

Captain Brooke: That was the next matter I was going to raise. The hon. Member might feel it might be almost as probable on the whole sale of the Border as it is in Wexfordshire.

Mr. Pitt: It is the value of experience.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I would ask hon. Members to allow the hon. and gallant Member to speak without unnecessary interruption.

Mr. Pitt: It all depends what you interpret as unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker: Would hon. Members allow the business of the House to be conducted in an orderly manner?

Captain Brooke: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That will make life much easier for me.

I should like to ask my right hon. and gallant Friend what measures he can take to protect our pig industry. This is something very close to my heart as we have the Ulster Swift factory in Lisnastitton. Great damage is being done to us. Indeed, this smuggling is being rebuffed in a way by the British taxpayer. Something should be done to stop it.

The Prime Minister referred to the Agricultural Trust. The time has come when the Minister of Agriculture should throw a little more light on its actions. No doubt it has been very wise to keep quiet until it has achieved something. It is somewhat that it was going to start a grass-drying plant and it has also done quite a lot with flax. We in this House should now have a little more information on the concrete achievements of which I am sure we are going to be very proud in the future. It is a conception of agricultural development which is quite unique. It has got a lot of money to spend and I would hope its achievements are going to be great.

Lastly, I repeat that I could not find anything at all in the Queen's Speech about tourist development. Recently the previous Minister of Commerce announced that the Fulford Commission from Scotch College University would inquire into the tourist industry. This is

an industry which employs somewhere around 25,000 people yet the total mention of that in the Prime Minister's speech was one and a half inches. This was on a tremendous inquiry into one of our greatest industries. It is a £250 million industry and there is no mention of it in the Queen's Speech. I repeat it appears that not only the public but the Government consider that it is not an industry which is worthy of more mention. While congratulating the Government on the future legislation I should like to note the absence of any reference to these various items.

5.29 p.m.

Mr. Hume: My right hon. friend was received with cheer; I would deem it an obligation upon myself on speaking here to-day first to make reference to my predecessor for the People and to say that I feel it my duty on behalf of the people of People to place on record their appreciation of the long service Mr. McKewen gave not only to them but to the people of the North.

I would say further that I appreciated very much the sentiments and the tone of yesterday's speeches and in particular that of the hon. and learned Member for South Antrim (Mr. Ferguson). The sentiments of the Prime Minister's speech were equally acceptable but I would hope that the new intake and the new focus on the opposite benches will strengthen the possibility that for the first time sentiment may be transformed into action to tackle the basic problems which prevent us having a just society in the North of Ireland. We have had sentiment for quite a long time and no action. It was the vast amount of sentiment and the lack of action that created or was partially responsible for the creation of the impotence that has led to the activities of the last four months.

The real question that hangs over this House today and indeed over the whole community is: are politics going to remain on the course or are they going to be brought out in this Chamber? With respect, before that question can be answered certain attitudes will have to be clarified. The first is the attitude of people on the opposite benches to the hon. Members on this side of the House because it was without a shadow of

doubt the failure of hon. Members on the opposite benches to listen to Members on this side of the House—who for years have put forward grievances and have not been listened to—that has been one of the causes of people losing faith in parliamentary democracy.

When a man is elected to represent people in public he is elected to express their fears, their suspicions and their beliefs. Hon. Members on this side of the House have done so for years but they were not listened to. At times, in fact, rather than listened to they were pilloried. Long before 10 October 1, as a private citizen, remember reading an account of a speech made by my hon. Friend the Minister for Health (Mr. Pitt) at Trafalgar Square in which, in my opinion, he did nothing other than express the mood at that time of the people he represented. He warned, as was his public duty to do, and he was pilloried for his pains. Therefore, if politics are to flourish in any way whatsoever and if this House is to be the place where the essential issues and problems of the people are to be debated, then the voices of the elected representatives on this side of the House must be listened to.

Secondly, it is clear that listening to these voices will not lead in any wrong direction because the experience of the past four months has shown that the essential truth of what we have all been saying has not been in question, but has proved to be right; recent exchanges between the Prime Minister and the former Minister of Home Affairs revealed that even further. That represents the attitude in the Opposition.

On the question of the attitude of the Government side, there are two possible courses both requiring examination of conscience by the representatives of both attitudes if we are to have normal political activity. There are those on the opposite benches who have been unreservedly described as the twelve tribes or the twelve apostles, depending on which view one takes. They say they are Unionist. I take a Unionist to mean a person who believes in the link with Britain and who believes that it will provide economic and social pro-

perty for all the people and for the whole community. That is what I take a Unionist to be. It is a conviction held by many genuine people in this community and it is a legitimate conviction to hold.

