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THE ORIGIN OF PETERLEE NEW TOWN

and

Some features of its subsequent development

by

D. B. Steele.

Thesis submitted for the  
degree of Master of Arts  
at the University of Durham.  
May 1962.

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# THE GENESIS OF PETERLEE NEW TOWN

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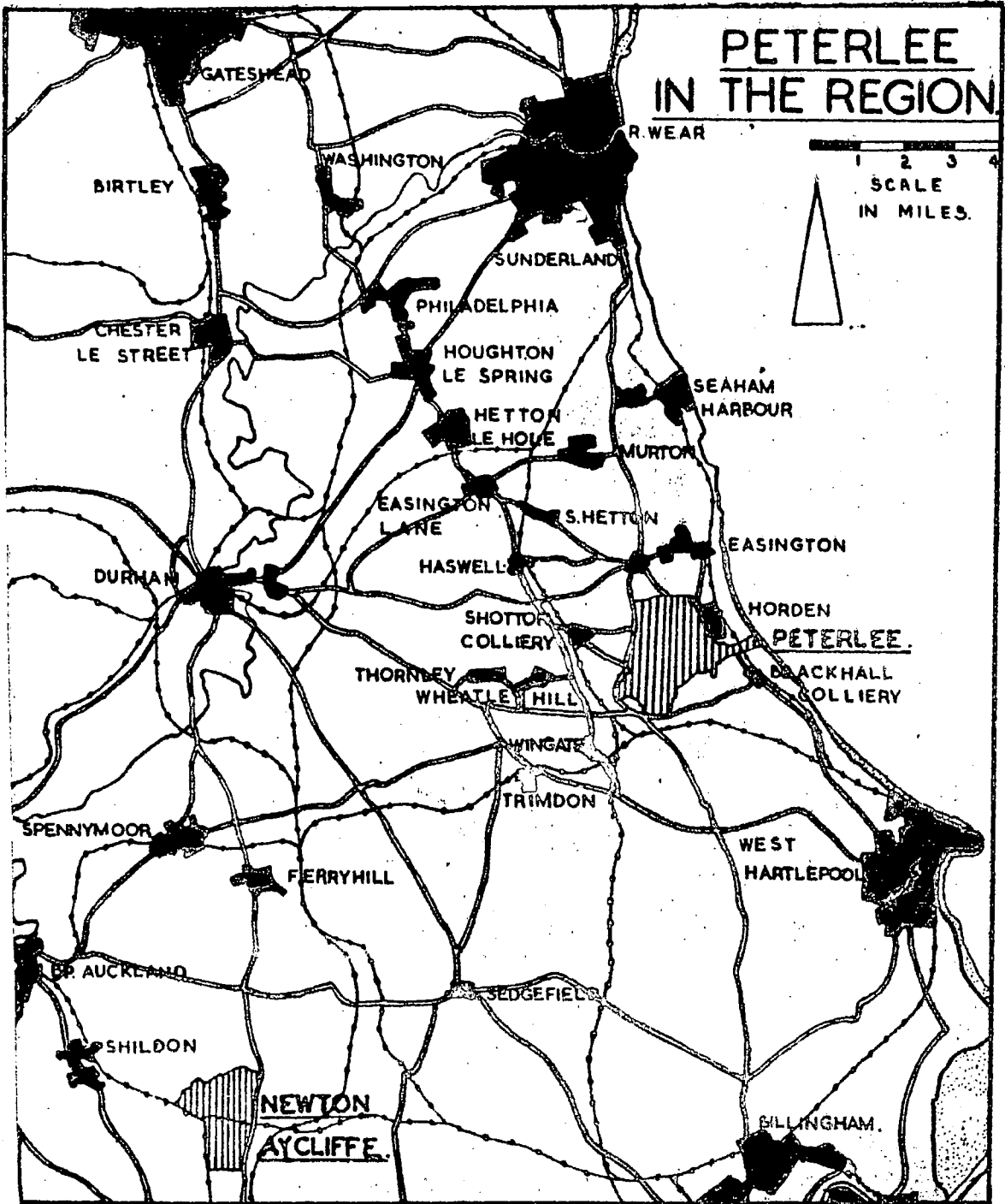
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MAP 1.



## PREFACE

This thesis attempts to trace the genesis and early history of the New Town of Peterlee. An introductory chapter on the 'New Towns Movement' has been written in order to place Peterlee into the perspective of the general history of the movement. The main body of the work lies in the chapter on the 'Genesis of Peterlee'. The rest carries forward the history in two particular directions. Firstly, a chapter has been written on the 'Coal Problem' which be-devilled the early years of the New Town. The second direction was to examine Peterlee in its regional context, with particular reference to the development of industry in the New Town.

It was found on writing the introductory history that the recognised literature had overlooked the potential significance of New Towns for depressed areas. Therefore, even though most of the sources in this chapter are from standard works, some of the few particular references to depressed areas have had to be traced to original documents.

The genesis of Peterlee was hedged around with a good deal of deceit. Some people intimately involved were indeed concerned that too much might be unravelled in such an investigation. Of course, personalities must play a considerable role in any history. They are in certain cases relevant to the subject matter here. Nevertheless, the persons concerned are still very much alive and to give an exhaustive account, as would be desirable, may have proved hurtful to some of them.

The history of the 'coal problem' is of acute interest as a study in administration. Where the government process runs smoothly its imperfections are misted and attract little attention. Over difficult issues, where the whole machine is operating under stress, its weaknesses, and for that matter its strengths also, are clearly highlighted.

Many of the assumptions upon which the chapter on industry was written have not as yet been satisfactorily tested. All the same, it is hoped that to look at Peterlee under their light may have itself proved enlightening. This chapter looks at the history of the Peterlee industry problem and relates it to both trends in regional planning and national distribution of industry policy.

One further planning problem which, as with the question of industry, ought to be viewed in relation to the whole regional distribution of settlement, is that of 'housing'. More research will be needed on this subject.

Many thanks are offered to my tutors, the staff of the Durham Colleges Social Studies Department, and to the many officials of local and central government who placed services at my disposal. Especially am I grateful to Mr. C. W. Clarke, "the Founder of Peterlee", and Mr. Nicklin, the Chief Administration Officer of the Peterlee Development Corporation for the abundant information they have given me.

CHAPTER I

SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW TOWNS MOVEMENT

## CHAPTER I

### SHORT HISTORY OF THE NEW TOWNS MOVEMENT

#### Introduction

If discussion of New Towns always begins with a reference to Ebenezer Howard, this is more than just; not because of the originality of his ideas, but because of the great proleletizing influence of himself and his followers. Many of his ideas live today in the New Towns, Peterlee included; most of them copies from his two practical experiments, the model Garden Cities of Letchworth (1903), and Welwyn (1921).

After having, as it were, thus paid homage, it must also be stated that Howard had many predecessors, who deserve more than just a passing mention. Howard, like Adam Smith, in his field of study, was too often regarded as the sole parent.

The importance of many of these predecessors can be minimised for our purposes because of the over-riding significance of the industrial revolution. There was incisive clarity in both the path traced by its movement through the nineteenth century and over the face of Britain, and in the counter reaction against it, which followed in the wake. The pioneers in new ideas often preceded the worst of the evils, and were consequently labelled by their fellow citizens as cranks. Any such proposal as the building of a new community would have been greeted by the capital markets with a very great deal of 'shyness'. The only persons or organisations with the necessary will and resources to build anything resembling a new town were the 'pioneer cranks' who happened to be at the same time well established industrialists.

The most significant names, and there were others, were Robert Owen, James Silk Buckingham, Titus Salt, George Cadbury, Joseph Rowntree and William Lever. All of these names have importance for the general history of new towns, but for the history of Peterlee, the first two are highlighted because they associated their ideas with the problem of unemployment. Most of the others were actuated by the needs of the moment. Their factories were ripe for expansion, and internal city land values were growing prohibitively high. New sources of power were being opened up giving greater mobility for industrial location. On the other hand, varying degrees of philanthropy were mixed with their egoism, and with Owen there was a conception of a utopian Socialist philosophy which tended to pervade the efforts of his inheritors. At least part of this social philosophy motivated all of them; this was the desire to provide sanitary and pleasant dwellings for their workers. The proposals of Owen, Salt, Cadbury and Lever were, though, not for new towns but for new 'villages'.

"The English are countrymen rather than town-dwellers by contracted habit", wrote Abercrombie in 1933. The unplanned housing thrown up by the industrial revolution lacked charm, sanitation or privacy. The wealthy were confirmed in their habit of clearing out of the town as quickly as they could every evening, and their garden residences and sea-side resorts existed as models for less fortunate eyes. What the philanthropic industrialists did was to attempt to democratise the process. Later on, this paternal desire to share the inheritance became intertwined with

a 'romantic' and anti-urban, anti-industrial trend, the members of which wished to return to the standards of an idealised eighteenth century.

From this grew the concept of 'open development', as it is known today, twelve houses to the acre density and a garden to each house. Not only is this question important because of the vast suburban sprawl in the nineteen twenties and thirties, but also there is something of this tendency latent in the 'Garden City' idea and in the New Towns built since 1945. Secondly, for this account, a factor to note is that one of the only really determined attempts since 1945 to create a 'truly urban' town<sup>1</sup>, was put forward by the first architect-planner for Peterlee. It was as if the fates were against such proposals. Just at a time and at a place where opinion would have welcomed the innovation, there arose unforeseen technical problems which proved insurmountable. Later, plans and planners had to revert to the predominantly 'house and garden' layout.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The phrase 'truly urban' clearly involves an implied 'value judgement'. To illustrate what underlies this judgement would necessitate a long social, even philosophical, discourse on 'The Culture of Cities'. However, a passage from an article by Reyner Banham from 'Architectural Review' will have to suffice. (Architectural Review, Feb. 1960, P.100.)

"The concepts we have of cities are as old as philosophy, and are so rooted in the language of cultural discourse that to say 'Cities should be compact' is to commit a tautology - we cannot conceive of a diffuse city, and have invented other words, such as conurbation, subtopia, to underline our inability so to conceive it."

This does not prove the point, which provides the field of battle for some of the most profound, but often 'hack' academic dialogues amongst architects and 'Planners'. Even so, notice that the theory of the 'neighbourhood-area' has been commonly abandoned in favour of a compact town conception, as at 'Cumbernauld'.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter III.

Owen and Buckingham

More important even than Howard for Peterlee are the two aforementioned visionaries, Owen and Buckingham, because since they wrote their contribution to New Towns and Employment theory, their ideas have receded into the background, only occasionally to reappear in odd and indirect ways.

It is indeed difficult to classify the first, Robert Owen. He was more than just a paternal industrialist, though at New Lanark, his model cotton spinning mill town, he was all of this. But he was much more besides; a leader and prophet of many trends of the 'Working Class Movement', a visionary or crank, depending on how cold-bloodedly one views him, and "perhaps", as G.D.H. Cole wrote, "the easiest answer to the riddle of his personality is that he was a little mad".<sup>1</sup>

Mad or not, Owen was an innovator of ideas who had a very great influence on later generations. The story of New Lanark has been often told in the histories of planning<sup>2</sup> - the care for the welfare of his work-people through provision for education and sanitary housing, the limitation to the hours that children and women were allowed to work, and the general all round improvement on working conditions. Owen made clear the policy inherent in the 'economy of high wages'. Seldom are 'social costs' a complete waste, a fact which is too easily forgotten, even today.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G.D.H. Cole - Introduction to the Everyman edition of Owen's works.

<sup>2</sup> Owen's own account in 'A New View of Society' is of course the best.

<sup>3</sup> See A.V. Williams' Paper, read to Institution of Gas Engineers, North of England Section, 24 Sept., 1958, para. 2 - on the Treasury attitude to its obligations to supply finance under the 1948 New Towns Act.



More important for the history of New Towns are Owen's plans for industrial villages. Though details of these often feature in the literature, there is little mention of Owen's association of his villages with a general cure for unemployment. The need for dispersal of population had not then presented itself as a problem, but for the first time, unemployment caused by an industrial depression had occurred in Britain. Primitive as Owen's suggestion was, it was the germ of an idea which is latent in some of the northern 'New Towns', and the significance of this solution is also not sufficiently appreciated today.<sup>1</sup>

Owen's 'Plan' was that the unemployed were to be housed in villages modelled upon his New Lanark community, each to be self-supporting and largely based upon agriculture, but with a certain amount of industry.<sup>2</sup> The villages were to contain 1,200 persons each,<sup>3</sup> at an estimated cost of £96,000 per village.<sup>4</sup> The details were first laid out in his 'Report to the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing poor', in March 1817, and until the end of his life he attempted to get them accepted with no success. Many associated his plan with his widely distrusted anti-religious and socialistic doctrines and refused to consider it seriously.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV on Industry.

<sup>2</sup> See the before-mentioned 'Report' (Everyman edition) p.162. Owen established a planning principle of 'zoning' land use for agriculture and industry.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.161.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.164.

The principle established by Owen, important for the subject of this essay, is that local unemployment can be cured by the establishment of new agricultural and industrial communities in the areas concerned.

The second relevant point put forward by Owen was the regenerative effect of manufacture, in this case on local agriculture.

"A whole population engaged in agriculture, with manufactures as an appendage, will, in a given district, support many more, and in a much higher degree of comfort, than the same district could do with its agricultural separate from its manufacturing population."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the details of his 'Plan' are of fortuitous interest to twentieth century eyes; others are of doubtful practicability. In many respects his analysis of the economic situation and agricultural theory is faulty, and the important principles arrived at above were reached by very dubious routes. We know though the effect of his work on later generations was profound. Ideas in print, of minor significance perhaps to the author, become highly suggestive to readers who are faced with new problems for which the ideas could be solutions. All the basic characteristics of the 'New Towns' are to be found in Owen, the 'green belt', 'satellite offshoots',<sup>2</sup> work places near to residence,<sup>3</sup> and many others.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.266. 'Report to the County of Lanark'.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.265.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.267.

In 1849 a book was written which was to have profound effect upon the history of the New Towns idea. It was called 'National Evils and Practical Remedies' and its author was James Silk Buckingham. Historians, in writing of Buckingham, mainly concentrated upon the 'Remedies' and have tended to ignore the 'Evils'. The scorn which often follows the publication of a writer's 'Utopian dreams' and 'crankish plans', as equally often kills the sensible and useful proposals there contained. So it was with Buckingham. The fort-like appearance of his model town 'Victoria',<sup>1</sup> the puritanical streak which made him desire to prohibit from his town intoxicating liquor, tobacco, weapons of war and Sunday work,<sup>2</sup> such plans as these turned balanced minds against him. Buckingham was not so shallow as to desire simply to cure people from the evils of drink, or from the crudities of man's nature. He saw the causal influence of environment, especially that of 'unemployment', and the main aim which lay behind his 'remedies' of a new town was 'to absorb the labour of every unemployed man, woman and child of the kingdom'.<sup>3</sup>

In Buckingham can be found a definite sense of what building a new Town and establishing industry could do to rejuvenate a region in economic decline, or to enliven an under-developed area. He compared Ireland of the North, with its manufacturing industry, and agricultural southern

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<sup>1</sup> W. A. Eden - Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement. Town Planning Review, Vol. 19, 1947, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> James S. Buckingham, 'National Evils and Practical Remedies,' with the Plan of a Model Town. (London 1849). pp. 144-145.

<sup>3</sup> Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 153.

Ireland, with its many poor living below subsistence level.<sup>1</sup> Without understanding the theory of the 'Classical Economists' too deeply, he could see the existence of both an industrial poor as well as the poor of under-developed backward areas, and advocated for both groups public works and 'paternalism' on a large scale.

'Paternalism' was defended on grounds of the country's long term self interest. The cost of 'model towns' could be borne because of the reduced poor relief and "a long catalogue of other expenses and drains on the community, which unemployed labour, vagrancy, crime and disease occasion on the public funds or private charity".<sup>2</sup>

The 'Remedy' that Buckingham suggested was for a model new town of 'Victoria' "to combine within itself every advantage of beauty, security, healthfulness, and convenience....peopled by an adequate number of inhabitants, with such due proportions between the agricultural and manufacturing classes, and between possessors of capital, skill, and labour, as to produce....the highest degree of health, contentment, morality, and enjoyment, yet seen in any existing community...."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 481.

2. See Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 88, for his ideas of 'paternalism', and bottom of same page and top of p. 89, for evidence of his comprehension of the industrial unemployed who "starve in the midst of wealth and abundance".

3. Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 141.

'Victoria' was to be truly urban in character, with terraced housing, and a density of population of about 16 per acre. The reaction against 'industrialism' had not dominated Buckingham with 'romantic' preconceptions. The town would be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles square and the maximum population was to be 10,000; any further growth could only be allowed by the formation of a satellite at a distance, beyond a protective agricultural belt around the original town.<sup>1</sup> Suggestive also for later writers was the idea of segregating off farm and factory from the residential areas.<sup>2</sup>

'Victoria' as a predecessor to Peterlee stands out in theoretical importance more than any other suggestion put forward by advocates of new towns. Not only did Buckingham want his model town to absorb the unemployed, but he realised it would provide urban and new industrial facilities, available because of the "association of the division of labour with the employment of capital",<sup>3</sup> in areas of scattered and poor agricultural settlement. In some important respects, mining and agriculture are very similar. Where one may need urban and new industrial facilities, so may the other. After Buckingham, these elements took a back place in the writings on new towns, until the 1930's and beyond.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buckingham, *ibid.*, pp. 142 and 152.

<sup>2</sup> Buckingham, *ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Buckingham, *ibid.*, pp. 133-138, and 201-203.

<sup>4</sup> A but moderately interesting and isolated exception was the 'Society for promoting Industrial Villages', for details of which see J. Saville - 'Rural Depopulation in England', pp. 158-159.

Ebenezer Howard

'Tomorrow', Howard's book opened up a new era in the history of New Towns and the whole town planning movement generally. The main ideas expressed in it were, taken separately, none of them original. His plan was to purchase an estate of 6,000 acres and construct in the middle of it a town of about 30,000 people, occupying 1,000 acres. The rest of the area would be strictly reserved for agriculture, development, in what has come to be known as the 'green belt' being completely restricted. Howard suggested that the natural growth of a town should only be encouraged to the extent of helping it to colonise a satellite, far enough away to be a separate community and near enough to have cultural attachments. The profits obtained on the increased land values due to development would go to help to pay off the interest on the borrowed capital and also to further more development.<sup>1</sup>

Inspiration for Howard's ideas came from the Socialist land reformers, Spence and Henry George, and especially from Bellamy through his book 'Looking Backward'; the substance came from, in Howard's own words, "(1) The proposals for an organised migratory movement of population of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and of Professor Alfred Marshall; (2) the system of land tenure first proposed by Thomas Spence and afterwards with an important modification by Mr. Herbert Spencer; and (3) the model city of James Silk Buckingham." Howard rightly adduces his own originality to the unification of these three ideas. Later assessment has placed

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1. The appreciation of the importance of gleaming land values as an aid to financing development can be attributed to Howard as an original contribution.

less importance on the infiltrative influences of the book than on the personality of its author<sup>1</sup>, his power to enthuse people with the idealisms involved, the moderation of the proposals<sup>2</sup>, and above all, his ability to grasp the value of concrete practical examples as a weapon of persuasion, over and against any amount of written material.

Only indirectly is Howard important for Peterlee. He made little reference to the possibility of Garden Cities being solutions to areas of unemployment, nor was his thesis mainly aimed at centralising scattered development. This latter theme was not dominant because with Howard it was either secondary to the main problem of decentralisation, or the solution of that problem would see the solution also of the problem of scattered development, as a complement to it.

Howard's regional plan implicitly assumes, however, much that is in Peterlee. The satellite towns surrounding a central town would derive sustenance from the centre. This can as well be applied to the surrounding villages around Peterlee as it can to the 'new towns' around London. The idea of decentralisation 'per se' does not necessarily imply that the population, once decentralised, then needs to be recentralised at the second stage of the process. Migrating population could be rehoused in a series of existing or new 'villages'. Howard, though, knew and stressed the social and economic benefits of 'towns', and his ring of Garden Cities was to be a programme of recentralisation in a new and planned environment.

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1. F.J. Osborn, Introduction to 1945 ed., 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow'.

2. For instance, the collaboration of private and public development.

In attempting to distinguish the theory latent in Peterlee from the basic pattern of the London 'new towns', as is being done in this introductory history, harsher divisions between these theories may be more justified than in a less generalised study. But anyone attempting to put Howard into categories must work with caution.

### The Garden City and Town Planning Movements

'Tomorrow' was re-issued under its better known title 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow', in response to the interest aroused. The time was not unreceptive to Howard's book. The idea of town planning in Britain was taking more positive shape under the academic influence of Patrick Geddes, who, even if he did not promote much activity, did start people thinking about city development; and also T.C. Horsfall, of whom it has been written that, "to him more than to any other man, town planning in England owes its origins".<sup>1</sup> The main argument being used by Horsfall was the strictly utilitarian one of 'unhealthy town dwellers resulting in trade losses to competitors such as Germany'.<sup>2</sup> This came as a sequel to the disclosure that for the South African War, a high proportion of the recruits were rejected as physically unfit.<sup>3</sup> Attention was directed to the state of the towns from many quarters. As a trade rival, the planners' eyes were directed towards Germany, and especially to the new

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1. C. B. Purdom, 'The Garden City', p. 201.

2. T. C. Horsfall; 'The Relation of Town Planning to the National Life', pp. 13-14.

3. Department Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1904. B.P.P. XXXII



suburbs there which were arranged on decidedly 'open' lines.<sup>1</sup> Into such an atmosphere, Howard's book, lectures and enthusiasm were injected.

The layout at Letchworth cannot be directly attributed to Howard. The strongest single influence came from the planner's pen of Sir Raymond Unwin, who helped design Letchworth as well as the other very influential planning project of the 'Hampstead Garden Suburb'.<sup>2</sup> It was through him and other close followers of Howard that 'Open Development' became the greater half of the meaning of the word 'Garden', instead of what one believes was Howard's original intention, which was that the word referred more to the 'Green Belt'.

The year after Howard's book came out, the dedicated, but often independently-minded band of adherents, formed themselves into the 'Garden Cities Association' and it was through them that the book had its greatest impact. Some in the Association could not resist the appeal of the planned suburb, which itself was for a time synonymous with planning, and was receiving support from many radical quarters.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, the Association changed its name with the passage of Town Planning legislation to accord with the growth of the planning movement generally, and it was through that movement that the Garden City idea was revived. The temporary eclipse until some undefined date after the first world war,

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1. W. Ashworth, 'The Genesis of British Town Planning', p. 178.
  2. Dame H. Barnett, 'The Story of the Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, 1907-28. Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, 'The Hampstead Garden Suburb, Its Achievements and Significance.'
  3. See Fabian News, 1898, p.11, for critic of the Garden City idea. Also Fabian Pamphlet, 'The House Famine and How to Relieve it', p.43. Also Charles Booth's 'Improved Means of Locomotion', p.13.

was in part due to the fact that most of the Garden City enthusiasts were engaged in building Letchworth.<sup>1</sup> After the war, the Movement tried to carry their ideas to the post-war public, who were anxious to build 'Homes for Heroes'. A 'New Towns Group' was formed mainly on the initiative of F. J. Osborn, which advocated the building of new towns in every region of the country. To achieve such an extensive programme, they realised that they would have to impress it upon the local and central authorities. Howard had no hope that they would succeed and on his own initiative proceeded to negotiate for the purchase of a site for a new Garden City at Welwyn. This brought to an end the intensive pressure on the authorities as the Group could not refuse to help the 'Grand Old Man' in his new project.<sup>2</sup> It appears, on looking back, that Ebenezer Howard was right, for the two realities of Letchworth and Welwyn provided the single most potent stimulant over time to the slow moving reaction of British public opinion. The dilemma facing the Group also pointed the world of difference between building new towns by private enterprise and persuading the authorities to build them. It was that gap which had to be bridged because increasing urban growth, and new legislative planning powers of local authorities, made the enlistment of official aid, as the problems mounted, ever more necessary.

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1. The best account of the building and early difficulties of the two Garden Cities is C.B. Purdom's 'The Building of Satellite Towns'.
  2. F.J. Osborn, 'New Towns after the War', 1918, re-issued 1942, Preface pp.8-9. Osborn also quotes a characteristic comment by Howard on the situation: "If you wait for the authorities to build New Towns, you will be older than Methuselah before they start. The only way to get anything done is to do it yourself".

The Committee on 'Unhealthy Areas' 1921

There was Ministerial notice of the problem of congestion in the big towns in the form of the appointment of a committee to enquire into the 'Unhealthy Areas' in 1921.<sup>1</sup> Two prominent members of the Garden City Association were on the committee, George Pepler and Captain Reiss, who was the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Association. The report was very much in favour of the Garden Cities solution to the problem of congestion and they advocated that the only way to attract industry to the new towns before the population had built up is "by the intervention of the state and the investment of a considerable amount of capital".<sup>2</sup> The conclusions of the committee were too advanced for the government and its report was shelved. It had, though, convinced its Chairman, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and this was to have important repercussions in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1919 Planning Act there had been statutory provision for giving state financed support for Garden City projects, which desired to acquire land. The provisions were faithfully copied into all succeeding planning Acts, and were as faithfully disregarded, because of the difficulties involved in the procedure. There was one notable exception.

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1. Interim Report of the Departmental Committee of the Ministry of Health to consider and advise on the principles to be followed in dealing with unhealthy areas, 1920.
  2. Final Report of the Expert Committee on Compensation Settlement, B.P.B., 1941-2, IV, p.4. Cmd. 6378
  3. Chamberlain appointed the Barlow Commission.

Welwyn Garden City Limited noticed the clause, which was written into the Housing Act of 1921. They applied for a loan from the Commissioners, which was only grudgingly made available with many encumbering strings attached.<sup>1</sup> No-one else made use of the clause.

### Dormitory Towns and Trading Estates

As the term 'Garden City' had been abused, so was Howard's other operative word 'satellite' often misapplied. A 'satellite' town should have been the name used to denote one of a ring of self-contained 'Garden Cities' which surround a central nucleus of original urban development. It became, in fact, synonymous with what is better known today as 'dormitory' town, whose principal detrimental characteristics are that inhabitants travel into the central nucleus to work, and that it is too near, to be in any sense an independent community, to the central town. Some of these 'dormitory satellites' were better planned than others. The L.C.C.'s attempt to move population into Essex at Becontree and Dagenham created nothing more than 'working class suburbs'<sup>2</sup>, with little industry until, in the case of the latter, Ford Motor Works set up there. Becontree also later improved, but from the first, all development was unplanned and carried out piecemeal.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Osborn's 'Green Belt Cities', p. 107, and Purdom, pt. 11, ch. VII, VIII, pp. 158-159, pt. 111, ch. VII, VIII.
  2. Ashworth, op. cit., p. 209.
  3. T. Young, 'Becontree and Dagenham'.

More carefully planned, and genuine attempts at building 'satellites', were initiated by Manchester and Liverpool Corporations. The difficulties which arose in their case were illustrative of the obstacles which had to be overcome if local authorities were going to build new towns.<sup>1</sup>

In somewhat the same haphazard manner, privately run trading estates were springing up in the suburbs of the big towns. Unfortunately, planned internally, as some were, they were still located in patterns unrelated to the residences of their labour, and in many cases they added to the traffic problem by lining up along the newly-built arterial roads.<sup>2</sup>

It was increasing traffic congestion, the protracted unemployment of the twenties and thirties, and a reaction against suburban development, which brought the planning movement, and therefore the New Towns idea, into enlightened focus. Henceforward, New Towns' advocates could hang more on to the coat-tails of the planning movement because they ceased, for the most part, to pull different ways.

### Traffic Congestion

The Locomotive Act of 1896 had preceded Howard's book by two years, and but the motor car became important much later, /not only aided the spread of suburbia, but raised the new central urban problem of congestion.

"Between 1903 and 1933, the number of passenger-miles travelled annually

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1. E. D. Simon and J. Inman, 'The Rebuilding of Manchester'. Journal of the Town Planning Institute, Vol. XXV, p. 164.
  2. D. G. Wolton (Ed.) 'Trading Estates. The Growth and Development of the Modern Factory Unit'.

in Great Britain increased by 181 per cent, and most of this represented an increased burden for the roads."<sup>1</sup> In the same period, the number of motor cars increased from 8,465 to 1,195,882. The main effect was in loss of working time and raised commercial costs, though part of the toll was in death and injury, and it was the latter which made the public more aware of the problems involved.

### Unemployment

The later twenties and the thirties were dominated by the long periods of unemployment which left certain regions of the country permanently crippled, even though from 1933 general economic activity was steadily reviving. Two independent lines of approach of the central authorities at this time are worth charting; meeting in their recommendations at certain points, they both set out to find solutions to what appeared to be different problems. The first was the approach of the Special Areas Commissioner, Sir Malcolm Stewart, who held his office under the Special Areas Act of 1934, and the second was that taken by the Departmental Committee of the Ministry of Health on Garden Cities and Satellite Towns, which reported in 1935.

It was the problems and suggestions dealt with by the Special Area Commissioners which gave significance to the Report of the Departmental Committee. Sir Malcolm's main object was to try to attract new industry to the depressed areas. In his Third Report, Sir Malcolm recommended that an embargo be placed on further factory construction in Greater London.

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1. Ashworth, op. cit., p. 216, figures taken from an unpublished thesis by E.J. Broster, on the 'Growth of Travel in Great Britain'.

The 'Marley Committee' Report was full, as has been written, of 'amiable commonplaces',<sup>1</sup> and like the 'Unhealthy Areas' Committee Report of 1920, it was shelved. Some of the Marley Committee's conclusions were not forgotten: its general recommendations for more Garden Cities, the fears about the growth of London, and the need for a National Planning authority to co-ordinate the location of industry and population.

The conclusions of the Special Area Commissioners and those of the Departmental Committee were influential in promoting the setting up of the Barlow Committee, which will be discussed in a little more detail. It is curious, though, first to note that there was very little association made between attracting industry to the North - the principal reason for the other recommendations of the Special Area Commissioners - and the conclusion of the Marley Committee for more Garden Cities. Garden Cities were not seriously thought of as possible solutions to the problems of the depressed areas. Even though the Marley Committee did discuss how the two existent Garden Cities had helped to rejuvenate the countryside round and about,<sup>2</sup> and it did hear evidence advocating that a number of new towns be built in the north, these ideas received no further hearing.

#### The First New Town for the North

The person who made this, the first recommendation for definite new towns in the north, was, strangely enough, the same person who was partly responsible for the trading estate solution to the problem of depressed areas. He was Mr. Sadler Forster, who was then the Secretary of the

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1. Purdom, op. cit., p. 367.

2. Evidence of First Garden City Ltd. to the Departmental Committee on Garden Cities and Satellite Towns.

Teeside Chamber of Commerce and Tees Development Board.<sup>1</sup> The sites chosen were therefore in the area covered by his offices. The ideas expressed by Mr. Sadler Forster were firstly the economic unbalance between the north and the south, secondly how the sparsely developed regions of the north could benefit from Garden Cities with light industry as their basis, and thirdly that sites should be found away from the congested areas, near enough to absorb the unemployed and far enough away to prevent the towns being simply residential dormitories. Mr. Sadler Forster, at this time, firmly grasped the double nettle of the problems of unemployment and congested areas. Few people since have thought of the problem so explicitly in this manner. The question which immediately arises is why Mr. Sadler Forster, when he saw so clearly the complete answer, put forward and pioneered the partial solution of trading estates?

#### The Barlow Committee

While Chairman of the 1921 'Unhealthy Areas' Committee, Neville Chamberlain became convinced of the soundness of the Garden City solution to the problem of urban slums.<sup>2</sup> In 1937 he became Prime Minister. The publication of the Special Areas Commissioners' Third Report and the pressure of groups, such as the Town and Country Planning Association,<sup>3</sup> led him to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the problem of the location of industry and population ('to inquire into the causes which have influenced the present geographical distribution of the industrial

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1. Evidence of Mr. Sadler Forster to the Departmental Committee on Garden Cities and Satellite Towns, 18th May, 1933.

2. See 'Town and Country Planning', Jan. 1959, p. 5.

3. F. J. Osborn, Intro. to Howard's book, op. cit., p. 16.



population of Great Britain and the probable direction of any change in that distribution in the future; to consider what social, economic or strategic disadvantages arise from the concentration of industries or of the industrial population in large towns or in particular areas of the country; and to report what remedial measures, if any, should be taken in the national interest....')<sup>1</sup> At its head he placed Sir Montague Barlow.

The Barlow Commission laid down the following principles of national action (1 and 2 in this thesis were the 4th and 5th conclusions in the Report):-

1. (a) Continued and further re-development of congested urban areas, where necessary.  
(b) Decentralisation, or dispersal, both of industries and industrial population, from such areas.  
(c) Encouragement of a reasonable balance of industrial development, so far as possible, throughout the various divisions or regions of Great Britain, coupled with appropriate diversification of industry in each division or region throughout the country.
2. The continued drift of the industrial population to London and the Home Counties constitutes a social, economic, and strategical problem which demands immediate attention.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Royal Commission in the Distribution of the Industrial Population Report (Barlow Report) 1940. Cmd. 6153, pp. vii-viii.  
2. Cmd. 6153, para. 428, pp. 201-202.

These conclusions of the Commission formed the basis of all future planning policy.<sup>1</sup>

Dissension among the members of the Commission resulted in both a majority and a minority report being produced. The main difference, important for this thesis, was that the majority report did not directly recommend the New Towns solution. It only put it forward in conjunction with other, perhaps competing solutions ("Garden Cities or Garden Suburbs, Satellite Towns, Trading Estates, and further development of existing small towns or regional centres").<sup>2</sup> The minority report, however, did directly recommend the three, admittedly still competing aims, of Garden City, Satellite Towns and Trading Estates.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the minority report also associated these aims with the objective above of encouraging a reasonable 'balance of industry', though they did not, unfortunately, elaborate on this relationship. It is clear, however, that the majority saw the north as a solution to the problems of the south, rather than as a problem in its own right. The settlement pattern around London was partly due to over attraction of industry. The relevance of the depressed areas was solely that they had a deficiency of industry; their overall settlement problems did not receive equal emphasis.

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1. Lord Silkin's statement in the House of Commons on the 5th March, 1956.

2. Cmd. 6153, p. 202.

3. Competing in the sense that if Garden City is meant as a solution for dispersal and not centralisation, then Satellite Towns and Trading Estates are something less than complete communities, in the first case only being residential, and in the last, only industrial.

## The Failure of Planning Legislation

Up to 1932 only borough, urban and rural district councils could initiate planning projects,<sup>1</sup> and they were financially too weak and administratively too small. It was a great deal to ask of the little men of local government to initiate such bold and imaginative schemes as new towns entail. The financial side was entangled in the dilemma of 'compensation'. Authorities, in their plans, just perpetuated existing land use in order to avoid having to pay compensation as a result of any radical planning,<sup>2</sup> and they themselves had no way of recovering their outlay by taxing the increase in land values which arose when their plans became known.

For their part, the Central Government did not give a lead.

"We owe the Ministry of Health little for the services it has performed as the Department supposed to be in charge of planning functions. It has been a drag on the wheels of progress; it has been preoccupied with incredibly trivial details; its capacity for leadership in this sphere has been conspicuous by its absence."<sup>3</sup>

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1. County Councils could take part on the 'Joint Committees' formed under the 1919 Act. They could also take over powers voluntarily relinquished by District Councils, an innovation of the Local Government Act of 1928. A fuller history of planning legislation can be found in the Report of the Committee on the 'Qualification of Planners', Cmd. 8059, 1950, pp. 1 - 12.
  2. Uthwatt, p. 4. Report of an Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment. Cmd. 6386, 1942.
  3. Robson, W.A - "War and the Planning Outlook". Also, see F.J. Osborn's Introduction, 1945 Edition Howard's 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow', p.16.

The consequence was that planning, which should logically come from the top downwards, grew as an administrative function in reverse. This was one of the principal reasons why it took so long to progress from private to public enterprise new towns. There was a clause in the Housing (Additional Powers) Act, 1919, and the Housing Act, 1921, which gave powers for the acquisition of land for the purpose of constructing Garden Cities. These clauses were faithfully copied into the Planning Acts of 1925 and 1932, but because of the great difficulties which encumbered local planning, they remained as an unused mockery.

### The Second World War

The Second World War for a time made planning respectable. The devastating bombing raids which created havoc in so many cities, turned the eyes of the authorities towards the plans and dusty reports which had, up till then, been confined to the uppermost shelf. The Barlow Report became the basis of enlarged plans for post-war reconstruction.

Bombing was double-edged in effect, removing not only valuable property and homes, but also "many obstructive buildings which had impeded improvement in civic design for centuries".<sup>1</sup> Resulting policies of evacuation accustomed people and industry to the benefits of other areas and the fact of being moved.

### The Influence of Lord Reith

Planning for the future acted as a moral island of security in periods of deprivation and chaos. Lord Reith of Stonehaven was appointed Minister of Works and Buildings, a man who had both conviction and drive.

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1. W. A. Robson, 'War and the Planning Outlook', p. 9.

No mention of new towns occurs in his full preparatory plan, drawn up as early as November, 1940, but on his newly instituted Consultative Council was F. J. Osborn, who played at that time a dominant role.<sup>1</sup> Further, it was Reith who persuaded the two sovereign planning committees in Greater London to work together with Sir Patrick Abercrombie.<sup>2</sup>

Also under Lord Reith, the Scott and the Uthwatt Committees were appointed, the one to deal with agriculture as the Barlow dealt with industry, and the other to tackle the vexing problem of compensation and betterment.

Lord Reith had worked hard to put the recommendation for a National Planning Authority of the Barlow Committee into effect. On the eve of the creation of a ministry with overall planning powers, Lord Reith found himself 'dismissed' from office.<sup>3</sup>

His successor, Lord Portal, carried on his work in the same direction, but at a reduced pace. An Interim Planning Act was passed in 1943, extending development control to all areas; and in 1944, a Planning

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1. See Lord Reith's Autobiography, 'Into the Wind', p. 425.

2. 'Into the Wind', p. 427. See also Lord Silkin's speech in the Second Reading Debate on the New Towns Bill 1946. Hansard, Vol. 422, pp. 1072-1186.

3. 'Into the Wind', p. 455. Conservative backbenchers had demanded Reith's resignation - "Moving too fast, too much planning all round, on both sides of my work, even fear of land nationalisation perhaps, and this at a time when Churchill was yielding to public pressure". F. J. Osborn (Letter to the author - 18th August 1960) claims it was behind the scenes pressure of the Town and Country Planning Association that saw the adoption of dispersal policies into all the Parties' programmes.

Act, which was less comprehensive than was Reith's intentions, was put through. This allowed the acquisition, reconstruction and re-development as a whole of areas (but only those areas) of extensive war damage. The legal groundwork of this Act was found very helpful later, and many clauses were incorporated without alteration into the New Towns Act of 1946. All three political parties had included dispersal policies in their post-war programmes; nevertheless, there was distinct opposition from two main quarters. There was the farming and countryside preservationist interests and the advocates of 'high rise', high density solutions, who were an ever present counter pressure to the advocates of New Towns.

### The Greater London Plan

In 1944 also, Forshaw and Abercrombie published their Greater London Plan.<sup>1</sup> Certain assumptions were made in the Plan which inevitably led to the conclusion that a number of new towns needed to be built. These were, basically, that there was a need for large scale decentralisation, and that there were certain planning opportunities of embodying the latest in civic design, which should be taken.<sup>2</sup> The Plan recommended seven new towns which, under other 'central density' assumptions, could be increased to ten.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Greater London Plan, 1944, Abercrombie and Forshaw.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. Ibid., p. 15. The Plan gave 10 possible sites, allowing latitude of increased decentralisation if the lower density figure, of 100 persons per acre, was adopted in the central areas instead of the recommended 136.

## The Labour Government and New Towns

A Labour Government was elected in 1945, and the heightened prestige of planning generally, made a favourable environment for New Towns 'lobbyists'. The speed with which events then moved was very largely due to "the extraordinary personal dynamism of Lord Silkin"<sup>1</sup>, who was appointed the new Minister of Town and Country Planning. By September, 1945, decisions were taken to go ahead with one New Town immediately, that of Stevenage. A Master Plan was prepared as a matter of urgency and all preliminary work was carried through under the relevant clauses in the Planning Act of 1932.<sup>2</sup> In October, 1945, a New Towns Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Reith. The Government had a very crowded programme and Mr. Silkin was fortunate in managing to find an early and unexpected opportunity to introduce his Bill. The Reith Committee did not have sufficient time to submit a full report before the Bill went before Parliament, so it introduced two interim reports as soon as work on each group of subjects was completed.<sup>3</sup>

## The Reith Committee

The Committee did not have within its terms of reference either the relative merits of New Towns, as against other methods of dispersal, or choice of sites.<sup>4</sup> The principal disagreement between the Committee's

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1. Report of Proceedings of the Town and Country Planning School, Oxford, 1951, pp. 71-82, F. J. Osborn.
  2. American Society of Engineers - Proceedings, "The New Towns Programme in Great Britain", T.C. Coote, p. 3. See also Section 35 of the 1932 Act.
  3. Ministry of Town and Country Planning, 1943-51, Cmd.8204, p. 10.
  4. The Reith Committee wrongly refers to the Barlow Report for such a discussion.

Report and the Bill, as presented, was over the choice of agency - who should build the town. The presence of Lord Reith on the Committee assured that the 'Development Corporation' would have a fair hearing,<sup>1</sup> and it was recommended as the main choice of agency. There were certain cases when other agencies could be allowed, for instance, when a local authority had sufficient finance or when one local authority had made an agreement with a co-operative neighbour. Mr. Silkin would not allow this qualification into the Bill because he feared that the New Town would be dominated by the local authority.<sup>2</sup>

#### Choice of Sites

The responsibility for choice of site was retained by the Minister. It was expected that the first proposals would come from the local authorities, and a decision arrived at after full consultation.<sup>3</sup>

Of the ten possible sites mentioned by the Greater London Plan, only two were finally designated - Harlow and Stevenage. Redbourn, Harpenden, Stapleford, Margettering, were rejected as being too close to existing settlements and therefore unlikely to survive as separate entities. Holmwood was rejected because of the uprooting of a 'lovely stretch of countryside'; two, Ongar and Redbourn again, because of the cost of building adequate railway services; White Waltham would have put an

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1. Town and Country Planning, Spring 1946, G. McAllister.
  2. See First Interim Report of the New Towns Committee, 1946, p. 9; 2nd Debate, New Towns Bill, Hansard, Vol. 422, cc. 1072-1186; also Debate in Committee Stage of the Bill.
  3. Ministry of Town and Country Planning, 1943-51, Cmd. 8204, p. 123.



airport out of action; and the last, Crowhurst, would not, it was claimed, have been able to have attracted sufficient industry.<sup>1</sup> Many sites were later suggested and agreed upon, but two which were badly needed had finally to be rejected. The first in South Wales, near Pontypridd, was turned down because it would have necessitated sterilising a large amount of coal, and the second, in Cheshire, because there was a risk of subsidence due to the mining of salt underneath.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry used six criteria by which it judged the suitability of sites: reasonably level and stable land, good road and railway access, services able to be provided at reasonable cost, suitable for purpose for which it was established, and absence from serious complications such as land subsidence.<sup>3</sup>

Local authorities took the initiative in suggesting some of the New Town sites. Essex County Council and Billericay Urban District Council put forward the site for Basildon, Lancashire County Council had three New Towns in their preliminary plan, Leyland, Parbold and Garstang, and Easington Rural District Council proposed the site for Peterlee.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 125.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

3. Ibid., p. 125.

4. Ibid., p. 124.

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF PETERLEE

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History of the Environs

From the earliest years of the nineteenth century, the varying fortunes of the coal industry has conditioned the settlement pattern and the social history of the environs of the Easington Rural District. Nation-wide trends in housing and living conditions reached into the area, but by the time they had been tributared into the mining villages of the north, their beneficial effects were diluted and often became further causes of squalor. Five distinct periods can be distinguished. The first covers the whole period before 1811, the others are 1811 to 1870, 1870 to 1890, 1890 to 1914 and 1914 to 1939.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest settlement that can be dated was believed to be at Yoden, circa 950 A.D. Until the eighteenth century, the land was entirely under the control of the Bishops of Durham, and was administered from Easington; it remained poor and desolate. Then in 1758, Rowland Burdon, a Newcastle banker, bought the Castle Eden estate and started off a chain of development by private land owners. All settlement which grew up was purely agricultural, grouped around the village green.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Except for those specifically given, all reference must be made to the first chapter of "Analysis of Planning Problems", 16th January, 1950. (Cyclostyled script - Peterlee Development Corporation. Interesting annotated copy in Durham County Planning Department.)
  2. 'Green Villages of County Durham' - Geographica 1935 - Thorpe.

Burdon's son built a turnpike from Stockton to Sunderland, and introduced a corduroy factory at Castle Eden. There was some mining of coal along the waterways of the Tyne and the Wear, in the shallow outcrops, but there was none in the district; the eastern half of the Durham coalfield was disguised under a bed of magnesian limestone.

In 1811, Dr. William Smith made a boring at Haswell and proved that coal lay beneath the limestone plateau. A railway line was laid from Hartlepool to Haswell in 1835, which opened up the coal to the southern markets. Railway, not road, became the early means of coal haulage. Pits were sunk first in the western half of the plateau - South Hetton was opened in 1831, then Haswell in 1833, Thornley in 1836, Murton in 1838, Shotton and Hesledon in 1840, Trimdon in 1842 and Wingate in 1843. The villages grew up around the pit heads.

Houses were often made of local stone. They were either low pitched one storey, or with the loft in the front converted into a bedroom.<sup>1</sup> They were built by the coal owners and let 'free' after the miners signed the yearly bond.

"Front doors opened straight on to black dirty unmade streets with possibly a concrete footpath edged by an open stone channel communicating with a gulley at suitable distances. Back doors opened into a small, sometimes unmade and unenclosed yard, never more than 10 feet

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1. Unpublished thesis, 'The Derelict Villages of County Durham', 1940, Ada Temple. (Durham Colleges Library.)

across, and then again on to black filthy unmade streets. A stone channel, the sole mode of drainage, again ran the full length of the street, with water stand pipes at intervals of 60 yards or so. In the centre of the back street stood detached groups of outhouses, comprising ashpits and middens, later to be converted into W.C.'s. Running usually on one side of this area was the main shopping street, comprising small combined shops or lock-up shops, together with frequent public houses."<sup>1</sup>

During this period of the history of the County, there was an influx of people. They came from the Pennine Dales where the lead mines were closing down, from Yorkshire where the linen industry was facing increased competition from cotton, from Ireland and from all parts of England affected by enclosure and poverty.

