

ment and place the returning soldiers in work worthy of their qualifications, the authorities have been warned to avoid the easy way and to direct labour with scientific precision. How great a strain this has placed on them was shown recently by a report presented in Kiev by the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Mr. Krushchev, in which attention was called to the rapid and heavy turnover of leading workers. In some parts of the Ukraine, it was revealed, there had been replacement at the rate of 80 per cent. owing to the inability of inexperienced *cadres* to cope with their work.

Unsatisfactory as this state of affairs must clearly be, it is held here to be a sign of health that inefficiency has been detected and that the process of replacement has been the result of initiative from below and not of a sudden purge directed from above. What was perhaps the most interesting feature of the Kiev re-organization was the frank criticism levelled against the central committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party and certain Ukrainian Ministries for not having paid sufficient attention to the work of local authorities.

Coupled with this not unexpected process of seeking the best men for the jobs, a searching

THE CRITICAL FUNCTION

Mainly for the benefit of its many new members, a careful distinction is drawn between party and State authority, the part of the former being to guide public organizations and to retain an independence which will enable it most effectively to exercise its critical function. At the same time the party reaffirms its conception of itself as the instrument of the dictatorship of the working class. The Communist Press has recently been unsparing in its criticism of alleged faults and misguided ideas. Thus in Ukraine concern has been expressed over the revival of a "bourgeois-nationalist" concept of Ukrainian history, and of a theory, described as "stupid and harmful," of the right of literary men to make ideological mistakes. In Azerbaijan the call has gone out for an intensification of the struggle with the remnants of capitalism in the minds of the people. *Pravda* has recently referred to the need to combat "decadent liberalism and petty-bourgeois slackness," while *Red Fleet* has called for a struggle against the influence of hostile ideology.

AN M.P.'S VISIT TO SPAIN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Mr. Noel-Baker's letter impels me to mention that I have just returned from a visit to Spain, where I found a great deal more liberty in many respects than exists in England to-day. All clothes and most foods can be purchased without coupons at cheaper prices than obtain here. Most ordinary activities can be pursued without permits. Spain is not a rich country, but there is every sign that Spaniards are now more prosperous than they have been for many years.

It is true that there is no political liberty in our sense, but that is not less true of Russia and the nations under her domination. Nor could anyone attempt to "assess the strength of political resistance" to régimes in eastern Europe by personal contact except by methods of secrecy.

Whether more "anxiety" exists in other countries about Spain or about Russia may be a matter of opinion, but in my humble judgment such methods, wherever practised, are not those by which members of Parliament can best serve the causes of peace and international understanding.

Yours obediently,

SELBORNE.

Temple Manor, Selborne, Alton, Hants,
Sept. 16.

Sir,—The Foreign Secretary has officially declared that he "detests" the Franco régime. He has not said this of the Governments of Russia, Bulgaria, or Rumania. This blunts the point of Sir Alan Herbert's analogy. But if Sir Alan Herbert attempted to visit those countries "without the knowledge of the police" in order "to assess the strength of political resistance" to the existing Governments it might contribute to the gaiety of nations.

Yours faithfully,

SEYMOUR COCKS.

House of Commons, Sept. 16.

Sir,—Surely the most important question raised by Mr. Francis Noel-Baker's recent secret visit to Spain is what would have happened if he had been apprehended by the Franco authorities. Would he have claimed special treatment as a British M.P., the son of a Minister of his Majesty's Government, or would he have been prepared to share uncomplainingly with many members of the Spanish left wing the discomforts and dangers of a Spanish prison?

Might not the Spanish Government have had cause to name the British Government as "detestable" if under the circumstances they were to demand the immediate release of an M.P.? It is not necessary to be an admirer of General Franco's régime to feel concern at the false position in which the British public might so easily have been placed.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

CHARLES M. HOPE.

Bracklenlea, Woking, Sept. 14.

A MIXED BLESSING

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In many State school playgrounds in the last few years an apparatus for the amusement of the children has been introduced. It consists of a long polished board, suitably guarded at the sides, down which they may slide in a sitting or lying position. It is calculated to wear out any clothes, particularly the seats of trousers, in record time, and in these days of clothing coupons must be far from welcome to the hard-pressed mothers. It is a typical example of the lack of foresight exhibited by so many authorities.

Yours, &c.,

PEDAGOGUE.

PYGMY RHINOCEROS IN BORNEO

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The remarkable pygmy rhinoceros of Borneo is threatened with immediate extinction. At the beginning of this century large numbers of rhinoceros roamed the mountain areas in the interior of Sarawak, Dutch Borneo, and British North Borneo. They were almost fearless of man, coming down close to the villages at certain seasons in the year. With the pacification of the interior by the respective Governments early this century, trade was opened up with the coast for the first time. The Chinese traders immediately sought the rhinoceros horn and nails for aphrodisiac and medicinal purposes and offered fire arms in exchange. Thus armed, the interior tribes began a wholesale slaughter of rhinoceros. These animals are practically sightless and, living in the jungle, can be approached to within five or 10 yards by a skilful hunter. As the supply became scarcer prices rose, until a rhinoceros was worth more than £100—untold wealth to the unsophisticated Murut or nomadic Poonan.

In the thirties the British North Borneo and Dutch Governments passed legislation completely protecting the rhinoceros in their countries. By this time there were only a handful left. In consequence the Sarawak natives, having exterminated the animal locally, crossed the borders and hunted in the other countries. I know one Sarawak native who has himself killed 16 rhinoceros, nine of them in Dutch territory.

In consequence of all this, to-day the rhinoceros is almost extinct in Borneo. In the remotest, unmapped part of central Sarawak, once the great rhinoceros stamping ground, I spent (in 1946) 28 days in the jungle with expert rhinoceros hunters; there was no trace of rhinoceros having been there for years. In extensive travels from March, 1945, onwards in Dutch Borneo I found the signs of one rhinoceros in the head waters of the Bahau river, and heard news of another from a party of jungle nomads. There are native reports of one in the south-west corner of British North Borneo and three or four in the south-east.

I doubt if there can be more than a dozen rhinoceros left alive, and several of these are single. Those interested in the preservation of our fauna should take steps to increase and consolidate protective legislation and to make illegal anywhere in the east any transaction in rhinoceros horn or hide.

Yours sincerely,

TOM HARRISSON, Major.

82, Ladbroke Road, W.11.

NEWLANDS CORNER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The letters of Mr. Stanley Hamp and the late Director of Camouflage have raised most interesting points, but they are straying from the subject heading of this correspondence and are based on a false premise.

The Council for the Preservation of Rural England, who wrote the first letter and who do not raise matters lightly and without skilled investigation, protested against the use of a particular site for house-building and suggested that other better sites were available which had not the objection of spoiling the famous view. There should therefore be no question of developing the proposed site with cottages clustering round a church or of camouflaging a building estate so that it does not look objectionable from Albury Downs.

Yours faithfully,

C. L. BADDELEY.
Clive Lodge, Albury, Surrey.