms of the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) who was a very distinguished and fair High Commissioner of Palestine, and who has made a very weighty contribution to this debate and one which, I think, might provide a solution of the whole difficulty, in 1919 and 1920 was talking of the establishment of a Jewish State. All the national leaders were talking of a Jewish State.

What happened? First of all, objections were made by the Arabs, by the Emir of Feisal, as he then was. He objected to the establishment of a Jewish State. He did not object to the co-operation of Jews in Palestine. In fact, he expressed himself as welcoming the advent of Jews in Palestine and the assistance of Jews in the development of Palestine, but he objected to a Jewish State. My right hon. Friend the Member for Darwen, in addressing a meeting of Zionists in London in 1920, found it necessary to say that he had had an interview with the Amir Feisal and had discussed the whole situation with him, and he declared to the Amir that what was contemplated in Palestine was not an immediate establishment—that is the phrase used—of a Jewish national home. There were two very serious riots, one in 1920, and the other in 1921. In 1921, a White Paper was issued to which reference has been made. In the meantime, there were speeches by the leaders to whom I have referred. Dr. Weizmann, coming back from the Conference, addressing the Zionists, said that by the Jewish national home it was clear that what was meant—he had very good authority for saying so, and I am not criticising Dr. Weizmann in the least— [156](#) was that Palestine was to be made as Jewish as England was English. He was not the only one who used the phrase. Letters in the "Times" of that period used the phrase, and were left to go unchallenged by any Minister of the Crown, and it was affirmed by responsible leaders like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping and my right hon. Friend the Member for Darwen. That was the position.

In 1922, after these two riots, the White Paper of that year, for the first time, said that phrases had been used which were an exaggeration of the meaning of the Jewish national home, and that it had been said—and the phrase was quoted in terms—that Palestine was to be made as Jewish as England was English. That is not what the Government meant, said the White Paper of 1922, but when that phrase was used it was used by Dr. Weizmann, the head of the Zionist movement and used legitimately by him. He was undoubtedly led by responsible people in the Administration of that date to believe that that was the position. If there was an open betrayal at all, which I am disposed to believe, it occurs, not in the White Paper of 1930, but in the White Paper of 1922. [Interruption.] The hon. and gallant Member says that it is accepted by the Jews. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping has said since the issue of the White Paper of 1930, that it is a betrayal; he was a party to the White Paper of 1922 and had spoken of a

Jewish State.

§ Major ELLIOT

The hon. Gentleman will agree that there is a vast difference between coming to an agreement with a party and making a declaration over the head of a party. One is an agreement and the other is a betrayal.

§ Mr. MORRIS

As to the meaning of that agreement, I think that, if Dr. Weizmann cared to argue the case carefully, that acceptance might be very clearly argued to mean something totally different. I am not saying that he says so, though I am not so sure about it. I am not for a minute going to doubt or to dispute that Dr. Weizmann and the Zionists on all occasions have acted in the highest good faith. That is not my case. I am saying that by these documents they were led to believe that they were going to have a Jewish State. That is the [157](#) position. I do not want to challenge the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping or my right hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. That is not the point. Suppose that it was accepted. Very well. If there was any betrayal in 1922, which is the only point at which a betrayal could take place, and if that betrayal was waived by acceptance, there is no betrayal now, and there has been no betrayal unless it took place then. I am disposed to agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Kelvingrove (Major Elliot) that since it was accepted by Dr. Weizmann and the Zionist organisation it did away with what betrayal there was. That is one side of the picture and one side only.

I am emphasising this, because I agree with every word that was said about the benefits brought into Palestine by Jewish enterprise and Jewish work. No one has a greater admiration for Jewish gifts, Jewish ability, Jewish history and the Jewish race than I. That is not the relevant issue. The relevant issue here is: does the Mandate mean primarily the establishment of a Jewish National Home? If it does mean that, a case can be made out against Great Britain that she has not carried it out, because she has checked Jewish immigration and put checks upon it which are only consistent with Arab interests. If, on the other hand, the Mandate means that you must primarily look after Arab interests you have a totally different set of circumstances. If, as we are told now, it means that both sections of the Balfour Declaration are to have equal weight attached to them, another set of circumstances arise. The results in Palestine and

outside Palestine must necessarily follow on the meaning you attach to it. That is what I am asserting.

Let me take the other side of the picture. This House, before it makes up its mind upon the justice of the position, must examine the whole matter fully. Reference has been made to the McMahon correspondence. Undoubtedly, definite promises were made to the Arabs. There is some dispute as to that.

§ Mr. HAYCOCK

Promises were freely made, and to us as well.

§ Mr. MORRIS

I am dealing with promises made to the Arabs. There were definite promises made to them. Just as there is a dispute about the meaning of the Balfour Declaration, there has been [158](#) a dispute as to the meaning of the McMahon correspondence, but with this difference. We know that the Balfour Declaration has been printed, although we do not know what it means or what meaning is attached to it, but the McMahon correspondence has not been published. Why not? The present Government, like the previous Government, have always declined to publish the McMahon correspondence. That does not mean that it is not published, and that you cannot obtain copies of it. If you ask the Foreign Office in this country for a copy of it, they will give you a version which they themselves have prepared—excerpts—which is a totally different thing from the full copy. Whether the meaning attached to that correspondence is the meaning that the Arabs claim to be attached to it or not, is not for me to say. It is sufficient to say that they attach one meaning, and that successive Governments have attached another meaning to it.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs comes here this afternoon—he has made a speech before; he may be quite right, for I am not disputing what he says—and says that the Mandate has been carefully considered by the Allies and by the leading statesmen of the world in the immediate post-War period. That is unquestionably true. The terms of the Mandate were, first of all, considered at San Remo, but the Mandate itself did not come into being until two years later and only the White Paper of 1922 had been issued. President Wilson and President Roosevelt had spoken in definite terms so that there could be no doubt what they meant by a Jewish National Home and the Balfour Declaration. They meant one thing and one thing

only—a Jewish State. I have said that leaders here have made it perfectly plain. Leaders in France made it plain, and leaders of the Allies made it as plain as they could make it, except Lord Balfour himself, what they meant by the establishment of a Jewish National Home. Why was it that in the Mandate itself there was all this ambiguity? Is it not because they were really sensible of the promises which they made to the Arabs, or is it not that they were sensible of the difficulties arising as a result of the riots of 1920 and 1921? It was a difficult position. I am not concerned as to [159](#) which of these interpretations is the right one or the wrong one. I am not pro-Zionist or pro-Arab, but there is such a thing as being pro-mandatory.

The honour of Great Britain is involved. The charge can be made by both Jews and Arabs against Great Britain that we have tarnished our honour. However you get out of this to-day, Great Britain cannot escape from the position in which she finds herself at the moment without in some degree tarnishing her honour. She cannot do it, because on the one hand there are the promises to the Jews and on the other hand there are the promises to the Arabs, totally inconsistent promises. How are you going to get out of the difficulty? The former Colonial Secretary, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery) may suggest one way, and the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs may suggest another. The right hon. Gentleman who has suggested the best way out of the difficulty is the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel). The Government have suggested a way out in the White Paper. What does the White Paper of 1930 do? It is admitted that it cannot be a betrayal unless the White Paper of 1922 was a betrayal. [Interruption.] Does the hon. and gallant Member for Kelvingrove suggest that there is betrayal in the White Paper of this year?

*HON. MEMBERS*

Answer!

§ *Major ELLIOT*

I shall make my own case in my own time, and I will not shrink from any of the implications. I will certainly not shrink from any implications because of any interruptions from the Front Bench opposite.

§ *Mr. MORRIS*

The White Paper of this year does two things. First of all, it defines what it supposes to be the meaning of the Balfour Declaration. That is an interpretation of the document itself and an

interpretation of the Mandate. In the second part the White Paper does a totally different thing. It there sets out the facts relating to land and immigration. It seems to me a great misapprehension in regard to the White Paper to say that because the White Paper has accepted as being correct the figures of Sir John HopeSimpso'n, the accuracy of which is dis- [160](#) puted, that therefore you have crystallised, in the language of the League of Nations, the national home. That seems to me to be a totally wrong explanation of the document from start to finish. What the White Paper does, as I understand it, is that it says that from now on we are going to attach the same equal weight to the two parts of the Balfour Declaration. It is not for me to say whether that is satisfactory or not. I do not believe that it is going to be satisfactory, because people do not understand the exact meaning of the word "equal," but in so far as it does attempt to give a clear definition in place of a vague ambiguous document, so far so good.

It may be that there is room in Palestine for plenty more Jews. The right hon. Member for Darwen says that 3,000,000 Jews can be absorbed into Palestine ultimately. That may be true. [HON. MEMBERS: "Total population!"] That may very well be so. There is nothing so far as I can see in the White Paper which prohibits that. All that the White Paper says is that at the present time, under the present methods of cultivation and with the industrial system in vogue at the moment, you had reached saturation point. That is not a question of the legal interpretation of a document but it is a question of fact which may be true this year and which may have varied considerably by next year or the year afterwards. A very interesting thing about Palestine and its administration since the War is that nearly every document about the administration of Palestine has been suppressed by every Government alike, by this Government almost to the same extent as other Governments. Two years ago a Commission was sent out to survey the Jewish settlement on behalf of the Zionist body. It was an expert committee and it surveyed the whole of the Jewish settlement. Suppose that the conclusions of Sir John Campbell had been placed in the White Paper of 1930 instead of the conclusions of Sir John Hope Simpson, would anyone suggest that that would be recognising the crystallisation of the Jewish National Home. Sir John Campbell recommended in his Report upon the circumstances as they stood in 1928 that what should take place in Palestine was Jewish emigration and not Jewish

immigration.

161 The first duty is to clear up ambiguity and in so far as the Government have attempted that duty, so far so good. Otherwise, what is the position so far as the administration in Palestine is concerned? Unless this Government shoulders the responsibility, or whatever Government is in power shoulders the responsibility of saying clearly what it means by the Mandate and by the Balfour Declaration, what it supposes to be its obligation and what its policy is in regard to administration in Palestine, the High Commissioner and all engaged in assisting him in carrying out the administration in Palestine will be called upon by their day to day administration to define what the Mandate is. Take the question of immigration. In one year certificates were applied for by the Zionist body to the extent of 5,000. I am not criticising them in respect to that demand. The High Commissioner and his staff came to the conclusion that the number of immigration certificates that could be issued was 2,500. What was the result? The High Commissioner and his staff were criticised by the Jews because they cut down the number that they had demanded to 2,500, and charged them with anti-Zionist bias in carrying out the Mandate. On the other side, they were charged by the Arabs with having admitted 2,500 Jews too many, with violating the Mandate and with having an anti-Arab bias.

§ *Major ELLIOT*

Surely the hon. Member is not unaware that the Zionists complained that after negotiations had taken place and after 2,500 certificates had been granted the certificates were cancelled by instructions from Whitehall.

