TOP PEOPLE

Mr J. F. Wilson

The Bank of Scotland announce that Mr J. F. Wilson, an assistant general manager, has been appointed a divisional general manager from today.

Mr Don Carmichael (34) has been appointed manager, industrial engineering and salary administration, and Mr John McVicar (30) manger, quality control, of the Drumchapel, Glasgow, factory of the Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Company.

Mr Michael Flint has relinquished the post of General secretary of Cie Association of Independent Radio Contractors. Cecilia Garnett has been appointed secretary in his place.

Sir Eric Faulkner, former chairman of Glyn Mills Company, has resigned from the board of the National & Commercial Banking Group because of pressure of other commitments.

NEW YORK

Most prices higher at close

WALL STREET, Monday. — Encouraged by hopes that interest rates were close to a peak, the stock market extended Friday's sharp rally. Advances outnumbered losses by 1012 to 450, but the Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 0.62 to 786.61. Trading was light.

DOW JONES AVERAGES

	Today	Prev.	Week	Month	Year
Monday	786.61	787.23	786.61	786.61	786.61
Friday	787.23	788.61	787.23	787.23	787.23
Thursday	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61
Wednesday	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61
Tuesday	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61	788.61

ADVANCES AND DECLINES

	Today	Prev.	Week	Month	Year
Monday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Friday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Thursday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Wednesday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Tuesday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012

BANKS AND FINANCES

	Closing Price
Bank of America	31¼
Bankers Trust	31¼
Chase Manhattan	31¼
Chemical New York	31¼
Citicorp	31¼
First National City	31¼
Manufacturers Hanover	31¼
Morgan Guaranty	31¼
Security Pacific	31¼

UTILITIES

American Electric Power	31¼
Columbia Gas System	31¼
Commonwealth Edison	31¼
Consolidated Edison	31¼
Detroit Edison	31¼
Houston Lighting & Power	31¼
Niagara Mohawk Power	31¼
Pacific Gas & Electric	31¼
Public Service Electric & Gas	31¼
Southern California Edison	31¼
Southern Co	31¼

RAILWAYS

Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe	31¼
Chesapeake & Ohio	31¼
Penn Central	31¼

INDUSTRIALS

Allied Chem	31¼
Aluminium Co of America	31¼
American Can	31¼
American Motors	31¼
Anaconda Co	31¼
Boeing Co	31¼
Caterpillar Tractor	31¼
Chrysler Corp	31¼
Continental Oil	31¼
Control Data	31¼
Dow Chemical	31¼
Du Pont	31¼
Eastman Kodak	31¼
Exxon Corp	31¼
Ford Motor	31¼
General Dynamics	31¼
General Electric	31¼
General Foods	31¼
General Motors	31¼
Gen Amer Trans	31¼
Gen Tel & Elec	31¼
Goodyear	31¼
Gulf Oil	31¼
Honeywell	31¼
IBM	31¼
Int Harvester	31¼
Int Nickel	31¼
Int Paper	31¼
Int Tel & Tel	31¼
Kennecott Copper	31¼
Litton Ind	31¼
Lockheed	31¼
Marcor Inc	31¼
Merck & Co	31¼
Minn Mining & Mfg	31¼
Mobil Oil	31¼
Monsanto	31¼
Nat Cash Register	31¼
Nat Distillers	31¼
Nat Steel	31¼
Owens-Illinois	31¼
Penney (J C)	31¼
Pepsico Inc	31¼
Pfizer (Chas)	31¼
Phelps Dodge	31¼
Phillips Petroleum	31¼
Procter & Gamble	31¼
Radio Corp of Amer	31¼
Republic Steel	31¼
Revlon Inc	31¼
Reynolds Metals	31¼
Reynolds Tobacco	31¼
Sears Roebuck	31¼
Shell Oil	31¼
Singer Co	31¼
Southern Pacific	31¼
Sperry Rand	31¼
Standard Oil (Calif)	31¼
Standard Oil (Ind)	31¼
Standard Oil (NJ)	31¼
Sun Oil	31¼
Texaco Inc	31¼
Texas Gulf Sulphur	31¼
Texas Instruments	31¼
Textron Inc	31¼
Union Carbide	31¼
Union Oil of Calif	31¼
United Aircraft	31¼
US Steel	31¼
Warner Lambert	31¼
Westinghouse Elec	31¼
Woolworth (F W)	31¼
Xerox Corp	31¼

Dollar premium: 54¼ per cent.

