

# MAN OF POWER

## Vital part in shaping Britain's industrial future

By the C N Political Correspondent

SIR PERCY MILLS has now taken charge of the Ministry of Power—formerly known as Fuel and Power. A Government department which will play a great part in shaping Britain's industrial future thus fittingly comes under the control, not of a politician, but of a brilliant man of industry.

On becoming Minister of Power at the age of 67, Sir Percy was created a baron, and he will make his big speeches in the House of Lords as Lord Mills. But he might aptly have been called "Lord Powerhouse"; indeed, some people invented this "title" for him because of what he has to do.

His control extends over the coal, gas, electricity, and oil industries, the first three of these already under State ownership. But his major job will be to put fresh drive into the building of a vast network of nuclear power stations.

For that reason the responsibility for the iron and steel industry has been transferred from the Board of Trade to him. Power-stations cannot be built without great quantities of steel. As other industries also need steel, the new



Lord Mills of Studley

Minister will be in a position to balance conflicting needs.

Two main considerations will guide him: first, our coal reserves will not last for ever, and, secondly, we cannot depend for ever on imported oil supplies. Coal and oil are our two main sources of power at present.

### NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

But our industrial power will be increasingly added to as the present programme, of 12 nuclear power-stations by 1965, is merged into an even bigger programme. These stations (the first, at Calder Hall, is already working) will produce electricity to be fed into the national grid, the "high-wire" system we see spanning the countryside on tall steel pylons.

The new Minister's appointment was the big surprise of Mr. Macmillan's Cabinet changes last month, because in peacetime Ministers are usually chosen from either the Commons or the Lords.

Percy Mills was born in 1890. He became one of the bright boys of the North-eastern County School at Barnard Castle, Co. Durham. He was a boy who "knew what he wanted." He was first-class at sums.

While Mr. Macmillan was showing some skill at Greek and Latin grammar at Eton, Percy Mills was in London learning to be an accountant. Before he was 30 he had begun to carve out a business career in Birmingham.

He was still a young man when he became general manager of W. and T. Avery, makers of weighing and testing machines; and until his Government appointment, which prevents him from engaging in business, he has been chairman or a director of various big engineering firms.

Wartime brought new and urgent demands, and Sir Percy became Comptroller-General of Machine Tools.

In this post he first made the acquaintance of Mr. Macmillan, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Supply Ministry. Mr. Macmillan formed a lively estimate of Sir Percy's great abilities, and, on becoming Housing Minister in 1951, called Sir Percy to help him—as a Civil Servant—to increase Britain's house-building record.

### INTERNATIONAL WORK

Before that, however, Sir Percy, with his great knowledge of the British steel industry, did another important job. He had spent four years directing the supply of machine tools when, in 1944, he was asked to become a British negotiator.

Defeated Germany still had a powerful steel industry. The question was how much steel she should be allowed to produce after the war.

Sir Percy was able to settle between the Allies an agreed total which, while preventing the Germans from threatening others, would not throw them on the scrap-heap, a burden to the world.

This, then, is the background of the man chosen to direct Britain's power programme, so vital to our prosperity.

### PLANE DOES 50 M P H ON THE ROAD

A light aircraft that has a cruising speed of 85 m.p.h. in the air and 50 m.p.h. on the road has been built by an American Doctor of Physics—Dr. Lewis Jackson.

By unlocking a single pin, the plane's 18-foot wing can be swung back above the fuselage, reducing the width to a little over seven feet.

On the road, the aircraft, aptly named Versatile, is driven along by its aircrew.

# Holidays on horseback

Pony-trekking through glorious Highland scenery is likely to be a great attraction for holiday-makers in Scotland this year. You do not have to be an expert rider to enjoy it—the sturdy ponies used are sure-footed and take care of their riders.

Staying at a hotel in the mountains, you can spend exciting days on pony-back, exploring the hills, glens, and woodlands, picnicking on the moors, and returning in the evening to take part in Highland dancing and singing—if you have any energy left.

Each pony-trekking centre provides something different. At one, complete novices are catered for, and at another more experienced riders can follow the trails the old-time Border reivers (raiders) used to ride.

More information can be obtained from the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation, 4 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh.

### NEW ZEALAND'S HISTORIC PLACES

Though a young nation, the New Zealanders have already developed a healthy sense of history. Their National Historic Places Trust, formed in 1955, has plenty of work on its hands. Recently it assisted in the skilled removal of some interesting rock paintings, which were threatened with destruction by hydro-electric schemes.

The Trust has nearly 800 places on its list. Among them are historic houses, churches and missions; Maori houses and villages; redoubts of the Maori war, battlefields and war graves; landing sites and birthplaces; and sealing and whaling stations of pioneer days.

An emblem showing an early settler's house is used to mark the places that are being preserved.

### CLIVE'S INDIAN ALBUM

An album of beautiful pictures by Indian artists is now on view at London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Acquired with money given by an anonymous American, it is of great historic interest, for it was given to Lord Clive in 1765 by the ruler of Oudh, an ancient kingdom north of the Ganges.

Oudh was conquered by the British in 1764, but a year or two later Clive restored the kingdom to its Nawab, and received this album as a token of thanks.

Exquisite flower studies decorate every page of the album, which contains miniatures illustrating many aspects of Indian life in the 17th and 18th century, as well as leading figures of the time.

### ENGLISH BELL FOR AMERICAN CHAPEL

One of the four bells in a ruined church on a hilltop above the Suffolk village of Stanton has been hired by American airmen for use in the chapel at their nearby base. They have paid 50 dollars—about £17 15s.—for the hire of the bell, which was cast in 1680.

# News from Everywhere

Britain is to build a 45,000-ton liner, the biggest since the Queen Elizabeth. Costing £12,500,000, it will sail between Britain and Australia.

A television camera weighing less than one pound has been developed in the U.S. It can be operated in the palm of the hand.

The Duchess of Kent is to open the first session of the Parliament of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) next month.

### Record prices



Mr. Joseph Rylatt has thought of a good way to attract customers to his grocery business at Wembley. He reads out the morning's prices into a tape-recorder before he opens the shop and then plays the record to housewives during shopping time.

A senior research fellowship in advertising has been introduced by the London School of Economics.

The world's first two gas-turbine-powered trawlers are to be built in Germany for a British firm.

A Canadian visitor to Burton-on-Trent has taken home a disused lamp-post as a souvenir of Old England.

Schools in New Zealand and Australia are adopting italic script handwriting, now so popular in Britain.

The BBC is to open a combined V.H.F. and television station next year to serve Dover and Folkestone.

A new training centre is being opened at the Hills Hotel, Largs, by the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation.

An American aircraft firm claims to have developed an electronic device which can land a plane without the pilot even touching the throttles.

The mud hut used by Livingstone and Stanley in 1871 at Kwihara, Tanganyika, has been opened as a memorial to the two explorers.

The Easter Navy Days at Chatham have been cancelled this year because of the petrol shortage.

Britain has obtained a £1,000,000 contract for five turbines to be installed in the Kariba Gorge hydro-electric scheme on the Zambesi in Rhodesia.

Prince Charles now goes to a prep school in Knightsbridge, about a mile from Buckingham Palace.

British exports rose last year—by ten per cent in value and six per cent in volume.

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