

CHAPTER SIX

FOR AND AGAINST PLACE-MEN

"If we had done as the kings told us, we should all have been slaves. If we had done as the priests told us, we should all have been idiots. If we had done as the doctors told us, we should all have been dead. We have been saved by disobedience. We have been saved by that splendid thing called independence, and I want to see more of it."

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, 1865.

THE EXECUTIVE IN PARLIAMENT

POSSIBLY, in the previous chapters, I have been too harsh on place-men. They are essential to Parliament; had they not been there, we should not be here, and I have a sense of parentage to the whole breed. I discovered that Parliament in the 15th century was full of them, sitting for boroughs, cities and counties, exactly as their successors do today—'ambitious human leeches', or 'the heart and core of the Constitution'? At the top of the tree were the Treasurer and controller of the Household, under the direction of the Lord Steward of the Household. They moved the Speaker to the Chair and assisted the Chair in managing business. The Speaker lodged in the Royal Palace as the guest of the Chamberlain of the Household. But besides them were endless King's Knights and Serjeants—and, for Weymouth-Regis or Totnes, there sat collectors of customs, tellers of the Exchequer, and escheators, 'alias extortioners', often nominated by Chancery or Treasury. They began coming in about the time of the Good Parliament (1376); they reached a maximum when they drowned Clarence in a butt of Malmsey wine (1478). Hotly competing with the squirearchy, they still subsist on Treasury briefs, or Agriculture

and Fisheries, or the supervision of shelters, or refugees, or Empire migration, or Home Guards or Scottish forests. In old days they made a living out of Parliament; now they answer to Parliament for their activities—while still making that 'living' by the respectable vote of Parliament. But it is the same crowd, ever denounced by their fellow Members, ever useful and active—in fact the Executive in Parliament.

It was in the following manner that officials first came into and finally transformed Parliament. Members of Parliament were paid, and paid by their constituencies, 4s. a day for county members, 2s. a day for borough members—the equivalent of £8 and £4 a day in present money. It is not too much to say that these handsome 'expenses' did much to perpetuate Parliament. A trip to town at your fellows' expense has always been popular. The most important people wanted their annual trip to town, acquired a vested interest in it; and the King would not stand in the way of such a good old established custom. But the constituencies did not enjoy it, especially as sessions became longer and more expensive. Boroughs began to refuse to elect anyone; they made no returns to the sheriff, pleading poverty. Quite half the boroughs dropped out altogether by 1435.

Those that continued to send up 'burgesses resident' suddenly found many who were not resident quite willing to pose as 'resident' and go to Parliament without pay. These carpet-baggers—Crown officials, budding lawyers, younger sons of the squirearchy—came to Parliament from boroughs they had often never seen. Dozens of boroughs belonged to the Crown, like Melcombe Regis, or to the Duchy of Cornwall, which was a Crown fief; and for many of these the 'return' was filled up at the Chancery with Treasury or Chancery nominees. By 1441 23 out of 259 identified Members of Parliament were carpet-baggers and 54 officials; by

1491 42 out of 278 identified Members of Parliament were carpet-baggers and 62 were officials; and some of great importance, such as Sir Thomas Lovell, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir John Riseley, Steward of the Duchy; Sir Richard Guildford, Master of the Ordnance; Richard Empson and John Dudley; and Robert Lytton, Under-Treasurer of England.

Besides the desire of lesser men to get to the Court, high officials found it desirable to have a seat in Parliament.

DRIVEN OUT BY HIGH LOOKS

Originally Parliament, that Parliament which became the House of Lords, was a 'Court' held in the King's House at Westminster. The Judges, the other King's Servants, and such magnates civil or spiritual as he (or the Chancery) chose to summon to consultation, came to the King's High Court. After 1264,¹ when the Commons were first summoned, the summons to the Upper House (to the King's Court) began to be regularized: all the Judges, Bishops, many Abbots and the heads of the great feudal houses were summoned to attend. The King's Servants, the officials of his household, did not get special writs of summons; they were on the spot, at home. At home—but not for long. The barons summoned by writ, valuing their privilege, began to look askance at the Controller of the Household, asking: "Who is he, that he should sit among us?" The King's Attorney was met with 'high looks'. By 1450 all such officials who had no independent right to be there as Bishop or Baron had been cold-shouldered out of the House of Lords, and the Judges had been reduced to the silence of 'speak when your opinion is asked'. So, cold-shouldered from the Lords, the high officials began to take seats in the Common

¹ Summoned by writs issued in Nov. 1264 to meet 21 Jan., 1265.