Stock Exchange conversion factor: 0.7640.

Steetley expand again in Europe

The Steetley Company have acquired interests in the French sand and gravel industry as part of their policy of expansion in Europe.

A 65 per cent holding in SA Sablieres Reunies has been purchased following the acquisition of 75 per cent of the shares in Ballastiere de Travecy.

Sablieres Reunies, their subsidiaries, and Ballastiere de Travecy produce nine million tonnes of sand and gravel in the Loire and St Quentin regions.

COMPANY NEWS

Ratners' record £900,000

Like the Samuel shops, who reported favourably a few weeks ago, Ratners (Jewellers) are trading briskly in these inflationary times. Pre-tax profits have soared from £561,000 to a peak £900,000 in 1973-74, for a substantial 4.3p boost to 19.8p in earnings per share.

This retailing sector is not without its business uncertainties but for the present sales are "substantially higher," says the chairman, Mr L. M. Ratner, and he predicts another favourable result for 1974-75.

Last year saw sales climb by £1.2 million to £4.6 million and 11 new branches were opened. Since the year-end in April, Ratners have acquired eight more shops of which three are open and the remainder are in various stages of shopfitting.

During the year a pre-tax profit of almost £950,000 — not far short of total net profits after tax — was made on sales of property.

Shareholders receive in two months' time the maximum dividend permitted of 3.85875p gross per share.

Alexanders

Alexanders, one of the 12 members of the discount market in the "Square Mile," have improved their half-year profits over those for 1973 which themselves showed sharp recovery from a loss of £972. Figures are only published at the end of the year — the usual practice among bill-brokers.

The group's chairman, Mr J. F. R. Glyn, who is also chairman of Agricultural Mortgage Corporation, is paying his Alexander shareholders an interim dividend of 3.6567 per cent gross, against last year's 3.5 per cent.

Eldridge switch

Eldridge Stableford, the investment-banking, property and manufacturing group, are following GEC's lead in buying for cancellation their entire £450,000 of 8 per cent Convertible Unsecured Loan Stock. The 20-year stock was placed privately two-and-a-half years ago.

Eldridge, who paid only £122,000 for the stock, explained last night that there will be a considerable saving in interest costs, in addition to the obvious capital advantage.

The group, made public slightly ten years ago as Jamitex, shocked the stock market in May when they said that on nominal 21 per cent dividend in half and went on to warn that "1974 will prove to be an equally difficult period for any financial group."

Mr R. A. Eldridge, chairman, said in the report that investments not producing an adequate return would be disposed of. One sale announced yesterday was that of Eldridge's 34 per cent stake in Le Valonet Investment Trust, incorporated in Jersey. Previously, Eldridge had sold their holding of 31 per cent convertible in Premier Consolidated Oilfields. Both deals admittedly were done at an "investment loss" in the current year, but the cash released will help keep down interest charges.

Le Vallonet now have a completely new board, led by Sir Giles Guthrie. He and his three colleagues joinde some months ago. Four directors have resigned.

IN BRIEF

SMITH, HELEN & CORK, HADDEN, TEST. — Profit £176,000 (£157,000) after tax £84,000 (£80,000). Final dividend 2.5p (2.4p) making 3.5p (3.4p) gross.

LINDSAY BUSSEN. — Dividend 1p p.a. (45p p.a.) — for 1973. Trustees announce loss of £15,000 (£100,000 profit) after tax of £14,555 (£73,000).

FOWLER (D. & J.). — Final 10p net dividend to put total for year at 15p net (same as 1972-73).

HOLLAND & HANNEN & CUBITTS. — Final 1.7125p making 2.9475p (1.8125p making 2.9475p) gross. Pre-tax profit £2,000,000 (£2,000,000).

PROGRESSIVE SECS. INV. TRUST. — Year's gross revenue £136,000 (£101,000), and pre-tax profits £104,000 (£64,000). Dividend totals 3.92p gross (4.46p).

