

291

NOTE FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY CONCERNING
BRITISH RESTAURANTS AND THE IMPENDING CIVIC
RESTAURANT BILL.

1. STATISTICS.

At August 17th, 1946, there were 1,281 British Restaurants of all types in operation. Of these 1,107 were administered under the Ministry's scheme, 116 were operated by Local Authorities on their own financial responsibility, 25 were conducted by voluntary organisations and 23 were School Canteens also serving the general public. We do not have figures of meals from all the Local Authorities whose restaurants are conducted on their own financial responsibility; 1,277 restaurants were served in 1946, served 409,700 main meals daily. In addition, a substantial number of subsidiary meals, teas and beverages, were served. At April 27th, 1946, the main meals served by 1,326 British Restaurants of all types, amounted to 405,800. Thus the number of restaurants has fallen between these two periods but the number of meals has risen slightly.

On June 1st we issued a circular terminating, at the end of the present financial year, our financial responsibility for British Restaurants. In consequence of this, but more importantly in consequence of the temporary nature of most British Restaurant premises, the number of restaurants must be expected to fall by March of next year. It is impossible to estimate accurately the scale of this decline but it is fairly safe to say that not less than 800 restaurants and probably not more than 1,000 restaurants will be in operation at March 31st, 1947. The number of meals served, however, will not decline proportionately since the more important units will tend to be replaced and only the small and financially unsound restaurants will close down without replacement of any sort.

2. WHY BRITISH RESTAURANTS WERE ESTABLISHED.

The dislocation of family life, due to movement of population and to the employment of women, led to a need for the provision of cheap and nutritious meals. This need was partly met by the extension of factory canteens. This service, nevertheless, left many gaps and the establishment of Municipal Restaurants was strongly urged upon Local Authorities as a means of meeting the widespread need for ample yet inexpensive meals. British Restaurants were not designed primarily to meet "blitz" conditions but their utility in this context was not disregarded.

3. HOW OUR POLICY CONCERNING THE FUTURE DEVELOPED.

- (a) In May, 1945, the then Prime Minister said at a Cabinet Meeting that British Restaurants "were admirable institutions which he wished to see continued." (Since this is a Cabinet matter it is confidential).
- (b) Early in the year the Corporation of South Shields sought powers by Private Bill to operate Municipal Restaurants. The clause to this effect was disallowed on the grounds that it was a matter for general rather than for special legislation.
- (c) Spontaneous approaches were thereafter made to the Minister by the Association of Municipal Corporations (representing the more important Local Authorities in England and Wales) and by the L.C.C. with a view to securing for these Authorities permanent powers to operate Municipal Restaurants.

- (d) The King's Speech at the opening of the present Session stated the Government's intention to continue the wartime provisions for the feeding of workers. This, no doubt, appeared in the King's Speech in view of the statement in the pamphlet "Let us Face the Future" that "the Labour Government will keep the new food services such as British Restaurants."

(2) The Circle Restaurants Bill introduced in the House at an

JUSTIFICATION OF THE POLICY.

The Government has accepted the responsibility for the population and responsible for the people's health and safety.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE POLICY.

Local authorities, during the war, have on the whole, accepted responsibility for the health and nutrition of the people. It is an integral part of their responsibility that the Government should make it possible for them to provide simple and inexpensive meals and have so met their needs. It is an integral part of their responsibility that the Government should make it possible for them to provide simple and inexpensive meals and have so met their needs. It is an integral part of their responsibility that the Government should make it possible for them to provide simple and inexpensive meals and have so met their needs.

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The National Council of Social Security, the British
 of its survey of British industry, and a national
 of a mood of scepticism but...

of Social Service has recently
overhauled and made a better
national food policy in
for the constructive

...which has grown up as part
of the survey was commenced
each or over-time, should now be
tasks will help to keep the net
of peace.

- 2 -

Wartime
Pwllerochan
COLWYN BAY, Denbighshire

[Handwritten notes on a piece of paper tucked under the book cover:]

Wm. G. Hall
H.H.

(5) CATERERS OBJECTIONS TO THE POLICY.

(a) That British Restaurants were set up to meet a war-time need and that their purpose served, they should close. In this connection the Caterers invariably refer to Lord Woolton's remark at a Conference in 1942 that he saw no reason to maintain the continued existence of the British Restaurants.

(b) The principle objection of the caterers is to municipal catering as such. They particularly emphasize the position of ex-service men wishing to enter the Catering Trade and finding themselves confronted by overwhelming commercial competition.

(3) They should be established where private caterers have not or could not meet the need. We cannot meet them on this point.

(ii) That they should be self-supporting and not rely heavily that concealed subsidies should be provided to prevent

(iii) That Local Authorities should not enjoy special powers to acquire land or buildings and should enjoy no priority as to labour and material. As to purchase powers there is a conflict here and as to purchase powers of the Local Authorities if they are to be used for the purpose of undertaking and

between the Ministry and the Local Authorities. We have to be sufficiently conduct their affairs. We have to be at the point of view of the external. As to priorities side with the Local Authorities. We have reached an agreement with the Ministry of Health (the Department however, we wish to be taken. We have reached an agreement with the Ministry of Health (the Department whose authority is necessary before Local Authorities can use building labour or materials) that we shall use building labour important applications for the

only support replacement of essential units. Local Authorities will receive no support from us in the meantime for the rapid expansion of their Restaurant undertakings. This would have to await better times, in view of the importance of the housing drive.

(iv) The caterers object to the Local Authorities, into the better class type of catering. They wish to exclude outside catering and to impose a low ceiling price on the meals served. But the Catering Trade cannot have it both ways. If we are to insist upon Restaurant

6. The Minister of service for the past year has confirmed the type of catering in which the Local Authorities may engage and the Bill is designed to establish this point.

WHY THE MINISTRY IS TERMINATING THE WAR-TIME FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The representative Associations of Local Authorities want to continue the special provision of British war-time commitments at the end of the present financial year. Nevertheless, our circular of June 1st announces that these arrangements are being terminated. The Treasury instructed all war-time commitments under the old arrangements to be made in August, 1946, and a large proportion of these have been made.

up the war-time provision, the Government Departments must be
are- been confirmed by the Minister. The grounds for this
Council) The Treasury instructed all Government Departments
grant, therefore, under the old scheme (apart from the grounds for this
(b) A large proportion of the existing war-time provision, the Government
used in premises held under requisition, must be secured with care for the
quired for their pre-war use. The Treasury would not sanction any
and if the British Restaurants are to be continued until March, 1945, the
must be secured with care for the termination year. This
time must be secured with care for the termination year. This
can sanction with care for the termination year. This
me 1945, the grounds for this

(c) We can only hold on to premises required for their use by themselves and to defer the date at which Local Authorities will for immediate release, 1945, would be to financial arrangements, merely due to the fact that the local weakness or to insecure, be

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Wartime Meals Division.
6th November, 1946.

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- 5 -