The third period was an intermission in the history of the area with long lasting social consequences. There was, between 1870 and 1890, a recession in the northern mining industry due to competition from the Midland pits, who were capturing the southern markets. The pits at Haswell, Hesleden and Hutton Henry closed, never to reopen. An inward-looking community spirit grew out of the miners' bitterness and resentment. The declining villages experienced the first taste of a long continuing migration of the young and enterprising. Lower rents

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1. 'Farewell Squalor', C.W. Clarke, p. 63.

accompanied the decline in the life of the village, attracting a drifting population and adding to the atmosphere of general decay.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1890 and 1914, there occurred the second great expansion in the coal trade, due to the economic nascence of the Dominions and South America. Some of the inland pits were revived and new deep sinkings were begun on the coastal shelf of the east Durham plateau. Easington was opened in 1900, Horden in 1901 and Blackhall in 1907. These pits became dependent on the coastal railway, the Leeds Northern line, opened in 1904 (not until 1924 did the A.1086 connect the villages by road).

Villages were larger and engulfed any agricultural settlements which happened to be near the site of a new pit. Houses were built for the colliery owners by speculative builders, limited only by the soulless bye-law health legislation of the 1870's. The colliery companies erected houses only to last the term of their lease. After the lease was up, the property reverted to the landowner, so it was not good business for the colliery company to expend fresh capital on repairs and improvements.<sup>2</sup>

Houses were laid out in what is now known as the 'grid iron', 30 to the acre density, no gardens and little open space nearby. They were monotonous rows of small brick houses, having no regard to arrangement or amenity. The Hammonds, in their 'The Town Labourer', called

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1. 'Derelict Villages of County Durham', Ada Temple, p. 40.

2. Ibid., p. 44. See also 'Report of the Coal Commission 1925', Vol. 1, p. 199.

them aptly 'the barracks of an industry'. This description could have applied to many of the industrial towns of Britain during the period, but the proximity of the pit, the waste heaps, the sulphur fumes, and the conditions of labour, made the mining villages 'singular' in character.

The east coast pits continued to expand between 1918 and 1939. By 1939, Horden, with 14,000<sup>?</sup> miners, was the largest colliery in the country. The last years of the twenties and the early thirties provided an interval of, first, industrial strife, then degradation. The Durham miners held out nine months longer than the rest in the General Strike of 1926. Because of the depression in the east of the area, miners found their wages cut below subsistence, and in the west (about 50%) were made redundant. The migration (6% of the population, 1931-1939) and the high level of unemployment, made plain to the public conscience the deplorable living conditions and the potential industrial weaknesses of the mining districts. Housing, but not industry, was a local government responsibility, so that whilst the problem of industry was being discussed in theory, that of housing was being tackled in practice.

During this period, the Rural District Council caught up with the private and speculative builders in the number of houses erected; the fraction of tied colliery houses was reduced to a quarter of the total. Between 1930 and 1932, also, the local council set about converting 12,000 privies into water flushed closets. The total number of houses the council built over the period 1918 to 1939 was 4,700, 2,700 of which were in replacement of the first mining period. Improvement as these

houses were on the old, they left much to be desired. Little thought was given to layout or architectural treatment. The only influence the series of Town Planning Acts had was to inspire lower densities, gardens, and roads back and front. The layout was a transition between grid iron and Garden City concepts. Thomas Sharp, the architect, did not mince his words in speaking about them:

"At Horden and Easington, a great sprawling town village is being run up by both the local authority and speculative builders. The standard of meanness and disorder shown here seems to me almost incredible in this fourth decade of the twentieth century. Here above all is the kind of activity which almost makes one believe that men have lost the ability not only to create what is good, but actually to recognise what is evil."<sup>1</sup>

Easington was the inherited administrative centre; Horden, the largest village, had no urban functions for the district as a whole. Recreational facilities, of the football field, billiard table, kind had been provided for the separate villages by the Miners Welfare Commission. Other than a well-organised lending library system, there was little provision for cultural entertainment.

In 1939, there were still 1,000 slum houses. Of the rest, one half had no bathroom, and three-quarters had no indoor lavatory. The thirties had brought great improvements in the provision of services, recreation

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1. 'Britain and the Beast', Essay by Thomas Sharpe entitled 'The North-East, Hills and Hells'.



and better housing. These undertakings had a profound effect on the social well being of the community and... "marked the beginning of a new concept of modern living in a mining community".<sup>1</sup>

#### Mr. Clarke and the Easington Rural District Council

The inspiration for the idea of having a new town in Easington Rural District can, with all justice, be attributed to the mind of one person, Mr. C. W. Clarke, who was the Council's Engineer and Surveyor. It is the growth of that inspiration which will be the main theme of the rest of this chapter - from its initial stage of 'centralised development' into the full legal concept of a 'New Town'. The story will be taken up to the stage where the Ministry of Town and Country Planning<sup>2</sup> was brought into the project, and then an interim summary will be made of events so far. The chapter will continue with an assessment of the various roles of the Council and the Ministry in the development of the concept, and will carry the story forward through the statutory proceedings of the New Towns Act, up to the stage where the Final Designation Order was made on the 10th March, 1948.

Mr. Clarke was the son of a colliery manager and had been brought up, and went to school, in the mining villages where his father worked. The squalor of conditions in the pit villages had been apparent to him as long

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1. 'Farewell Squalor', C. W. Clarke, p. 12.

2. Henceforward, wherever the word 'Ministry' is used on its own, it refers to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Reference will be made to various files during this chapter, which will be listed in a special appendix at the end of the thesis.

as he could remember. From school, he went to train as a design engineer. At no stage did he receive any formal training in Town Planning, and even his informal training consisted of personal observations, rather than book learning. The only book relevant to the subject that he can remember to have influenced him, was F. J. Osborn's 'Green Belt Cities'.

In the early 1930's, when an attempt was being made to remedy the most obvious of the area's housing and sanitary deficiencies, a great competition for new housing developed among the separate villages. The only answer made by the then architect was a policy of short term appeasement. Mr. Clarke was influenced by this in coming to his own conclusions. Also important in developing his ideas was a spate of 'jerry building' on Crimdon Dene. The first occurrence, the addition of new housing on to the fringes of villages whose original nucleus did not, in his opinion, merit such additions, led him directly to the policy of, what became known as, the 'centralisation of development'. This involved the building of all new housing on virgin sites away from the existing villages. The concept had greater content than this, as can be seen later when the first report that Mr. Clarke produced is examined in detail. The second happening, with its long fight to gain powers of compulsory purchase, raised in Mr. Clarke a desire to create a recreation area which would serve the whole Rural District.

In 1938, the post of Architect fell vacant and as the Council wanted one man to fill all three offices, Mr. Clarke was obliged to take on the extra responsibility. All the same, it was the opportunity he was

waiting for to improve the planning of housing in the District. He put out feelers among the Council Members to see how they reacted to the suggestion of centralising development on one site. The reaction was completely negative and the idea was "guillotined by a small group of senior councillors".<sup>1</sup> It has been surmised that Council Members at the time regarded such a proposal as politically unpopular; they would be risking their seats if they put it forward. Mr. Clarke had to postpone his ideas until a more favourable time. These tentative plans were then only at a very nebulous stage and did not take any definite shape until later.<sup>2</sup>

It was the necessity of submitting a post-war scheme for reconstruction which was the excuse and motive for Mr. Clarke to propose once more the centralisation of development. On the 4th March, 1943, the Ministry of Health issued a circular requesting the Easington Rural District to submit a post-war programme. It also allocated to the District two years' supply, 800 houses, 400 a year.<sup>3</sup> The circular was discussed on the 18th March and methods of allocation were gone into. The Council first of all agreed upon a one year scheme, and it was, as it were, upon the basis of the second year's allocation of 400 houses that Mr. Clarke first tied his larger scheme of centralisation.

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1. Sunderland Echo - Supplement, Wed. May 25th 1960.

2. Interview with Mr. Clarke, 11th December, 1959.

3. Telephone conversation Mr. Agar, January 1960 - from Minutes of Housing Committee E.R.D.C.

The idea at that stage was not to have one large site. In Mr. Clarke's eyes, previous experience had already proved that the Council would not be willing to approve a proposal of this nature. Instead he suggested, in order, as it were, to provoke discussion amongst members of the council, having perhaps as many as four or five sites. His ideas were placed before a meeting of a Sub-Committee of the Housing Committee on the 29th June, 1943. This consisted of the Surveyor, Mr. Clarke; the Clerk to the Council, Mr. Gray; and the Chairman of both the Council and the Housing Committee. The Housing Committee was to meet later the same day, and this Sub-Committee (an institution of flexible purpose, like a Committee of the whole House of Commons) was acting that day as a Working Party. To quote from the tersely worded minutes, what Mr. Clarke suggested was:

"that apart from the first year's programme, and in view of the Council's general post-war programme, consideration should be given to the acquisition of suitable sites for the purpose of creating and developing central housing estates on a large scale to serve a number of villages in the vicinity of such estates, rather than continue the sporadic building of smaller numbers of houses in each and every village."<sup>1</sup>

The Sub-Committee agreed that the suggestion should be a matter for early consideration by representatives of the whole of the parishes in the District. The full meeting of the Housing Committee recommended that the proposal should be placed on the agenda at a future date, and that meanwhile, Mr. Clarke should prepare a report showing the number, location and size of the sites that he had in mind.

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1. E.R.D.C. Minutes of the Housing Committee, 29th June, 1943.

While Mr. Clarke was preparing the details of his report, the reactions of some of the parishes were elicited by members of the Sub-Committee who went around paying visits to certain representatives. Not every village was consulted. Those that were, included Easington, Blackhall, Station Town, Wingate, Thornley and Shotton.<sup>1</sup> When the outline report was ready it was presented to members of the Housing Committee at a meeting held on 5th August, 1943. In order not to rush the proceedings, the Clerk and the Chairman suggested that no decision be arrived at then, but that members should have time to digest the report. Later it could be gone into from every angle and all objections given a full hearing. A visit to the proposed sites was also suggested so that the whole Council would have the opportunity of discussing their relative merits.

#### The Five Site Plan

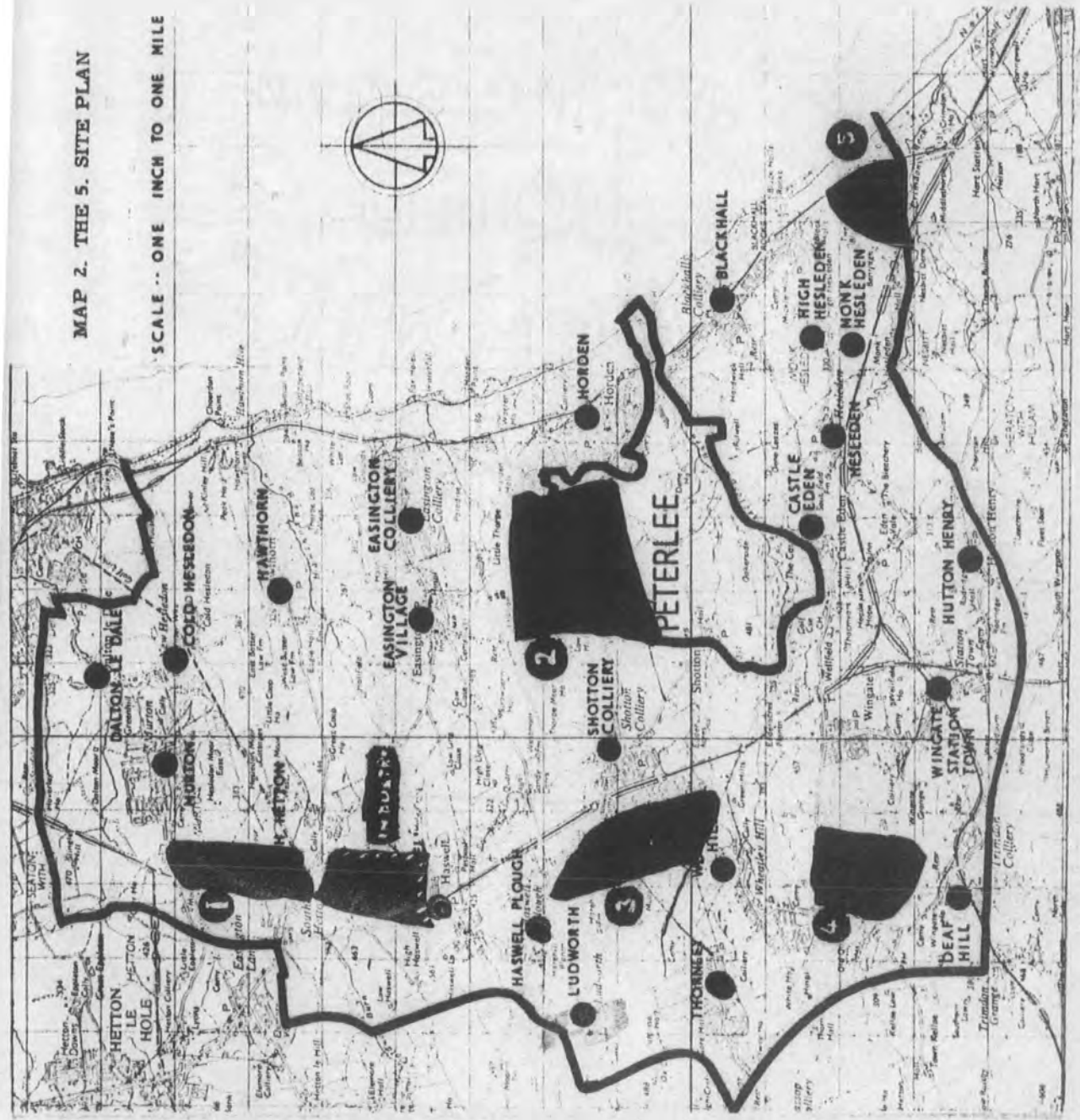
The Report presented by Mr. Clarke showed five sites for housing, as well as an extra one to be used as an industrial site for a trading estate. The fifth area recommended was only a tentative suggestion by Mr. Clarke for development to take place at Crimdon, on land already acquired by the Council. The recommendation was not accompanied by concrete proposals. For all intents and purposes, there were only four sites, plus the one for industry, which were taken seriously. Site No. 1, just north of South Hetton, was meant to cover the districts of Murton, Cold Hesleden, Dalton-le-Dale, Hawthorn, Seaton and South Hetton. Site No. 2, in the area which is now the north part of Peterlee, was intended to cover Easington Village, Easington Colliery, Horden and part of

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1. E.R.D.C. Minutes of the Housing Committee, 5th August, 1943.

MAP 2. THE 5. SITE PLAN

SCALE -- ONE INCH TO ONE MILE



Shotton Colliery. Site No. 3, lying between Haswell Moor and Wheatley Hill, catered for Haswell, Thornley and parts of both Wheatley Hill and Shotton. Site No. 4 was to the north of Deaf Hill and was intended to cover the districts of Wingate, Station Town, Hutton Henry, Castle Eden, Deaf Hill and parts of Wheatley Hill. The single area selected for a trading estate lay to the north of Haswell.

Each site was analysed from the point of view of road and rail access, drainage, and availability of amenity open space. With sites 2 and 4, the railway facilities were not good and "road transport would have to play a large part in long distance and services to local collieries". New roads were proposed for some of the sites. Drainage in all the areas was said to be good, and only site No. 3 needed more wooded land and open space. The average size of each site was just under 300 acres.<sup>1</sup>

The area selected for the trading estate was to be for light industry. With a new road joining Easington Lane to Haswell, good road access would have been available, and being on the Pesspool branch line, rail facilities would have been also adequate. It was also near the Sabulite Works at Tuthill Quarry.

The Question of the provision of services had not been at that stage fully investigated. Certain broad planning ideas were mentioned. Each new district would be "self contained with its own amenities", which

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1. For a rough comparison, the Peterlee designated area was 2,350 (which included Castle Eden Dene). Mr. Clarke's plan in 'Farewell Squalor' was for 1,395 acres.

included schools, branch library, churches, cinema, shopping centre, communal laundry, public house, community hall, medical clinics, nursery, restaurant, and playing fields. These amenities would act as a central core of development around which would be built the housing, first of all a ring of houses at 10 to the acre, and then another ring at 6 to the acre. These belts of housing would be intersected by a series of green "wedges" radiating from the centre. There would then be a green belt around the second ring of houses, which itself would be followed by another ring of housing, at 3 houses to the acre. The outermost belt would be agricultural land, with very scattered development, 1 house per 7 acres. "All existing plantations, woods or natural green belts would be earmarked so as to retain for posterity the beautiful parts of this Rural District."

The whole scheme was to be a long term policy for development, covering up to 20 or 30 years. It was recognised that the idea was necessarily ambitious and would involve expenditure on a scale hitherto unknown in a Rural District.<sup>1</sup>

The visit to the various sites took place on the 12th August, 1943, when the Housing Committee, in effect the whole Council, was taken around the District in a 42 seater bus.<sup>2</sup> On the 19th August the Housing Committee met again and decided to recommend that the principle of the centralisation of housing development be adopted. The question of having made a hurried decision over the main principle did not appear to

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1. Mr. Clarke's Report, 4th August, 1943 (14.7)

2. Interview Mr. Clarke, 11th December, 1959.



be in dispute. The only point which members seemed to want time to consider more fully was the location and number of the sites. This then was deferred to a later date to give members more opportunity of examining the Surveyor's Report.

In October, there was an attempt to set up a Sub-Committee which would consist of representatives from each parish and ward, in order that a closer inspection could be made of the sites recommended in Mr. Clarke's report. On 18th November, 1943, some Council Members forced a special Sub-Committee meeting in order to voice objections. Most of these were levelled, not against the principle of centralisation, but the siting of the proposed new areas of development. The Chairman said he was at a loss to understand why the meeting had been called at all. The principle had been agreed upon, and there was a period of time being allowed to pass before any further steps were to be taken, so that members would have time to inspect the district and come to a decision themselves. Nevertheless, the meeting continued and objections and observations were recorded. The principal source of these objections came from the representatives of Haswell, who disliked the site just south of Murton, between Murton and South Hetton. They felt that houses should be planned to be built nearer Haswell. A Wheatley Hill representative wanted development associated with his village to be tied to Site No. 3, rather than site 4. One important general warning was given by Councillor Stonehouse who said that in taking large tracts of land for central housing development, the possibility of the sterilisation of coal would need to be taken into account. The meeting adjourned with the intention of having a further look at the sites at a later date.

Councillor Barnes and the Proposal for a Single Site

The next reference to centralisation that can be traced was at a meeting of the Housing Committee held on February 9th, 1944, which had very important results. Mr. Clarke was questioned by Councillor Barnes as to whether he thought that a major project of centralisation on the No. 2 site would not be the best policy. This was entirely unexpected. During the period from August 1943 to February 1944, Mr. Clarke, in general conversations, had been advocating the benefits of the one town idea. Nevertheless, he had no knowledge that such a suggestion was going to be brought up at the meeting, but was pleased that his 1938 suggestion had at last taken root.<sup>1</sup> He, of course, answered the question in the affirmative, and proceeded to give his reasons at length. Nevertheless, the Committee, willing as they were once more to accept the principle of the idea being put forward, were not willing to accept at that stage on what site centralisation should take place. At this meeting, where the whole Council of 41 was eligible for membership, only 19 persons were present (at least, only 19 voted). The motion was formally moved by Mr. Barnes and seconded by Mr. Edwards. A delaying amendment was moved but failed. On the vote to the main motion, there were 14 votes for and 5 against. It was duly recommended that the principle of centralisation of housing development on one suitable site be adopted, and that the particular site should be decided on at a later date. The Surveyor, Mr. Clarke, was also asked to prepare a report. On 17th February, 1944, the principle of centralisation of development on one site

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1. Ibid., interview with Mr. Clarke.

was confirmed by the whole Council. Before the meeting, the Minutes of the Housing Committee of the 9th February, as was usual, had been circulated. Nevertheless, only 26 attended the Council Meeting,<sup>1</sup> a clear indication of either apathy, agreement, or perhaps ignorance of the project's significance. A fourth alternative may also provide the answer. There is very little argument in a full meeting of the Council. The main deliberations are settled in Committee, and the main disputes in the meetings of the "Labour Group". These Labour Group Meetings are held before important decisions are taken in Council or Committee. Most members in Council Meetings abide by majority votes taken by "the Group". The divisions of opinion between the older inland 'West side' villages and the more 'modern' east coast villages, which seeped into the open in certain extraordinary meetings of the Housing Committee, were mainly hidden under the cloak provided by "the Group".

#### The Effect of the New Towns Report

Because the preparation of development on such a scale would take a long time, and in order that the worst deficiencies in the villages should be made good first, the one year plan for 400 new houses had been changed into a two year plan for 800 houses. It was the administration and organisation necessary for this two year scheme which prevented planning being continued on the long term project. The end of the war in 1945 meant that the two year plan for post-war reconstruction took effect immediately and further long term planning had to be postponed.

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1. Telephone conversation with Mr. Agar, January, 1960, from Minutes of the Council.

The staff in the Surveyor's office could not stand the strain of preparing the two schemes at the same time; one was a matter of urgency, the other could wait.<sup>1</sup>

In March, 1946, the first Interim Report of the New Towns Committee was published. This was avidly read by Mr. Clarke, and carefully annotated. He was impressed by all those points which appeared relevant to Easington, and particularly noted the benefits of development by a New Towns' Corporation, compared with the lesser powers then available to local authorities.<sup>2</sup> By the end of April, too, the Surveyor's office was free to turn to long term planning because their two year scheme had got underway and was out of their hands. Mr. Clarke and his staff began to think about ways and means. On 6th May, 1946, they wrote to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, requesting a copy of the 1920 South Wales Regional Survey in connection with their own scheme, agreed by the Council in 1943, to centralise development for the whole district. The letter was answered by a subordinate, and its significance was not realised.<sup>3</sup> A couple of days later, Mr. Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, opened the debate on the New Towns' Bill in

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1. This explanation is surmised from the letter 'Clarke to Gray', 14th May, 1946, (14.3) and from details of Housing Committee Minutes up to 1946.
  2. Interim Report of the New Towns Committee (14.8) - annotated by Mr. Clarke.
  3. Letter Clarke to Tetlow, 6th May, 1946 (14.1).  
Letter Robson to Clarke, 10th May, 1946, (14.2).

the House of Commons. Mr. Clarke had already noticed that one of the purposes of 'New Towns', suggested by the Reith Committee (the New Towns Committee), was to:

"regroup persons from areas of diminishing population and from small scattered communities, whose major industry is declining, and to rehouse them, not merely with greater amenities, but in proper relation to newly established industries".<sup>1</sup>

Then, in his speech on the 8th May, 1949, Mr. Silkin mentioned that he was contemplating New Town development in Durham.<sup>2</sup> This reference perturbed Mr. Clarke and he wrote on the 14th May to Mr. Gray, the Clerk of the Council, inviting him to write to the Minister.

"Before carrying the work in my department too far, I think it might be advisable, in order to avoid duplication of work or future hold-ups, to contact the Minister of Town and Country Planning on this matter, pointing out that in 1943, the Council decided, on a report from me, that the practice of sporadic building in each and every village be discontinued, and that consideration be given to the

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1. First Interim Report of the New Towns Committee, P.3. The New Towns Committee did not have in mind specifically either Peterlee or Newton Aycliffe when writing this paragraph. "Members had much general knowledge of Great Britain and knew then of many areas of declining industry and scattered population where New Towns could be useful for creating better conditions and introducing new industries." (F.J. Osborn - Letter to the author, 18th August 1960).
  2. 2nd Reading Debate on New Towns Bill, 8th May, 1946.

creating of a new self-contained centre of development complete with the necessary community facilities, employment being provided by new light industries."<sup>1</sup>

It appears then that at this time Mr. Clarke had not been informed of the intention of the government to establish a New Town near to the recently created Trading Estate at Newton Aycliffe. Also, one can assume from the foregoing that Mr. Silkin's reference to Durham in his speech on 8th May was not made with any knowledge of Easington's project.

Mr. Gray, the Clerk to the Council, responded to Mr. Clarke's letter by writing to the Regional Office of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning at Newcastle. What may well have confused the Ministry was that Mr. Gray enclosed with the letter dated the 17th May a copy of Mr. Clarke's report of the 4th August, 1943 - the report which suggested five different sites.<sup>2</sup> Whether this enclosed report delayed a full and immediate appreciation of the Rural District's plans, cannot be ascertained for certain. No communication with a senior officer of the Ministry until December, 1946, can be traced. What appeared to be the result of Mr. Gray's letter in May was that a few research workers in the Ministry were allotted to basic fact finding and statistical work on the Rural District's behalf.

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1. Letter Clarke to Gray, 14th May, 1946, (14.3).

2. Mr. Clarke's Report, dated 4th August, 1943, (14.7).

Initial Research of the Regional Offices of the 'Ministry'

The first results of these research workers in the Ministry, of which there is a record, is a report by Mr. James, which was sent to the Rural District by the County Planning Officer, Mr. Bates. It is not known whether the Rural District received a copy when it was first produced on the 30th August, 1946, or whether Mr. Clarke had to wait until October, 1946, when he received the communication from Mr. Bates, to realise that the research being carried out in the Ministry was mis-directed. Research in the report had been confined both in its assumptions and in the calculation of statistics to the one Labour Exchange area of Horden. It appears that it was not fully realised that the proposed new development was to be for the whole of Easington Rural District, and not just for the Exchange area, where the new building was going to take place. Mr. Bates was misled by Mr. Gray having enclosed the 1943 report. It is noteworthy that it was not until October that the correct interpretation was put on the scale of the project, though it is not certain whether the Regional Controller of the Ministry was himself informed.<sup>1</sup>

Research was needed because Mr. Clarke was trying to draw up a comprehensive report on the Rural District. The Surveyor's office was attempting to gather in material as fast as it could. The Ministry was supplying some basic facts and figures. Most of the material, however, appeared to be gleaned in direct correspondence with the relevant

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1. Report prepared by Mr. James, 30th August, 1946 (14.9)  
Letter, Bates to Clarke, 1st October, 1946 (14.10).

authorities concerned, and likewise it seems that the co-ordination and arranging of the facts was done in the Surveyor's office at Easington, mostly by Mr. Lumsden.

A first draft of the 'Report' was sent to Mr. Bates on the 8th November, 1946, and to Mr. Tetlow, the Regional Controller of the Ministry, ten days later. Both were asked for their early comment because copies had to be circulated for a meeting of the Council in December.<sup>1</sup>

#### Interim Summary

This is a good stage to stop and take stock of the history to date. There is no hard line where the work of the Easington Rural District Council ceases and that of the Ministry begins. Nevertheless, it was, as we shall see, the publication of the 'Outline Survey' by the Council in November, 1946, which brought home to the responsible officers in the Regional Offices of the Ministry the true significance of Easington's schemes. Easington did not leave off planning and research, but the emphasis moved from planning to consultation and compromise. To make the point of interim summary here, is also apt because it emphasises the responsibility of Mr. Clarke and his deputy for the development of the idea, and the research and planning which led up to the publication of their plan.

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1. Letter, Clarke to Bates, 8th November, 1946 (14.12)  
Letter, Clarke to Tetlow, 18th November, 1946 (14.13).



The project had indeed grown from the 1938 and 1943 concepts of 'centralisation'. It is difficult to determine how much, because it is uncertain just how strong was the theoretical idea in Mr. Clarke's mind in the early days of 1938. The evidence goes to suggest that though there were many points latent in the concept, they were all in a very nebulous stage. Nothing had been worked out very fully. This is very natural as it is rare for someone to work out a scheme in detail unless he thinks that there is a good chance of it being implemented. The 1943 plan for four or five separate sites was not simply a climb down. The readiness and ease with which Mr. Clarke switched in defence of the 'one site project' at the meeting of the Housing Committee on 9th February, 1944, suggests that he must have had his heart strongly on that idea. The separate sites solution was a compromise to his ideal.

Even a project envisaging five new estates was recognisably ambitious. Mr. Clarke made no attempt to disguise "the magnitude of the scheme". 1,800 houses at an average of 4 persons per house, in each of five centres, made a total of 36,000 people "which is equal to 50% of the population. The cost was placed at between 7 and 8 million pounds. He also clearly stated that new road works, bridges, sewers, water and electric services would be required. Anybody reading the report of 1943 would be left in no doubt as to what he would be letting his Council in for if he voted for the project. The report was widely distributed, the members of the Council were shown the sites and they were given from the 5th August, 1943, to the 9th February, 1944, to consider the report

at their leisure. As with later objections, most at this stage were confined, not with attacking the principle of 'centralisation', as defined by Mr. Clarke, but against the particular location of intended sites. A foreboding of future discontent were the vociferous objections raised by Haswell. It appears that the plans for this village, which were in Mr. Clarke's mind from some unknown date, were for its complete replacement within 20 years. The site of the new industrial estate was scheduled to lie immediately to the north of Haswell, and it may well have been Mr. Clarke's intention to plan for expanded industrial building on the site of the demolished village.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult also to determine the reasons why the principle of centralisation on 'one site' was apparently passed so easily through both the Housing Committee and the Council. During the narrative, three possibilities were mentioned, 'apathy', 'ignorance', and either 'agreement', or the cloaking of 'dispute' in the 'Labour Group' meetings. What must be meant by 'ignorance' here cannot be lack of knowledge of the details of the plan, or even of many of the economic consequences in terms of cost or social upheaval. What can be meant is that the Councillors were ignorant of the long term effects on their constituents. It was probably imagined that the extraordinary wartime feelings would continue long after the war, if not indefinitely. The same spirit of revolutionary community rebuilding that was infusing the legislators and

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1. Letter, Clarke to James, 17th January, 1947 (15.5).  
Interview Mr. Lumsden, February, 1960.

planners in London and the big cities, had its counterpart at Easington. The 1938 attitude of the Councillors is an interesting one. Is it to be regarded as the norm, or a case of pre-war ignorance which could not happen today? The evidence of contemporary attitudes in Easington, compared with first the 1938, and then the extraordinary wartime years, leads one to suspect that a similar project proposed today would not stand anywhere near the same chance of being accepted - notwithstanding the early unhappy episodes in Peterlee's history. There was most certainly dispute between the villages, but mainly over the question of where the town was to be sited. There was considerable agreement over the principle of centralisation. The villages on the west, which were older development, realised that a New Town sited away from them would mean the destruction of their 'identity' as villages. There would be comparatively little slum clearance in the newer pit villages, with the double benefit that what clearance was found to be necessary could be rehoused immediately 'next door'. The newer east coast villages, by virtue of their larger populations, commanded a majority of representatives in the Easington Rural District Council, and likewise in the corresponding 'Labour Group'. It was most probably the loyalty of the villages in disagreement with the plan put forward by Mr. Clarke, to the majority decisions of the 'Labour Group', that allowed apparent unanimity in full meetings of the Council.

The next point which is worth considering is the effect of the 1946 New Towns Bill on the Easington project. Why was there such a delay between the 17th February, 1944, when the Council confirmed the idea of centralisation on one site, and May, 1946, when Mr. Gray wrote to the Ministry? The coincidence of this letter and the publicity surrounding the appointment of the New Towns Committee, and the impending New Towns Bill, is almost too suspicious to put down to chance. Surely one must conclude that the plan had been allowed to hang fire and had suddenly been revived by the appearance of the Bill. There must be some truth in this, but to weigh up how much is a task for which there is not sufficient evidence to provide any sure answer. What probably was a stumbling block were the immense legal and financial difficulties involved, which were beginning to be realised by the Surveyor's office at Easington.<sup>1</sup> The centralisation project was first of all the second part - and more - of the two year postwar plan that the Ministry of Health in 1943 asked Easington to draw up. The next step was to make the two year plan complete in itself, after the Council had approved the long term plan. The 800 houses allocated for building during those two years were erected in the villages in proportion to their population. Whether the larger scheme would have been in the same fashion continually put off, cannot be determined. However, there is not much doubt that the Surveyor's office was kept busy between February, 1944, and May, 1946,

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1. Interview Mr. Lumsden, February, 1960.

drawing up plans for these 800 houses. An authentic note was struck in Mr. Clarke's letter to Mr. Gray when he said:

"The working drawings for our two year permanent housing programme, with the exception of Horden 134, have now been approved by the Ministry of Health. As this two year period expires in August, 1947, I think it is essential, in order to avoid delays in building development, that preliminary survey and research work on the proposed Centralisation scheme be commenced at the earliest possible date."<sup>1</sup>

There was indeed a coincidence in the dates when the New Towns Bill made its appearance and the date when the Working Drawings for the two year plan had been passed by the Ministry of Health. Whatever was the case, the Interim Report of the New Towns Committee dispelled some doubts and made the case for speeding up planning of their own scheme. Mr. Clarke had noted well the benefits of having the New Town built under the aegis of the proposed Act. From a Memorandum sent to him by the Town and Country Planning Association,<sup>2</sup> he had seen that neither Private nor Local Authority Associations would receive the same prerogatives as the 'Development Corporation'. If Private or Local

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1. Letter, Clarke to Gray, 14th May, 1946 (14.3).

2. Memorandum of the Town and Country Planning Association, 22nd May, 1946 (14.5)

Authority development had been directly turned down as a proposition by the Minister, then their own project, if they intended to go ahead and build it by themselves, would obviously not be very well received when it was placed before the Minister - unless, that is, it was submitted as a proposal under the Act. Such must have been Mr. Clarke's reasoning when he sent the note to Mr. Gray inviting him to contact the Ministry.

Mr. Clarke was well aware of the need for new industry to be associated with any new development, as can be seen in his first report of 1943. The industrial area in that report was intended to serve all the five new communities. It is clear from this that Mr. Clarke had either faced up to the dilemma of at least limited travel to work and had, nevertheless, come down in favour of concentration, or had discounted the factor entirely. Whatever weight was given to it at this early stage was most certainly increased by contact with the Ministry. The important point was that from the very first, it had been decided that the industrial site used should be planned to be in an area which would "serve existing townships as well as the New Town."<sup>1</sup> Even if the industrial site was not organically integrated into the New Town area, the housing and community facilities would have been planned with a great deal of understanding of contemporary planning techniques. One gets the impression from reading through the files, that Mr. Clarke was

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1. Outline sketch of central development (File 14)

digesting new ideas as fast as they were explained to him.

It can also be seen how much the 'Outline Survey' was the product of Easington, rather than the planning section of the Ministry, because of some of the individual ideas there expressed, which did not receive much support from the Ministry. Firstly, there was Mr. Clarke's views on the mining problem; he did not regard the danger of coal subsidence to be very great.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, all the 10,000 houses to be built were to rehouse miners from the villages, not the kind of balanced population that 'Planners' were then aiming for.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, there was to be practically no new house building in the villages, the result of which was later to be the concern of both the Ministry and the County Authorities. Lastly, the target population took no account of natural growth.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Easington Plan and Regional Influences

Mr. Bates' (The County Planning Officer) views on the 'Outline Survey' were discussed with Mr. Clarke at a meeting, so there is no record of them, but Mr. Tetlow's (The Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning) were expressed in a personal

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1. Chapter 3 on Coal Problem, P. 2.

2. See Silkin's speeches, Ch. 2, p. 20 and pp. 21 - 22.

3. See letter James to Clarke, 6th March, 1947 (14.16a).  
Also Meeting, 26th March, 1947, p.4 (17.5).

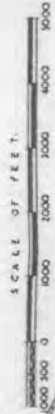
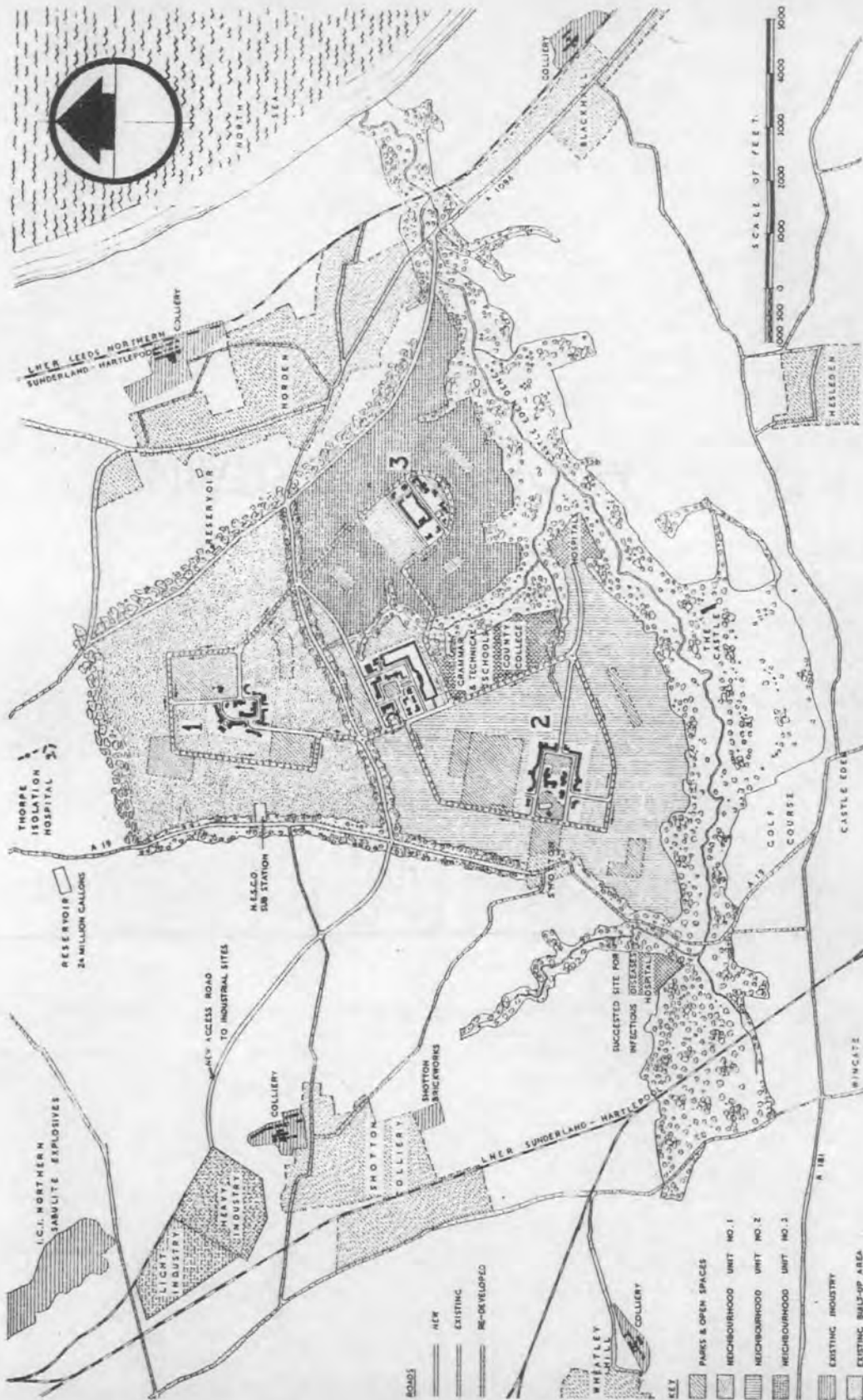
letter, which is very instructive. The letter opened with the guarded comments that none of the remarks made was to be taken as official by the Ministry. All the same, Mr. Tetlow said that he was having the matter very thoroughly looked into so that his Ministry would be in a position to develop its own views on the project without necessarily having to wait for the initiative to be taken by Easington. He therefore regarded the problem with some urgency, and thought that central government would take a hand if they agreed with the idea in principle. For himself, he had some doubts; these were mainly concerned with, not the idea of 'grouped development', but with the intention of having only one site for the grouping. Either a "white elephant" would be created, or the existing villages would have their life blood and initiative sapped. Mr. Tetlow also stressed the importance of coal in the area, and though the introduction of other interests was necessary, it was vital that nothing was done to draw attention away from "this most important of all the country's minerals."<sup>2</sup> With regard to Mr. Clarke's views on the sterilisation of coal, he disagreed that there would be little trouble, especially "if the damage factor is considered in relation to more or less total extraction of coal."<sup>2</sup> "Any new development in the Easington district, whether it be in a new community or an extension of existing communities, must necessarily be considered very carefully in relation to the coal position."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tetlow, though making the principal point that the subsidence problem was serious, admitted at the same time that it applied to new building of all kinds, whether centralised or not.



Such was the gist of this very important letter. The rest was mainly concerned with criticism of certain figures in the tables used by Mr. Clarke. The only important criticism was of the figure given in the report for employment needs, and for the density per acre in the industrial area.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tetlow thought that Mr. Clarke's employment figure of 8,000 was the absolute maximum, due to the reluctance of the Ministry of Labour to admit a higher figure of female labour availability, and he also thought the allowance for the industrial area of 100 acres was too large "and could be very appreciably reduced."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Clarke did alter one of the figures criticised. They had been worked out by Miss Elliott, herself in the Ministry, and sent to Easington on 4th October, 1946. The figure of 8,000 mentioned by her had been reduced to 6,000 because "the Ministry of Labour and ourselves think it unlikely that the percentage of female to make employment can be raised to the national average."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Clarke had just attempted to get away with the higher figure. He did not reduce the planned size of his industrial site.

The "Outline Survey of the District with Development and Redevelopment Proposals" was in fact submitted earlier than expected. A Special Meeting of the Housing Committee considered it on 19th December, 1946.

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1. The industry question played an important part in the early history of Peterlee. The relevance of these points will be discussed in a separate chapter devoted to the problem of industry.
  2. Letter, Tetlow to Clarke, 4th December, 1946 (14.14).
  3. Letter, Elliott to Clarke, 4th October, 1946 (14.11)



GENERAL LAYOUT OF UNITS.

MAP 3. MR. CLARKES PLAN FOR PETERLEE

- ROADS**
- NEW
  - EXISTING
  - RE-DEVELOPED
- KEY**
- PARKS & OPEN SPACES
  - NEIGHBOURHOOD UNIT NO. 1
  - NEIGHBOURHOOD UNIT NO. 2
  - NEIGHBOURHOOD UNIT NO. 3
  - EXISTING INDUSTRY
  - EXISTING BALS-UP AREA
- LOCAL INTERNAL BUS ROUTES**

It was decided to recommend that powers be given to Mr. Clarke to implement the 'Report', and also that the Council's indebtedness to the Surveyor should be placed on record.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tetlow later made the point that he had known about the project for "a considerable time",<sup>2</sup> but that he had maintained a discreet silence until the Council had expressed their desire to go ahead. The Regional Controller's knowledge could not go back further than May, 1946, and it appears unlikely that his appreciation of the scope of the project went back further than the date when he received the draft report from Mr. Clarke.<sup>3</sup> The question is of some importance because it is not known how much encouragement was given behind the scenes, how much, that is, of 'Farewell Squalor' was written from Easington and how much from the Ministry. Also, by not taking too much of a hand in the early stages, before the Council had committed themselves, the Regional Controller saved himself a 'trump card' in any persuasion that might be necessary with the Minister. The question of dating his knowledge and appreciation of Easington's scheme then, if it could be answered, would perhaps give us a clearer idea of when he had it in mind to attempt to have the area designated under the New Towns Act. There is another reason why he did not interfere with the initiative of

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1. Minutes of the Housing Committee.

2. Meeting, Tetlow and the Council, 12th March, 1947 (15.7)

3. The inclusion of the old report (14.7) with the letter to Tetlow from Gray (14.4), the statement by Tetlow in his letter to Clarke (14.14) that he agreed with the idea of grouped development but not necessarily on one site, and the initial confusions of the Ministry Research workers, lead one to this conclusion.

the local authority. Mr. Tetlow knew the strength of local democratic feeling and did not want a repetition of the public opposition and resentment which had resulted from some of the previous applications of the Act.<sup>1</sup>

The only kind of interference that the Regional Controller allowed himself was to dampen down the speed at which the Rural District wanted to move. The same day the Report was passed by the Council on the 19th December, 1946, Mr. Clarke wrote to Mr. Bates and Mr. Tetlow asking them to "come and see me at a very early date". He also wrote to Colonel Methven of North East Trading Estates Ltd., asking him to attend the same conference. He mentioned in this letter that his proposed plans might cut across the policy that N.E.T.E. intended implementing. Mr. Clarke was obviously uncertain of the best site for the industrial estate and asked in the letter for some advice from Colonel Methven.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Tetlow's reply was to arrange a meeting - which was virtually the newly instituted Regional Physical Planning Committee<sup>3</sup> - for 10th January, 1947. He also urged patience on the Council, which the day before the meeting, themselves confirmed the Housing Committee Minute

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1. See Tetlow's opening remarks at Meeting with the Council, 12th March, 1947 (15.7).

Also, H. Orlans "Stevenage; A Sociological Study of a New Town" (Routledge and Kegan Pool, 1952).

2. Letters, Clarke to Methven, Tetlow and Bates, 19th December, 1946 (15.1)

3. Meeting 10th January, 1947 (13.1).

of December. The wheels of negotiation were slow but necessary. All the Regional heads of Ministries were present on the 10th January. Mr. Clarke opened by explaining that he had already submitted his proposals to the Government Departments concerned. The site had been discussed with the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and was the most suitable one as far as they were concerned; it was near to the main collieries, and the agricultural land was no better and no worse than land in other parts of the district. The configuration of the land was suitable for sewerage, and a reservoir was adjoining. Road facilities were good; rail access was not good, but a line could be brought from the Wellfield track.

There was a large degree of difference between various members' views as to the correct acreage for the industrial estate. Mr. Clarke adhered to the 100 acres of his report. Mr. Bulmer of the Board of Trade thought that 30 acres was sufficient. Colonel Methven, for the North East Trading Estates Limited, the Board of Trade's Agent, stated that a small estate is administratively difficult to run. Working on the assumption of 7% of the population needing diversified employment, he had come to the figure of 7,000 and therefore an estate of 70 acres. Mr. James, the Research Officer of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, also came to a different result. Reducing the number of females available for employment, given by Miss Elliott and adopted by Mr. Clarke in his amended report<sup>1</sup> (Miss Elliott was Mr. James' assistant)

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1. December, 1946, Report Amended January 14th, 1947. (See errata sheet in File 14).

to 4,000, and adding 1,000 jobs for males, he had come to the conclusion that there was a need for an estate of 50 acres. He had reduced the number of jobs for females because the figure of 6,000 did not include the work which would be available in the service industries

Two more points mentioned at this meeting are worth recording.

The first was raised by Mr. Gibbs, from the Ministry of Labour. He was concerned at the increase in travelling distance for the miners from their homes to the collieries. Mr. Tetlow gave him the answer that figures from the Miners' Welfare Association showed that miners already travelled long distances, criss-crossing from home to pits which were not necessarily the nearest to them. Secondly, Mr. Bates raised the question again of the mining problem. He said that he had gone into it unofficially, and was satisfied that provided they kept south of an important seam to the north of the site, they would be all right. Mr. Coates, the Ministry of Fuel and Power representative, said nothing on this which has been recorded. But when a conclusion was arrived at of "general agreement in principle", two points were stated to need further consideration. One was agriculture and the other coal.