GLANFIELD. — Pre-tax profits cut to £5000 (£87,000) after steeper interest charges. Since end of accounts, hall in Hatch, sales of vehicles have improved, it is thought. The second half's profits should be near last year's £87,000 — but are bound to be affected by first half, says interim report.

KETTERING MOTOR. — Interim 1.3659p (1.4166p) due mid-December. Profit before tax £54,000 (£62,000) for 26 weeks. Full year's profits expected to top last year's £227,000.

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BROKERS' VIEW

Combined English

BY OUR FINANCIAL STAFF

Partly-convertible loan stocks are normally regarded with some reserve by investors, but the London brokers, Hoblyn & Company, point to an interesting one in the Combined English Stores 9½ per cent stock, of which half is convertible into Ordinary shares between July 1974 and July 1977 at the rate of one share for 55p of stock.

At 61, the stock yields more than 15 per cent straight and, on the brokers' reckoning, would take a holder into the Ordinary at 36p which is just 2p above the current price of the Ordinary, where the yield is 10 per cent.

The brokers think this will be a year of consolidation for Combined English, which will follow substantial earnings growth. They rate the shares a "buy."

COMMODITY PRICES

GRAIN

LIVERPOOL: Monday (official prices, basis c.i.f. UK). Maize, Feb. Yellow American/French, ... Canadian, ... Argentine, ... Rhodesian, ... Barley, Feb. ... Wheat, Feb. ... Soya Bean Meal, Feb. ... Soya Bean Oil, Feb. ... Tallow, Feb. ... Groundnuts, Feb. ... Cotton, Feb. ... Rubber, Feb. ... Sugar, Feb. ... Cocoa, Feb. ... Coffee, Feb. ... Copper, Feb. ... Lead, Feb. ... Zinc, Feb. ... Tin, Feb. ... Silver, Feb. ...

CHICAGO: Monday (prices in cents per bushel). Wheat, Sept. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Maize, Sept. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Oats, Sept. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Soya Beans, Sept. ... Nov. ... Jan. ... Mar. ... May ... Soya Bean Meal, Sept. ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Jan. ... Mar. ... May ... Soya Bean Oil, Sept. ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Jan. ... Mar. ... May ... Broilers, Chicago wholesale, ... Eggs, Chicago wholesale, ... Cattle, ... Hogs, ... Pork Bellies, ... Wool, ...

WINNIPEG: Monday (prices in Canadian cents per bushel). Wheat, July ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Oats, July ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Barley, July ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Flaxseed, July ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Rye, July ... Oct. ... Dec. ... Mar. ... May ... Cheese, Montreal wholesale, ...

METALS

GOLD — $159, up $1.
SILVER (bullion) — 173p, up 0.5p.
SILVER (LME) — 173.75p, up 0p.
COPPER — £662, up £66.50.
TIN — £2100, up £100.
LEAD — £256, up £7.50.
ZINC — £303.50, up £22.
WOLFRAM — £42.50, no change.

PRODUCE

RUBBER — 77.75p, up 0.75p.
SUGAR — (prices £/t) ...
COCOA — £305, up £23.50.

SECURITY EXERCISE AT AIRPORT

The Army carried out a security exercise at Heathrow Airport, London, yesterday. Armoured cars and troops moved in and police cordons were strengthened.

The exercise was intended to test variations made in the original plan since the major alert exercise a fortnight ago.

Big drop in Paisley society's lending

By GEORGE BRODLIE
Financial Editor

Investors took £165,724 more out of Paisley Building Society than they put in during the six months to June 30, 1974, the figures being £948,661 invested and £1,114,385 withdrawn.

Not surprisingly, the loans advanced, at £539,845, were well down on the figure for the first half of 1973, which was £930,897.

The new chairman, Mr A. D. S. Rollock, says these results show clearly the inhibiting effect on lending of Government pressures to prevent societies from increasing interest rates. Competition from other institutions, not subject to such restrictions, had attracted money away from building societies.

Paisley Building Society had not accepted any of the Government loan Mr Rolland discloses, because of their strong liquidity and the relatively unfavourable terms of such borrowing and because the terms of repayment were such that the loan would not increase the overall amount which the society could lend. Not surprisingly, it made available at an earlier stage money which would fall to be repaid out of future intake.

