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WE LEARN FROM TRYWERYN



GWYNFOR EVANS

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WE LEARN FROM TRYWERYN

by

GWYNFOR EVANS

HOWEVER it ends, the fight for Tryweryn will have taught the Welsh some hard lessons. If they are learnt properly the protracted struggle for this Merioneth valley may prove to be one of the most important happenings in modern Welsh history.

Some Facts Recalled

Liverpool's engineers and surveyors had been prospecting in many parts of Gwynedd and Powys in 1955, and in the summer of that year the City's water committee successfully provoked an uproar in Wales by proclaiming its intention of drowning Dolanog, where Ann Griffiths, the saint and hymn-writer, had lived and where a chapel stands as a memorial to her.

Their statement was a piece of bluff, for the corporation had never at any time decided to go again to Montgomeryshire for more water. Nothing could be clearer on this than its engineers' report, which rejected the possibility because the amount of water available there was comparatively small and its exploitation expensive. It was therefore better left for the Welsh themselves.

The Welsh Nation brought off a journalistic scoop by publishing this report in full in its issue for December 8th, 1956. When Mr. Gerald Thesiger, Q.C., handed a copy to Mr. Geoffrey Lawrence, Q.C., in the Select Committee's hearing in the House of Lords, the latter said of it: "This is the best threepen'orth I've seen".

The Engineers' Report, which is dated December 1955 said: "*Serious consideration has been given to the Dolanog Dam Site on the River Vyrnwy. However, the gross yield from this source is some 20 M.G.D., which would not have gone very far towards solving Liverpool's problems. . . .*"

Accordingly they considered a dam on the River Banwy, but found that "the cost of this scheme is estimated,

excluding Dolanog, to be some £2,500,000 more than the Tryweryn Scheme. The net yield from this scheme is some 20 M.G.D. less than that from the River Tryweryn. For the above reasons we have passed over this scheme in favour of the Tryweryn Scheme. . . . We consider the Tryweryn Scheme to be the most economical solution. . . . We therefore have no hesitation in advising that this scheme be adopted”.

The Dolanog decoy drew the fire of the Welsh people as Liverpool had intended, upon which the City Council magnanimously bowed to Welsh opinion, withdrew from Dolanog, and announced its plan for taking Tryweryn, where it hoped to get four times the quantity of water at smaller cost.

Its bluff had not deceived everybody. It had already been called by Plaid Cymru in a rally attended by thousands at Llanuwchllyn, where it was stated that the party would oppose Liverpool aggression in Wales wherever it happened.

Significantly enough, whereas the protests against the Dolanog proposal had brought no comment from Liverpool, this statement stirred angry replies from Alderman Cain, chairman of the City water committee, and from the *Liverpool Daily Post*, which contrasted the unbearable nationalists, who had the temerity to say that every part of Wales was important to them, with the local objectors at Dolanog, “whose dignity, patience and transparent sincerity must surely impress Liverpool City Council”.

Immediate Opposition

In December 1955 Liverpool came into the open with its complete Tryweryn scheme.

Immediately the people of the valley began the resistance which they have never relaxed. It is as strong today as it was at the beginning of the struggle despite the tempting offer of unusually high compensation figures. “It’s all right talking about compensation”, said Councillor David Roberts, of Caefadog, on their behalf at a meeting after the Second Reading of the Liverpool Bill. “But we don’t want compensation: we want our homes”.

Mrs. Bessie Braddock, M.P., spoke for Liverpool in the debate on the Second Reading. She is a member of the Liverpool City Council and her husband is the Alderman Braddock who leads the Labour Group which controls the Council. She should therefore know her facts. In her speech she said: “Liverpool did not decide on a site for a scheme without consulting those living in the district. . . . Liverpool did not ‘walk in’ without some sort of approach and did not do anything until it received the permission of the people in the area which was to be looked at. . . . After that, Merionethshire local authority was approached”.

This is a wholly idealised account of what happened. The men and women concerned first read of the plan to drown their homes in the press. Surveyors had been in the district, but they were thought to be independent geologists; as soon as their purpose was realised they were prevented from continuing their work.

No one living in the valley gave permission to any Liverpool agent to enter on his land with a knowledge of his purpose, and no one looked like agreeing that the valley should be the site of a reservoir. The local councils, including the County Council, were not consulted at any stage during the forming of the plan. They were confronted with the completed scheme and were subsequently asked their opinion only on very minor points such as the removal of a gate or the deflection of a path. From the beginning, Liverpool thought its weight would be sufficient to force its plan through without the use of courtesy, and subsequent history showed it to be right. An English authority wanting Welsh resources need not show any decency; it has its Parliament behind it.

