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HOLIDAYS AND THE STATE

DONALD CHAPMAN

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ................................................. Page 3

PART I—THE PROBLEM ........................................
1. DEMAND AND SUPPLY ................................... 5
2. FASHION TRENDS ........................................ 9
3. THE PROBLEM OF COSTS .............................. 12

PART II—TOWARDS STATE INTERVENTION ............
4. THE HISTORY ............................................. 15
5. VOLUNTARY EFFORT ..................................... 18
6. THE PROBLEM OF COSTS—AGAIN .................. 21
7. A HOLIDAYS COUNCIL .................................. 23
APPENDIX ..................................................... 25

NOTE This pamphlet, like all publications of the Fabian Society, represents not the collective view of the Society but only the view of the individual who prepared it. The responsibility of the Fabian Society is limited to approving the publications which it issues as embodying facts and opinions worthy of consideration within the Labour Movement.

INTRODUCTION

"More Family Holidays" is the title of a short section in the draft statement issued by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party as a basis for the 1950 Election programme. It advocates, in a short summary, that there should be a Holidays Council, set up with Government support, to begin providing centres where families can have reasonably priced holidays. The centres will be leased to non-profit-seeking holiday organisations, relieving them of excessive capital costs; and a start is to be made in some of the "stately homes" coming into Government hands under "Pay-As-You-Die" taxation.

That is all it says; but much history lies behind that brief outline. Discussions on the whole problem of what the State could and should do to assist in family holiday provision started in a Fabian Group in 1947. It was partly from these discussions and from the material which was collected for the Group's work that it was possible, late in 1948, to prepare for the Labour Party a memorandum making the kind of recommendations which have now been incorporated in the policy document.

This pamphlet is now a full-length outline of the problem and more detailed proposals.

The development of social services during Labour's first five years has inevitably and rightly been confined mainly to such basic needs as social security, education and health services—measures to protect against misfortune and to secure for everyone a higher minimum standard in the basic needs of life. Even so, money has been found to foster the Arts and other forms of creative recreation; the substantial Treasury grants which have been made available should allow striking developments on the foundations now being laid.

Labour's policy statement correctly warns that further bold advances in social services are now limited by the possibilities of raising national production. Redistribution of incomes has now gone so far that there are only about 50 people with net incomes, after direct taxes, of over £6,000 a year; it is no longer possible to plan for expanded social services out of taxation of the rich, especially since the existing schemes will cost more as the years go by and as, for example, more resources become available to allow further sections of the 1944 Education Act to be implemented. Any new services in a second five years must therefore be limited in scope and cost; 'consolidation' of the measures brought into operation since 1945 must be the keynote for 1950-55. Holiday provision has been singled out as practically the only new service. Why is this?
Labour policy has often been for the State to intervene in order to co-ordinate and then make more widely available benefits which have been developing piecemeal or through voluntary agencies—to build on or extend facilities which, up to now, have not reached most working homes. In the case of social security, health or education, State intervention has led to complete taking over of the services to make them comprehensive under official planning. But, as we have said, the limit of what can be state-provided is in sight for the time being; moreover, the limit of what should come free from the state—the limit, if you like, of what should be taken away from some reliance on personal initiative—is also in some cases in sight. Holiday provision is probably well outside that limit. It is both impossible and undesirable, then, to plan free facilities—"bribes for all"—in the case of holidays. Moreover, it is a form of recreation so influenced by personal taste and so easily ruined by regimentation, that any schemes for state holiday camps or the like would be quite unpalatable.

Yet the case for state intervention remains. Through the growth of the holidays-with-pay movement they are now the right of the majority of the working population; but, as the figures will show, they are by no means within the reach of all working people, particularly those with families. And the importance of the holiday break must be stressed when national leisure facilities are considered. Only a part of the community, albeit an increasing part, takes advantage of grants for music and the arts or sports; but for most families the holiday-by-the-sea or in the country, a complete change from normal life, provides a highlight of the year's recreation and spiritual refreshment for months to come. If there can be some plan to bring such holidays, free from regimentation, within the reach of all; and if it can be done without really major state expenditure and with only a mere subtle assistance to personal effort and initiative, then we can say that a prima facie case for a state holidays policy can clearly be made out.
Part I—The Problem

1. DEMAND AND SUPPLY

The History

"In 1900 the annual holiday had hardly begun to attract the attention of sociologists, still less of politicians. It was taken for granted as a luxury which would be enjoyed at a certain level of income but which there was no special hardship in going without." Even though, as this quotation suggests, widespread holiday making is a growth of the last fifty years or so, there is a considerable history of holiday-making by the middle class and better-paid workers before then—mainly, of course, dating from the beginning of the Railway Age. The weekly half-holiday, the unparalleled influx of visitors to the Great Exhibition of 1851 (when Thomas Cook, at the beginning of his career, brought 165,000 excursionists to London from Yorkshire alone), the Bank Holiday Act of 1871—all these, and many others, provide threads of history which made the turn of the century the real beginning of widespread attention to the value and possibility of holiday-making.

