

# NATURE

No. 3852 SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 1943 Vol. 152

## CONTENTS

	Page
Plans for Reconstruction in Great Britain . . . . .	225
Reclaiming the Great Wren . . . . .	227
Archæological Finds from Greece and Crete. By Prof. R. M. Dawkins, F.B.A. . . . .	229
The Free Will Controversy. By Dr. H. Dingle . . . . .	229
The Coming-of-Age of Industrial Psychology. By Dr. Millais Culpin . . . . .	230
Edmond Halley and Geomagnetism. By Prof. S. Chapman, F.R.S. . . . .	231
More and Better Milk . . . . .	237
Some Czechoslovak Contributions to Chemistry in the Nineteenth Century. By Dr. Gerald Druce . . . . .	239
Obituaries :	
Dr. C. J. S. Thompson, M.B.E. By Dr. S. H. Daukes . . . . .	241
Dr. R. W. Gray. By Prof. James Ritchie . . . . .	241
News and Views . . . . .	242
Letters to the Editors:	
X-Irradiation of Rabbit Spermatozoa <i>in vitro</i> .—E. C. Amoroso and Dr. A. S. Parkes, F.R.S. . . . .	244
Possible Role of Birds in the Maintenance of Yellow Fever in West Africa.—Brigadier G. M. Findlay and Major T. A. Cockburn . . . . .	245
Synergistic Effect of Para-aminobenzoic Acid and Sulphapyridine on Penicillin.—J. Ungar . . . . .	245
The Development of the Angoumois Grain Moth ( <i>Sitotroga cerealella</i> Oliv.).—Dr. A. C. Crombie . . . . .	246
Frictional Properties of Metallic Films.—Dr. Robert Schnurmann; Dr. T. P. Hughes and J. L. Heaton . . . . .	247
Recording Low Relief in Metallic Surfaces by Cellulose Acetate Moulds.—Capt. A. T. J. Dollar . . . . .	248
A Neglected Constituent of Proteins, $\alpha$ -Amino-n-butyric Acid.—Dr. Walter C. Tobie . . . . .	249
Cleavability of Keratins Treated with Hot $\beta$ -Naphthol by Proteinases.—Dr. N. Lichtenstein . . . . .	249
Vacuum Filtration of Sewage Sludge.—J. M. Wishart, C. Jepson and L. Klein . . . . .	249
Infection of Laboratory Animals with Johne's Disease and Leprosy. By John Francis . . . . .	250
Evolution of the Planetary System . . . . .	251
The Mumbwa Caves, Northern Rhodesia. By M. C. Burkitt . . . . .	252
Recent Scientific and Technical Books . . . . .	Supp. ii

## PLANS FOR RECONSTRUCTION IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE dangers which follow on the Government's delay in announcing its decisions on the Uthwatt and Scott Reports and in laying down the broad lines of its planning policy become almost daily more apparent. The scope and imaginative courage of the plan for the County of London prepared for the London County Council (see p. 227) is one of the strongest of a number of recent challenges to action. The plan itself is still under discussion by the Council, but obviously it cannot be given proper consideration without reference to other planning authorities. At almost every point regional considerations arise; often they predominate, as, for example, in projects affecting the distribution of industry and of the industrial population.

It is not merely that the size and wealth of the London County Council ensure that its proposals must exert an important influence on the plans of the many smaller authorities. The distribution of open spaces, the layout of roads and railways, the shopping centres, markets and theatres may be largely domestic matters. The grand features of the plan—the dispersal of large numbers of population and the controlled location of industry—are matters of regional and national concern, and their determination involves decisions of national policy. Publication of the plan at the present moment has provided an outstanding example of the way in which the absence of authoritative decisions by the Government creates formidable difficulties in the preparation of reconstruction plans by local planning authorities.

No planning for the location of industry, either in the form of the dispersal of industry and population from congested areas or in the form of the direct provision of industrial employment where it is needed, is possible before the Government has made three fundamental decisions: on the Barlow Commission's proposals for the decentralization of industry; on the Scott Committee's qualifying proposals for the control of construction in rural areas; and on those of the Uthwatt Committee regarding the methods of land control by which the direction of industry and construction are to be effected. The development rights scheme dealing with undeveloped land and the proposals for strengthening public powers of acquisition in urban areas may not indeed be sufficient in the great urban problems such as that of London, as the Uthwatt Report itself indicates. There is, however, no indication of official initiative or of any national economic policy in these vital matters. Without such a national policy adequate schemes cannot be prepared, as the London plan itself demonstrates conclusively. Local planning is at a standstill until the national policy is made known. No lip service to reconstruction will clear the Government of something more than a suspicion of deliberate obstruction if this position persists.

A further difficulty exemplified in the London plan is also emphasized in Guy Hunter's "The British

Editorial and Publishing Offices

MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.,

ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.