Welsh Incursions into Liverpool

The people of Tryweryn immediately established a Defence Committee, with Miss Elisabeth Watkin Jones as its very active secretary, and to it they called a number of prominent Welshmen who were willing to help. Early in its history it sought to send a representative deputation to the Liverpool City Council. Twice the Council refused

to receive one, the clerk stating in his replies that it had no time for such things, and had not received one for a great number of years.

Yet, when Dr. Tudur Jones, Mr. David Roberts and myself went to the Liverpool Council Chamber on November 7th, 1956, *we witnessed the reception of a deputation* from the local Trades and Labour Council which had come to talk about Suez. When, later in the afternoon, we tried to address the Council there was pandemonium, to which the voice and arms of Mrs. Bessie Braddock, M.P., contributed not a little, and the police were called in to remove us from the chamber.

An important reason for the Defence Committee's insistence on sending the deputation to the Council rather than to a committee was that in this way alone could the people of Liverpool themselves be reached. They knew little of their Council's plan; they knew nothing of the nature or the strength of the opposition it had aroused in Wales. It so happens that *The Liverpool Daily Post* has a large circulation in Wales, earned for it by its excellent news coverage and the quality of its columnists. This paper has always fairly reported the opposition in its Welsh edition in its news and correspondence columns, but very few of the reports and letters have been allowed to appear in its Liverpool edition. On the ground that this news and these letters concerning their Council's plan were of no interest to the people of Liverpool themselves, its policy has been to withhold from them news of the Welsh reaction to the scheme which was being forced through in their name.

The people learnt something of what the English papers generally had suppressed when the whole community of Capel Celyn, including the children, bravely ventured to Liverpool and paraded its streets on November 21st, 1956, carrying banners protesting against the plan to drown their homes. Still more learnt of it when they went to Manchester and took part in Granada's ITV programme, which was broadcast throughout England and much of Wales. And when Plaid Cymru devoted its annual rally to the question and staged it on the banks of the Tryweryn, near Bala, it was clear that opposition would be intense throughout Wales.

Consequently Welsh local authorities and other public bodies responded strongly when the Defence Committee appealed for their support. The great majority of the local councils sent resolutions of support (125 in all), as did hundreds of religious and cultural organisations and trade unions. Particularly encouraging was the support of the South Wales area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Liverpool Case Badly Shaken

The protagonists of the plan sought at first to dismiss the opposition as something confined to members of an unimportant nationalist party, whom it accused of narrowness, fanaticism and lack of Christian charity in refusing drinking water to the million people who wanted it so badly. This alleged domestic need of water in the city was made the basis of its case in the beginning, and even as late as the parliamentary debate the Minister for Welsh Affairs could still speak of the need of a million people for water.

When presenting their case in the early stages, *Liverpool spokesmen gave the impression that most of the water was needed for domestic purposes*, though later at Bala they claimed that only half the 80 million gallons per day involved would be so used. In fact, none of the water obtained from Tryweryn was needed for domestic purposes, as the defence was able to show. Is there need to say why the spokesmen for this great City felt it necessary to fabricate this story?

The books of the City's water committee were examined, and it was found that domestic consumption, which stood at 22.5 m.g.d. in 1920 had increased only to 26.9 m.g.d. in 1955, *an increase of little more than 4 m.g.d. in thirty-five years. As the City was already getting nearly 50 m.g.d. from Lake Llanvddyn (Fyrnwy) in Montgomeryshire, twice its total domestic consumption (including baths, toilets, gardens, washing cars, etc.) was being obtained from Wales.* Tryweryn was to add 80 m.g.d. to this.

It was thus perfectly clear that the *Tryweryn water was to be used for industry and for resale at a profit.* The profit to the City was no less important for being concealed in the extremely low price charged for water—the lowest of all

the authorities of the United Kingdom. An important part of Wales and of her water resources were to be taken from her in order to enrich and enlarge an English town already far too big.

In addition, it had been shown by the engineers' report already referred to in relation to Dolanog, that *no serious investigations had been made anywhere outside Wales*. Wales, as the Minister for Welsh Affairs was later to emphasise, was "the most obvious and the cheapest source of water for Liverpool". No effort was made to spare her.

The exposure of these facts, together with the bad impression which Liverpool's arrogance and deceit had created, affected the morale of the more sensitive of its Council members, of whom many became uncertain of the justice of their case. This was reflected to some extent in the Council's policy, for it quietly dropped that shocking part of its plan which involved the Conway River.

Nevertheless, its officials and party leaders remained serenely confident that their plan would go through. There was good reason for their confidence. Had they not a government behind them?

Uncertain City

The impression made in Liverpool by the opposition and its case was shown in more than one way. The same City Council which had refused to receive a national deputation allowed the Welsh Nationalist President to address it, an action without precedent. When the Council's vote for the adoption of its Parliamentary Bill was taken, 90 only supported it out of 160, although all the members knew that an absolute majority of the Council was needed before the scheme could go forward. Most of the abstentionists had stayed away from the meeting as an indication of their disapproval.