PROPER RATE

If interest rates generally rise again later this year to pre-Budget levels, Mr. Rolland says the proper investment rate to attract enough funds to enable societies to perform their function of lending for home ownership could entail a mortgage rate of 12.75 per cent, which was still a great deal cheaper than the general market rate for borrowers.

"If any Government should consider such a mortgage rate to be socially insupportable or socially undesirable, then in these circumstances it would be for the Government and not for the building society investor to provide the means of smoothing the effects," he concludes.

Mr Rolland succeeded Mr Robert F. Balnave as chairman on July 9. Mr Balnave remains a director.

CANADIAN PRICES

Abitibi Corp	11¾
Alcan Aluminium	31¼
Bell Canada	31¼
Bow Valley Ind	31¼
Brascan 'A'	31¼
Brunswick Mines	31¼
Canada Cement	31¼
Canada Packers 'A'	31¼
Canada Southern Oil	31¼
Canadian Breweries	31¼
Canadian Pacific	31¼
Cominco	31¼
Consolidated Bathurst	31¼
Dome Petroleum	31¼
Falconbridge Nickel	31¼
Gulf Oil Canada	31¼
Hudson Bay Mining	31¼
Imasco	31¼
Imperial Oil	31¼
Inco	31¼
Int Nickel Co	31¼
Massey Ferguson	31¼
Moore Corp	31¼
Noranda Mines	31¼
Pacific Petroleum	31¼
Placer Development	31¼
Power Corp	31¼
Rio Algom	31¼
Royal Bank	31¼
Seagram	31¼
Shell Canada	31¼
Steel Co of Canada	31¼
Texaco Canada	31¼
Toronto Dominion Bank	31¼
Trans Canada Pipelines	31¼
Westcoast Transmission	31¼
Weston (George)	31¼

INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE

	Today	Prev.	Week	Month	Year
Monday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Friday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Thursday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Wednesday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012
Tuesday	1012	1012	1012	1012	1012

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MP puts Glasgow case for oil HQ

By Our Political Reporter

An appeal to Mr William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland, to try to ensure that Glasgow will be the location for the British National Oil Corporation headquarters and the proposed Scottish Development Agency was made in a letter published last night by Mr James Craigen, Labour MP for Maryhill.

Mr Craigen said the Labour Government should introduce an "inspill policy" for the Greater Glasgow area in terms of stimulating employment opportunities.

"In one blow, the siting of the BNOC headquarters and the Scottish Development Agency in the Glasgow area would be a powerful beginning to such a programme," said Mr Craigen.

The offices themselves might bring little in the way of additional employment, but they would bring decision-making people into Clydeside and act as a magnet for research and ancillary services as well as new manufacturing companies in the area.

"In time, Clydeside could discard development area status as part of an unwanted past," he said. "Unless these key bodies are sited in Glasgow the West of Scotland will remain an undernourished part of the Scottish economy, and this will have serious political and economic consequences for Scotland as a whole for generations to come."

Mr Jain Sproat, the Conservative MP for Aberdeen South, has written to Mr Eric Varley, Secretary of State for Energy, pressing the claims of Aberdeen for the headquarters of the BNOC.

It was not in Glasgow but in Aberdeen that the international oil companies had of their own free will made their UK administrative and support headquarters. "Whatever any Government may now do, Aberdeen will be the operational centre of the UK oil industry. Therefore the Government should match industry and put its headquarters there, too," he said.

Milestones . . .

The Land Tenure Reform (Scotland) Bill, which abolishes feu-duties from September 1 this year and prevents the creation of new feus, was given an unopposed third reading in the Commons.

The Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Bill, which switches responsibility for educating mentally handicapped children from the medical authorities to local education authorities, was given a formal third reading in the Lords. Lord Crawford, Country Assembly Bill, which extends local authority powers over conservation matters, was given an unopposed second reading.

Callaghan plea for restraint

By ALEXANDER MacLEOD, Our Diplomatic Correspondent

Mr James Callaghan, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday advised the Greek and Turkish governments to act with restraint in the situation created by the overthrow of President Makarios of Cyprus.

