

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

Vol. 6. No.17. 10th Nov. 1966

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**VIETNAM—
War Crimes
Tribunal
Meets in
London**

COMPANIES BILL

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BMC STRIKE

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Vol. 1, No. 1, 1971

COMPANIES BILL

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BMC STRIKE

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WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL OPENS

As we go to press news arrives of the convening of the first plenary session of the international War Crimes Tribunal to investigate charges of war crimes in Vietnam against the United States Government. The Week takes this opportunity to salute the distinguished company of men of goodwill who are gathering in London this weekend at the instigation of Bertrand Russell.

The London meetings will prepare the ground and announce the structure, statement of aims and time-table for the full hearings of the Tribunal which, as previously announced, are to take place in Paris next March.

BIG BUSINESS KEEPS SECRETS

One reason why big business continues to make easy profits is that the law protects it. The recently published Companies Bill contains nothing to change this situation. It is quite clear that it has not been designed to assist the workers, though it is the workers who need to know much more of the details of company accounts. The Bill requires that any person who owns at least 10 per cent of a company's shares shall reveal his identity. This is a pathetically weak attempt by the Board of Trade to get somewhere near to finding out just who does own big business. At present people can and do hold millions of shares anonymously in "nominee" bank accounts. E.g. in 1961, the following are listed as the biggest holders in the 124 million Daily Mirror shares: Strand nominees about 11 million, Midland Bank nominees 3 million. So even under the Companies Bill these particular nominees would not have to reveal themselves.

We know that British industrial ownership is dominated by the vast network of inter-locking directorships, but we are not sure which firms are subsidiaries of parent companies, and one of the biggest city sensations of recent years was the revelation that Imperial Tobacco owned over a third of its ostensible rival Gallacher. And just how many other interests do companies like British Electric Traction, which owns most of Britain's bus companies (and is referred to on another page) actually have ?

The most significant facts to arise from the recent Senate foreign affairs debate concerned the scale of the U.S. commitment in Thailand, and particularly the remarks of Senator Fulbright comparing the situation with that in Vietnam at the beginning of last year. There are, he said, already considerably more American troops in Thailand than in Vietnam at that time, and he accused the Administration of keeping the Senate and the country in the dark over the huge military preparations and the secret understandings with Thailand which made them possible. Instead of being equal partners with the President, Fulbright said, Congress is becoming his instrument "easily and compliantly - if not enthusiastically."

"Why", he said, "they say there are no B52 bases in Thailand, but someone sent me an ad from the Wall Street Journal where one of those big construction companies is advertising that its doing that" The ad in question, which appeared in at least the San Francisco edition of the Journal, was for a chief photographer and public relations officer. It was headed, "We are constructing a B52 base and deep water port in South Thailand, approximately 100 miles southeast of Bangkok" This, officially, can only be the base at Sattahip which belongs to Thailand's Navy, which according to one recent report, owned one plane.

RENT ACT LOOPHOLE A letter to The New Statesman from Frank Allaun, MP.

A striking anomaly in the application of the Rent Act, one that should be ended, was revealed in a hearing I attended recently. A property company had bought a row of ten terraced houses in an industrialised area with maximum controlled rents of just under £1 a week, plus rates. One of these became decontrolled some time ago by a change of tenant and the new rent was raised to £3. 10s. The tenant took his case to the rent officer, who fixed a rent of £2. 2. 6d. Whereupon the landlord took the case to the rent assessment committee. He was ably represented by a lawyer (the tenant had none and only uttered one sentence throughout the hearing). One of the lawyer's strong points was that the owner had sold one of the houses, which were identical, for £1,200. So, assuming a return of 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % on his capital, he thought that £3. 10s. or at least £3 was reasonable.

The tribunal put searching questions and drew out the fact that the company had kept the house empty for seven months before they were able to sell it at that price. But then came the really pertinent question, "Whilst you are not required to answer this question", said the chairman, "would you like to tell the committee how much you paid for these houses when you bought them seven years ago?" This the property owners chose to ignore. (I happen to know that the 10 houses were bought for £1,900, or £190 each). On such a low purchase price the landlord's return on his capital was phenomenal. This buying up of 19th Century controlled property for a song is taking place all over the North. (Incidentally, the committee decided to raise the rent to £2. 7. 6d.) Surely the rent assessment officer should be entitled to ask such a question and obtain an answer. The Act says that regard must be paid to all the relevant factors. What could be more relevant than this? Para 10 Schedule 3, of the Act says that the Committee may demand 'such further information as they may reasonably require'. It could hardly be held unreasonable to require this particular information.