§ *Mr. MORRIS*

The hon. and gallant Member is not referring to the same occasion to which I am referring. I am talking of certificates that were granted, not cancelled. My reference is to 2,500 certificates that were granted in 1928. I say 5,000 certificates were asked for by the Zionist executive and 2,500 were granted. That has been occurring every year regularly. The criticism they make is that because of an anti-Zionist bias you are cutting down the number. The Arabs, on the other -hand, say that you are giving 2,500 too many. My point is that because the Government of this country decline to accept the responsibility of defining what the Mandate 162 means they are throwing this responsibility on to the shoulders of the High Commissioner. That is a duty which in my view

ought to rest on solely the shoulders of the Government at home; it is not a duty which the High Commissioner should be called upon to bear. The White Paper does something to remove that difficulty and make the position of the High Commissioner easier. In the case of disagreement every one will concentrate upon the Government at, home; and it is the duty of the Government at home to define the meaning of the Mandate. They are the proper authorities to deal with it.

I do not want to take a partisan view as between Jews and Arabs. The Jews have contributed to the welfare of Palestine. They have brought high scientific knowledge and industry and enterprise to the development of that country, and that they will be necessary for the future development of the land there can be no possible doubt,. The sole question behind the whole of this issue is, which is to have political domination. That, is the whole quarrel. There is no quarrel between Jews and Arabs as such. The quarrel here is about political domination. We look forward to a Palestine where the two peoples have equal rights, as the right, hon. Member for Darwen has said in his very welcome pronouncement. Of course there must be difficulties. No one can defend outrages such as the right hon. Member for Darwen has described; wild in their character and barbarous in their nature. On the other hand, it is not a question of giving to violence what we dare not give to reason. That is not the question. You have to make up your minds on what lines you are going to govern the country, on what lines development shall take place, and how you are going to deal with the question of political domination.

The right hon. Member for Darwen says, equal rights. There is reason to believe that had the right hon. Member for Bewdley (Mr. S. Baldwin) and the late Colonial Secretary refrained from writing their letters to the "Times," and if the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs had not made the speech he did, indeed, had there not been all this propaganda throughout the world, and it had been left to the Jews and 163 Arabs in Palestine there would have been some hope of the High Commissioner achieving peace. On some of The Jewish settlements with which the name of the hon. Member for the Isle of Ely (Mr. de Rothschild) is associated and that of his ancestors, their model settlements, there was no trouble. There the Jews and Arabs worked together. The difficulty in Palestine is largely a human difficulty. Outside it is largely a political difficulty; and it would be a moment of very grave importance in the history of this country if it were recognised that

international events of this kind are to be part of the ordinary battle of party conflict in this country. I should much regret any such result. Palestine is the Holy Land and every Englishman who has inherited part of the Christian civilisation looks at it with the greatest respect and veneration. It would be a tragedy if it became the shuttlecock of party politics in this country. At the same time it is important for Great Britain to see that its administration is just and fair to all the peoples concerned in the future welfare of Palestine.

§ *Mr. COCKS*

I was much impressed, as indeed I am sure the whole House was impressed, by the moving tribute paid by the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) to the glories of the ancient race of which he himself, if I may say so, is one of the most brilliant ornaments. I take a somewhat different line on this question I hope that he and his friends will not think that I have the least prejudice against the Jewish race which has given so much to the world. I think the Government have been somewhat harshly treated in this matter. Everyone has admitted the extreme difficulty of the position. In Palestine we have 700,000 Arabs, whose forefathers have lived there almost as long as the English have lived in England, and 150,000 Jews, the majority of whom have only been there for about 10 years, and because the Government are trying to hold an even balance between these two races and are endeavouring, according to the terms of the Mandate, to guard the rights of the original inhabitants against the consequences which might follow from an excessive immigration of Zionists they are assailed in all parts of the world, a great mass movement is organised against [164](#) them in various countries and the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) comes down to this House and denounces them in terms of very eloquent vituperation, but in a speech so one-sided and biased that it did not mention the Arab side of the question at all. When he was speaking I could not help thinking that he had one eye on the Mount of Olives and the other on a part of the East End of London where a by-election is about to take place and where there is a population of very hard-working and able Zionists. The right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs quoted one article of the Mandate which seems to have a slight bias in favour of the Zionists. But he did not refer to Article 6, which says that: The administration of Palestine, whilst ensuring that the rights of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration. What is clear from that Article is that when Jewish emigration is

carried out, the Mandatory must see that the rights of other sections of the population are not prejudiced. The right hon. Gentleman raised one or two other points in a way which was rather misleading. He said that the Jewish workers had been blamed for saying that they preferred arbitration to industrial strife, and he rather suggested that we would prefer industrial strikes to arbitration. When you look at the particular paragraph in the White Paper which deals with that subject you see that what the White Paper says is not that the members of these colonies must have arbitration instead of strikes, but that they are not permitted to have recourse to the courts of the country. In other words they are setting up a little kingdom within a kingdom. The members of that particular colony are not allowed to have recourse to the ordinary courts of the country. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that we should not blame them for giving preference to members of their own union. But what the White Paper says is that these particular Zionists are forbidden to employ anyone except Zionists. They can go on purchasing land and employing on that land only Zionists and no Arabs. As a comparison has been made between Palestine and Wales, I wonder what the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs would say if it were suggested that a number [165](#) of Scotsmen should invade Wales and purchase land and refuse to employ any Welshmen on the land and should say to the Welsh people, "You can go across the Severn to England." That is what is happening in Palestine. Over and over again we have had the statement made that as a result of the Jewish immigration the Arabs are dispossessed and are told that they can go across the Jordan to the lands beyond.

Let us turn to the Arab side of the case. The history and the record of the treatment of the Arabs during the last 10 or 15 years reflects very little credit upon Western civilisation, upon this country or other countries which have had relations with Arab countries. When during the War we wanted the warlike assistance of the Arabs, we pledged ourselves to give them their independence. I know that successive Governments have said that that pledge was not definite, and that they have shielded themselves behind a suppressed correspondence. Government after Government has done that. The hon. Member who last spoke has seen and has read the correspondence. I have seen parts of it. It is quite certain, in my opinion, that the Arabs were promised their independence. Even the Under-Secretary of State in an answer he

gave me to a question last Session, stated that although the correspondence did not pledge us to support Arab independence in Palestine, the nature of the correspondence was such that those who had heard the correspondence read might be under the impression that we had given that pledge. I have received orders from my Government to inform you that all your demands are accepted. That is what Sir Henry McMahon wrote to the Arab leaders in January, 1916. It is very difficult to see what could have given the Arabs a stronger impression than such a statement as that. It was after that that the Balfour Declaration was made. I assert now quite frankly that in my view the Balfour Declaration, important as it was and as it is, has very little moral basis or mortal validity. In the first place, in view of the great principle of self-determination, no one had any moral right to give a pledge to instal a national home for the Jews or anyone else in a country inhabited by some other people who did not wish to receive them. Beyond that, it [166](#) conflicts with the pledge previously made to the Arabs. But time has gone by; various events have happened and commitments have been made. Money has been spent and the situation has changed. We cannot go back on all that. But the existence of these previous pledges does mean that the extreme Zionist claims to make Palestine as Jewish as England is English, cannot be carried out and supported by this or any other Government.

A great deal has been said about the sacredness of the Mandate. There is more humbug talked about mandates, especially this Mandate, than about any international subject. Let me react Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. It says: To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late War have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant + Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage, of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection

of the Mandatory. That sounds so paternal, so full of the spirit of loving-kindness. We go to these little nations and say: Let me take you by the hand. Let me, guide your faltering footsteps along the ways of prosperity and peace until you are strong enough to stand alone in the strenuous conditions of the modern world." It sounds very fine. As a matter of fact things did not happen precisely like that. The League of Nations did not go to this race and ascertain its views, or find out whom it would like to have as Mandatory or guardian. What happened' was that the British Government, the French and other Governments, declared that they were going to take the Mandates themselves, the French in Syria and ourselves in Palestine. That was at San Remo. The League, of Nations was not consulted at all. Years afterwards we went to the League and got the [167](#) League to ratify our own decree. Yet even the Mandate says that the rights of the other inhabitants of Palestine must not be prejudiced. That means that the Zionists must not be allowed to pour without any check the people of Poland and the Ukraine into Palestine, if that is going to prejudice the interests of the inhabitants of Palestine, and then to turn round to them and say, "If there is not room for us and you as well, you can go across the Jordan to Jordania." I suppose that every Member of this House has received a paper from Palestine called "Davar." In the issue of that paper, dated 5th November, it is stated: Transjordan must be thrown open both for the displacement of landless Arabs and for the settlement of Jews. I think those who know the conditions in "Transjordan will think that, as far as the Zionists are concerned, that is very bad advice for them indeed. The Government have a very difficult and delicate task. They propose to set up a legislative assembly in which all parties will be represented. They propose while helping the Zionists in the development of a national home in Palestine—not in making Palestine the national home of the Jews, but in developing a national home in Palestine—to safeguard the interests of the majority of the inhabitants who are not Zionists. I echo the appeals which have been made from all sides of the House that the Government should be assisted in this task, in order that the future of Palestine may be happier, and in order that the interests of the two races may be brought together, instead of having acute differences arising between them because of the desire of one side to dominate over the other think that the Government have issued an excellent White Paper, and I pray them not to be moved by threats from outside, by suggestions of electoral motives, or by the pressure of too zealous supporters of the



Zionist movement. I hope they will not be moved from the position taken up in the White Paper, but that they will stand by those principles of impartial justice which are the only basis of the position which we hold in the Eastern world.

§ Sir GEORGE JONES

I very cordially agree that it would be a calamity if the [168](#) Palestinian question were involved in party politics in this country. I think, all the same, that it is necessary in a debate of this kind to make quite clear what we allege is the responsibility of the Government. In the first place we have this remarkable fact. The Government state that they have changed nothing and that they are following out the principles laid down by their predecessors. Notwithstanding that, we find that, until the advent of this Government, Jewry, in the main, was grateful and appreciative to this country for all that it had done in regard to Palestine. It has been my pleasure to attend many Zionist meetings, and in every one of them I found the same feeling expressed, a feeling of pleasure that England was the Mandatory Power. I agree that there were some mistakes—there are bound to be mistakes in all great and novel experiments—but there was at that time substantial satisfaction with what had been done. To-day, as far as I can see, Jewry is united in condemnation of this Government because of the policy recently announced. It is really nonsense to suggest that this change is all for nothing, and that Dr. Weizmann, Lord Melchett and Mr. Warburg resigned for no reason whatever. They are fully acquainted with all the disadvantages of the policy which has been laid down by this Government and they have come to the conclusion that, on that policy, the whole thing is so impossible that they wish to withdraw from it. They suggest that they have been betrayed. I do not think that any British Government would betray anybody. My own view is that any Government in this country would try to honour its obligations. But I think that by ineptitude, by one blunder after another, the Government have succeeded in alienating the sympathy of the whole of Jewry. I attach great importance to the word of England being treated as its bond, and when we have an accusation made of the kind which has been made, the Government, whatever else it does, ought to try to make it certain that we are going to act faithfully and honourably to everybody concerned. I very much regret the manner in which the Prime Minister referred to the massacres of August, 1929. He brushed that matter

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[169](#) on one side with a purely party remark to the effect that his predecessors were involved as much as he was—[An HON MEMBER: "Far more"]—or something of that kind. That is not the way to meet such a point. The Permanent Mandates Commission, to which the Prime Minister did not think it worth while to refer, found that that massacre could not be explained away by the statement that it was an unexpected disturbance. They further found that this country failed to protect Jewish inhabitants in Palestine and I think such findings call for a full and detailed reply. I regret that the Prime Minister did not give such a reply.