Britain, Greece and Turkey are joint guarantors of Cyprus independence. Amid reports that Turkey might be prepared to intervene in the island if Greece tried to proclaim Enosis, the Foreign Secretary told the House of Commons that he had made direct approaches to the Greek and Turkish governments, reminding them that all three governments must recognise and maintain the independence, territorial integrity and security of Cyprus.

He was reviewing the safety of British community and their evacuation should it become necessary," he told MPs.

Assembly stays until after elections

The Government would "stand ready" to give any assistance it could to the proposed Constitutional Convention for Northern Ireland, Mr Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, told the Commons yesterday.

Moving the second reading of the Northern Ireland Bill, which contains proposals for the Convention, he said the Government would, however, play no part in its deliberations.

Mr Rees said the Government did not intend to dissolve the Northern Ireland Assembly until an election was called for the Convention. The Government recognised the importance of continuing to have elected representatives who could speak for the people of the province.

The Convention would be modelled very closely on the Assembly, with the same number of members, and method of election. It would have a life of six months, or less if its report was completed and laid before Parliament within that time.

But if more time was needed, the Bill gave the Secretary of State power to extend it by up to three months at a time. It could also be recalled within six months of dissolution.

The Opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland, Mr Ian Gilmour, said the Convention would be its own master and was being properly allowed great flexibility. But it might be said for laying down more increased the chance of unnecessary argument in the Convention.

Capt. Lawrence Orr (UUU, Down S) said there was a danger the elections could come too late, unless some fair determination was exhibited and a danger in the actual organisation of the Convention itself.

Mr Gerry Fitt (SDLP, Belfast W) said: "I believe the reason why this Bill is being accepted by the so-called Loyalist forces is because they believe that, when the elections take place, their supporters will be elected with an overwhelming majority and able to dictate the terms under which they will accept any new Northern Ireland political structure.

"The bipartisan approach at Westminster must be maintained at all costs to ensure that majority opinion in Northern Ireland does not achieve its insatiable lust for power.

"The way the wind of majority opinion is blowing may bring with it a hurricane of disaster.

"There seems to be a mood — ever since the UWC strike — that they have shown they can bring the country to a complete halt and therefore the British Government will be prepared to concede their demands. If that happens, I can only predict further serious troubles."

The leader of the United Ulster Unionists, Mr Harry West (Fermanagh and Tyrone) said they would not engage in political or constitutional discussions with other political groups until after the Convention elections.

The Bill was given an unopposed second reading and later received an unopposed third reading.

Government reprieve for lay magistrates

BY OUR POLITICAL REPORTER

and the appointment of additional professional judges.

"They were not acceptable to those who would wish participation by lay men and women in the administration of justice in Scotland to continue," said Mr Ross.

He told Mr Ewing that he and the Lord Advocate considered that a strong case had been made for the judges to be served by legally qualified clerks of court.

Time was pressing upon the Government and they have not carried out an extensive re-examination of lay justices into a new set up. The best solution in the time available, said Government think, is to replace the JP and burgh courts with a court with similar powers and jurisdiction.

Three groups

We propose that the new courts, called district courts, will be administered by the new district authorities who will be responsible for providing them with legally qualified clerks," said Mr Ross.

Three groups of laymen will sit in the courts next year. All bailies and police judges who were in office on May 15 next year will be appointed justices of the peace; and district councils will be empowered to nominate one-third of their number to ex-officio justices.

Provision will be made for the appointment of stipendiary magistrates to the district courts where the district council thinks it is desirable and the Secretary of State approves. Stipendiary magistrates will have the power of a sheriff sitting summarily, as is the case in Glasgow at present.

The prosecutors will at first be appointed by the district councils but there will be a provision in the Bill implementing the decision where the Lord Advocate's office can take over, district by district, responsibility for prosecution in the courts.

For the first time, legal aid will be available in the district courts, at an estimated annual cost of £100,000.

The jurisdiction and powers of penalties in the district courts will be the same as those of the burgh and JP courts except that the present maximum power of fine in common law cases, set at £50 in 1963, will be raised to £100.

The Government's intention is to hold immediate consultations and introduce the Bill when Parliament resumes.

A spokesman for the Law Society of Scotland said: "I think we are bound to be a bit disappointed because we have advocated professional judges. I think there is greater public satisfaction in getting a job professionally done. We doubt if the lay magistrate has any advantage in terms of knowledge of every-day life and we are sorry that the opportunity had been missed to improve the situation.