House, to sit on the benches near the Speaker while others stood, to advise the Speaker on the conduct of business, to form in fact the germ of the present Cabinet. Any constituency was proud to return them; they demanded no pay, but dispensed instead favour and patronage.

So, by 1450, we begin to find that notable and unique feature of British Democracy—the Executive in Parliament—in the Lords and in the Commons. They held places at Court; they were place-men—and so was the ‘keeper of the coney on the lawn at Clarendon’, or ‘the keeper of the water of Fosse by York’.

Gradually the minor place-men failed to survive the competition or reach the House of Commons. The desire of the gentry and the lawyers for seats in the Commons led them to offer not merely to serve for nothing, but to entertain the electors; and in that the keeper of the coney could no longer compete. The servants of my Lord of Stafford ceased to be good enough, and my Lord’s sons were elected instead—for such ‘boroughs’ as Bletchingley in Surrey, owned by the Earl of Stafford, and known now, only, as the hamlet which once returned two Members to Parliament.

COURT AND COUNTRY

Therefore by 1600 the Executive was firmly fixed and permanently in Parliament—in one House or the other—as was the King himself. It was Henry VIII who used and magnified a Parliament of landowners. In Stuart times the all-powerful spirearchy began to contest power with the Crown and Ministers. Parties become ‘Court’ or ‘Country’. The place-men were all ‘Court’; the squires all ‘Country’—‘country-bumpkins’ in the ‘Courtiers’, and ‘jackanapes’ in the squires’ language. We begin to find Committees of the House, and Chairmen of those Committees, becoming leaders

of opposition to the Court. We might have slid into the French system of government by Committees with *rappor-teurs* had not Civil War ended in the domination by the Crown with its swarms of 'pensioners'.

For the place-men had come back again in fresh guise. The Court Party were recipients of grants of monopolies as well as posts at Court. They got Regiments and employed a Lieutenant, or they got just simply pensions, so long as they were 'good'. After all, were not the King and his Ministers in receipt of pensions from the French King? The 1661-78 Parliament is known as the 'Pensioners' Parliament', and was naturally the longest-lived Parliament in our history.

The appellation 'Lieutenant' (*lieu-tenant*—place-holder) had acquired too military a sound. It only survives civilly in our Lord-Lieutenant of a County. In lieu thereof, the blessed word 'deputy' arrived, and the 18th-century Parliament flourished on deputies. A man might be appointed Governor of Carolina, and take the pay, but he appointed a deputy to do the work; or he was made Secretary to the Barbados, appointed a deputy and never knew where the islands were! A post carrying a high fee, such as Clerk of the Pells, was granted in reversion four deep, and the lucky holder employed someone else to write on skins. A Teller-ship of the Exchequer was worth £8000 a year, and was 'in the gift' of the First Lord of the Treasury, whom we now call Prime Minister. There were no duties attached thereto, but a seat in the House improved one's chances of 'landing the big fish'.

AN OFFICE OF PROFIT UNDER THE CROWN

Naturally the country squires tried to stop the growth of these perquisites to others, so did the constituencies

which had elected (as they hoped) honest men. Party strife was exceptionally virulent during the reign of Queen Anne. Whigs and Tories gave no quarter. Every possible borough election was contested, most returns were petitioned against. One can imagine the indignation of Lichfield, after electing a Chetwynd of Tory principles, at finding him accepting a comfortable office (perhaps for life) from the Whig Government. Of course they could turn him out of his seat in three years' time, but meanwhile he was a 'rat', a 'renegade', a 'traitor'. The Parliament of landed squires got so far as to pass an Act of Parliament which compelled anyone who received an office of profit under the Crown to resign his seat at once. He might, however, stand for re-election. That Act, to my disgust and in spite of my opposition, has recently been whittled away, so that an unpopular Government can now make a more unpopular appointment without having to select a man with a safe seat. If our hungry horde of present place-men had been obliged to face a by-election there would be far fewer of them, and there would be more men serving without profit. I need hardly say that careful definition of what exactly was an 'office of profit under the Crown' enabled an increasing number of beneficiaries to slip through without a by-election. It was then that Sir Robert Walpole did *not* declare 'Every man has his price', and the Duke of Newcastle, acting on that principle, managed to control the House of Commons.