Naturally, the idea had to run the gauntlet of the Jeremiah who prophesied dissipation, drunkenness and poverty as a result of recreation in holiday areas. But the owning classes could not for ever deny to the workers benefits which they themselves readily appreciated. The House of Lords even improved and extended the application of the Bank Holidays Bill! As the standard of living rose, so the idea of a week's holiday, rather than half-holiday or bank-holiday excursions, could spread also. At first, they were mainly holidays without pay—not always welcome—but instances of paid holidays have been traced to 1875 and 1884, while public authorities particularly were increasingly accepting the principle in the 1890s. The Co-operative Holidays Association was formed in 1897, but its activities date from some years earlier.

The coastal resorts were transformed as various areas became the playground for the better-off from industrial centres. Blackpool, for example, grew from a population of about 2,000 in 1851 to 47,000 in 1901; and all round the coast new capital was sunk in hotels and entertainment.

Increasing industrialisation and the wider horizon given by expanding education meant that people needed little or no persuading to take holidays, once wages were high enough to allow holiday

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savings. The fact that paid holidays were equivalent, and hence an alternative, to additional pay meant that the real crusade for holidays-with-pay was unlikely to come until success was in sight in the bitter struggle to get wages everywhere above subsistence level. The T.U.C. passed a resolution on the subject in 1911, but it was not until the 1930s that the movement gained strength. Private member's Bills to enforce the system were rejected by Parliament in 1925 and 1929; and there seemed little will to adopt the 1936 I.L.O. draft convention which suggested six consecutive days' holiday with pay for adult workers.

Another Bill introduced in 1936 led to the promise to set up an enquiry. The result was the Amulree Committee on Holidays with Pay, which heard evidence from all quarters: the T.U.C., for example, suggested twelve days' paid holidays between April and October. The Committee's Report estimated that, of the 18½ million workers earning under £250 a year in 1937, 7¼ millions had consecutive holidays with pay of some kind. Of these, 1¾-1½ millions received them under collective agreements. But the figure had swollen to three millions in 1938; and, after the Holidays with Pay Act of 1938 (giving powers, as recommended by the Committee, to wage-regulating bodies; and allowing the Ministry of Labour to encourage voluntary agreements), the figure rose considerably. Just before the outbreak of war it was estimated that through collective agreements and by other provisions the number of workers with paid holidays was about 11 million; in 1945 it rose to 80 per cent. of all workers and to day the total is probably substantially higher. This, of course, did not mean they could afford a holiday in the accepted sense. The total number on holiday in 1937 was 15 million out of a population three times that number.

**Actual and Potential Demand Today**

The Holidays-with-Pay Act was to have been supplemented in 1940-41 by other legislation enforcing statutory provision if the voluntary agreement system failed. The War and the success of negotiations made this unnecessary. Reports during the War estimated that, compared with the pre-war (1937) number of holiday-makers—15 million—the average in post-war years might well double and rise towards 45 million in succeeding years. In fact, that proved to be a gross over-estimate; but it remains true that it is now best to approach demand for holidays more from the angle of total population than from examining the industrial and other agreements on the subject.

More exact figures are now provided in a remarkable Survey of Holiday Accommodation undertaken during 1948 by the British

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Minard Castle is a Holiday Fellowship Centre and is a beautiful example of the country and seaside guest houses run by the non-profit-seeking holiday organisations.

The Lido, Rustington, is a new-type family holiday centre owned by the Workers' Travel Association—which has also the kind of guest house shown above.
Tourist and Holiday Board's Home Holidays Division, and published in April, 1949. The Division's functions will be more fully described below, but a full account must now be given of the figures in this very comprehensive survey.

Although really intended to assist Town and Country Planning authorities in working out new needs in accommodation, the Survey provides a complete set of figures for any sociological study of holidays. On the demand side it is fortified by estimates carried out by the Social Survey, Central Office of Information, in 1946, 1947 and 1948 and by the readership survey of Hulton's Press in 1947 and 1948. Several factors make complete accuracy impossible. But the surveys all agree remarkably well in their findings and the Survey's tables make every effort to keep inaccuracies to the minimum. Since, in any case, we shall be dealing in large round figures, the Survey's figures are likely to be a very good guide indeed for the broad trends which we are seeking.

The first table shows the present-day demand for holidays:—

**Table I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Taking seaside or country holidays in Great Britain</th>
<th>% of Popn.</th>
<th>Thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seaside</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Taking other forms of period holidays</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Towns</td>
<td>6·0</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>3·0</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total taking period holidays</td>
<td>56·0</td>
<td>24,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total taking Holidays by day trips</td>
<td>11·0</td>
<td>4,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking no Holiday</td>
<td>33·0</td>
<td>14,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of Britain (individuals over 4 years of age)</td>
<td>100·0</td>
<td>44,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To-day, then, about 21 million people are likely to be seeking the traditional kind of holiday in seaside or country—less than half the population. That is probably an advance on pre-war, but it is nowhere near the kind of holiday demand which could be expected once everyone who wished to take a holiday is actually able to do so.

What, then, is the potential demand in this country for the usual kind of residential holiday?

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1 From Queen's House. St. James's Street, S.W.1. 5/-.
Again, combining the results of their own investigations with the figures indicated by the various surveys, the Report suggests that there could well be a seasonal demand for accommodation for just under thirty million people, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 per cent. of the elderly (over 65 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People serving overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed and dependants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detention, asylums, hospitals and sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of foreign visitors and Britishes holidaying abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People holidaying with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People taking only day trips (11 per cent.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in holiday trades (on holiday out of season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People on holiday in London or other large cities (6.2 per cent.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who have to take their holiday out of season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential demand for accommodation during the season</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supply of Accommodation**

So far we have established present-day demand for accommodation, using rounded figures, as 21 millions, compared with a potential demand of 30 millions and with 15 millions pre-war. Before turning to consider the particular problems of families and low-income groups, it is well to see how demand compares with available accommodation.