"We feel this not just from the point of view of the profession but also from the point of justice for the Scottish people."

The society welcomed the extension of the legal aid system to cover the lower courts — something they had been campaigning for.

Bailie John Gray (Lib.), of Edinburgh, who is also a member of the legal profession, said: "I see this both ways but I take the view that in many ways the lay magistrate is first-rate — even better than professional in certain kinds of case."

"Commonsense"

He called for more training courses for magistrates and the introduction of stipendiary magistrates to free the laymen from dealing with lengthy cases and cases involving complicated legal arguments.

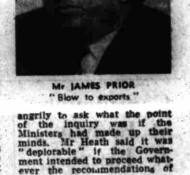
Bailie Walter Dalgleish, of Edinburgh, who led an all-party campaign to retain the system, said: "We have had justices of the peace in Scotland since 1661 and it seemed rather odd to me that they should abolish them now.

"The Law Society have tried to maintain their legal grip on Scotland. This was not really on for the people of Scotland and it seems the Government here have adopted the commonsense view."

Editorial—Page 8

Row over plan to extend dock labour scheme

BY OUR POLITICAL EDITOR



Mr JAMES PRIOR
"Blow to exports"

The Government plan to extend the registered dockers scheme to unregistered ports and to container depots, a declaration of intent in the Commons by Mr Michael Foot, Employment Secretary, led to a row with Conservative MPs who said the Minister was placating the Transport and General Workers' Union.

Mr Foot pointed out to MPs that the scope of the statutory regulation of employment of dockworkers has scarcely been altered since 1947. Since then, particularly over the past few years, there had been considerable changes in the ports industry, particularly in the patterns of trade and shipping and cargo-handling methods.

The results of these changes had had a serious effect on industrial relations in an industry historically bedevilled by insecurity of employment.

The Employment Secretary continued: "The safeguards in the present dockworkers employment scheme do not apply at many ports and wharves which have grown significantly in both size and economic importance.

"So I propose to use powers under the Dockworkers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1946 and to consult with the industry on the preparation of a draft of an Order to extend the present scheme to cargo-handling activities at those ports and wharves handling third-party traffic not at present covered by the scheme. Any objections to the Order will, as the Act requires, be considered by a statutory inquiry."

Mr Foot announced: "I also propose to start consultations on possible changes in the statutory definitions of 'dockworker' and 'dockwork' to take account of the introduction of new cargo-handling techniques and other changes in the industry and on new arrangements for resolving disputes about the application of the scheme."

'Mean spirit'

The political implications of the plan were not lost on the House. It was contemplated, it was argued, to take work away from the docks, which led to the dispute which resulted in the five jailed dockers in 1972.

Non-registered ports include those like Montrose, Felixstowe, Portsmouth, Shoreham and British Rail ports. The extension of the scheme to these ports is seen by some Tories as the first step towards the nationalisation of the docks which, was promised in the Labour programme.

Some inter-union disputes could result if dockers at the non-registered ports are not all in the TGWU, those in British Rail ports are in the main in the National Union of Railwaymen.

Mr James Prior, Shadow spokesman on employment, said Mr Foot's statement was designed to please a small section of society. When would the Minister realise he was responsible to the nation as well?

He wanted confirmation that the statutory inquiry would be able to consider the great contribution made by the non-registered ports. The Minister's statement could do nothing to help Britain's export and import industries.

Mr Foot said Mr Prior had welcomed the statement in a "mean spirit."

Mr Richard Wainwright (Lib., Colne Valley) suggested the Minister's declaration of intent would lead to further ports and harbours outside the registered dockers scheme to offer exporters expeditious handling of goods. Mr Foot said that suggestion would not help the situation.

Mr Ian Mikardo (Lab., Bethnal Green), chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, would the Government announcement be warmly welcomed "by the bods who shift the goods?"

Mr Harry Ewing (Lab., Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth) said the announcement would be widely welcomed, especially in Scotland. With the development of North Sea oil "notoriously non-registered ports were cashing in on what was basically a national enterprise.