Equally significant was the difficulty which the Council had in getting a sufficient number to the Town Meeting to give the Bill the necessary majority there. Three-quarters of an hour after the meeting was timed to begin it looked as if the opponents of the Bill were in a majority. "Then", wrote the Liverpool correspondent of the *Welsh*

Nation, "unaccountably a stream of clerks and office workers, the bulk of them council staff, came in. Many of them had obviously come in haste".

When Alderman John Braddock, who was in the chair, was asked why the Council's employees were there in such strength, and was requested that they be sent back to their work, he answered that he did "not take responsibility for the intelligent interest which the council's employees took in the affairs of their city".

Only by packing the meeting in this way could the Council get its majority for the measure. A few months earlier thousands of Welsh people had travelled to Bala, some of them hundreds of miles, in order to protest against Liverpool's plan. In Liverpool itself, the Council failed to get two hundred people to travel half a mile to support it.

Even Welsh M.P.s are Moved

Not in Liverpool alone was the strength of the opposition being felt. It was even threatening to move the Welsh M.P.s to action. And here we face one of the most important of the lessons which Tryweryn has to teach Wales.

The M.P.s give their allegiance to parties which are not notable for their concern for Wales, and not at any stage in the Tryweryn struggle has one of them taken up the issue. Still more damning is that even their Welsh regional committees have stood aside and the great majority of the Welsh M.P.s themselves have remained aloof.

Those who eventually acted did so under very heavy pressure from the country, and their action was then confined to London. Never were they in danger of giving a lead where it most mattered. They made no contribution to building up the opposition in Wales itself, where the brunt of the work fell, but reserved their energies for Westminster, in which they showed a naive and pathetic faith.

An indication of their inaction is the statement made by the *Western Mail* the day after the passing of

Liverpool's Bill that "this Act was half-way to the Statute Book before anyone (*sic*) in Wales had woken up to its significance".

Their Record

Consider their record. The annals of the Liberals are short and simple; both their Welsh M.P.s voted against the measure, and one of them spoke against it. No more than that was heard of them.

The Conservative record is more complex. Mr. Raymond Gower has been, of all the Welsh members, possibly the most consistent and vigorous in his opposition, but his party has been of no assistance to him at all. It is the party of Mr. Peter Thorneycroft, the only member for a Welsh constituency who voted for Liverpool in either division; of Mr. David Llewellyn, the only member for a Welsh constituency who tried to justify Liverpool's action publicly; and of Mr. Henry Brooke. Its name suggests that it is a party that understands the value of national tradition and custom, but it has never been known to exert itself to create the conditions in which they can develop in Wales, and Tryweryn was no exception.

More than three-quarters of the Welsh seats are held by members of the Labour Party, and it is surprising that during the greater part of the campaign the voice of no prominent Labour personality, with the exception of Lord Ogmore, was raised in defence of Tryweryn. During the last stage, Mr. T. W. Jones, the member for Merioneth, and Mr. Goronwy Roberts were active, but the attitude of even the Welsh section of the Labour Party was for most of the time concealed or ambiguous. The members did not attempt to air the matter in the parliamentary debate on Welsh affairs on January 30th, 1956, when they were far more concerned with encouraging Mr. David Llewellyn in his ridiculous charges against the B.B.C., which were made, said Mr. Ness Edwards, "with the approbation of nearly every member of the House".

At the end of 1956 the Welsh Parliamentary Group were meeting a Liverpool deputation with the apparent

intention of gaining some benefit for Merioneth from the drowning of Cwm Tryweryn, which they did not at this stage oppose.

How not to Fight a Battle

On January 13th, 1957, Mr. T. W. Jones addressed the Ffestiniog Urban District Council, and as his address as reported by the *Liverpool Daily Post* is so revealing, it deserves to be quoted at some length.

"During an explanation of *his revised attitude* towards the Tryweryn water scheme, Mr. Jones said he had been informed that establishment of an atomic power station at Ynys, Talsarnau, on the Cambrian coast, could be clinched if the necessary water to serve it could be drawn from the reservoir created at Tryweryn.

"He did not think the atomic power authorities would be prepared to provide a reservoir themselves because of the cost.

"Mr. Jones explained that *his attitude to Tryweryn had been influenced with other considerations by this link with a scheme which would be situated in Merioneth* for the creation of nuclear power, and which would provide work for about 1,000 people.

"Referring to fears that the British Transport Commission might consider closing down the railway between Bala and Blaenau Ffestiniog, he said that the fact that any diversion necessary to accommodate the Tryweryn scheme would be carried out before the scheme was started disposed of any excuse which the railway authorities might use as a reason for closure.