The Survey makes certain inevitable assumptions about the length of season (90 days in some areas; 120 days in most) and about the average length of holiday (generally ten days). The picture of the total seasonal demand which could be accommodated for a holiday is then:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lic. hotels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Not requiring accommodation separate from their parents.
2. Estimated as half the present figure of 17 per cent.
That means, in theory at any rate, that the whole potential demand could apparently be fitted in—accommodation and demand equal at approximately 30 million. But, clearly, it is not as simple as that! Firstly, some 40 per cent of holidaymakers insist on going away in the four weeks round August Bank Holiday, so there is likely to be an acute shortage at all points in the high season. Secondly, and much worse, it is by no means true that accommodation of the right kind and at the right price would be available for all, even if the overall total figures do balance out. Demand for apartment houses cannot be supplied in luxury hotels; and not everyone could travel from London, say, to Devon and Cornwall if that is where there happened to be plenty of room.

It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that there is likely to be in any case a need to increase holiday accommodation as demand increases. With any peak demand there will be an overall shortage at any one time; but that will be concealing probable gross under-provision in some kinds and less shortage in other kinds of accommodation. The answer clearly lies in breaking down the figures further: what kind of holidays do people want, with what kind of facilities and in what areas of the country? All this, of course, ignores discussion about whether all the new potential demand is likely to have enough money to make its desires effective. That will be examined in chapter 3 when a word has first been said about this problem of qualitative demand.

2. FASHION TRENDS

The Nuffield College Report (mentioned above) confirms the trend quoted by the average observer. Despite the tendency to have holidays in the country, in Youth Hostels, under canvas, or abroad, “the English seaside resorts seem likely to remain the backbone of the tourist industry and the mecca of the great majority of holiday-makers”*. Nevertheless, two particular fashion trends are clear.

At the beginning of the last century, the resorts were visited more or less exclusively by the upper and upper-middle-class groups. Then, as a result of the Industrial Revolution and mainly through the development of the railway, the middle classes began to visit them. The ‘fashionable’ towns then changed from Brighton or Blackpool to Frinton or Lulworth; new, more charming, more ‘select’ places became the haunts of the well-to-do. In this century that trend has been intensified, and the working classes are making towns like Blackpool virtually their own, while the middle classes join the more wealthy in the feverish search for quieter and more undisturbed retreats. Further, the final lap is now starting; a few years of a large resort make working people ready to move on to new conquests in the coves and the countryside. And in the end all classes are
beginning to push their claim to the undeveloped, 'unspoiled' areas on the coast and inland. We can, then, expect that the Tourist and Holiday Board’s Survey will hide, in its overall figures, a surplus of accommodation in the larger resorts and a shortage in small resorts and in the countryside. That, in fact, is the case, as was indicated when the Survey was broken down into detailed preferences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASIDE</th>
<th></th>
<th>Thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td></td>
<td>Large Resorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>9,895</td>
<td>5,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>14,168</td>
<td>7,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>21,554</td>
<td>5,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>+11,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>+7,386</td>
<td>-2,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY Demand</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>5,204</td>
<td>5,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>7,453</td>
<td>8,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>2,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>+407</td>
<td>-3,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>+205</td>
<td>-5,789</td>
<td>-5,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that, by the time the new potential demand makes itself felt, although it may largely swell the crowds in major resorts, it will also tip the scales in smaller resorts and in the countryside, leading to feverish searches for empty accommodation in these areas.

This difficult situation will be made worse by the second fashion trend, which concerns the quality of accommodation demanded. As the Nuffield Report again forecast, the types of accommodation also show a similar process of 'moving up one'. The traditional holiday is one in which the wife has no real holiday because she still has to do the cooking—or at least to go out and buy the food. Only the sea-shore provides a place where the children can be cheaply amused. The boarding house was a step above this for many people, and hotels were out of their reach. When the new commercial holiday camp came along—quite recently; Mr. Butlin, for example, started his company only in 1937—it was for a long time used only by the middle classes. The non-profit-seeking organisations, to be mentioned below, also found that they were catering largely for
the smaller salaried people in their new-type guest houses. In fact, to quote the Nuffield Report again, it seems that "new forms of holiday-making are so far largely confined to those who have had the opportunity to savour and digest the traditional type of holiday and are therefore ready to pass on to fresh fields. . . . The granting of holidays increases, a new camp is built, some of the established holiday-makers vacate their seaside lodgings and move into it, and the new holiday-makers move into the lodgings thus made available."