The matter does not end there, because evidence was given before the Shaw Commission which apparently the Commissioners overlooked in their report, and which made it clear that the Government gave directions to certain officers based on the possibility of an outbreak just about the time when the outbreak occurred. I understand that even the actual date was forecast. I think it is quite certain that that outbreak was the culminating incident in a series of troubles which had been arising, and which had become acute only a few weeks or days before the actual outbreak. We ought to know from the Government if they were warned of the possibility of this outburst. If they were not, they should have been, and somebody is to blame. If they were warned then they are gravely to blame for not having taken the necessary measures to protect the population of Palestine.

The real point, however, is the policy of the White Paper. The first part of the White Paper deals in generalities, and the Government say they agree with all that their predecessors did—with the 1922 Memorandum, with the Mandate, and with the Balfour Declaration. Obviously, the real trouble is not the principle which is to be carried out but the manner in which it is to be carried out. The Under-Secretary of State said that the language used was very unfortunate and ambiguous. It may be, but I think certain things become abundantly clear. All these documents mention the object of establishing a Jewish national home. That object is made quite plain. It is also made quite plain that we are to facilitate Jewish immigration. There is no dispute about that point. It is further made [170](#) clear that we are to encourage settlement by Jews on land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes. All that is beyond any question of ambiguity, but as has been pointed out it is not all.

We have also to safeguard the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants and to ensure that the rights and the position of non-Jewish sections of the population shall not be prejudiced. Those are the two essential duties placed upon us by the Mandate. I do not care whether they are called positive and negative, or primary and secondary. I do not think that matters, but I think it stands out clearly that as far as the Jewish national home is concerned, it is a progressive movement. We are to facilitate immigration, we are to increase the Jewish population. That I think is the important point and it is because, in the opinion of the Jewish leaders, that is not done in the directions laid down in the White Paper, that this Government has been so much criticised. My own view is that so far as the non-Jewish residents are concerned, all that has to be done is to preserve their rights and position. There is no responsibility for future development.

That is the general policy laid down. So far as the specific part of the Government's programme is concerned, it is stated under three heads, the first of which is that they want to give security to Palestine. We all agree that there must be peace and orderly government. Then there is the second head which seems so far not to have been dealt with in this debate, and that is what they call the constitutional development. They are proposing to impose on Palestine something in the nature of the Legislative Council embodied in the 1922 Memorandum. When it was proposed in 1922 it failed, because the Arabs refused to co-operate. To-day, so far as I know, the Arabs have not yet said that they will co-operate, and Jewish friends of mine tell me that, so far as the Jews are concerned, they think at present at any rate that they cannot co-operate in any such scheme. But the Government, in the White Paper, have made it plain that they intend to force this system of government upon Palestine, and in express terms they say that if anybody does not co-operate, [171](#) they will take steps to put the matter on a proper basis. If there is one thing more than another which would be disturbing in Palestine, it would be to enforce upon the country a Legislative Council to which certainly one section and possibly both sections strongly object. I cannot see how it is fair to expect the Jews to co-operate at present.

So far as the outbreak of August, 1929, is concerned, not a single Arab leader has yet expressed public regret for the occurrence. The feeling between the two races is intensely bitter, and I cannot imagine anything more fatuous than to say to these two hostile peoples, "You have to sit

down in a Legislative Council whether you want to or not." I am puzzled to know what good the Government think will come of it. They say it will give the Arabs a constitutional means of putting their grievances forward, but I think the Arab can put his grievances forward very well to-day. So far as my own post box is concerned, I have every week a number of communications from someone writing on behalf of the Arabs, much larger in number than I get from anybody representing the Jewish race; and at any rate there is the Arab executive, which is a very efficient agency.

Another advantage suggested by the Government is that it would improve the relations of Jews and Arabs, but it seems to me unthinkable that you are going to get any improvement, in the relationship of these peoples by putting upon them a form of government to which they object. It is popular in these days to think that any representative Government on a wide franchise will solve all troubles. It is a great mistake, especially when dealing with people who have been brought up under different political ideals from our own. A good deal of our trouble in many parts of the world has been caused by this ill-advised zeal on our part to force upon other people political ideals which are really peculiar to ourselves.

The third head relates to the question of economic and social development, I think this is the substance of the whole case. The difficulty here is not really political. I am not sure that it is so much racial, though I do not want to under- [172](#) estimate that side of it. It is essentially an economic problem, and when it is boiled down, if you take the White Paper and the Simpson report, it comes to this: Is there enough land to justify the policy of immigration which is desired by the Jewish section of the community? The Government say in the White Paper that at the present time, and with the present methods of Arab cultivation, no margin of land is available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as is held in reserve by Jewish agencies. The House will see, therefore, that there is no land at all available on that standard, except that held by Jewish agencies. I should have thought, in passing, that if undeveloped land is admittedly held by Jewish agencies, that is an excellent reason for not stopping Jewish immigration because such land must be available for the Jewish immigrants.

Passing on, the basis of the Government's figures is 6,500,000 dunams of cultivable land. That is a figure which they have got from the Simpson

report, but most unfortunately they never explain the many modifications which Sir John Hope Simpson put upon that figure. Starting with 6,500,000 dunams, they say you want 130 dunams for every Arab family in order to get a living out of the land, and having gone to that extent, they then see how many Arab families there are, and they arrive at this remarkable result—and I think this has caused a lot of the trouble—that to provide for the Arabs alone would want 8,000,000 dunams. The House will observe that that is 1,500,000 dunams more than the total cultivable land given by them in the report. The net result of that must be that not only is there insufficient land for the Arabs, but it is absolutely hopeless for any new immigrants. If that is the policy to be pursued, it is obvious that immigration will be at a standstill for an indefinite period.

There are various criticisms of these figures. Take the 6,500,000 dunams with which they start as a basis. The Government say that that is in place of earlier official estimates of 10,000,000 to 11,000,000 dunams, and I think the House is entitled to know why there is this amazing disparity between the Government figure now and the earlier official estimates. The land is there and can be seen and [173](#) measured. The Jewish experts claim to have been there, and they stand by the figures, and it is very unsatisfactory that we are suddenly told that we must accept the figure of 6,500,000 dunams.

As an instance of how the difference has arisen, take the Hill territory. That is cultivable land to a very large extent, but Sir John Hope Simpson has reduced the cultivable area of the Hill districts by well over 2,000,000 dunams, a lower estimate than anybody has given before. What new information has he had? We are not told. But he gives this piece of information: He says there was a test by means of an aerial photograph. They photographed 10 per cent. of the district, and on the basis of that he came to the conclusion that the earlier official estimates were greatly in excess of the real quantity. An aerial photograph of only 10 per cent. seems to me a very inconclusive method of estimating the land, and I think it is valueless when one remembers that it is put against the calculations of experts who have actually been on the soil for themselves and made detailed measurements.

But perhaps more remarkable still is this idea that every Arab family wants 130 dunams to live upon. I am told by those acquainted with Palestine that that is two or three times the quantity used by the

average Arab now. It may be desirable to raise the Arab standard by giving him more land, but I do not think you will do it in this way. The experiment in question was tried at Beisan, where the Arab was given 150 dunams, and what happened? He reserved for himself what was necessary to live on, and he promptly sold the rest at very inflated prices, and Sir John Hope Simpson himself mentioned this in his Report. Another point about this calculation is that if you are going to give 130 dunams, you are not only getting a shortage of cultivable land, but you are swallowing up 1,300,000 dunams of admittedly cultivable land in the Plain districts which are not at present even inhabited. I think I have said enough to show, therefore, that the Government basis, so far as the cultivable land is concerned, is of an extremely doubtful character.

It does not end there. There is no mention in the White Paper, and it is [174](#) one of the many instances in which it fails to do justice to Sir John Hope Simpson, of the fact that he defines what he means by cultivable land is land which can be cultivated by the labour and financial resources of the average individual Palestinian cultivator. That is quite a different thing from what is actually cultivable, because the Jewish organisation has great capital at its disposal, far more than the average Palestinian cultivator has, and the Jews claim that by their capital they can bring into cultivation a very large quantity of land which is outside Sir John Hope Simpson's definition. Indeed, in his Report he does not deny it; he rather takes the view that it may be so. If that is the position, I should like to ask the Government why the Jews should not be allowed to have a try. It is their money, and they will take the risk. Everybody will agree that when it comes to a commercial transaction, if there is one race that can look after itself, it is the Jewish race, and if they feel that they can take this chance, it is wrong to put obstacles in the way, as this White Paper has been doing. No harm can come to the Arabs from any such experiment being made. It can be done on a limited scale and with adequate safeguards, and in fact the bringing of capital into Palestine from Jewish sources has always benefited the Arab. It does the country good, and the Arab participates in the general prosperity; even if only Jewish labour is employed, the argument still remains perfectly good.

I should like to say a word in regard to the criticisms that have been made against the Jewish Federation of Labour and the Jewish National Fund, because they have restricted employment to

members of their own race. They take the view, which is obviously quite sound, that they must take measures to ensure that the standard of living of the Jewish labourer is adequately maintained. It is much higher than that of the Arab, and as the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) said, they do not want to convert the Jewish owner of land into an effendi employing cheap Arab labour. The capital is subscribed not for the employment of Arabs, but of Jews, and it would be much more difficult to get money from Jewish quarters for the development of [175](#) Palestine if you did away with this provision which has been made by the General Federation of Jewish Labour.

But there is another point about which I should like to know something. Immigration was stopped in May by the suspension of the certificates, but in October the White Paper was issued, and that justified the suspension of the certificates. A few days ago 1,500 certificates were issued. The situation was, of course, the same in October as in November. What is the reason for the Government's change of policy? As far as I can see, nothing has happened except the by-election in Whitechapel. If there is any other explanation, we shall be interested to hear it.

I suggest for the consideration of the Government that there is only one limitation that ought to be put on immigration, and that is the capacity of the country to absorb the immigrants. That is the only test that should be made. It is not right that the Government should refuse immigration to Jews merely because there are Arabs unemployed, if that unemployment caused is not likely to be aggravated by Jewish immigration. The sole test is: Can the country absorb the people whom it is proposed to immigrate into that country? If that test is applied, it seems that, when the figures with regard to the land are looked into more carefully there is ample room for Jewish immigrants to go into the country without any prejudice to the Arab. I know that this is a difficult problem. It is always difficult when you are dealing with two entirely different races in one country, especially when, as in this case, they are on an entirely different cultural level. But after all, this country has successfully solved many more difficult problems, and I am sufficiently an optimist to say that, given good will all round, this will be another of the successes accomplished by England in administration abroad.

[§ Mr. de ROTHSCHILD](#)

I should like to say at the outset of my remarks

that I have been much struck to-day by the very high level of the debate, and by the very fair-minded way in which this problem has been attacked from all sides. I hope that I shall be able to keep to this same high level, and that in any personal zeal that I may have, I shall not tread on any [176](#) national corns. I feel this matter very deeply, and I am sure that the House will sympathise with me when I say that it was a matter of great and grave concern to me, as it was to all the members of my faith and race, to read and hear of the massacres which took place in Palestine in 1929. I shall try to forget that on this occasion.