The Ministry of Agriculture objected to the site chosen by the Surveyor for Easington on the grounds that it was valuable agricultural land. They put forward an alternative, which was an area more to the west, around Shotton Colliery. ('The coal problem' has been dealt with in a chapter by itself and the changes in the Coal Board's attitude can be located there.)<sup>1</sup> The Northern Region Physical Planning Committee had

had one earlier formal meeting, but at its first working meeting held on 28th January, 1947, the proposed 'New Town at Easington' was the third item on the agenda. The Ministry of Agriculture there reiterated its attitude. The representative of the Ministry of Labour also maintained his position as regards the objection to increased travel to work, which he claimed the alternative site proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture would not help alleviate. The committee were willing to agree in principle to the proposal for a New Town, in fact unanimously, but they deferred to a future date any decision as to size and location.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion on the deferred subjects was held in February. The Ministry of Labour, having accepted the project in principle, attacked the proposed size of the New Town. Mr. Gibbs, their representative, claimed that "if the town went ahead as planned with about 9,000 houses, it meant a vast expansion of men in service industries right in the heart of a coal extraction area, where the paramount need, as laid down in the White Paper, was to expand the coal mining labour force". No discussion was held on the location of the site and it was decided to refer the question of size to a sub-committee of interested members.<sup>2</sup>

The Regional Office of the Ministry, at least from January, 1947, must have had it in their minds that the Easington project would make an ideal subject for the New Towns Act. The County Planning Department,

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1. Meeting 28th January, 1947 (17.3)

2. Meeting 25th February, 1947 (17.4)

under Mr. Bates, most certainly did. On the 28th January, Mr. Bates made a report to his County Planning Committee that the proposal could best be realised through a government sponsored New Town under a New Town Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Whether Mr. Tetlow approached the Minister before or after attempting to convince the Rural District Council, is just not known. If it was the former, then the consent of the Minister to proceed must have been received by March because the Regional Controller arranged for a meeting with the Council for the 12th March. Mr. Tetlow opened with a long and very frank speech which succeeded in its object, to persuade the Council to accept a New Town Corporation instead of themselves as the operative agency. One of the decisive influences in disarming possible opposition was the emphasis placed on the fact that the Government would finance the project. All his comments in the light of what happened are very interesting. Here is a selection of the most important:

"The proposal that you have put forward is one which, to some extent, surprised me, but very much pleased me. Normally, one finds that it is the Government officials in an area who are pressing the elected representatives to concentrate development."

"You have the richest coal and modern mining, but on the other hand, mere coal getting is not in itself a full and complete life for a community... the Government should help you set up a society which has, as its primary basis, getting coal, but has also other industry to help coal out in a difficult period."

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1. Report of the County Planning Officer, 28th January, 1947 (16.1)



"If we are going to get permanent industry in the area which will be reliable, it seems to me that we should get the industries that are tied here, which depend on the use of rivers, coal...."

"You have a New Towns Act; so far, it has not been used, it is starting to be used, but it is having a rough passage in some places, largely because the Government has been trying to use it... In Durham we have tried to go about things differently; we do not want the Government to say to an authority "Do this" or "Do that". Up here we want it to be a case of finding out what the authorities want and then giving them all the assistance possible in helping them to carry it out."

"If this is to be carried out with the greatest of expedition, the Government feels it can be done best if a body of developers responsible for the whole is set up, a body which need not worry itself about the financial background. A New Towns Corporation would be a body of perhaps a dozen persons who would be selected as far as possible locally, but with possibly a few outsiders in it in order to bring in points of interest which the local people might not have."

The Regional Controller added that they were yet uncertain on two points: the size, and location of the proposed New Town. They were not certain whether Mr. Clarke's recommendation for a town of 50,000 was too large or whether 30,000 would not be better in the circumstances.

The principal point about the location, he said, was that differing from other New Towns, it was not going to be industrially self-contained, therefore the travelling time between home and work becomes an added factor to be considered.

After his speech, Mr. Tetlow answered questions. One Councillor asked whether, considering that Hartlepoons and Sunderland were developing industrial estates, did he think they would have much chance of getting new industry? Mr. Tetlow replied that industry was going to those places to take up the slack in employment, just as they intended to do with Easington. They did not want people to have to travel up to 40 miles to work. The New Town trading estate may not only cater for people not engaged in coal getting inside the area, but also perhaps draw on people outside the boundaries of Easington. He added that due to the proposed New Town estate, the one agreed upon in 1946 for Wingate would be reduced to not more than two or three factories.

In answer to a question of how long it would take to build the Town, Mr. Tetlow said that he thought it could be done faster than the 15-20 years proposed by the Council. The main factors controlling the speed of development would be the availability of labour and materials

There was no question as to the success of the Regional Controller's appeal to the Council. On the 24th March, by a unanimous vote, it was decided to put the project in the hands of the Minister, and to have the

Town built by means of a Development Corporation, under the New Towns Act.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the Surveyor went ahead tidying up his own 'Outline Survey', and preparing it for the printers. The meeting of December, 1946, had also empowered him to have his report published "in order that the proposals in the scheme be known to all in the District".<sup>2</sup>

There was also much interchange of information between the Rural District and the staff of the North Eastern Development Area Plan. This professional team of Planners were doing, at the time, a comprehensive survey of the North East. The principal authors were George Pepler and P.W. Macfarlane. They were in favour of the idea on the whole, but they had their reservations. They considered that the stretch of coast from Sunderland to the Hartlepoons, including the scattered mining villages, was already sufficiently urbanised. The proposal was in order only if it was regarded essentially for 'population regrouping', and not for expansion by means of an attraction of the coming labour surplus from west Durham.<sup>3</sup> More comments on the Pepler and Macfarlane Plan can be found in the chapter on 'Industry'.

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1. Meeting, Tetlow and the Council, 12th March, 1947 (15.7).  
Letter, Clarke to Tetlow, 24th March, 1947 (in unheaded file - Clerk to the Council's Office, Easington R.D.C.).
  2. Extract of Minutes of Housing Committee (15.3).
  3. North Eastern Area Development Plan P. 152. (Copy in Durham County Library).

The Regional Physical Planning Committee met again in March to consider the report of their sub-committee set up to consider the question of the proposed size of the New Town. The sub-committee did in fact consider the subject of location as well as size. They made some interesting comments on the site suggested by Mr. Clarke. The area, they said, was a very rolling one; the gradient of the principal access from Horden was abnormally difficult and unsuitable. The location most suitable for a civic centre was too close to the northern boundary, and the whole site was generally very exposed. The committee also elaborated on the reasons why the suggested site of the Ministry of Agriculture was unsuitable. The location of a drab derelict village on the site was unsatisfactory. The area was also most exposed. The committee put forward a third alternative. Their recommended site was to the north of Mr. Clarke's, embracing Easington Village and Easington Colliery. The benefits attributed to their choice were, first, that the contours, and suitability for drainage, aided normal development, and, secondly, the proximity to existing habitation would prevent unsatisfactory detachment and would solve many difficulties in the early stages of development. Most of the recent building has been in that area. Lastly, the site adjoined a main railway and offered good facilities for the location of industry. The committee recommended that the site proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture be withdrawn and that consideration be given further to Mr. Clarke's and their own alternative.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Report of the Sub-committee (17.6).

The March meeting of the full Regional Planning Committee considered the report. The Ministry of Agriculture still refused to give its assent to the second ten-year programme, and had shifted their ground from claiming that a New Town site would eat up more land than scattered development, which was their original position, to asserting that the acquisition of land a long time prior to development would result in the product of the land falling, as a consequence of decreasing agricultural land values. The Ministry of Labour had not altered its views but agreed to abide by the majority decision. The Committee were unanimous in agreeing to acquire land for the first ten-year programme of 3,904 houses, and in the decision to also buy enough land for the second ten years, of 5,416 houses, the Ministry of Agriculture dissented. Also agreed was that the overall density should be 6.5 houses to the acre. Consideration of the site proposals was deferred again for further consultations.<sup>1</sup>

No decision on the site had been reached by the time of the next meeting the following month. Mr. Tetlow agreed the situation was growing urgent because the Rural District's housing programme was rapidly nearing completion, and they hoped to put all their future development into the New Town. But negotiations were still continuing with the Ministry of Agriculture, and had just been opened with the N.C.B., so they would have to wait until the outcome of these were known.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Meeting, 25th March, 1947 (17.6).

2. Meeting, 22nd April, 1947 (17.7).

The Committee again met in May. The Chairman stated that agreement had been reached with the N.C.B. The question of the site was more or less assumed as settled, without further discussion being recorded. Mr. Dixon, for the Coal Board, said there would be difficulties in building anywhere in Easington, and wherever development took place strongly reinforced foundations would have to be used. The Ministry of Agriculture maintained its position, which none of the suggested alternative sites had managed to satisfy.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that the choice of site was conditioned by the fact that, other things being more or less equal, the National Coal Board had at least been able to clear 146 acres for immediate development on the land abutting on Horden Colliery. When the Minister was given the choice of sites, this land agreed with the N.C.B. would have been in the north-east corner of Mr. Clarke's site, and in the south-east corner of the site put forward by the Regional Physical Planning Sub-committee.

The first communication that the Rural District had with the N.C.B. over the New Town was on the 18th March, 1947, first of all on the telephone and then by letter. Mr. Clarke made a request to the Divisional Production Director for permission to use certain figures in his published edition of 'Farewell Squalor'. The N.C.B. were quite upset that they had not been informed of the project before and had not received a copy of the 'Outline Survey' along with the other Ministries and Government Departments. Mr. Clarke tendered his apologies.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Meeting, 28th May, 1947 (17.8).

2. Letter, Clarke to Barratt, 18th March, 1947 (14.17).

A meeting was arranged with Mr. Dixon, the Divisional Estates Manager. As well as Mr. Dixon, there were present, Mr. Clarke, the County Planning Officer Mr. Bates, and Mr. Tetlow. After the meeting, Mr. Clarke posted to Mr. Dixon a copy of the drawing showing the general layout of the proposed New Town. A few more such meetings must have been held between the Regional Controller and Mr. Dixon, culminating in agreement in June of that year.<sup>1</sup> In his report to the County Planning Committee of July 11th, 1947, Mr. Bates wrote:

"Following upon discussions with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the National Coal Board, agreement has now been reached with the latter that where necessary to secure stability, coal will be sterilised so as to develop the first section of the Easington New Town and steps will be taken to co-relate the mining and surface development in the two future units."<sup>2</sup>

The Acceptance of the Plan by Mr. Silkin, The Minister.

The next important event which carried the project forward another step took place in July, 1947, when the Minister of Town and Country Planning, Mr. Silkin, paid a visit to Easington. The visit had a joint purpose; Mr. Silkin was also spending a day at Aycliffe. The Minister, when he arrived in Easington on the evening of the 7th, made a short tour of the area. The next day, he met members of the Council at the Council Offices.

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1. Letter, Clarke to Dixon, 16th April, 1947.

2. Report of Meeting of County Planning Committee, 11th July, 1947 (16.2).

Mr. Silkin put the question to the Council of why did they not build the Town themselves. Most of the answers given were not relevant and only stated why a Town was needed in that locality. However, Mr. O'Neil said that coal was a national asset and if the State wanted coal, it could pay to make the area more attractive.

60,000 was the figure mentioned by Mr. Silkin as the right size for a New Town and he hoped that they would review the figure of 30,000 that had been suggested to him. Mr. Silkin also said that they should aim at having a balanced community consisting of all classes. In reply, Councillor Roseby said that the site of the New Town chosen was such a beauty spot that he feared that too many 'other classes' would be attracted.

After the meeting, Mr. Silkin again paid a visit to some more of the villages. The whole thing had, he said later, been mainly exploratory. The answers he had received to the questions he had raised "had very deeply impressed him".<sup>1</sup>

The Regional Controller, Mr. Tetlow, had been with the Minister on his tour and had pointed out the various sites, other than the one recommended by Mr. Clarke. All the complications had been explained to Mr. Silkin, but as a result of his visit he nevertheless immediately chose the one put forward in 'Farewell Squalor'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Files in Clerk to Council's Office, Easington. Unheaded report of visit of Minister, 8th July, 1947, also Meeting of Minister and Local Authorities, August 27th, 1947.

2. Interview J.R. James, 8th January, 1960.



The Council next heard from the Ministry in London on 16th August, 1947. Referring to the recent visit, the letter said that the Minister "had in mind the expediency of establishing a town with a population of the order of 30,000 people. The town would be a balanced community, its citizens being drawn in the main from persons now living in unsatisfactory conditions in the Rural District. The existing opportunities of local employment would be supplemented by the introduction of suitable additional industries".<sup>1</sup>

During the early part of August, the Ministry of Health had allocated another 400 houses to Easington to be built in, and only in, 1947. The Regional Controller, Mr. Tetlow, recommended to the Council that they build these on the New Town site. They could use the normal procedure under the Housing Acts to acquire the site and raise the necessary loans. Mr. Clarke said that he was anticipating a favourable decision from Mr. Silkin and had commenced surveys on the New Town site.<sup>2</sup>

Under Section 1 (1) of the New Towns Act, the Minister, before he could make a Designation Order, had to first consult with all the Local Authorities concerned. A meeting with the Local Authorities was arranged for August 27th, 1947. The intention was to speed up the statutory proceedings as much as possible in order that the building programme could be got under way.<sup>3</sup> The Minister was responsive to this

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1. Letter, Ministry to Clerk of Council, 16th August, 1947 (15.8)

2. Surveyor's Report, 21st August, 1947 (15.9).

3. The reason for this was the necessity to build the allocation of houses quickly. See note 3, page 23.

and agreed to the early meeting. When he arrived, he said that he had not expected, when he was in Easington last, that he would be back so soon. The Local Authorities represented at the meeting were the Easington Rural District Council, the Durham County Council, the East Durham Joint Planning Committee, the Newcastle Corporation, the West Hartlepool County Borough, and the Hartlepool Borough Council. Mr. Pepler, for the North Eastern Development Area Plan, was also present. Both the Hartlepoons Authorities were only invited after protests had been sent to the Ministry.<sup>1</sup> The meeting mainly consisted of an address by the Minister, with a few questions at the end.

Councillor McMann of the Easington Rural District Council took the chair. His opening remarks mentioned two reasons for speed. There was, he said, an immediate need for new industry in the area, and the rate of progress in setting up such new concerns did not have to be linked with the rate of construction of the New Town. Secondly, the Direct Labour Staff employed by the District Council was rapidly nearing the end of the post-war two-year building programme.

Mr. Silkin then spoke at length. He first of all explained the purposes of the New Town, and what had influenced him in agreeing to the project:

"... in the next twenty years, there is an established need of some 10,000 new houses providing for a population of about 30,000, and the question the Easington Rural District Council

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1. Letter, Waddell to Clerk of Council, 22nd August, 1947 (15.10).

had to ask was where were they going to build those 10,000 houses, and it was a question they had to answer straight away."

"The only thing was to build them on a new site away from the conditions he had described without the handicap of any existing buildings, and where it would be possible to build up a township of some thirty-odd thousand with the amusements and other essential conditions which were necessary to maintain the good life."

A second reason was:

"... that it was definitely anti-social that they should have people of one income group and one type of occupation all segregated together, merely able to discuss the events of the pit and the life around the pit, and nothing else."

There was another factor which impressed him:

"that in an area such as this, where practically the only industry was mining, there was no scope for people who wanted to take up any other occupation, or were not suited or fit to take part in mining."

The Minister then stated why he thought the town should be built by a public corporation and not by the Local Authority:

"The building of a New Town would mean capital outlay which is irrecoverable, in the first years at least; but in the very early years it means a heavy loss, which, having regard

to the finances of the Rural District and the County Council, it would be unfair and unreasonable to expect them to bear."

As to the size of the town, Mr. Silkin estimated that because of the short life of the pits, 20-40 years, the figure of 30,000 target population would be too small. He favoured the larger figure of 60,000, which could support a larger number of amenities.

He then went on to describe the statutory machinery for creating the town, the draft Designation Order, the local public inquiry, and the setting up of the Corporation. The Minister defined at length the qualities he was looking for in members that he would appoint to the Corporation. It would not be a reward for service. The Corporation would need a variety of talents, people who were not too old, who were really keen on the idea of a new town, and who could act independently from the pulls of Local Authorities who recommended them.

The first comment to be made after the Minister's speech was from the Town Clerk of West Hartlepool, who voiced fears that the creation of another trading estate in the New Town north of the Hartlepoons would simply mean increased competition for a limited labour supply. The Minister answered this with these words:

"It would be absurd to build new towns at the expense of the old, and it might do more harm than good if we did not consider the effect on the old town. This new town was not being erected for the purpose he had explained when introducing the New Towns Bill, it was for a different type of purpose, and it had to be

perfectly clear that they were not attracting population from old towns that should not be attracted - that was not the purpose of the plan which was being organised by Mr. Pepler and his organisation. One of the purposes was to ensure not only that the development area got the amount of industry necessary, but that it was properly distributed."<sup>1</sup>

The Easington Rural District Council were now being overtaken by the mechanism of central government. The letters from the London offices of the Ministry were couched in a most formal manner, and requests were made to them to do small tasks as if they had had no close interest with the project at all. However, they still thought of it, or Mr. Clarke did anyway, as 'our' New Town. It was made quite clear at the meeting with the Local Authorities in August that a Consultant Planner would be engaged on the planning of the town. Mr. Clarke, in his correspondence, made no reference to suggest that he would be offered the post.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, negotiations had been taking place with electricity and water companies, and sewage disposal was being planned, all on the basis of the 'three neighbourhood plan' that had been printed in 'Farewell Squalor'.<sup>3</sup> Also the prospects of the industrial area recommended in Mr. Clarke's pamphlet were being

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1. Meeting of Minister and Local Authorities, 27th August, 1947 (3.2). See Summary at end of Chapter.
  2. Letter, Clarke to Hunting Aero Surrey Ltd., 25th November, 1947. (15.19a).
  3. See File 15 for evidence, August - October, 1947.

seriously looked into by Mr. Tetlow, Colonel Methven and representatives of the Board of Trade. The only serious disadvantage was the proximity of the area to the I.C.I. sabulite works, and the consequent enforcement of Home Office regulations concerning buildings adjacent to explosives works. Mr. Bates and Colonel Methven were satisfied and obviously thought the above difficulty could be overcome.<sup>1</sup>

The Regional Physical Planning Committee discussed the question of the industrial estate at its meeting on the 26th August, 1947. They could not come to any agreement over its exact location before receiving figures of estimated labour availability from the Ministry of Labour. But all the same, they were all in agreement that the estate should not be included in the Declaratory Order.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Tetlow called a meeting himself on the 24th September, 1947, which was virtually the above Committee, but included other interested parties (similar to the meeting on 10th January, 1947). The same question was discussed and a similar conclusion arrived at as the Physical Planning Committee before them. However, many points of interest arose in the course of these two meetings which will be discussed in a separate chapter devoted to the 'Industrial Problem'.<sup>3</sup>

Work in the Regional office of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the Council Offices, Easington, continued through November and December, 1947, planning for the public services, the re-routing of

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1. Letter, Bates (X) to Clarke, 10th September, 1947 (15.13).
  2. Meeting, 26th August, 1947 (17.9).
  3. Meeting, 24th September, 1947 (16.3).

the A.19, and the contouring of the North-east corner of the site, the No.1 unit in Mr. Clarke's plan.

May, 1948, was the date when the Easington house building programme was scheduled to be completed, and both the Regional offices of the Ministries of Health and Town and Country Planning considered it unthinkable that there should be a cessation of the Council's building programme. The planning and surveying for development in the North-east corner of the intended designated area was the direct outcome of the two Ministries' consultations on the impending housing needs of the Rural District.<sup>1</sup>

Just before the Draft Designation Order was published on the 10th October, 1947, the Council received another formal letter requesting recommendations for members of the informal Committee, which would later become the Corporation, 'if the need arises'.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the formal documents contain little information, except a reference to a particular map and stating where this may be viewed. The Draft Order was accompanied by a Statement from the Minister as to the size and general character of the proposed New Town:

"A town on this site would provide accommodation for some 30,000 people, drawn in the main from other parts of the Rural District where families are at present living in badly-serviced

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1. Report of the Surveyor, 11th December, 1947 (15.20).

2. Letter, Waddell to Clerk of the Council, 6th October, 1947 (15.18).

and congested settlements too close to the pit heads. In addition, the new settlement would provide for the first time the recreational and shopping centre which is needed to give the district as a whole a greater degree of cohesion and self sufficiency. While facilities would, as far as possible, be made available for all the community activities normally associated with a town of substantial size, special care would be taken to preserve and enhance the natural amenities of the neighbourhood, in particular the existing open space at Castle Eden Dene.

In order that the new town might be enabled to develop as a balanced community, suitable provision would be made for industrial employment to absorb the female labour available in the district and any male labour not employed in the coal mining industry."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Easington Advisory Committee

The first and informal meeting of the New Town Advisory Committee was held on the 16th December, 1947. Not all the members who were later to be asked to sit on it were present. The names recorded were Mrs. M. Felton, the Chairman, Councillor O'Neil, Mr. C.A. Mackay, Alderman E. Robinson, Councillor H. Lee, and Mrs. J. W. Gray.

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1. Draft Order, Statement by the Minister as to size and final character, 29th October, 1947 (15.19).



The full list included two more names, Mr. E. Allen and Lt. Col. Sir M. Wayman. In the letter asking for the Rural District Council's comments on the appointments, some brief notes were given on each member. In brackets by the names of Councillor O'Neil and Alderman Robinson were, respectively, "Easington Rural District Council", "Durham County Council" - "by whom his name was suggested". All the members, except the Chairman, were people resident in the North-east.<sup>1</sup>

The opening meeting was arranged by Mrs. Felton in order, as she said, to make a start, and to have some suggestions to put before the Minister when he came up again in January.

Mrs. Felton said that she had come across some uncertainty as to who was going to manage the industrial estate, and she approached the Minister, who had agreed to the new Corporation assuming the responsibility.

Mr. Mackay asked if there was any objection to the appointment of Mr. Clarke as Planner. Mr. Robinson replied that some tribute should be paid to Mr. Clarke, but he thought, however, that it would be better to have someone who had much wider experience of town planning for the post of Planner. It was decided that the Committee should look for a suitable person.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Letter, Waddell to the Clerk of the Council, 6th March, 1948 (15.24).

2. Informal Meeting of the 16th December, 1947 (1.2).

There was no other meeting until the one in January, which the Minister attended. On this day also, the new Architect-Planner, Mr. Lubetkin, put in his first appearance. The Minister told of how he had been chosen. Mrs. Felton had first tried to find someone who knew the area, but no-one was available who seemed capable of undertaking the task. By process of elimination, they had finally come to the conclusion that the firm of Tecton, and in particular Mr. Lubetkin, was the most suitable. The Minister said of Mr. Lubetkin that he was a naturalised Englishman, having been Russian by birth, and had practised in England for many years. He was regarded as one of the most enterprising and eminent of architects in the country. He was both architect and engineer and had undertaken a number of important schemes, which included works in the Soviet Union, France, Germany and in this country. The most notable London work that he had done was in Finsbury and Paddington.

Some other members of the Committee had come with other names in mind, but it was generally agreed to be guided by the Minister, and Mr. Lubetkin was duly appointed. It was thought that if Mr. Clarke wanted a post, he could be asked to apply when the advertisements appeared in the press. (It is believed that they had actually earmarked one for him).<sup>1</sup>

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1. Interview, C.W. Clarke, 11th December, 1959.

The position offered by Mrs. Felton was Works Manager, to be responsible for building the town by direct labour, of which Mr. Clarke had gained considerable experience whilst working for Easington Council.

The Minister made a short address to the new Committee, stressing the missionary aspects of their work. He begged them to understand the special responsibilities of the Ministry, and hoped they would co-operate with it, even if there was resentment at what was misread as interference. Mr. Silkin again in this speech made a reference to the speed at which the New Town could be built.<sup>1</sup> 'Speed should not be the determining factor; they should build on a firm foundation and see what they built could stand the test of time'.

The next step in the statutory proceedings was the Public Local Inquiry. This was to be instituted if, after the publication of the Draft Designation Order, there were any objections lodged with the Ministry. There were, and an Inquiry was scheduled to be held on the 27th January, 1948.

#### The 'Explanatory Memorandum'

Before the Inquiry an 'Explanatory Memorandum', printed by the Ministry, was circulated. This gave in some detail "the reasons which led the Minister of Town and Country Planning to propose that an area of approximately 2,350 acres in Easington Rural District, County Durham, should be developed under the New Towns Act, 1946".

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1. The Minister also mentioned the question of time to be taken in building the town, in the meeting with the Local Authorities (3.2).

The Memorandum gave a brief history of the proposal, and then went on to give the case for a New Town. It was pointed out that even though the merits of the project may not have been doubted, it could have been held that as good, if not better, cases could have been made out for similar development in other parts of the country. "It seemed clear that the District did have a special claim in that it is situated on the richest part of the Durham coalfield and must in any case receive a high priority in housing, and also that it offered an outstanding opportunity for breaking with the unhappy tradition" of the squalor and isolation of mining villages.

Three reasons were given why the population was limited to thirty thousand. First, they decided not to eliminate existing settlement in the Rural District. Second, they did not want to attract population from outside, and third, they did not wish to unjustifiably encroach on coal or agricultural interests.

The most interesting paragraph was that on 'Industry'. Though it was said that sooner or later new industry would be needed in Easington - and it did not state the exact reasons why this would be so - there was nevertheless substantial provision for the employment of female labour and any male labour not employed at the pits at the Hartlepoons Trading Estate, and apart from that, coal mining would remain the dominant industry in the district. The only clearly stated reason given for new industry was that it would create a more balanced community.

The Memorandum ended by a statement of reasons why that particular site was chosen. It was conveniently placed in relation to road communications and essential services; it lay amongst pleasant surroundings and offered every opportunity for a satisfactory lay-out and the effective arrangement of neighbourhood units. The two alternative sites had to be ruled out because of, in one, existing development, and, in the other, the presence of a spoil heap.<sup>1</sup>

### The Public Local Inquiry

The Local Public Inquiry was conducted by Mr. Fitzgibbon. The objectors who sent representatives were the North-Eastern Electricity Supply Company, the County Borough of West Hartlepool, the National Farmers Union, the three landowners, Mr. Hannon, The Ecclesiastical Commission, Haswell Parish Council, Thornley Parish Council, and Hutton Henry Parish Council.

In a letter accompanying the eventual Designation Order, the Minister's answers to the various objections were published. For convenience, where a reply was made, it will be given immediately after the particular objection, in this narration.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Morpeth gave evidence on behalf of the North-Eastern Electricity Supply Company, who did not want to object to the scheme as such but wanted certain facts to be placed in front of the Minister so that he

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1. Draft Easington New Town Designation Order 1947, 'Explanatory Memorandum' (3.1).
  2. Letter, Waddell to the Council, 5th March 1948 (15.24).

could decide in the light of them. These were that if the New Town was built in that area, it might mean the loss of certain substations, and the cost of placing underground two sets of overhead cables which cross the area. The cost of this was estimated at £61,000. In his letter to the Council, the Minister said that "nor can it be assumed that an electricity substation or other undertaking lying within the area affected by the Order will be subject to any form of control that would not be entirely acceptable to the statutory undertaker".

The West Hartlepool Borough Corporation objected on the grounds that the proposed designated area had a section which was included in an application made by the Borough Council to the Boundary Commission. An answer was given to this in the Minister's letter. The Minister said that he was concerned with the most effective planning of the area as a whole and he would not be justified in allowing applications to the Boundary Commission for extension of local authority boundaries to influence his decision either for or against the development proposals.

It was the Durham City Branch of the National Farmers Union that raised an objection on behalf of the tenant farmers who farmed on the site. The lawyer who spoke for them raised several specific points, most of which were attacks on statements in 'Farewell Squalor'. The first was that when Mr. Clarke said that the land was of typical fertility, he was underestimating it. The second point was to question why the alternative site at Wheatley Hill had been turned down; the life of the pit was over-estimated, it was second rate agricultural

land, and the unsightly pit heap could be bull-dozed. Thirdly, the three farms on the site co-ordinated their milk production, whose end product was 200 gallons of what they said to be irreplaceable milk. Lastly, they objected to the lack of individual freedom that there would be in the New Town and implied that the Local Authority might well prove a tyrannous landlord. In the Minister's letter to the Council, the only one of the above points answered was that concerning the loss of agricultural land, which it was claimed would be no more than under equivalent scattered development.

The solicitor acting on behalf of the three landowners also raised the question of loss of agricultural land. The Minister's letter was an answer to them too. Mr. Angus, their solicitor, said that more agricultural land was being lost than was necessary, because Mr. Clarke's planned densities were too low, and he made no mention of the possible use of 'flats'. Mr. Tetlow's reply to this was that the planned densities were no less than normal suburban development. Mr. Angus's second objection was that the woodlands acquired by the Corporation would not be utilised commercially. The Minister replied that the land would be administered in accordance with the soundest principles of estate management.

Mr. Hannon then attempted to make an objection and was very roughly handled, and rudely treated, by the presiding Inspector, Mr. Fitzgibbon. After some hard cross-questioning, he was at last allowed to make a short statement - which was pretty incoherent.

The gist of it was, on the other hand, quite clear, and that was that Mr. Hannon thought that building should be confined to the villages, and that the New Town was a waste of the taxpayers' money, that of ex-servicemen in particular. The two points that Mr. Fitzgibbon picked on that are worthy to be noted were first, that no-one could object unless he had some interest which he represented other than the national interest, and, secondly, Mr. Fitzgibbon said that objections on that level had been and should be dealt with by Parliament. As a short comment here, it can be said that the Inspector's views must have been mistaken, otherwise Parliament would not have given the Minister discretion to name each New Town under the Act, and it would not have written into the Act the statutory safeguard of a Public Local Inquiry.

The Durham County Planning Office was also represented at the Inquiry, but they made it quite clear that they were not there as objectors. In fact, the proposal "has been considered more than once by the County Planning Committee and has been approved by them on each occasion".

A representative of the Ecclesiastical Commission put in an objection because his client feared that a small farm near Shotton would be destroyed and they would lose control over the land use. The Minister replied to this by saying that, just because buildings lay within the designated area did not mean they would necessarily be destroyed.



Haswell Parish Council complained that there had been very little contact made with them by the Rural District Council over the proposal; not in fact until August, 1947, when they were sent a copy of 'Farewell Squalor', did they receive any official notification. A similar complaint was made by Hutton Henry Parish Council. Both Haswell and Thornley Parish representatives stressed the lengthened 'travel to work' entailed by the New Town. Miners, it was said, had impossible schedules of work hours, which no bus service would be able to keep up with. Thornley Miners Lodge sent a letter to their Parish Council asking to be associated with their complaint. The Miners Lodge's principal point was that the whole working of the Lodge system depended upon the fact that the officials and the men lived on top of the pit. All three villages stressed their strong community feeling, and the need and desire for development in their villages, which they felt would be sapped by the growth of the New Town. Both Thornley and Hutton Henry desired to have Trading Estates built in their areas. Thornley also expressed a fear that Peterlee would become but a mere appendage of Horden.

The Minister, in answering the criticisms of the separate Parish Councils, based his reasoning on the support given to the project by the County, and Rural District Councils, which made him conclude that the proposal would benefit the district as a whole. Few of the individual objections were dealt with; the only one answered at length being Thornley's point about Peterlee becoming an appendage of Horden. It was more likely, the Minister said, that a town of 30,000 would swamp a town of 14,000.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Minutes of Local Enquiry (12.4).

Final Meetings of the 'Advisory Committee'

There were meetings of the 'Advisory Committee' on the 22nd January, when an Administration Officer was chosen, and on the 3rd 11th and 25th February, 1948. The meeting on the 3rd was mainly devoted to discussing which authority should run the licensed premises in the New Town. (The description of the meetings of this Committee may not be an accurate account of the discussions which took place, as they were taken from the Minutes, whose content was to be a subject for dispute later). On the 11th, Mr. Lubetkin reported on his meeting with the Coal Board on the 5th.<sup>1</sup> Co-operation between the Board and the new Corporation would not be easy. Mr. Lubetkin, who had first visited Easington on the 21st January, 1948, had, by the time of the meeting with the N.C.B., formulated his views on how the town should be built, firm views which allowed him to report that no matter what arrangements had been made with the Board, or by the Ministry, no easy path could be found. A full description of his ideas will be made later. At the moment, it can be noted that whatever research was done during his tenure of office, Mr. Lubetkin had nevertheless drawn his principal conclusions long before any primary research had been made. What is more, they directly conflicted with the network of negotiations that had been built up on the basis of the skeleton framework provided by the neighbourhood plan in 'Farewell Squalor'. This was probably explained to him in a meeting with Mr. Tetlow and the Regional Controllers of the Ministries of Labour and Health just before

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1. Meeting on the 11th February, 1948 (1.5).

the one with the N.C.B.<sup>1</sup> This is the last reference there is of Mr. Tetlow in connection with this project. He was soon after moved to another appointment. The sympathies of the 'Advisory Committee' were clearly with the Architect-Planner and there seemed to be no debate on the question of adhering to the arrangements made by Mr. Clarke and Mr. Tetlow, or of overturning them in favour of those of Mr. Lubetkin. It was even realised by them that these plans had been formulated because there was an urgent need to start building right away as soon as the Final Designation Order was made. At the meeting on the 11th February, it was stated that the new plans would take a long time to make, and that they would not be able to use Easington's Direct Labour force.

On the 25th February, the 'Advisory Committee' expressed its dislike of the plans made by the Regional Controller, and suggested that better liason was going to be needed between the new Corporation and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Mr. J.R. James was lent by the Ministry, ostensibly to help with the work on the 'Social Survey', but mainly to act as liason.<sup>2</sup>

By the 5th March, the 'Advisory Committee' had engaged its own mining consultant, Mr. Potts, then Mining Reader at King's College, Newcastle, and had begun to make its own investigations into the mining problem. At the meeting on that day, the Committee took steps to publicise the New Town.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Letter, Tetlow to Clarke, 4th February, 1948 (15.23).

2. Meeting of 25th February, 1948 (1.6).  
Interview J.R. James, 8th January, 1960.

3. Meeting of 5th March, 1948 (1.7).

Shotton Hall was chosen by Mr. Lubetkin for the new residence of the Corporation, and the Direct Labour force at Easington were engaged to do the necessary repair work and to erect the temporary structures to provide office space.

Mr. Clarke was not able to take up the offered employment with the new Corporation. The strain of the preparatory work had worn him out and, on Doctor's orders, he was obliged to take up other and less arduous occupation.<sup>1</sup>

The Final Designation Order was made on the 10th March, and the Corporation were duly constituted on the 12th.<sup>2</sup>

### Conclusion

This summary will attempt to trace the leading threads of the history, some of which stand out in their own right, others of course being much conditioned in their priority of placing, by the events which have taken place since. Where the interim summary ceased, was the point where Mr. Tetlow, the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning definitely decided that the Easington New Town project needed to be very carefully inspected. The narration continued up to the time of the Final Designation Order in March, 1948. The broad and

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1. Interview, C.W. Clarke, 11th December, 1959.

2. Designation Order, 10th March, 1948 (15.25).

general history of the New Town will end at that point in this thesis, principally because there, the main aim of the thesis has been achieved - to trace how it was that a New Town of Peterlee came into being.

Whether the New Towns Act was invoked or not, the various Government Departments still could have killed the project more or less at birth if they had wanted to. The most influential member of the group of Regional Officers was Mr. Tetlow. As The Regional Controller of the Ministry, who had no building functions or specific responsibilities limited to one field, as had the others, Mr. Tetlow became the Chairman of the Regional Physical Planning Committee. The Regional Controller had been a very important man to convince. How had it been done?

Mr. Tetlow had betrayed many misgivings in his letter to Mr. Clarke on first receiving a copy of the 'Outline Survey' in December, 1946. He had rightly foretold the later feelings of other Government Departments, when he said that the idea had the potential danger of either being a "White Elephant" (his own phrase) or it would be so effective as to drain the existing villages of their "life blood and initiative". At the time of receiving the report he was already convinced of grouped development as being the right answer, he was just not sure that there should be only one site. What appeared to convince him was that there were not sufficient existing settlements which warranted being further developed. Mr. Clarke's enthusiasm and many of the ideas expressed in his report must have taken a toll on Mr. Tetlow's opposition. He agreed that the social structure needed broadening and that the area was due for new

industry. But he well recognised the priority of coal getting in the neighbourhood, which was a limiting factor on his enthusiasm for new industry, but was also a motive force for agreeing to the housing part of the New Town. This, the newest part of the Durham Coalfield, was going to need extensive development anyway.<sup>1</sup> Miss Elliott, one of the Research Assistants at the Ministry, was against the scheme<sup>2</sup>, but the senior Research Officer of the Ministry was Mr. James, who threw his weight down on the side which advocated the New Town. This is all the evidence there is. All else is conjecture. Whatever was the final persuasive influence on the Regional Controller is not known, but he certainly became its strongest advocate, and it was his influence on Mr. Silkin which, as the Minister admitted, proved decisive.<sup>3</sup>

It was a chain of persuasion from Mr. Clarke, through the Regional Controller, to the Minister. The arguments that had convinced one had a similar effect on the others, but all the same, certain individual preferences stand out with the main personalities. With Mr. Silkin, one can deduce that he had been very impressed by his tour around the villages in July, 1947. What people had said to him then and what he had seen appeared to do a lot to convince him. Two points stand out. The first was the desire to create an example for the building of mining villages, for the future, and for other localities -

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1. Letter, Tetlow to Clarke, 4th December 1946 (14.14).

2. Letter to the Author, 18th January, 1960 and 6th April, 1960.

3. Meeting, 21st January, 1948 (1.1).

to make a break with the tradition of squalor which had dominated their past. The second was the impulse to widen the social structure of the area by introducing different income groups - an argument which needed the building of new industry, if for no other reason. As with Mr. Tetlow, it is difficult to tell what was the most decisive influence. The argument explained in the interim summary would have had a powerful effect on the Minister. It would have proved most embarrassing for the Minister in the long and much disputed arguments in the House of Commons if the Local Authority had managed to push the measure through the Regional Physical Planning Committee, but the Minister had then not agreed to place it on the list of Government-built New Towns. The arguments were against the amendments to the Bill which desired to allow other authorities than 'Development Corporations' the privileges of the Act. Mr. Silkin did not, though, have to succumb to further pressure from the North-East for another New Town. Newton Aycliffe preceded Peterlee and sufficed to placate the desire of the North-East, as with other areas, to be 'in the swim'.

The next problem that is worthy of being investigated further is that of the choice of location and size of the New Town. Mr. Clarke's choice was objected to, principally by the Ministry of Agriculture, and right through the negotiations they were never really satisfied. They were willing to accept that their objections had received a fair hearing and after the final decisions had been made, they just gently smouldered in silence. There was a general assumption by everybody

that the site, wherever it was finally located, must be near the new coastal pits, so that the area was limited in which a choice could be made. The objections of the Ministry of Agriculture were partly admitted by the Sub-Committee of the Regional Planning Committee which investigated the problem, when they themselves made an alternative recommendation. The Sub-Committee, as with the Regional Controller and the Minister, could not accept the Ministry of Agriculture's alternative because of the delapidated existing development and the siting of a coal slag heap. It was suggested at the Local Inquiry that the pit heap could be bull-dozed. As with, though, the Sub-Committee's alternative, the main argument against either appeared, from the planning point of view anyway, to be the presence of existing development. The Sub-Committee's choice had indeed been conditioned by this factor and they had picked their area partly because most of the new development since slum clearing started had been concentrated in that part of the district. The village green at Easington was put forward as a good focal centre. As this site was also rejected on the grounds of 'existing development', it can be seen how much the Ministry of Town and Country Planning desired to build on virgin land. The actual site chosen was unique among the New Towns in that it had fewer people living on it than any of the others.

There were also other factors which influenced the decisions, of a more political nature. The Regional Physical Planning Committee stressed that if Easington Rural District put forward a site, then it should be given priority, in order not needlessly to thwart their wishes.



Mr. Tetlow was obviously very worried about the coal position. There was little recorded discussion in the Regional Physical Planning Committee, in which a representative of the Ministry of Fuel and Power took part. It was, it seemed, an understood thing that the Board's consent had to be obtained. The negotiations that opened in April were attended by Mr. Clarke, and it can therefore be assumed that his site received priority investigation from the Board. Mr. Dixon and the local Mineral Valuer had said that the magnitude of the problems would be similar on most sites in the district. The fact therefore that the Coal Board had accepted the neighbourhood plan of Mr. Clarke must have so pleased the Regional Controller that he did not think it was worth pursuing any of the other sites. All the same, the various recommendations were all placed before the Minister when he came for his visit to Easington in July, 1947, and it was Mr. Silkin who made the final decision.

Before taking a look at the controversy about the correct size for the New Town, there are a couple of interesting points about size relative to population. A query on intended densities was raised at the Local Inquiry by the solicitor representing the landowners. The 'all in' density of 6.5, it will be remembered, was confirmed by the Regional Physical Planning Committee, and indeed Mr. Tetlow defended the point on the spot at the Local Inquiry. His answer - that the figure was usual for 'suburban' development - showed very clearly the way Mr. Clarke intended building the town, with which idea everybody seemed to concur. Size relative to population is the subject also of

comparisons made between the various suggested sites, as to the acreage they would have used. Mr. Clarke's original report in 1943 suggested five sites, at an average of 300 acres each - 1,500 acres. For the single site of 'Peterlee' in 'Farewell Squalor', there would have been used 100 acres less, excluding the industrial estate, that is 1,400 acres. The rest that was included to make up the 2,350 acres of the designated area, was Castle Eden Dene, which was neither going to be built on, which might have disturbed the Coal Board, nor was it land lost to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The size of the town was calculated by Mr. Clarke by multiplying the average population per house by the number of houses to be built in the Council's twenty-year programme. The result was the target population of 30,000. This left out of account the natural increase which would be expected, especially in the second ten-year period. It also ignored the numbers necessary to make up the 'balanced population', which was not a motivating factor of Mr. Clarke or the Council, but would have inevitably resulted from the introduction of new industry. A further point which is debatable was whether Mr. Clarke over-estimated the number of houses that were 'substandard' and were scheduled to be pulled down in the second ten-year period. A complimentary point to this is Mr. Clarke's calculations of where all the new houses should be built. Would there be no new building in the villages? Though he made no allowance in his assumptions for new building in the villages, he had intended to have a 'rounding off process' which would not only see the

erection of community buildings, but also houses as well.<sup>1</sup> All these points would have altered the target population somewhat.

The North Eastern Area Development Plan pressed the point that the area was sufficiently urbanised and that therefore the New Town should not attempt to attract population from outside, notably from West Durham. A town of 30,000 was all right but it must not be any larger. The Ministry of Labour and National Service must have echoed the Coal Board's feelings when they complained that a town of 30,000 would need a quantity of service industry which would be incompatible with the desire not to have too great a rival pull on the local miners. They desired to cut down the target population to 20,000 in order to reduce the quantity of service industry necessary. On the other hand, the Minister, Mr. Silkin, wanted a town of 60,000 which, he said, would be more balanced and would support a greater number of amenities. But he was obviously obliged to be swayed by his advisers and agree to the lower figure. He did add in one speech, though, that it was likely that the planners had underestimated the length of life of some of the surrounding pits, which would mean the provision of more jobs and homes than had been calculated for.

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1. Letter from Lumsden, March 1948 (File 15).

In a letter to a local vicar inquiring about the likely population of his parish at the end of the twenty years, Mr. Lumsden replied that the vicar should allow for a figure 5% above the calculated decrease in the population, because of the new houses which would be built in the village.

The full story of the 'Industry Problem' will be told in a separate chapter, but for the sake of completeness, a few points about this early period can be made here. Without new industry attached, the whole conception would indeed have been a glorified housing estate. This would have gone against the tenor of long term development and New Towns area policy. So then, what we are looking at when the arguments are surveyed is the effect of short term policies limited to the peak periods of high demand, especially for coal. The conflicting thoughts on this are even reflected in some of the official and publically issued policy documents. For instance, the tenor of the Statement accompanying the Draft Designation Order is very different from the 'Explanatory Memorandum' issued before the Local Inquiry. The various waves of political pressure took their toll on official thought. There was complete agreement on one point. Lack of rail facility, and the need to centre industry for the district, meant that the estate should lie in the North-west of the area - outside the designated New Town boundary.

The two-year post-war housing scheme of the Rural District was due to end by May, 1948. There was a certain air of urgency in the Council Offices at Easington and in the Ministry, at the thought that this should happen before building for the New Town had commenced. This became intensified by the extra allotment of 400 houses by the Ministry of Health in August, 1947. The urgency was responsible for the pre-designation planning carried out by the Surveyor's Office at Easington, all on the basis of the neighbourhood plan, printed in

'Farewell Squalor'. A considerable amount of planning was done. Negotiations were entered into with all the organisations who would be supplying the town with services, again on the basis of the No. 1 unit of the plan, in order to facilitate building as soon as the Designation Order was passed. In fact, if Mr. Clarke and Mr. Tetlow had not believed that the Minister was pushing the Order through as fast as he could, they were prepared to acquire the land and raise the necessary loans by means of the Housing Acts. Quite a situation would have arisen if they had acquired the land and built on it, and then the Development Corporation had been forced to re-purchase it for other purposes. In point of fact, events did not go to these extremes because the Minister, surprisingly soon after his July visit, responded to the urgency of the situation by coming back in August to hold the Statutory 'Local Authorities Meeting'.

It is not necessary to go into the agreement that Mr. Tetlow made with the N.C.B. at any length here, as the salient points of it will be discussed in the next chapter especially devoted to the problem of 'Coal'. In brief, agreement was reached in May that building could start on the No. 1 unit in Mr. Clarke's plan, building on the remaining units being agreed from time to time. There was probably a Cabinet meeting in June or July to discuss the whole question of Peterlee, where the agreement with the N.C.B. was confirmed. It is uncertain whether a point, which later gave the Corporation some heart-ache, was confirmed by the Cabinet. This was the question of how long should be spent in building the town. In his speech to the Council in March, 1947,

Mr. Tetlow made reference to the fact that Mr. Clarke had probably overestimated the time necessary to build the town. Mr. Clarke was working on his twenty-year plan, Mr. Tetlow was thinking in terms of under fifteen years, but this was before discussions had been opened with the N.C.B. In the speeches he made to the Local Authorities and then to the first formal meeting of the Easington Advisory Committee, Mr. Silkin mentioned that "speed should not be the determining factor." The Minister did not elaborate the statements on either occasion, so that any conclusion is purely conjectural.

Both the agreement with the N.C.B. and the preliminary planning and negotiations with service agencies were conducted on the basis of Mr. Clarke's plan. The Regional Controller and the Minister must have been content that this plan should form the ideas on which the town should be built. The Regional Controller and Mr. Clarke knew that a senior Consultant Planner would be engaged by the Corporation. Either they thought that Mr. Clarke would be that person, which is unlikely, or they thought that the person called in would agree to follow the basic principles at least that Mr. Clarke had laid down. As we shall see, the kind of person who would make a plan like Mr. Lubetkin was rare. He was not of the school of planners who adhered to the 'suburban' densities that Mr. Tetlow defended at the Local Inquiry.