Although it is broadly true that taste shows this process of venturing on to new types of holiday, the modern tendency, with the spread of knowledge of what modern holiday-provision can in fact do, will probably be to jump the first stage. When the new potential demands swell the numbers hunting for accommodation, they are increasingly going straight to the holiday camp or holiday centre. This general position is borne out in the following table, again taken from the figures in the Survey:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>Boarding houses</th>
<th>Apart. houses</th>
<th>Holiday camps</th>
<th>Holiday centres</th>
<th>Youth Hostels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>7,311</td>
<td>8,983</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>10,469</td>
<td>12,863</td>
<td>2,392</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>10,947</td>
<td>13,093</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>+ 541</td>
<td>+ 3,636</td>
<td>+ 4,110</td>
<td>+ 766</td>
<td>+ 265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>+ 478</td>
<td>+ 230</td>
<td>- 1,488</td>
<td>- 445</td>
<td>- 324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these figures are broken down still further into seaside and country requirements, the main needs for the future will be country boarding houses and apartment houses; holiday camps, holiday centres and youth hostels at the seaside; and, to a lesser extent, camps and centres in the country. Present-day evidence confirms this: it is known, for example, that hundreds of thousands of bookings for camps alone were turned away in 1948.

For the convenience of the planners, the Survey presents its conclusions in even greater detail and shows the varying needs of the different regions. It concludes with a warning that the trend from apartment houses and boarding houses to camps and centres may well be much more intense than the figures indicate. The calculations

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1 Excluding camping sites for which provision is adequate.
2 The Survey hints that the shortage here may be less than is at present estimated.
of potential qualitative demand have in fact been made by dividing up the total potential demand according to the preferences which people have to-day. If, therefore, the fashion trends continue, as no doubt they will, it is certain that the figures under-estimate the shortage of new-type holiday accommodation. Finally, when the complication of peak demand is introduced, there is also a case for selected expansion of hotel and boarding-house facilities.

Staggering

A word can usefully be added here on the possibility of reducing some of the peak demand by increased staggering of holidays. In its latest Annual Report, the Home Holidays Committee confesses that their campaign to encourage people to spread holidays through the season has had little effect. Tradition, a firm—but totally wrong—belief that the best weather comes near August Bank Holiday, the Bank Holiday itself, and the incidence of school examinations and holidays, all combine to make the Committee's persuasions largely unheeded. By propaganda about high-season congestion and early season weather, by an attempt to link industrial and seaside towns for specific weeks in the early period, and by pressing for reduced rail fares for early holidays, the Committee has done its best. The fact that major school examinations are to be earlier in 1950 will help. But the proposal to have a fixed Bank Holiday in June (replacing Whit Monday), with an autumn Holiday in September (instead of August) has failed to secure acceptance by both sides of industry. It deserves increased discussion and may well succeed in the end.

3. THE PROBLEM OF COSTS

The general picture drawn up to now indicates certain needs which will be felt as holiday-making expands; but it gives no indication of the problem of making sure that this potential demand can really become effective. That is a problem of prices and costs, and a few initial figures indicate its magnitude:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>Social Survey, 1946</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% not on holiday in 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to £3</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3 to £4</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4 to £5 10s. 0d.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5 10s. 0d. to £10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10 or over</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, in 1946, which was a peak year, with accommodation relatively heavily booked now that everyone could take a first
HOLIDAYS AND THE STATE

post-war break and spend savings or gratuities, still less than half the wage-earning group managed to take a holiday of any kind, even with friends. And yet, in Table II, we were envisaging a potential demand in holiday areas during the season of 30 millions with another 8 millions taking holidays in other areas or at other times—out of a total population of 48 millions. Clearly, if only these proportions could afford a holiday in the peak year, considerable financial obstacles have to be overcome before the full potential demand will be able to make itself felt.

The figures for family holidays and holiday spending are even more instructive:—

**Table VII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of children</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>1946 Family Holidays in which</th>
<th>% in which</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. had hols. together</td>
<td>some did, some didn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table VIII**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Group</th>
<th>Holiday Spending, 1946</th>
<th>Average spent (£ s. d.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £3 p.w.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3 to £4</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>13 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4 to £5 10s. 0d.</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>16 8 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5 10s. 0d. to £10</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>23 13 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>965</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average £18 0 0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 1946, costs have certainly risen, particularly now that the minimum wages fixed under the Catering Wages Commission are being enforced. The increase in hotel or boarding house charges is certainly £1 per week. Less than one-third of families with three children were having holidays even then; and, since it was costing them over three weeks' wages in 1946, it is safe to suggest that families provided a considerable share of the fall in demand which was in evidence in 1947 and 1948. If costs per week in commercial establishments to-day are £5 5s. Od. to £6 10s. Od., a family of four will certainly have a holiday budget topping £23 or £25, once account is taken of rail fares, entertainment costs, and special outlays. If 'average' holidays are taken as ten days, the necessary weekly saving will be well over 10/- per week. In effect, this would mean

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1 From the Social Survey for the Home Holidays Committee.
that the family would have to deny itself normal entertainment for 50 weeks of the year and would have to economise in other ways on family budgets which are already strained.

By contrast, what *can* a working man afford? It is one of our assumptions that holidays must be the result of personal effort in saving; but, if 10/- and more per week is unreasonable, what estimate can be taken? This, of course, is largely a matter of personal opinion and individual circumstances, and it is best to fly to an authoritative source for an estimate. The Committee on Workers’ Holidays (mentioned below) suggested in 1939 that the most a worker can be expected to save for holidays is “about as much again as he will receive in holiday pay”. Without being rigid about it, that seems a sensible rule-of-thumb, under which the £25 suggested above would be contrasted with double a weekly wage which to-day might be £6—£7 on average, but less than that for many.