I am qualified to address the House on these matters for two main reasons. The first is that by the accident of birth I happen now to be the Chairman of the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, of which much is written both in the White Paper and in the Hope Simpson Report, while it has been referred to several times to-night. Secondly, during the War, in 1918, I was detailed by Lord Allenby to recruit the Jewish Battalion in Palestine. There were then, in that part of Palestine which had been conquered by the British Army, about 18,000 to 20,000 Jews. They were mostly in Jerusalem, and a few of them in the surrounding colonies, but the greater number had already been deported to the north, to Syria, Damascus, and Konia, by the Turks. In just over a fortnight, out of this population of 20,000, a great number over age, and a great number tired out by the fatigues and the hardships of a long famine during the War, a thousand men came forward, solid good soldiers, who were enrolled in the 40th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. These men fought in the British Army, and it was with regret that I heard from the lips of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) what had taken place when he was High Commissioner. I know that to-day these men who wore the British uniform are the only soldiers who served in the British Army to whom no offer was given to settle on the land.

To-day the greater number of them who have been able to find a livelihood on the soil are living in Palestine and eking out their own living without help from the British Government. I do not wish to make too heavy weather of the volunteering of these men, but I should like to remind the House at the same time there were recruited in Palestine men for the Arab Army, who gallantly fought under the Emir Feisal on the other side of the Jordan. While out of a population of 20,000 Jews in Palestine, [177](#) a battalion of 1,000 men was recruited in a very short time, if my memory serves

me right, out of several 100,000 Arabs who were then in Palestine, only 165 volunteered and went to help the Emir Feisal in his campaign. I do not want to put one patriotism against the other, but still, 11 there is any measure by which patriotism can be judged, it is only that of sacrifice.

I am qualified to approach this question, 1 wink, from another point of view, namely, that I have inherited a long tradition of Palestinian colonisation. The P.I.C.A. was founded about 50 years ago. It was the first manifestation of practical Zionism. In those days, when it was founded the word "Zionism" did not exist, and I, personally, rather fight shy of these words ending in "ism," like Capitalism and Socialism. It was the first manifestation of this movement, because the men and women who went to Palestine then as settlers chose to go there in preference to going to the Argentine or New York. They went there amidst indescribable hardships, and in conditions which to-day would seem quite impossible. Under Turkish rule, of which no one to-day can have an adequate idea, they were harassed by officials who always tried to get baksheesh and by legal difficulties of all sorts. It was a wonderful achievement that they produced, and it was really owing to the efforts these men put forward that it was possible for the Government of this country to issue the Balfour Declaration and accept the Mandate because, of course, if it had been impossible to cultivate any part of Palestine, and if there had been no hope of developing there flourishing conditions of existence for the people who immigrated, it would have been quite impossible to create a National Home. That is the service these men and women have rendered to the cause which their children and their grandchildren are upholding at present.

There have been comparisons raised both in the White Paper and in the Hope Simpson Report between the P.I.C.A. colonies and the colonies of the Zionist organisation and the Jewish National Fund. They do not touch the heart of the matter of the White Paper, and I should like to mention that Baron Edmond Rothschild, the founder of the [178](#) P.I.C.A., associated himself with Br. Weizmann, when he resigned the office of head of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist organisation, when he wrote a letter to the "Times," published about a fortnight ago, explaining how grieved he was by the conclusions at which no one could help arriving on reading the White Paper. The comparisons, which are made between the P.I.C.A. and the colonies of the Jewish National Fund, are mainly as to the employment of Arab workmen.

The relations of the colonists in the P.I.C.A. with the Arabs are better, so the White Paper says, than those of the colonies of the Jewish National Fund. When these men went to Palestine 50 years ago they worked in small numbers and, of course, they had to call in the help of the people who lived in the country, and, owing to the more plentiful circulation of piastres, gradually there formed in the neighbourhood of these colonies flourishing Arab villages.

Since the British Mandate the P.I.C.A. has largely extended its activities, because though the British administration has not been particularly helpful to the Jewish development of Palestine, it has, at all events, been neutral, and has not been harmful like the Turk was in his day. And the P.I.C.A. has been able to extend its activities in several fields and to increase its cultivation of oranges, fruit, grain and other commodities. Therefore, it has been able to split up some of the Colonies and to bring more people on to the same land and, by doing so, more Jews have been employed and fewer Arabs. The same process which has been going on in the Jewish colonies of the National Fund has also been going on in the P.I.C.A., but I am glad to say we have been able to keep on good terms with the Arabs, because they remember the advantages they have gained from the Jewish neighbourhood. It took 50 years to create those flourishing Arab villages which surround the Jewish colonies of the P.I.C.A., and there is no reason to believe that the Arab villages which at present are on the fringe of the newer Jewish colonies will not be in 50 years times just as happy and as flourishing as the villages which are neighbouring the P.I.C.A. Settlement at the present time. Both the P.I.C.A. and the National Fund have done a great deal [179](#) to develop the country, but in no case have they done more than in draining the marshes and the swamps to which allusion has been made to-night. I do not like to give figures, but still, I should like to put before the House the disparity between the following figures. The Government have drained 12,000 dunams, and have spent £31,250, and of this the settlements themselves contributed about £3,600. These are round figures. The P.I.C.A. and the Kerenha Ayesod have jointly spent £335,000 and they have drained over 130,000 dunams. But there is one point of which we must not lose sight. Jewish colonisation must give more employment to the Jews, because, although there is behind us a long tradition of making bricks without straw, yet we cannot make a Jewish national home without land and without Jews, but it is obvious that we alone cannot fashion and shape the life of

Palestine. The Jews cannot work it out alone, but must collaborate with the Arabs. It is essential, however, that they should retain their individuality, their language, their culture, their western and peaceful outlook and the rest of their social aspirations in their own particular individual settlements. The White Paper says: So long as widespread suspicion exists, as it does exist, among the Arab population, so long as the economic depression under which they are suffering is largely due to excessive Jewish immigration, and so long as some grounds exist on which such suspicions can be plausibly represented to be well founded"— To our mind those suspicions are totally unfounded, but they appear to the Arab mind sufficient to debar the Jews from going on developing the land to the interest of both sections of the population. There is no reason why the Jews and the Arabs should not be on good terms. There is already a marked rapprochement between the two races. Not only does this take place near the older Jewish colony, but it has taken place in a great many of the cultural and economic and social meetings of the Jews and the Arabs. They talk one another's language, in many cases they attend the same evening classes. They have joint trade unions in the Post Office and on the railways. They both use the same hospitals—the same Jewish hospitals — and they also have the same social 180 amusements and both go to the same cinemas. Indeed it is in one's enjoyments that one forms lasting friendships. The Government have done little to help this rapprochement between the Jews and the Arabs—the Government in Palestine. The Government here could have helped them more, because the Round Table Conference was a plan which this Government could and should have accepted. I much regretted to hear the Parliamentary Secretary state in his speech to-day that this meeting of the Round Table, which had been put forward by Dr. Weizmann and had not been accepted by the Arabs, was only meant to discuss the legislative council. I will refer him to a letter which Dr. Weizmann wrote to Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State, on 19th September this year, and I would like to read what he said. This paragraph states: The importance of a better understanding with the Arabs has ever been present in my mind. Could it be reached many of the difficulties which now hinder our work would disappear. When I met the Prime Minister immediately after the Palestine disturbances of 3rd September, 1929, I suggested that His Majesty's Government should at the earliest convenient time summon a Round Table Conference and undertake

the part of the honest broker between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. I still think that such a Round Table Conference which would consider all the main problems of Palestine"— All the main problems of Palestine— could render invaluable services to the evolving of a constructive programme for the future. That was the spirit in which the Government themselves should have approached this question. It does not matter for the success of a Round Table Conference, as we have seen in another and in an even more important case, that all the component parts of the population should attend. You can hold a valuable, an important and a far-reaching Round Table Conference even if some of those elements abstain, and I am quite certain that the Government, if they had put their back into this question, could have got such a conference. The Parliamentary Secretary himself said to-day that when he went to Palestine he found a great deal of good feeling. The Government could have used this feeling and could have got together a Round Table Conference. It is not too late to-day.

181 There is one point I want to answer, and that is the point which was made about the Balfour Declaration by the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Cocks). Of course, there is no doubt that the two obligations which are laid under the Mandate are of equal importance. The Mandate Commissioners recognise it, and there is not a single Jew who does not recognise it too. But the White Paper states that allegations have been made—I do not know who made them—that the Balfour Declaration, that the Jewish National Home, is not the principal and the pivotal part of the Mandate. Remembering what happened in 1916 and 1917, I am prepared to say that without the Jewish National Home there would be no British Mandate for Palestine. At that time there were, as everybody who went through those difficult days remembers, conversations between the Allies.

The Sykes Picot agreement was negotiated about that time, simply and only because of the Jewish National Home, and when the limitation of their frontier was drawn between Syria and Palestine, it was drawn north of the most northern Jewish colony in order to include that in the Jewish National Home. If there had been no mention of the Jewish National Home in this Mandate the other conditions dependent upon it would not have occurred. It is only because there is a mention of the Jewish National Home that there is mention of the Arab population. I regret hearing the hon. Gentleman say that the Balfour Declaration had no moral validity. Colonel Lawrence, no better

champion of the Arabs, did not think so, and in a letter which can be easily found in his works he has said so, and proved that the Zionist colonisation and Zionist aims are most helpful to the Arabs in Palestine. What I deprecate is that the right hon. Gentleman wishes to divest himself from his pledge. When Henry VIII discovered that his marriage with Catherine of Aragon was not as pleasant as he thought it would be, he got tired of her, and we all know what happened. After the generous contributions which have been made both by the Parliamentary Secretary and more especially by the Prime Minister, I do not want to go into too many details of the White Paper. The ground [182](#) has been well traversed, but there is a quotation which has not been made to-night. We have, had hundreds of quotations, and I have listened with great care, because I hope to make some of them myself. There is, however, one that has not been made by anyone, and it might easily have been made by the Parliamentary Secretary, and it should have been made by him if his attention had been called to it. He came here saying that he heard vague allusions that the Arabs were satisfied with the White Paper inasmuch as it was detrimental to the Jewish National Home. Therefore, it showed, that he had not seen this quotation from the "Felestin," one of the most important Arab papers in Palestine, which says: There is nothing but the name left now of the Balfour Declaration. The new Government policy is a glorious triumph for the Arabs containing not one favourable word for the Jews. I should like to say before I sit down that I hope when the Government come to a decision about the Development Commission, they will take in the land of Transjordan on the other side. The point raised by the Parliamentary Secretary in which he said that the land of Palestine was sacred equally to the Jew and the Arabs does not hold good in this case. The land in Palestine which is sacred to the Arab is land around Jerusalem which is sacred also to the Jews. The land of Beisan on one side of the Jordan is not more sacred than the land which is on the other bank. If there is this great land hunger, this great want for further settlement, surely a country which is larger than Palestine, in which there are 300,000 inhabitants, which is as fertile as Palestine and is an Arab country, has the same claim as Palestine itself for that settlement. To divide Palestine and Transjordan is like cutting a line between Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. I now want to read two short passages from a pamphlet published in 1922: No explanation of the Zionism of today is adequate which leaves out of account the spiritual position of Judaism. True, the Jew is