"He considered, therefore, that Liverpool Corporation's assurance in that respect helped Blaenau Ffestiniog.

"The corporation had promised the county unlimited supplies of water from Tryweryn, and had mentioned a rateable value figure of £350,000. 'There would be no need to talk about the equalisation grant if that figure is correct', he said,

"He quoted other Welsh counties which had welcomed industrial schemes and *overspills* from English cities. 'We must put our prejudices on one side, and look at things realistically', he declared. 'If we are serious about securing industry for the county we must do all we can to persuade people to come here'.

"Summing up his attitude to the proposed Tryweryn scheme, he said: 'I shall adhere to Merioneth County Council's decision after their forthcoming meeting with Liverpool Corporation. If the county council support the scheme I shall support it, and if they oppose it, I shall do likewise to the bitter end'."

If the end is indeed bitter, can this attitude be absolved from blame? Leaving aside the fact that each one of the assurances given on behalf of the Liverpool Corporation, concerning rates, the railway and use of the water for industry, in Merioneth, was phoney as we knew at the time, we can observe that the "revision" of Mr. Jones' attitude, which was made a year after he accepted the honorary presidency of the Defence Committee, seems to have brought him into line with the standpoint of the Labour Party in Wales as it then was.

Secret sellout Failed

It was this attitude that made the Welsh Labour M.P.s so bitter towards the members of the London Tryweryn Defence Committee when that committee was making arrangements for a joint meeting in the House of Commons on February 19, 1957. The projected joint meeting threatened not only the Welsh Labour Group's proposed sellout to Liverpool behind closed doors, but, more important still, its attempt to oust the all-party group of Welsh M.P.s known as the Welsh Parliamentary Party, as the instrument of concerted Welsh action in the House of Commons. The Labour Group knew too that a joint meeting of the kind proposed would embarrass its own members whose vacillations were well known to Liverpool but who would have no alternative before a Welsh audience to opposing Liverpool tooth and nail.

The activities of the London Tryweryn Defence Committee were under review by the Labour Group

when the Committee was in session: and no doubt it was the realisation of what the proposed joint meeting would mean to the group's policy and to its members which led it to send its acting chairman, Mrs. Eirene White, to the London Defence Committee with an ultimatum that unless it consulted with the Labour Group or the Welsh Parliamentary Party the Welsh Labour M.P.s would boycott the meeting. It was this, too, which probably led to a last ditch attempt to wreck the joint meeting by trying to induce the Defence Committee to hold the meeting in the Caxton Hall or some other place outside the precincts of the House. As it was, members of the Welsh Labour Group actively dissuaded other M.P.s of Welsh extraction, who had been invited, from coming.

In reality the Welsh Labour Group, as it must have realised, was powerless to resist Welsh opinion and when the meeting was held in the historic Committee Room 13 on February 19 an expectant audience of London Welshmen heard Welsh M.P.s of all parties, one after the other, declare themselves opposed to Liverpool's plans.

Active opposition to Liverpool by Welsh M.P.s was on. It is significant that what effectiveness there was in the parliamentary struggle came only when the matter had been taken out of the hands of the Welsh Labour Group and transferred to those of the only body at present in the House of Commons (viz., the Welsh Parliamentary Party) which, weak and amorphous though it is, does on rare occasions unite individual Welsh M.P.s to speak as a body on Welsh affairs. But the M.P.s had left it 14 months too late. Never has the need of a united, disciplined Welsh Nationalist Party in Westminster been more emphasised.

Fortunately the Merioneth County Council proved adamant and the staunchness of its opposition illustrates *the importance of getting men and women on local authorities who have a clear vision of the true interests of Wales and who are prepared to fight for them.* It not only voiced its opposition, but undertook also the burden of its cost, which was not light. Not the least important of the lessons of Tryweryn can be learnt from the fortitude of the County Council up to the passing of the Liverpool Corporation Bill and the stamina shown by the Penllyn Council in subsequently taking up the lead.

Can These Save Wales?

The lack of conviction in the M.P.s was inevitably reflected in the Welsh Parliamentary Party, whose inactivity remained unbroken until the weeks preceding the parliamentary debate. Members from each of the three parties then spoke against the measure, but they spoke not as members of their English party, nor of the Welsh Parliamentary Party, but as individual members. Other members of the English parties spoke in favour of the Bill and many of those most prominent in both major parties voted for it.

Not all the Welsh M.P.s put in an appearance. Of the six Conservatives three only supported the defence with their vote, and of the Labour members those with most influence were the most silent. Mr. James Griffiths did not speak, Mr. Ness Edwards did not vote, and Mr. Aneurin Bevan was conspicuous by his absence.