'Betrayed'

"Are you aware that ports in Scotland, particularly those in the Forth estuary, accepted containerisation without question and that this had the effect of reducing many of the registers in these ports; and that when industry expands and there are great exports to be had these men find themselves betrayed by these ports going to non-scheme ports?"

Mr Foot replied that the inquiry had to be a proper one as laid down under the Act. He added: "That does not mean this is not a clear declaration of the Government's determination to carry through the extension of the scheme."

Both Mr Prior and Mr Heath, the Opposition leader, rose angrily to ask what the point of the inquiry was if the Ministers had made up their minds. Mr Heath said it was "deplorable" if the Government intended to proceed whatever the recommendations of the committee.

The National Association of Port Employers last night criticised Mr Foot for not discussing the plan with them before it had talked with the TGWU.

The Chamber of Shipping, calling for an inquiry, said it had been deeply impressed by the efficiency of non-scheme ports and hoped nothing would be done to blunt "this practical efficiency and competitive ability."

Cabinet to discuss dead-heats

By Our Political Editor

The Cabinet will consider today Tory demands that two "dead-heat" Commons votes last Thursday should be taken again. They were the divisions on the Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill in which Mr Harold Lever, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was "nodded through" though not present at Westminster.

The Government Chief Whip, Mr Michael Mellish, met Mr Humphrey Atkins, the Conservative Chief Whip twice last night to discuss the issue. Mr Mellish promised to put the Opposition's case to the Prime Minister. After today's Cabinet a message will be sent back to Mr Heath.

The Tory plan, which the Government are unlikely to accept, is for the whole of both parties in Thursday's two dead-heat divisions to seek an appropriate moment to report to the Commons that as a result of a mistake in "nodding through" a member, the figures announced by them were incorrect, and to announce the correct figures.

This formula was put in a letter last night from Mr Atkins to Mr Mellish. He suggested, too, that a motion should then be sent to the Lords to request the return of the Bill so that the debate could be held again in the Commons. This would mean delaying the Bill in the Lords.

Mr Heath wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting this was a relatively easy way of putting this matter right."

The amendments were on the rights of workers to decide whether or not to join a union and to allow a choice of union.

During Commons exchanges yesterday Mr Edward Short, Leader of the House, said the simplest way out would be for the Opposition to table identical amendments in the Lords to those which were defeated. MPs on both sides raised points of Order about the votes.

Mr Geoffrey de Freitas (Lab., Kettering) wanted the whole matter of the votes to be referred to a Selection Committee of the Commons.

Past convictions guide

The Home Office is proposing to issue guidance to police and magistrates' courts to prevent the unnecessary recital in open court of old and irrelevant convictions, the Minister of State at the Home Office, **Lord Harris of Greenwich**, said yesterday.

He was giving the Government's "broad support" to the principle of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Bill when it was debated on second reading in the Lords.

The Bill, which has gone through the Commons, penalises the unauthorised disclosure of previous convictions and amends the law of defamation. It later received an unopposed second reading.

Lord Harris said the Government believed it right to prevent the damage and distress caused to someone with an old criminal conviction — which he had long lived down — by the fact or fear of needless disclosure of that conviction.

The Commons it had been agreed that the Bill should not apply directly to criminal proceedings. "But as was stated there by the Government, we propose that the spirit of the Bill should be honoured by the criminal courts," he said.

"I am pleased to learn that the Lord Chief Justice has indicated that he will be prepared to issue a practice direction, which we will certainly follow from the Home Office with guidance to the police and magistrates' courts."

The Government accepted it was the will of Parliament that there should be legislation on the lines of the Bill.

The Bill does not apply to Northern Ireland.

A former Lord Chancellor, **Lord Gardiner**, moving the second reading, said there had been a Press campaign recently by papers, authors and publishers. But on the other side stood more than one million families who are involved.

Lord Wigoder (Lib.), in a maiden speech, welcomed the Bill. The only persons the Bill threw to the wolves, he said, were those who dealt in scandalmongering to titillate or embarrass, he said.

He said those concerned with the law of libel and its practical application were worried about the Bill's provisions.

Lord Salmon, also a Lord of Appeal, said he had often heard of a man released from prison disclosing his whole career to his employers and doing well until the whisper got to the shop floor that he was an ex-jailbird.

"That man is so much tormented that life is insupportable and he falls back into crime."

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