persecuted and needs a home, but if you wish to understand Zionism, you need to understand the minds of the little crowds that gather to wail and pray by the wall of the Temple as well as the pogroms in Eastern Europe. The Jew seeks a National Home in Palestine, not only because he is denied a home elsewhere, but because [183](#) Palestine has always been calling to him from his heart—and he must go. I want to read another quotation, because I think that the House will be interested to hear it. To the older Jewish settlements and agricultural schools are owing to a great extent both the Jaffa orange trade and the culture of vines; to the newer, agricultural machinery, afforestation, the beginnings of scientific manurings, the development of schemes of irrigation and agricultural cooperation. Palestine not only offers room for hundreds of thousands of Jews; it loudly cries out for more labour and more skill. With the permission of the House, I will read the title of this pamphlet which says that Palestine is crying out for more labour, for more men, and for hundreds and thousands of more Jews. It is called "A Socialist in Palestine," by J. Ramsay MacDonald." Let me appeal to the Prime Minister when the consultation takes place on the subject of the White Paper between the Government and the Jewish Agency, to approach this problem from the same angle and with the same sympathy, and to remember that when this country undertook to foster the National Home, it was not with the idea of only settling there a few thousand men or more, but it was a bigger and a greater thing than that. I still hope that we shall see growing up there a young and virile nation joining hands with its Arab brethren, ranging itself under the same aegis which has gathered round it this great Commonwealth of Nations. But if this White Paper remains not in word only but in spirit, then it will truly be said that the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but that the Jewish people has nowhere to rest its head.

§ Mr. HOPKIN

I think the House will agree that the test of the success or failure of this debate will depend upon whether the status quo can be established. We have the fact, that the head of the Jewish Agency has resigned, and the whole success or non-success of the policy of the White Paper will depend upon whether he will assist in carrying out that policy or not. I am not inclined to discuss the question of the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate; for it is far more important to see what actually is the position to-day. It has been said many times that every British statesman since 1917 has encouraged

the Jew to go to Palestine. I myself heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George), in a most eloquent speech to Jews, say that he said to Dr. Weizmann, as the result of his great services during the War: "What honour can we give you?" and the answer that the right hon. Gentleman received from him was: "Give land to my people." In that spirit every British statesman since 1917 has encouraged Jews to go to Palestine, and with what result?

I challenge from any quarter of the House a denial of the statement that the Jew in Palestine has done to the Arab no wrong at all. On the contrary, the Arabs, and particularly the fellahin, have gained enormously by the Jews going there. You need only go, for instance, to any of the agricultural colonies, and you will find there that the Arabs are in a very much better state. Let me take one simple example which has not been mentioned here 'at all. Take the example of Mr. Rutenburg, who has established his electricity scheme near to the Sea of Galilee. There he has working side by side Jews and Arabs. They work under exactly the same conditions at precisely the same rates of pay. When he started he had as high a rate for malaria as 80 per month. It is now not more than four or five. Let us examine what the Jew has done in the short time that he has been there—in the last 10 years.

Hon. Members who were there during the War will remember the difference between 1919 and to-day. You can see orange groves, bananas and almond trees, and, if you go up into the Vale of Jezreel, where I was a year ago, you cannot but feel tremendously proud as I a non-Jew, did, of what the Jew has done there on totally new land. He has become a farmer. These men and women have left behind them for ever any chance of making wealth, and have gone there solely and wholly attracted by the ideal. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman who is to reply why it is that on page 20 of the White Paper you have that statement concerning the General Federation of Labour. Why is that statement there at all, if it is not to hold that system up to ridicule and contempt. Why is it, when the land is nationalised, when there is no opportunity for exploitation, that we at any rate should hold it up to any kind of ridicule at all? Take only the [185](#) Hadassal, which this year spent £118,000 on medical services. I saw a year ago the hospital which was put up for Jews and Arabs at Saped, and which had been burned down. In that hospital 10,000 cases a year were treated and over 100,000 cases have been served by the Hadassal. On ducation, in nine years, the Jews have spent £700,000 alone. Fifty-one years ago, Petach

Tikwah, which is now a town, was a mere barren waste. To-day it has a population of 9,000, and from this one centre alone there are exports worth over £150,000. The story of Rehoboth is the same. Thirty-eight years ago it was a waste of sand; to-day it has 2,800 people. Tel-Aviv, as I remember, was in 1919 simply sand, but last year I saw there a flourishing town. Hedera, again, 30 years ago consisted only of swamps, and of the first 540 people who went there, no less than 214 perished from malaria; and yet the work went on. These people have performed this miracle of making the desert blossom as the rose, and it is literally true to say that they are now producing two blades where formerly one was produced.

I wish to deal in a very few words with my view of the White Paper. I cannot dissociate the production of this White Paper from what I myself saw in September, 1929, of the hideous and foul murders in Hebron. Away up in the North, in the little town of Saped, 201 tiny houses were burnt out and gutted and all the people who were there were foully murdered. I cannot but connect in my mind that massacre and the production of this White Paper. Those of us who have studied this question are as much opposed to the spirit of this White Paper as to what it actually says. I say with full conviction that, if the policy contained in this White Paper is carried out, it will be the greatest mistake of any Minister since the time when we lost the American colonies. I am convinced that this policy represents a complete break between Jew and Arab. There is absolutely no chance for this policy to have any fair scope, because the whole of it depends upon co-operation. Co-operation is appealed for throughout, but how can you co-operate with people who believe rightly or wrongly that the very basis, the very foundation of the whole [186](#) scheme is an attack. If you attack in this White Paper immigration and land, you destroy the whole ideal of a national home for the Jews. Very shortly—who knows when—the policy of this White Paper must end in bankruptcy. You stop the flow of money from America, Canada, South Africa or England, and what is the result? Many of these colonies are just getting to the point where they are self-supporting. They become bankrupt. They fail to pay their taxes. The exports and imports of the whole country go down. Where is the money coming from? There is no chance at all for this policy to have fair scope. It divides hopelessly the Jews from the Arabs. That is the biggest argument against it.

I agree that the only one way of building up Palestine is a Jewish-Arab friendship. It can be



done. I saw it done myself. In Tiberins, just before the outbreaks in 1929, the Jews and Arabs got together, and they did elsewhere. They said, "We are here, neighbours. It is far better for us to live in peace than to cut each other's throats." Take what has been done in the trade union movement. It has been said that a Workmen's Compensation Act has been passed. So, too, is there a law against the employment of women and children. It is in this connection that you can work in giving scope to the Arab—not to the 250 Arab landlords whose interest it is to keep these people down. It is in this way that I think you will be able to get peace between Jew and Arab. Take the question of the land. Land was secured by the Jews by displacing 705 Arab tenants. First of all, they themselves received £20,000 compensation, and 90 per cent. of them were replaced on the land. I ask: where are the landless Arabs who have been displaced by Jewish colonisation? The Jews do not need a new Ghetto in Palestine. They do not need to set up a museum. According to this White Paper, if a Jew buys land he is wrong. If he is a farmer, he is wrong. It seems to me that to some people Trotsky is always a Jew hut Einstein is always a German. Every time he is wrong. We are bound to do justice to this ancient people. I am convinced that in Zionism there is real truth, and, whether we stand for it or against it, in the end it is bound to win, and in this our day and generation T. am certain we can help on this fine ideal. 187 This was the only piece of idealism that came out from the War, to give this landless people a land. I think it a duty and an honour for the House to help that forward.

§ *Major ELLIOT*

The speech we have just heard is itself a reply to those who would say that for some party reasons this debate has come on at the present time. It cuts across party lines. On every side of the House, from every bench, there have been expressed opinions both pro and con. It is inevitable that action taken by the Government of the day should be challenged and, if it is challenged, it is inevitable that some of those who challenge it should be those who find themselves in opposition to the Government of the day on other grounds. The speech to which we have just listened is sufficient proof that many of those who challenge the policy of the Government to-day, many of those who challenge the statement of policy that the Government has put down, are those who in normal times are the strongest supporters of the Government, just as some of those who have supported the action of the Government are those who in normal times would challenge its action.

We are dealing to-night with a very old and a very widespread question. It is not merely a question of the small country of Palestine. It is not merely a question of Jewry and Arabs in Palestine. It is a question that even transcends the bounds of the League of Nations and goes far beyond them. The huge nation of the United States, who take no lot or part in the League of Nations, is keenly and desperately interested in this question and there is no ordinary question in Europe which would bring about a mass meeting of 20,000 in Madison Square with 20,000 more waiting to get in. It is a world question. You are dealing with the vast East on the one side and the whole of the New World, passing right across to the Pacific, on the other. It is a great responsibility and an enormous task which this House has to debate and, still more, which the Government has to decide upon.

It is said the White Paper is nothing. It is of no importance. It is a reaffirmation of the declarations of previous Governments. If that is so, why this turmoil? Why this commotion? Why 188 these resignations? It cannot be put down merely to a party desire to embarrass the Government of the day. Is it suggested that the Jewish Agency is suddenly seized with a partisan desire to embarrass the Government of which many of its own members are anxious supporters? Is it suggested that America is convulsed suddenly because it gets a message from here that it is now desirable to attack the Government of the day? These things are not so. It is not possible to maintain that. Something has happened. What is it? The hon. Member for Cardigan (Mr. Morris) said the betrayal was done in 1922 in a previous White Paper. That is when the break with Jewry was made. But he further said that although certain Allied statesmen spoke in favour of a Jewish State then, he had searched all the statements of the great statesman whose name was specially associated with this Declaration, and that he had been unable to find any declaration in favour of the so-called Jewish Palestine, as Jewish as Kent is English.

What becomes of all his argument? If it is true that this statesman said no word which could now be quoted against the declaration which he stood for, how is it that he, of all men, was venerated, respected, almost idolised, by that very Jewry whom he is supposed to have betrayed? It seems a strange thing that treachery should be rewarded by such devotion. That argument will not help. There is same-thing about the declaration of 1922 which is not present in the declaration of 1929. There are new factors imported into the declaration of 1930

which were not in the previous declaration, or if not., it is for the Government to say why they have been so incredibly inept as to convey the impression to all the world that that has been done. No declaration has been made. No change of policy has been brought about. Surely it is a masterpiece of ineptitude which has raised against us such tirades of opinion both in the new world and the old, first against the Declaration for having made it, and then in the East, as will be seen in coming weeks, for having rescinded it. It is a strange declaration, which, although changing nothing, yet so vitally and so adversely affects our position.

**189** Is that the only answer? I look upon the White Paper at one point with peculiar interest, namely, the point dealing with the position as to the employment of labour. This is one of the fundamental questions which is here under discussion. We find that the White Paper speaks of it adversely, and draws attention to it in order to condemn. It says that these stringent provisions are difficult to reconcile with the declarations of the Zionists of the desire by the Jewish people to live with Arab people in relations of friendship and mutual respect. But it is said that that declaration does not mean anything, which shares the dubious honour with "Reynolds" newspaper and others of being the vehicle by which the Minister conveys his modifications of the policy to the world. Lord Passfield wrote to the "Times," when it was challenged by Lord Hailsham, and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon). He wrote to the "Times" to say that the paragraph in question contained no such words: All that is done is to draw attention to the practice. and implied no such intention.