When the struggle did reach "the bitter end", what fighting spirit had been engendered in the Welsh members had departed, and the sorry group that tramped ingloriously into the Noes' lobby on July 31st were the quintessence of English party politics in Wales. Liverpool's Bill to drown Tryweryn was allowed its Third Reading without a debate, without a single voiced being raised against it. Had a debate been forced many of those who went into the lobby for Liverpool would have left the House before the division came, so that even tactically the failure was shocking. Still more scandalous was to allow the long struggle to end in a mean-spirited anticlimax.

For days beforehand the press had warned us that the fight would end "not with a bang but a whimper". "The Welsh members, and particularly the North Wales M.P.s", said the London Letter of the *Western Mail* on July 27th, "realise the futility of a last-ditch stand on the Report stage, and they are also influenced by the concessions which have been made during the protracted Committee stage. . . . Welsh M.P.s agree that the fight to save Tryweryn is over". On the same day the *Liverpool Daily Post* commented in similar vein on the effect of "the concessions" on the Welsh members. Writing on July

29th, the author of the London Letter said: "Now the Bill must come again before the full House at 7 p.m. on Wednesday when—in what promises to be a brief discussion preceding the last vote of all—the members may indulge in general comment. . . . For practical purposes the scheme is through".

On Wednesday, July 31st, the day of the Third Reading, the *Liverpool Post's* Political Correspondent reported in this way:

"Intensive efforts were being made in the Commons last night to avoid any debate on Liverpool Corporation's Tryweryn Reservoir Bill when it comes before the House tonight for report and third reading.

"Mr. Tudor Watkins (Brecon and Radnor, Soc.) who is acting as unofficial Whip for the opponents of the Bill, and Mrs E. M. Braddock (Exchange, Soc.) who is with Mr. John Tilney (Wavertree, C.) acting as unofficial Whip for its supporters, later agreed to do their best to dissuade anyone from launching a debate on either side.

"Any unofficial gentleman's agreement cannot be guaranteed to stand.

"But if neither side make the first move a division on third reading will take place soon after seven o'clock".

It did. By five past seven Liverpool's Bill was law. It was a case of pusillanimity aforethought.

A Party, My Country for a Party

In the most critical Welsh issue of the generation Wales had no party in Westminster to defend her. Her M.P.s are an inchoate group of individual persons whose value to Wales is destroyed by their allegiance to English parties. To carry their parties with them to right even so glaring an injustice as Tryweryn is too great a task to be attempted. But if their influence upon their party is negligible, the corrosive influence of their party upon their Welsh integrity is plain for all to see.

Whatever its effects on the nation's social and economic life may be, they react violently against treating any issue in

Wales as a national one. As Mr. Arthur Probert, M.P., put it in a letter to the Ynysybwl branch of Plaid Cymru: "My personal opinion is that much more harm than good is being done for the people concerned by making this a Welsh versus English issue. It would be just the same to me if Cardiff told Mountain Ash that they were proposing to take over the valley of the Clydach".

Tryweryn brought under a spotlight the fact that Wales can never count on any one of the English parties to protect her interests. For if not in so clear a case as this, when could she hope to rely on them? However arrogant and unjustifiable the threat to her, the English parties will steer clear of her defence and will tend to draw their Welsh members with them.

It has long been known that *no English party will act to further the self-government of Wales* without effective compulsion from a strong Welsh party. *Tryweryn demonstrates that neither will they act to defend Welsh interests.* It has shown that an independent Welsh party alone can be relied upon to maintain the integrity of Wales and to serve her interests effectively.

The Sad Passing of a Minister

Not only has Tryweryn removed many Welsh illusions about the English parties: its effect on the office of Minister for Welsh Affairs has been still more decisive. Through it Mr. Brooke met the shattering fate of Humpty-Dumpty, and however desperate the efforts may be, not all the resources of the Tory Party and press can ever put Henry together again. At the Llangefni National Eisteddfod his rejection by those who had most right to speak for Wales was one of the most telling knocks given the Government by the Welsh people. Whenever Mr. Macmillan may choose to bury the office, it died on August 7th, 1957.

The preceding section of this pamphlet made it clear that Mr. Henry Brooke does not bear sole responsibility for the Westminster decision on Tryweryn. But his culpability is undeniable, and through it he has exposed his Welsh office, which had been thought only to be innocuous, to be positively dangerous.

It was his predecessor, Earl Tenby, who was first confronted with Tryweryn. His reaction to its challenge was to refer the question of Welsh water resources and their control to the Council for Wales.