AMERICA TAKES A HAND

Such were the place-men of the 18th century, whose existence created the war with America, and whose destruction (on Dunning's Motion¹ in 1779) ended Lord North's

¹ Dunning proposed and carried in the House of Commons a resolution affirming "that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." M.S.

government and finally the war with America. Unfortunately, to the eternal sorrow of all succeeding ages, fear of these place-men induced the Fathers of the American Constitution to separate for ever the Executive from the Legislature in Congress.

Dunning's Motion and sixty years of subsequent legislation, and finally the great Reform Bill in 1832, put an end to the scandal of the place-men. The sinecures and pocket-boroughs vanished with them. These may be coming back in different guise, but now, with live constituencies to correct yes-men and suppress the nodders, if they should come back we can look after them. Our Constitution is what we choose to make it. But for all time, so far as I can see, the United States of America, with a written Constitution, are committed to a fatal divorce of the Executive from the Legislature, based entirely on a misconception of Parliament and dislike of the temporary 18th-century blemish.

CONTRACTORS WITH GOVERNMENT

However, we have had a very dusty type of place-men, and may get them again. Let us balance up. What should we lose if suchlike were excluded from Parliament? Already all who have contracts to supply Government with goods are definitely excluded by heavy penalties from sitting in the House of Commons. That prohibition is a legacy of 18th-century corruption, and a stupid inconvenience today which is continually involving us in personal Indemnity Bills. If Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, Ltd., sell mugs to a Government canteen, all is fair, though I be a director¹; but if instead of being a director of a company I were a partner

¹ I am not, and never have been.

of a firm, the 'common informer'¹ could convert me into his private gold-mine. It will probably occur to most good democrats that as there must be Government contractors, it would be better to have them where you can see them, and to keep them in good company.

As I am not in favour of excluding directors or shareholders in companies 'which have dealings with the State', I am not in favour of excluding individuals who have such dealings. Still less do I favour excluding the Fighting Officers, or H.M. Ambassador to Moscow, or the Prime Minister, or the Governor of the Bank of England, or the Financial Secretary to the War Office. I see no real advantage in excluding from the House of Commons clergymen of the Church of England. We might humanize them, and they might spiritualize us.²

In fact place-men are what the public make them. If it is 'good form' to swindle and sell your vote and get something for nothing, one can always turn English gentlemen into the 18th-century type of place-men. If it is 'bad form', one gets the scrupulous honour of Victorian days in which it was my privilege to be born. In any case, it is better to have them on the benches beside one rather than nosing around Government offices in the dark. The Prime Minister would not inspire me with more confidence if he were never allowed to speak to a Member of Parliament, lest he might be influencing his vote. That, I gather, is the length to which this fetish of separation of the Executive from the Legislature has gone in America. "He has been hanging about the

¹ A person who prosecutes others for breaches of penal laws or furnishes evidence on criminal trials for no other reason than to get the penalty or a share of it. M.S.

² The Select Committee on Offices of Profit, 1941 (par. 61), reported: "It seems probable that the Church of England would strongly oppose the removal of the disqualification." So much the worse for the Church of England, if true. But that is probably the mere wishful thinking of a Tory escapist.

Lobbies" is the heaviest crime that can be charged against an American Secretary of State. While in England we do so wish that Churchill or Eden would spend more time in the Smoking-Room, and vainly we ask them to come to dinner.

THE HAPPY MEAN IS IN CONSTANT DANGER

Without the Executive in Parliament there would be little power for Members of Parliament, little interest in a political career, and no training or selection of the right men to rule. With too many of the Executive in Parliament, ruling would be too easy, Government too powerful, opposition impotent and democracy would vanish. By a lucky accident the British system has struck a happy mean; but the balance is constantly in danger of being upset in the direction of the Executive. Just as the instinctive desire of every individual Member of Parliament is to hold office—for power, patronage, or salary—so the instinctive desire of every House of Commons is to perpetuate itself and avoid the costs and risks of re-election. Responsibility is pleasanter than representation, for the patron in Parliament becomes the petitioner on the hustings.

The Long Parliament (1640-53) of revered memory became full of place-men or beneficiaries, excluded more and more of its enemies, and ended as a Rump of 'Kinglets' only to be dissolved by force. The Pensioner Parliament (1661-1678) was full of pensioners determined to retain their seats and benefice. In both cases public opinion in the country, which had been more and more abandoned and neglected, was roused to furious demands for dissolution and a 'free' Parliament.