STRIKING APPRENTICES TO STAY OUT

The 130 iron working trades apprentices employed by Fairfields (Glasgow), who have been on strike now for almost three weeks, are prepared to stay out indefinitely, it was stated on Monday by Mr. Pat Kelly, district delegate for the Boilermakers' Society after a mass meeting. Financial support, he said, had come from the journeymen in the yard and further support was expected from the other yards in the district.

A delegation of seven apprentices is to be taken by Mr. Kelly to the Clyde District Committee of the Boilermakers' Society to ask them to endorse their action. On Friday the delegation will lobby Mr. Iain M. Stewart, Chairman, of Fairfields, before he addresses a mass meeting of the firm's workers in a local cinema. They will ask him to find a basis for a return to work. The apprentices are on strike because they claim they should have been included in a productivity agreement affecting iron working tradesmen in the yard which gave them an increase of 1s 1d an hour.

MAYHEW & CO. TO "CONTINUE MEETING"

The first revolt against the Parliamentary Labour Party's new disciplinary rule banning meetings of "unrecognised" groups of MPs has come from an unexpected quarter - three "middle-of-the-road" members, who include a former Minister, Mr. Christopher Mayhew.

In a letter to the Government Chief Whip, Mr. John Silkin, the three state that they intend to continue meeting with "like-minded colleagues" on particular issues. "We do not think it is consistent with our rights and duties as MPs to ask for official permission to do this" they add. Even the most loyal of MPs find themselves differing with their leaders on particular issues, the letter says, "and if they want to make their views effective they are bound to discuss these differences with like-minded colleagues in unofficial groups." The letter adds, "While naturally opposed to disruptive groups, we feel we must register our strong opposition to this far-reaching directive of yours."

Mr. Silkin later replied to Mr. Mayhew denying that his original letter to MPs had any sinister motive. Last night the "Monday Club" of about 30 Left-wingers, most of whom refused to support the Government during the recent controversial votes on prices and incomes, held another meeting. It then sent its own letter to Mr. Silkin to the effect that its meetings were solely to discuss important issues and not to make decisions on them. Mr. Mayhew resigned earlier this year as Navy Minister, following a disagreement with the Government's defence policy. Since then he has been a leading opponent of the Government's east of Suez defence expenditure. The other MPs who signed the letter were Mr. Arthur Palmer (Bristol Central) and Mr. William Wells (Walsall North).

Following the resolution of the Parliamentary Labour Party banning all unofficial group activities, a Group of Labour MPs under my chairmanship met on Tuesday and issued the following statement:

"Last week the Parliamentary Labour Party passed a resolution calling 'for the immediate abandonment of all group organizations within the Party, other than those officially recognised.' We deplore this resolution for three reasons. It is illiberal. It is based on allegations which are not true. It is prejudicial to party unity.

(1) It is illiberal. Such a resolution is unprecedented in the history of Parliament. To demand that MPs should not meet without official approval to discuss matters of common interest gives to the Party machine a power which it has never exercised before. This resolution seeks to forbid freedom of association among MPs, which has always been a normal feature of Parliamentary life.

(2) It is based on allegations which are not true. We deny entirely that we have ever formed "a party within a Party." When detailed charges attempting to support this allegation were published in the Press, they were exposed as false.

(3) It is prejudicial to Party unity ... the voting at Morecambe for the National Executive Committee showed that the great majority of Constituency parties recognised that the allegations against us were false. For these reasons we opposed the resolution. Nevertheless, we accept the majority decision of our colleagues and, for our part, we will abide loyally by it. Each one of us, however, will take every legitimate step to persuade the Parliamentary Labour Party to reverse the decision, and to restore as soon as possible to Labour MPs their full rights of free association."