But if men hold this conviction they should be prepared to back the preference of this community with this conviction in view, because if people are genuine Unionists they should not be afraid to prove that they can develop the whole community and respect its rights without fear of their belief being proved wrong. While the finger is being pointed at people on the streets as being essentially the cause of trouble and a danger to our stability it is my view that there is more to Members and the greatest danger to that stability, and, in a perfect sort of way, they are also the greatest threat to the Constitution which they claim to hold is clearly because their view is that our community should be maintained at the expense of the fundamental rights of a section of it and by repression, though, as has been shown over the last four months, all that repression does is to create trouble and violence from which no one benefits.

Then there is the attitude of the other section of the hon. Members opposite—the attitude that has been expressed in the few points of order, the attitude that has been described as moderate and progressive. I ask: is it moderate or progressive to deny universal franchise in local government? Is it moderate or is it progressive to support the existing rigid electoral boundaries at local government level? Is it moderate or progressive to maintain the Special Powers Act? Is it moderate to ask, as we ask, that there should be universal franchise at local government level, that there should be an end to gerrymandering, or that the Special Powers Act should be wiped off the Statute book?

How many hon. Members on the opposite benches would be proud to see the Special Powers Act published in any English newspaper? How many would be proud of it as a piece of legislation? How many would be proud of the fact that in one man, the Minister of Home Affairs, rests the power to suspend citizens' inquiries on dead pri-

[Mr. Hume]

case? How many hon. Members opposite are even aware that a person

"who is suspected of acting, having acted or about to act in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of the peace?"

can be arrested without warrant and imprisoned without trial? In other words, a person can be arrested without warrant and imprisoned without trial for being suspected of having bad thoughts. That is what this regulation amounts to.

What is moderation as it is understood by the people today? As I have already said, it amounts to the denial of universal franchise and the refusal to face up to it when everyone knows it is coming and that it must come. A clear statement that the next local government elections will be fought on a universal franchise would do much to take the heat out of the present situation as would a clear statement that the incorporation of local government will not involve a larger government. This is the moderate attitude and the attitude that is opposed to what is described as extreme. But these are words which need careful and clear definition. The five points have been put forward as a reasonable attempt to meet the reasonable demands of this side of the House. Some are reasonable and some must be welcomed as genuine attempts to meet these demands.

A fair price system for the allocation of houses is undoubtedly welcome and essential but it would be a very foolish person who would believe that it would solve the serious housing problems which face this community. Underneath the underlying evil of housing allocation has been the fact that housing has been used as a political instrument at local government level. The only real way to remove injustice in housing is to take all housing problems completely out of the hands of local government and put them into the hands of a central housing authority working through local committees with tenant representation. This would not only remove it from the political arena and prevent people and houses from becoming political tools but would also ensure professional attention at every level of housing problems.

Another point is the Commission for Derry. As a Derryman who knows many of the people in that Commission I would say quite frankly that I am happy that these men have the interests of Derry at heart and will do their best for its development. I have no doubt either that if they are given full Government support they will make a major contribution to the solution of the serious housing problems in that area. But what of other areas? What of Tyrone and Fermanagh? What about the housing problems there?

The appointment was announced yesterday of a Parliamentary Commissioner whom I do not know and I am sure no one on this side of the House knows, but whom we all presume to be an impartial person. Am his powers wide enough and are not the major grievances at local government level? Are there not the grievances that require real investigation and a commissioner to investigate?

Mr. E. V. Simpson: How, hon.

Mr. Hume: The Commission of Inquiry whose other members were announced yesterday has already been welcomed by all hon. Members on this side of the House because, as we have said, we have nothing to hide. It has been welcomed as well by those who organise people on the streets because again we have nothing to hide, but what does "immediate cause" in its terms of reference mean? Does it simply mean that it can investigate only what took place immediately prior to the disturbances or protests, or does it mean that it may go deeper into the root causes of social injustices that have given rise to all that has happened?

The Prime Minister in his speech yesterday rightly mentioned that underlying all the recent disturbances were serious social and economic problems. I have already said it is the duty of any hon. Member to express freely the fears and suspicions of his constituents. What happened in Derry on 14 October did not start on 14 October. It has been building up for quite a while. Reported warnings of what might happen have been given. When the direction error was made by the then Minister of

Home Affairs the final match is a bow-tie that had been building up for years was it.

What has been happening there for years? There have been genuine fears and suspicions and I am here to express them because if they are not expressed then there is no hope of any understanding of how the people feel and neither will there be any hope of reaching a solution to these problems. Fears and suspicions have been mounting ever since the Matthews Report was published in 1961. That report and subsequent Government statements showed that the population trends west of the Burn was going to lose 11,000 people in a 20-year period. The 1961 census has already demonstrated that this movement is taking place.

Suspensions were strengthened by the foundation of the new town of Cragg-aven and by the resignation of its chief planner on the grounds that he felt it should have been in Derry. It was further strengthened by the closing of the railways and by the resignation again of another Englishman. Both of these people to us seemed to have no use to print and one of them on his resignation pointed out that he was being asked to close the second rail link after the 1970 elections.