Telephone Number: Whitehall 8831

Telegrams: Phusis Lesquare London

Advertisements should be addressed to

T. G. Scott & Son, Ltd., Talbot House, 9 Arundel Street, London, W.C.2

Telephone: Temple Bar 1942

The annual subscription rate is £4 10 0, payable in advance, inland or abroad.

All rights reserved. Registered as a Newspaper at the General Post Office



Way in Local Rule",\* and in a recent "Occasional Paper" of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research† by Prof. J. R. Hicks and U. K. Hicks. In the latter paper, which gives a further example of the important contribution which the Institute is continuing to offer to social science and reconstruction, Prof. J. R. Hicks and U. K. Hicks present part of the results of an inquiry into the burden of local taxation which they are conducting on behalf of the Institute. Although this investigation of county boroughs in Britain was limited to an attempt to supply answers to two questions of fact, its conclusions as to policy and as to the functions of local government, together with its observations on the Beveridge Report, give it an importance highly relevant in the present connexion regarding the relations between central and local government in planning.

To the two questions of fact the report returns a straight answer. The main reason for disparity in rates is disparity of wealth. A poor town cannot get enough revenue to reach an average standard demanded by public opinion, backed by direct and indirect pressure of the central government, without imposing a crushing poundage. A rich town can reach the same standard without any strain. As regards the recrudescence of the rate problem, the general growth in the nation's economic prosperity during the nineteen-thirties led very naturally to an increase in local expenditure, which in the fields of health and education left a larger share of the increase to be borne by the rates. The decrease of the old Poor Law also placed unforeseen responsibilities on the local authorities, but the revolution in the standards of public assistance was by far the most important factor in the renewed pressure on the rates. To preserve the national resilience against future economic shocks by preventing such possibilities before they occur, the authors suggest that the endemic crisis of public assistance could be ended in a way altogether consistent with present aspirations for social security and also profoundly consistent with the natural evolution of English institutions by a National Board of Guardians to deal with domiciliary relief.

Once again, therefore, we are brought face to face with the need for a declaration of general policy in regard to local government reform, and this in a field closely touching that covered by the Beveridge Report. Moreover, Messrs. Hicks make some pertinent observations on local government generally which accentuate the need for decision. Local government needs to be equitable financially, but it should also be an effective organ of democracy, and this it clearly is not as we have it at present. Again, it is no longer necessary as formerly for such matters as relief to be local responsibilities. Messrs. Hicks point out that we are freer than our ancestors to choose what functions should be allotted to local

government, and that we should make our choice, not merely on grounds of efficiency in administration but also with a view to the possibility of using local government to give practice in the working of democracy to far wider circles than can be brought into any intimate contact with the national parliamentary organization.

This goes to the roots of the matter, and no passage in this valuable study deserves to be more widely pondered than that in which the authors indicate criteria on which such a choice could be made. In particular, they refer to the opportunity for achievements of a distinctly local character offered by the field of 'civic amenities' in its broadest sense, including not only highways, housing, parks and public lighting, but also town planning and public buildings. Nor is this all. Analysis of the subject from a point of view totally different from that of Sir William Beveridge has led to the same conclusion as to the urgency of transferring public assistance to central control. This paper, however, directs attention to the dangers which would arise if the Beveridge proposals were enacted and no alteration made in the financial relations between the central government and the local authorities. If the Social Security Plan is not to be, in one important respect, a sham, its cost must be distributed fairly, not only between classes but also between localities. Furthermore, apart from the suggestion, to avoid this danger, of a national rate, emphasis is once more laid on the necessity of a proper regional co-ordination of hospital services. The present extremely haphazard development of such services involves grave danger of disproportionate burdens being placed on the poorer authorities.

The same necessity for finding at the centre the ground plans of policy and the solution of legal and financial obstacles is stressed by Guy Hunter in his pamphlet on the "British Way in Local Rule". For many of the proposed reforms of education, transport and public utility services, as in planning, the areas of operation differ widely from the present local government areas. This administrative difficulty must be faced if we are to draw effectively on the local councils for their experience, leadership and goodwill in the execution of policy. The London plan itself both affords evidence of the value of local tradition and experience and challenges the Government to declare its mind and policy. Paralysis, if not chaos, must speedily result if we are left much longer in doubt as to whether a general reform of local government areas and powers is in prospect, or whether it is proposed to tackle planning first, grafting a new pattern of planning authorities on to the existing structure of local government.

The challenge to Government and Parliament to decide and act on the fundamental assumptions on which the London plan rests is as unmistakable as the challenge which the plan offers to the imagination and resource of London's citizens. Fully as emphatically, however, the recent debate in the House of Commons on the Forestry Commission showed the dangers which have attended the failure to plan with foresight, determination and consistency in the period since the War of 1914-18. The recent report of the

\* The British Way in Local Rule. By Guy Hunter. (Oxford Pamphlets on Home Affairs, No. H (8).) (London: Oxford University Press, 1943.) 6d. net.