Since we attach importance to the publication of this statement in full, I hope you will be able to make it known through your columns."

*This letter from Harold Wilson, PC, MP, appeared in the New Statesman, November 1, 1952.

DRASTIC REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF DOCK FIRMS

from a London reader

One of the things envisaged in the Devlin Report: a great reduction in the number of dock and stevedoring firms is coming about. The idea behind this is that it will help to concentrate labour and impose "discipline" on the dockers.

A large-scale reduction in the number of dock and stevedoring firms in the Port of London's enclosed docks has already taken place ahead of the new national licensing system which comes into operation after December 1. Over the past year the number of employers of labour in the enclosed dock has been reduced from over 30 to nine. This has come about by voluntary mergers and associations between existing companies. The licensing authorities will decide applications on the basis of an applicant's ability to manage his business efficiently and provide adequate equipment, the ability to employ a reasonable quota of the labour force and to avoid excessive temporary transfer of his workers to other employers.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES

by Pat Jordan

CAR EXPORTS FALL TO 4-YEAR LOW

Exports of British motor cars this year are now virtually certain to be the lowest since 1962. Even if shipments during October-December match up to last year's figures, this would still bring the total for the year to only 590,000 cars exported, compared with a record 680,000 in 1964 and 628,000 last year. The example from the past which still frightens the industry is the experience of the last credit squeeze when export plummeted to 371,000 in 1961. Throughout the car industry the following complaints are now being repeatedly emphasised.

1. The industry already had the physical capacity to support higher export sales and the restrictions were therefore unnecessary.
2. With profits depending entirely on home sales the squeeze is immediately hitting companies' profits and this will delay the introduction of next year's models.
3. In addition to the manufacturers' checks on their own investment, there is alarm that the component suppliers will now dig their heels in also.

ANTI-INDUSTRIAL SPY PLAN LAUNCHED

A plan to beat the industrial spy was launched last week by Management Investigations Ltd., the counter-espionage agency set up 18 months ago by Mr. R.B. Matthews, a former Army intelligence officer. Management Investigations is now offering firms wishing to guard against or unmask industrial spies a "security package deal." For a basic annual fee of £1,500 the agency undertakes:

1. To carry out a security survey of the firm's premises.
2. To have a director of the agency attend every meeting of the Board where security matters are discussed.
3. To supervise the running of the security department.
4. To provide up to 12 hours of security training for members of the staff, including senior management.
5. To carry out one probe exercise a year to test the effectiveness of the security arrangements.
6. To investigate any breaches of security that may occur during the year.

Management Investigations have just published the first of a series of monthly news-letters devoted to industrial espionage. The first issue contains an article describing "technical aids" such as a wireless microphone concealed in a cigarette pack and transmitters hidden in a telephone handset."

STATEMENT BY MORRIS RADIATORS SHOP STEWARDS COMMITTEE

DISPUTE AGAINST REDUNDANCY

RUMOURS ! REPORTS! HEARSAY ! HERE ARE THE FACTS.

- Sept. 13th Company INFORM us of impending Redundancies.
Sept. 27th Company DECLARED Redundancy of 100 employees out of 1,200 on a sectional basis. Our economical proposals on Work sharing rejected.
- Sept. 28th Following a mass meeting there was a stoppage by production workers in protest against the sackings.
- Sept. 29th Representation by Senior Stewards and Local Officials resulted in the reduction in the declared figure to 69.
- Oct. 3rd Lobby of Labour Party Conference by Car Workers. Representatives met the Prime Minister.
- Oct. 4th Following a mass meeting, and on advice from local officials, strikers resumed work to allow our claim for work sharing to be progressed through procedure. Works Conference resulted in a failure to agree.
- Oct. 7th Local Conference - Failure to agree, but Company were forced to accept - Last in/first out.
- Oct. 12th George Harriman B.M.C. Chairman met Senior Stewards only to re-affirm Corporation Policy. HE AGREED WORK SHARING WAS POSSIBLE IN RADIATORS BUT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO OTHER BRANCHES. He announced that voluntary redundancies would be acceptable.
- Oct. 14th Central Conference - failure to agree, even though the number was substantially reduced through voluntary Redundancies.
- Oct. 20th With the figure down to 28 a final appeal for Work Sharing was rejected by the Company. A Factory meeting resulted in withdrawal of labour by incensed workers.