Then there was the deplorable and criminal story of the second university. To me that is where all the present trouble started because that brought the awakening of the public conscience. The Prime Minister denounced the New University yesterday and he made reference to the Government with to maintain university education in Derry and yet in this morning's edition of a Derry newspaper which strongly supports the Government the front-page headline refers to the fears in Derry about the future of Magee.

The present Ministry of Education signed an agreement which was made in 1965 that undergraduate education would be maintained in Derry. Already two of the departments which were to be there have moved with the result that the student intake has been seriously reduced. There is a strong feeling among the staff and among the people that rather than being kept alive

Magee University College is being slowly strangled and that what we will have in future there in terms of university education is simply adult education. I should like to point out that that would not be accepted by people in Derry of any shade of opinion and I am sure that the hon. and gallant Member for Derry City (Commander Anthony) will agree with me in that.

Then, plus the reorganisation of local government, plus the movement of functions, for example, of the county council from Derry to Coleraine, including even the court in the recent election, point in one direction and cast anyone there our people in these areas for lacking and fearing that it means economic deprivation for the whole area; that it means a continuance of unemployment and migration? This is what people feel and all these factors, combined with the basic denial of civil rights, has led to the recent disturbance.

There is fear, too, that the reorganisation of local government will mean a larger gerrymander. Time will tell whether or not that is so, but I would point out again this would not be accepted or acceptable. Any attempt to divert proper functions from the city of Derry to Coleraine or indeed from other centres in the north-west would be resisted and opposed because all these suspicions are fuelled up by the harsh reality of unemployment and migration. Many hon. Members on the opposite side of the House have no personal experience of what that means. On this side of the House, unfortunately, we have. We know what it does to people.

Therefore, I would say that if we are to have a just society it can only be brought about by certain fundamental attitudes and principles in view. It can only be achieved if we believe in the equality of rights of every citizen in our community; it can only be done if we approach the problems with justice in our minds and in our hearts; it can only be done if we believe in one another and if we are prepared to wipe out the prejudices and fears that are the roots of past hatreds. As I say, that can only be built on the basis of justice and equality. The major responsibility for

[Mr. Home:]

the creation of a just society and fundamental justice in this community rests not on this side of the House but on both. Members opposite who have in their hands the power to do it tomorrow. [Mrs. Members: Hear, hear.]

1:45 p.m.

Mr. Curran It is customary for the person following an hon. Member who has made his Maiden Speech to congratulate him and to pay tribute to him. I have particular pleasure on this occasion in congratulating the hon. Member for Fife (Mr. Home) on a very fine Maiden Speech. I have heard him speaking as a member of audiences and I expected that his Maiden Speech would be of the type he has made, but I think it must have been an eye-opener to certain other hon. Members and I sincerely congratulate him on it.

It has already been pointed out that there are many new faces in the House and also one new girl. It has been suggested that this is something new in this Parliament—to have so many new people in such a short space of time. This morning I was doing a little bit of checking. I will be five years in this House on 1st July and during that time there have been considerable changes in personnel. I find that in five years I have changed from being the most junior member to being the 20th most senior member. This must be an eye-opener to some people outside this House who say that this place never changes and that the same people are there for years and years.

I think that anyone looking at the composition of the House and remembering that fact about the past five years will be able to give those people their answer. I would say to the new people that they should not be too long getting into their stride because in a very short time they will be the old people in the House like myself. I hope that changes in attitudes will come about as quickly as changes in personnel. I doubt it very much following the recent elections but time will soon tell whether the changes in the attitudes of people in this House have gone along as fast as the changes in personnel.

I can only speak from my own experience. I would say that over this past while, and out of five and a half of those five years, my attitude and my feeling in this House has been largely one of frustration. It is only over the past few months that I managed to get away from this feeling and to begin to feel that something was happening in this community. It was only then that I felt that things were changing rapidly and despite the efforts of certain people, still unfortunately represented in this House, nothing could be done to even this side of things.

It must be pointed out that the change of attitude in this community and the changes that are obvious have come about not because of what has happened here but rather despite what has happened here. Street politics have had every impact on this community than parliamentary politics. I think this is a lesson which has to be learned. I feel that the hon. Member for Fife put his finger on what has been wrong and I agree completely with him.

One trend that has remained constant over these past five years in my experience has been the unwillingness of people on the Government side of the House to treat the Opposition as an Opposition. Time and time again over the last five years this has been noted despite what speeches, sentiments, suggestions and proposals are made from this side of the House. No matter how objective and how responsible those proposals have been they have been turned down because they emanated from this side of the House. On occasions even when we had an Official Opposition it was treated with what I can only describe as contempt.

This happened on many occasions. Some of the proposals that are now coming from the Government side and which are now being suggested by the Government themselves are proposals which have been made time and time again by the Opposition but because at the time they came from the Opposition they were turned down, I need not go any further than one of the proposals made in the Queen's Speech, the abolition of the grand jury. Repeatedly both in this House and in another place