Since when has it been the practice of Secretaries of State to write letters to the "Times" drawing attention to reprehensible practices within their own jurisdiction save to say that they ought to be brought to an end? We were asked by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whose presence amongst us we are all glad to recognise again, to read the Government White Paper in the light of the Hope Simpson report. These paragraphs, he said, are mere extracts of the Hope Simpson report. We cannot put everything into the White Paper which is in the Hope Simpson report, therefore it is to the Hope Simpson report you must look on points which are in doubt and which require clearing up. The Hope Simpson report says of this policy, in a paragraph in page 55, headed, "Policy contrary to Article 6 of Mandate." The principle of this, which it calls the persistent and

deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist Colonies' is not only contrary to the provisions of that article of the Mandate, but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country. **190** This is the practice to which attention is called in the White Paper and challenged by Lord Hailsham and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley, and on which, when challenged, the Secretary of State for the Colonies has nothing to say but that he has no intention whatever of asking that it should be brought to an end, but is merely drawing attention to the practice. If, indeed, the Secretary of State is so fraudulent a trustee of the Mandate as not to put a stop to the practice which is declared to be contrary to Article 6 of the Mandate, then, indeed, he would be worthy of the highest blame. If, on the contrary, he does not believe this, but has merely brought it in to carry on this correspondence in the public Press, then, indeed, it is a piece of wanton trouble-making for the people of this country which one is scarcely able to parallel, and certainly not to excel.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, who is to wind up the debate, has to meet that case. Why has the declaration of the Government caused this immense turmoil in the world? I do not think that it is possible for him, in view of the declarations up and down the world and not merely in this country, and especially in view of the declarations of his own supporters, to ride off with the suggestion that this is a mere piece of party jealousy which has brought the affairs of Palestine into the party arena of this country. The First Lord of the Admiralty has to explain to us why have the Government decided on all these committees and commissions of inquiry if they had not resolved to follow them up with some executive action. We are accustomed to committees and commissions, and I do not complain. No doubt inquiry must be held and examination must be made, but these inquiries must be followed by action, and that action must depend upon co-operation with Arab and Jew. That means coming into touch again with the Jewish agency which the links are at present broken. We have heard of the resignation of the head of the Jewish agency, and the resignation of Lord Rothschild has also been announced from the Liberal benches to-night. We know that negotiations are proceeding but they are not proceeding on the basis of this White Paper.

**191** Has the White Paper been withdrawn or has it not been withdrawn? His Majesty's Government sent out a Commission and then they sent out an expert investigator to consider the facts arising out

of that Commission, and as a result we have a statement of policy in the White Paper. In answer to a question which I put to the Prime Minister only last week he said that he did not intend to act on that White Paper until the matter had been fully discussed in the House of Commons. It was further stated to-night that before he acts upon that White Paper he must have full consultation with both sides. In answer to a supplementary question which the right hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Ormsby-Gore) put to him as to whether he withdrew the White Paper or he was going to redraft it, he said, "The substance, I think, is all right." That means that the ipsissima verba of the White Paper have fallen, or have been withdrawn—that the drafting cannot be defended. Further, he did not say, "The substance is all right," but he said, "The substance, I think, is all right." That is to say, that the substance of the White Paper is still under consideration by the Cabinet. These are declarations of enormous importance, especially in view of the policy which has been announced to-day. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies explained that a loan is to be floated of which the interest and the sinking fund, for a term of years, is to be paid by the taxpayer of this country. That is a declaration which he will need to explain further to this House. "For a term of years." For what term of years? He will need to explain that, particularly in view of the declaration of the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel), who had the responsibility of administering Palestine, that he did not approve of that policy and that he thought it was a profound mistake to have a loan for local expenditure, the interest and sinking fund of which should be guaranteed by the taxpayers of this country.

§ *Sir H. SAMUEL*

Paid!

§ *Major ELLIOT*

Yes, paid by the taxpayers of this country. The taxpayers of this country shoulder the responsibility of defence and a large part of Imperial expenditure, but the settlement of individuals upon the soil was not, said the right hon. Member for Darwen, a subject for which he could ask the taxpayers of this country to bear interest and sinking fund for an indeterminate period of time. The one constructive piece of policy brought forward by the Government has been challenged by the man who, of all men in this House, has the greatest right to challenge it, and the First Lord of the Admiralty must reply to that criticism as part of the Government's policy to-

night.

The position as stated by the Government is still profoundly unsatisfactory. The First Lord will have to answer the further observation of the right hon. Member for Darwen that the White Paper will come as a chilly douche upon all the enthusiasm and aspirations which have for many years under previous Declarations been fostered in Palestine. He will have to answer also the question brought forward by the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Hopkin), who has said that the country is faced with bankruptcy as a result of this policy.

The Government have pledged themselves to take into consultation both Jews and Arabs before they promulgate any Ordinance as a result of this White Paper. If the Government do not get agreement, are they going forward with their policy? And if they do not get agreement with the Jewish Agency, which, without a penny of expenditure from the taxpayers of this country, collects —700,000 a year for the purposes of land settlement, what is going to happen to the finances of Palestine and to the revenues of Palestine? These are concrete and immediately important questions which will have to be discussed and settled, and to which an answer must be given before the First Lord can hope to conclude the debate to-night. The areas affected in the debate have been so wide in extent as to stretch from San Francisco on the one side to the cities of China on the other. The Under-Secretary of State will know that one of the great educational trusts under which education is proceeding in Palestine came from a bequest made by a Chinese Jew for the benefit of education in that land.

But in point of time the scale is even greater. It is two years ago since I had occasion to analyse one of the last occasions on which a quarrel took place [193](#) about a Declaration and an interpretation of a White Paper in another great empire which, for a time, had the responsibility of administering the affairs of Palestine. It was a case somewhat parallel to the present position. A number of Jews were returning after a period of exile. The administration was under the Persian Empire, and in the Civil Service files, which the Under-Secretary will forgive me if I recall to his recollection, as in the Book of Ezra, Chapter 4 and verse IV, he will find the same things happening then. They got at loggerheads with the people of the land; and the people of the land "hired counsellors to frustrate their purpose," barristers-at-law or of equivalent title. A petition was drawn up and docketed as being in the Syrian tongue.

And the same accusation as to-day was brought, that they were Bolsheviks, that they would rebel. "This city of old time hath made insurrection against Kings." But the story goes further than that in the comment of the time. The new works were held up. The Treasury was consulted. It was said that this would cause loss of revenue, "The revenue of the Kings would be endamaged." And the files showed it was so in the records. "This city of old time bath made insurrection against Kings. Therefore let this city be not builded until another commandment shall be given from me." But there was another declaration not less famous in its day than the Balfour declaration, the declaration of Cyrus the King. "Let search be made. The other files have not been consulted," said the Jews. "And let the King send us his pleasure concerning the matter." A year—or two years—or three years—the matter was held up. The Civil Service of the time sent back the answer that they had looked into the files and the Jews were right.

There was a Palestine declaration of the day; the programme had been authorised; and not merely was the declaration there, but conclusive argument was given in proof—a grant had been authorised for this purpose from Imperial sources. The works started again and the house was finished in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the King. That was 2,519 years ago. And there is that scale of time which is the scale you have to con- sider when you are dealing with matters such as this. You are touching things that are woven back into the very fabric of history. You are dealing with millennia and not with decades. You are touching declarations which were made and pledges which were kept by another great Aryan empire, the Empire of Persia, to the Semitic peoples of those days—a quarrel which was composed between the Arabs of the land and the Jewish immigrant after a period of exile and captivity as it might have been the day before yesterday.

It is necessary for us to remember these things in debates such as this. The responsibility that hangs upon the shoulders of Ministers and of Members of the Opposition in speaking of such things is scarcely to be measured. You are dealing with the good will of a people widely spread over the earth. I was speaking to a Member, not on our own side of the House, who said: I have lived abroad most of my life. I have had experience of what it means to have the international Irish on our backs. Do we wish to bring Jewry on our backs as well? We must keep faith with the East, with the Moslem world as well as with the Jews. Are we going the right way to do it in issuing and countermanding, in

modifying and counter-modifying, in explaining and explaining away a pronouncement such as the pronouncement which the Government have made? I say not. The grievances which were contained in the McMahon correspondence and the Balfour Declaration are being succeeded by a new set of grievances arising out of the White Paper of 1930. This unfortunate country has scarcely got rid of one set of grievances when a new set of grievances is prepared for it by the very action of those who have been trying to sweep away the former grievances. The Government's responsibility is graver than they seem to appreciate. This is a matter for constructive statesmanship, not merely in the way of a small development commission here and a small set of public works there. It is an international question of far-reaching importance. It is really a matter more for the Foreign Office than for the Colonial Office. It is a matter for methods of administration which are not the familiar practice of the Colonial Office. It is a matter of international diplomacy, affecting both East [195](#) and West, and not merely of the promulgation of codes of law for one small colony or another.

We are dealing here with a question of such size and importance that it would well repay the attention of our international diplomats in conference, both official and unofficial, both here and elsewhere, for months and even years to come. Many of the leaders of the Arabs are grave and responsible men like, for instance, Mr. George Antonius, whom I have met myself, and to whom this nation is greatly indebted for his services in connection with the negotiations which took place with the Arab rulers of the desert and elsewhere. There are men like him, deeply trusted by the Arab people, through whom, I believe, arrangements might be made and negotiations conducted. But not if they are to be conducted in the pettifogging spirit which is reflected in every paragraph of the White Paper. I say that the whole world has a responsibility to these people, but still more since the massacres of last year the people of Palestine have a responsibility. It is said that they are the majority of the people. Well, they hold a responsibility now which they did not hold a year and a half ago—to the people who came amongst them, the people who suffered in blood and fire, not the aggressive Sews but the old men who came there to pass away the end of their lives, and the young students who came there for learning. They owe a great deal to those people. There was a piece of land purchased in Palestine a thousand years before this declaration of which we might well

remember the title deeds to-day.

Give me a possession of a burying place with you; that I may bury my dead, out of my sight. Unless we are going to do that in Palestine for these people, then there will not be peace in Palestine nor throughout the world. It is a grave responsibility which we have to-night, and, as I say, I feel that the Government have a greater responsibility than they have shown any signs of appreciating. It is that which fills us with disquiet, which makes us watch with eagerness and with anxiety the progress of the negotiations which they have undertaken. It is certainly that which will make us hail with delight any sign of the lightening of the clouds which, in spite of the Government's [196](#) declaration, still hang over the future of Palestine.

[§ The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY \(Mr. A. V. Alexander\)](#)

One could not help thinking in listening to the last speaker that he tried to work up a great deal of indignation because all the time he felt that, really, the so-called case against the Government as stated to-night had been a very damp squib.

[§ Mr. ORMSBY-GORE](#)

You have insulted the Jews.