Over the years in anticipation of situations of this kind we have carefully examined every proposed intake of labour by the Company. Because of this our present claim for work sharing cannot be denied. In the past, when it suited the Company, work sharing has been the policy over long periods. We are determined that in this recession the same Policy will be implemented.

Work sharing as opposed to redundancy is supported by Labour Party Conference and is Union Policy. Our Stand is in line with this Policy.

BUILDERS HOLD ANTI-FREEZE DEMONSTRATIONS

Marches of building workers against the pay freeze took place in London and Merseyside on Monday 7th November. Hundreds of men from London sites headed by kilted pipers, paraded through the West End streets crowded with shoppers. "Aren't your food prices going up? Aren't your rents going up? So what about your wages", one marcher roused them through his loud-hailer as the march went its way to deliver a protest to the employers. The letter was handed in at the National Federation of Building Trades Employers' headquarters in Cavendish Street.

It rejected the freezing of the November wages settlement of 3d an hour for tradesmen and 2½d an hour for labourers, with deferment of the cost-of-living adjustment from March to September 1967. The men said employers were attempting to shift the burden of the jobs tax on to the workers while building and building material firms' profits rocket.

Speaking on 'A Socialist Policy for the Car Industry' at a crowded meeting called by the newly established Coventry Centre for Socialist Education, Jack Jones, Assistant Executive Secretary of the T & GWU, made an important and thought-provoking analysis of the condition of the motor industry.

Over a hundred shop stewards and members of the University of Warwick met in the Municipal Staff Canteen, at this inaugural public meeting of the recently formed Coventry Centre. A series of lively questions and contributions were generated by Mr. Jones's lecture. The theme of Mr. Jones's address was that the planlessness of the motor industry in the economy at large had to be tackled by trade union members: thus the structure of the industry was a legitimate and necessary area of trade union concern. Again and again the speakers returned to the problem of workers' control in the industry and the need for some form of nationalisation. Although it might be argued that the Government has no mandate to take over motors, he said, no-one could deny that the Government was committed to take over "industries which are failing the nation." BMC in particular was a strong candidate for such treatment. If the powers of the Industrial Development Corporation were not sufficient to encompass this purpose, then it should be done by other means, he said.

Emphasising that nationalisation of major car firms was perfectly practicable, Mr. Jones did not avoid any of the complex problems which arise in planning where nationalised industries are forced to exist in a basically unplanned economy. While there is no doubt that we can operate a nationalised car industry, with extensive areas of workers' participation in management, he argued, it was also necessary to move on to full and real economic planning. In this connection he lucidly demonstrated the inadequacies of the Government's "National Plan" of last year, now a dead letter, which was completely wrong about the car industry. Mr. Jones drew attention to the increasingly grave penetration of American capital into the British motor industry. At the same time, he strenuously argued against the tendency to assume their entry into the Common Market would solve the industry's problems. On the contrary, Mr. Jones pointed out, these problems may be intensified by the open access of Volkswagen, Fiat and Renault onto British markets. The real problem was one of finding access to wider world markets, particularly to create markets in the third world countries of Africa and Asia, who were struggling to industrialize themselves.

Answering questions on the form and extent of "workers' participation", Jack Jones was very precise on the need to preserve trade union independence and strength at all times. He did not believe that unions should "train people to become managers". Rather, they should train trade unionists to act as trade unionists and take over powers and decisions from management disposition. Asked about German and other forms of co-partnership, he said that while all these examples should be carefully studied, he did not think of this example as his model for trade union action to control management's scope.

Summing up, Mr. Jones insisted that the power in the movement was at the roots, and that the working people must tell the leaders what their views were. "Study, study and study again, but apply the study to action" he concluded, saying that in pursuance of this objective, the establishment of Centres like this could only be welcomed.

LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONS

The following is the text of a letter explaining the reasons for the calling of the National Conference Against Wage Freeze, Unemployment and in Defence of our Trade Unions. Any reader who is interested in becoming a delegate or requiring any further information should write to Brother Hiles.