The argument so far can now be summarised very briefly. It is suggested:

1. That, taking into account present and potential demands for both total and type of holiday accommodation, there is a clear case for expansion of certain kinds of holiday facilities, particularly those catering for the more modern ideas in these fields and particularly for family holidays.

2. The potential demand for holidays which we would like to see effective will not be so unless some means can be found to bring present prices and costs down to within the reach of wage earners with families.

3. The limits of state outlay—both desirable and possible—indicate that the more immediate progress towards a solution can only involve limited state activity, probably through careful ‘next steps’ designed to give more subtle assistance to personal initiative and effort.

Part II will try to sort out what can be done.
Part II
Towards State Intervention

4. THE HISTORY

As with the development of the other social services, it is best to plan carefully on the basis of any existing structure in so far as it has been tried and tested. Secondly, it is well to find out what experienced committees and organisations have recommended from impartial investigation. What, in fact, are the strands in history which can best be taken as guides for any “next steps”? There are several.

The 1938 Holidays-with-Pay Act, although mainly concerned with fostering voluntary agreements between employers and workers, is the important landmark in state intervention. It gave actual powers to fix paid holidays to the statutory Wages Councils—or Trade Boards as they then were—so that even if voluntarily granted holidays-with-pay had not been growing in number, the very existence of statutory powers in some industries would have provided a powerful lever for workers in others. The Act was evidence that the movement was passing from a period of campaigning to one of achievement.

Turning to intervention in the sphere of actual accommodation, there is the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937. As its title implies, the aim was to provide facilities mainly associated with such work as that of the National Fitness Council. It made a slight attempt to face the inevitably growing need for cheaper, “open-air” types of holidays by allowing local authorities to build and equip camps. The difficulty in that would have been lack of knowledge of really suitable sites and, for inland towns, that of supervising a distant enterprise and organising proper commercial management. Paington actually took steps to acquire a camp, and Lambeth planned one at Herne Bay to cost £50,000. The Board of Education was empowered to make certain grants to non-profit-making camps, but this power was narrowly interpreted and those of the Workers’ Travel Association were excluded.

Later, a National Camps Corporation was set up with the aim of providing about 50 school camps to be used for evacuation in the event of war. A “Committee on Workers’ Holidays” was set up by the Industrial Welfare Society at the suggestion of the Ministry of Labour. Referring to the Corporation’s work it said:

“... in the debate in the House of Commons the opinion was strongly expressed in several quarters that this could be the...
beginning of a very large programme of camp construction, and
many should be so constructed that they could be used not only
for evacuation camps but also as holiday camps for adults in peace-
time... the spokesman of the Government did not exclude the
possibility of such development."

The Committee’s report is indeed a pioneer effort. It pointed
out that, despite isolated provision by industry (e.g., the Lever Bros.
Camp) and by Trade Unions (e.g., the Skegness Centre of the
Derbyshire Miners’ Welfare Committee), the prime need was for
state intervention to help cheap holidays for the working class
grouping. Already in 1939 the Committee was recommending
"a National tourist or holidays board" and that part of its ideas
has been adopted. But nothing was done about its findings that
"some national body should be entrusted with power to make
grants to local authorities, associations of employers and employed,
and other approved organisations of a non-profit-making character
... towards the erection of camps, etc., and similar forms of cheap
holiday accommodation, the same body to have power to erect
such camps and arrange for their management."

At the end of the War came the Hobhouse Report on National
Parks. Having made its major recommendations for the creation
and management of the Parks, it went on to discuss holiday ac-
 commodation inside them. It "was impressed by the inadequacy"
and suggested quiet hostels for the elderly, camps or guest houses
for families, etc.—all to be provided by the purchase of country
houses and the building of new accommodation. Expert advice
on costs led them to believe that a considerable amount of it would
have to be constructed and maintained on a non-profit-making
basis or at a loss. The Committee recommended a fund of £1 m.
over ten years, so that the Parks Commission could provide facilities
and co-operate with non-profit-making organisations for their manage-
ment. The Bill now before Parliament empowers local planning
authorities to provide, or secure provision in the area, of National
Parks, of accommodation and camping sites, with Treasury grants of
up to 75 per cent. of the necessary capital costs. Grants can be given
to voluntary non-profit-making bodies co-operating in such provision.

In this evolution towards a national policy the next step was
the British Tourist and Holidays Board, with its executive functions
carried out by four Divisions—Tourist; Home Holidays; Hotels;
Catering. The Home Holidays Committee (including representa-
tives of the industry and of ‘consumers’) was created at the Board’s
first meeting in February 1947. Its duties were based initially on
the 1945 report of the Catering Wages Commission and included
the following:—

(a) To compile an authoritative and comprehensive list of
all holiday establishments.
(b) To provide suitable guide books . . . etc.
(c) To carry out a survey of holiday accommodation.
(d) To co-operate with the authority responsible for National Parks and the interests concerned in the country's holiday services.
(e) To co-operate in the provision of new types of holiday facilities.
(f) To co-operate in any measures designed to effect the staggering of holidays.
(g) To pay particular attention to holiday accommodation for low-income groupings.

Later, however, this rather promising list of functions was modified and confined mainly to exploratory and exhortatory work within the existing pattern of the holiday industry. The country's economic situation, particularly the capital cuts, may have had a great deal to do with this change.

