

Press Have Conferences With Cabinet Ministers

This is another in a series of articles written by W. H. Legge and C. V. Charkow, who represented The Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association in a recent tour of Canada.

ARTICLE NO. 28
(By Walter H. Legge)

As mentioned in an earlier article, in addition to the conference which we had with Britain's Prime Minister, we had informal meetings with a number of the Cabinet Ministers.

Naturally as editors we were particularly interested in meeting the Minister of Information, the Hon. Brendan Bracken. Before his appointment to this post in July, 1941, Mr. Bracken was Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister Churchill. He has had practical publishing experience, having been editor of "The Standard," chairman of the "Financial News," and managing director of "The Economist."

Mr. Bracken is the fourth man to have held the Ministry of Information post since the beginning of the war.

Our conference with him was no longer one. He told us something about what England is doing. "The people of England," he said, "are working harder than any other people have in any war. A series of strikes and disturbances has not destroyed our services. The English people are all out in their war effort, but they will still do more. Whatever happens, the English will never surrender. We will see this thing through to the absolute end."

"Some people think that after the war, England will give up her Empire and Imperialism. This is entirely wrong. We'll not sell our heritage for a mess of pottage. We have an enormous contribution to pay to posterity, and no government will ever agree to the dismemberment of the British Empire."

"The British lion is not a mangy dying animal, nor will he be confined in an iron cage. Only in the years to come will the effort of England be finally understood."

Such was part of the message that the Hon. Brendan Bracken had for us.

We found the Ministry of Information most co-operative during our stay in England. The passes issued by that department were so effective that the others which had been issued to us were almost superfluous.

We met the Hon. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labor, in his office and had a talk with him. Mr. Bevin was born in 1885 and started his career as a truck driver, was general secretary of the Transport Workers' Union, and in 1940, became Minister of Labor and National Service. Some people think that he may some day be Prime Minister.

His is one of the most important tasks to-day, for Britain is raising the world's greatest navy, maintaining armies in many parts of the world, supplying a steady stream of men for the R.A.F., keeping up home defence, fire fighting and A.R.P. services, and steadily increasing production of war supplies. No won-

der that he tells us there was no such thing as a saturation point in manpower.

He has made a wonderful success of his task, but it must be remembered that this result could not have been attained without the enthusiastic cooperation of the entire population.

In answer to our question he said that there is very little initial obstruction. But when we asked him about labor troubles in certain places, he immediately replied that the newspapers had to make news, and "virtue has no news value."

He thinks that the war is teaching the United Kingdom a great deal about transportation which will have an effect after the war is over.

We had an interesting conference with the Hon. L. S. Amery, who is Secretary for India and Burma. He told us a good deal about the troublesome elements in India. Most of us went away with a new conception of the India problem. We also began to realize how little most people know about it.

Mr. Amery has travelled in most parts of the world, and as we left, he said, "With the war over over so that I could pay another visit to Canada."

The last conference we had was with Sir E. Stafford Cripps, who is probably better known to Canadians than any other minister except the Prime Minister. He has been a very successful legal counselor, and is now Lord Privy Seal.

He has a very attractive personality, a keen mind, and our whole impression of him was very favorable.

It was an intensely interesting conference, for he spoke of India and his mission to that country, and about India and the failure of his mission there.

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