SPONSORS

London Building Workers
Joint Sites Committee
ENV S/Stewards Committee

EMI S/Stewards Committee
London Exhibition Workers
Co-ordinating Committee

Port of London Docks
Liaison Committee

London Sheet Metal
Workers' Committee

Hawker Siddeley S/Stewards
Committee (Kingston)

Ambrose Shardlow's Joint
S/Stewards Confed. Com.

Port of London Ship Repair
S/Stewards Committee

Works Committee, Rover Co.
Tyseley, Birmingham

Magnatex S/Stewards Com.

Ford's Body Plant S/S
Committee, Dagenham

Shell Chemicals (Carrington)
Joint S/S Committee

Carrington Const. Site
Joint Site S/S Committee

Ratcliffe Tool Co., Joint
S/S Committee

Budenberg Gauge Co. Ltd.,
Joint S/S Committee

May & Baker Joint S/S
Committee

The Decca Joint S/S Com.

Cramic Joint S/S Com.

National Conference Against Wage Freeze, Unemployment and in Defence of our Trade Unions. Saturday 3rd December 1966, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Beaver Hall London E.C.4. (3 minutes from Bank or Mansion House Underground stations).

Your organization is invited to elect delegates (5/- fee for delegates up to 4), to this important Conference which is open to bona fide representatives from Trade Union organizations, Shop Stewards Committees and Trade Councils.

It will take place in a situation representing the most serious threat to trade unionism and to organised labour this century.

The Government Wage Freeze, the plan for large scale unemployment - already started - the punitive measures against T.U. officials, shop stewards and active trade unionists, and the demand constantly made at the Royal Commission on Trade Unions for further legislation against the Unions - all this threatens to wipe out all the gains and advances made by trade union struggle and sacrifice over the past 150 years.

The purpose of this Conference is to discuss the best ways and means of mobilising our trade unions and trade unionists for action and campaigning against these vicious attacks, and suggestions and ideas, preferably sent in before the Conference, will be welcome.

The Conference is of course an advisory one and no decisions seeking to bind the delegates or the organizations will be made.

The Cost of organising the Conference will be considerable and a donation and use of the enclosed collecting sheet will be greatly appreciated.

J. HILES

Conference Arrangements Secretary
c/o 1 Teynton Terrace
Tottenham N.17

The salient facts of the East Yorkshire bus strike have been reported in previous issues of The Week. Since then, the strike has been prolonged into its fourth week. During that time, abortive attempts have been made to initiate negotiations with the company in London. These never materialised, since the company refused to discuss the issues until then men returned to work - which they refuse to do whilst the new split-shift schedules remain posted. Nor has the union abandoned the original demand for a bonus scheme to match that paid to municipal bus men working co-ordinated routes in the city of Hull.

Throughout the strike, the Hull Workers' Solidarity Committee has been campaigning for a concerted approach by the busmen for support in the local labour movement. It has held several meetings with the T&GWU officials who have the responsibility for conducting negotiations in the dispute. They had worked out provisional plans for mass leafletting, marches, fund raising activities, but until last Friday, these proposals had not been put to a fully representative busmen's gathering. On that day, a public meeting in Bevin House, Hull, was attended by over 150 people, including many of the strikers. Under the chairmanship of the Solidarity Committee, the meeting heard a detailed exposition of the busmen's case by the regional trade group secretary, Brother Hazell, and a firm acceptance that since the break-down of talks, the strike was likely to be prolonged. In view of this, the discussion from the floor of the meeting, which stressed the urgent need for a rank-and-file busmen's committee of maximum numbers, which could liaise through the Solidarity Committee with the trade union branches, labour party wards and constituencies, organise marches, the publication of counter-propaganda against the company and the wage-freeze, and which could utilise the considerable resources of the T&GWU itself, (which covers dockers, municipal busmen, factory workers, etc., throughout the town) took on a real significance. The busmen, up to this point, had felt isolated, inactive and defensive.. They heard Solidarity speakers stress the vital lessons learned by them, in Hull, during the Seamens' Strike.