Even so, within its present limits, the Committee has done a great deal of valuable work which is little known. Its major tasks have been to compile the Survey of accommodation which has been so frequently quoted in this pamphlet; it has drawn up a register of over 40,000 hotels, camps, etc. At one point its investigations into the charges for accommodation led the Committee to report to its parent Board that, failing voluntary methods of regulation, compulsory registration of all holiday establishments should be considered. Little more has been heard of this, but the Committee is now encouraging local associations of hotels and boarding-houses to issue lists showing charges.

Staggering of holidays has been a major campaign as mentioned earlier; and the Committee's officers organised the scheme to link an industrial town with a seaside resort to encourage a June holiday-week. Its other work has included advice to resorts on the use of "All-in" quotations for holidays to meet the demand for the kind of comprehensive holiday charge which makes camps so popular; sponsorship of applications from the trade to Government departments for equipment and materials; supervision of bulk accommodation for the Olympic Games . . . and so on. Finally, it has attempted to secure redundant Government war property for holiday purposes. During the war it was thought that this would be important in post-war expansion of accommodation, but that view has proved to be wrong. The Ministry of Works retained many of the best places for other Government departments, or demanded commercial prices, or found difficulties about maintaining site requisition; the premises were too costly to adapt. Moreover, owing to what can only be described as very short-sighted policy, the Government has not allowed the Board to hold
properties and lease them out, nor even to have the first call on houses handed over under death duty taxation.

In short, the Committee has done much in a very short time of two years. It has no power and no funds; its work has been to tidy up the present scene in the post-war years, to make the best of existing accommodation and, most important, to build up that background of experience and knowledge which will be invaluable in the promotion of a thorough-going holidays policy. It is significant that one of the original functions which was later dropped was that of "paying particular attention to the holiday accommodation for the lower income groups". Without money and responsibility it would, of course, have been unable to do much in this respect. But it is clear that, when its experience is read in conjunction with the history of findings and discussions of the last twelve years, the Committee's work provides an indispensable basis on which a plan for cheap holidays can be built.

Thus it is clear that the next stage in policy can be founded on the existing beginnings of state intervention. With the experience and the recommendations related in this chapter firmly in mind, the questions which arise are:

(a) How are the new cheap holidays to be provided and managed?
(b) How much state outlay is required, and in what form?
(c) What new planning organisation will be needed?

5. VOLUNTARY EFFORT

What kind of cheaper holidays? How provided? As suggested in the Introduction, they must be free from regimentation and without the stamp of state uniformity. In the chapter on demand and supply it was estimated that all figures indicate that the increase of demand will show itself in filling up existing apartment and boarding houses but also in making much worse the already great shortage of modern holiday camps and centres, both by the sea and in the country. The problem thus resolves itself into finding the agencies which can best give a varied approach to the modern idea of holiday provision, particularly for families.

The Committee on Workers' Holidays and the Hobhouse Committee both singled out the non-profit-seeking holiday organisations as possible state agencies. A word must therefore be said about their experience and methods.

The Co-operative Holidays Association and the Holiday Fellowship were founded before the first World War—before the cinema, loudspeakers and dance bands—and are based on the idea
Eskdale Hostel was specially planned and built for the *Youth Hostels Association*.

Follaton House, situated in beautiful surroundings at Totnes, is one of the centres run by the *Co-operative Holidays Association*. 
that for many people holidays are better enjoyed in a spirit of fellowship than in solitude. Capital is provided on a co-operative share system, with a fixed low rate of interest, and the governing committees are composed of unpaid members whose purpose is community service. The holidays they provide are mainly residential, usually large country houses in beauty spots or by the sea. They are not luxuriously furnished and staff costs are kept to a minimum by a considerable amount of self-service at meals, etc. Rambling or walking by day and self-entertainment in the evenings are the principal features.

The C.H.A. now has over fifty years of experience behind it. In 1948 it had about 24 centres open for the season, including a new Family Centre at Filey. Holiday weeks with a cultural background (i.e., with a few talks on music or art) are provided for those who like them. Full membership, with the right to vote at the Annual Meeting, is restricted to those who spend a week at one of the Centres. Its balance sheet shows a turnover of more than £100,000 in 1948. Including a limited programme of Continental holidays it provided over 30,000 guest weeks that year. Most notable are its Invited Guest weeks and Assisted Guest Scheme: through donations and money-raising events organised by voluntary committees several hundred are provided with a free week’s holiday while others are able to have them at less than normal charges.

The H.F. has grown from two thousand guest-weeks in 1914 to nearly 50,000 in 1948. It maintains over 40 Centres for varying periods of the year, has share capital of over £70,000 (limited to £10 individual holdings) and an annual turnover of something like £200,000. It too has a scheme for Assisted Holidays, has local Groups of members who meet between holiday periods, and is venturing into the field of family holidays. Five centres are reserved for this purpose and special provision is also made in Youth Camps for organised parties of boys and girls, while in certain centres priority is given to young people in the 15-30 age group. Any surplus over the 2½ per cent. interest on capital is ploughed back to buy new centres and plan new activities.

