

Sir John's Budget

Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, recently told the British people that the "cruel necessity" of preparing the Empire for "defense" necessitated an outlay of \$3,150,000,000. And then he told them how this money is to be raised.

First, \$1,900,000,000 will be "borrowed." That means, of course, that Britons for many generations will be burdened with a tax load. These taxes will not be paid to the government but eventually to the holders of the bonds. Perhaps Sir John will buy some of these bonds; that is, he will loan to the present government, of which he is part, some of his wealth. In due course of time he will die, and he will bequeath these bonds to an heir. This heir, who had nothing to do with loaning anything to the government, or with earning any of the money loaned to the government, will collect from British workers of the next generation, through taxes, part of their production.

We cannot borrow from a future generation. We cannot shoot guns today with ammunition made in the next century. We consume today what we produce today. All we can do with regard to the next generation is to load them with a mortgage on their production—a mortgage which they did not contract, for which we give them nothing.

It is fatuous to say that the mortgage is a good thing for them, that without it they would not have a "country" to live in, or "freedom from slavery," and so on ad nauseam. How do we know what kind of government they would like to live under? What right have we to prescribe the conditions under which our great-grandchildren must seek their satisfactions? Let us hope that they show more sense in ordering their world than we have shown; we cannot boast of our social scene, characterized by poverty and by war.

Nor can we claim that the sacrifice we are asking the unborn to make is an assurance that they will be free from poverty or from war. In our own "democratic" United States, no generation has been free from war. And the increasing number of unemployed indicates that the cause of

poverty is as virulent today as ever. The claim of "good parentage" is stupid, in the light of history. We've made a mess of things; therefore, we cannot claim any right to impose our ideas on the future. Let's give them a chance to work out their salvation for themselves. We have no right to mortgage them.

But, the reason Sir John proposes to mortgage the future by borrowing nearly two billion from the present is that if he proposed to take the two billion from those who have it there would be such opposition from these people that his whole plan would fizzle out. There is two billion in England now. If there weren't Sir John could not borrow it. Why not take it—from the present generation, from the living who want to "save" England, from those who got it in England? it is their England. How much is it worth to them? Apparently, not two billion.

We almost forgot to mention the billion-odd dollars that Sir John is actually going to take from the present generation. Most of it he is going to get from tea-drinkers, cigarette-smokers, automobile-drivers, and other Britons who work for these things. The fellows who have the two billion will pay some out of their incomes—but the source of their incomes will not be affected. If it were, they would in all likelihood fight

England rather than a foreign enemy; as Franco fought Spaniards.

And the decadent Britons, inured by English sophistry to economic slavery, proudly meet Sir John's proposal to further enslave them with a headline: "We Can Take It."