Almost the first act of the country gentlemen's 'glorious revolution' of 1688 was to insist on triennial Parliaments,

so that no House of Commons should escape from its electors for a longer time, or again flout them and become 'Jacks in office'. With the Hanoverian Whigs once firmly in the saddle (1714), they pulled over the lever the other way, and passed the Septennial Act, which changed three into seven years of safety. It was their most unpopular Act, denounced and suspect by electors, not only because of the wrong wrought to democracy—the trusty electors' pockets suffered also if those exciting and remunerative elections were to be held only once in seven years. After the great Reform Bill, Parliaments tended to shorten, by the wish of the Press or the Prime Minister; for the Press likes elections, and a Prime Minister's threat to dissolve must sometimes be followed by action. Moreover, one of the seven points of the People's Charter (1845) was Annual Parliamentary Elections, so that having to face the electors might steady the grip of democracy upon the place-man's collar.

The contest has ever been between 'a free Parliament' and entrenched rulers with a vested interest in retaining their seats; or between 'Country' and Court; or between 'demos' and 'place-men'; or, indeed, between the Gallup Poll and Fascism. Members of Parliament tried to keep their speeches secret; they tried to keep their voting secret. Winkles could not have been more reluctant to leave their shell! Even so did politicians acquire their reputation in the Fascist Press. 'Place-men *v.* Parliament' takes its natural part in the eternal match between Authority and Freedom. Mussolini's Rome has all authority and no freedom; the U.S. Congress has no authority and all freedom; our Parliament moves serenely between—with the Executive encased in a free Parliament ever under the prospect of dissolution.

But with respectful deference to Mr. Churchill, I venture to think that our present Parliament is getting too far from the people, and too full of executive place-men.

CHECK BY THE PRESS

Fortunately there is still a free Press. From Milton and the pasquinades, by way of the *Spectator* and the *North Briton*, by pamphleteers and poets, by the *Manchester Guardian* and even the Beaverbrook Press, Parliament has been kept straight, place-men kept in their place; and the people have learnt to control themselves in the continued enjoyment of liberty. It is not lightly that we speak of the watchdogs of the Press.

It may be that I have overstressed the identity of place-men and Executive. Certainly in a House where quite one third of the Members hold offices of profit under the Crown (quite one half, if we include the cohorts of the P.P.S.), a good many of these place-men have but a nodding acquaintance with real power. The Executive that counts is the Cabinet, to which all subordinate Ministers and Under-Secretaries tend to become 'noddors' without influence on policy. These minor place-men have grown in numbers more rapidly than the Cabinet; and the Cabinet itself has two grades of Executive—those in and those not in the War Cabinet.

This great growth in the number of Junior Ministers, who are little in the public eye, rarely speak in Parliament and consider themselves lucky if given a question to answer, needs watching. More particularly do they need watching when one Party is continuously in power. They continue indefinitely in their particular office; they are forgotten, and tend to forget that they are Members of Parliament; they tend to think of themselves as a part of bureaucracy they

were deputed to control. I frequently greet old friends, saying how glad I am to see them back in the House, only to discover that for the last half-dozen years they have been Parliamentary Secretary to the Transport or Pensions Minister. It is most embarrassing.

A PURGE WANTED

Unfortunately, with the growing functions of the State fresh Ministries become inevitable, or at least possible. If we want to restore Parliament as a responsible body, a purge is needed. Perhaps in all cases where the Minister is not a Secretary of State, the nodding Under-Secretary might be restored to his proper duties on the back benches; otherwise a considerable section of the gentlemen of the House of Commons will soon be, for all practical purposes, in the Civil Service. I should like a resolution of the House, similar to Dunning's Motion: that not more than forty Members of the House of Commons or ten Members of the House of Lords should hold paid appointments under the Crown. There would still be plenty of candidates for unpaid offices which lead to higher things. But this curtailment of patronage would as always, be resisted by the patrons. They do not want 'noddors' and 'yes-men', but they do like to throw (substantial) crumbs to their friends. Really titles would be cheaper and as captivating. The number of Ministerial office holders in the Commons in July 1914, was 36; in July 1939, 47; in May 1941, 70!

I give below a complete list of the offices of profit of a ministerial character held by Members of Parliament today and in 1905 under a less expansive and expensive Government. The growth cannot but astonish the student, alarm the economist, and grieve the philosopher.