† Standards of Local Expenditure: A Problem of the Inequality of Incomes. By J. R. Hicks and U. K. Hicks. (National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Occasional Papers, No. 3.) Pp. 61. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1943.) 4s. 6d. net.



Forestry Commission puts the problem of afforestation, agriculture and rural reconstruction in its right perspective but, as the report itself indicates and as Mr. Clement Davies reminded the House of Commons, in spite of a parallel report twenty-five years ago, immediately the danger was passed, we reverted to our old chaotic methods.

There can be no question that in this particular matter the Government is right in proceeding with caution, and the assurance of financial continuity in the vigorous execution of whatever policy is finally adopted is all that could reasonably be expected at the moment. Afforestation is essentially a problem demanding a long-term policy of assured continuity. It has to be related to agricultural policy—its relation to hill-grazing requirements was repeatedly stressed in the debate, and Sir William Jowitt intimated that the Government is awaiting reports on the hill sheep industry—and a long-term policy for agriculture has yet to be formulated. Again, afforestation, like the larger question of agriculture, is linked with the broad question of export and import policy in our post-war trade, and no continuous long-term policy can be determined without full consideration of these questions also.

The report itself received some criticism as well as praise in the debate and, whatever its intrinsic merits, the scheme proposed is confused in aim and gives no clear guidance as to the real objectives of afforestation policy. There was, however, general support for the view that there should be a more effective central administration of forestry, whether or not it was placed under the Minister of Agriculture, and less reliance on, or tenderness towards, private owners than the report itself suggests. Sir William Jowitt assured the House that forestry would be considered along with post-war commitments as a whole, and that pronouncement on policy would not long be delayed.

With that assurance there would be no reason for dissatisfaction, but for the Government's own record in the field of reconstruction policy. It has to be admitted that some of the matters raised in the Forestry Commission's report, as was noted in the debate, touch on the proposals of the Uthwatt Report in regard to the ownership of land. Others affect the policy of rural reconstruction raised by the Scott Report. Once again we come back to the central point at issue, that over the whole intricate field of post-war reconstruction certain broad and basic decisions of policy are required of the Government before policy can be formulated, nationally or locally, in particular fields, and plans prepared for the execution of such policy regionally, locally, or in specialized fields. Appreciation of the complexity of the situation and the general interlocking of the many post-war problems is widespread and tempers what might otherwise be a dangerous impatience with the Government's delay. If, however, that delay continues indefinitely, impatience may pass into a sense of frustration, with disastrous consequences not only to the war effort but also to our chances of establishing the harmonious co-operation of all the many elements in our institutions—local government,

central administration, Parliamentary oversight and technical and professional advice, and above all the keen interest of the average citizen in local rule—on which depend our hopes of building a worthy post-war world.

## RECLAIMING THE GREAT WREN

### County of London Plan

Prepared for the London County Council by J. H. Forshaw and Prof. Patrick Abercrombie. Pp. xii+188+59 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1943.) 12s. 6d. net.

**S**ELDOM in the history of Great Britain can such a gigantic scheme of land reclamation have been put forward as a practicable proposal; seldom can such a case have been made out for powers to alter the physical environment of a great population. The book of the County of London Plan is first and foremost a quite remarkable essay in public relations, in the right kind of publicity for the special aspect of democratic action which we call 'town and country planning'. Published at a price which must be suited to the purchaser rather than the promoter, beautifully set-out and illustrated, and finely printed, with large coloured maps, descriptive photographs, and a host of diagrams and line drawings, the book is the best ambassador to the public that the plan could have. Neither Moscow nor New York were surveyed so ably and in so popular a format, and only Amsterdam can claim to have produced anything comparable to it. It is not possible to read it without becoming deeply interested in the future of London, as in its past; and in a world of war-time restrictions, this achievement of authors, publishers, printers, illustrators and engravers is, in itself, a matter for congratulation.

With such a complex subject, expert presentation is something to be thankful for; the gist of the matter is nevertheless far from easy to analyse. Clearly the main contribution which the plan makes is its imaginative grouping of the residential neighbourhoods and the commercial and administrative centres, of which London is composed. Its most important proposal is therefore one of density, that is to say, the size of the population and its disposition within the county boundaries, the numbers that are being—or should be encouraged to be—moved out. The elements that must contribute to the realization of such a comparatively stabilized pattern, namely, the roads and railways, the location of workplaces and the provision and maintenance of open space, are all secondary to the social reorganization which is the basis of the plan.

Before examining the road or rail proposals, therefore (which are in fact described as tentative, and for the consideration of a "specially-appointed investigating body"), one must consider the essential principles involved in the proposed re-grouping of the population. These principles are in harmony with enlightened thought in the realms of housing, social science and public administration; nevertheless the consequences of their application in any particular case are liable to be intensely controversial. It may mean flats instead of houses, footways instead of traffic approaches, restriction to a local rather than a central shopping area, or a reduction in the time of journeys to work. Briefly, the plan contemplates "the conservation or creation of communities which