On February 7th, 1957, Mr. Raymond Gower asked Mr. Brooke what recommendations had been received from the Council and whether he wished to make a statement. The Minister replied that the Council submitted to him this conclusion: "that there should be established an Advisory Water Committee for Wales to survey water requirements and resources and to advise the Minister of Housing and Local Government upon matters connected with the conservation and use of water resources". The Minister went on to say:

"After careful consideration of those recommendations . . . I have informed the Council of my views in a letter as follows: 'As regards the [Rural Development] Panel's first recommendation, the Minister agrees with the proposal that a committee should be set up to advise him on matters connected with the conservation and use of water resources in Wales. He considers that as a preliminary step it is desirable to set in train a *technical appraisal of the water resources of Wales*, and he is arranging for his engineers to begin such an investigation at once. . .

"'It is likely to take twelve months to carry out this investigation, and even though the proposed new advisory committee may not possibly discharge its main responsibilities until the results of the technical appraisal are available, the Minister thinks it desirable to appoint a committee as soon as possible so that it may keep in touch with the progress of the survey and may advise'."

Note that all this was stimulated by and directly concerned Tryweryn. But its immediate and most important result was to goad Liverpool to push forward its plans with all possible speed, so that it would be in possession of Tryweryn before the survey was published.

Decline and Fall

The Welsh people were grateful to the Minister for having given Tryweryn, as everybody assumed, a year's grace. Obviously he had also recognised that the water

resources of Wales were not limitless, and his inquiry would put him in a better position to judge Liverpool's huge demands. As Mr. Dewi Watkin Powell, counsel for the Tryweryn Defence Committee, said in the House of Lords Select Committee hearing: "The purpose of the inquiry was one and one only—to meet the position which had been raised by the Liverpool Corporation itself when Liverpool proceeded with its scheme".

Liverpool, however, moved forward roughly and quickly. It had at all costs to get its Bill through Parliament before the survey of the water resources of Wales was complete. But Mr. Brooke's position was crucial. It was at this moment that he had most power to delay, perhaps irretrievably, Liverpool's forward rush. *He needed only to stand by his inquiry.*

But in such a case a politician is usually influenced more by the political weight of the contending parties than by the justice of the matter. And so it was here. The Welsh politicians were still ambiguous in their attitude. "The Act was half way to the Statute Book before any one in Wales had woken up to its significance". Liverpool was wealthy and had a compact strength. It knew what it wanted as an English city.

And so the Welsh people were most bitterly disillusioned to find Mr. Brooke acting for Liverpool. Far from trying to restrain it, he now helped to hurry its plan forward before his inquiry could be completed. His mouthpiece in the House of Lords inquiry was a civil servant, a Mr. Wood, whose position as a witness was made doubly strong because, as a civil servant, he could not be cross examined on the statements made by him after the evidence had been heard and after both Mr. Thesiger, for Merioneth County Council, and Mr. Powell, for the people of Capel Celyn, had made their final speeches.

Mr. Wood drew attention to what the Minister had said, that Wales "is a land of mountains and valleys with an abundant rainfall". He then continued:

"As far as we know there is no foundation for the suggestion that Tryweryn is the last big reservoir site or big catchment available in Wales".

Having comforted other English cities in this way he had a word for the Welsh too:

"The Minister's report does not say that there is no immediate anxiety".

On the vital question of the survey this was his statement:

"The Minister has not drawn any necessary conclusions that a decision on Liverpool's proposals ought to be held up until this Advisory Committee has reported; indeed, if the Minister had meant to draw that inference he would have said so. But what he has said is that the question of holding up Liverpool's proposals ought to be judged against these two considerations: the need of Liverpool, on the one hand, and on the other hand the fact that water from the Tryweryn area does not, on present possibilities, seem likely to be needed by Wales".

It will be noted that all the qualifying phrases, "as far as we know", "on present possibilities", "seem likely",—they all beg the question which it was the whole purpose of the survey to answer. But the statement successfully established that the criterion by which Tryweryn was to be judged was the need, not of Wales, but of Liverpool.

Until the House of Lords hearing Mr. Brooke had done his utmost to give the impression that he was striving to safeguard Welsh interests, and the report of his intervention (as a witness for Liverpool through Mr. Wood) shocked those who had followed the matter. Thenceforth his attitude hardened, and his sole concern seemed to be to prove the urgency of Liverpool's need. There was in fact no urgency, for apart from the additional water it was to get from Lake Llanwddyn, Mr. Thesiger was able to show that it was to abstract from the Dee an additional ten million gallons a day "by arrangement with other people who are already authorised to take from the Dee, but will not be taking up to their full authorised quantity for several years".

By the time the parliamentary debate was reached Mr. Brooke was able to speak strongly and some say

passionately, for Liverpool. He was able to do so although he realised much of what was felt to be at stake in Wales, as this passage from his speech shows:

"As I see it, Wales has its own language, its own traditions and its own history, and these together form a distinctive but almost indefinable Welsh way of life. Particularly in the Welsh-speaking parts of the country, such as that round Tryweryn, there is a deep-down sense of belonging to a rather special community.