MINISTERS IN 1905 AND 1942

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Treasury:</i>		
Prime Minister	10,000	5,000
Chancellor of the Exchequer.....	5,000	5,000
Financial Secretary to the Treasurer....	2,000	2,000
Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (National)	3,000	2,000
Patronage Secretary to the Treasury (Labour)	3,000	—
Treasurer of the Household	1,000	1,000
Comptroller of the Household	1,000	1,000
Vice-Chamberlain of Household	1,000	1,000
Captain of the Gentlemen at Arms (L)..	1,000	—
<i>Chancery:</i>		
Lord Chancellor (L)	10,000	10,000
Attorney-General	13,000	13,000
Solicitor-General	10,000	10,000
Lord President of the Council	5,000	2,000
Lord Privy Seal	5,000	—
<i>Foreign Office:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	1,500
<i>Home Office:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	5,000
Parliament Secretary	1,500	1,500
Security Secretaries (two)	3,000	—
<i>Navy:</i>		
First Lord of the Admiralty.....	5,000	4,500
Parliamentary Financial Secretary (L) .	1,500	2,000
Civil Lord of the Admiralty.....	1,500	1,000
<i>Army:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary (L) (Lords)..	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Commons)...	1,500	1,500
Financial Secretary to War Office.....	1,500	1,500

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Air:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	—
Parliamentary Under-Secretary (L) (Lords)	1,500	—
Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Commons)	1,500	—
<i>Colonial Office:</i>		
Secretary of State (L)	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	1,500
<i>Dominions Office:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>India Office:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	5,000
Parliamentary Secretary (L)	1,500	1,500
<i>Scottish Office:</i>		
Secretary of State	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Labour)	1,500	—
Lord Advocate	5,000	5,000
Solicitor-General for Scotland	2,000	2,000
<i>Irish Office (not extinct):</i>		
Lord Chancellor	—	8,000
Chief Secretary	—	5,000
Attorney-General for Ireland	—	5,000
Solicitor-General for Ireland	—	2,000
<i>Board of Trade:</i>		
President of the Board	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	1,200
Minister, Overseas Trade	2,000	—
<i>Ministry of Fuel and Power:</i>		
Minister	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary, Mines	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary, Petroleum....	2,000	—

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Health:</i>		
The Minister for Health	5,000	2,000 ¹
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	1,200
<i>Agriculture:</i>		
President of the Board	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>Education:</i>		
President of the Board	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	1,200
<i>Labour:</i>		
The Minister of Labour	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Labour).....	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Conservative).	1,500	—
<i>Supply:</i>		
Minister for Supplies	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Lords).....	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (Commons)...	1,500	—
<i>Information:</i>		
Minister for Information	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>War Transport:</i>		
Minister (L)	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
Parliamentary Secretary (America).....	1,500	—
<i>Works and Planning:</i>		
Minister (L)	5,000	2,000
Parliamentary Secretaries (two).....	{1,500	—
	{1,500	—
<i>Ministry of Food:</i>		
Minister (L)	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>Economic Warfare:</i>		
Minister (L)	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—

¹ Then "President of the Local Government Board".

	1942 £	1905 £
<i>Aircraft Production:</i>		
Minister	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>Production:</i>		
Minister	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,500	—
<i>Paymaster-General:</i>		
(Reconstruction)	5,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	2,000	—
<i>Pensions:</i>		
Minister	2,000	—
Parliamentary Secretary	1,200	—
<i>Post Office:</i>		
Postmaster-General	3,000	2,500
Assistant Postmaster-General	1,200	—
<i>Duchy of Lancaster:</i>		
Chancellor	2,000	2,000

Of the above eighty Ministers, eleven sit in the Lords. But most have parliamentary private secretaries who usually vote according to custom and abstain from criticism whether in Parliament or outside. Besides the eighty parliamentary offices, the Chairman of the Public Assistance Board at £5000 a year sits in the Upper House.

NON-PARLIAMENTARY APPOINTMENTS

Even this formidable list by no means exhausts the far-flung ambitions of the new Servants. Governorships of the three Presidency Provinces of India—Bengal and Bombay and Madras—as well as Governorships, when desired, of the Seychelle Islands and St. Helena, or well-paid sinecures, such as a directorship of the Suez Canal, used to be in the nature of parliamentary perquisites. But a Member of Parliament accepting such paid posts had to retire from Parliament.