Mr. Lubetkin arrived in Easington on the 21st January, 1948, and he probably learnt at the various meetings on 5th February the extent of the negotiations made with the Government Departments and other

authorities. But between those dates, he had formed the ideas on which he thought the town should be built, ideas which conflicted with the agreement made with the N.C.B. and with the urgent housing situation in the Rural District. The newly formed Corporation was dominated by the personality of its Chairman, Mrs. Monica Felton.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not she was conversant with the whole situation is not certain. It is most probable that the Minister briefed her quite thoroughly. What is certain is that the other members of the Corporation were for some time kept in the dark and did not see the papers of the Regional Physical Planning Committee, nor were they thoroughly briefed on the negotiations that had preceded their formation as a Corporation. This made for a position where the Corporation were enthused with Mr. Lubetkin's inspiring ideas without clearly realising the conflicts they must engender if carried through.<sup>2</sup>

Peterlee is there because of the phenomenal coincidence between Easington's unusual scheme and the early idealistic years of the New Towns Act. It is pure conjecture whether anything less powerful than a Development Corporation, with all its statutory powers, could have established the New Town. Could Easington have done it on their own? It is the opinion of this author that the answer must be no, mainly because the very motive force which would have needed to have been

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1. Interview, Mr. E. Allen - February, 1960.

2. Interview, Mr. E. Allen, February, 1960.

perpetually renewed in the Council Chamber itself, would have been an increasingly diminishing one. All over the country, the end of the war idealisms have vanished. The counter pressures would have grown too great and the scheme would either have collapsed altogether, or its scale would have been gently pared away into insignificance.

It is a very difficult question to answer, whether Peterlee should be there at all. For the answer to the question why it is there, one need only analyse the political situation and the strength of relative pressures - who, in fact, had the ear of the Minister at the crucial moment? This is not the whole story, as the rational, social and economic imperatives played a distinct role, but to what extent is difficult to determine. The Regional Physical Planning Committee seemed to concentrate on specific items which were placed on the agenda by one of its members. The County was only in 1947 set up as an overall planning authority in place of the separate Districts. Durham County were only just beginning preliminary planning for their Development Plan which was not due to be ready until 1951. The rational analysis could have only been done in the offices of the Regional Controller for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, or by the North Eastern Development Plan. To the author's knowledge, the Ministry did not have any plans for New Towns in the region, which were formed as a deliberate part of Development Area policy or for a region with poor housing and villages. It is not known whether any judgement was made at all



whether expanding or contracting areas should be given New Towns. The main policy of the Pepler and Macfarlane Plan was, as was the County after them, one of re-groupment. They did recommend other New Towns, but the significant point was that their recommendations came after both Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee had been designated. New Towns were at the time a popular item and many areas were clamouring for them. Durham had received more than its quota. The West of Durham may have deserved priority but at the time when the New Towns were being allocated out, no comprehensive Plan had been issued upon which Regional decisions could be based.

Neither of the Durham New Towns was created as part of rational joint housing and industry policy for a depressed area. The New Towns Act was put on the Statute Book principally to facilitate the Barlow Commission recommendation of decentralisation for congested areas. Neither the Tyne nor the Tees area was regarded in the same light as London, and the New Towns in the North were not meant to solve that kind of problem. Peterlee, in fact, was limited in its designation responsibilities to not drawing on population from outside the Rural District. But as can be seen when the 'Industry Problem' is looked at more closely, there are suggestions of the idea of New Towns as a solution to some of the problems of depressed areas, in some of the comments made by the Minister and other responsible people. The principal difficulty to fuller understanding was created by the inflationary situation of the economy which was nevertheless combined with a policy of high investment. But this discussion must be saved for a later chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF COAL SUBSIDENCE

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Introduction

The problems of subsidence dominated the minds and time of all those engaged in the early years on the planning of a new town at Peterlee. The long drawn out negotiations held up the building operations for two and a half years. They developed into an uncompromising struggle between the Peterlee Development Corporation and the National Coal Board. The watershed, which divides the narration of the history into two, an understanding of which will aid the reader, is the interim between two decisions. The first was the high point for the Corporation, the award of the Lord President's Committee of the Cabinet, in July 1949, and the second, a Cabinet meeting of February or March 1950, which completely reversed the first decision and left the power of dictating terms to the N.C.B. The account of the various negotiations will be set out below and a critical summary at the end.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of subsidence contains problems of great technical intricacy. A brief description of the geology of the Peterlee site

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1. References will be made to various articles, memoranda and letters during the course of this chapter, most of which, but not all, were found in the files of the Peterlee Development Corporation. These files and their contents have been listed in a special Appendix, and notes in the thesis will also state, where applicable, a reference to the relevant file (i.e. as note 4 below (4.11)).

will be made here and any further explanations that are necessary will be interspersed with the general narrative.

The profile of the land in the area consists of sandy clay deposits overlying a strata of magnesian limestone, beneath which are first, yellow sands and marl clays, and then the various layers of coal deposits.

The limestone outcrops in the North-east of the site. It is of varying thickness, but generally about 500 feet. In this area it is weak and powdery, containing fissures and cavities enlarged by the pumping of water. Instability due to the partial collapse of the limestone bed, apart from the mining of coal, is counted as a possible (though not probable) danger, due to any long continued pumping out of the water.<sup>1</sup>

There are five workable seams of coal measures, at depths of 900 - 1,300 feet below the surface; the highest being 300 feet below the yellow sands. The seams are of a general thickness of 3 - 5 feet, and only partly worked out. In 1948, it was assumed that the whole of the coal would not be extracted until circa 2,000 A.D.<sup>2</sup> The weak plateau of limestone will provide little protection against the dangers of subsidence. The final degree of sinking that will result has been

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1. Analysis of Planning Problems - 16th January 1950, p.49.

2. This assumption was one of the points of the N.C.B.'s mining programme challenged by the Corporation. See p.122.Ch. III.

estimated, and generally agreed upon for the area, to be some 60% of the total thickness of extracted seams.<sup>1</sup>

Coal under the area is worked from Shotton and Horden collieries. A royalty barrier, which under nationalisation has been still maintained, divides the two sets of working. The barrier acts as a safeguard against flooding.

The area in which the coal was most worked out was in the north-east of the site, growing least extensively mined progressing towards the south-west of the site. The coal programme as it stood after the war was not of concentrated, but piecemeal extraction, in plots scattered over the whole area.

The ideas of the Rural District Council on the subject were those of its engineer and architect, Mr. C. W. Clarke. He was not particularly perturbed by the prospect of possible subsidence. The main reasons why this was so were given in a small paragraph in 'Farewell Squalor'.<sup>2</sup>

"Another disadvantage, the effect of which can be minimised by suitable precautions, is the liability of the surface to subsidence due to Mine Workings. Subsidence in this area, however, is not such a serious disadvantage as is sometimes quoted, since the depth of the colliery workings, coupled

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1. Professor Potts, Peterlee Development Corporation's mining consultant, verified that this figure was correct. (4.11).

2. C. W. Clarke - 'Farewell Squalor', p.62.

with some peculiar quality of the overlying strata, renders subsidence almost unnoticeable over most of the area."

From March, 1947, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning assume increasingly greater responsibilities for the project. By that date, the Regional Physical Planning Committee had agreed that the New Town should go ahead, and the Easington Rural District had allowed the idea to be placed before the Minister under the New Towns Act. At that date also, the Regional Controller, Mr. Max Tetlow, had come to certain conclusions about the suitability of available sites, especially from the angle of the coal problem.<sup>1</sup> From that point of view, he thought that the Peterlee site was as good as any other.<sup>2</sup> Realising that the N.C.B. had objections to the project, Mr. Tetlow decided to open negotiations with them.

The Coal Board's first reaction when they heard of the New Town was decidedly one of unqualified opposition. They felt that the miners living in the New Town would have further to travel than they did then. Also, no matter where the town was sited, they believed that there would be a need by the builders for serious sterilisation of coal deposits.

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1. See p. 71. Ch. II.

2. See letter from Mineral Valuer to Regional Controller (marked confidential), 28th February, 1947. (B.2).

### The Pre-designation Agreement

Second thoughts, however, coincided with the opening of negotiations by the Regional Controller. It became apparent to the Board that a New Town would have a good psychological effect on the area and would help stabilise the mining population on a particularly important section of the Durham Coalfield.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Tetlow managed to pacify the N.C.B. completely. A letter dated 24th June, 1947, from the Mining Estates Manager of the N.C.B., Northern Region, to the Regional Controller "puts very plainly on record the price of the National Coal Board's acquiescence in the project".<sup>2</sup>

"

#### Easington New Town

I refer to our recent discussion regarding the site of the proposed New Town and now write to confirm that the Divisional Board will raise no objection to the selected site as shown on the plan enclosed herewith.

The Board are of the opinion that the area shown scored in red on the plan will not seriously interfere with the present coal production and should be regarded as the first stage of development for immediate building, provided structural

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1. From Minutes of Regional Physical Planning Committee, 28th May 1947 (13.4).
  2. Letter from Mr. Dobbie of Ministry of Town and Country Planning, July, 1949 (4.5).

precautions are adopted by building houses in pairs on strongly reinforced concrete foundations.<sup>1</sup>

It is understood that the next development stage of the New Town will be in the western portion of No.1 Unit followed by Nos. 2 and 3 and that you will give an early indication to the Board of the approximate date when these further developments may be expected, so that a suitable programme of underground operations can be planned to secure the maximum extraction of the valuable coal resources in each area in advance of building requirements.<sup>2</sup>

In agreeing in principle to the location of the New Town, the Board understands that all future major housing schemes contemplated by the Easington R.D.C. will be concentrated in this area and that the programme of surface development will be agreed from time to time to the underground mining operations of the Board.

(signed) F. Dixon.<sup>3</sup> "

It has also been ascertained that, not long after, these negotiations travelled up the administrative hierarchy as far as the Cabinet, and that

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1. The area scored in red on the map mentioned, refers to the North-east corner.
  2. The 'units' mentioned in this paragraph, refer to the neighbourhood units as shown in C.W. Clarke's 'Farewell Squalor'.
  3. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations' (6.1) p.2.



some sort of undertaking was given at that level.<sup>1</sup> At this stage of the proceedings then, it can be assumed that the Minister of Town and Country Planning gave his consent to these opening preliminaries on the part of his Regional adviser.

There was no reference to the likely effects of subsidence by the Minister at either of two important meetings he attended, the first at Easington in August, 1947, and the second with the Advisory Committee in January, 1948.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that either Mr. Tetlow believed that Mr. Clarke would be the Planner, or more probable, that another Planner would be chosen who would nevertheless adhere to the bare outline drawn up by Mr. Clarke. The plans for the No.1 unit to the North-east of the site were very well advanced and negotiations had been opened with the statutory agents for public services to be provided.<sup>3</sup>

At the first informal meeting of the Advisory Committee on 16th December, 1947, it was decided to have someone else other than Mr. Clarke to do the planning.<sup>4</sup> By the Meeting on the 21st January, someone had been found, after some amount of searching. Mrs. Felton, the Chairman

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1. Letter on the 23rd July, 1948, from Mr. Williams to Mr. Dobbie (4.5).

2. Meetings, 27th August 1947 and 21st January 1948 (3.2) and (1.1).

3. See pp. 80 and 103 Ch. II.

4. Meeting of Easington New Town Advisory Committee, 16th December 1947, (1.2).

designate had eventually chosen Mr. Lubetkin, and Mr. Silkin, the Minister, had interviewed him a few days before that meeting.<sup>1</sup> It is not known whether Mr. Lubetkin accepted the appointment with full knowledge of the agreement already made with the N.C.B., or exactly when it was explained to him, if it ever was, before the 5th February.

The Local Public Enquiry was held on the 27th January. The N.C.B. did not put in an appearance at all and it was certainly this original agreement which kept them from placing any objections.<sup>2</sup> The only reference to the problem of coal subsidence was made by Mr. Tetlow, who stated the Minister's preference for centralised development which could be better related to problems of subsidence than could any scattered development.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Lubetkin quickly formulated his general views on how the New Town should be built. He was ready to put them forward at the supposed routine meeting with the N.C.B. arranged for February. At that meeting, Mr. Lubetkin expressed surprise when told of the agreement made with the N.C.B. by Mr. Tetlow. The Regional Controller was also present at this meeting.<sup>4</sup> (It is the last reference of him in connection with Peterlee

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1. Ibid., 21st January, 1947 (1.1)

See also p.104, Ch.II, note 2.

2. Minutes of Meeting with the N.C.B., 5th February 1948 (4.2).

3. Minutes of the Public Local Enquiry (12.4).

4. Preliminary Report on Relations with the National Coal Board, 7th February, 1948 (4.2).

that can be traced; soon after he was moved to another appointment.) The new Architect-Planner put forward his general ideas, the basis, he thought, from which the Corporation would want to formulate their Master Plan for a New Town. The N.C.B. in turn stoutly adhered to certain fixed principles, most of which could be deduced from the pre-designation agreement. These were:-

- " 1. That the development of the town should proceed in detached and semi-detached houses on reinforced foundations.
2. That such development to take place on areas of the site where one or two seams only remained to be extracted.
3. The development to start in the extreme North-east corner, and for the sake of an early start, the National Coal Board agrees to sterilise some coal in this area.
4. The total time necessary for the construction of the town to be in the neighbourhood of thirty to forty years so as to allow the Coal Board sufficient time to extract the coal in accordance with their existing plans."<sup>1</sup>

The objections of the Architect-Planner were threefold:

- " 1. The overall building period for the town was too long (this would be about three times as long as the period envisaged in the Reith Report).
2. The fact that only the North-east corner of the site was ready for immediate building, and that no other portion

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1. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations', (6.1), p.6.

would be available for some time, pre-determined to a large extent the character of the master plan, irrespective of planning considerations related to the New Town as a whole.

3. It was clearly undesirable on planning grounds to proceed with the development of the North-east corner. Nevertheless, if parts of it had to be utilised, this could not be done without simultaneously providing an appropriate proportion of urban amenities, which should be more centrally located."<sup>1</sup>

The Corporation henceforward took the attitude to the pre-designation agreement with the N.C.B. with the full consent of the Minister,<sup>2</sup> that what had been negotiated before they had been instituted as a legal body under the 1946 Act, was not binding upon them.<sup>3</sup> At the meeting on 19th May, 1948, the N.C.B. partially accepted this argument by agreeing that the technical officers of each side could meet to examine each other's plans in detail. Neither side referred the matter back to the Cabinet, which had some time before concurred with the pre-designation agreement. Henceforward, this agreement receives no further mention. In this way, Mr. Lubetkin's plan was laid open for

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1. Ibid., (6.1), p.4.

2. Interview with Lord Silkin, 29th January, 1960.

3. Minutes of the meeting of the 19th May, 1948 (4.4).

inspection on its merits. The negotiations which followed gave it a very thorough hearing. It was also established at the meeting on May 19th that the Coal Board were thinking of their legal liability for compensation to property owners if subsidence took place. Mr. Williams had suggested that this might be so as a guess, and had hit on to something which was one of the prime motivating factors in the N.C.B.'s whole behaviour throughout the prolonged negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

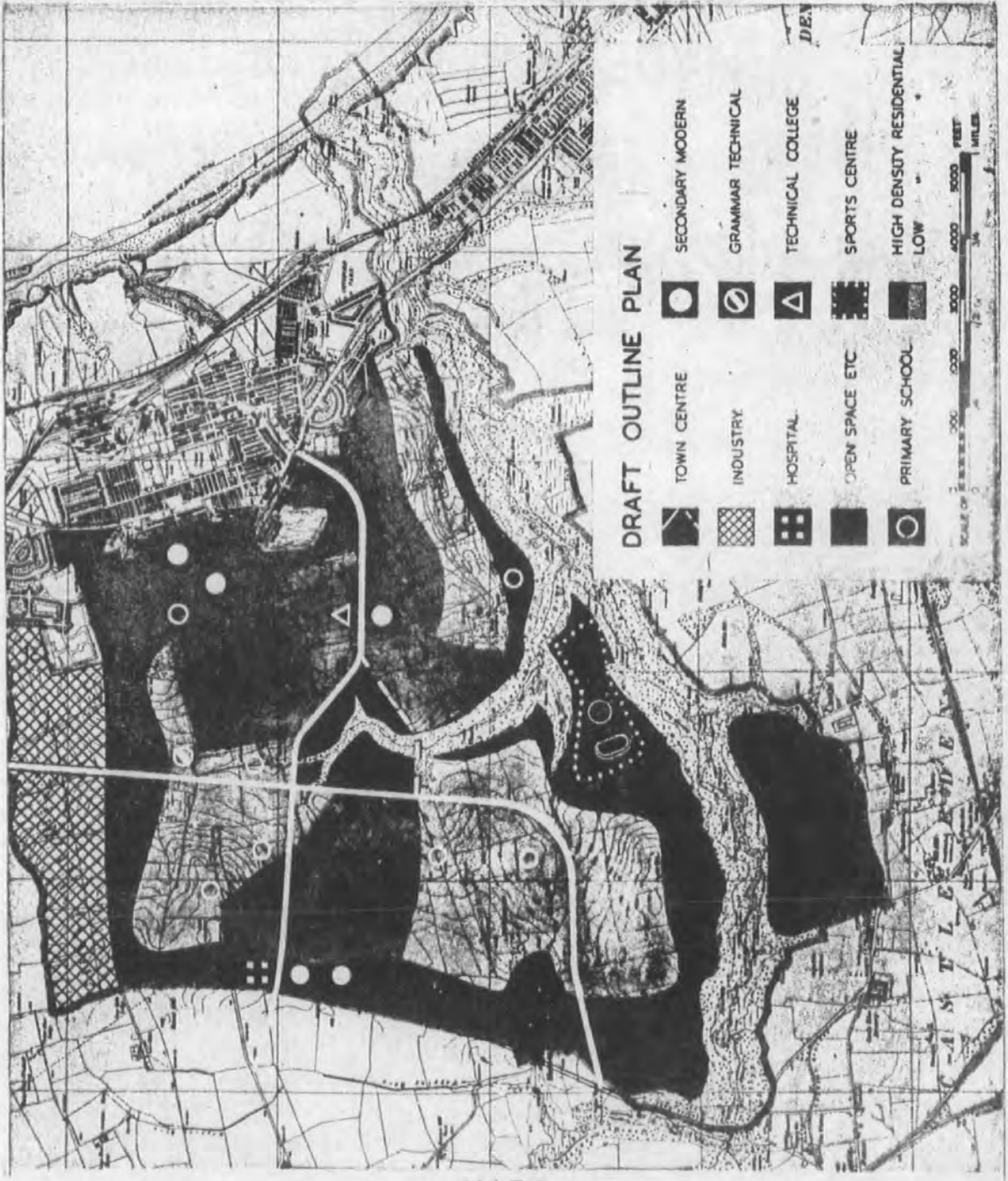
#### The Ideas of Mr. Lubetkin

To give a resume of Mr. Lubetkin's ideas: he saw the area of the site as a large 'saucer', within whose rim the whole town should be built.<sup>2</sup> In the centre would be the dense development, growing less dense towards the periphery, merging eventually into the open spaces, parks and playing fields on the outer boundaries. The phasing of the building programme, he wanted so arranged that as each portion of housing was completed, it should be accompanied by corresponding communal amenities. Mr. Lubetkin believed that building lightly (that is mainly semi-detached houses) was unacceptable on sociological, aesthetic and economic grounds. Subsidence would mean that structural precautions would be needed over the whole site. Building heavily, utilising many

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1. Ibid., 19th May, 1948 (4.4).

2. The building of the town within the rim of the 'saucer' was often referred to in the negotiations as - "Horizon-lining".



**DRAFT OUTLINE PLAN**

- |  |                |  |                              |
|--|----------------|--|------------------------------|
|  | TOWN CENTRE    |  | SECONDARY MODERN             |
|  | INDUSTRY       |  | GRAMMAR TECHNICAL            |
|  | HOSPITAL       |  | TECHNICAL COLLEGE            |
|  | OPEN SPACE ETC |  | SPORTS CENTRE                |
|  | PRIMARY SCHOOL |  | HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LOW |

SCALE OF 1 INCH TO 1/4 MILE  
 0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000 4500 5000 FEET  
 0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 MILES

MAP 4

flats, would occupy a lesser ground area, but the sites would need to be entirely stable when building took place.<sup>1</sup>

The next step was taken at a meeting in July 1948. The N.C.B. here recognised that the Corporation felt that the North-east corner was unacceptable, and since an early start on building was essential, they said they were willing to suggest some alternative sites on which work could begin.<sup>2</sup> A few days earlier, the Minister visited the Corporation and intimated his intention to take steps to ascertain what would be involved in building on land liable to subsidence and what would be the costs of insuring against such risks. Early in August, 1948, the Minister notified the Corporation that he had appointed Professor Webster, the Chief Development Officer of the Ministry of Works, to investigate.

Meanwhile, of the four choices of alternative sites offered by the N.C.B. on which work could begin immediately, the Corporation chose one in the South-east corner adjoining existing settlement at Horden. The N.C.B. had acted very promptly in acceding to the Corporation's request for such a site.

At the request of the Minister, no meeting was held for further discussions between the N.C.B. and the Corporation until the Webster

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1. See unheaded note by Mr. Lubetkin (4.15).

2. Minutes of Meeting, July 23rd, 1948 (4.6).

Committee had reported.<sup>1</sup> The Committee gave a progress report to the Corporation in November, clearly showing the way it was heading in its intended recommendations.<sup>2</sup> The Committee's final report was not available until January, 1949.

The Corporation went ahead with the preparation of a master plan, even after the progress report of the Webster Committee had been received, and were bold enough not only to do much needed preliminary work, but to turn out a fairly complete plan. This was submitted to the National Coal Board for inspection. The final receipt of the Webster Report, even after the warning of November, still came as a 'sharp interruption' to the Corporation's activity.<sup>3</sup>

### The Webster Report

The Webster Report is a very important document in the history of these coal negotiations. The words used in the Report itself were for the most part guarded and well qualified. In the hands of some of the authorities, certain precepts hardened though into firm rules which bedevilled much future discussion.

The Report concluded that the danger from subsidence varied in different parts of the site. The land was divided into three categories of relative danger, green, amber and red.

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1. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations' (6.1), p.5.

2. Conference with Minister's team, 26th November 1948 (4.9).

3. Op. cit. Analysis of Planning Problems, p.56



"The amber denotes areas where surface movements can be expected to be severe, and green areas where the surface movements can be expected to be average or less."

"The red zones consisted of land which from any aspect building should not be permitted."

Development should be mainly confined to green zones, where these progressively became available, and also should be restricted to detached and semi-detached houses, except where local sterilisation of coal was conceded to allow buildings of special importance to be constructed.

"It was assumed that, as far as possible, there should be no interference with coal working, and no extensive sterilisation of coal or alteration in the programme of mining."<sup>1</sup>

The Corporation felt that if the Report was accepted, then it would be restrictive on all its major activities, layout and construction, the areas to be developed, and the timing of the building operations. Layout proposals restricting building to two storied detached and semi-detached houses, as well as the prohibition of building on 'red' zones, would both limit the number of inhabitants which could be accommodated. They also objected to the fact that the

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1. Report on Peterlee Development by the Chief Development Engineer's Division of the Ministry of Works. (Webster Committee Report). (6.2).

growth of the town would be a reflection of the gradual expansion of 'green' zones from 'amber'.<sup>1</sup>

In stating their objections to the implied conclusions of the Report, the Corporation attacked certain of the underlying working hypotheses of the Committee.

From the point of view of building on the surface,

"There is not a great deal to choose between the 'green' and the 'amber' zones proposed, and that there seems to be no sound evidence for regarding the 'red' zones as permanent obstacles to building."<sup>2</sup>

The Webster Committee did not say that there should be no building on 'amber' land. There could be if they were not important buildings and certain structural precautions were taken, but they advised building only on the 'green' land. Their criterion, which the Corporation thought was not sufficient, was the number of principal seams remaining to be extracted. It worked out that land under which less than two principal seams remained to be extracted was denoted as 'green' and therefore safe. Where there were two and a half or three seams, the land, broadly speaking, was denoted as 'amber'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Op. cit. Report on the Negotiations with the N.C.B., p. 6.

2. Ibid., 'Report on the Negotiations' p.6. (6.1.).

3. Zoning proposed in the Webster Report, 11th March, 1949, pp. 2 and 5 (4.12).

In addition, the Corporation, though they agreed that there ought to be no extensive sterilisation of coal, on the other hand thought there ought to be some positive alteration in the mining programme of the National Coal Board. Mr. Potts, Mining Reader at King's College, Newcastle, had been appointed Mining Consultant to the Corporation, and had formulated a case for the reorganisation of the mining programme under the Peterlee site, on the basis of the surveys of workings prepared by himself.<sup>1</sup> No meetings had been arranged with the technical officers of the National Coal Board and the Corporation, and the information as to the National Coal Board's plans were not easily forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Phased Development Plan

The Master Plan being prepared while the Webster Committee were sitting depended for its relation with the 'coal problem' on the plan thought out by Mr. Potts. This plan proposed that the area be divided into zones and the coal under each zone extracted in quick succession, leaving five years for subsidence to take place before building. Then an area for initial development would need to be agreed upon since there were no stable sites for the first five years' building. Some sterilisation would be involved in this initial development area, but not more, it was hoped, than the one and a quarter million tons allowed

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1. See 'Report on Mining Subsidence' - Mr. Potts, February 1949 (4.11).

2. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations', p.7 (6.1). The Webster Report, p.6 (6.2) stated that the N.C.B. had not made detailed plans beyond 1960.

for in the 'early agreement', where a start was to be made in the North-east corner. This whole scheme was called by the Corporation the 'Phased Development Plan'.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the Corporation wished to go ahead with the building of 100 houses on the site in the South-east corner adjacent to Horden, agreed upon in July, 1948, with the National Coal Board.<sup>2</sup> They submitted a proposal under Section 3(1) of the 1946 Act early in March, 1949.<sup>3</sup> This was to obtain permission from the Treasury for the construction of roads and sewers for the 100 houses scheme. In reply, the Treasury expressed apprehension regarding the subsidence question in relation to the development of the town. They withheld their permission to continue, and suggested to the Minister that he should report back to the Lord President's Committee.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Lord President's Committee

The Lord President's Committee of the Cabinet did consider the question on the 25th March, 1949. They agreed that it would be necessary to proceed with the proposed construction of a New Town at Peterlee, but that the size and other details of the project could not be decided until

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1. See (a) Ibid., 'Report on the Negotiations', p.7 (6.1).  
(b) 'Analysis of Planning Problems', p.58.

2. See p.118 (this chapter).

3. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations', p.5 (6.1).

4. Details found in Report of a meeting of Corporation with Mr. Dobbie of the Ministry, 31st March, 1949 (4.14).

the position had been further examined. The Ministry of Fuel and Power and the National Coal Board would have to examine the Webster Report and discuss the problem further with the Corporation. The Committee invited the Minister of Town and Country Planning to arrange for a detailed examination of the plans for Peterlee by his Department, in consultation with the Treasury, Ministries of Health and Fuel and Power and the National Coal Board, and to report further whether an agreed scheme of development could be secured.<sup>1</sup>

The detailed examination and consultation with the other Departments was arranged in an Interdepartmental Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Thomas Sheepshanks, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Also invited to sit on the Committee were Professor Webster and Mr. Hill, the Senior Structural Engineer of the Ministry of Works. This Committee met in April, 1949, and decided that the Corporation and local representatives of the National Coal Board should at once open negotiations with a view to arriving at an agreed solution of the problem of relating surface and underground development. They should report the results of their negotiations to the Interdepartmental 'Working Party' as soon as possible. The report should be a joint document and should show an agreed phasing of the New Town and a Master Plan in accordance with that phasing.<sup>2</sup> The National Coal Board did not

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1. Minute headed 'Regional Working Party for Preparation of Peterlee New Town Development Plan' (7.1).

2. Report of Interdepartmental Working Party, 13th April 1949. (8.3).

wish to meet the Corporation before the 1st June, so that was scheduled as the day for the first local level meeting of what became known as the 'Regional Working Party'.<sup>1</sup>

### The Informal Meetings

Because the first meeting was not until 1st June, the Corporation decided informally to sound the National Coal Board on its 'Phased Development Plan'. Mr. Williams, the General Manager of the Corporation, met, in turn, Mr. Dixon, the Estates Manager of Northern Division, N.C.B., and then Mr. Barratt, the Production Manager. At the first meeting, Mr. Dixon led the General Manager to believe that the National Coal Board were not only prepared to consider initial development, other than in the North-east, but that they would examine the idea of sterilisation for residential purposes, especially on the East side. Mr. Williams also deduced that the Estates Manager did not look with any disfavour on the idea of a development periphery or 'horizon line'.<sup>2</sup> The second meeting on the 19th May, 1949, was also felt by the General Manager not to be discouraging, though Mr. Barratt did say that he was not prepared either to go into details then, or to commit the Board to any of the Corporation's proposals.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Notes for the General Manager (4.15).

2. Meeting of the 15th March (4.16).

3. Meeting on the 19th May, 1949 (4.17).

### The Regional Working Party

By 1st June, 1949, the Board's attitude had hardened. The Webster Committee had pre-supposed that "generally speaking, there are about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seams of coal to be worked under the Peterlee site." The Board claimed there were five workable seams; the others had not been planned for detailed extraction until 1965. The addition of these seams made the waiting time before the land became stable longer than the Corporation had calculated.

It was conceded in principle that some sterilisation of land may be necessary, if only for the town centre. On the other hand, the Board withdrew its previous offer in the 'early agreement' to sterilise one and a quarter million tons in the North-east corner. The National Coal Board was also very doubtful as to the possibility of sterilising land in the East for initial development, or of speeding up its mining programme in the West.<sup>1</sup>

A second meeting took place on 16th June, 1949. As the session on 1st June had been unclear whether the target population figure could be treated as a variable, a directive was obtained from the Minister of Town and Country Planning. The Chairman announced that it was to remain 30,000.

The Corporation had prepared entirely new plans, which it thought were a concession to the National Coal Board's existent mining plans.

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1.Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations', p.8 (6.1).

First the Corporation wanted 60 acres set aside for the town centre, of which only the East side should be made available immediately, and the rest in ten years' time. Second, the general acceptance elsewhere of unstable areas for residential development, restricting this in the first place to detached and semi-detached houses, but with gaps left for terraces, flats, schools and similar large buildings, to be built as and when stable sites became available. Third, a small measure of sterilisation to be accepted, and every effort made to speed extraction.

It was to this third and last stipulation that the National Coal Board directed their main objections. They were not prepared to sterilise the coal under the Eastern part of the central area, in the lower seams, only in the upper, not giving required stability until 1957. They were also not able to expedite extraction in the North-east area as requested by the Corporation. The only concession made was a small stable area of some 27 acres to the East of the town centre to be made available by 1958-59.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Two Seam Rule

During the course of the meeting, the 'two seam rule' became established. This said that only that land under which two or less seams remained to be extracted could be considered stable for the building of detached and semi-detached houses. The Webster Report did

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1. Ibid., 'Report on the Negotiations', p.9 (6.1). Meeting of 16th June, 1949.



not state this in any way categorically but the Senior Structural Engineer of the Ministry of Works, Mr. Hill, who was principally responsible for writing the Report, was also present at these meetings of the Regional Working Party. The Webster Report had stated certain buildings and precautions for building on 'three seam land',<sup>1</sup> but when questioned by Mr. Williams, Mr. Hill answered that "he did not think they knew sufficient about ground movement to estimate the difference between two 'pulls' and three 'pulls'.<sup>2</sup> This idea became firmly fixed, not only in the minds of the National Coal Board, but also the Treasury, who judged their consent to expenditure by it.<sup>3</sup> The strong adherence of the National Coal Board to the rule was motivated by their fear of having to pay out large sums in compensation.

The Corporation were forced to do their calculations upon the basis of the 'two seam rule'. Given the 600 acres that Mr. Lubetkin calculated were available, then under the above stipulations, the Corporation would only have been able to build sufficiently for a population of 18,000 in 38 years.<sup>4</sup>

There are no written reports or minutes of the third meeting of the Regional Working Party held on 11th July, 1949. We can deduce that it must have been pretty stormy. The lines the Corporation were

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1. Ibid., 'Report on the Negotiations' (6.1), p.11. See also (6.2).

2. Meeting of 16th June, 1949 (7.3).

3. See p.123 (this chapter), note 4. (Ref. (4.14)).

4. Op. cit. 'Report on the Negotiations' p.10 (6.1).

working on before the meeting were firstly to attack the 'two seam rule' for low density housing, and secondly to press for 300 stable acres for the higher density development,<sup>1</sup> either by re-organisation of the mining programme or by sterilisation. It appears then, from the outcome of this meeting, that neither the position of the Board or the Corporation fundamentally changed.

#### Re Submission to the Lord President's Committee

After the third meeting of the Regional Working Party, the Chairman submitted a report to the Interdepartmental Working Party, which met on the 14th July, 1949. The result of this meeting was that a recommendation was passed to the Lord President's Committee of the Cabinet, that land for the town centre should be sterilised, plus 300 acres which should be made available 'over varying periods'. The 300 acres was made up of 100 within the visual horizon on the North-east, and 50 outside it, 50 in the South-east abutting upon the East side of Blunts Dene, and 100 West of the town centre. On the last 100 acres, the Committee were willing to discuss whether they were to be on the South-west or the North-west.<sup>2</sup>

The Lord President's Committee met on the 19th July, 1949, and decided in favour of the Peterlee Development Corporation. A town was to be built of 30,000 population within 15 years. The National Coal

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1. Op. cit. pp.11-12 (6.1). Meeting 16th September, 1949 (7.4).

2. Report of the Interdepartmental Working Party (5.2).

Board had to agree to make available 'for immediate development' the area asked for by the Corporation for the town centre, and 200 acres on the East side of Blunts Dene. Another 100 acres, the exact location of which to be agreed later by the Board and the Corporation, was to be made available on the West side of the designated area.

The only difference between the Interdepartmental Committee's recommendation and the Cabinet award was one of time. Should the land be surrendered by the National Coal Board 'over varying periods' or 'for immediate development'.<sup>1</sup>

Another meeting of the Regional Working Party, the fourth, was held in September, 1949. What was discussed was the land East of Blunts Dene awarded by the Cabinet. Before the end of August, the National Coal Board, through the Minister of Fuel and Power, had objected to the 100 acres on the West. While discussion continued on the Eastern sites, the Minister of Town and Country Planning investigated the problem of sites on the West.<sup>2</sup> The National Coal Board had, during all the previous negotiations, stated the difficulties they would have in speeding up their programme of working in the West, and now they were very worried that the Cabinet award would have the effect of making their proposed re-organisation of Shotton Colliery uneconomic.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Note by the General Manager, P.D.C., July 1949 (5.4). See also (8.8).

2. Meeting of the 16th September, 1959 (7.6). Also *ibid.* (5.4).

3. *Ibid.* (5.4).

## The Miners Unions

Whether or not the National Coal Board knew the repercussions that would result by raising the question of 'redundancy' and introducing the Miners Union into the already complex negotiations, is not known. Either way, the Unions were brought in and their influence was, one can surmise, almost decisive.

Both Shotton Miners Lodge and Horden Miners Lodge were called in by the Area General Manager and had explained to them the National Coal Board's interpretation of the likely effects of the Cabinet's award of sterilised land. Much to the Corporation's dismay, the National Coal Board used a literal reading of the Cabinet's phrase 'for immediate development', not only in the case of the Horden miners, where it was perhaps justified, but also with the Shotton miners, where it was doubtful. With the fear of unemployment in their minds, the two Miners Lodges wrote to the Corporation for a meeting of explanation.

The first was held with the Horden Miners Lodge late in September, 1949. The miners expressed fears that 400-500 men would be laid off, and that four and a quarter million tons of coal would be sterilised. The Corporation were surprised at the size of the figures mentioned and they put their case in full to the Lodge. After the meeting, Mr. Williams, on the instructions of the Corporation, contacted the Area General Manager to see where he had estimated his figures of redundancy from, and why he had called the Unions in. The answer given was that the figures were a

conservative estimate, and that they were produced on request and not with a view to exacerbate relations or to make the continuation of relations with Peterlee difficult. The Area General Manager added that if he were approached again, he would say that the picture of redundancy would not be so depressing when the final analysis had been reached - though he would not go so far as to issue a joint statement with the Corporation to this effect.<sup>1</sup>

It is surmised that internal affairs were so occupying the Corporation in October that they had to put off seeing the Shotton Miners until the following month.<sup>2</sup> The meeting was held on 19th November. As with the Horden miners, great apprehension was expressed, as to the amount of sterilisation, and they mentioned a figure of seven and a half million tons of coal (an increase of three and a quarter over the Horden Lodge!)<sup>3</sup>

Before that meeting, however, the fifth meeting of the Regional Working Party was held. Against their will, the National Coal Board were forced, because of the July Cabinet decision, to come to some agreement over the stable area to be made available in the West. The Corporation estimated that they would have developed the 50 acres of sterilised land in the South-east by 1956-57. If five years had to

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1. Report of the General Manager, September 1949 (8.3).
  2. Dr. Felton resigned as Chairman of the Corporation. Lord Beveridge was appointed in her place on 13th October, 1949.
  3. Meeting with Shotton Miners Lodge, 19th November, 1949 (8.6).

pass to let the effects of subsidence work themselves out, then the National Coal Board would have to stop working in two years, that is 1951. In that year the Corporation would want at least 50 of their 100 acres.<sup>1</sup>

### Internal Divisions in the Corporation

While forced acceptance was the working hypothesis at Regional level for the National Coal Board, at Headquarters pressure was beginning to rise. This must have been sensed by the Corporation because by the middle of November they were not only reviewing their plans, but divisions were appearing in the openly expressed views of the administrative heads. The General Manager issued a report to the Corporation which disagreed with some of the assumptions of the Architect-Planner, while agreeing with certain others. Mr. Williams pointed out that he was now convinced that the National Coal Board did not over-stress the difficulties of speeding up their mining programme. He felt that Mr. Lubetkin's plan to house first one third, and, in a later plan, one fifth, of the population in flats was something which, in the circumstances, should be altered. He agreed that the 'two seam rule' not only increased the amount of land to be sterilised, but also reduced the total land available, even for low density building, making some

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1. Meeting of the 7th November, 1949 (8.4) and (8.7).

high density development inevitable. Mr. Williams therefore recommended that the size of the town centre and the target population should be reduced.<sup>1</sup>

### The Breakdown of the Regional Working Party

The Corporation had been right in their judgement that pressure was indeed being built up at a high level against the decision of the Cabinet made in their favour. On the 5th or 6th of December, 1949, news filtered through to the Corporation that the Regional Offices of the National Coal Board had been instructed by the Board in London to discontinue attendance and co-operation with the Regional Working Party.<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by the Regional Offices to the Chairman of the Working Party on the 7th December, when it was explained that the Board in London were raising certain points of principle with the Minister of Fuel and Power, and asked them to postpone any further meeting of the Regional Working Party for the time being.<sup>3</sup> At a meeting later (13th January, 1950) between the Corporation and representatives of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the reason for the breaking off of negotiations was given that the terms of reference for the Working Party relating to the construction of a town for 30,000 population in fifteen years were unacceptable to them. This

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1. Report of the General Manager on the Coal position, 17th November 1949 (8.8).

2. Letter, Mr. Dobbie to Mr. Peyer, 8th December, 1949 (7.10).

3. Letter, Mr. Nimmo to Mr. Sydenham, 17th December, 1949 (7.11).

was because the period of fifteen years would mean the stabilisation of such a large amount of coal as to render the proposed reorganisation of Shotton Colliery uneconomic and would considerably reduce the life of the pit.<sup>1</sup> Lord Beveridge, the Chairman of the Corporation, was most perturbed by the National Coal Board's action in breaking off negotiations; so much so that he took the view that there would really be no alternative to asking the Minister to issue a direction under the 1947 Act, refusing permission for coal working in the areas referred to at the July meeting of the Lord President's Committee.

#### Corporation Concessions

Some time in early October, the Corporation brought over a Dutch mining expert, Dr. Van Iterson, to act as 'Subsidence Consultant'.<sup>2</sup> At a meeting arranged for January, 1950, Dr. Van Iterson argued out with Mr. Hill of the Ministry of Works the question of the 'two seam rule'. Mr. Hill did not entirely agree with the Doctor's views, but did admit that there was no hard and fast 'rule'.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of this meeting and the various arguments expressed against the 'two seam rule', the Corporation met the Minister of Town and Country Planning's representatives again on the 17th January, 1950. Mr. Lubetkin suggested resuming negotiations with the National Coal Board with an increased time target -

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1. Meeting of 13th January, 1950 (10.2).

2. Letters, 14th and 26th October, 1949, from Mr. Niven (8.5).

3. Meeting of 6th January, 1950 (10.1).



twenty years, a relaxation of the 'two seam rule', and only a small stable area on the West. It was Mr. Dobbie of the Ministry who insisted on adherence to the 'rule', hard as Mr. Lubetkin pressed for its relaxation. The reason given by Mr. Dobbie was that the introduction of the question at this stage would confuse the Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The Minister reacted to the proposals of this last meeting by drafting a letter to the Minister of Fuel and Power, dated 17th January, 1950, asking for resumption of negotiations. He stated that the Corporation's requirements entailed that the West side should be available with two seams to be worked out in 1960-63, the remaining seam to be sterilised. The 'immediate' clause in the July Cabinet minute would have been foregone and the main objections of the National Coal Board to the Corporation's planning on the West side have been met. This letter was ignored by the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and the National Coal Board, if the latter ever received it from the former.<sup>2</sup>

### The Second Cabinet Meeting

The next event of importance was the second Cabinet meeting forced by the Minister of Fuel and Power, on behalf of the National Coal Board and, it is believed, by Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P. for Easington, whose constituents were the Horden and Shotton miners. This Cabinet meeting

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1. Meeting of 17th January, 1950 (10.3).

2. Summary of the Coal Problem (8.10). Letter, Lord Beveridge to Lord Hyndley, 5th April, 1950 (8.13).

took place after the General Election on the 23rd February, 1950.<sup>1</sup> It was probably one of the first meetings of the new Cabinet, with Mr. Dalton replacing Mr. Silkin as Minister of Town and Country Planning. From evidence of later meetings, it can be deduced that the July decision was reversed and the original mining programme re-asserted. Decisions as to the future of the Peterlee New Town were left over to the discretion of a meeting of relevant parties.

This was finally held on 4th April, 1950, at the House of Commons, and the importance of it for the whole existence of the New Town can be seen by the Coal Board's opening moves. At the meeting, Lord Hyndley attended for the Coal Board, Dr. Sam Watson for the Durham Miners Union, Lord Beveridge for the Corporation and Mr. Dalton on behalf of the Government and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Lord Hyndley began by a frontal attack on the idea of having a New Town at Peterlee. Mr. Dalton took the kind of line which brought the National Coal Board into a position where instead of arguing that question, they argued the question, if the project was going to be carried through, what would need to be done. The National Coal Board were in the same way moved from their second attacking position of attempting to shift the site for the town several miles to the South, and were asked, as a first step, to consider the possibilities of the present site.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Interview with Lord Silkin, 29th January, 1960.

2. Letter, Lord Beveridge to Mr. Dalton, 5th April, 1950 (8.11).  
Letter, Lord Beveridge to Mr. Williams, 5th April, 1950 (8.12).

### The Resignation of Mr. Lubetkin

The departure of the Architect-Planner, Mr. Lubetkin, occurred in February, 1950. He resigned because, after the reversal of the July Cabinet decision, it became impossible for his plans to be implemented even in a revised form. His resignation made a material difference to the Corporation's needs for stable land. They were now willing to forego high density development entirely outside the town centre and were willing also to build outside the 'horizon line'. If sufficient land in the North-east quadrant was made available then, and land also for the East town centre, they were prepared to consider any change or mode of building that avoided sterilisation of coal. All the same, Lord Beveridge still had his mind on the land in the West, and later, in a letter to Lord Hyndley, he reminded the Coal Board of the offer made by Mr. Silkin to the Minister of Fuel and Power, which had received no answer.<sup>1</sup> The same letter of Lord Beveridge contained a plea that the Coal Board should not be as rigid as they appeared to be in the past, about making minor concessions underground to meet the Corporation's needs above ground.<sup>2</sup>

It was finally decided at the House of Commons meeting, that a Working Party should prepare an immediate programme of action, including in particular the delimitation of one or more areas within the present

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1. See page 136, and 'Summary of the Coal Problem' (8.10).

2. Letter of Lord Beveridge to Lord Hyndley, 5th April, 1950 (8.13).

designated area of the New Town, on which house building could begin in the very near future. The Working Party, it was also concluded, need not be wedded to either 30,000 as a target population figure or 15 years as a time target. They were to be governed by the programme of the National Coal Board for underground working.<sup>1</sup>

#### Resumption of Meetings of the Regional Working Party

Six months after the National Coal Board walk-out of the Regional Working Party in November, 1949, meetings were once more resumed. The date was May, 1950. There was a distinct change in the atmosphere as compared to the minutes of previous meetings.

The Coal Board agreed without argument to the sterilisation of coal under the Eastern half of the town centre, and to allow building immediately to begin in the North-east corner. The Corporation still pressed for accelerated extraction East of the town centre, and the Coal Board replied by accepting the need to look at the problem again. In particular, they would investigate the possibility of not only speeding up working, but also the idea of leaving pillars as underground supports in the Horden main seam.<sup>2</sup>

The Grenfell Baines Group had taken over from Mr. Lubetkin and his team the task of planning the town. For the benefit of the Grenfell Baines Group, a map was given them at this meeting by the

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1. Letter of Lord Beveridge to Mr. Williams, 5th April 1950 (8.12).  
2. Meeting of 2nd May, 1950 (7.12).

National Coal Board showing the amount of two seam land that was at their disposal for building purposes. The amount shown was 800 acres, which later study proved the Corporation capable of building a town of 20,000 in 15 years.

Dr. Sam Watson was also at this meeting on behalf of his Union. He must have gained the necessary assurances about the possible numbers who might be made redundant, because he did not attend any further meetings of the Working Party.

Next month, the Regional Working Party met again. Only the East side was the subject of discussion again as the Coal Board were still in the process of planning for their reorganisation of Shotton Colliery.