The Workers’ Travel Association is a little different from the others. It was founded in 1921 mainly to develop international friendship through travel. Thus, in the peak pre-war year of 1937 it took nearly 34,000 overseas bookings. Its home holidays began with a first guest-house in 1926; to-day it has 14 and leases others for the season, besides taking bookings in certain ‘agency’ centres not under the Association’s own management. It has a holiday camp in East Anglia, taking over 300 guests, and a new-type family holiday centre for 450 in Sussex. It has developed work as a travel agency, doing a large turnover in rail, sea and air bookings, in motor tours and so on. Since 1948 it has been experimenting with sketching holidays and special week-end breaks at which famous scientists,
etc., attend to talk with the guests. It had over 70,000 bookings in 1948 and a turnover of over £1 m. In that year it turned away 29,000 bookings.

Like the Holiday Fellowship, membership depends on shareholding on a co-operative system. Trade unions and co-operative societies increasingly invest in it. The Centres are rather more luxuriously furnished and only in one or two cases cater mainly for the all-out 'open-air' type of holiday which is the main concern of the C.H.A. and H.F. Furniture and fittings are usually up to the standard of a good-class private hotel, waitress service is provided—and, of course, charges are bound to be proportionately higher. But its centres have the same note of fellowship and communal enjoyment. This is no sense amounts to regimentation: it simply means that some organised activities are laid on for those who want them. Many go to enjoy themselves in their own family party.

Finally, it should be mentioned that, during the War, all three organisations were entrusted with the management of key industrial hostels. The idea was that they could bring both commercial management and a homely spirit to the mundane task of accommodating people.

In most cases the charges in the guest houses and holiday camps are above £4 5s. 0d. per week and generally now over £5, with reductions for children. Their appeal is therefore mainly to the middle and lower-middle classes. Families with children are specially prominent in camps where the proportion of children is about one-third capacity. Thus, while they have provided a new and creative type of holiday, it is true that they have not yet brought them within the reach of ordinary working people as a general rule. The problem is to use their experience and their spirit in some new policy which will enable them to keep their charges down.

The Youth Hostels Association of England and Wales has grown at a phenomenal rate and now has over 225,000 members, although founded only in 1929. It provides a roof and a bed from about 6 p.m. to 9 a.m., sometimes with meals and sometimes with only cooking facilities. In 1947 it received grants of over £11,000 from the Ministry of Education.

The Camping Club of Britain, with a total membership of 11,000, was founded in 1901 to promote the interests of all campers. It estimates that in 1938 about half a million people spent three or more days and nights under canvas.

Many other organisations could be mentioned with a minor share in this total voluntary effort. There is the Family Holidays Association and a similar one in Scotland. There are, of course, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. which, with kindred organisations, provide many happy holidays for young and old.
It is organisations such as these which have been behind the insistent demand that something must be done to bring holidays within the reach of ordinary people. The W.T.A., for example, has plans ready for the building of family holiday centres on a large scale. Speaking particularly of the three holiday associations, it is true to say that they have valuable commercial experience, they are capable of expansion, they are anxious to take part in any scheme to give cheaper and family holidays in the kind of areas and centres which Chapter 2 showed to be increasingly sought. Moreover, they are flexible; they can and will provide ordinary guest house and hotel accommodation, camps, family centres, camp sites—all with some or no facilities 'laid on' as required, and all with the same assurance which comes from a spirit carefully fostered for many years. They are democratically governed, enjoy a fair amount of voluntary service and are not exclusive or for members only. They are free from subsidy and take commercial risks. Profits are not sought and after limited interest on shares any surplus is used to build up activities. They, particularly, provide a valuable fund of experience on which a holidays policy can build in its aim to make enjoyment more widespread.

6. THE PROBLEM OF COSTS—AGAIN

If the spirit and experience of organisations like the W.T.A., H.F. and C.H.A. can be harnessed into a scheme for cheaper and for family holidays, what kind of costs will be involved, and what state help will be needed within the limits we have set already?

Typical guest houses—in mansions, castles and purchased hotels—property, fitted with good-class equipment, modern furniture and with waiters service at tables—show costs somewhat as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Cost (approx.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong> . . . . . . . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wages</strong> . . . . . . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL COSTS PER GUEST-WEEK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Guest-weeks p.a.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, it is expected that 1949 costs will be higher. Indeed it seems safe to approximate that in such a guest-house of 60-120 capacity, charges will have to be over £5 per week. The tariffs quoted in 1948 and 1949 by the Organisations (the H.F. and C.H.A. after losses in the previous years) bear out this generalisation. And if figures could be given for houses bought and furnished at normal post-war prices, it would be seen that costs would be even higher.

Holiday Centres of the camp type or in buildings where very large numbers can be catered for present a more hopeful picture.
The satisfactory economic and social unit has then been found to be 300 to 500. Here, so long as capital costs are discounted, it seems possible to provide holidays for about 65/- or 70/- per adult per week. This includes some service at table, guests making their own beds and tidying rooms, staff for entertainment (children’s nursery, etc.) and some evening planned recreation. In a centre of this kind, running costs might work out somewhat as follows in 1949:

Food 15/- to 20/-. Wages 25/-. Other expenses (excluding capital) 20/-.

Where wages would make these figures impossible some economies could be made by instituting help-yourself service at meals.

It is estimated that the capital cost per bed, pre-war, was about £125 compared with £250—£300 to-day in a camp, and higher for a guest-house. Thus a camp for 300—350 people would cost up to £100,000 to build. If, as is normal, interest and repayment were spread over twenty years, the capital cost, with the high depreciation which it entailed, would add well over £1 per week to the cost of a person-week holiday.