"For many years the distinctive nationhood of the Welsh nation has been felt to be under threat of eventual disappearance through absorption into all the rest of British life. . . If integration becomes complete, Wales as a separate nation may become forgotten and the Welsh language may die out.

"At the ultimate end, the opposition which has manifested itself in Wales to the Liverpool scheme is not based on simple issues like balancing the hardship caused to 60 people by having their homes flooded and needing to move some miles down the valley, against the increased rateable value. . . It is far deeper than that. It is opposition by people who feel that perhaps the critical point is being reached in the fight to keep Wales different from England, and that it is vital, on Tryweryn, to make a stand".

However inadequate this statement—"to keep Wales different from England" does not begin to express the purpose of those who believe in Wales—it did show that the Minister had more than an inkling of what was at stake. Yet the whole of this he brushed aside.

The Watch-dog's Bark

What in his view was the factor which was to override all Welsh economic and social considerations? Liverpool Corporation's "real and urgent need to augment their water resources". Although they could have augmented them elsewhere, Mr. Brooke would have none of this, because, in his own words, "it will remain true that North Wales is *the most obvious and the cheapest* source of water supply for Liverpool". There might be other sources, but

in his opinion it would be "*more expensive for Liverpool to obtain water from there than from North Wales*".

We have seen that Liverpool had safeguarded itself for the next eight or ten years by additional abstractions from the Dee and from Lake Llanwddyn. For the more distant future it had before it a wide variety of alternatives outside Wales. We have also seen that its domestic needs were more than adequately provided for by Wales already, and that the water was to be used for industrial expansion and resale.

These facts, which seemed to the Welsh to be important, were as chaff before the wind besides the unacknowledged but dominating factor—the extent of *the profit* Liverpool would make from Tryweryn. *Profit, not need, governed Liverpool's actions.* Everything else was available elsewhere, but profit of the magnitude Tryweryn's water promised to yield. Every alternative was dismissed (except the one which would drown the town of Bala) because it would be "more expensive to obtain water from there".

Mr. Brooke knew this well. It did not prevent his closing his speech to the House of Commons with this choice bit of bathos: "Water shortages", he said, "might occur in the next few years on Merseyside and in South-West Lancashire. I cannot believe that preservation of the Welsh way of life requires us to go as far as that. I cannot believe that the Welsh people of all people want to stand outside the brotherhood of man to that extent".

All this echoed the soul-stirring oratory of another Englishman, and a Liverpoolian to boot, on Welsh Disestablishment. And well might we repeat the famous piece of advice he was given. Chuck it, Brooke.

When the vote was taken not a single Welsh M.P. voted for the Bill. They knew that the whole of Wales was against it. Yet Mr. Brooke brazenly persisted in saying that he knew better than the Welsh representatives and better than the Welsh people, what was best for Wales. He still says so. His behaviour was insufferable, and in telling him that he was not wanted at the National Eisteddfod the Council showed him in a restrained and dignified way what Welsh Wales thought of him. They did not want to hear the Tory watch-dog's honest bark.

Parliament for Wales—not a Minister

The drama of Mr. Brooke's personal failure has brought into focus the ludicrous inadequacy of his minor office as a political recognition of a nation of two and a half million people. I have just been entertaining a party of overseas visitors who included men and women from Nigeria, the Philippines, Mauritius, Formosa, Taiwan, Burma, Singapore, Sarawak, Ceylon, Syria, Israel and Trinidad. They had not heard of Wales before coming here and could not understand why this ancient Western nation did not enjoy the self-government which they all did. A few days before this we were visited by a party of young people from Baden-Wurtemberg in Western Germany. They, too, had not heard of Wales before coming, and their leader was mystified to discover that Wales had no Parliament. "But why?", he asked. "We have one in Baden-Wurtemberg although we are not a nation". How many people from how many self-governing provinces in how many countries throughout the world could have echoed his astonished words.

Wales has Mr. Brooke. His office is her sole national political institution.

Tryweryn has shown how intolerable this position is, and how feeble a remedy it would be to put more civil servants at his disposal and call him a Secretary of State. *In the Welsh situation of today these are clearly trivialities. But they are useful to the government as it plays with Wales.* A secretaryship has been demanded in Wales for 80 years. But no government during that period has taken Wales seriously, and they have successively retained the carrot to dangle before Welsh noses. They know that there will always be some to bray importantly for it.

While our only national political institution has been active in furthering the plunder of Welsh resources, hundreds of provinces in scores of countries throughout the world have been enjoying the security of self-government. How long again will this nation be denied what these provinces enjoy? There must be constitutional reform in Wales, but no reform can any longer be called serious which does not recognise the need for a Parliament for Wales.