The Board had considered the question of speeding up the working in the East and their findings were that they could make available to the Corporation a group of stable sites, during the period 1957-1960. Calculation by the Corporation on this basis allowed for a planned rate of building of 450 houses a year.<sup>1</sup>

While the Grenfell Baines Group were in the process of drawing up their Master Plan, Mr. Potts for the Corporation, and Mr. Fry for the National Coal Board, were on their own initiative investigating in detail the implications for building of the mining plans as they stood then. Their conclusions, based on the assumption of 5 years for

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1. Meeting of 1st June, 1950 (7.14).

settlement, and an angle of draw of one third the depth of seams, were that a planned rate of 450 houses could not be nearly maintained.<sup>1</sup>

### The Re-organisation of Shotton Colliery

On top of this blow, the Corporation learnt of the completed plans of the National Coal Board for the re-organisation of Shotton Colliery. Added to the above, the result was a major upset to the calculations of land availability upon which the Grenfell Baines Group had been working. The Chairman of the Regional Working Party was angry that such a drastic revision of plans had not been notified to him directly, and for a time he contemplated rejecting them.<sup>2</sup> As an outcome of the disturbance caused, the National Coal Board were persuaded not to revise their plans again under the designated area.<sup>3</sup>

The reduction in the amount of two seam land available forced the Corporation once more to consider attacking the 'two seam rule', in order to bring into use some of the land the Webster Committee denoted 'amber', with three seams of coal on the average underneath.<sup>4</sup>

An attempt was made to find Mr. Hill of the Ministry of Works; Mr. Hill had said that a decision could be made as to the use of 'three seam land' if there was definite information as to its location and geological formation. This information had been collected, but Mr. Hill

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1. Meeting of 9th March, 1951 (5.6) and 9.6).

2. Meeting of 8th May, 1951, (10.5) and 8.14).

3. Letter, Mr. Williams to Mr. Sydenham, 3rd July, 1951, (8.16).

4. Op. cit., 8th May, 1951 (10.5).

could not be traced. He had by then left Government service. In lieu of Mr. Hill, the Ministry obtained the services of Mr. Whitaker, Superintending Structural Engineer of the Ministry of Works.<sup>1</sup>

### The Technical Working Party

A Technical Working Party was established by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and Mr. Whitaker was asked to expound to it on the choice of criterion as to the liability of certain land to subsidence and its suitability for building. His answer was that the number of seams was not a sufficient criterion. Concentration should instead be laid on measuring surface differential. This would be greatest where there were faults or barriers in the strata below the surface, and where coal workings abruptly ceased. Additional factors were also relevant, making it certain that each piece of land would have to be judged on its merits. The broad generalisations of the Webster criterion were unrealistic.<sup>2</sup>

In a report made after this first meeting of the Technical Working Party, Professor Potts wrote on the possibilities which the new criteria had for the Corporation. It opened up freedom of movement on the East side of the area, other than in the South-west, where four seams still remained for extraction. Also available were the North-west area between the two barriers, and the south-east and South-west corners. These conclusions were worked out in conjunction with the National

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1. Letter, Mr. Williams to Mr. Dobbie, 9th May, 1951 (7.15).

Letter, Mr. Sydenham to Mr. Williams, 21st June, 1951 (8.14).

2. Meeting of 27th July, 1951 (8.17).

Coal Board.<sup>1</sup>

Grenfell Baines altered their plans so that as little three seam land was incorporated as was consistent with the production of 500 houses a year. Three seam land was to be regarded as a bonus and not a key factor in planning, in order to keep to a minimum the possible objections which could be made by the Treasury.<sup>2</sup>

The final report of the Technical Working Party agreed upon in October, 1951, even allowed for the construction of some large buildings on three seam land, provided that certain structural precautions were taken. The 'Availability of Land' map agreed upon at the same time, allowed for the construction of a town of 20,000, 5,800 houses, by 1961, at the rate of 500 houses a year.<sup>3</sup>

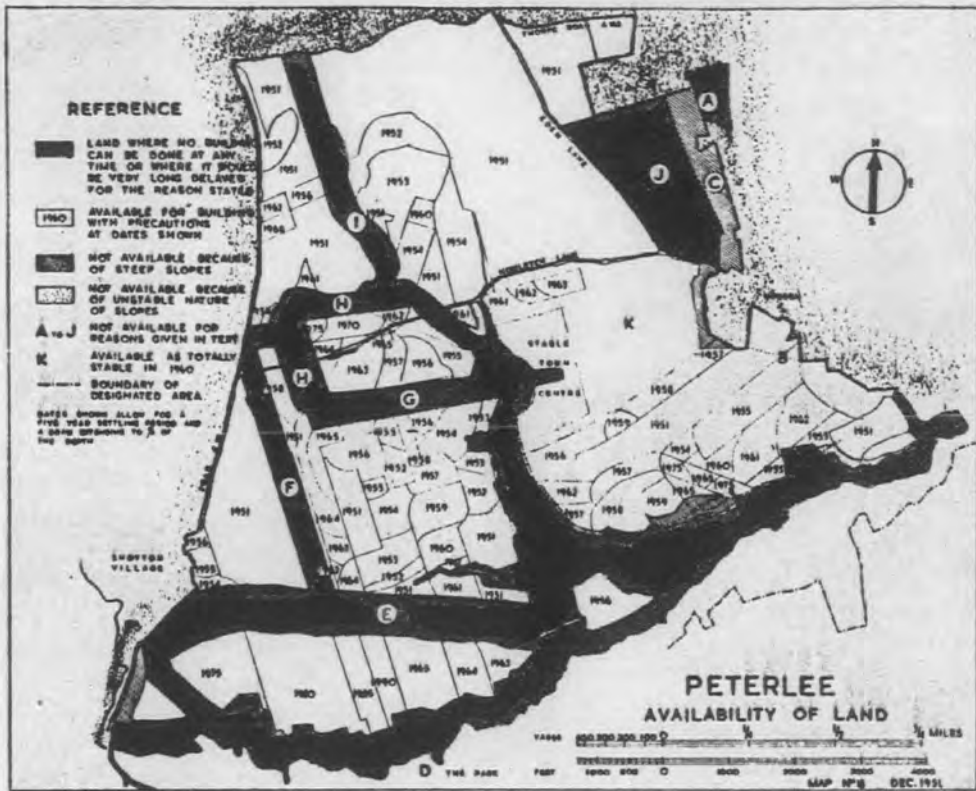
#### The Joint Memorandum

For the first time, a Joint Memorandum was prepared by the Corporation and the Coal Board, which was put before the eighth and last meeting of the Regional Working Party on the 23rd January, 1952. It is noteworthy that the only dissenting note in the report concerned the availability of land in the West. The Corporation desired that further consideration should be given to the Coal Board's proposed programme of working to the West of the town centre, where, owing to the proposal to extract the Hutton seam, an area of 17 acres necessary for the cohesive

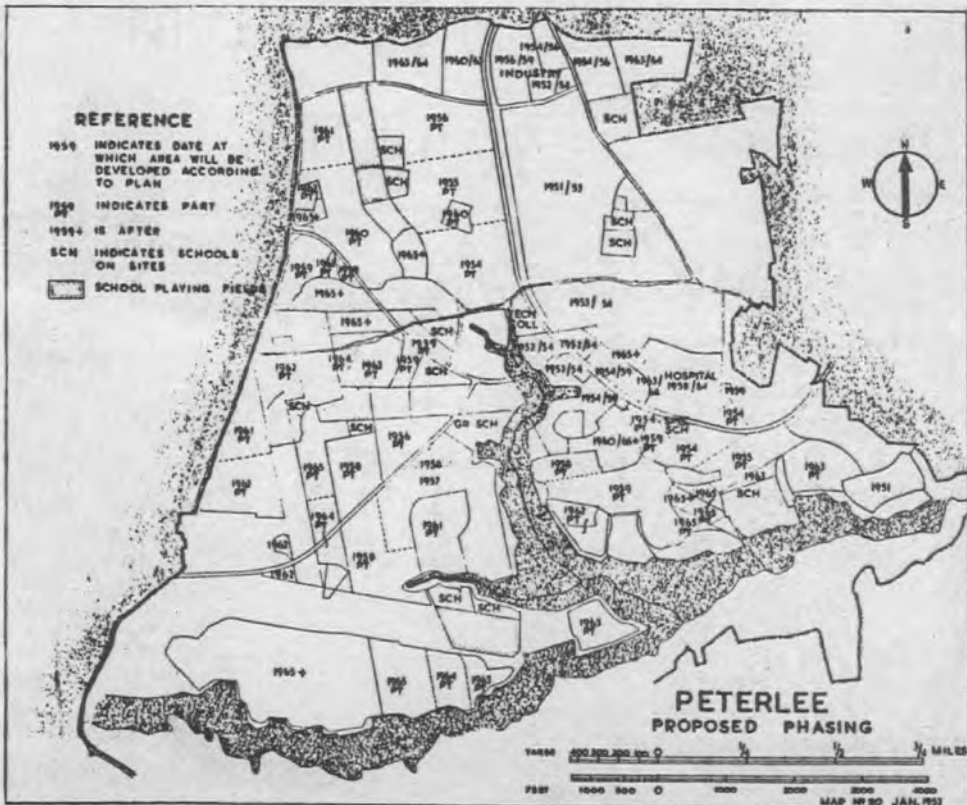
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1. Report of Meeting on the 2nd July, 1951, by Professor Potts (8.18).
  2. Meeting, 3rd August, 1951 (11.2).
  3. Report of the Technical Working Party, 25th October, 1951 (11.4). and Meeting, 21st October (11.5).



MAP 5.



MAP 6.



build up around the town centre, would not be available to the Corporation until 1963-64. The Board agreed during discussion at the meeting to examine the possibility of making the land on the West mentioned, available earlier. The National Coal Board also agreed to have regular meetings in the future of a special Technical Sub-Committee in place of full meetings of the Regional Working Party.<sup>1</sup>

The Chairman concluded that the Report of the Technical Working Party and the Joint Memorandum provided a basis for the development of Peterlee on lines acceptable to the Coal Board, and opened the way for the Master Plan. The only difficulty that was likely to arise was over timing rather than layout.<sup>2</sup>

In his report to the Corporation, the General Manager, Mr. Williams, wrote:

"As a result of this work, we have been able, for the first time, to arrive at a concordance between underground extraction, Master Plan and phasing of the Plan, which enables the building of some 500 houses per annum, resulting in a population of over 21,000 by 1962. By this agreement, we have been able to increase our densities on the site, and continue building operations with a greater architectural flexibility than we have hitherto enjoyed."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Joint Memorandum (7.16).

2. Meeting of 23rd January, 1952 (7.17).

3. Report of the General Manager, 6th February, 1952 (8.19).

From here on, the history of the Coal Negotiations can be traced in the meetings and reports of the Technical Sub-Committee. The basis of operations, however, has not changed since this convenient terminal point in the negotiations. Relations with the National Coal Board continued to improve from that date on. Professor Potts has later written of the "tremendous co-operation" that has been achieved in the Technical Sub-Committee, "irrespective of the earlier disagreements". He went on to say that:-

"Peterlee stands out as a remarkable example of co-operation between developers under conditions which have never been attempted anywhere else in this country, and, probably in the whole world."<sup>1</sup>

It would have been clearly wrong to finish off this chapter and the summary below without mentioning these later changes.

### Conclusion

It is not correct to imply that the reason for the delays and obstacles which impeded the progress of the New Town were simply due to the normal processes of the national democratic system. Though once certain unpleasant facts have been digested, we can question just how much truth there is in this idea.

The unpleasant facts must be examined closely. What were they? First of all, of course, was the fact that coal was under the site, and

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1. Letter, Professor Potts to the Author, 30th March, 1960.

that, at the time, fuel shortage made the industry very powerful in terms of the pressure it could exert in high places. How short-sighted the Government was in choosing between so many million tons of coal and the value of a town which may be the pride of a nation for centuries, must be left to the reader. Put baldly like that, without examining the various influences that Government might succumb to, even taken in a vacuum, the decision could not have been an easy one.

Also important for the understanding of the problem was Mr. Lubetkin's conception of how the town should be built. Though he claimed shortage of land for building forced him to consider a central area of flats and high buildings, nevertheless Mr. Lubetkin, as he admitted, wanted density of the kind that he was contemplating for its own sake - or rather for "sociological, aesthetic and economic" reasons. To build high, it is absolutely necessary to have stable land on which to build. Stability was only possible at the price of sterilised seams of coal.

Thirdly, there was a certain amount of ill feeling engendered in the Coal Board because of the unwillingness of the Corporation to adhere to the pre-designation agreement made by Mr. Tetlow, the Regional Controller of the Ministry at the time. The idea that they had been misled in some way clouded the negotiations from the time that Mr. Lubetkin first put forward his ideas, to the date when the Board finally walked out of the Regional Working Party.

This agreement, it could be argued, should not have been made in the first place. Mr. Tetlow, who was himself not the planner, had made by these negotiations definite limitations for anybody who was going to take on the task. Not only though, did he think when he was engaged on them that whoever was going to plan the town would most certainly adhere to the skeleton framework suggested by Mr. Clarke, but also, it can be said in mitigation, that the kind of person who was likely to turn out a plan like Mr. Lubetkin was very rare. This can be readily seen by the criticisms levelled at most of the London New Towns that they are not sufficiently dense, or are 'prairie' like.<sup>1</sup>

However, given the agreement as a 'fait accompli', it is, if only for reasons of political expedience, wise not to ignore some obligations which arise because of it. Also there is a moral obligation to keep to a 'gentleman's agreement'. By recognising these obligations and adopting a different method of approach, the Corporation might have succeeded in gaining the co-operation of the Board in introducing Mr. Lubetkin's plan in a modified form, in exchange for the outline desired by the Board. By strict adherence to their legal rights under the New Towns Act and by refusing to accept that the Coal Board had sufficient 'locus standi' in law, the Corporation had antagonised the Board's local representatives. The Board themselves proved very

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1. Lewis Mumford, in a visit to some of the New Towns, called them "Prairie towns" and the name stuck. He was referring to the sparse, detached nature of the development. See also the frequent attacks in "Architectural Review".

difficult from the beginning; they were loathe to admit the Corporations standing in the locality, under the New Towns Act. They were aggrieved that what had been agreed upon before the Act had designated the New Town officially, was so arbitrarily overthrown once the Act had been so applied. The Corporation claimed, probably with reason, that the 'time target' of 30-40 years would create impossible planning and economic difficulties. This does not excuse them however from attempting to honour the agreement - if only in order to change it. There was more content to the agreement anyway than just the 'time target' clause. The "method of approach" counted in this case a great deal as, of course, it does in most administrative negotiations.

Mr. Lubetkin's position was a difficult one. If he knew of the agreement before accepting his appointment as Architect-Planner, then if its implications were clear, he should not have taken on the post. An architect or a planner, being ideally an artist on a vast scale, should know at once the limitations under which he would have to work, preferably before accepting his commission. Ultimately, the responsibility, and the word here is not used in its politically technical meaning, lies with the Minister, Mr. Silkin. He knew about both the agreement when it was first made and the plans, when they were first formulated, of Mr. Lubetkin. Taking a departmental line, Mr. Silkin stood by his legal rights under the Planning Acts, and accepted the advice of the Corporation to ignore the pre-designation agreement.

It appears as if the first fear of the Board was not that there would necessarily be large amounts of coal sterilised, with all the consequent effects on employment and production, but that building would take place on unstable ground, and they would be liable to pay compensation for damages. Secondly, they did not like the idea of having the extra outlay of themselves insuring against the effects of subsidence. In this they found an ally in the Treasury, who under a section in the New Towns Act sanctioned specific items of capital expenditure. But, as Mr. Tetlow tried to make clear in the Local Public Enquiry, and as Lord Beveridge wrote to Lord Hyndley,<sup>1</sup> the Board did not realise that the alternative to the New Town was to allow Easington to go ahead with a large housing programme, which itself would raise the same problems. It was just that the Corporation attempted to come to grips with the problem firmly. The same answer could have been equally well addressed to the Treasury.

The unfortunate fact was that when the problem arose to be discussed, there was not sufficient known about the technical issues of subsidence, especially as regards the peculiar nature of the potential earth movements under the designated area. When indeed a technical enquiry was ordered, it was equally unfortunate that their findings, which were in a sense only provisional, were treated as final. Some of the criteria and conclusions were misleading or one-sided. For instance, the conclusion that there should be no alteration in the mining programme was in the

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1. See p. (this chapter) and Letter from Lord Beveridge to Lord Hyndley, 5th April, 1950 (8.13).

circumstances unreasonable. The criterion by which the site was divided into arbitrary categories was found later to be misleading. The 'two seam rule' which grew up in the Regional Working Party, and was adhered to strongly by not only the Board and the Treasury, but also the officers of the Ministry, was only provisional until, in the words of Mr. Hill, they knew more about the difference between 'two pulls' and 'three pulls'. This provisional ruling was not questioned at a high level until May, 1951, when the plans for the re-organisation of Shotton Colliery reduced the amount of 'two seam land' that the Corporation had at their disposal. It had to wait until then, even though Mr. Lubetkin had been trying to obtain a revision of the 'rule' from the time the Webster Report was published until when he resigned.

It is not easy to work out now how well the extra available three seam land would have aided Mr. Lubetkin's plan. Some of it would have been outside the horizon line within which he wished to concentrate all building. The necessity for concentrated development would have been reduced, but, as has already been noted, Mr. Lubetkin wanted 'building heavily' for other reasons. He would still have wanted some sterilised land, and the second Cabinet meeting took back all it had awarded in the first place. However, it was partially the large amount of land granted at the first Cabinet meeting in July, 1949, to be available 'immediately', that precipitated the crisis and the second Cabinet meeting.

The last contextual circumstance which complicated this already complicated problem was the situation created by the Coal Board's



plans to re-organise the workings under Shotton Colliery. Combined with this was the potential reaction which lay in wait for any project which looked as if it may have led to 'unemployment'. The power of the Miners Unions at the end of the War was at its peak, and their influence was probably greater than the National Coal Board's itself. A difficult question to answer, but one that should be asked, is whether such a re-organisation under the designated area of a New Town was justified? Being an old pit, extensive modernisation was necessary, but should the plans have been formulated without reference to the intention of also building a New Town? It may have been that the re-organisation itself involved some redundancy, and that any sterilisation concessions to the Corporation made the margin of difference to the Unions and the Board. The figures of redundancy were, in the Board's views, underestimated, but their calculations were based on the 'immediate' sterilisation of the land. If their financial conclusions about Shotton Colliery had been instead based upon the letter of the Minister of Town and Country Planning to the Minister of Fuel and Power, of the 17th January, 1950, would the life of the pit have been so much shortened and its re-organisation still uneconomic?

It is a curious fact that even after Mr. Lubetkin's resignation, and there was a different team of planners on the task, it was still necessary to seek stable land on the West, above the Shotton seams. The closing words of the Joint Memorandum presented to the Regional Working Party meeting of January, 1952, were a request by the Corporation for 17 acres on the West.

To conclude with an answer to the question posed at the beginning of this critical summary, one could say that the ebb and flow of 'interests' and 'pressures', which provides the key to an understanding of the political side of the problem, were part of the democratic working of the country's system of government. Peterlee was not 'a jewel in the palm of the hand', a phrase of Mr. Lubetkin's, to the National Coal Board, but was to an increasing extent, from the date of its final designation, a 'thorn' in their mining programme for the area. As a generalisation, their attitude can be said to be one of self protection, using the Cabinet as an arbiter in the national interest. The pressure they could exert depended on a number of factors, the personality of the Ministers, the counter pressure of their rivals, and the number of forces, other than themselves, that could be lined up alongside. When, for one reason and another, the Corporation was weak in its pushing power at the end of 1949, and the National Coal Board had correspondingly powerful allies supporting its campaign against the Corporation, then the Cabinet decisions went in favour of the Board. This conclusion takes no account of the rational weight of the issues, which of course are intricately involved. All the same, the issues did not radically change between the Cabinet decision of July and that after the General Election. This example provides an intriguing commentary on 'Cabinet Government', and is food for thought whether this process should be dignified by the name of democracy.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRY AND PETERLEE

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Plan of the Chapter

The assumption that runs through this chapter and indeed through the whole thesis, is that the concept of a 'New Town' connotes the co-ordinated development of housing and industry, and that this kind of solution is possible for a whole range of planning problems. Peterlee is a "depressed"<sup>1</sup> area New Town, lying in the hinterland between two conurbations, placed amongst small scattered outworn mining villages. In theory, the range of social and industrial 'diseases' that it can cure is wide. The chapter will therefore begin by a statement of the main regional industrial problems in order to clarify the potential significance of Peterlee.

The rest of the chapter will take the following pattern. First the different views of the important personages and interest groups will be discussed in historical order. A more detailed history can be found in Appendix 2. (References will be given to this Appendix in the notes to this chapter.) The second approach will be to take the main specific issues individually under the headings of "Employment" and "Siting". Finally, the regional and particular problems of Peterlee will be related to National economic trends in Development Area Policy.

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1. The use of the word "depressed" is not to suggest that the level of unemployment today bears comparison with that which persisted through the "Great Depression".

### The Regional Perspective

The introductory chapter has shown how with Owen and Buckingham 'New Towns' had a joint significance for the many problems associated with both housing and industry, and how, after them, when the idea became synonymous with first 'Garden Cities' and then 'Garden Suburbs', much of the industrial significance was lost. The economic thinking of Owen and Buckingham was idealist and pre-classical, that of Ebenezer Howard, orthodox! So even if the idea of a 'Garden City' had not itself been perverted, the significance of 'New Towns' from an employment angle would still have had to wait for a revival of 'Public Works Economics' before travelling the long distance from literature to legislation. The relation between the 'New Town' concept and the depressed areas was 'one way only'. By 'one way' is meant that 'New Towns' were thought of as solutions primarily to the problem of southern congestion, especially the spread of London. The problem of the depressed areas was largely relevant to, for instance, the 1939 Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population only in so far as one of the prime reasons for the congestion in the south was that new industry was setting up there, instead of the north where it was recognised to be needed. Government policy for the North-east, with which this thesis is most concerned, did not theoretically co-ordinate the new industry, which was steered there by legislation, with the settlement pattern on the same or even comparable scale as was worked out for London. This is not to say that many other areas did

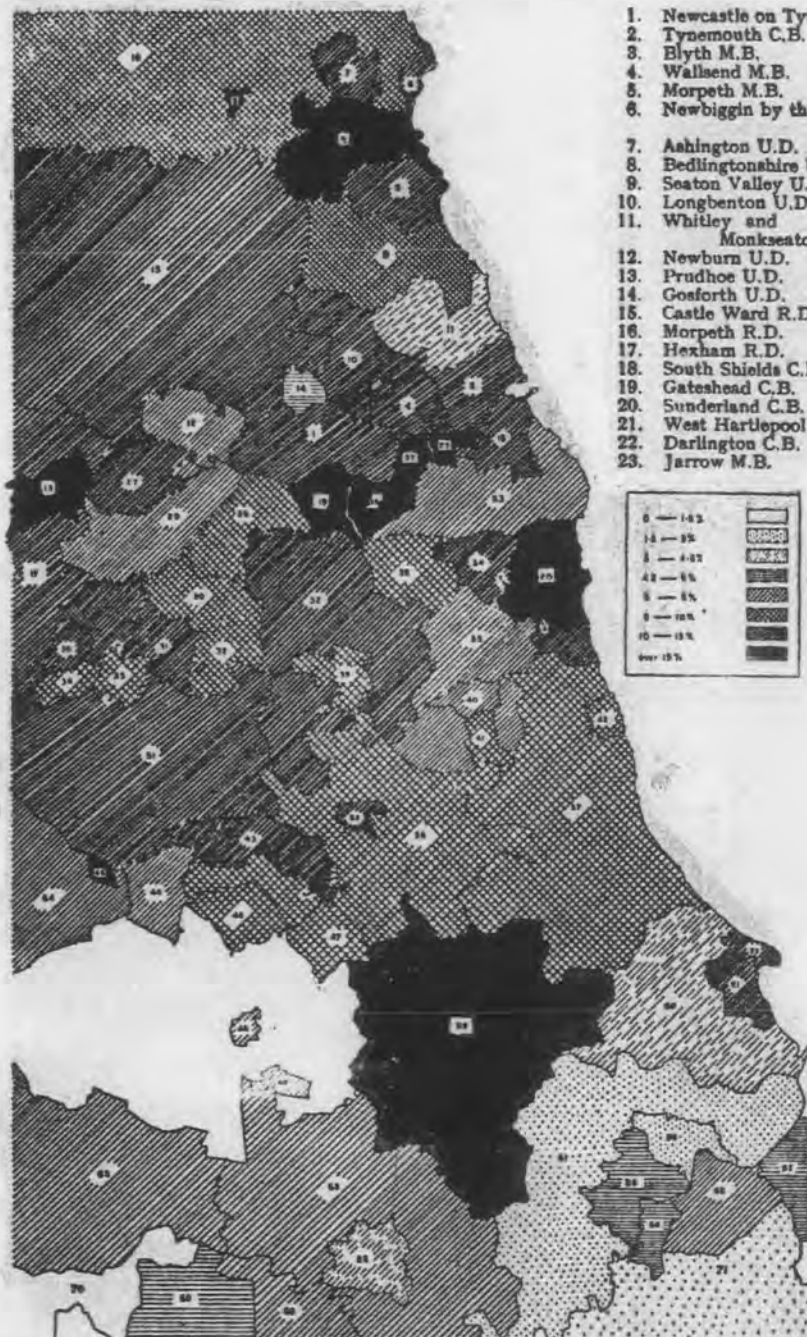
not have similar complaints, especially the 'Development Areas'. In various regions there are conurbations in depressed areas, and therefore there is a double problem, that of obtaining new industry, and then secondly, co-ordinating it with the settlement pattern. This will need more explanation, which the next few paragraphs will attempt to provide.

The pre-1939 situation in the North-east was still, in terms of known economic theory, a difficult problem. But with the assertion of Keynesian type solutions, a simple answer was provided which, to unsophisticated policy makers, needed little elaboration. Social problems can be ignored if the basic economic difficulties are solved. Another way of putting this could be that short run economic problems assert themselves far more easily on the attention of politicians than do long run ones. The placing of trading estates wherever the unemployment percentage was high, was just such a solution. It was the concrete expression of the much bandied policy of "taking the work to the workers". Firstly, population is most concentrated in the big towns around the Tyne and Tees conurbations. In fact, the index of the 1936 National Overcrowding Survey showed that overcrowding was worse in the packed industrial towns of the North-east than in any other industrial centre in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The 1951 Census revealed that

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1. The first six on the list of County Boroughs with the highest degree of "overcrowding" were, in order - Sunderland, Gateshead, South Shields, Tynemouth, West Hartlepool and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. (National Overcrowding Survey 1936).

MAP 7.



- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Newcastle on Tyne C.B.       | 24. Durham M.B.                 |
| 2. Tynemouth C.B.               | 25. Hartlepool M.B.             |
| 3. Blyth M.B.                   | 26. Stockton on Tees M.B.       |
| 4. Wallsend M.B.                | 27. Ryton U.D.                  |
| 5. Morpeth M.B.                 | 28. Whickham U.D.               |
| 6. Newbiggin by the Sea U.D.    | 29. Blaydon U.D.                |
| 7. Ashington U.D.               | 30. Tanfield U.D.               |
| 8. Bedlingtonshire U.D.         | 31. Annfield Plain              |
| 9. Seaton Valley U.D.           | 32. Stanley U.D.                |
| 10. Longbenton U.D.             | 33. Leadgate U.D.               |
| 11. Whitley and Monkseaton U.D. | 34. Consett U.D.                |
| 12. Newburn U.D.                | 35. Benfieldside U.D.           |
| 13. Prudhoe U.D.                | 36. Felling U.D.                |
| 14. Gosforth U.D.               | 37. Hebburn U.D.                |
| 15. Castle Ward R.D.            | 38. Washington U.D.             |
| 16. Morpeth R.D.                | 39. Chester le Street U.D.      |
| 17. Hexham R.D.                 | 40. Houghton le Spring U.D.     |
| 18. South Shields C.B.          | 41. Hetton U.D.                 |
| 19. Gateshead C.B.              | 42. Seaham Harbour U.D.         |
| 20. Sunderland C.B.             | 43. Brandon and Byshottles U.D. |
| 21. West Hartlepool C.B.        | 44. Crook U.D.                  |
| 22. Darlington C.B.             | 45. Tow Law U.D.                |
| 23. Jarrow M.B.                 | 46. Willington U.D.             |
|                                 | 47. Spennymoor U.D.             |
|                                 | 48. Bishop Auckland U.D.        |
|                                 | 49. Shildon U.D.                |
|                                 | 50. Billingham U.D.             |
|                                 | 51. Lanchester R.D.             |
|                                 | 52. Chester le Street R.D.      |
|                                 | 53. Boldon U.D.                 |
|                                 | 54. Sunderland R.D.             |
|                                 | 55. Houghton le Spring R.D.     |
|                                 | 56. Durham R.D.                 |
|                                 | 57. Easington R.D.              |
|                                 | 58. Sedgefield R.D.             |
|                                 | 59. Hartlepool R.D.             |
|                                 | 60. Stockton R.D.               |
|                                 | 61. Darlington R.D.             |
|                                 | 62. Barnard Castle R.D.         |
|                                 | 63. Weardale R.D.               |
|                                 | 64. Middlesborough C.B.         |
|                                 | 65. Thornaby on Tees B.         |
|                                 | 66. Easton B.                   |
|                                 | 67. Richmond R.D.               |
|                                 | 68. Croft R.D.                  |
|                                 | 69. Startforth R.D.             |
|                                 | 70. Stokesley R.D.              |
|                                 | 71.                             |

MAP SHOWING THE INCIDENCE OF OVERCROWDING IN AN AREA IN THE NORTH EAST

National Overcrowding Survey 1936

Tyneside had still the highest degree of overcrowding amongst all the other conurbations - 0.88 persons per room, compared to the average for England and Wales of 0.74. Taking the work to the workers necessitated bringing industry into the big towns. Team Valley is an example of this.

Team Valley was attached to a conurbation. There are two possible siting zones for such industrial estates in big towns, and these are on cleared land in the centre, or on new land at the periphery. It is claimed that the second has been the most popular policy, not only because clearing land is itself expensive, but because land values in the centre of big towns are prohibitively high. Such peripheral growth is the means by which conurbations add to their size even further, as housing estates bulge outwards and 'in-fill' the unprotected open areas. Apart from its location, the big town industrial estate in a depressed area tends to prolong the life of outworn social capital, some of which, but for the presence of the estate, might have been long since replaced in a more pleasant and habitable situation. Thirdly, as has been found at Team Valley and a number of other estates, during a prolonged 'twilight inflation', labour tends to be drawn from many miles away. There is a long 'travel to work' which is regarded by many as itself a social evil; and also continual travel in leads to a further incentive to the town's growth. Another related employment problem is created by the fact that big towns have large service



industry requirements which satisfactorily absorb much of the available urban female labour. Trading estates need also much female labour and therefore must look further afield to find it.

The next aspect of the policy of bringing the 'work to the workers', which the author asserts has not been sufficiently related to the settlement pattern and consequent long run economic and social problems, is the way in which the scattered hinterland has been dealt with.

The post war policy for the distribution of industry for these hinterland areas has been as diffuse as the original and natural growth of the mining settlement pattern. The questions here can be raised in two halves. Firstly, if the pits themselves were not, and the coal industry with them, going into decline, would New Towns on balance be still the most satisfactory policy? Secondly, taken as axiomatic the long term exhaustion of the pits, either because of high comparative cost or because of sheer physical exhaustion, where then is the best location for new industry? These can be seen as regional planning questions necessitating the co-ordination of housing and industry policy together. One can only see the results of policy making here, and compare them with the theory and practice of Peterlee, but it undoubtedly raises the question of the efficacy of existing regional controls, such as the division of responsibility between the Board of Trade, which has regional offices, and the Ministry of Housing and Local

Government, which has not. In a similar way the Regional Physical Planning Committee is also brought into the limelight.

Both the questions raised intimately concern the problem of Peterlee. The West of Durham was mined before the East and the pits there are fast declining. Blackhall, Easington, and Horden on the East coast were regarded, at the time of the designation of Peterlee, as having a very long mining life. The main reason for designation was to provide a centralised area of new planned housing and community facilities, instead of adding on new development to the outworn social capital in the old villages. New industry would, if provided at all, be wanted only to create a 'balanced community', to give jobs to the women of the district who wanted to work, and for the menfolk who were unsuited to mining, such as the disabled.

The significance of Peterlee is enlarged if a kindred New Town was also regarded as the most satisfactory form of development for an area where the pits are in decline. In that case, the west of Durham and any other declining region becomes a candidate for designation. It is clear that the line between building up existing development, such as that envisaged under the 'Town Development Act', and the creation of a 'New Town' is a marginal one. Too much existing development, and the planning difficulties are multiplied; the merits of the social capital must be weighed up. There is then only a like marginal, but important difference between the policy of 'grouped development', which

is the present policy of the Durham County Plan, and that entailed in the building of Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe. The difference lies in the size of the groupings, the location of industry, and the scale of the operations.

The size of the grouping depends on the relation between the intended site and the nearest medium size town, and the facilities that the town provides. There are also certain social and planning considerations which favour 'town' grouping rather than 'village' grouping. Here the main consideration is industrial, and from that side it can be put forward that industrialists are attracted to, and their firms, once established, are more economic in, 'New Towns' than in 'New' or enlarged villages.<sup>1</sup> There are also social and economic reasons for having the new industry close to and related with a specific town, instead of being isolated and at some distance from the town. Lastly, the co-ordination of all development and its timing is a point of importance.

Where there is a major declining industry in the locality, such as coal, in an area which has been historically depressed, there can still be economic difficulties even though the rest of the country is

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1. Some of the content of this hypothesis is not untested. The Inquiry on "Development Area Policy in the North East of England", (E. Allen, A.J. Odber, and P.J. Bowden), published by the North East Industrial and Development Association in 1957, has some bearing on this question. (pp.65 -74). The authors found that the big industrial towns were more favourable for the success of enterprises than areas of scattered settlement, where especially communications were poor. They could of course say little about the relative merits of 'New Towns' as against 'New Villages' because there were no examples of the latter. On the other hand, Newton Aycliffe was found to be a relatively favourable spot, taking into account that mainly small, therefore comparatively high cost firms had been located there.







# NORTH EASTERN DEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN, 1948

## INDUSTRY






### MAJOR INDUSTRIAL CONCENTRATIONS

- Iron and Steel
- Major extension of Iron and Steel
- Shipbuilding and Repairing
- Heavy Engineering
- Heavy Chemicals
- Other principal areas of existing and proposed industry
- Approved and proposed Docks, principal Quays and Stoilths
- Brine Extraction Area where no surface development should be permitted pending a detailed survey of underground salt deposits
- Areas requiring eventual clearance and rehabilitation
- Areas suitable for industry requiring facilities for discharge of effluent out to sea.
- Areas suitable for large water consuming industry also requiring facilities for effluent disposal

### INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

- Existing Estates
  - Small  Large  For major expansion 
- Proposed Estates
  - Small  Medium  Large 
  - (Up to 50 Acres) (Up to 120 Acres) (Up to 200 Acres)

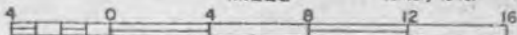
### COLLIERIES

- Existing collieries graded according to number employed
  - 1500 - 3700 
  - 750 - 1500 
  - 50 - 750 
  - Under 50 
- Proposed new sinkings 

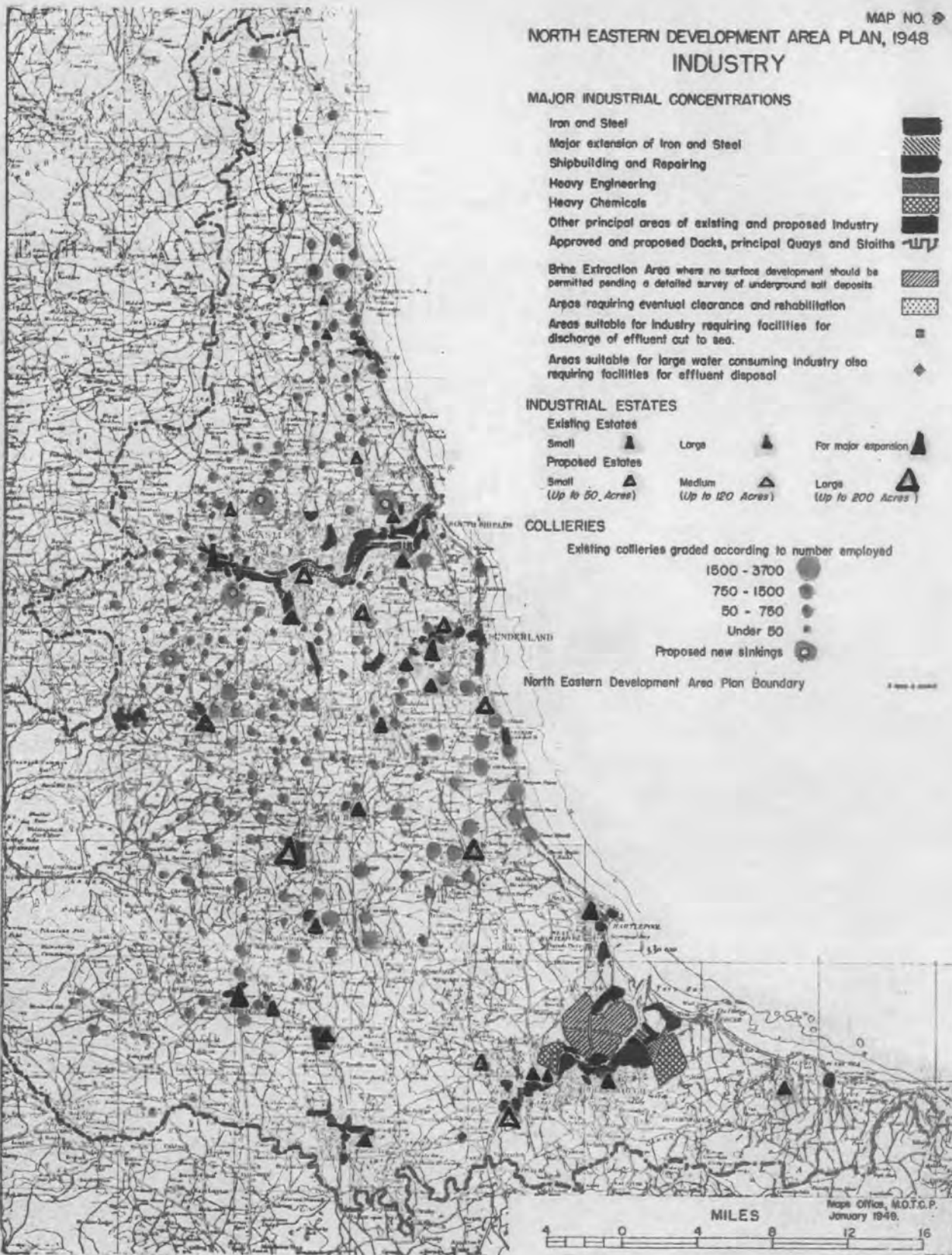
North Eastern Development Area Plan Boundary

Scale 1:50,000

MILES















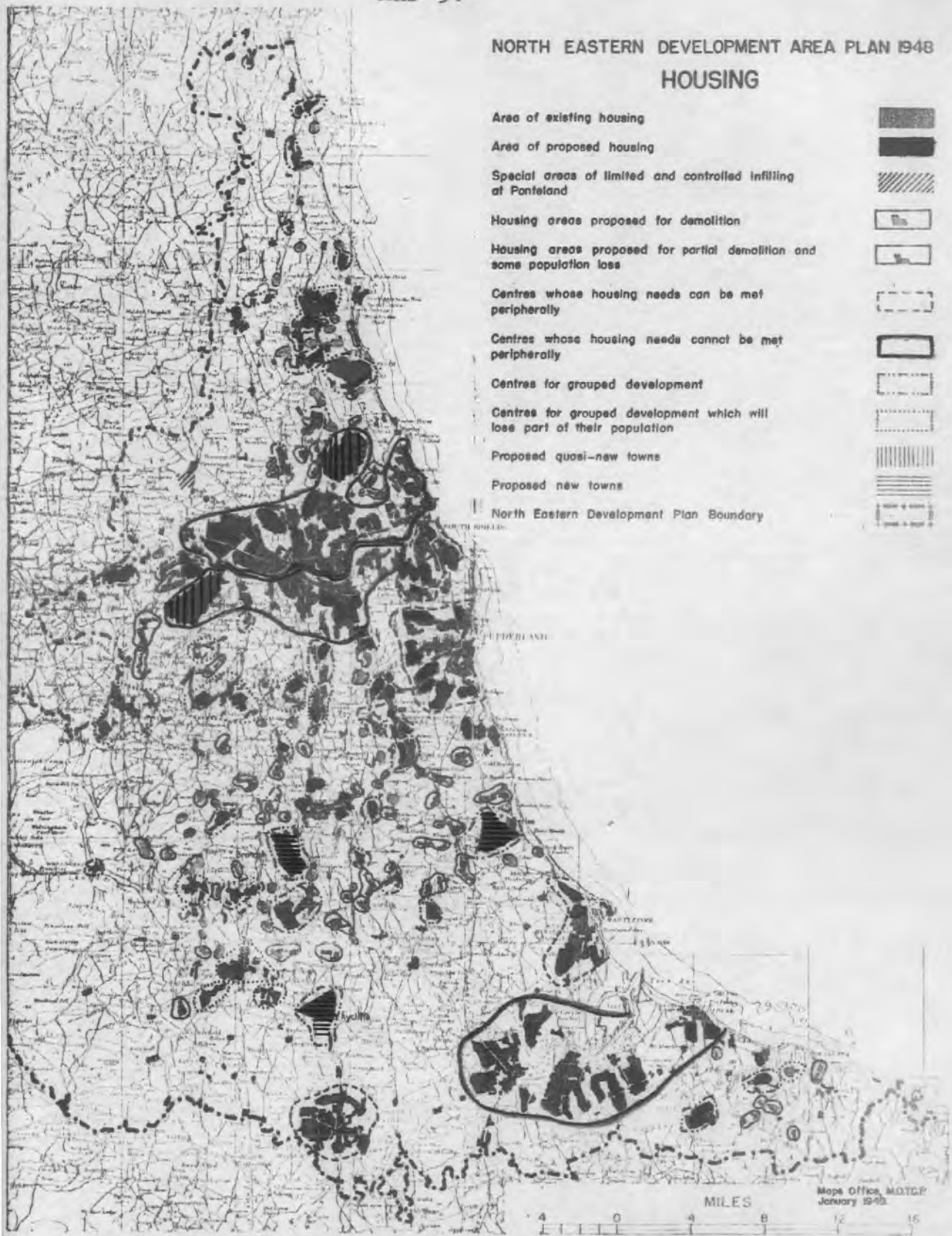
Map Office, M.O.T.C.P.  
January 1949.



MAP 9.

NORTH EASTERN DEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN 1948  
HOUSING

- Area of existing housing 
- Area of proposed housing 
- Special areas of limited and controlled infilling at Ponteland 
- Housing areas proposed for demolition 
- Housing areas proposed for partial demolition and some population loss 
- Centres whose housing needs can be met peripherally 
- Centres whose housing needs cannot be met peripherally 
- Centres for grouped development 
- Centres for grouped development which will lose part of their population 
- Proposed quasi-new towns 
- Proposed new towns 
- North Eastern Development Plan Boundary 



Maps Office, M.O.T.G.P.  
January 1948

inflating happily. In assessing the effect of Peterlee, one must not only take into account the employment given by the new industries imported into the area, but also the multiplier effect of incomes spent by employees, as well as the incomes earned and spent and orders placed, in the course of actually building the town. The more incomes that are spent locally, the less harmful the result of building in a period of inflation. Ideally the best time to build would be on the downturn, but the most favourable time to attract industry is in an expansion. If creeping inflation is the rule, as it appears from the postwar economy to be, then the problem is how far one can invest locally in a depressed area without straining the national economy.

The industrial history of Peterlee can only be understood within the framework of national economic trends. To grasp the special problems of the New Town regionally, one will need to abstract them. Those developments with priority would stand out in relief in the region when national trends demanded economies. Was the New Town going to receive priority or was it instead to queue up with everybody else for new industry? In short, was Peterlee going to be just a New Town 'in' a depressed area and not 'for' a depressed area?

This section will first attempt to piece together some of the threads of the history to date and, where possible, to draw some conclusions about past and therefore future policy. The important problems then revealed will be treated individually. They are broadly

divided between those connected with 'employment' and 'siting'. This division is one of convenience, and the method might in some cases hide the interrelations which are present in most of the situations discussed.

### Trends in Peterlee Industrial Policy

The memories of local councils are naturally longer than national parliaments on events which affected mainly a few, and their own, localities rather than all. With the 1930's well in mind, the plans for the New Town brought out by the Rural District Council of Easington contained provision for new industry, and sites where it could be located.<sup>1</sup> The rationale of this was well investigated by Mr. Clarke and the Research Team in his own offices and those of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in Newcastle. To a large extent then - at this time - the New Town was to be 'for' the depressed area of Easington. It was recognised that it would start by being a 'miners' town', with many of the inhabitants travelling out to their pits to work, but....

"The extent of this travelling will be a maximum at the outset of the Scheme, gradually reducing as collieries become redundant and New Industries develop."<sup>2</sup>

The Easington New Town project came to the attention of the main regional authorities at the end of the war. The post war boom had started, continuing the pressure on scarce resources and prolonging

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1. Mr. Clarke's Report, 4th August 1943 (14.7). "Outline Sketch of Central Development" (File 14). For further detail see Appendix II, pp. 1-4.
  2. 'Farewell Squalor', p.66.

war-time controls. Existing local interests were protected by the blanket of full employment, and potential structural weaknesses were hidden by the common cry for more labour. The New Town, which during the war was seen as a long term project for replacing not only outworn social capital, but also industrial capital, after the war, turned into a threat to established local interests. Short term policies prevailed at the expense of the future. The main fear was centered about the competition for labour. The view was expressed most forcibly by those who represented the Hartlepoons Trading Estate. The other interest was more powerful and therefore less voluble. I have called them here the 'mining interests' as they are represented by the Coal Board as well as the miners' unions. The relative merits of each of their claims are discussed later on in this chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that the change in attitude brought about by these interests can be personified in the role of the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, Mr. Tetlow. His early views were expressed when he spoke to the Rural District Council in March, 1947, about the New Town.

"The Government should help; you set up a society which has, as its primary basis, getting coal, but has also other industry to help coal out in a difficult period."

"If we are going to get permanent industry in the area which will be reliable, it seems to me that we should get the industries that are tied here, which depend on the use of rivers, coal..."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Meeting, Tetlow and the Council, 12th March, 1947 (15.7).



Mr. Tetlow's attitude changed in the Regional Physical Planning Committee, where all the major industrial interests were represented. After hearing the views of members of the Committee at preceding meetings,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tetlow, on the 17th November 1947, concluded that,

"No allowance had been made on the plan for the New Town for such an estate, and it was unlikely that there would be such development on the site."<sup>2</sup>

The Minister, Mr. Silkin, was introduced to the subject through Mr. Tetlow, after agreements had been made with the other local interests. Despite this, Mr. Silkin was favourable to the idea of new industry for the New Town. The Minister also rejected the "Hartlepoons argument" on the grounds that the purpose of planning...

