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"EVENING
STANDARD"
13/8/47

Halve MPs' holiday, says Eden

Evening Standard Parliamentary Reporter

Mr. Anthony Eden proposed in the House of Commons to-day that MPs should cut their holidays from 10 weeks to five.

Instead of meeting again on October 20—as Mr. Morrison proposed—they should meet on September 16.

"The House cannot be absent spectators while the Government do the splits over an ever-widening abyss," he said.

"What we are asked to do," he said, "is to adjourn for ten weeks, when the Government has no plan, to enable the Government to seek for a plan—to enable the Government to do something which they ought to have begun to do a year ago."

"Nobody can deny," said Mr. Eden, "that this country is in a balance of payments crisis. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said last week that the American loan will run out before the date suggested for Parliament to reassemble in October.

'This gap'

"There will then be a gap with little except our resources of gold and free exchange available to bridge it.

"We agree with the Chancellor that we must not fritter these reserves away.

"I ask "What do the Government propose to do to meet the situation of the final exhaustion of the American loan which will arise before the resumption?"

"We do not know what the Government proposes to do."

The Government had not only shown a lack of foresight, they had shown a stubborn unwillingness to face the facts—facts apparently to anyone of average intelligence without any of the Government's sources of information.

"That was true of the fuel crisis last winter, and it is true also of the payments crisis in which we are now."

Parliament had not yet been told what reduction the Government proposed to make in the estimates of capital expenditure. It was reasonable to assume during the recess some form of answer would be worked out, and the House of Commons should be there to hear it.

What steps were the Government taking to meet current inflation and to meet the greater inflation when the loan runs out?

There was the question of coal production. Did the Government still propose the half-hour a day extra or the 11-day fortnight?

What was the Government's intention in respect of direction of labour. Where and how were they going to apply it?

It was unreasonable to ask the House to adjourn for 10 weeks while the Government made up their minds on these issues.

It was the absence of Government plans or policy which made the present crisis inevitable.

"We are asked for a blank cheque in respect of policy for the next 2½ months, just as yesterday we were asked for a blank cheque for the next few weeks."

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OVER

P.T.O

16 weeks 'holiday'

MPs are due to-day to start their summer holiday. They will be away, barring accidents, for ten weeks. They had four weeks at Christmas. At Easter they had a week, at Whitsun another. That adds up to 16.

▲ Many people say that these long holidays contrast sharply with ministerial exhortations for harder work and longer hours. "What about the miners," these people ask, "the men and women at the factory bench, and in the offices? MPs' holidays should be cut."

▲ This is a mistaken view. This country is a democracy. True sovereignty resides with the people. Their will is expressed at the poll. Between elections contact between the people and their elected representatives may be maintained in two ways and in two places.

▲ The constituents may come to London to see their MPs, or the MPs may go to the country to see their constituents. It is most desirable that MPs should hear their people's views and be informed of their problems and desires. For this reason their "holiday" is justified amply.

▲ Not only must the members keep abreast of local affairs. It is their duty, too, to inform their constituents on the matters discussed at Westminster. Thus the influence of miners' members should be directed to the success of the coal campaign. The members for the industrial areas have it in their power to help the production drive. The farmers' MPs will wish to know the difficulties of the men who make the soil bring forth our food.

▲ The legislators have also a duty to themselves. Many of them come to Parliament with little knowledge of foreign countries; most of them, owing largely to the war years, possess only a superficial knowledge of one or two European states. Yet from day to day these men are called on to sustain by their votes the conduct of British foreign policy in every part of the globe. They must have opportunity to broaden their experience, strengthen their judgment and refresh their minds by visiting Empire and foreign countries.

**MY COURT
CASEBOOK**

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Soho is a sad as well as a shocking spot. And the