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HOME DEFENCE PLANS

TWELVE REGIONS

A COMMISSIONER IN EACH

EMERGENCY POWERS

SHADOW SCHEME IN PEACE TIME

An announcement was made yesterday by Sir John Anderson of the civil defence measures which are being prepared in peace time and of the "shadow" war organization which would come into operation immediately an emergency arose.

England has been divided into 10 regions; Wales makes an eleventh; and Scotland will also be a separate region, but, because of its size, made into five areas.

Each region in war would be in charge of a regional commissioner, who will be appointed in peace time, and who will be assisted by a deputy commissioner and a war staff, also designated in peace time. Besides the A.R.P. regional officers, the staff will include representatives of all Government departments concerned with civil defence, thus linking the regional organization with the existing machinery of Government.

The regional commissioner will in peace time be supplied with full details of the war plans of all the Government departments concerned with civil defence, and will hold frequent meetings with the officials who would act with him in time of war. He will not be concerned with the administration of the air raid precautions scheme in peace time.

The degree of control exercised by the regional commissioner in war time on his own responsibility will vary according to the extent to which communications may have been affected, but the region would, in case of need, work as a self-contained unit.

COMMISSIONERS' POWERS

"FULL AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT"

Commenting on the announcement Sir John Anderson said: "We have to envisage the possibility of a region being completely cut off and detached from the

also be a technical inspector in most regions for the purpose of helping to carry out the Lord Privy Seal's shelter programme. Most of these appointments will be made by the beginning of March.

This regional organization will provide facilities for the treatment of local problems so far as possible on the spot. This will have the effect, among other things, of reducing the need for reference on various subjects to the central department, and the senior regional officers will have authority to indicate approval, on behalf of the department, of definite parts of local authority schemes.

On the basis of these peace-time arrangements a war organization has been devised. This will exist in shadow form in peace time and be capable of functioning immediately in the event of an emergency. In war each region would be in charge of a regional commissioner, who will be appointed in peace time; he would be assisted by a deputy commissioner. The regional commissioners will be men of national standing, and wherever possible they will be men actually residing in the regions they are to control. If the commissioner himself is not a local man every effort will be made to secure that his deputy will be.

WAR STAFF

The regional commissioner will have a war staff which will be designated in peace time, and in addition to the A.R.P. regional officers who will have been at work in time of peace will include representatives of all Government departments concerned with civil defence, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport, and the Food (Defence Plans) Department; thus linking the regional organization with the existing machinery of Government which would, of course, be strengthened at the regional towns as well as at headquarters. Protected accommodation for this staff with all necessary communications and other services will be provided in peace time, so as to be immediately available for full operation whenever the threat of war occurs.

The regional commissioner will in peace time be supplied with full details of the war plans of all the Government departments concerned with civil defence, and will hold frequent meetings with the officials designated to act with him in time of war. This in effect amounts to peace-time meetings of the war staff. In peace time the regional commissioner will establish touch with the local authorities within his region. There will be set up in each region a council representative of the various interests; it will also include the regional representatives of the Government departments concerned. The regional commissioner will not be concerned with the administration of the air raid precautions schemes in peace time. Local authorities in connexion with these schemes will deal as at present with the Government departments concerned or their local representatives.

On a threat of war the regional commissioner, his deputy, and the Government officials designated to form his war staff would proceed to their headquarters. The degree of control exercised by the regional commissioner in war time on his own responsibility will vary according to the extent to which communications may have been affected, but the region will, in case of need, function as a self-contained unit.

Thus there will be carried out in peace time thorough preparation of all services that will be required in time of war, avoidance of overlapping and confusion, and the creation of a shadow organization ready to function instantly on the threat of war, each individual knowing his post and functions, and all being personally known to each other, and fully acquainted with the plans and arrangements of each other's departments.

NEW MINISTERS AT THE PALACE

RECEIVED BY THE KING ON TAKING OFFICE

The King held a Privy Council at Buckingham Palace yesterday, when Lord Chilston, Mr. R. A. Butler (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), Captain Crookshank (Secretary for Mines), and Sir Reginald Dorman-

INDUSTRIAL BASIS OF DEFENCE

ADVISORY PANEL'S REPORT

UNTAPPED RESOURCES

The Advisory Panel of Industrialists, which was constituted by the Prime Minister in December to receive representations and to make proposals in regard to the execution of the rearmament programme, has issued its first report. It is signed by Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. M. Greenly (chairman), Mr. Peter F. Bennett, Sir George Beharrell, Mr. J. O. M. Clark, Sir Geoffrey Clarke, and Mr. J. S. Addison.

The report, which is addressed to the Prime Minister, is as follows:—

We were constituted by you last December as your Advisory Panel of Industrialists to receive representations as to any delays, defects, or difficulties in supply or production under the rearmament programme and to suggest remedial action in such cases; and also any general improvements in regard to the execution of the programme of any measures in regard to the position of industry in time of emergency which our knowledge of industry might dictate to be desirable. Labour questions were excluded from our purview.

We have now made a preliminary survey of the rearmament and allied problems and of the progress so far achieved, and we have endeavoured in this letter to provide you with some account of the work that the Panel has so far carried out and to acquaint you with the general impression which it has formed as to the position in the various parts of the field covered.

A WIDE SURVEY

You will recollect that you met the Panel on December 20 and explained to it the objects which you had in mind in setting it up, emphasizing particularly that you desired that it should settle its own method of approach to its task and that you did not wish to fetter it in any way by laying down any method of procedure. We subsequently turned our attention to the scope of our problem and to the course of action we should follow in tackling it.

Our first conclusion was that we must make, as a preliminary step, a general examination of the whole field of rearmament and of such other defence measures as fell within our terms of reference and that we might, with advantage, firstly consider the items which in our opinion seemed of more immediate importance. In this category we included such matters as the supply of anti-aircraft equipment and air raid precautions in relation to industry.

We were impressed at the outset by the need for urgency in starting our investigation and therefore held our first meeting on December 30. Up to date the Panel has held some 15 meetings and has covered the following subjects in connexion with which it has had discussions with, and received memoranda from, the officers and others whose names are also indicated:—

SUPPLY OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT.—Vice-Admiral Sir Harold Brown, Director-General of Munitions Production at the War Office.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS IN RELATION TO INDUSTRY.—

Sir John Anderson, the Lord Privy Seal, and

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