"was to ensure not only that the development area got the amount of industry necessary, but that it was properly distributed".<sup>3</sup>

His refusal of the claims of opposing interests, though, was of little importance, since by 1950, when the industry question became a live issue at Peterlee, he had been replaced in office, and secondly, it was the Board of Trade which was by statute responsible for the location of industry. Unfortunately, the terms in which the official designation

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1. See especially, Meeting 24th September 1947 (16.3).

2. Meeting, 18th November 1947 (17.10).

3. Letter, Silkin to Ridley, 23rd March 1949 (18.1).

Further detail is given in the Appendix II, p. 5.

literature was written were highly ambiguous. For instance, in the Draft Designation Order, dispute centred on the motivation behind the intention to create a 'balanced community', and on the more subtle point as to whether "labour not employed in the coal mining industry" was meant to embrace only 'present unemployment' or to include also 'anticipated future increases'. A quotation from the Order follows to illustrate this ambiguity.

"In order that the New Town might be able to develop as a balanced community suitable provision would be made for industrial employment to absorb the female labour available in the district and any male labour not employed in the coal mining industry."<sup>1</sup>

Likewise the "Explanatory Memorandum" issued with the Draft Designation Order must be scrutinised for its significant meaning. The use of the phrase "labour not employed in the pits" has a different meaning in both documents. In the Draft Order it is suggested that the phrase refers to immediate needs. In the Explanatory Memorandum (quoted below) the same words are linked with the Hartlepoons Trading Estate which here covers also immediate needs. If immediate needs were covered by the Hartlepoons Estate, as was suggested in the Explanatory Memorandum, then why mention it at all in the Draft Order that industry was needed for 'labour not employed in the pits'?

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1. Draft Designation Order (3.3).

In the Explanatory Memorandum there was mention of the 'impending' industrial needs of the district, and a clear statement of the desirability of associating this with Peterlee.

"Not the least of the advantages of the New Town would be the opportunity it would afford of creating a more balanced community than any which exists in the area at present. Coal mining would clearly remain for some time the dominant industry in the district. There was substantial provision already in the Hartlepoons Trading Estate for the employment of female labour and any male labour not employed in the pits. The need will sooner or later arise for industry at Easington itself, and this would be most effectively met by associating industry with the New Town."<sup>1</sup>

Important a statement as this was, no clue was provided, however, as to the timing intended. 'Sooner or later' is an expression which allows much latitude, and the ground between became the field of battle for a great deal of later argument. The phrase also suggested to the Board of Trade only two points of time.<sup>2</sup> It is clear, though, that industry would not be needed in "separate parcels" in the future, especially if

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1. Explanatory Memorandum (3.1).

2. Letter, Sillar to Williams, 22nd February 1951. (19.7).  
Discussion on this subject is in the Appendix II p.25.

a long term view point was being taken. There would be a gradual build-up of unemployed from the pits. A short term depression might cause a panic need for a large number of jobs, but this should not have been a governing factor in policy making. The only time when a large number of jobs should have been provided all at one point of time was at the beginning, when the backlog was being made up. Otherwise, industry should have been built up gradually over time to anticipate the trend of future needs. These ambiguous statements may have been written that way on purpose, to allow flexibility, or they may have been unintentional. In either case, the Board of Trade was given leeway to take a less positive line.

The only other view that industry would be needed in Easington to offset the impending redundancy in the local pits was the North Eastern Area Development Plan,<sup>1</sup> but once written, there was no 'interest group' who would take up the recommendations and by 1950, the Plan had more or less been dropped as a basis for calculation.

None of the authorities suggested that redundancy would not occur in the long run. It has been found that the Board of Trade and the County Planning Office, for instance, in a meeting in August 1950, did moot the long term prospects, but they were concerned at the lack of rail

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1. The North Eastern Area Development Plan - Pepler and Macfarlane, p.152. More details of the recommendations made in this Plan in Appendix II, p.9.

facility and the instability of the site.<sup>1</sup> Even with these points in mind one can conclude that the Board were unwilling to come to grips firmly with the long term problem. Mr. Sillar, the Controller, insisted that industry in Peterlee must not draw on labour working in neighbouring localities,<sup>2</sup> that the New Town would be treated like any other trading estate in the North East, and specifically that the 'long term' was only when "the coal was completely worked out".<sup>3</sup>

To the extent that the long term was brought into the calculations at any time, the Board, at the most, envisaged the total maximum capacity of the Peterlee site to be about 3,000 persons,<sup>4</sup> most of whom would be female employing. From the very first and right through all the traceable correspondence, the Board was assuming that all male employing industry needed rail facility, especially that employing unskilled males.<sup>5</sup> A second assumption was that male employing industry was 'heavy industry' which would need absolutely stable land.<sup>6</sup> For these reasons it was

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1. Meeting of Corporation with County Planning Officer, 30th May 1951 (19.11), also (22.2).  
See Appendix II, p. 29.
  2. Interview West with Sillar, 29th November 1949 (Research Files - Industry).  
See Appendix II, p. 23.
  3. Letter, Williams to Sillar, 20th February 1951 (19.6)  
See Appendix II, p. 25.
  4. Paper written by Dymond of Board of Trade, in file 5P/25 of Durham County Planning Department.
  5. Interview West with Sillar, 29th November 1949 (Research Files - Industry).
  6. Interview Tindall with Sillar, Sullivan and Dymond, 27th January 1950 (Research Files - Industry) and General Managers Report to the Industrial Sub-Committee, 30th October 1950 (18.26).

conveyed to the County Planning Office (or at least was not denied) that Peterlee would be unlikely to fulfil their designation responsibility of supplying the needs of the whole of the Easington Rural District.<sup>1</sup> On this understanding, the County Council proceeded to look for sites outside the boundaries of the New Town. At the second meeting of the Working Party<sup>2</sup> (noted in the Appendix II) it was assumed that the New Town industrial estate would be responsible for that portion of the population of 30,000 not dependent on mining, which again worked out on their calculation as 3,000 jobs to be provided.

Peterlee Corporation have not attempted to deny that sites should be available outside the boundaries of the New Town for firms requiring rail facility and 'absolute' surface stability.<sup>3</sup> They have claimed, though, that this is not such a severe limitation as the other authorities have made out. To be able to prove this was part of the reason why the Corporation desired to be free from the restrictions placed upon them by the agreement with the Board of Trade in 1950.<sup>4</sup> (This agreement handed over the responsibility for deciding industrial needs to a Committee controlled by the Board of Trade. The advantage to the Corporation of

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1. Meeting of Corporation with County Planning Officer, 30th May 1951 (19.11), also (22.2).
  2. "Discrepancies in Statements as to Industrial Development at Peterlee" (Research File - Industry).
  3. Interview with Mr. Nicholson, March 1960.
  4. For more details see the Appendix II, pp.19-22.

this arrangement was that the factories that were built could have their rents subsidised under the Distribution of Industry Acts.) The Corporation felt that they would be able to cater for the needs of the whole Rural District, apart from the exceptional industrial case. They did not want to compete with other sites outside their boundaries, which competition might be harmful to the full development of the Town.

Two arguments for new industry were accepted by most of the regional authorities, the first to create a 'balanced community', and the second, to give employment to more women in the area, which had a very low female to male employment ratio.<sup>1</sup> Even though the site at Peterlee was agreed by the Board of Trade to be suitable for light industry, which they recognised to be generally female employing, the Board still were only counting on a long term maximum of 500 in 1950.<sup>2</sup> The first factory for Peterlee was under construction in September 1953 and a second in August 1954, which gave the two a potential of 800 female employees - the actual number had reached 600 by January 1958.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the Board were satisfied with the female employment that had been provided by the two factories, and this partly accounted for the delays after 1954.

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1. Draft Designation Order and Explanatory Memorandum. See Appendix II pp. 5-6.
  2. Paper written by Dymond of the Board of Trade - in File 5P/25 of Durham County Planning Department. See Appendix II, p.24, Note 2.
  3. Notes on Industrial Development, 9th January 1958 (21.7). See Appendix II, p.35, Note 3.

Even when a third new factory did come to the New Town in 1958, it was nearly all male employment that was provided. The first argument of 'balanced community' is one which has no exact measurement statistically, and is an argument that will bend easily to other policy requirements. Also, the difficulties which were found in drawing population from the mining villages of the Rural District were found to be partly counter-balanced by an influx from numerous other sources, creating a 'balanced community' without new industry as the causal force. Nevertheless, this latter point only applies to the New Town and not to the whole Rural District, to which the argument was first intended to apply.

The concluding points to this section concern Government policy. (The main conclusions on "Distribution of Industry Policy" occur at the end of the chapter.) Firstly, national restrictions particularly affected the depressed areas. Far from the Government giving the depressed areas preference in boom years, they in fact used the low level of recorded unemployment in the areas as an excuse to make "useful economies" in their own estimates of expenditure.<sup>1</sup> When restrictions were needed to curb overall national inflation, again it was the Development Areas who were proportionately the hardest hit, because they depended upon Government assistance. The two examples that can be quoted are the K. X. Lamp Factory and the additional factory for Amblers Ltd. These

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1. See P.206 of this chapter.



were two firms that Peterlee had managed to persuade past the preliminary negotiating stage. The effect of Government restrictions, it was claimed, prevented the K. X. firm from proceeding (even though they had spent £3,000 in abortive fees), and the effect of the same restrictions, but this time directed through the Board of Trade, forced Amblers to look elsewhere for a factory.<sup>1</sup>

From 1958, the position underwent a radical change. Economic depression, added to Government rethinking on its policies in the Development Areas, has resulted in Peterlee going up in the scale of regional priorities for new industry. Independence from the control of the Board of Trade resulted from the inability of the Board to build new factories between 1956 and 1960. The Corporation themselves had been, almost continuously since 1950, pressing through their own Ministry for either special grants, permission to erect "Factories in Advance of requirements", or freedom to build with loans made under section 12(1) of the New Towns Act. Restrictions on capital investment and certain administrative directives prevented the Board of Trade allowing its agent, the North Eastern Trading Estates, to build any Government financed factories in the Development Area.<sup>2</sup> The element of priority was introduced in 1958 when the Ministry of Housing and Local Government

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1. Letter, Sadler-Forster to Col. H.H. Peile, 12th September, 1957. (21.4).

2. Illustration of these points can be found in Appendix II, pp. 35-37.

obtained permission from the Treasury to finance factory building at Peterlee under the New Towns Act. The usual New Towns pattern of help from the responsible Ministry was for the first time rendered possible for Peterlee. The New Towns had been in competition for new industry 'on the move', with the Development Areas. The ring of New Towns around London had been more favourably placed from the viewpoint of industry. Business men chose them in preference to the "Depressed Areas", even though the Board of Trade attempted to "push" the latter. However, the Board carefully guarded its rights to decide for the regions under its control, where industry within the "Areas" was to go, and what interests needed protection from potential competition. Despite being a New Town in a "Depressed Area", Peterlee had not received the best of both worlds. In 1958, as a concession to its status as a New Town, Peterlee achieved an element of priority through its own Ministry, at a time when there were restrictions on the Board of Trade's ability to finance factory development. The only advantage of a loan through the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was that their own Ministry saw them in a more favourable light. The disadvantage lay in the cost of the loan, at current high interest rates, compared with the comparatively low cost to the Corporation under the previous arrangements, of having subsidised factories built for them by the Board of Trade's agent. Unhappily for the Corporation, it did not receive from the Board the element of priority it thought it deserved.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS

As was indicated at the beginning, this chapter will continue with an investigation of the separate problems which seem to merit more attention. They will be grouped under the general headings of 'employment' and 'siting'.

Employment

The main initial objections to new industry to be provided in the New Town, or anywhere in Easington for that matter, can be traced to the two sources of the Trading Estates in the conurbations, and the 'mining interest'.

(i) The Hartlepoons objection

In the pre-designation discussions there was some mention of possible opposition from the Sunderland estate, but equally early on it was made clear that the New Town would be given responsibility for the Labour Exchanges of Horden, Haswell and Wingate, and not Seaham, part of which is included in the Easington Rural District and which part would supply most of the labour coming from the Rural District which worked in Sunderland. The complaint then mainly came from the Hartlepoons, which had abutting to it the south of the Labour Exchange of Horden and the south-east of Wingate.<sup>1</sup> The objections were lodged at a time when there was competition for labour in the immediate post

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1. Letter, Ridley to Silkin, 24th February 1949 (18.1).  
See Appendix II, pp. 13-14, Note 1, p. 14.

war, an exceptional period, and a difficult one from which to make forecasts. It is true that the provision for an over-large estimate of labour availability would tend to exert a corresponding pull on more distant areas. This being so, the estimates of labour availability for Easington assumed a justified importance, and so also does the definition of what should be a fair area in which industry should be allowed to carve out its empire, which was a subject, at no time, not openly debated by interested parties. The above discussion, and in fact the arguments that were actually used, assume that it is correct to talk about 'fair' and 'unfair' areas. To a certain extent, this must be so, otherwise there would be no 'development area'.

The question, which has wide implications, can be seen to be not an easy one. It is no good simply labelling the argument of the Hartlepoons as 'parochialism', and the same can be said of the 'mining interest', when we come to discuss it. The Corporation did not attempt to deny the Hartlepoons claim that there was a 'fair' area; it did not accuse them of parochialism, but it did say that the area claimed by the Hartlepoons was too great and was based upon the short instead of the long term view. The Hartlepoons were expanding at the time and they not only wanted to maintain their hold on the female labour from Easington that they already had, but they wished to call upon larger supplies to keep pace with the expansion. The Peterlee Corporation said there was a limit to the number of females that could possibly be attracted from the Rural District, even if there was no industry established at the New Town. The women of the Area far from the

Hartlepoons just would not travel the long distances. A second argument the Corporation used was that the Hartlepoons were underestimating the natural increase in population which could be predicted and would fulfil their needs. The Corporation agreed that the long term problems from the point of view of both the Hartlepoons and Easington, was a male, rather than a female, labour one, and that female labour would be needed to fill the vacancies in the predominantly, but not totally, male employing industry.<sup>1</sup>

The actual position has been somewhat different than was predicted. Except for the depression periods, there has been a surplus of female labour and a shortage, in certain skilled trades, for male labour. The unemployment figures for the Hartlepoons for both male and female labour has been consistently higher than the average for the North-East since 1946 (up to 1957). The figures given here come from the book 'Tees-Side at Mid Century' by J.W. House and B. Fullerton. This was financed by the North Eastern Development Association who backed the Hartlepoons position in 1949. Here a similar attitude is taken that longer travel to work from outlying districts will be necessary to make up for the shortage in skilled male labour. The concentration is now on male, and not female, labour, and the claim is that the expected population increases on Tees-side, which they estimate will raise the labour force by 21,000 by 1971, (16,000 of them males), will not be sufficient!

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1. Peterlee Industry and the Hartlepoons, April and May 1950 (18.4 and 9). See Appendix II, p. 15, Note 1.

Figures of migration from the Tees-side are given and the only comments that they can make on them in the light of their conclusions are that they are "curious" and "inexplicable". The most revealing of these figures are that only 85% of the natural increase since 1949 elected to remain, and as much as 15% migrated.<sup>1</sup> If they cannot, in the Hartle-pools, prevent their own population from migrating by supplying industry, there does not appear to be much support for their case for calling on the surplus population of other regions.

Instead of there being a continuing female shortage and a male surplus, as was predicted by both the Corporation and the Hartle-pools, there has been the completely opposite situation. Nevertheless, the desire to draw even male population to 'travel to work' to the Hartle-pools has point if the conclusions that Mr. House and Mr. Fullerton make are justified. First of all, though, on their own evidence on the Hartle-pools of figures of unemployment, of expected population increases and migration rates, their conclusions do not appear justified. Secondly, their claim that Tees-side should grow more had not been sufficiently substantiated, even though there are in the area growth industries with expansion potential. The same argument could be applied to Greater London.

Though the 'Hartle-pools argument' was not openly pressed after 1949, probably because the justification for it had partly been removed, it still appeared to motivate the Board of Trade in their attitude towards

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1. House and Fullerton, "Tees-side at Mid Century", p. 433.

industry at Easington, or at least the removal of the argument did nothing to change the attitude which that argument had originally helped to create.

(ii) The Mining Objection

The same conclusion and some of the opening remarks on the Hartle-pools question apply equally to the objections raised by the 'mining interest'.<sup>1</sup> The post war high demand situation was the same, and the qualifications about short term economic gains weighed against long term gains or the value of social costs, applies also with this case. If the National Coal Board believed that the high level of demand was permanent, then was it justified in making complaints that industry at Peterlee would be competing with a limited labour supply? If the level of demand was permanent, then it is possible to claim that wages and conditions in the mines should have been raised so that the competition from the alternative industries could be met. However, the National Coal Board did act on the assumption of a permanently high level of demand. This did not justify them in restricting competition. By virtue of their position as "Monopsonist buyers" of labour, they could maintain lower wages (and prices) than would have been the case if alternative industry was available. However, the National Coal Board were inaccurate in their forecasts. They neglected not only the possibility of a fall off in

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1. Analysis of Planning Problems, p. 28. See Appendix II, p. 28, Note 1, and Notes on Industry (18.2). See Appendix II, p. 13, Note 2, and Meetings of Regional Physical Planning Committee, especially 24th September 1947 (16.3).

demand, which is understandable at the time, but they also underestimated the effect of modernisation and mechanisation in reducing their call on labour.

The method adopted by the Coal Board was also at fault. They attempted to balance out the expected redundancy by providing just sufficient jobs. They did not account for the fact that industry would be needed for other reasons - for females, for the disabled, for the natural increase in population, all of which industry would have acted as a magnet on the miners unless the pits were made comparably more attractive. Industry would also have been required to set the 'ball rolling' (upon which, comment is made later) when there was no redundancy, a temporary form of competition which should have been tolerated. Market forces need not be the sole criterion for all action, but they cannot be ignored.

As the Peterlee Corporation argued, wages in the mines were by no means so low as to warrant fears that employment provided by new industry would be competitive to the pits. Miners who have always appreciated hard cash and have not gone to work because they liked it, would not be so easily drawn to a lower wage level.

The restrictive arguments of the Hartlepoons and the mining interest are further examples of the fallacy of the benefits of nation-wide restriction which has held sway in Government circles for a number of years. New industry would see an increase in the level of production, which would not only maintain the high level of demand for such basic industries as



coal, and therefore the potential power to pay higher wages, but would also increase productive resources, directly, as well as indirectly, through the increased power to pay for imports. The increase on the supply side would in turn tend to curb the inflation. So on a national level, if the new industries are wisely chosen, then local restrictions, though they may solve some problems, are a hindrance on expansion.

There must be a careful balance between the parochial interest of the individual groups and the wider national interest, a theme which is constantly re-occurring throughout this thesis. Too often was it the case of the local groups thinking far too easily that what was in their interest was coincident with what was best for the whole community. Also it was sadly true that Government agencies, whose responsibility it was to rationalise the issues, either could not see the national interest, or were too willing to take the easy course out and succumb to the most powerful pressures. It is impossible to say to what extent it was the mining interest or the Hartlepoons themselves who were responsible for the Board of Trade adopting the attitude they did, or whether the Board on its own initiative, or in consultation with the Ministry of Labour, decided to act as guardian protector. In either case, even after the initial period of high demand for labour had passed, the protective cloak of the Board of Trade was given to the Hartlepoons and the mining interest at the expense of Peterlee. The significance of this protection, it can be surmised, gradually was reduced over time, but, unhappily, one cannot make any just measurement because other complications arose as the others declined.

(iii) The Availability of Labour

Between 1950 and 1958, various sites outside the New Town have been agreed upon by the County Authorities and the Rural District Council with the Board of Trade.<sup>1</sup> This has meant that the availability of labour statistics for the New Town have not been meant to encompass, necessarily, the whole of the availability of labour in the Easington Rural District. There have been varying indications as to the intentions of the Board. On the one hand there is evidence to suggest that the Board's aim was to have the Peterlee site responsible for the whole needs of new industry for the Rural District, with only the special case located outside,<sup>2</sup> and on the other hand, there is also evidence for the view that the Board thought that the New Town should be responsible only for its own population - 30,000. In which case, the sites outside the New Town were intended by the Board to cater for the other 50,000.<sup>3</sup>

The County Plan agreed upon with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1954 made provision for two sites outside the New Town with an employment capacity of 1,000, but it is clear that the Board of Trade had agreed a further site with the County to accommodate another 2,000 people. This site was only omitted from the final Plan because

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1. Meeting of Corporation with County Planning Officer, 30th May 1951 (19.11), also (22.2). See Appendix II, p. 30, Note 1.
  2. Letter, Williams to Reading, 25th October, 1950 (18.23). See Appendix II, p. 29, Note 2. Also Pre-designation discussions.
  3. Minutes of Meeting, 28th May 1954 (22.1). See Appendix II, p. 31, Note 2.

of the later suspected instability of the site due to coal subsidence. Therefore, at this time, one can suppose that the Board of Trade were willing to agree to 3,000 jobs being provided outside the New Town in the Rural District. In 1958, the County Planning Authorities issued a Town Map, in which another two sites were added to the original one of 20 acres (1,000 jobs), making, with the additional 80 acres (4,000 jobs), a total of 110 acres and 5,000 jobs. It is very uncertain whether it is simply correct to add these figures to the Board of Trade's approval for the New Town's employment provision, in order to arrive at the total for the Rural District. When the Board makes out its own statistics for its own estates, these can be taken as an accurate assessment of its intention to provide that amount of employment. The Board's approval of the County Plans does not implicate it in the same responsibility. The County, in the eyes of the Board, often overestimates, and the Board, having no reason to discourage the optimism as it does not itself have to provide the new employment, allows the overestimated employment figures to be written into the County Plans.<sup>1</sup> The total lack of success which the County has had in attracting industry to the sites outside the New Town demonstrates its own sterile powers compared at least with the Board of Trade.

The Board has been entirely consistent in its attitude, a consistency which, in the light of economic changes, must amount to stubbornness.

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1. Interview with the Research Office, the Board of Trade, April 1960.

The long term estimates made in a 1950 Board of Trade report were, for females, 8-10 acres (500 jobs), the same as the "immediate need", and for males, the estimates made by the North Eastern Development Plan for redundancy in the pits of 2,500 in five years, for the Easington Rural District. This made 3,000 jobs in all to be provided. This figure of 3,000 jobs was maintained throughout, though the 'raison d'etre' behind it underwent some change. First the unsatisfactory nature of the site as regards lack of rail facility and subsidence instability meant that more labour could not be employed on the New Town site, and secondly, later on it was decided that the figure of 3,000 should be maintained as it would coincide with the employment that they estimated would be suitable for a town of 30,000. It is not known whether this figure has been altered since 1954.

Carrying the warnings in mind about the dangers of adding together the County Plan estimates and the Board of Trade estimates for the New Town, we can proceed to do just that, in order to arrive at the Board's estimation of the employment needs of the District as a whole.

The County Plan 1951 estimate for: <u>1971</u>	The New Town	The Rest	Total
	3,000	3,000	6,000
The Town Plan 1957 estimate for: <u>1974</u>			
	3,000	5,000	8,000

One of the most important criterion for the determination of the availability of male labour was the estimates which have been made from time to time by the National Coal Board. The Board have not been too accommodating with their pronouncements, especially when the national figures published in the 'Plans' are wanted on a Regional and District basis. It is only on such a level that forward estimates are of any use. When the Coal Board believed there would be always a surplus of coal requirements over supply, and this is what estimates before 1957 were in fact based upon, then it could really have afforded to be more forthcoming with its own plans, even though these were rapidly changing at all times. It is true that the Trade Unions would need to be consulted before publication, but even so, this takes only a limited length of time and cannot account for the roundabout way in which some local estimates have been obtained. With the 1959 'Revised Plan for Coal', which was brought out after an 'agonising re-appraisal' when demand fell, due to, amongst other things, the competition of oil, the whole situation grew uncertain. More than one new 'variable' was thrown into the system, and one can have sympathy with the Board for not, as it were, 'opening its mouth' too soon. But it is hoped that figures will eventually be produced, because with the reductions that it is believed will be necessary in man-power needs in the pits, it is not sufficient just to base new industry policy upon vague rumour.

There have been two pronouncements and one rumour on which local estimates have been made by the various authorities concerned. The first was based on estimates made in 1949 and the second on figures produced in 1958. The rumours, of course, are based upon the 'Revised Plans for Coal'.

In Appendix I, an attempt has been made to tabulate the various estimates made at different times by the interested bodies. Peterlee Development Corporation itself used the figures provided by the National Coal Board in its 1949 and 1958 estimates. The figures for Coal Board recruitment, together with other employment replacement figures, were deducted for the appropriate years from the estimated number of school leavers. On the 1949 estimates, the Corporation thereby arrived at the need for 4,950 jobs for males by 1971 and 8,700 by 1980, and on the 1957 estimates the need for 7,680 by 1971 and 12,890 by 1980. For both forecasts the Corporation maintained the same figures for proposed female labour. These were calculated upon the basis of the need to raise the proportion of female to male working population to the level of the North-East, and to maintain that level, that is 28%. The figure they arrived at was 5,600 by 1971 and 6,800 by 1980.

To compare the totals calculated by the Board of Trade and the County Planning Office for the needs of the New Town and the Rural District, as given on page 182, with the figures arrived at by the Corporation in their two documents, "Peterlee - Industry"<sup>1</sup> it will simply

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1. Peterlee Industry is a closed circulation document put out by the Development Corporation in 1958 with an addendum in 1959. The first figures given in (1) are calculated mainly on the basis of figures supplied by the N.C.B. in 1949, and in (2) by those given in 1959.

be necessary to add together the male and female totals for the two sets of estimates, with the following result:

		1971	
'Peterlee - Industry' (1) 1958	10,550	County Plan 1951 (+ B.o.T. estimates for New Town)	6,000
(2) 1959	12,280	Town Map 1957 (+ B.o.T. estimates for New Town)	8,000

The figures shown under the Town Map heading do not include the jobs which the County should be providing in the New Town - these have not been indicated at all in the Town Map. We only have an indication what provision they made for outside the Town. The provision for the Town indicated is that made by the Board of Trade. It is to the Board of Trade that one must mainly turn for comparison of figures, not simply the County Council plans.

The County Plan was, of course, turned out in 1951 upon estimates made at that date, whereas 'Peterlee - Industry' (1) was based upon estimates made in 1957, except for pit redundancy which were both based upon 1949 figures. A fairer comparison with the 1951 County Plan is the Corporation's 'Master Plan' produced in 1953. This stated the need for 8,000 new jobs in manufacturing industry by 1971.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Peterlee Master Plan, September 1952, p. 28.

Some of the discrepancy between the figures given in the County Plan and those prepared by the Corporation is that in the former, no allowance was made for the expected natural increases in the population, and secondly, no account was taken of females not registered as unemployed. In the Town Map this situation was altered. The New Town was intended...

"to create conditions in which new industrial development may be attracted to the area in sufficient quantity to replace any employment lost in coalmining in future years, and allow not only the retention of any natural increase in population in the area, but also the attraction of people from outside".<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, open to question whether the Durham County should aim at holding the whole of its natural increase in population within its own administrative boundaries. There is no similar issue at stake when one discusses the Easington Rural District. To suppose that the long term natural increase could not be maintained in an area where a New Town is being constructed is to imply that the New Town project would be a failure. To a certain extent, from the point of view of new industry, and looked at from the angle of natural increase, this must be counted to be so. Peterlee Corporation have worked out the rate of migration from the district since 1951 up to 1957, 690 persons per annum.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of the whole Rural District who migrate

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1. Easington Town Map, 1958, p. 11.

2. "Peterlee - Industry", p. 2.



each year, working on the figure given by the Corporation, is just under 0.9%. Between 1951 and 1957, 2,000 persons came into the district, mainly to the New Town, from outside. Nevertheless, there has been a net loss of 860 persons a year. Granted the number who will want to change jobs, surely there should not be a net loss of population in these circumstances. Even though the Town Map expressed the desire to retain the natural increase in the district, they did add that, with as many as 13,600 more people in the district in 1974, over 1957, it is doubtful if this can be achieved. The paramount need, if either migration or increased travel to work is to be avoided, is more immigrant new industry.

The recent cuts that are to be made in the mining programme are believed to intimately concern the Durham pits. The overall fall in the national manpower needs of the coal industry have been placed at anywhere between 50,000 - 70,000 men, depending upon whether increased productivity can improve coal prices relative to oil.<sup>1</sup> It is not known what proportion of these can be allocated to Durham or to the Easington pits.

(iv) The Peterlee 'Multiplier' - The Problem Stated

A problem which has not been given a hearing by any of the regional authorities is the employment creating effect of various aspects of the New Town. To what extent has Peterlee increased incomes in the

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1. Times Review of Industry, March 1960, p. 11, London and Cambridge Economic Survey. "Problems of Coal and Energy Policy", E.A.G. Robinson.

Region?<sup>1</sup> Not only the factories on the Peterlee industrial estate are important for an answer to this problem, but also the orders for the construction of the Town placed in turn by the Corporation and then by the constructing firms themselves. An exhaustive inquiry is really necessary to give a satisfactory reply to the questions raised. This would not be easy even if the time and information were readily available. There are practical limits to the extent to which the 'multiplier' and the 'accelerator' submit themselves for analysis in the real world. Only a broad general picture can be given of where Peterlee generated incomes are spent, which will have to suffice for this thesis.

Some of the major National Construction Companies have employed local men, so that the wages paid out are spent locally, though without further analysis it cannot be said where the other revenue of these Companies is dissipated. The factories themselves employ local people, so wages there have the same effect. The raw materials for the output of the factories come from numerous sources most of which are not local. The other construction companies are themselves local and it can be assumed that much of their revenue is expended in the North-East. An estimate has been made that out of the approximate £8 million that has

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1. Some aspects of this idea can be found in an article by Prof. Alan T. Peacock, and D.G.M. Dosser, in Lloyds Bank Review, January 1960. "The New Attack on Localised Unemployment". They suggest making a list of trades which have a high localised employment creating effect, but which will not suffer from cost discrepancies from being directed to set up in a different area from the one they would have otherwise chosen.

been spent by the Corporation on contracts placed out, £6 million have gone to firms in the North-East.<sup>1</sup>

If industry is to be built up in anticipation of unemployment, then incomes must be generated in a period of expansion. The fear of inflation has prevented the Government from adhering to this policy. The industry that Peterlee has managed to obtain has come as a result of current unemployment. This conflicts with the widely accepted theory that the best time to attract new industry to locally depressed areas is in a period of general national expansion. What cannot be determined without much further research is the speed of an income generating process, or for that matter, an Investment inducing Process, started locally. It is possible that industry attracted at the peak of the expansion may not have generated its full effect by the time a down turn in trade has been reached.

### Siting Problems

There are five distinct but interrelated questions that can be grouped under the heading of 'the siting problem'. There is first of all the relative merit of diffused and concentrated industrial development. The second, and closely connected with the first, is the problem of the control and responsibility of the sites. The difference between sites owned by agents of the Board of Trade and those owned by other Corporations will be looked at in the 'rent and subsidy problem'.

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1. Interview, Mr. Nicklin, 13th June, 1960.

The last two questions that will be touched upon, and which, because of their importance, merit fuller treatment than this thesis is able to offer, are the problems of 'rail access' and 'subsidence'.

(i) Scattered or Concentrated Development

There has not been much academic work done to investigate the actual comparative costs of firms in isolated spots of countryside, on their own, or with just one or two others, as against firms who are grouped on large estates. There is still some argument as to whether the large estate has a cost advantage. Whether this is so is, of course, very important, and all the signs point to the fact that it has, especially for a large number of small firms as opposed to one large firm. Whatever the cost discrepancy, it can be said that industrialists are certainly motivated by the thought of this, and anybody attempting to attract industry will have an easier time if he has a large estate than if he has a small one.

This study is going to make no attempt to investigate why specific firms, who had made initial contact, did not decide to come to Peterlee. That is a thesis on its own. What is also relevant, but time does not permit it unfortunately, is to enquire from the firms who have settled at Peterlee the kind and scale of their costs at various levels. From this, one could make some deductions as to the direction of the discrepancy in cost, as say, compared to firms on both an isolated trading estate and one near a conurbation, such as Team Valley. One feels almost certain that it is not only the 'grouping' that matters, but the

manner of the 'grouping'. Again and again, the General Manager of the Peterlee Corporation, Mr. A.V. Williams, has reiterated this point, and it certainly needs to be tested thoroughly. He puts it thus:

"Although it is with the nation's capital that Peterlee's factories, in the main, have been built, it is perhaps one of the greatest of the corporation's achievements that it has demonstrated to the industrialists the need to measure the rentability of his own capital by reference to the advantages that accrue from the planned investment of new social capital."<sup>1</sup>

A true picture will not be obtained until the New Towns, Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee, have been completed, when all their social advantages, as compared to the rest of the depressed area, have been allowed to take root. At the moment, the industrialists, as much as the Corporations, are working on trust. So long as the Corporation is in control of future development, one can say that the issue is purely one of time, and but for that, industrialists are backing a 'certainty'. If the attempt to diversify the industrial structure and to replace the declining coal industry with new industry is to succeed without drawing upon the conurbations to north and south, then fully planned and co-ordinated development on New Town lines must be the rule, rather than the exception. Industrialists cannot be expected to voluntarily set up in the isolation of a derelict mining valley, to be associated with a

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1. Talk by General Manager, Mr. A.V. Williams, to Institution of Gas Engineers, North of England Section, 24th September 1958, para 22.

settlement pattern and social capital which are the leftovers from an age of uninhibited exploitation. Direction of industry, on such lines, either by statute or by undue subsidy, only disguises the problem.

Concentrated development may be the solution to the problem of finding sites in the west of Durham. During the interrogation by the Estimates Committee in 1955, Mr. Sillar of the Board of Trade stated the problem he was up against in that part of the County.

"Again in the Durham part of my particular area west of the Great North Road, it is very hilly country. There the roads and services follow the valleys, and the valleys are the only fertile parts. That is where the best agricultural land is, and it becomes very difficult to take agricultural land and turn it into industrial sites without encountering a considerable amount of opposition, and very understandable opposition too."<sup>1</sup>

The reply could be made that concentrated development would consume an equal quantity of agricultural land. This would, one imagines, not be the case because not only would certain services not be duplicated, but also the sensible location of housing and social services on the lower slopes of the valleys would likewise mean a redeployment of the most suitable place for industrial sites. One would not be so dependent upon the positioning of the old services because comprehensive re-development would result in new ones being provided.

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1. Select Committee on Estimates, p. 103, 5th April 1955, para 654.

To give some idea of the spread over of small sites in the North-East, some figures of acreage and number of factories can be given. Only the most general conclusions can be made without a fuller investigation of the employment figures of each estate. These figures are not published by the Board of Trade and it is bidden by statute to be especially careful about revealing details of the smaller estates. There are, coincidentally, 33 estates administered by what was North Eastern Trading Estates Limited,<sup>1</sup> and 33 administered by the Durham County Council. Of the first 33 only 6 have 10 factories or over, and 25 have 5 or under. Of the second 33, those administered by the County Council, 18 are 20 acres or under, and only 7 are over 50 acres. Most of the County Council estates are as yet undeveloped. One can generalise from this and say that the small estate is the rule rather than the exception.

The difficulties that isolated firms have were pointed out by Professor Daysh and Mr. Symonds in their book on 'West Durham'. They mentioned the limited quantity and quality of the labour available, the reluctance of key-workers and management to go into isolation, the risk of local unrest if it was found necessary for any reason to lay off workers, and the lack of contact with, in turn, markets, raw materials, the parent firm, or new developments in the trade.<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet on 'Development Area Policy in the North-East' by Messrs. Allen, Bowden and

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1. Found in 'Industrial Estates', 1956.

2. G.H.J. Daysh and J.S. Symonds, 'West Durham', Basil Blackwell, 1953. pp. 141-143.

Odber, stressed the corrolary of this - the benefits of 'grouped development'.

"Such a centre may provide not merely markets but also a source of various types of labour and numerous other facilities, from the repair of machinery to technical education."<sup>1</sup>

(ii) The Problem of 'Control'

Peterlee themselves make out arguments not only for a large estate, but also that it should be associated closely with the development of the Town proper, that is the housing and community facilities. It is an interesting point to conjecture what would have been their attitude if the designated area had been larger and had included some of the 'Western sites',<sup>2</sup> later put forward by the County Council. Many of the planning and administrative difficulties would have been wiped away. Some, of course, would have remained. The Corporation desired industry to be adjacent to the rest of the Town to attract in population which was proving 'sticky' in its willingness to settle in the New Town. Secondly, with industry close in, the transport system could be geared to bringing people from the outlying district in to work, at the same time as facilitating the travel out of miners to their pits. It would also

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1. E. Allen, A.J. Odber, P.J. Bowden, 'Development Area Policy in the North-East of England'. North-East Industrial Development Association 1957.

2. Most of the industrial sites agreed upon with the Board of Trade to be outside the designated area, within the Rural District, were to the west of the New Town.



associate the whole of the district in their daily lives with the town and the town centre. The Corporation claimed also that the sites put forward by the County Council had most of the faults of the small and isolated estates in other parts of the County. Road communications were admitted by the County Planning Office to be bad in certain cases, and others were likewise admitted to be "not likely to be generally attractive to industrialists".

Those difficulties which would have been cleared away by the inclusion of the 'western sites' in the designated area were mainly bound up with the problem of 'control', a problem which is central to this chapter. To have included the western sites in the designated area would have been to admit that a problem existed, something that the Board of Trade were unwilling to accept. Their attitude was that they were responsible for all industrial development in the 'Area' and so it did not matter whether the site was within or without the designated area. If the Corporation had believed that the Board had had views identical with their own on the amount and timing of employment provision, then they too would not have been so concerned to have the estate adjacent to the Town and within the designated area. Mr. Silkin, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, had agreed to Mrs. Felton's request on behalf of the Corporation to have an estate within the designated area,<sup>1</sup> and the Board of Trade had acquiesced. In turn, there was imposed an agreement on the Corporation which gave the Board almost total control of the estate. The Corporation's easy acceptance of this came because

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1. Minutes of Advisory Committee, 16th December 1947. (1.2).

of the Board's monopoly of the disposal of benefits under the Distribution of Industries Act. Without these benefits, the power of 'control' was empty. It mattered considerably who administered the estate. For these reasons, the County Council estates have been far less successful in attracting industry than have those administered by N.E.T.E. Since 1951, the significance of the discrepancy in powers has been gradually reduced and in 1958 and 1960, the situation radically altered. All the same, there is still a difference between the powers of the Board and those of the Corporation, as the situation now stands in 1960, even though the New Town is still in a 'Development District'.

(iii) The 'Rent' and 'Subsidy' Question

What were these benefits, and what were their significance? From the end of the war up to 1951, factories were let by the N.E.T.E. at 1939 rentals for the first five years of the lease. From 1951 to 1957, a graduated system of rent rebates was used. In both cases the firm found itself, after five years, paying the 'current market value', which it went on paying for the whole period of the tenancy. But even the 'current market value' contained a hidden subsidy because it was determined by factors derived from the attitude of the 'lessee' and ignored the cost side altogether, or rather did not ignore it but in fact compensated for it.<sup>1</sup>

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1. E. Allen, A.J. Odber, P.J. Bowden, 'Development Area Policy in the North-East', p. 33.

First of all, on a regional scale these rents distorted the cost advantages and disadvantages of certain locations. This may have been justified in some individual cases on social grounds, but the blanket coverage was indiscriminate. Secondly, it lowered the general level of rents and made it more difficult still for landowners, other than the Board, to obtain a cover cost rent. For Peterlee, the full effect was felt when it attempted to work out rents for firms willing to finance the building of their own factories. N.E.T.E. insisted on 'full cover cost' rents being charged. There was an open and significant discrepancy in rent and no firm would set up without the benefits which it supposed were its, of right. Rents are not such a significant part of total costs, but they are a 'gloss on the gingerbread' and differences are most easily noticed. Entrepreneurs are not always completely rational. In 1957, the rent rebate was brought to an end, but the hidden subsidy remained. A year later, Peterlee were allowed to build factories for firms to rent from money loaned by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, through the Treasury. Rates of interest have been, since 1951, generally high, and so consequently has been the return demanded by the Treasury on loans made by it.

It is not wrong that the development 'areas' or 'districts' should receive subsidies. It is possible, though, to have subsidies without distorting the rent structure. In this case it is not true that 'a rose by any other name smells as sweet', because an undistorted rent acts as a valuable indicator for government as well as the industrialists.

Subsidies should clearly reflect social priorities, and not as at present the administrative division of labour for various kinds of responsibility in the region. The Board of Trade, Peterlee and the local Councils all have some responsibility for industry in the Easington Rural District for instance, yet the Board alone is allowed to subsidise industry and it has confined the subsidies to factories built by its own agencies. The Board could answer that the County Planning authorities provide the sites whilst it decides the priorities and steers industry. That this is not the correct picture can be seen by the individual efforts to attract industry on the part of rival local authorities, and also by the entrance of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in lending capital to Peterlee in 1958 and 1959. Regionally, as well as nationally, it is a case of who bawls the loudest gets the most. It is very unfortunate that the Board of Trade, after the war, could be the legitimate ground for so much criticism because it has partly shielded the faults in the alternative system that has developed. These are faults that are inherent in any process which allows the strongest, or the loudest, pressures to win a competitive battle. Everything that the Board undertakes does not necessarily merit a subsidy as compared to what the Board allows others to undertake. The situation may change under the 1960 Act. The Board has powers to make grants and loans in any direction and almost to anybody it thinks is deserving. If it ceases to monopolise the powers for its own agencies, then it can begin to act once more as arbiter in the social interest.

### Rail Access

To what extent the lack of rail access has proved a hindrance to the development of the Peterlee estate is difficult to decide. It is almost certain that to the firms who inquired about a site at Peterlee, rail access was not an important factor, and on the trading estates which were run by N.E.T.E. the presence or absence of rail facility was not felt to be an issue of substance.<sup>1</sup> It was not a point that the Corporation needed to argue strongly with the Board of Trade. If the Board and the County wanted to set up sites outside the designated area for industries requiring rail access, the Corporation had no objection. They just claimed that there would be few firms who needed to take advantage of the sites and little else was needed but to wait for the firms to turn up in order to prove it. But the strongest effect, and we can only surmise how strong, was on the Board of Trade, who were conditioned into rejecting the possibility of male employing industry being set up in Peterlee, because they had concluded that such industry needed rail access.

### The Subsidence Problem

Apart from the lack of rail access, the second complication which has caused considerable heart searching on the part of the Board of Trade and the Development Corporation has been the effect of 'subsidence'. Over time, from 1950 on, increasing knowledge about precautions, their

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1. Interview, Mr. Syrrett of the North Eastern Trading Estates Ltd., 10th December 1959.

cost, and the local underground conditions, have enabled the Corporation to grow more confident about the possibilities of the site. The Corporation had realised that certain kinds of heavy industry would not be suitable for the Peterlee site and would require absolute stability, but they did not accept the Board of Trade's hypothesis that all male employing industry was heavy, or even that all heavy industry needed absolute stability. The Board were unwilling to fight the view which they considered was generally that of most industrialists, that "unstable land was no good for their factory". For their part, the Corporation did little to grasp the nettle by the palm and publicise the true facts of the situation as they became known. It was not, for instance, until the closing months of 1957 that the Corporation decided to make known to the County Council the exact nature of the stability position - and it was the County Council who, in their 'Plan' of 1951, had openly published their doubts about the site.

As the experts have said,<sup>1</sup> "within limits nearly all buildings could be made proof against subsidence, but the cost could be prohibitive". Under the industrial estate there has been one seam of coal which the National Coal Board have been extracting continuously since the construction of the town was begun. A certain amount of subsidence had to be expected on the site. The effect was minimised by careful planning involving little extra cost. Structural precautions,

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1. W.D. Dobson, Professor E.L.J. Potts, R.G.S. Roberts, and K. Wilson, "The Co-ordination of Surface and Underground Development at Peterlee, Co. Durham", p. 21.

though, did involve extra cost. The Corporation has worked out the extent of this to be in the region of 5%. This figure has been calculated from a total cost figure which included site works and the internal partitioning of the factory. Subtract this cost and the figure is nearer 6%.<sup>1</sup> The cost of the Ambler's factory was £250,000 and the cost of structural precautions was £12,500. If, however, the cost of the machinery which has been installed in Ambler's is added in, which has not been done to calculate the above percentage, then the figure of 5% is brought down considerably to 1.7%. The cost of machinery was approximately £500,000 in the case of Ambler's, and it can be counted as an initial expense of the enterprise. This is not taken into account when the Board of Trade constructs a factory, because it, of course, does not bear the cost of the capital installations. The figure of 1.7% puts the cost of subsidence precautions into perspective. The figure of 5% calculated on the above basis has been reasonably constant and has been repeated in the latest factory constructed at Peterlee for Tudor Foods Limited.<sup>2</sup> Finding stable sites for industry in mining areas is a large problem. An article on the subject of subsidence precaution in "The Architects Journal" (Supplement) October 10th, 1957, shows that Nottinghamshire is approaching the same problem in a new way and is building schools on severe subsidence sites in which the structure as a whole has been designed to allow them to

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1. Letter, R.G.S. Roberts to Author, 16th May, 1960.

2. Interview, Mr. Nicklin, March 1960.

follow the predicted movement of the ground. They are costing no more than if they were being built on stable ground.<sup>1</sup> Even so, to allow the fear of subsidence to dominate the location of industry to the extent that it has is to prejudice any possibility of the planned co-ordination of industry with the settlement pattern. Here is a case where cost accounting ought to give way to a more careful analysis of the social gains from the long term viewpoint. If social gains are proven, as one must assuredly say they are, then there are two alternatives. Either the cost of subsidence precautions must be borne willingly as a state subsidy, or, if it is a lesser cost, the coal beneath must be sterilised.

A further suggestion is that the industrial estate could spread eastwards to the north of Horden. At first sight this is a horrifying idea as it would be outside the designated area, and it would mean tearing up some existing housing in the newest part of the Durham coalfield. If the Board of Trade reasserts itself on the correct lines,<sup>2</sup> then the first problem would not be so great as it was in the past, and as for the second, the housing is substandard development and the sooner it is replaced the better. The village is pillared so that subsidence is no problem - as long as the pillars are allowed to remain. Also, there is a rail head linking with the coast railway. Industry

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1. Letter, Board of Trade (Robinson) to the Author, 13th June 1960.

2. Horden Labour Exchange has been declared one of the 'Development Districts' under the 1960 Local Employment Act.



could then be accommodated adjacent to the New Town, with good communications, on a site which could take all the kinds of industry which could not be catered for on the existing site.