In particular, John Prescott, one of several of the militant seamen's movement, and co-author of the seamen's pamphlet 'Not Wanted on Voyage', urged the busmen to enter the "propaganda war" with utmost vigour. Mike Kidron called for the formation of a big strike committee, Jack Ashwell drew attention to the example of the seamen's pamphlet, Tony Topham asked for maximum use of the Solidarity Committee facilities and of the wide network of T&GWU branches and shop stewards, Alan Rooney pointed out the vast inter-locking empire of the British Electric Traction Company, which the busmen were fighting - an empire which included 49% of the shares of the local Daily Mail. Afterwards many busmen came forward to link up directly with the Committee. On Saturday, Alan Thompson, national bus officer of the T&GWU, addressed a mass busmen's meeting at which nearly 400 were present. To tighten the strike, he reported, the outlying rural depots had been ordered back to work, since they were now outside the issue of the strike. The 300 men of the Hull depot, he said, must now hold out to the finish. They would have full union backing on this: the issues had national implications for all company busmen. After he had finished speaking, the platform was handed over to spokesmen of the Solidarity Committee, who included again members of the NUS and the T&GWU.

PROFITS FOUR PER CENT UP

Gross trading profits earned in the financial year April 1965, to March 1966, by companies reporting to the Board of Trade in the third quarter of 1966, totalled £658m. - 4 per cent above the same companies' results a year earlier.

The Board's journal reveals that for the accounting year 1965 as a whole, gross trading profit of the 1,670 companies received and analysed was 4 per cent higher than in 1964. That compared with an increase of 16 per cent between 1963 and 1964. The gross trading profit of all companies, as estimated quarter by quarter by the Central Statistical Office, for the 12 months ending December 1965 was just over 3 per cent above the previous year. An analysis of the accounts of quoted companies whose reports were received in the third quarter shows that of the 22 individual industry groups, 10 recorded profit increases over the previous year. Of the remainder, eight industries showed no change and four recorded falls in profits. The biggest increases were in the electrical engineering industry (up 15 per cent), chemicals and allied industries (14 per cent), and textiles (12 per cent).

Falls were noted in the food industries' trading profits (down 13 per cent), timber, furniture and associated industries (15 per cent), and companies in the shipbuilding and marine engineering fields made losses, the Board discloses. Gross income (trading profit plus investment and other incomes) of all companies reporting up to the end of September 1966 rose from £2.956 m. in 1964 to £3,099 m. in 1965, an increase of 5 per cent. For companies reporting between July and September this year the rise was 4 per cent.

SHOULD SHAREHOLDERS SAY "OPEN THE BOOKS?"

In a letter to shareholders of Pye, Mr. F.B. Duncan, the chairman says: "It has been ascertained that for a long period of time certain income receivable by Pye Ltd from Pye (Ireland) Ltd. has been kept out of the books of Pye Ltd. and credited to a private memorandum account, not known to the auditors nor to the boards as a whole, out of which various payments have been made". The existence of this "memorandum account" was brought to the notice of Cooper Brothers by a Pye director. A representative of the accountancy firm said yesterday that the account now stood at about £50,000 and that in the region of £25,000 had been paid out over the past 15 years. The payments due by Pye (Ireland) in which Pye of Cambridge have a 20 per cent stake, are in respect of fees for technical services.

Explaining why the board have been unable to make further disclosures from the original reports by Cooper Brothers, who did not deal with the memorandum account, Mr. Duncan states that they "include confidential information vis-a-vis third parties which it would be improper to disclose". They also include business information which it would not be in the interests of the company to take available to competitors, and particulars with regard to matters which are sub judice.

In their 1963 Report, the General Council of the TUC commented upon the Report of the Jenkins Committee on Company Law Reform, which had been published during the year 1962/3. The TUC had offered a substantial deposition to the Committee, which it had published in the 1960 Report. The central TUC criticism of the Jenkins Report is still, very clearly, relevant to discussion of the new Companies Bill, refurbished after the lapse of the Bill which died when the last General Election was called. The TUC's complaint, in 1963, was:

"They regretted, however, that the Report did not give explicit recognition to their central assertion that workpeople had a right to receive information about the affairs of their company, and that the provision of the information should not merely be a by-product of obligations laid upon companies for other purposes."