"Wales is Free"

"But we already have our representatives in Parliament", people have been saying. "Wales has parliamentary self-government. She is already free".

Tryweryn has exposed the measure of her freedom. Normally the authority her representatives might acquire as a Welsh party is squandered amongst the English parties, but this issue gave them their chance to show, in the most favourable circumstances, what they could do when united. It was a clear Welsh issue; the country was solidly behind them; and there was a free vote in both House of Lords and House of Commons. They excel in speaking and they had a debate. As far as reason and argument and oratory went, they won this easily. Not a single Welsh member supported Liverpool in the division lobby; 27 of the 36 were there to vote against the Bill. But there are 625 members in this House of Commons. Liverpool carried the day.

"The people of Wales have never felt so intense on any subject this century as they feel about the question which we are discussing here this evening". These were the words of Mr. T. W. Jones in opening the debate on the Second Reading. But the depth of their feeling availed them nothing. They do not decide, nor do their representatives, what is to be done in Wales. They cannot. They have no power of decision on any matter which concerns them all. *Liverpool knew what she wanted and was given the right to act by an English Parliament. Wales, too, knew what she wanted, but she had no Parliament to give her the power to act.*

This is nothing new. Everybody knows that Wales has no power to act. She opposed, and her M.P.s opposed, military conscription in peacetime, but she could not act. She wanted her national tongue recognised as an official language in her own territory; at great cost she organised a national petition which gathered nearly half a million signatures and presented it to this same English Parliament. Nothing came of it. She cannot act.

Once again Wales has united to present a national standpoint in this Parliament, and once again she has been

contemptuously overridden. It was not the *Welsh Nation* but the *Western Mail* which said on the morrow of the parliamentary debacle:

"There has been every appearance of complete contempt for Welsh opinion on the part both of the Liverpool Corporation and of Parliament".

Action Needed and Overdue

Must this humiliating process be repeated again before the Welsh nation is retrieved from her impossible position? There is nothing now to prevent it. Some put their faith in action behind the scenes. It will be ignored with the same brusque contempt again and again.

As things are, July 31st, 1957, can be repeated in 1958 and 1959 and through the years until the terrible vision of Islwyn Ffowc Elis's novel, "Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd" (A week in future Wales) is the terrible reality. Radical political action alone can prevent it. Radical action means independent action by Welshmen in Wales. It means action to win national freedom.

While so many Welshmen are playing politics in the English parties, Wales is being destroyed. Radical action means breaking with these parties and uniting with fellow-Welshmen in dour and selfless action for a government.

This thing happened to Wales because she has no Parliament. The fact is generally accepted. Mr. Geoffrey Lawrence specifically stated it in presenting Liverpool's case in the House of Lords hearing.

"There can be no question that emotions in Wales have been aroused", he said. "But Liverpool Corporation have to take the constitution as they find it. There is at the moment no separate Welsh Government; there is no separate demarcation of Wales from England from the point of view of administration or from the point of view of water supplies".

He argued, therefore, that Liverpool had proceeded in the only way open to it under the present constitution.

As long as Wales remains without a Parliament, so long can Liverpool's success be repeated by others. It

can be repeated even in the same matter of water. The towns of England have now been alerted to the importance of this vital raw material. A rush to drown more Welsh valleys is far from inconceivable. In its first leading article on September 7th, 1957, the *Manchester Guardian* did not mince its words:

"The demands (upon water resources) are now mounting at an accelerating rate because the new industries upon which our prosperity increasingly depends need disproportionately large supplies of fresh water, while agriculture is waking up to the potentialities of irrigation. . . .

"The country must be prepared to undertake a programme of capital expenditure on new waterworks (which) will certainly mean the submersion of many valleys which have, on every ground, far better claims to remain inviolate than that of Tryweryn".

Wales can do nothing effectively to develop her resources, nor can she protect them from pillage. This is part of the price she pays for being an undifferentiated part of England. Without a government, her role is often that of the helpless victim. An English government will always see to it that English cities get the resources "upon which our prosperity increasingly depends", and the life of Wales will not be allowed to stand in the way.

Tryweryn will become a word of fateful significance for Wales. It may become as well-known in Wales as a verb as Qisling has become as a noun:

"To Tryweryn"—to exploit the land or natural resources of a small nation, or to destroy its social life or language, in the interests of a big neighbouring country or part of it.

When a small country has no Parliament of its own, it is possible for a big neighbour to Tryweryn it at will, however strongly the small nation may oppose the process. It is in fact possible for the big neighbour to Tryweryn the small country to death. If the small nation lacks the political institutions of a nation how can she prevent it?

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