### Peterlee and National Industry Policy

The Corporation, since its inception in 1948, has put forward the benefits of the co-ordinated development of housing and industry in a depressed area - arguments, it is true, which would come easily to a New Town Corporation desiring to expand. Nevertheless, it is desirable to determine just how much they were 'on the side of the angels', and such an assessment as has already been given is very one-sided and narrow. National policy since 1945 must be introduced to correct the balance. It will be no part of this work to question national policy, only the regional priorities in the light of it.

Comparison with Newton Aycliffe here may be of some help to illustrate the change in economic behaviour of industrialists between 1945 and 1950. The Peterlee industrial estate was not agreed upon until 1950. The delay caused by the 'coal problem' can, for reasons stated below, be said to have had a lasting effect upon the industrial structure of Peterlee. At the end of the war in 1945, there was a high labour demand which resulted in industrialists being willing to go to areas where, other things being equal, they would not have chosen to go. Newton Aycliffe, which was first a Trading Estate before it was designated as a New Town, received a lot of its industry in these

early years.<sup>1</sup> From 1950, the inflated demand for labour was not so great, but the shortage of raw materials was. The normal pattern of post war crises, culminating in a balance of payments panic, was intensified because of the Korean War, and the unfavourable twist in the terms of trade.<sup>2</sup>

The policies of the Board of Trade after the war were to encourage dollar producing export industries. This must have reduced the number of available applicants eligible for building licences, but it is not possible to give any details because of the Board of Trade's unwillingness to part with the relevant information. Defence policies also restricted the choice of eligible industry. Another factor was the competition exerted by the New Towns around London who were, likewise with the development areas, receiving priority. After 1947, too, as has already been pointed out, there was no 'advance factory' building in the development areas.

Partial relaxation in restrictions came in 1953, when a recession in the consumer goods industries brought about a fall in the number of applications for new factory building. This was followed in 1954 by the abandoning of the building licence control. The relaxation coincided with the Peterlee Corporation's second campaign for new industry. It will be found, quite naturally, that the Corporation

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1. Interview, Mr. Syrett, 10th December 1959.

2. Much of this National and Regional Information comes from 'Development Area Policy in the North East of England' - Allen, Odber and Bowden, 1957.

increased the intensity of its pressure at times when it supposed the government mind was most susceptible. Towards the end of 1954, it was learnt that the Board of Trade were satisfied with the industrial provision made for Sunderland, on which they had for some time been concentrating their attentions. It was considered a period suitable for expansion. N.E.T.E. put on the pressure on the Corporation's behalf.<sup>1</sup> This secured for the Corporation their second factory, Alexandres Limited, which had been considering setting up in Peterlee since 1950.<sup>2</sup>

In 1955, the Government began looking around for economies in its own expenditure, and partly as a result of the House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates Report of that year,<sup>3</sup> the Treasury put the Development Areas amongst the list of items which would come under the 'axe'. The recommendation that loans should temporarily cease was accepted by the Treasury. The Board of Trade also agreed to seek to de-schedule any area when such areas were no longer likely to be in special danger of unemployment.<sup>4</sup> They did not agree to de-schedule

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1. Letter, Williams to Coles, 15th November 1954 (20.13).
  2. The long delay was caused by a temporary clothing recession, and later by a desire to have a larger factory than the Board of Trade were willing to grant.
  3. Select Committee on Estimates 1955-56 (1-3)  
Sub-Committee E., 'Development Areas', Report P. ii-xxiv, and 'Special Reports' - Observations of the Board of Trade and the Treasury, p. 3-9.
  4. Reply by the Board of Trade to Select Committee (above Note 3).

'part' of a Development Area, also recommended by the Select Committee. Even though the North-East Development Area was not de-scheduled at any time before the 1960 Act, financial restrictions on the Board of Trade were imposed. In answer to a question put to the Parliamentary Secretary in May 1955,<sup>1</sup> inquiring why the estimates for the acquisition of land and the erection of buildings in the Development Areas were £1 million down on the previous year, the Parliamentary Secretary replied that "the low level of unemployment in these areas enabled a useful economy to be made". It can be seen from the table that it was the Development Areas which were the first to feel the effect of Government policy when economies were made, and this at a time when industrial expansion was proceeding apace, certainly in the Home Counties and probably in the Midlands. With this in mind, the full effects of Board of Trade control on Peterlee and its unprivileged position relative to the rest of the region can be appreciated.

New Industry in N.E.

1,000 sq. ft. Area New Factory Space

2

	<u>N.E.</u>	<u>Home Counties</u>		<u>N.E.</u>	<u>Home Counties</u>
1951	1335	4370	1955	3353	8519
1952	1527	5035	1956	2210	9463
1953	2262	4572	1957	2993	9632
1954	4978	9533	1958	2337	9244

1. Board of Trade Journal 1955, Vol. 170. Questions Tuesday, 15th May.

2. Board of Trade Journal, 1958, p. 1030.

Very soon after the Government's restrictive measures of September 1957, came the warning signs of an impending recession. From then on the restrictive policy went into reverse and the traditional (post 1934) 'depressed area' policy began to be re-asserted. A twist was given by the additional facilities to be made available to certain designated 'regions' within, and without, the Development Areas. These particular regions were to be helped under the 1958 (Industrial Finance) Act, and the emphasis was placed on loans to Industrialists, rather than the building of factories to rent - though this could still be done under the old Acts in the Development Areas. How much the old Act had fallen into disfavour through lack of use can be seen by Peterlee's attitude at this time. The emphasis was on loans to industrialists, and Peterlee were firmly in the belief that industry could only be attracted by means of factories built for the firms, and in 'advance' at that. Secondly, and more important, Peterlee was not included in the regions designated under the 1958 Act in Durham County.<sup>1</sup> The special assistance given to Peterlee by their own Ministry of Housing and Local Government compensated for this exclusion, and in the words of the General Manager, Mr. A.V. Williams, "the Corporation at long last has become master in its own house and is no longer dependent on a Government agency whose interests have been spread over a large number of industrial estates throughout the North-East".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Jarrow and South Shields were included in the first list and Sunderland, Pallion and Southwick were added later.
  2. Talk given by General Manager, Mr. A.V. Williams, to Institution of Gas Engineers North of England Section, 24th September 1958, para. 21.

Under the Act which came into force in April 1960, all the previous legislation was superseded, even the 1958 Act. The 'smaller areas principle' enshrined in the 1958 Act was preserved, whilst the emphasis on loans to industrialists was abandoned for the combination of weapons, which were in the previous Acts. Peterlee has been included under the 1960 Act because Horden was declared a 'Development District', and it was hinted in a Parliamentary Question on 28th April, 1960,<sup>1</sup> that the fact of the New Town was part reason for the inclusion of Horden into the Act. Nevertheless, Horden Labour Exchange, on the 14th March, 1960, had 4.5% unemployment and Haswell, 4.1%, so it might well have qualified anyway. This most recent Act has other important clauses which will have to be discussed further when the regional conclusions are drawn. Other than the establishment of Waage Woodwool Ltd. in the New Town, mentioned earlier, a further industrial firm has been attracted to Peterlee, that of Tudor Foods Ltd., 75,000 sq.ft., with an employment capacity of 350.

### Conclusion

The significance accorded to 'industry' in Peterlee was at a high level with Mr. Clarke's 'Farewell Squalor', but soon declined with the pressures of competing interests, and has slowly increased again to the relatively high point it is at now. In 1948, the main reasons for designating the New Town, and to many people the only ones, were to

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1. Board of Trade Journal, 6th May 1960, p. 983. Question asked on 28th April, 1960.

rehouse local miners and to provide some industry for their womenfolk. Industry now has a much more important role to play. It must cater for the rundown in manpower in the pits of the district and for the consequent employment difficulties of the school leaving population. It must attempt to prevent migration not only in the Easington District itself but also in the County.<sup>1</sup> Peterlee has now been seen not only to be the New Town for Easington but one of the New Towns of County Durham, not just a miners' town but a New Town for a wider depressed area. Although the claims for more recognition of the Corporation might have been self-interested, the changes have been a vindication of the policy of the Corporation, especially of its General Manager, Mr. A.V. Williams. He never let go of the wider meaning of the Town's aims right through its most troubled period.

Peterlee is an oasis of co-ordinated industry and housing, attempting, under planning limitations, to create an environment fit for the mid-twentieth century, in a wilderness of admixed conurbation and sprawl. It represents a policy of placing industry in an attractive setting, not perpetuating outworn social capital either in isolated villages with scant amenity, or in conurbations which have their own overspill problems and which are large enough in size already. Large scale regional planning which brings together effectively the County Borough

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1. Easington Town Map No. 13, p. 11.

The County Authorities have now accepted that Peterlee has responsibilities for the Region as a whole. One reason may be that the County have had such difficulty in attracting people into the New Town from the immediate locality that they have fallen back on this solution.

and the County Council Authorities in the North-East is mainly absent at the moment. The ideals of the 1948 Pepler and Macfarlane Plan for the region have been slowly whittled away. The two New Towns represented in that Plan and in their designation orders but small parts of the wider conception. Since the wider conception is now absent, the New Towns have themselves assumed the mantle of much that has been lost.

To the Board of Trade in 1950, the New Town was just "part of the general industrial development provision for the North-East development area" and now it has become just what the Board in the same paragraph said it was not, "a separate entity connected only with the development of a New Town".<sup>1</sup> That this is so is not to be lauded. The unfortunate behaviour of the Board of Trade between 1950 and 1958, in the North-East Region, lost it its power of arbitration in the National interest. Up to 1960, there has been a continual growth in the power of the separate statutory bodies in the region to influence their own industrial future. The period of uncertainty between 1958 and 1960 did not aid the situation. The New Town of Peterlee has been raised in its claims to priority because of the growth in its own powers of influence. The New Town should indeed have priority, but not at the expense of the regional governmental authority. Within the scope of the 'Development Districts', the fringe 'travel to work areas' and 'official overspill schemes', it appears that the 1960 Act does allow for some degree of

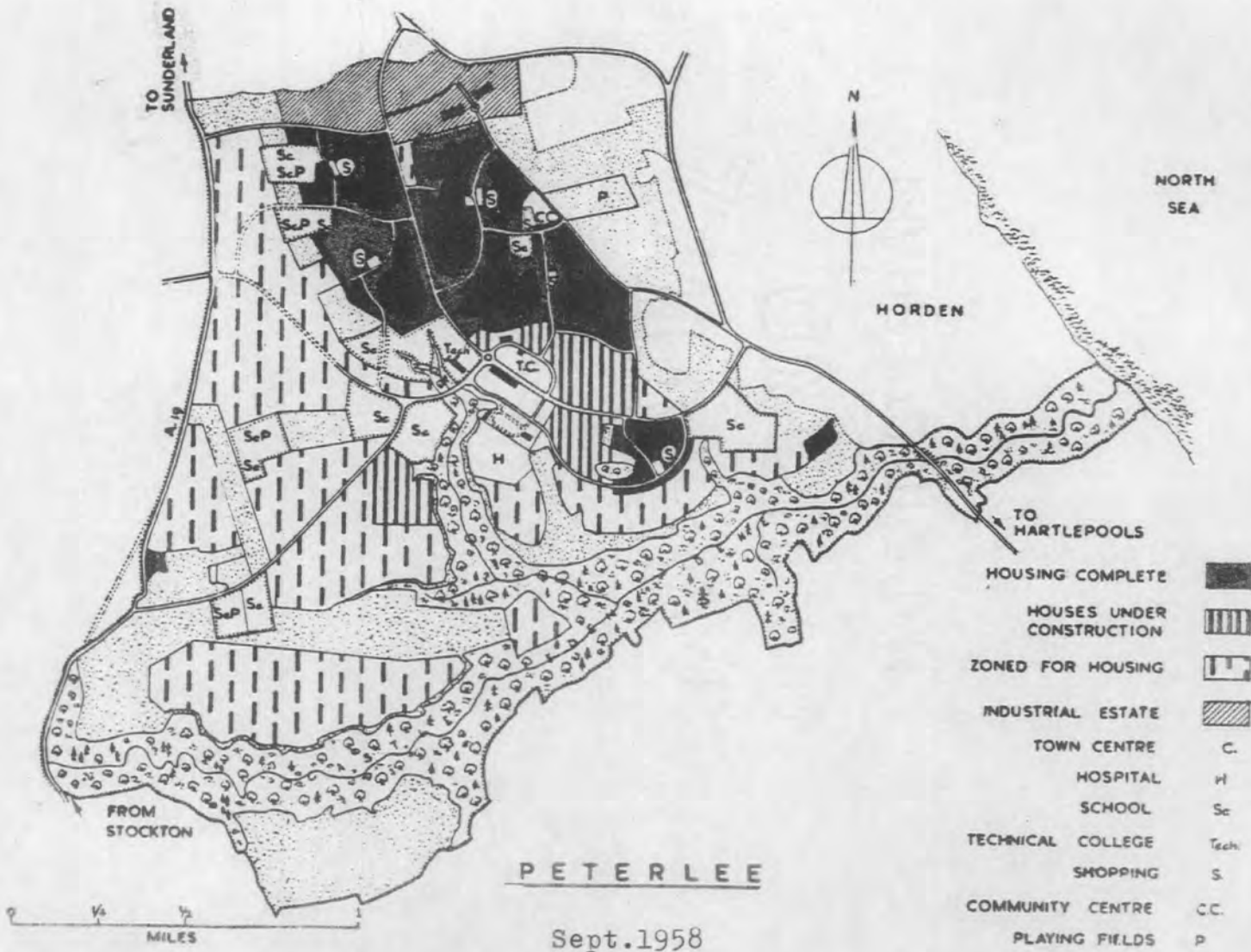
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1. See page 171 of this chapter, and Appendix II, p. 20.



regional (as apart from local) planning. These are extensive powers; it depends on how they are used. It also depends on how bold are the other authorities that are responsible for settlement planning, because without their prior imagination the Board can do little. There is not much ground for hope in either direction.

## CONCLUSION



**PETERLEE**

Sept. 1958

MAP 10.

CONCLUSION

Each chapter in this thesis has its own particular interest. Nevertheless, there is a guiding theme. This I hope reflects not only the preoccupations of the author but the importance of the subject. The theme is the value of new towns development for a 'depressed area'. To be complete, much more research would have been necessary, on the implications of different kinds of regional settlement patterns, and in particular, the problem of Peterlee 'housing growth'. The general conclusion which follows will abstract some of the more valuable points from the individual chapters in order to comment upon them in the setting of the general theme.

The introductory history revealed the broad division between the general motive forces towards New Towns development and the particular motives which brought about Peterlee. It was necessary to find two 'impractical idealists', Owen and Buckingham, before one could assert a definite individual theoretical history for Peterlee. All the practical examples belonged to the 'urban decentralisation' school of new towns advocates. There was certainly not the same theoretical justification for any of the northern New Towns as there was for the ring built around London. The rational arguments for Peterlee, as for most of the other provincial New Towns were 'ad hoc' and empirical. The appeasement of an area by allowing it to be 'in the swim' was not, though, a reason which could be applied to Peterlee; Durham had already been designated a New Town - Newton Aycliffe. It was the arguments and the determination of some of the members of the Easington Rural District Council, and especially the

Surveyor, Mr. Clarke, and his Deputy, Mr. Lumsden, that made it inevitable that Easington's project would be included in the official list. It was partly a bluff on Easington's part that came off, for some of the regional officers realised that there were immense difficulties for a local authority attempting to build a New Town without the benefits of the New Towns Act. Perhaps, as has been suggested, the Minister, Mr. Silkin, could not have taken the risk of the Council succeeding after having defended in the House of Commons that only the specially created 'Corporations' should have perogatives under the Act.

In his report 'Farewell Squalor', Mr. Clarke showed a clear understanding of most of the implications of his suggested New Town. The originality of this local Surveyor and Engineer is made all the sharper by the shortage of predecessors. The idea of 'centralising scattered development' was there, and also the intention of associating housing development with new industry. The hard fact of local boundaries as well as his purely local responsibilities made Mr. Clarke perhaps a little blind to the regional possibilities of the New Town. Nevertheless, it is only necessary to look for a moment at the boundary disputes on the edge of towns to realise that regional planning, under the present local government structure is impossible. Much of even the limited appreciation of the significance of Peterlee was allowed to pass when the project was commenced. It has needed the full resources of the Corporation as a 'pressure group' in its own right, to keep the potential of the town publically understood. Opposition interests have maintained a constant and often successful counter pressure.

Of very great interest are the opposition forces within the boundaries of the Rural District. The most suitable site for the New Town, fortunately for Mr. Clarke, lay on the west of the district, close to the newest and most populated existing development. It must have been clear to Mr. Clarke that his proposal would pass in the Council because of the preponderant voting power of the 'west side' villages. The old scattered villages in the east of the district, which were the ones most likely to be affected by the scheme, did not have sufficient representatives to decisively oppose it.

It was only then a surface unanimity that was presented to the Minister. There was opposition to the scheme even in its early formative stages. More powerful forces were needed to stem the tide of a planning Minister in the high days of planning, once the decision was taken by him to allow the scheme to go forward under the New Towns Act. These forces were to be found in the three industrial interests of agriculture, mining, and the 'Trading Estates'. Because of these the Minister had to agree to cut down the size of the town by half, from sixty to thirty thousand population.

Even so, it can still be said that Peterlee had a most unfortunate beginning. Even by New Towns standards the difficulties must be judged unusually high. All New Towns Corporations are bodies created suddenly by statute, set up in the midst of a long existing and slowly developing local and regional government structure. Other New Towns Corporations have survived the ordeal of gaining local recognition. When one is greeted, as the Durham authorities were, by a very bold and adventurous plan advocated with a forcefulness amounting

to fanaticism, then the natural result is a certain degree of hostility and suspicion. This indeed was at a time when the general feeling of 'end of war' idealism was still high. It is true that the Plan put forward by Mr. Lubetkin and his team was out of the ordinary, again judging by New Towns standards. Notwithstanding all these factors his plan would most probably have survived the initial conservatism and today be regarded as one of the glories of modern Britain, - if there had been no 'coal problem'.

What the investigation of the complicated negotiations at the time of the 'coal problem' revealed, was a clear picture of the administrative machine attempting to solve a crisis in its ranks. Some of the weaknesses of the system and some of its strengths were laid bare. The episode itself is important for Peterlee history because it explains largely why the New Town has been built on the pattern of a patchwork quilt. But there may be wider implications. There are, of course, the financial questions of subsidence precautions, possible compensation against damage and the loss of coal if sterilisation took place. Also on the same side of the balance were the human problems of redundancy. On the other side were to be weighed the multifarious social benefits of public expenditure in the New Town. It is to be hoped that adequate summary of these points was made in the chapter devoted to the subject. What it is desired to reiterate here is the purely administrative and political conclusion that the history of the episode enables us to draw.

Politically, the question to be decided was an easy choice between the two alternatives. The two sides in the case were for long periods evenly matched. Each had their own administrative advocates. With a strong central government there goes a tendency for regional and sectional interests to push their own point of view, secure in the feeling that ultimately the central authority will arbitrate in the 'National Interest'. There is no incentive for an enlightened attitude beyond that of 'enlightened self-interest' which always thinks that what is good for itself must be good for the Nation. Secondly, central government is believed to justify its strength by the fact that it can withstand pressures and judge upon the rationale of the issues, not the strength of the personalities expressing them. This is to some extent a fallacy in most problems, but in this case the conclusion is a clear one. Two important decisions were made by the Lord President's Committee of the Cabinet during this episode, one 'for', and the other 'against'. The issues had not altered radically. What had, though, was the political 'standing' of the two sides. Thirdly, the strength of administrative negotiation, the willingness of competing interests to compromise and be flexible, which is present in most cases, was absent here. How necessary an element this is was demonstrated by the lack of it.

The last chapter was an essay on 'Regional Planning'. It was limited for the most part to discussion of 'industrial location', using the Peterlee files as the main source of evidence. It is the most important of the chapters. The North East, over the last thirty years has suffered more than the average from the changes wrought by



depression. The long post war inflation has brought prosperity nearer. Nevertheless, much of the social and industrial capital are the remains of a past industrial revolution. Uncertainty still hangs over some of the basic industries. The future of the coal industry and of shipping, given present trends, are definitely not bright. The great interest of the Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe experiments are that they are a break with the settlement pattern of the past, and that they are industrial New Towns in a depressed area. The history of Peterlee so far has been a long struggle to achieve this status. Designated, in the eyes of the responsible authorities, as a glorified housing estate, it only managed to acquire industry after much time and administrative pressure. The fact of the struggle leads us to conclude that the full theoretical implications of the town were not sufficiently appreciated.

The administrative conclusions will not be stressed here, but it may be worth mentioning that the industrial struggle at Peterlee well bears out the contention that the administrative division of labour between the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is a most unfortunate one. The only authorities who have regional and not just simply county planning responsibilities, are not forced to plan housing and industry together. The two central government departments have positive and not simply the negative powers of the county planners. A strong new planning Ministry with positive powers, regionally based, is necessary before the present muddle can be sorted out. The Ministry will have to combine the powers and regional structure of the Board of Trade with the 'good

intentions' of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

The then Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, in 1946, made clear that Peterlee would face the dilemma of being either a "white elephant" or it would sap the "initiative and the life blood of the surrounding villages". Here is material for important sociological research. Is Peterlee sapping the 'life blood' of the Easington villages? Are the problems too deep-rooted, or can administrative action on the 'rent discrepancy' question resolve most of the difficulties? Some of the early history of the 'housing problem' has been written in the 'Genesis' chapter, but there have been many developments since which are needed for a complete picture before judgement can be made.

It is to be hoped that the University that is on the 'doorstep' of the New Town will sponsor the necessary research. This would be assisted without doubt if the authorities, and perhaps Peterlee Development Corporation themselves, were to put up some money for a research grant.

LABOUR REQUIREMENTS IN THE EASINGTON PITS

Peterlee Development Corporation, the National Coal Board, the Rural District Council and the County Council have at some time all made their own estimates as to how fast the local pits would decline in their manpower needs. Because comparison of all their estimates is so difficult by virtue of differing base years from which calculations begin, and because in certain cases the areas of each are not the same, this table has been relegated to this appendix.

Derivation of the figures

In order to make comparison possible, all the separate figures were reduced to a per annum calculation of the estimated 'reduction in the number of jobs' available in the pits over the separate periods stated in the table. The estimates were made at various dates; they are listed below and in the table, in order of 'appearance'.

1 and 2 were obtained as they were, unadulterated, except that they were reduced to a yearly average. 1 was the calculation of Mr. Clarke in 'Farewell Squalor' and was based on pre-nationalisation figures of the length of life of certain, but not all, of the Easington pits. The ones included were Shotton, Murton, Wheatley Hill, Deaf Hill, and Wingate.<sup>1</sup>

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1. "Farewell Squalor" p.59.

2 occurs in 'Analysis of Planning Problems', the booklet issued by the staff of Mr. Lubetkin's department in the first years of the Development Corporation.

3 was found in the County Council's Town Map for the Easington Rural District. The number of insured males attached to the industry were given for 1955. In turn each of the figures of expected decrease were subtracted, and the results again reduced to an average yearly basis.<sup>1</sup>

4 was given in a document issued by the staff of the Peterlee Development Corporation. This was entitled 'Peterlee - Industry'. The figures given were for the No.3 Area N.C.B. Murton Colliery is not in the No.3 Area, but is in the Town Map, whereas Sherburn Hill is included in the No.3 Area and not in the Town Map. Murton is twice as large as Sherburn, but is expected to decline less rapidly. Therefore, the absolute reduction in the number of jobs will be approximately the same in each. The Town Map area and that of the No.3 Area N.C.B. are broadly comparable for the purpose of these calculations.

Estimates altered considerably from 1957 onwards because of the surprising reversal in fortunes of the coal industry. The most interesting result to appear from the table are the Easington Town Map figures, which were given in such an oblique form<sup>2</sup> that on

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1. Easington Town Map, 1958, p12.
  2. The exact form in which it was put in the Town Plan was "The National Coal Board have estimated that employment in coalmines in Easington Rural District will decline from 25,667 in 1958, (figure in 1955 given as 29,328) to 22,792 within 10;25 years, 21,435 within 25-50 years and to 18,852 at the end of the century". ---

<u>Source</u>	<u>Year estimate was made.</u>	<u>Estimated average reduction in the number of jobs, per yr.</u>		
1. Farewell Squalor	1945	157 (1947-74)	117 (1974-84)	177 (1984-94)
2. N.C.B. No.3 Area	1949	162 (1950-71)	150 (1971- )	
3. Easington Town Map	1957	233 (1955-68)	54 (1968-83)	152 (1983-2000)
4. Peterlee - Industry	1949	129 (1958-65)	160 (1966-71)	
" "	1958	300 (1958-65)	360 (1966-71)	337 (1972-80)

clarification to an annual basis, they appear even more curious. There does not seem to be any justification, certainly none was offered, as to why there should be such high initial reductions in manpower in the pits, which should then fall off by three quarters in the next period. This table, however, clarifies the narrative in the main body of the thesis by illustrating first, the basis of the Corporation's claims for new industry in its early formative years, and secondly, it points the reason for the change in fortunes of the Corporation in its relation with the Board of Trade from 1958 onwards.

2.(contd.) (Easington Town Map. p12.) What appears so curious is that they could have forecast to the 'last man', but only within a time span of 25 years.

I N D U S T R YMr. Clarke's Industrial Proposals

Mr. Clarke had incorporated into even the earliest of his reports, a site for new industry. This report, it will be remembered, was a compromise solution recommending not one new town but five smaller housing estates. The new proposed trading estate in this plan was to serve the whole of the Rural District. From the very first, then, it can be seen that new industry had very special responsibilities. Wherever the trading estate was situated it had to be central to the whole district.

This idea became even more difficult to carry out once the one site New Town had been agreed upon by the Council. The East coast pit villages who had been the main supporters of the project in the Council felt that their mining jobs were secure. Those on the West side of the District did not feel so happy and were insisting that the industrial site should be located central to the whole district and not adjoining to the housing site, which itself was over to the East.

There was one other very good reason for keeping the industrial estate on the West, and that was because Mr. Clarke's recommended New Town site had no immediately adjoining rail access. This was regarded by Mr. Clarke, as it was by other later, as an absolute essential.

Contact with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning Research Team of Mr. James and Miss Elliott clarified the availability

of labour situation; they also brought into greater prominence the thorny problem of 'travel to work', entailed by centralising housing development for pit workers. It was decided by Mr. Clarke and Mr. James that the catchment area for labour could be taken as the three Labour Exchanges, Horden, Haswell and Wingate.

First of all we can deal with Mr. Clarke's figures, given in 'Farewell Squalor', for immediate availability of labour (1946). There were then 1,704 unemployed males.. The number of females available for work was calculated at 6,032, a compromise figure, 25% below the national average (female to male labour proportion). Nevertheless, Mr. Clarke attempted to adhere to the highest figure possible in the first copy of his report,<sup>1</sup> but was forced on Mr. Tetlow's further advice to accept the lower one.<sup>2</sup> It was the Ministry of Labour who were objecting to the large estimates of female available labour. The estimates for female labour provision were again further lowered to 4,000 by Mr. James.<sup>3</sup> Again the Ministry of Labour were the objectors. Their grounds now were that Service Industry, previously not accounted for, would tend to draw essential labour away from the pits.

Mr. Clarke's long term analysis took into account the estimated decline in the pits, and also the verbal warning that the natural increase in the population would have to be taken into account in any future reckoning. The estimated life of the pits, shown as

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1. See 'Amendments' to Outline Survey in File (14).
2. Letter Tetlow to Clarke, 4th December 1946. (14.14)
3. Meeting, 10th January 1947. (13.1)

a diagram in 'Farewell Squalor', was obtained through the Ministry Research Team from figures available before nationalisation. They did not contain, therefore, the additional modernisation and mechanisation proposals which in some cases would have brought forward the closing date of the pits.<sup>1</sup> In Appendix I an attempt is made to record in sequence the various estimates made over time of the length of life of the pits in the Easington Rural District. Mr. Clarke's calculations came from allowing for a decrease in annual output of one-fifth, and the availability of male labour was determined from these assumptions. In ten years there would be 1,704 miners made redundant, which would increase to 7,350 in 50 years.<sup>2</sup>

In 'Farewell Squalor', Mr. Clarke devoted a chapter to the 'Case for New Industry'. Before listing his arguments, it should be noted that his report was a survey of the Easington Rural District, and that consequently it did not occur to him as important to defend industry for the New Town as against industry elsewhere in the District. Nevertheless, Mr. Clarke defended a large trading estate, because with it industrial development costs could be kept to a minimum, and diversified employment would be within easy travelling distance of the whole district - at the most 3 or 4 miles, 20 minutes travelling time.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Deduced from Mr. Clarke's criteria for estimating future redundancy and from letter (File 14) from Mr. Barratt of N.C.B. to Mr. Clarke giving permission to use the figures.
  2. 'Farewell Squalor', p59.
  3. Letters to Wheatley Hill Labour Party. (15.14)



The arguments put forward for new industry in 'Farewell Squalor' were comprehensive. The single industry had 'adverse effects on social character'. The coal industry was subject to fluctuations, bringing in turn poverty and prosperity in quick succession. There was an absence of employment for female labour. The young and enterprising migrated. All the above led to an unbalanced social and economic structure - an argument in its own right.<sup>1</sup> Such was the case expressed in 'Farewell Squalor'. New arguments were added by the Corporation later, but basically all the important ones were incorporated in this local authority report which eventually led to the Minister designating a New Town.

If these, then, were the views of the author of 'Farewell Squalor', influenced as he was by the Research Staff of the Regional Offices of the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, then one can imagine that the Regional Controller himself could have held similar opinions. His views can be traced in the public speech he made before the Local Council in March 1947, and from his statements from the Chair of the Regional Physical Planning Committee. The counter play of opinions among the members of this committee and the other important local interests will also be traced here. They had an effect on the Regional Controller, and of course, on the Minister, whose views must likewise be highlighted.

Part of the reason why the Ministry of Labour fought to keep down female labour employment provision<sup>2</sup> was, we can assume,

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1. 'Farewell Squalor' p61.

2. Letter Tetlow to Clarke, 4th December 1946 (14.14)

its concern for the Hartlepool Trading Estate, which was drawing some of its labour supply from Easington. Nevertheless, when Mr. Tetlow was asked about the Hartlepool Estate on addressing Easington Council on March 12th,<sup>1</sup> he said that the intention of the New Town Estate would be to take up the slack in employment, perhaps outside as well as within the district. They did not want people to have to travel up to 40 miles to work. Mr. Silkin made somewhat the same answer to West Hartlepool's Town Clerk at the meeting with the Local Authorities in August 1947.<sup>2</sup> They did not want to attract population from old towns that should not be attracted, but they did not only want to see that the development area got the amount of industry necessary but that it was properly distributed. Mr. Silkin made here a very suggestive statement. He could have been thinking of only avoiding long travel to work, or it is possible he was considering the wider implications of the relation between industry and the settlement pattern. It is difficult to tell which.

The Ideas of Mr. Tetlow, Regional Controller, Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and Mr. Silkin, the Minister.

Mr. Tetlow also gave his reasons for having new industry in Easington. He talked about the increasing mechanisation of coal, and the possible sources of alternative cheap power such as atomic energy. He said also, that reliance on a single industry was wrong. What they needed though was some permanent industry which had some

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1. Meeting Tetlow and the Council, 17th March 1947 (15.7)
  2. Meeting of Minister and Local Authorities, August 27th 1947(3.2)

tie in the area, perhaps one based on coal. They had to make the area attractive to industrialists. Mr. Silkin laid more stress on two aspects of the employment situation in the region. Emphasis was laid on the necessity of creating a balanced population, and the need to prevent migration. The Minister affirmed<sup>1</sup> that his policy for industry in the New Town was in accord with the Draft Designation Order issued in October 1947.<sup>2</sup>

"In order that the New Town might be able to develop as a balanced community suitable provision would be made for industrial employment to absorb the female labour available in the district and any male labour not employed in the coal mining industry."

The early intentions of the authorities, as expressed in the various documents and speeches, are later referred to with intensity. Each nuance assumes a terrifying significance, not, one suspects, intended for such scrutiny by the authors.

Likewise, the 'Explanatory Memorandum'<sup>3</sup> issued with the Draft Designation Order, must be scrutinised for its significant meaning.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Letter, Silkin to Ridley, 23rd March 1949 (18.1)
  2. Statement with Draft Designation Order (3.3)
  3. Explanatory Memorandum (3.1)
  4. See p164 of Chapter 4, and this Appendix p.25.

The Regional Physical Planning Committee

The discussion of views put forward in the Regional Physical Planning Committee form the subject for this next paragraph. The opposition of the Ministry of Labour, first of all to suggested figures of female available labour, and their attack on the size of the intended population build up - because of the necessary service industry to support it - has already been mentioned. In August 1947 the Committee met to discuss the proposed boundaries of the New Town, and it was agreed there to have a trading estate in Easington, but to have it separate from the town and not included within its designated boundaries. Neither the Durham County Planning Office nor the National Coal Board was present at this meeting but they were represented at a special meeting held during the next month. The general opinion at both meetings<sup>1</sup> was that the trading estate was very much a secondary consideration - as Mr. Hanham of the Ministry of Labour put it - the primary purpose of the New Town was to re-house miners. Mr. Dixon for the Coal Board at the September meeting went so far in his objections to the new estate that he said that if he had known of it earlier he would not have been so willing to approve the New Town. The reason given by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Tetlow, for not having included the trading estate in the boundaries of the designated area were twofold. First of all, he said, there was a large

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1. Meeting 26th August 1947 (17.9)  
Meeting 24th September 1947 (16.3)

number of comparatively modern houses in the existing villages. If the Estate was to be central to these it should be away from the New Town. Secondly, he said that the Town site was an unusual case because it had no rail facility. This second reason was given as an answer to Mr. Bates, the Durham County Planning Officer. Mr. Bates claimed that it was contrary to the Minister's general policy for New Towns to separate housing from industrial development. There was a further meeting of the Regional Committee in November 1947.<sup>1</sup> At it, one more final reason was added to the above for not including the trading estate in the designated area. Mr. Tetlow said that there was uncertainty as to the exact siting of the trading estate. No allowance had been made on the plan for the New Town for such an estate, and it was unlikely that there would be such development on the site. The Regional Controller also mentioned that some doubt had been cast on the site North West of Shotton Colliery because of its proximity to explosives. Perhaps also stability of the site had been questioned by the N.C.B., by this date. The general uncertain air surrounding the idea of the trading estate was added to by Mr. Sullivan of the Board of Trade. At the August meeting the Board of Trade had accepted the idea of a trading estate in principle. The November meeting saw, however, a change in attitude. Because of the location and labour shortage in the Hartlepoons Estate, Mr. Sullivan said that he did not think that one could be considered for Easington. There would be difficulty also in attracting suitable industry. The

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1. Meeting 18th November 1947 (17.10)

labour was unskilled and the road and rail connections were not so good as in the larger centres of population. All in all, he thought, housing and industry should, in this case, not proceed together.

Withall one can conclude that amongst the Regional Physical Planning Committee and other local interests, except for the County Council and, of course, Easington themselves, there was not much enthusiasm for a trading estate. Whether the absence of rail facility and the other reasons given are the whole story why the estate should be separate from the designated area - one can only surmise. The politic element may have crept in, that an estate within the boundaries of the designated area would be difficult to 'control'. The Development Corporation may have been addicted to empire building, which would have proved most awkward for some of the local statutory authorities.

#### The North Eastern Area Development Plan

The recommendations of the North Eastern Development Plan were important and influential.<sup>1</sup> Pepler and Macfarlane, the authors of the Report, said that there would be a need for employment in the district. They based their conclusions on the following assumptions. There would be a decline in the mining industry. The location of industry should be as near as possible to the people's present homes, so that long moves into areas with which they are

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1. See, for instance, letter Silkin to Ridley 23rd March 1949 (18.1) and speech by Minister to Local Authorities, 27th August 1947 (3.2)

unfamiliar would be avoided. There are no large existing areas of expanding industry in the district which could absorb the surplus population. The Planners qualified this by the statement that Tees-side was estimated to need 50,000 workers during the following 20 - 30 years, but the high birth rate would reduce the external demand for labour. The figures given for employment to be provided at Peterlee were for 5,000 jobs in 10 years and 7,500 in 25 years.<sup>1</sup> This was also later qualified by an addition that if output per man shift rose above 20 cwt in the Easington pits, then the number of jobs needed in 25 years might exceed 10,000.<sup>2</sup> Immediate labour availability should be made up of women who want employment, men who are temperamentally unsuited to mining, and for those who are physically able only to do light work.<sup>3</sup> Peterlee was thought only to be a local regrouping and should not aim at attracting population from outside the district, notably from West Durham. A summing up of the position adopted in the Plan was that "this New Town Peterlee will have some industry but in the main will act as a dormitory for workers at a number of long life pits."<sup>4</sup>

Influential on the County Planning Committee was the 'Plan's' recommendation of the industrial site for the New Town to be at Thornley Station.<sup>5</sup> As with Mr. Clarke, there was no comparison

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1. The North Eastern Area Development Plan - Pepler and Macfarlane, p.61. (Available copy in Durham County Library).
  2. Ibid. p.152
  3. Ibid. p.56
  4. Ibid. p.186
  5. Ibid. p.61

made by Pepler and Macfarlane as to the merits of this site compared to one nearer the New Town, for the same reason, which was that neither of them was concerned with the legal and administrative problems of co-ordinating industrial and housing development. Perhaps the Planners thought that the industrial estate would be included in the designated area of the New Town. The reasons actually given for siting the industrial estate at Thornley Station were that it was on the railway to Scotland, that it was adjoining the A19, and within easy reach of their new proposed motorway.

#### The Work of the Architect - Planner's Department

The Coal Problem took up most of the time of the staff at Shotton Hall during most of 1949 and the early months of 1950. All the same, Mr. Tindall and Mr. Verrinder of the Corporation, continued with their research into some of the basic questions. Their findings were put into print in two publications: 'The Analysis' of Planning Problems', and 'Social and Economic Research'. The assumption from the very first was that industry should be situated within the boundaries of the Designated Area.<sup>1</sup> From the first also, the extent of opposition to the fact of new industry made itself felt through the medium of the Regional Controller of the Board of Trade, Mr. Rhodes.

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1. See Minutes of first and unofficial meeting of Advisory Committee, 16th December 1947 - Mrs. Felton on the industrial situation (1.2) Also 'Analysis of Planning Problems' p.54, para.18.



By 1950 when the 'Analysis of Planning Problems' was published, the objections to industry at the new town had clarified. The objectors can be divided into two groups: those that were opposed to industry anywhere in Easington, and those who wanted industry for the Rural District but desired that it should be situated outside the Designated Area. The first were the strongest influence and if it was not for their overall objections, the second group would have received much less of a hearing. As it was, a whole host of secondary considerations were multiplied in importance. The overall objections can be traced to two sources, the National Coal Board - or, more accurately, the mining interest - and secondly, the Trading Estates around Easington, especially the Hartlepoons.

### The Mining Interest

The most difficult one to trace is the objection of the mining interest. There is no comment of the National Coal Board available to be quoted; the 'Analysis of Planning Problems' said "The N.C.B. have not made any information available to us... their fears were based on the 'Fifeshire Survey' made in 1945".<sup>1</sup> As has been seen, the Ministry of Labour was the most voluble objector during the pre-designation meetings of the Regional Physical Planning Committee. The Board of Trade, almost, as it were, automatically took up the case unprompted by any other source. It has been suggested that the Durham Miners may have been a strong objector

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1. 'Analysis of Planning Problems' p.28.

because of the fear that the local Union would be reduced in size, and therefore in its voice in the National Union. Whatever truth there is in this, it would have to be restricted to the years before 1953 because of the co-operation in trying to attract more industry to Easington that the local miners' leader gave to the Corporation's General Manager from that date on.<sup>1</sup> The Corporation had an answer to criticisms that new industry would prove competitive to the mines and reduce the available labour force. The main ones given were that competition would give an added incentive to improvement of conditions of work in the pit. Secondly, wages in the mines would be able to outbid any new industry, and thirdly, the N.C.B. would be able to mechanise their mines without having to worry about redundancy.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Hartlepoons Argument

Mention has already been made of the possible competition of industry at Easington to the Sunderland and Hartlepoons Trading Estates. It is much easier to give evidence of Hartlepoons objections than the N.C.B.'s because they voiced their complaints more openly. They were represented at the Local Authorities meeting on August 27th 1947, and at the Public Local Inquiry. They had managed by early in 1949 to convince the North East Development Association of the merits of their case and on February 25th 1949 Lord Ridley wrote to the Minister on their behalf. The interchange of correspondence is

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1. See p.38 of this Appendix.

2. Notes on Industry (18.2)

interesting for revealing the misinformation of the Association and the confirmation of the attitude, albeit not in specific detail, of the Minister, Mr. Silkin. Suggestion had been made to the Committee of the Association that there would be substantial industrial development at Peterlee. Lord Ridley said that he understood that when the Order had been made there would be no industrial development other than necessary service industry. Was there to be a change in policy? He put forward that such a change would disorganise the plans of the Board of Trade in relation to the new Trading Estate at the Hartlepoons.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Silkin replied on the 23rd March. The Minister reiterated the statement issued with the Draft Designation Order in 1947, which he said still correctly indicated the intentions of the Government in regard to industry in the new town. He added that the report of the Consultants on the North East Development Area would be examined and their proposals taken into account in decisions on future policy. Also any greater degree of industrialisation than was indicated by the Draft Order Statement would only be considered after consultation with other departments, particularly the Board of Trade.<sup>2</sup> It is proof of how much importance was placed on this objection by the Hartlepoons that the Corporation twice devoted a research paper to the subject to show that their argument was less well founded than was apparent at first sight.

The gist of the Corporation's reply to the Hartlepoons

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1. Letter Ridley to Silkin, 24th February 1949 (18.1)
  2. Letter Silkin to Ridley, 23rd March 1949 (18.1)

question was based on the following points. The main need at the present of the Hartlepoons was female labour but it would not be able to be satisfied from Easington. The women who then worked in the Trading Estate came from the villages nearest to it. Reluctance to travel long distances would prohibit the Hartlepoons from drawing any more female labour, whereas there was a pool of approximately 8,300 available for Easington.<sup>1</sup>

Other industry problems, all of which have dogged the later history of Peterlee, were dealt with in the two research publications brought out by the Architect-Planners Department. One problem, of course, that was left in abeyance was the effect of subsidence on the building of factories. The site marked out was in the very north of the designated area, where originally the one seam remaining under the eastern portion, at least, was going to be sterilised. The Webster report, prepared by the special technical committee set up by Mr. Sillin to investigate the cost and results of building on land liable to subsidence, also led the Corporation to believe that structural precautions could be taken, as with all buildings on 'two seam land'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Peterlee Industry and the Hartlepoons, April and May 1950 (18.4 and 9)
  2. See Summary of the Draft Outline Plan, 13th March 1950, p.5 para.17, and 'Webster Report' (6.2)

Corporation Reasons for Siting the Industrial Area

The main reasons why the Corporation desired to have the industrial site within the designated area were for purposes of control. At the opening meeting of the Easington 'Advisory Committee' the Chairman of the new Corporation, Mrs. Felton, said that she had approached the Minister to gain for the Corporation the responsibility of managing the industrial estate - and he had agreed.<sup>1</sup> This question of control was re-opened after Mr. Silkin had been replaced by Mr. Dalton in 1950. The economic and social reasons given by the Corporation why the industrial estate would be better off in the designated area were that many of the workers would be living in the New Town, and those that were not could come in by the most direct transport, which itself could be geared on a central basis. Technical and key workers could be associated with the New Town. Other such arguments were that the Town would have an 'industrial character', and lastly, that it would be beneficial if mother could combine the travel to work with the daily shopping and taking the children to and from school. The shops in the Town Centre would be well utilised from the first by incoming workers.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Minutes of Advisory Committee, 16th December 1947 (1.2)
  2. Industry and Rail Access, 8th June 1950, (File R1 1/12 Industry Papers - Research) and Social and Economic Research p.166.

Labour Available

The Corporation's research team investigated all the basic problems, especially those that were influencing the policy makers in the Board of Trade. Papers were turned out on the Hartlepoons question (already mentioned), 'Labour Availability', and the importance of 'Rail Access'. Immediate availability was placed at 1,200 workers, 300 males and 900 females. The former was the total of males unemployed at the time,<sup>1</sup> and the latter was the total required to maintain what the Corporation thought should be the best immediate male to female labour ratio. Warning was given that as industry was seldom either totally male or female employing, to attract too much female-employing industry to begin with would be to prejudice later changes of attracting male-employing industry, having the right male female ratios. The long term employment need was for 8,300 jobs, which was the mean between the minimum figure of 5,800 and the maximum of 12,800, each extreme calculated on different assumptions of potential emigration from the district. The long term (1962) female labour target was fixed at a figure which would bring the female to male ratio to 33%, which was the regional average. The ratio at that time stood at 18.1% for the Easington Rural District.<sup>2</sup>

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1. 'Labour Availability' (18.4)

2. See 'Analysis of Planning Problems' p.26

### Rail Access

The paper on rail access attempted to show that its absence was not an important limiting factor. Their results were deduced from the example of 23 predominantly male-employing firms who had applied for sites at four New Towns. Only 3 considered rail access essential, another 3 considered it desirable, and the other 17 did not require it at all.<sup>1</sup> It was generally true, the Corporation admitted, that the heavy industries required rail facility, but there were wide variations between factories in the same industrial groups. Another influential factor, they claimed, was the container system of carrying good which allowed goods to be transported along road and railway with handling only once when they left the factory. A goods depot could be constructed at Horden.<sup>2</sup>

### Travel to Work

The 'Social Survey', as well as giving a great deal of other useful information, also threw some light on the travel to work question at Easington. It was found that 79% of the wage earners attached to the mining industry resident in the Easington district worked in the village where they lived. The other 21% travelled, (4,000 miners), of whom 600 travelled even when there was no system of public transport.<sup>3</sup> This shows a very much more serious situation

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1. Industry and Rail Access - 5th June 1950. (File R1 1/12 Industry Papers - Research)

2. 'Economic and Social Research' p.167

3. Ibid. p.177

than was given, for instance, by Mr. Tetlow when he was Regional Controller of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, to Mr. Gibbs of the Ministry of Labour, who raised the point of travel during a meeting of the Regional Physical Planning Committee.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tetlow claimed that figures from the Miners' Welfare Association showed that travel to work was already quite usual among miners. The Social Survey figures put Mr. Tetlow's general comments into perspective. With nearly 80% of the Easington miners resident in villages near to the pit head, it can be easily understood that opposition might naturally arise later when inhabitants were asked to move to the New Town.

#### The Institution and Administration of the Estate

In April 1950, when the 'coal problem' had been reduced to a size sufficient to allow building of the town to proceed, considerations were once more given to the question of industry at Peterlee. The initial problem to be tackled was that of 'control'. It was clear that the Board of Trade would not tolerate a second government agency in the North Eastern Development Area, building factories in competition with them.