Although the new Bill will enable trade unions to make more informed guesses than they did before about the economic position of companies with which they negotiate, and although measures to compel publication of private companies' accounts will be particularly welcome, it is perfectly obvious that this central complaint of the TUC loses none of its force when transferred from the door of the Jenkins Report to that of the new Bill.

Although the financial columnists have welcomed the new measure, even they have registered complaints. Margot Naylor, who was a member of the Jenkins Committee herself, wrote in The Observer last weekend that she was sad that there was no obligation upon companies to produce half-yearly reports or to speed up their publication of annual accounts. She also complains:

"I would have liked a blanket compulsion to reveal the methods used to calculate depreciation charges and the values of stocks and work-in-progress. And these values should be shown separately, not lumped together."

The city editor of The Times complained about the failure of the new measures to compel disclosure of exact figures for individual directors' earnings:

"Considering that the earnings of any public servant are known, there seems little justification in this day and age to protect the directors from having their earnings revealed."

Certainly the abortive measure of Peter Shore's to compel disclosure of top management earnings, which was counted out in February 1965, when only some fifty MPs cast their votes on it, went much further in this direction than the present measure, which only compels disclosure within broad income-brackets, except for the case of the highest paid director or chairman of the Board. Trade unionists ought to notice this retreat.

The Sunday Times wrote largely about the fact that "some of the most important items" to be disclosed "are only going to be available in a very limited sense to certain people, at certain times, at certain places." Readers of the Seamen's excellent pamphlet, "Not Wanted on Voyage", will be interested to see that although Jenkins recommended that Shipping Companies should not be exempt from provisions about the revelation of assets, and transfers to and from reserves, a large measure of exemption will still be granted to them under the new Act.

Even that most aggravating problem, of Company subsidies to the Tory Party, has been treated with kid gloves. Such contributions are to be disclosed: the TUC'S evidence of 1960 and memo of 1963 argued that they should be prohibited. Workers are charged personal income-tax on their contributions to the political levy: why should the corporate rich be able to sustain their political organisations without making any personal sacrifices?

In short, the new Bill is in marked contrast to the trade union legislation of the present Government. Nothing whatever is being done to provide the kinds of information and access to "business secrets" which would allow workers to police a real incomes policy. Large areas of manoeuvre still remain in the fields which now do qualify for limited disclosure. And, above all, no steps at all have been taken to implement such obvious demands as those of Prof. Wedderburn, in his Fabian pamphlet on Company Law Reform, that "the next Companies Act should provide that one of the modern conditions for incorporation with limited liability should be a willingness to conduct collective bargaining wherever a company employs a substantial number of workers." If a moderate demand like this is to be spurned, what then of such demands as those advocated by such sterling spokesmen as Paul Derrick, in "The Company or the Community", or again and again in Union Voice ?

The new Bill shows beyond any doubt at all that the reforming interest of the Wilson administration is entirely limited to meet the needs of neo-capitalist management, and that Mr. Wilson only needs trade unions when he is looking for votes. By such acts of omission, as well as by the attacks of Part IV of the Prices and Incomes Act, should this administration be judged. If the moderate demands of the TUC are disregarded in such a cavalier fashion, how long can unions repose trust in those who disregard them? It is to be hoped that the answer is "not long". As Ernie Roberts rightly says, in this month's issue of Voice of the Unions, "If the leaders won't change, change the leaders." The new Companies Act is yet another argument for doing just this.

BUSMEN'S DISPUTE : HULL AND EAST RIDING Continued from Page 9

A big strike committee had now got down to work in earnest, planning tours of trade union branches and workshop meetings, collections, a march to take place next Saturday, the publication of a strike pamphlet, visits to busmen's branches outside Hull - to Grimsby, for example. A charter for busmen - which will raise the question of workers' control over schedules, and of access to the secret recesses of the B.E.T. accounts and inter-locking interests - is to be proposed through the Solidarity movement.

The busmen's response to the evidence of support shown through Solidarity workers, has been immediate and enthusiastic. Union spokesmen have welcomed the assistance, advice, and suggestions coming from the Committee, with unreserved generosity.

We shall continue to report developments in this fine example of trade union and labour movement co-operation.