That retirement has no longer been found necessary in the case of certain Ambassadors and others who continue in most cases to draw double salaries. Besides those above mentioned, the Prime Minister has certified that the following offices of profit of a non-ministerial character may be held in conjunction with a seat in the House of Commons: Mr. MacDonald, High Commissioner, Canada, £2500; Mr. Cross, High Commissioner, Australia, £2500; Sir Peter Bennett, Chairman, Automatic Gun Board ("nil"); Mr. Spens, Chairman, National Vegetable Marketing Board, £1250 (now lapsed); Prof. A. V. Hill, Member of Ordnance Board, fees not exceeding £600 a year; Mr. Summers, Controller, Ministry of Supply ("nil"); Col. Sir. Walter Smiles, Ministry of Aircraft Production ("nil"); Mr. Hewlett, Dyestuffs Controller, Board of Trade ("nil"); Mr. Wakefield, Director of the Air Training Corps ("nil"); Comdr. Stephen King-Hall, Adviser, Ministry of Aircraft Production ("nil"); General Spears, Minister to the Republics of Syria, £2000; Lord Burghley, Controller of American Supplies ("nil"); Robert Morrison, Chairman, Waste Food Board ("nil"); Sir Ian Fraser, Governor, B.B.C., £1000; Hon. H. G. Nicolson, Governor, B.B.C., £1000. The same is now true of various Members of either House of Parliament who are Civil Regional Commissioners, with staffs or Deputies also drawn from Parliament and holding nominal office in one of the Fighting Services.

I would call attention here to the pleasing fact that the Labour Members of Parliament in these posts—Tom Johnstone, John Lawson, Robert Morrison and Robert Richards—all decline to take any salary, remaining content with their Parliamentary £600 a year. Conscience on the matter of public salaries has grown somewhat apathetic under the influence of war and an uncertain future.

In the last war many M.P.s were given commissions in the Fighting Services and employed and paid as King's Messengers, travelling widely with despatches and ciphers. This practice has not been followed in the present war; but there are other commissions, now given for non-fighting work—*i.e.* liaisons, public relations, for which M.P.s are certainly well fitted, but which, according to old-fashioned ideas, should not draw double salaries.

All these add some thirty to our list of the paid Executive; and in addition there are at least fifty more Members of Parliament definitely with the fighting Services in the field, in the air or on the seas, setting a fine example, but withdrawn from Parliament in varying degree. Cartland, slain at Ypres, refusing to surrender, certainly carried out to the end the finest traditions of Parliament at war.¹

In view of this large number of new paid public servants, many of them in new offices without tradition or practice to guide, a word should be said to illuminate a present virtue and eliminate danger of future reproach. Members of Parliament who cannot afford private secretaries or private motor-cars—and that is a large majority in war-time—may slip too easily into using the officially provided convenience for constituency work, and thence further for private affairs. This is a dangerous example to set, and even more dangerous to the Minister Member of Parliament who errs. Everybody is watching them; they are sure to be denounced. So let me state the view of the virtuous, or the old-fashioned.

The use of Government paid secretaries as private secretaries is regarded as inadmissible in the Treasury and as 'bad form' by the young gentlemen in the other Departments. But it is not possible to resist a constituency grievance tossed

¹ Likewise Sir John Savage, M.P., was slain at Boulogne, refusing to surrender, in 1491.

across the table with a "You might ask your opposite number at the Home Office to let me know about this." Junior Ministers had better avoid even that; but the bitterest complaints arose when the wife of one Minister thought *she* had acquired an A.D.C. and a secretary with her husband's seals of office. Perhaps that is why he lost the seals; for a whisper to the mysterious 'head of the Civil Service' would at once produce a rebuke from the Prime Minister. An accusation of meanness is quite as much dreaded in certain circles as a charge of misappropriation.

Official secretaries and official motor-cars seem inextricably confused with the private and the personal in the minds of the less scrupulous. There was the terrible case of the official car found waiting for a Minister outside a quite doubtful house in Paris during the Peace negotiations; and, only last year, a Junior Minister's career rocked when his wife and child were observed to be brought up from the country to the pictures in his official car. In my opinion he would have gone had not some blame rested on the Treasury for not having previously made a point of honour clear.

However, to sum up this vexed question of place-men in Parliament, let us be clear that, so far as we ensure the Executive being present in Parliament, such officials in Parliament vulgarly described as place-men are an essential, valuable element in British democracy. The combination trains the Member of Parliament to rule, provides an honourable and useful career in politics which attracts the best class of people to altruistic work, and it provides the best democratic control of the growing bureaucracy. On the other hand, an excessive growth of place-men injures the responsible and representative character of the House of Commons, makes a political career selfish and mercenary, merges the Member of Parliament in the bureaucracy, and gives good

ground for (often) exaggerated reproach to the enemies of Parliamentary rule. The pendulum in these days has swung too far in the direction of place-men and Government, and needs to be reversed in the interest of democracy and freedom.