If, therefore, a beginning is to be made on the problem of family and cheaper holidays—a beginning because it is impossible to solve the problem in one blow—then the best plan seems to be for the State (as recommended, for example, by the Hobhouse Committee) to accept major responsibility for capital provision, free of interest, and for management to be entrusted to non-profit-seeking organisations.

As far as possible the centres should cater for the best unit of 300—500; but, accepting higher costs as inevitable in smaller places, there is no reason why the beginnings of this policy should not be in houses handed over in death duties and in the very large hotels or houses which now come on the market as redistribution of incomes makes them uneconomic for the wealthy.

The average man could then get accommodation for 65/- and upwards or, say, about £10 when he has two children. The problem of incidental expenses will be smaller the more these family centres are planned to include special facilities for children or adult-entertainment at an all-in price. But, even so, it will be hard to keep costs—including fares—within the limits of two weeks’ wages.

One solution is family holiday tickets on the railways. A second is the scheme advocated by the Home Holidays Committee—cheap fares outside high season. A third, perhaps less practicable for the moment, but certainly due for early consideration, would be to increase the family allowance to 10/- or £1 for one week of the year.

The cost to the State of the whole of this scheme could be kept very small. A capital grant of £5 to £10 million per year for
property would be all that is possible while housing claims priority. The family allowances scheme would cost less than £5 million if raised to £1.

Although family holidays for lower income grouping are the main problem, higher income classes meet it too. And there is no reason at all why any body administering state funds should not also make cheap loans for the extension of guest-house accommodation for those who prefer it. Indeed the committee could treat applications on their merit and could bear in mind the Survey’s finding that although camps and family centres are and will be the main shortage, boarding houses and hotels will be short as demand increases.

Finally, there is every reason to suggest that, although these three organisations will be able to take the lead under any such new state policy, other organisations should also have a share in state-provided capital. Centres could be allocated to them too.

7. A HOLIDAYS COUNCIL

A new, universal and free social service is impossible in present-day circumstances. Physically it would be unattainable; financially it would be equally so in present circumstances and in the foreseeable future. Moreover, it would probably be an unwise decision. Holiday provision is beyond the boundary of what should be supplied free by the State. It is one of those enjoyments of life which, at least in this stage of human development, is best saved for and reached mainly by personal effort.

A combination of facts, however, points to the need for a partnership between the state and voluntary non-profit-seeking holiday organisations. There is already a shortage of camp and family centre accommodation of the type which they are increasingly providing in country and seaside areas. As the real potential demand for holidays—another ten million annually—becomes effective, the shortage will become more acute, especially when demand is further intensified by fashion trends.

Figures show that families are increasingly unable to take holidays as prices rise. It is probably then potential demand which accounts for a considerable proportion of the extra ten million.

1 Even this modest outlay need not be a charge on annual revenue. A national Land Fund of £50 m. set up by Mr. Dalton remains untouched. It was envisaged that this should be used to reimburse the Treasury when landed estate, ceded in taxation, was used instead for Youth Hostels and the like. Moreover, it was specially said that the money could be used for other, wider purposes: acquisition of beauty spots, help to such bodies as the National Trust, the Y.H.A., etc. were specifically mentioned. The scheme outlined in this pamphlet would seem well within the broad purposes for which Mr. Dalton intended the Fund.
Some state help on costs will be necessary; and if plans can be laid for the kind of centres and camps which, luckily, are what people are asking for, then state assistance can be limited to capital provision (with property leased rent free to any suitable voluntary organisation which an independent committee approves) and possible help via rail fares and family allowances. This will lead to appreciably smaller holiday bills.

History, and the testimony of independent committees, indicate that this would be no revolutionary departure. It would be a logical development, and it would have as a foundation organisations which have a long history of successful commercial management, combined with high ideals of social service and ability to provide all kinds of holidays, "organised" or "unorganised" as required.

All this would be a beginning towards large-scale provision of holidays which ordinary people could afford. It would mark the start of an active holidays policy which could bring happiness to many and, through the flexibility which these organisations have developed, would be regimentation for none.

The State machinery needed would be a Holidays Council, independent and without commercial representatives, which should be responsible to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and should have annual capital grants of £5—£10 million and suitable priority for building material and labour within the overall plan for use of the building industry. This fund should be used to build holiday centres planned in conjunction with the voluntary organisations, local authorities, National Parks Commission, etc.; and to acquire and adapt suitable large hotels, country houses, etc., as they come on the market. Properties received in lieu of death duties should be handed over to the Council. All properties could then be leased for family holidays or Youth Hostels at a nominal rent only and subject only to reasonable maintenance.

All this would be quite separate from the Holidays Committee of the Tourist Board which should continue the advisory and investigation work already so successfully begun. Indeed it is probably essential that our detailed proposals should include continued progress towards universal staggering of holidays. This could be on the lines already recommended by the Committee which, representative of all sections of the Industry, is the best organisation to press on with the campaign. Finally its present work in building up a register, fostering price-regulation, representing the industry vis à vis government departments, etc., will still be needed, and will in no sense conflict with the recommendation for a Holidays Council. Equally, its representative character makes it unsuitable for the kind of independent functions suggested for the Council.

1 See Appendix.