[§ Mr. ALEXANDER](#)

I ask any impartial Member of the House who has sat right through this debate and heard all the speeches, to summarise the arguments put forward pro and con—to which we on this bench have listened very carefully—and to say if he does not agree with me that, in the main, the debate has not shown that there is a strong feeling in this House on the part of a majority against the position of the Government in this matter. I listened to the speech of the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George), which was very powerful and very eloquent, but he made statements which could not be justified by the actual words of the White Paper. He talked in such phrases as that this White Paper was actually tearing up the Mandate. Is there anybody who has listened to all the speeches on this question who can say that this White Paper tears up the Mandate? No impartial person can state that. I can well understand someone with very strong emotions and religious feelings holding that view—anyone is entitled to have partisanship—but I say that any impartial-minded person here, sitting as a judge in this matter, could not say that this White Paper tears up the Mandate. On the contrary, this White

Paper, criticised as it has been from many points and angles, does make this plain, repeating the Declaration of 1922 and giving amplification of it: That we want the Government of this country, whatever party may be in office, to maintain our obligations, both under the Balfour Declaration and under the Mandate. I do not think any White Paper could have made that clearer than this particular White Paper has done.

When I go on to the speech of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook (Mr. Amery), I find no support for the kind of [197](#) argument put up by the Leader of the Liberal party. He said he thought the White Paper was capable of being misunderstood, but he accepted the assurance which had been given by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. That was the main burden of his speech, except that he gave us a useful dissertation upon the history of the matter and upon the views which were taken by himself and his colleagues when he was in office. Except for the point which he put to the Prime Minister and which the Prime Minister answered, there was nothing else in his case.

I come now to the speech of the right hon. Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel). I am sure there is not a Member of this House, in any part of the House, who was not charmed with that speech. It was one of the most masterly and most sympathetic utterances that it has ever been my lot to listen to in this House. He had some points of criticism for us, but what I was amazed at in listening to him, with all his experience of the Palestinian problem, was to find on how many points he was really in agreement with the policy of the Government. I agree that in one or two instances he did say things which certainly made me think. He said he was afraid that the impression the White Paper might leave on some minds would be that there was to be no more land, no more people. Much as I admired the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, I hope he will forgive me for saying that the Government do not intend that, and I do not think one can really get it impartially from the White Paper that that would be the result.

We have made it as plain in the debate to-night as possible, through the speeches of the Under-Secretary of State and the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, that it is no part of our intention, and never has been, that there should be any crystallisation of the present position in regard to the formation of the National Jewish Home, and I hope and believe that the House and the right hon. Gentleman will take that assurance from me once more in this matter. I felt, as he continued his

speech, that there were one or two points that were not quite so pleasing. The right hon. Gentleman referred to certain events last year which all of us deplore, and it is a pity that [198](#) one or two speakers also referred to them, as a blot on the Arab name. I listened to my hon. Friend the Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Hopkin) with a little pain, not because I do not utterly deplore the events of last year, but it is curious to introduce in the same speech reflections on these appalling events at the time when you are pleading for new racial co-operation in future. I am not saying that the right hon. Member for Darwen and my hon. Friend the Member for Carmarthen are not entitled to draw attention on occasion to the horrors that occurred, but I ask that in the kind of atmosphere we have to-night, when we are appealing for a development of racial co-operation, we shall not always be opening old sores.

§ *Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY*

The sore is not very old.

§ *Mr. ALEXANDER*

If the wound is so open, is that not all the more reason why we should confine ourselves to healing it? A point of criticism of the right hon. Gentleman to which I must refer is one also referred to by the hon. and gallant Member for Kelvingrove (Major Elliot) in regard to the Government's proposal for development. The right hon. Member for Darwen said that he thought that it would have been more advisable for that scheme to have been financed under some such fund as the Colonial Development Fund, rather than be, provided as a new service. There is some point in that criticism, but I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will take the assurance from me that it is the official view of the Treasury that the Colonial Development Fund is not really suitable for paying the interest and sinking fund that would be necessary in the case of the first few years of the undertaking, and that as the Palestinian finances are not able to bear the burden of those first few years, it must be provided for by the votes of the House. I ought to add that we certainly hope—a hope based upon Sir John. Hope Simpson's Report—that in a few years the increased productivity of the land, which we all desire to see as the result of the development, will enable the Palestinian administration to meet the later charges upon the Fund out of its own resources.

The hon. and gallant Member for Kelvingrove might have remembered, [199](#) when he was referring to the financial pressure, that we at any

rate cannot be charged as a Government with being responsible for the economic conditions of the country which make it necessary to put the development scheme into operation. I know quite well that there will be differences of opinion, but we have acted in good faith, in the best bonâ fide way we can after having seen what has been praised from the other side of the House as the careful and sound report of Sir John Hope Simpson. We have acted in such a way as we felt, in all good faith, would promote development in the country. We have not in any way endeavoured, as has been suggested, to crystallise the present position of the development of the Jewish National Home, but we accepted, through the White Paper issued after the receipt of Sir John Hope Simpson's Report, the view that if we really wanted to see Jewish development and intensive land settlement go on, beyond the reserved land still retained by Jewish institutions for development, it could only be done effectively and economically if the general productive capacity of the country were improved. The aim of the Government is to concentrate on development in this way and, as has been explained by the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, after we have made provision for special work and for the settlement of Arab families, there is no reason at all why the scheme cannot be used for both Jewish as well as Arab settlers.

On that point, may I say that we are very glad on these benches to associate ourselves with every word that has been uttered as to the greatness of the effort which has been made since the granting of the Mandate as well as before, by Jews in the development of the part of Palestine which they have occupied. We desire to recognise that as freely as any member of any creed or party in this House. We do not desire in any way to detract from that development. We are now, as has been indicated already in the House and in the Press, actually in touch to try and remove any misconceptions or misunderstandings which may have arisen. We think perhaps misunderstandings and misconceptions have arisen which might not have occurred if there had been rather more [200](#) slowness about people who rushed into print and statements as soon as the White Paper was issued. The hon. and gallant Member referred to that point just now. He said that if the contention which had been made were true, how was it that we got all these protests from America, South Africa, and leading people here and leading people there? Is it not a fact that we got these protests by cable within a very few hours of the issue of the White Paper, which means that the overseas cables

must have come before the people concerned had any real opportunity of studying the full text of the White Paper and of the Hope Simpson report?

§ Major ELLIOT

How many of them have been withdrawn since?

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

I would refer to the message we received from that great overseas statesman, General Smuts. He obviously sent his cable on the basis of a cabled message which he had received and before he had had any opportunity or chance of studying the full text of the White Paper or of reading the Hope Simpson report. It is perfectly plain from the message of General Smuts and the reply sent by the Prime Minister to him in elaboration of the White Paper.

§ Mr. ORMSBY-GORE

Did not the statement sent by the Prime Minister to General Smuts wash out, the White Paper?

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

Certainly not. As a matter of fact, the reply of General Smuts was a very different interpretation from that which had been made in haste, with good intentions, in a course of action which he thought was in the very best interests. I can understand exactly how he felt. It was probably taken upon insufficient information, given only in a cable.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

Did not General Smuts, in reply to the Prime Minister, after hearing the Prime Minister's explanation, say, My impression remains that the Government statements do not correspond with the actual obligation for a National Home undertaken in the Balfour Declaration"?

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

I read both his first cable and the one the right hon. 201 Gentleman now quotes, and I can say that the latter represents a very different feeling.

*Mr. LLOYD GEORGE*

Those were his actual words which I quoted.

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

The observation was made without the full text of the White Paper and the Hope Simpson report in front of him.

§ Mr. MOND

The full text of the White Paper was cabled.

[Interruption.]

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

If the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Ormsby-Gore) will permit me, would like to say that we welcome the debate which has taken place. If the feelings which have been expressed in certain quarters of the House were held by Members it was a very good thing that they should be expressed, but I retain the view which I expressed at the opening of my speech that, on the whole, the strength of the case against the Government's action in this matter has not been very great. Nevertheless, we want to make it perfectly plain that inside the terms of the Balfour Declaration, and in fulfilment of the two obligations of the Mandate, we want to secure a very large measure of co-operation with both the parties in the country in respect of which we have undertaken the Mandate. If statesmen of other parties would take more helpful action than has been taken in this matter, we should value it very much, and I think it would be very much for the benefit of Palestine itself.

I ought to mention one point of detail referred to by the hon. Member for Stoke Newington (Sir G. Jones) in which he said, with reference to the labour schedule, that apparently we had forgotten all about it until there was a by-election in Whitechapel. That just shows the kind of party atmosphere existing. His statement is entirely unfounded. As the hon. Member knew quite well, the certificates had been suspended for the previous six months and it was entirely due to the fact that the application from the Jewish agency for the next six months was late, doubt under a genuine misunderstanding between them and the administration as to whether for the next six months there were to be applications for new certificates or the suspended certifi- 202 cates were to be dealt with, that there was any delay. They came in late from the Jewish agency, they were dealt with as rapidly as possible, as soon as the information was received, and there was no foundation for what has been suggested by the hon. Member.

§ Sir G. JONES

Why did you not issue the writ for the by-election?

§ Mr. ALEXANDER

I hope that, without any further feeling on this matter we shall, on both sides of the House, endeavour, as many speakers have done, to approach this matter in less of a party spirit, and to

help everybody, with goodwill, to bring about the desired result.

§ Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY

rose—

§ Dr. SHIELS

rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question he now put," but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

§ Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY

I do not want to delay the House, but there are two very important points raised in this debate which my right hon. Friend has not dealt with. I make all allowances for the Under-Secretary, who has not been long with us again after being on a sick bed—I have no complaint to make against him—but he rose rather quickly to move that the Question be now put. I have two points of great importance, and I would ask my right hon. Friend to show a little more seriousness in his treatment of this subject than would appear from his speech. He is a great acquisition to our party as a debater, but this is not a case for smart debating speeches across the Table. This is a very serious matter.

§ Mr. SPEAKER

rose—

§ Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY

May I ask, Mr. Speaker, on what ground you have interrupted my speech?

§ Mr. SPEAKER

Under the Standing Orders of the House the debate must now come to an end.

§ Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY

On a point of Order, Mr. Speaker—

§ Mr. SPEAKER

Order, order!

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§ It being Eleven of the Clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

§ The Orders of the Day were read, and postponed.

§ Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now Adjourn."

§ Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY

I wish to ask two questions, and I apologise to you, Mr. Speaker, if I appeared in any way to transgress your Ruling. I do not put my questions in any party

spirit, and I ask the Government to take this matter seriously. My first question is whether the Government propose even now to try and get a round table conference between the Jews, the Arabs and the Government. If that is done, I hope that the arrangements will not be made by the Colonial Office, which has shown itself unsympathetic on this question. Colonial secretaries have come under the lash of my tongue in the past and others will do the same unless the Colonial Office policy is changed. That is the first question: Is an attempt really going to be made to bring the Arab and Jewish leaders together? If the Arab leaders refuse, as they have up to now—and I am disappointed at the attitude of the Under-Secretary on this matter—they put themselves out of court, and we must come to some agreement with those who are prepared to take part in these negotiations. This is a constructive suggestion, and I hope that it will be followed. My right hon. Friend said that he was trying to find some agreement, I do not know with whom. The main agreement must be in Palestine itself, with those who can speak for all sections of the people—Moslems, Christians, Jews, and His Majesty's Government.