"In this respect any factories that are built in Peterlee must be regarded, we think, as part of the general industrial

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1. Meeting of 10th January 1947. (13.1)



development provision for the North East Development Area and not as a separate entity connected only with the development of a new town".<sup>1</sup>

A similar situation had been found at East Kilbride and a solution of 'dual control' had been devised, which the Board of Trade wanted repeated at Peterlee. In this case the North Eastern Trading Estates Limited, the agent of the Board of Trade, would build the factories on land permanently leased to them. Other industrialists who did not want to call upon the Board of Trade would be allowed to erect their own factories on land leased to them by the Corporation. A small proportion of the industrial zone would be set aside for this latter purpose.

The whole question of 'control' is bound up with the fears of the Corporation of complete reliance upon the Board of Trade. The attitude and reasonings of the Board will be given special attention later. For now it will be sufficient to note that in certain interviews it had been ascertained by the Corporation that their own estimates on labour availability did not agree with the Board's, and likewise with both their separate appreciations of the merits of the site selected at Peterlee.<sup>2</sup> One of the Corporation's Research Officers had contacted East Kilbride Corporation and asked them what they had thought of the arrangement they had with the Board of Trade.

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1. Letter, Reading to Hardy, 6th April 1950 (18.3)
  2. Interview, West with Sillar, 29th November 1949. Tindall with Sillar, Sullivan and Dymond, 27th January 1950. (Research Files - Industry)

East Kilbride were not very happy because the Board of Trade were only giving consideration to dollar exporting industries, and there were not many of these around.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, with certain stipulations, the Corporation at a meeting in September 1950 accepted the system of 'dual control'. A Standing Joint Committee was set up which had executive powers, consisting of the Board of Trade, N.E.T.E. and the Corporation. Their joint objective was "to establish in the Designated Area, manufacturing industry not requiring rail access, as part of the reconstruction plans for the Development Area as a whole."<sup>2</sup> The Corporation achieved a say in the determination of policy - the selection of firms and some degree of architectural control, two conditions they stated they desired, before the meeting.<sup>3</sup> They also coaxed a clause into the agreement which assured the Corporation of the 'active good will' of the Board in seeking grants under the Distribution of Industries Acts.<sup>4</sup> The Board, however, affirmed later that, in respect of grants for basic services under the Acts, the applications would have to be treated on their merits in exactly the same way as are those from Local Authorities and industrialists in other parts of the Development Areas.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Interview, Verrender with Matheson of East Kilbride  
12th May 1950 (18.8)
  2. Letter, Williams to Reading, 2nd October 1950 (18.20)
  3. Letter, Williams to Dobbie, 27th April 1950 (18.5)
  4. Letter, Williams to Reading, 2nd October 1950 (18.20)
  5. Letter, Reading to Williams, 19th October 1950 (18.22)

On the 3rd November 1950, the Joint Committee met for the first time. The functions of the Committee, the kind and scale of industry, and the planning considerations of the site, were all discussed. The Corporation wanted a group of firms linked by a common raw material (industry based on timber was suggested) rather than a heterogeneous number of firms. They wanted a balanced age structure and a reasonable standard of industrial welfare in the firms who came to Peterlee. Both the latter points were agreed, but the Corporation were forced to accept that they would only receive heterogeneous industry. The Corporation did not want heterogeneous industry because, they considered, it was, one, more likely to have too high a female male proportion, and, two, be subject to fluctuations, in comparison with firms based upon a homogeneous product. The Board of Trade, though, did not think there was any suitable male employing industry which did not require rail facility. Also light industry alone could be given safeguards against subsidence.<sup>1</sup>

Before going on to the question of the amount of employment to be provided, which was discussed at the meeting on the 3rd November it will be of interest to see the developing attitude of the Board up to that date.

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1. Interview, Tindall with Sillar, Sullivan and Dymond, 27th January 1950. (Research Files - Industry). and General Manager's Report to Industrial Sub-Committee, 30th October 1950 (18.26).

The Developing Attitude of the Board of Trade

The Regional Controller when the Corporation was instituted in 1948 was Mr. Rhodes. At interviews given by him to the Corporation and to one of the Corporation's Research Officers, Mr. Rhodes first of all expressed the opinion that development should be in three phases, the first of 3 years, the second of 10, and the last ending when the town was completed. Differing from his successor, therefore, Mr. Rhodes was prepared to see the long term employment need related to the development of the town, not to the exhaustion of the pits.<sup>1</sup> The only evidence of his views on labour availability is that when shown the Corporation's estimation, he replied that it was an 'interesting and theoretical exercise', but that they would have to accept what industries were offered and what the government policy of the day dictated.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1949, the new Controller, Mr. Sillar, gave an interview to Mr. West, the Corporation's Chief Estates Surveyor. Mr. Sillar said that he had in mind a site of 8 to 10 acres, accommodating 2 or 3 factories totalling about 1,000,000 sq.ft. If future events showed the need for further industry, considerations would be given to the establishment of an Estate outside the designated area. The industries provided would need to be dollar earning and must not draw on labour working in neighbouring localities.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See this Appendix p.25 Note 3.

2. Interview Rhodes and Corporation, 19th May 1948 (File R1, General Industry - Research)

3. Interview, West with Sillar, 29th November 1949 (Research Files - Industry)

A second interview was given by Mr. Sillar to the Research Officer mentioned above, Mr. Tindall. Mr. Dymond, the Board's Research Officer, was also present. The immediate labour force for whom Mr. Sillar considered employment should be found was 400 women and 200 men. He was prepared to accept the Corporation's long term estimates but thought, though he was not questioning at this stage the zoning plans of the Corporation, that further employment should be located outside the designated area. "The Board knew of no industries, employing a majority of unskilled males, which did not require railway facilities".<sup>1</sup> Two sites were mentioned on which 'clearance' had been obtained by the Board - Shotton and Thornley Station, both with rail access.

At the first meeting of the Joint Committee on the 3rd November 1950, figures were quoted by the Controller, Mr. Sillar, which were taken from a paper prepared by Mr. Dymond. This paper suggests finding posts for 500 women and 1,000 men by 1954. Redundancy would amount to 2,500 by 1957 but it was 'too small to worry about'.<sup>2</sup> The Board agreed to 'hope' that the Estate would provide 2,000 jobs by 1955 but did not 'anticipate' more than 1,500. The ultimate figure they placed as low as 2,500 men and 500 women.<sup>3</sup>

The main attraction of Board of Trade control and the reason why the Corporation accepted so easily the limitations of the

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1. Interview Tindall with Sillar, Sullivan and Dymond, 27th January 1950. (Research Files - Industry)
  2. Paper written by Dymond of Board of Trade found in File 5P/25 of Durham County Planning Department.
  3. Meeting 3rd November 1950 (18.29)

Joint Committee was that the factories that they built could be let at government subsidised rents of 1/9d. a square foot (1939 prices) compared to 4/0d.<sup>1</sup> a square foot, post war prices and 'economic rents'. This is an important aspect of the industrial situation and will be discussed again later. All that could be done by the Corporation was for them to attempt to impress on the Board their own conception of the situation. In an interchange of correspondence between the General Manager of the Corporation, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Sillar, the Controller, Mr. Williams first of all referred the Controller to the 'Explanatory Memorandum'. The passage which was important<sup>2</sup> was one which stated that 'sooner or later' there would be a need for new industry in the district, and this was best associated with the New Town. Mr. Sillar, in his reply, wrote that he thought the passage in the 'Memorandum' meant to apply to the long term, when the coal was completely worked out.<sup>3</sup> In aid of his argument, Mr. Sillar quoted the 'Statement' accompanying the Draft Designation Order, which read that "provision would be made for .... any male labour not employed in the coal mining industry". Mr. Williams replied that the Corporation were not anxious to take a narrow view, and that they were looking forward to the time, not when coal was worked out, but to the more immediate future when extensive mechanisation will have caused redundancy.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Interview, Mr. Nicklin, March 1960, and Interview Tindall with Sillar, Sullivan and Dymond. 27th January 1950. (Research Files - Industry) and see p. 196.
  2. Letter, Williams to Sillar, 20th February 1951 (19.6)
  3. Letter, Sillar to Williams, 22nd February 1951 (19.7)
  4. Draft Letter, Williams to Sillar, no date (19.8)

The kind of figures the Corporation were putting forward as targets for their industrial estate can be seen in their Master Plan - which was later agreed with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.<sup>1</sup>

"It has been estimated by the National Coal Board that in 1971 the number of men employed in the mines of the district will be 3,400 less than in 1949. Studies of population and industrial statistics projected to 1971 seem to indicate that if the population increases at a normal rate unaffected by migration, there may be some 8,000 people to be employed in manufacturing industries, 5,000 of whom will be men and 3,000 women".

To turn back one again to another aspect of the rent question - so strongly did the Board feel about the employment capacity of Peterlee, that they refused to allow the number of factories planned for the estate to be increased by packing in more factories on the same acreage. This would have kept the Estate's total revenue from rents up whilst maintaining a competitive level of rents.<sup>2</sup> N.E.T.E. were also anxious about the ground rents to be charged to industrialists who built their own factories.<sup>3</sup> They probably feared the competitive element in rents that the Corporation might have been able to introduce. With this in mind it is possible to appreciate the reluctance of the Board of Trade to approve grants

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1. Master Plan, September 1952, p.28

2. Meeting of 8th January 1951 (19.3)

3. Sadler-Forster to General Manager, 3rd & 15th January 1951  
(19.2) & (19.4)

under the Distribution of Industries Acts. Periodically throughout its history, the Corporation have applied for such grants<sup>1</sup> to cover the cost of basic services and so maintain low ground rents. Because of the depressed nature of the area, ground rents were expected by industrialists to be low, whereas the expenditure on basic services was as high as anywhere in the country. Nevertheless, the Corporation has not as yet received any such grants to help it maintain a low and attractive rent.<sup>2</sup>

That the Board were more than just joint members of a policy making committee can be seen by this further example. The Corporation, after agreement on the estate had been reached, began an open policy of attracting new industry. This came to the ears of Mr. Sillar who proceeded to write to the Corporation that he would not tolerate such a course of events. In the letter he set out clearly all the means by which the Board of Trade could make life very difficult for the Corporation if they continued in this policy. Building licences could be obtained from the Ministry of Works only after the relevant production department of the Board of Trade had given its sponsorship. Planning consent would only be granted after an Industrial Development Certificate had been given by the Board of Trade, who must have first consulted with all other relevant departments.<sup>3</sup> (Sometime earlier a Ministry of Town and Country Planning

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1. See Letter, Reading to Williams, 19th October 1950 (18.22)  
Letter, Coles to Williams, 26th February 1953 (20.2)  
Letter, Williams to Syme, 21st April 1954 (20.10)
  2. Interview with Mr. Nicklin, March 1960.
  3. Letter, Sillar to Williams, 23rd July 1951 (19.18)



official had written a confidential letter to the Corporation saying that the New Town section of the Ministry might be able to help Corporations pick up firms on the Building Licence list of the Board of Trade,<sup>1</sup> and a little later came another letter saying that the Minister was anxious to keep industrial development in the New Towns in step with housing development).<sup>2</sup> As if in knowledge of these steps, Mr. Sillar added to his letter the comment that the sum set aside in the capital investments programme for factory building in the New Towns was purely for 'national accountancy purposes', and its existence does not mean exemption from stringent tests'.

#### The Responsibilities of the Durham County Council

The Board of Trade's attitude to the suitability of the Peterlee site compared to other possible sites in the district, had a most unfortunate effect on the Durham County Council plans for the area - unfortunate from the point of view of the Corporation anyway. Final judgements can be left until later. To trace this attitude one can turn to a letter sent by Mr. Reading, a senior official of the Board of Trade in London, to Mr. Williams of the Corporation, in October 1950. "We agree," he said, "that every effort should be made jointly by the Board and the Corporation to establish new manufacturing industry within the designated area to meet the estimated employment needs of the Easington Rural District. But", he added, "I think I should add that it will probably be necessary to

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1. Letter, Coles to Williams, 20th June 1951 (19.13)

2. Letter, Barber to General Manager, 6th March 1951 (19.14)

provide some sites outside the designated area for industries requiring rail access and assured surface stability".<sup>1</sup> Mr. Williams acknowledged this by agreeing that sites would be needed outside the town for industries requiring rail access and "absolute" surface stability.<sup>2</sup>

The next important event was a meeting at the County Planning Office with the Board of Trade and a representative of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, but no representative, be it noted, from the Peterlee Corporation. The meeting had been called by the County because they were drawing up a Development Plan and wanted to know the line it should adopt as regards industry in the Easington Rural District.<sup>3</sup> It was not conveyed to the County, what was implied in pre-designation discussions, that the New Town would have definite responsibility for the employment needs of the whole Rural District. This responsibility indeed was reaffirmed in the letter above mentioned from Mr. Reading. The County assumed, therefore, from the Board of Trade's indecision on the question at this meeting, that if the site was unstable it could not possibly fulfil the whole needs of the Rural District. Mr. Dymond's paper, mentioned earlier, was the basis for discussion. It is quite possible that the short term plans in that paper for an 8-10 acre site, could have been regarded at the meeting as the long term capacity of the whole New Town Estate. Other sites in the district were then discussed. Two were agreed upon, the first at Station Town Wingate,

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1. Letter, Reading to Williams, 19th October 1950 (18.22)

2. Letter, Williams to Reading, 25th October 1950 (18.23)

3. Interview, Bob Scarlett (Research Officer, County Planning Department) March 1960.

10 acres with an employment capacity of about 1,000, and the second at Thornley Station, 40 acres and a capacity of about 2,000.<sup>1</sup>

All their doubts about the town site and the alternative estates to supplement it were incorporated into the widely distributed Development Plan. The Corporation attempted to have the Draft amended. Their attitude was that the Peterlee estate could not expand industrially, or even get a proper start industrially, if it had to compete for its male labour with at least two other sites in proximity to the New Town. They insisted that their employment target for the first five years was 2,500 (500 above that agreed to be 'hoped' with the Board of Trade, and 1,000 above that agreed to be 'anticipated'). Mr. Geenty, the County Planning Officer, for his own part, was willing to press for the amendment of the County Plan to bring more to the forefront the significance of the New Town. He said there had been a considerable amount of opposition in the Durham County Planning Committee to the establishment of industry in the New Town. It would be difficult to go to the Committee with an amended draft. So it proved, for Mr. Geenty had to write later that any amendment would go against a substantive resolution of the County Council that sites other than in Peterlee should be provided in Easington.<sup>2</sup>

When the 1950 County Council meeting with the Board of

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1. See Meeting of Corporation with County Planning Officer, 30th May 1951 (19.11). Also (22.2)
  2. See General Manager's Report, 3rd June 1951 (19.10)

Trade took place and the decisions of the Planning Committee were made, much less was known about the stability of the site and the type and expense of precautionary measures than was known after 1951. News filtered through occasionally to the Corporation after 1951 that the County were themselves having doubts about the stability and suitability of the two sites at Station Town and Thornley. Nevertheless, even after 1953 when much more was known about the stability of the estate, two further meetings were held with the Board of Trade, neither of them any more favourable to Peterlee. The first was on the 15th April 1953 and the second on the 28th May 1954. On neither occasion were representatives of the Corporation present. At both the stability of the Peterlee estate was called into question. At the first the extreme step was taken of fixing the maximum long term employment at Peterlee at 3,000, on the basis of supplying work for that portion of the population of 30,000 not dependent on mining.<sup>1</sup> The second meeting reaffirmed the figure of 3,000 because it was difficult, Mr. Sullivan said, to persuade industrialists to go to an area where there was a risk of subsidence.<sup>2</sup> It was not until 1956 that further correspondence was opened by the Corporation with the County Planning authorities. In reply to a letter from the County Planning Officer, Mr. Geenty, asking for houses for key workers engaged on sites outside the New Town, the General Manager for the

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1. "Discrepancies in Statements as to Industrial Development at Peterlee" - Research File - Industry.

2. Minutes of Meeting, 28th May 1954 (22.1)

Corporation replied that he thought that Peterlee was the only site, and that the other two had not gained approval.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Geenty, in turn, affirmed that the Thornley Station site had been believed to be unstable but that it was later given a reprieve and replaced in the County Plan.<sup>2</sup> The Station Town site had been approved by the Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1954 with the rest of the County Map,<sup>3</sup> so the General Manager had been misinformed. The problem as the County Planning Officer saw it, was

"to ensure that sufficient attractive sites are available in the Easington area to bring industrialists to the area, to offset the fall in employment in coal mining, and slow up outward migration, thus helping Peterlee reach a population of 30,000".

Finally in the closing months of 1957, the Corporation decided to make the stability of the New Town industrial site clear to the County Planning Committee. Certain organisational changes had taken place as well, putting Peterlee in a more favourable position. These will be discussed below. The Corporation used as an excuse for a meeting the unsatisfactory nature, they claimed, of an industrial brochure brought out by the County Council. As a result of the explanations made by the Corporation, the County Planning Committee decided that - seven years after the creation of

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1. Letter, Williams to Geenty, 20th February 1956 (20.16)
  2. Letter, Geenty to Williams, 21st March 1956 (20.17)
  3. County Development Plan - Town Map No.13 Easington.  
Chapter 3, p.12.

the Peterlee Industrial Estate - they could enter the site in the County Industrial Register, and that industrialists should be informed of the ability of Peterlee to erect factory buildings to rent.<sup>1</sup>

Factories, 'Tailor-Made' and in 'Advance of Requirements'

The question of erecting factory buildings to rent has itself a history, and is an important question worthy of some investigation. The first factory building commenced in September 1953. It was for the firm of Jeremiah Ambler Limited. The second was for Alexandres Limited, about whom negotiations had dragged on for a number of years since the estate was established.<sup>2</sup> The first recorded employment at Alexandres was in December 1955. Both the factories were partly financed by the Board of Trade, and both were built by North Eastern Trading Estates Limited. By January 1958, employment in the firms had reached 800 men and 600 women (their capacity is 1,000 men and 800 women), and by that date also no other industrial development had been definitely scheduled. N.E.T.E. claimed that since 1953 no government financed factories had been built elsewhere in the North East which might have come to Peterlee,<sup>3</sup> and Peterlee Corporation, for their part, said that there was nothing to suggest that industry would not settle at Peterlee.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Letter, Williams to Geenty, 23rd January 1958 (21.8)  
Report of Chief Engineer to General Manager, 14th February 1958 (21.11). Letter Geenty to Williams, 3rd February 1958 (21.10)
  2. Negotiations were first entered into in June 1950 (Annual Report 1951, p.229)
  3. Notes on Industrial Development, 9th January 1958 (21.7)
  4. Letter Williams to Dobbie, 20th Feb.1953 (20.1) and meeting with Mr. Shinwell and E.R.D.C., 24th January 1958 (21.9)

To verify these latter combined statements would need a paper in itself. But for now the above comments will suffice to illustrate the reasons for the anxiety of the Corporation to assume more responsibility for the industrial development of the New Town. The initial agreement with the Board of Trade, of course, allowed the Corporation to let plots of land to industrialists who were willing to arrange the building and financing of their own factory. But they could not build themselves either to order or in advance of requirements. To deal with the question of Advance Factories first, a memorandum brought out by the Corporation in 1954 illustrates the need for them succinctly.

"The present scheme for development by the Corporation and North East Trading Estates Limited, provides for the industrialist who is prepared to wait twelve months or more between the granting of an Industrial Development Certificate and his commencing industrial operations, and also for the industrialist who is prepared to lay out his capital in building. Experience has shown, however, that industrialists as a class prefer to utilise capital in technical development, industrial research and marketing organisation, in preference to tying it up in building".<sup>1</sup>

Before October 1947, at which date Sir Stafford Cripps made certain cuts in capital investment, the building of factories in advance of requirements was allowed. Added to the other factors, such as the

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1. Memorandum on Advance Factories, 5th January 1954 (20.9)

inflated post war demand, advance factories helped the high rate of development in the scheduled areas before that date. The reverse statement has also been made that the cessation of 'Advance' factory building was part reason why such development in the areas fell off from that date on.<sup>1</sup>

As early as July 1952, Mr. Sadler-Forster on the Corporation's behalf, wrote to Mr. Macmillan, then the Minister of Housing and Local Government, to make a plea for 'Advance Factories' at Peterlee. Mr. Macmillan's reply was very sympathetic, but the risks involved and the current restrictions on capital expenditure made the situation difficult. He agreed, though, that such an 'Advance Factory' might well have "set the ball rolling" for the industrial estate,<sup>3</sup> and with this agreement the Minister must have taken the matter a stage further because from time to time information began to come filtering through that he was engaged in discussing the subject at a high level.<sup>4</sup> Pressure was kept up by the Corporation during 1954 and 1955 which did not result in permission being granted.<sup>5</sup> The pressure was probably reduced because of the investment restrictions, in the first place in 1957, though a further plea<sup>6</sup> was written into the 1957 Annual Report, and, in the second, the eventual granting in August 1958,<sup>8</sup> of

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1. Development Area Policy in the North East of England - Allen, Odber, and Bowden, 1957, p.18.
  2. Letter, Sadler-Forster to Macmillan, 24th July 1952 (19.23)
  3. Letter, Macmillan to Sadler-Forster, 12th August 1952 (19.24)
  4. Letter, Barber to Williams, 5th March 1953 (20.3)
  5. Letter, Williams to Sadler-Forster, 28th June 1953 (20.14)
  6. Report of the Development Corporations, March 1957 p.331



permission to build factories themselves, with money borrowed from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, through the Treasury.

This change in policy was very welcome to the Corporation as it was a break with their dependence on the Board of Trade. North Eastern Trading Estates Limited, who were the Board of Trade's agent, continued in their help to find new industries for Peterlee, even though restrictions on capital investment and certain administrative directives prevented the Board of Trade allowing N.E.T.E. to build any government financed factories in the Development Area. Permission to build gave the Corporation the privilege for a time of being the only government financed agency in the 'Area'. The only major snag in such an enviable position was that the loans made by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government under New Towns Act, came through the Treasury, at the current rate of interest, necessitating in turn high cover cost rents. The way permission came for the Corporation to build and rent its own factories was that in 1958 the firm of Waage Woodwool Limited were found who wanted a factory in the New Town and an application for a loan was made to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government under Section 12 (1) of the New Towns Act 1946. This was granted in August 1958, and with it the tacit assumption that the Corporation could submit similar claims in the future.

### The Mining Interest

The last important regional interest which is worthy of further examination is that of 'Mining', which includes the National

Coal Board and the Durham Miners. Lack of information makes this only the briefest of sketches. What one really needs to complete the picture is some information about the channels by means of which the mining interest managed to affect the estimates of employment made by the Ministry of Labour, on the one hand, and on the other, the distribution of industry facilitated by the Board of Trade. The estimates themselves are not so difficult to trace and will be given in the summary.

As the National Coal Board were legally responsible for the damage caused by subsidence, they naturally desired to be consulted on the erection of factory buildings. Their original ownership of the land allowed them to insist on a restrictive covenant being inserted into the conveyance of the land which enforced the need for the Coal Board's prior approval to structural precautions in the factories.<sup>1</sup> The Board of Trade were anxious about this, but the Corporation felt it was reasonable. When, however, at a later date the Coal Board were consulted at a meeting arranged to clear the industrial site with them, it is of interest that an attempt was made to call in question the whole idea of an industrial estate at Peterlee. They were obviously here not thinking of the compensation problem but of the effect the estate would have on the local employment situation. In the light of this N.E.T.E.'s answer, that priority would not be given to the Peterlee site over and above others in the

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1. Letter Sydenham to Williams, 30th October 1950 (18.25)  
Letter Reading to Williams, 19th October 1950 (18.22)

Development Area - which seemed to satisfy the members of the Coal Board present<sup>1</sup> - stands out in importance when one tries to understand why there is so little industry at Peterlee. During the years between 1950 and 1957 there was little or no communication with the Corporation by the Coal Board on anything but matters relating to the structural precautions to be incorporated in factories. An attempt in 1957 by an official of No.3 Area, Northern Division, to help Peterlee by suggesting that a maintenance shop to repair local pit props be set up on the Estate, did not come to anything. It had not had the blessing of his superiors anyway, and the idea conflicted with their headquarters' policy for repair of pit props.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of the Durham Miners' Union was altogether different. This applies from at least 1953. For in that year we know that, for instance, Mr. Sam Watson the miners' leader, wrote to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government suggesting he should lead a deputation of Union members to the Minister to impress upon him the urgency of bringing industry to Peterlee. The Ministry's reply, from Mr. Dobbie, said that deputations do not solve problems, and that they all knew at the Ministry what the nature of the problem was, but that "this was a really tough one".<sup>3</sup> The correspondence was passed on to the Corporation. The General Manager wrote to Mr. Watson that "so far as the Ministry is concerned no prompting is

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1. Meeting, 20th November 1950 (18.30)
  2. Letter, Williams to Charlesworth, 1st March 1957 (21.2)  
Letter, Langford-Holt to Williams, 3rd Mat 1957 (21.3)
  3. Letter, Dobbie to Watson, 19th June 1953 (20.4)

required, but such a delegation might do good with the Board of Trade".<sup>1</sup> Later, on Mr. Watson's suggestion that pressure could be exerted on the Board of Trade through the Miners' Lodges, Mr. Williams replied that he was in whole-hearted agreement. "It is logical to use the organisations in this area who are most concerned with present and future employment".<sup>2</sup>

### Publicity

The Corporation had one other ally in their struggle to gain recognition for their site, Mr. Shinwell, the Member of Parliament for Easington, who asked questions in the House on behalf of Peterlee and arranged conciliatory meetings between the Corporation and the Easington Council. At various periods the Council expressed disquiet at the shortage of industry in the district, and it was only in 1958 that feeling rose to a sufficient pitch to provoke the necessity of a meeting. Questions were asked of the Corporation by Councillors, such as: were there any special difficulties peculiar to the New Town which kept industry away - lack of rail access, subsidence, or the hardness of the water? In reply, the blame was laid by the Corporation and N.E.T.E. on national conditions and denied altogether that "the fault lay with local conditions at Peterlee".<sup>3</sup> One answer to a question put by Mr. Shinwell to the

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1. Letter, Williams to Watson, 23rd June 1953 (20.5)
  2. Letter, Williams to Watson, 1st July 1953 (20.6)
  3. Meeting with Mr. Shinwell and Representative of E.R.D.C.  
24th January 1958 (21.9)

President of the Board of Trade angered the Corporation considerably. It raises also the general question of 'publicity'. The question in the House, asked on 2nd August 1957, wanted to know from the President whether he was aware that the New Town of Peterlee had only two light industries for a population expected to reach 20,000 in the next few years. Mr. Erroll, the Parliamentary Secretary, replied that the Board of Trade were trying to interest suitable firms in Peterlee, but so far had found none willing to go there.<sup>1</sup> This answer was what Mr. Sadler-Forster called "rank bad publicity". The Parliamentary Secretary had given the impression that industrialists had "taken one sniff" at it and fled away". "He had made no reference to the fact that the unwillingness of his Department to use the powers conferred on it by the Distribution of Industries Act to finance the building of industrial premises cost Peterlee the Ambler No.2 factory, and the effect of Government policy on the car and vehicle industry cost Peterlee the K.X. lamp factory".<sup>2</sup>

With the tight hold government had on the location of industry in the Development Areas, there was little scope for initiative on the part of Peterlee to advertise its wares. At varying intervals certain steps were taken. A display panel was suggested and agreed upon for the Board of Trade Interview Room. An industrial brochure - of doubtful quality - was produced, the press and

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1. Board of Trade Journal, August 1959.

2. Letter, Sadler-Forster to Col. H.H. Peile, 12th Sept.1957 (21.4)

television were contacted for articles and programmes on the Town, progress reports given to interested industrial magazines, and even unsigned advertisements inserted in the main local papers. At one stage the Corporation even toyed with the idea of engaging the assistance of a firm of public relations experts.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1953 Mr. Williams, the General Manager of the Corporation, thought the licensing procedure of the Board of Trade a little easier, and so decided to pay a visit to a leading industrialist in the Midlands to see if he could persuade expanding industries to extend their operations to the North East. The written reply from the industrialist was informative.

"You can take it from me that there is not a single industrial concern that I know of, situate in the Midlands, that wants to move out, because the services and the labour are both cheaper and more co-operative than in any other area. I am afraid as long as Midland towns offer industrial sites, our problem in the Midlands area is going to grow, and the Government is the only body which can, by Act of Parliament, force industry to develop in other areas".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Scattered over the four files - 18, 19, 20, 21.

See specifically:

(a) Letters, 18th April 1956 (21.1)

(b) Letter, Sadler-Forster to Williams, 16th January 1958 (21)

(c) Letter, Sadler-Forster to Williams, 15th November 1957(21)

(d) Meeting at Board of Trade, 10th June 1954 (20)

2. Letter, Owen to Williams, 3rd July 1953 (20.7)

Mr. Sadler-Forster in 1957 placed an increasing reliance on 'publicity' to attract industry, in place of governmental help. The Board of Trade could not be relied on to build factories to let under the Distribution of Industries Acts.

"So far as the North East is concerned the Acts are dead, or almost dead. The Treasury has a stranglehold on Departmental spending and therefore the prospect of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government doing very much on specially attractive terms is not very much brighter".<sup>1</sup>

It is<sup>a</sup> very difficult question to assess whether the Corporation did enough to publicise itself, but it is clear that the initial dependence on the Board of Trade sterilised initiative. This also probably partly accounts for the spasmodic and diffused efforts of the Corporation when such attempts were made.

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1. Letter, Sadler-Forster to Col.H.H.Peile, 12th September 1957 (21.1)

LIST OF FILESAbbreviations

P.D.C.	-	Peterlee Development Corporation.
E.R.D.C.	-	Easington Rural District Council
M.H.L.G.	-	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
D.C.P.D.	-	Durham County Planning Department

1. P.D.C. Easington Advisory Committee, A.M.10

1. Meeting of 21st January 1948
2. Informal Meeting of 16th December 1947
3. Meeting of 23rd January 1948
4. " " 3rd February 1948
5. " " 11th February 1948
6. " " 25th February 1948
7. " " 5th March 1948
8. " " 10th March 1948
9. " " 17th March 1948
10. " " 24th March 1948
11. " " 9th April 1948
12. Joint Meeting with Easington Housing Committee,  
17th March 1948

2. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations

1. Map 9th May 1951
2. Map Regional Working Party 28th November 1949
3. Map Regional Working Party 16th September 1949
4. Memo. Mr. Williams.
5. Map September 1950
6. Site of Factory for Messrs. Alexandres 28th August 1950
7. P.D.C. Memorandum (after July 1951)
8. Programme of possible development 1st May 1951
9. Comparison of land availability, 1950 and 1951.



3. P.D.C. Designation Orders, A.D.10

1. Draft Easington New Town Designation Order 1947  
Explanatory Memorandum
2. Meeting of Minister and Local Authorities  
27th August 1947
3. Draft Designation Order
4. Appointment of Members
5. Order of Incorporation, 22nd March 1948
6. Objects and Powers of Development Corporations
7. Letters - Designation Orders as Statutory Instruments
8. Summary of Observations for Local Government  
Board Commissioners
9. Letter, Mr. Hannon to E.R.D.C. 14th September 1949
10. Press Conference of Minister, 1st September 1949

4. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations A.C.12/5

1. Meeting, 23rd July 1948
2. Preliminary Report on Relations with N.C.B.  
7th February 1948
3. Notes of conversation with Mr. Reiss of  
Miners' Welfare Association
4. Meeting 19th May 1948
5. Letters concerning pre-designation agreement
6. Meeting 23rd July 1948
7. Letters to Ministry of Works
8. Preparatory Notes for Meeting with N.C.B.
9. Second Confidential Conference with Minister's team  
18th November 1948
10. Letter from Dixon agreeing to extension of No.2 area
11. Mr. Potts' Report on Mining Subsidence, February 1949
12. Zoning Proposed in the Webster Report  
11th March 1949
13. Letter, Williams to Dixon 16th March 1949
- 14.. Meeting of 31st March 1949
15. Notes for General Manager (from Lubetkin)
16. Meeting, 15th March 1949 Williams and Dixon
17. Meeting, 19th May 1949 Williams and Barratt

5. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations Inter Departmental Working Party. A.C. 9/7

1. Letter, Williams to Sydenham, 24th June 1949
2. Report of the Inter Departmental Working Party
3. Meeting, 13th April 1949
4. Note by General Manager
5. General Manager's Report, 31st August 1949
6. Meeting, N.C.B. and Corporation, 9th March 1951

6. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations A.C. 9/12

1. Report on Negotiations with the N.C.B.
2. Report on Peterlee Development by the Chief Development Engineer's Division of the Ministry of Works (the Webster Report)

7. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations, Regional Working Party. A.C. 9/2

1. Terms of Reference of Regional Working Party
2. Meeting, 1st June 1949
3. Meeting, 16th June 1949
4. Meeting, 6th September 1949
5. Letter, Niven to Williams, 6th September 1949
6. Meeting, 16th September 1949
7. Letter, Williams to Dobbie, 14th October 1949
8. Letter, Scragg to Williams, 3rd November 1949
9. Meeting, 7th November 1949
10. Letter, Dobbie to Peyer, 8th December 1949
11. Letter, Nimmo to Sydenham, 7th December 1949
12. Meeting, 2nd May 1950
13. Meeting, Sub-Committee, 3rd May 1950
14. Meeting, 1st June 1950
15. Letter, Williams to Dobbie, 9th May 1950  
and reply, 19th May 1950
16. Meeting, 23rd January 1952

8. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations A.C.9

1. N.C.B. Annual Report for East Durham, 1948
2. Meeting, 26th September 1949, Horden Lodge
3. General Manager's Report on meeting with Fry
4. General Manager's Report on meeting of the Regional Working Party, 7th November 1949
5. Letter, Niven (ref. Van Iterson), 26th October 1949
6. Meeting, 19th November 1949, Shotton Lodge
7. General Manager's Report, 7th November 1949
8. General Manager's Report on the coal position, 17th November 1949
9. Report of Architect-Planner, 24th November 1949
10. Summary of Coal Problem
11. Letter, Beveridge to Dalton, 5th April 1950
12. Letter, Beveridge to Williams, 5th April 1950
13. Letter, Beveridge to Hyndley, 6th April 1950
14. Letter, Sydenham to Williams, 21st June 1951
15. Letter, Williams to Sydenham, 27th June 1951
16. Letter, Sydenham to Williams, 3rd July 1951
17. Meeting, 27th July 1951
18. Report of Potts on Meeting 27th July 1951
19. General Manager's Report, 6th February 1952
20. Meeting, 3rd December 1952
21. Meeting, 24th February 1952

9. P.D.C. Meetings with the National Coal Board A.C. 9/5

1. Letter, Williams to Fry, 14th October 1949  
and reply, 20th October 1949
2. Letters, Beveridge to Williams, 12th December 1949
3. Letters, Williams to Dobbie
4. Letter of Lubetkin, 2nd February 1950
5. Meeting, 9th March 1951
6. Letter, Williams to Potts, 26th April 1951

10. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations, Meetings with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, A.C.9/4

1. Meeting, Hill and Van Iterson
2. Meeting, Williams and Minister's reps.  
13th January 1950
3. Meeting, 17th January 1950
4. Meeting, 8th May 1950
5. Meeting, 8th May 1951

11. P.D.C. Coal Negotiations, Technical Working Party. A.C. 9/1

1. Meeting, 27th July 1951 (Whitaker)
2. Meeting, 3rd August 1951 (Grenfell Baines)
3. Meeting, 14th September 1951 (N.C.B.)
4. Draft Report of the T.W.P. 25th October 1951
5. Meeting, 21st October 1951

12. P.D.C. Correspondence with Peterlee Parish Council. A.P.4.

1. Letters, Memoranda and full details leading up to the formation of Peterlee Parish Council
2. Draft Designation Order (Explanatory Memoranda)
3. Letter from Ministry to Clerk of E.R.D.C. giving reasons why reject local inquiry objections
4. Minutes of Local Inquiry
5. Letters dealing with affairs of Parish Council (up to the present day)

13. M.H.L.G. Easington Rural District - Peterlee New Town  
(at offices of Ministry Nat. Region,  
83 Victoria Street, London S.W.1.)

1. Meeting, 10th January 1947
2. Letter, Mineral Valuer to Tetlow, 28th February 1947
3. Objections by the Ministry of Agriculture  
24th February 1947
4. Minutes of R.P.P.C. 28th May 1947

14. E.R.D.C. File 249 (January 1946 - April 1947)  
(Mr. Clarke's own file)

1. Letter, Clarke to Tetlow, 6th May 1946
2. Letter, Robson to Clarke, 10th May 1946
3. Letter, Clarke to Gray, 14th May 1946
4. Letter, Gray to Regional Planning Officer,  
17th May 1946
5. Memorandum of the Town and Country Planning  
Association, 22nd May 1946
6. Extracts from Council Minutes
7. Mr. Clarke's Report, dated 4th August 1943
8. Copies of New Towns Bill and Interim Report  
of the New Towns Committee
9. Report prepared by Mr. James, 30th August 1946
10. Letter, Bates to Clarke, 4th October 1946
11. Letter, Elliott to Clarke, 4th October 1946
12. Letter, Clarke to Bates, 8th November 1946
13. Letter, Clarke to Tetlow, 18th November 1946
14. Letter, Tetlow to Clarke, 4th December 1946
15. Letter, and Schedule, Clarke to Tetlow,  
(Housing Requirements) 5th March 1947
16. Outline sketch of Central Development
- 16a. Letter, James to Clarke, 6th March 1947
17. Letter, Clarke to Barratt, 18th March 1947
18. Travel to work figures from Ministry
19. Letter, Clarke to Dixon, 16th April 1947
20. Letter, Clarke to Lyon, 29th April 1947
21. Letter, Clarke to North Eastern Development Area  
Plan 30th April 1947

15. E.R.D.C. New Town Peterlee. File 327

1. Letters Clarke to Methven, Tetlow and Bates  
19th December 1946
2. Letter, Bates to Clarke, 30th December 1946
3. Extract from Minutes of the Council and  
Housing Committee
4. Letter, Clarke to Gray, 14th January 1947
5. Letter, Clarke to James, 17th January 1947
6. Letter, Clarke to Tetlow, 7th March 1947
7. Meeting, Tetlow and Council, 12th March 1947
8. Letter, Ministry to Clerk, 16th August 1947
9. Surveyor's Report, 21st August 1947
10. Letter, Waddell to Clerk, 22nd August 1947
11. Meeting, Silkin and Local Authorities  
27th August 1947
12. Housing Schedule
13. Letter, Bates (?) to Clarke, 10th September 1947
14. Letters, Wheatley Hill Labour Party
15. Reply, Clarke to above, 23rd September 1947
16. Letters to various people concerning  
Industrial Site No. 14.
17. Letter, Clarke to Gray, 13th October 1947  
(Formality of Ministry's letters)
18. Letter, Waddell to E.R.D.C., 6th October 1947
19. Draft Order, Statement by the Minister as to  
size and general character, 29th October 1947
- 19a. Letter, Clarke to Hunting Aero Survey Limited  
25th November 1947
20. Report of the Surveyor to Housing Committee  
11th December 1947
21. Letters of December 1947, Clarke to Ministry  
and replies
22. Explanatory Memorandum
23. Letter, Tetlow to Clarke, 4th February 1948
24. Letters, Waddell to the Council,  
5th and 6th March 1948
25. Designation Order, 10th March 1948

16. D.C.P.D. Easington New Town. File 1
  1. Report of the County Planning Officer  
28th January 1947
  2. Report of Meeting of County Planning Committee  
11th July 1947
  3. Meeting on Boundary Proposals, called by  
Tetlow, 24th September 1947
  
17. M.H.L.G. Minutes of the Regional Physical Planning Committee  
17th December 1946 - 18th November 1947
  1. Report on Regional Organisation
  2. Meeting, 17th December 1946
  3. Meeting, 28th January 1947
  4. Meeting, 25th February 1947
  5. Meeting, 26th March 1947
  6. Report of the Sub-Committee on the Size  
and Site of the Proposed New Town
  7. Meeting, 22nd April 1947
  8. Meeting, 28th May 1947
  9. Meeting, 26th August 1947
  10. Meeting, 18th November 1947
  
18. P.D.C. Industry General A.11
  1. Letters, Ridley to Silkin, 24th February 1949  
Silkin to Ridley, 23rd March 1949  
Chrisp to Silkin, 25th March 1949
  2. Notes on Industry, 12th April 1950
  3. Letter, Reading to Hendy, 6th April 1950
  4. Industry at Peterlee and the  
Problem of the Hartlepoons
  5. Letter Williams to Dobbie, 27th April 1950
  6. Letter Williams to Dobbie, 9th May 1950
  7. Extract, Northern Echo, 9th May 1950 -  
Conference of Parish Councils
  8. Interview, Verringer with Matheson of  
East Kilbride D.C., 12th May 1950
  9. Peterlee Industry and the Hartlepoons  
19th May 1950

## 18. (Continued)

10. Letter, Sullivan to West, 10th June 1950
11. Report of Chief Estate Surveyor, 13th June 1950
12. Letter, Dobbie to Williams, 12th July 1950
13. Letters, Williams, Dobbie and Sillar,  
14th and 17th July 1950
14. Note, West to Chairman, 17th July 1950
15. Letter, Hope to Secretary, Ministry of  
Town and Country Planning, 20th July 1950
16. Letter, Williams to Clerk of County Council,  
2nd August 1950
17. Letter, Williams to Dobbie, 2nd August 1950
18. Letter, (Not sent), Williams to Sadler-Forster,  
29th September 1950
20. Letter, Williams to Reading, 2nd October 1950
21. General Manager's Report, 19th October 1950
22. Letter, Reading to Williams, 19th October 1950
23. Letter, Williams to Fry, 25th October 1950
24. Letter, Williams to Reading, 25th October 1950
25. Letter, Sydenham to Williams, 30th October 1950
26. General Manager's Report to Industrial  
Sub-Committee, 30th October 1950
27. Letter, Williams to Sydenham, 1st November 1950
28. Extract, Northern Echo, 11th November 1950
29. Meeting of 3rd November 1950
30. Meeting of 20th November 1950

19. P.D.C. Industry General A.11

1. Letter, West to Sadler-Forster, 19th December 1950
2. Sadler-Forster to Williams, 3rd January 1951
3. Meeting of 8th January 1951
4. Memo, Chairman to Gen. Manager, 15th January 1951
5. Meeting, 19th February 1951
6. Letter, Williams to Sillar, 20th February 1951
7. Letter, Sillar to Williams, 22nd February 1951
8. Letter (draft), Williams to Sillar (no date)
9. Copy of New Towns Act, Sec.3(1) Submission  
of Plan for Ind. Estate
10. General Manager's Report, 3rd June 1951
11. Memorandum of County Planning Officer, 30th May 1951
12. Letter, Sydenham to Williams, 14th June 1951
13. Letter, Coles to Williams, 20th June 1951



## 19. (Continued)

14. Letter, Barber to General Manager, 6th March 1951
15. Letter, Sydenham to Williams, 12th July 1951
16. Letter, Coles to Williams, 12th July 1951
17. Letter, Williams to Coles, 13th July 1951
18. Letter, Sillar to Williams, 23rd July 1951
19. Letter, Williams to Sillar, 24th July 1951
20. Letter, Williams to Shinwell, 24th July 1951
21. Letters, Williams, Dobbie, 10th & 14th August 1951
22. Availability of Labour, September 1951
23. Letter, Sadler-Forster to MacMillan, 24th July 1952
24. Letter, MacMillan to Sadler-Forster, 12th August 1952
25. Letter, Barber to Williams, 13th January 1953

20. P.D.C. Industry General

1. Letter, Williams to Dobbie, 26th February 1953
2. Letter, Coles to Williams, 26th February 1953
3. Letter, Barber to Williams, 5th March 1953
4. Letter, Dobbie to Watson, 19th June 1953
5. Letter, Williams to Watson, 23rd June 1953
6. Letter, Williams to Watson, 1st July 1953
7. Letter, Owen to Williams, 3rd July 1953
8. Letters, 11th September, Williams to General Managers, Corby, Harlow and Basildon D.C. and replies
9. Memorandum on Advance Factories, 5th January 1954
10. Letter, Williams to Syme, 21st April 1954
11. Letter, Syme to Williams, 30th April 1954
12. Letter, Sceats to Williams, 5th May 1954
13. Letter, Williams to Coles, 15th November 1954
14. Letter, Williams to Sadler-Forster, 28th June 1955
15. Letter, Williams to Coles, 3rd October 1955
16. Letter, Williams to Geenty, 20th February 1956
17. Letter, Geenty to Williams, 21st March 1956

## 21. P.D.C.

1. Letters to Newspapers, 18th April 1956
2. Letter, Williams to Charlesworth, 1st March 1957
3. Letter, Langford Holt to Williams, 3rd May 1957
4. Letter, Sadler-Forster to Col. H.H. Peele,  
12th September 1957
6. Letter, Agar to Williams, 20th December 1957
7. Notes on Industrial Development -  
Sadler-Forster, 9th January 1958
8. Letter, Williams to Geenty, 23rd January 1958
9. Meeting with Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P., and Representatives  
of E.R.D.C., 24th January 1958
10. Letter, Geenty to Williams, 3rd February 1958
11. Letter, Chief Engineer to General Manager,  
14th February 1958.

22. D.C.P.D. E.R.D.C. Peterlee New Town 5P/25

1. Minutes of Meeting, 28th May 1954
2. Minutes of Meeting, 31st August 1950
3. Ogden to Geenty, 26th August 1950
4. Sullivan to Geenty, 8th July 1950
5. Dymond to Geenty, 5th July 1950
6. Geenty to Dymond, 13th June 1953

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Mr. Clarke	11th December, 1959
Mr. James	3th January, 1960
Mr. Lunoden	February, 1960
Mr. Nicklin	March and June, 1960
Lord Silkin,	29th January, 1960
Northern Research Officer, Board of Trade, Northern Regional Office	April, 1960
Mr. Syrett	10th December, 1959

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Miss Elliott	13th January and 6th April, 1960
Mr. Roberts	16th May, 1960
Mr. Robinson	13th June, 1960
Sir Frank Osborn	13th August, 1960
Prof. Potts	30th March, 1960

His present allies had been his secret allies since he entered Parliament. Hibbert again spoke of peace, retrenchment, reform and civil and religious liberty and said that the Conservatives stood in the way of achieving such things. Spinks asserted that the Conservatives wanted to preserve and improve institutions and attacked Liberals as renegade "Tories" holding office for power and position.

Local connection, social position and good party organisation carried the day. Platt was placed at the head of the poll with 1122 votes, followed by Hibbert with 1105. The two Conservative candidates were soundly defeated with 898 votes for Cobbett and 846 for Spinks.