My second question is with regard to Transjordan. The hon. Member for the Isle of Ely (Mr. de Rothschild), whose speech was heard with great sympathy in all quarters of the House, referred to Transjordan, as did also the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel), but I rather gathered that they both looked upon Transjordan as a vast reserve of land for the settlement of Arabs. I want to make it clear that for many years there has been a desire 204 on the part of the Zionist organisations throughout the world to be allowed to settle on the other side of the Jordan. Everyone who knows the country will bear me out when I say that there are great tracts of fertile land there which are really more suitable for settlement than most of the unoccupied land on this side of the Jordan. [Interruption.] The desire is that the Jews should be allowed to go there. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Darwen said that a number of Palestinians have bought land on the other side of the Jordan. It has been bought by Arabs, and also by Jews. The only difference is that the Jews have not been allowed to settle there, those who have bought land there having rented it to Arabs.

There is no reason why they should not be allowed to settle there. Transjordan was originally intended as a buffer State between the Wahabi and Palestine, but any risk from the Wahabi has now



been removed by treaties and so on, and there is no reason why the Zionists should not be allowed to go into Transjordan and settle there, and Arabs, too, and I understand that the Arabs are prepared to raise a very large loan with the assistance of the Transjordan Government and settle the country with their help. This constructive suggestion has been made rather tentatively from the other side of the House, and I want to put it to my right hon. Friend. I will take another opportunity of doing so, because it is the only way out of the mess into which we have got ourselves. It is there that there is land available; it is there that there is land capable of being occupied and used without displacing a single Arab, if any have been displaced.

I can only conclude by repeating that the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty represents a great opportunity missed. He had an opportunity of removing much of the bitterness and pain that has been caused by the language in the White Paper. I take the word of the Government that they did not know the effect that this White Paper would have, they did not know what they were signing, or what they were passing. They are overworked; they have many grave problems on their shoulders, and too many problems are put on the shoulders of willing Members of the Government. The effect that this [205](#) White Paper would have was not known, but there was a great opportunity of making good this error, and of removing the misapprehensions and healing the wounds that this White Paper has caused. That opportunity was missed. Other opportunities will return.

[§ Mr. ERNEST BROWN](#)

I am sure the House appreciates the courtesy of the Under-Secretary in coming back as much as it dislikes the apparent discourtesy, which I hope is not real, of the First Lord of the Admiralty in going away. Private Members still have some rights. You, Sir, will not put the Question until half-past Eleven o'Clock, and the Minister ought to encourage hon. Members to listen to what other hon. Members have to say. I desire to put one question. There must be many Members in the House who are very anxious to know, is the policy of the Government at this moment the White Paper unaltered, as read by any ordinary intelligence or is it the White Paper modified—and if the latter, in what way has it been modified? The House and the whole country will be bemused when they have read the varying statements of Ministers and will find it difficult to know what is the right answer to that question. I am quite unable to see, although I have

followed all the debate, what the answer is, and the House is now entitled to a straight answer to that simple question.

[§ Mr. BRACKEN](#)

I hope the Under-Secretary of State will answer the question. This is a matter of the utmost importance. The hon. Gentleman will avoid a great deal of trouble if he will answer that perfectly straight question now, because it may mean a Vote of Censure from the Liberal party instead of their perfectly proper action to-day in setting down a Motion which would allow the matter to be discussed. We are bewildered by the number of statements that have been made from all parts of the House. The Government produce a great State document, and the biggest critic of that document has been the Prime Minister, who has overthrown the senile observations and policy of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. He has treated the document as if it was something that he had never seen before. He throws over the Government policy and yet we cannot get a straight answer [206](#) to the question. Does the White Paper still stand or is it withdrawn and, if it is not, I commend to the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. E. Brown) to represent to his leader the necessity of putting down a Vote of Censure.

[§ Dr. SHIELS](#)

I understand I can only speak again by leave of the House.

[§ Mr. SPEAKER](#)

It is a new Motion.

[§ Dr. SHIELS](#)

I should not like it to be thought that I or the Government was guilty of discourtesy when legitimate use is made of the forms of the House to ask questions, but I did not expect to have the privilege of addressing the House at this time of night and answering these somewhat startling questions which have been put so suddenly to me. I did not hear all the speech of my hon. and gallant Friend behind me, but I understand his first point was with regard to the round-table conference. I think that I made it clear that the Government were only too anxious to have a round-table conference or any other kind of conference which would help to bring peace and amity in Palestine and better relations between the two communities. The High Commissioner in Palestine has frequently explored these possibilities in connection with various matters which have come up. I pointed out with very great regret, in

connection with the Wailing Wall, how particularly important and suitable would have been a conference of this kind, whereas negotiations had to be conducted separately. I can assure the House that I am very glad to have heard from representatives of the Jewish people and others who have spoken as sympathisers this great desire for a more friendly feeling; and I can assure the House that, whatever else there may be against the Government, whatever justice there may be for criticisms, there certainly can be no justice in the suggestion that we should hesitate for one moment to grasp the opportunity of bringing the two communities closer together.

§ *Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY*

Are you inviting them?

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

I do not think that the hon. and gallant Member would press me to say off-hand that I, on behalf of the Government, should propose to send out a series of invitations.

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§ *Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY*

The hon. Gentleman must not misunderstand me. I do not want to press him. I thought it was a question of policy, and I was asking what it was.

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

The policy which I have indicated has been a constant and consistent one, and I have said quite definitely that efforts in this direction have repeatedly been made, and will continue to be made. We are encouraged by the suggestions which have been made in favour of this racial agreement, and certainly every effort will be made to have a conference or anything else which will improve the relations between these peoples. My impression is that the human element is of importance, and until we can get the human element right in Palestine we shall not have success. I think the second question was in regard to Transjordan, which has been frequently mentioned. As the hon. Member knows, Transjordan is marked out from the operations of the Jewish National Home, and I think he will also know that it is not a very likely or a suitable area for Jewish immigration.

§ *Mr. de ROTHSCHILD*

Will the Government give effect to the suggestion made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Darwen (Sir H. Samuel) and myself as to the settlement of Arabs in Transjordan?

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

Of course, that is a matter which is not new, and which has certain difficulties associated with it, but I shall be very pleased indeed to bring to the notice of my Noble Friend the fact that it has been mentioned again in this House, and pressed in the way it has been by those whose opinion on this matter we most respect. I shall be very glad to do this. I hope that I am not forgetting all my questions.

§ *Mr. BRACKEN*

What about the White Paper?

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

I was remembering that. The hon. Member for Leith (Mr. E. Brown) came next. He put a very definite question: Did the White Paper stand or did it not stand; was it modified or not? To which question, of course, I understand he would wish to obtain a categorical answer. I would say that I have already answered his question today. I have said that the White Paper 208 that has been issued has been very obviously misunderstood and a considerable part of the debate has been taken up in explaining to hon. Members what the misunderstandings were and in giving what I hope is a better understanding of the Government's intentions. The hon. Member for Leith (Mr. E. Brown) comes from very near my own quarter and I regret that he should have failed to be satisfied with a very full and lucid explanation.

§ *Mr. E. BROWN*

The hon. Gentleman and I are very good friends, but this is a matter, not of my hon. Friend or myself, but a matter of tremendous public interest and anxiety. [An HON. MEMBER: "In Whitechapel."] There are plenty of people outside Whitechapel who do not understand at the moment whether the White Paper remains the policy of the Government unmodified, or whether the Government policy is the White Paper modified, or whether the Government's policy is the White Paper simplified. We should like a simple answer to that question.

§ *Dr. SHIELS*

My reply to my hon. Friend is that I have already answered his question. The White Paper was put forward by the Government giving certain propositions and announcing certain intentions. Those propositions were misunderstood, and the intentions also apparently were not clear. We have endeavoured to make the matter clear, and I am glad to think that on the whole we seem to have

had the sense of the House with us.

§ Mr. E. BROWN

Then you are easily satisfied.

§ Dr. SHIELS

Well, the record of the debate is before the country, and anyone who is in doubt about the position will have an opportunity of reading the various speeches and getting the various points of view, but, I think that we have made clear what we wished to make clear—[Laughter.] I had not finished my sentence. We have made clear what we wished to make clear and that is that we stand by the full Mandate, that we intend to carry out the policy of the 1922 White Paper as we have done in the past, that we intend so far as we are responsible for the government of Palestine to see that the dual obligations of the Mandate are fully carried out and 209 that every opportunity is given for the development of the Jewish National Home consistent with the obligations imposed on us by the other side of the Mandate, and to work especially for the full prosperity and happiness of the whole population of Palestine.

§ Sir PATRICK FORD

I would suggest to the hon. Member that perhaps he might describe the policy that he has enunciated, not as the White Paper amplified or modified but as the White Paper stultified.

§ Major NATHAN

The position on a matter of such extreme importance is so unsatisfactory that it cannot be left as it stands at the moment. There is one question which hon. Members in the House and people outside, and indeed throughout the world, are waiting to have answered, and that is the question which I will give the Under-Secretary ample time to reply to, for the answer must be either "Yes" or "No." The question is: Does or does not the White Paper stand?

§ Mr. MOND

It is most surprising that we have not had an immediate answer to the question that has been put by the last speaker as to the attitude of the Government. Throughout this debate the controversy has been one which I have been utterly unable to understand. The Government have always tried to foist the controversy about the White Paper on the rest of the world. They drafted it, and then they called into question the intelligence of the whole civilised world as to what it meant. They said that everybody who had read it

was wrong, and that they were right. That is a ridiculous position to take up. One person above all others has realised the ridiculous position, and that is the Prime Minister, who has made this clear, not only by what he has said this afternoon, but by his cable to General Smuts. One thing should be understood thoroughly and completely, and that is the effect the White Paper will have. It will destroy the effort that is being made to build up a National Home in Palestine. It will have a disastrous effect upon the development of 210 the country, which has been solely carried on by the Jews. Until it is modified there is no hope for any future development in Palestine, and not only this Government but this country will suffer the opprobrium of those who throughout the world have hitherto trusted its word.

§ Captain GUNSTON

Apparently the question put by the hon. and gallant Member for Bethnal Green, North-East (Major Nathan), as to whether the Government stand by the White Paper, the Under-Secretary refuses to answer, although the answer is required throughout the world. Even after a day's debate, the House of Commons cannot be informed as to the position of the Government. I appeal to him to let the world know where the Government stand.

§ Dr. SHIELS

I have made it perfectly clear how the Government stand. It is quite obvious, surely, that the answer to the question put to me is that the White Paper, as explained and amplified to-day, certainly stands.

§ Mr. HORE-BELISHA

If the Under-Secretary cannot answer a question about policy, will he be so good as to answer a question about tactics. Could he tell us where the First Lord of the Admiralty is; why he has been so discourteous as to leave the House in the middle of some questions which were being (put to him by the hon. and gallant Member for Central Hull (Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy)?

§ Dr. SHIELS

If I might be allowed, I should like to say that I am quite sure that, the absence of the First Lord is not due to any discourtesy. I feel certain that my right hon. Friend would be most disappointed if he knew the position. I desire to apologise to the House on his behalf.

§ Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY

I do not complain at all.

§ Question put, and agreed to.

§ Adjourned accordingly at Twenty-nine Minutes  
after Eleven o'clock.