

is gripped by that, he will be gripped, less dramatically, by the rest; if not, he had better put the book down again.

—James K. Baxter

INSIDE PARLIAMENT

GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT. A Survey from the Inside, by Herbert Morrison. Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, English price 21 s.

IN a library of books about the government of Britain there is, I should say, with the publishers, nothing quite like this tour through the whole of the machinery of government. It is conducted by a veteran of the Labour Party, who has been in three Ministries and the War Cabinet, and has led the House of Commons. Mr. Herbert Morrison not only tells us how the machinery works, but drops in experiences as one of the engineers. Part of the unique value of this study is that, though it is very detailed in places, it has the warm human touch.

Mr. Morrison explains how Cabinet agenda is prepared, and how Ministers actually work round the table. He discusses, with exceptional authority, the size of Cabinets and the value of supervising or co-ordinating Ministers. From a consideration of the relationship between Crown and Parliament, in which he respectfully disagrees with King



RT. HON. HERBERT MORRISON
"To be effective in the Commons one must love the place"

George V's handling of the 1931 crisis, he passes to his most fascinating theme, the House of Commons. There he shows the activities behind the publicised debates: the work of the Whips and committees, and of the law draftsmen, who may make 20 drafts of a Bill before it goes to the House; the burden carried by Ministers (Mr. Morrison's average bed-time as Foreign Secretary was about 3.0 a.m., and he was up at about 8); and the pains taken to keep contact between Front and Back Benches. Through the system operates the corporate spirit of the House, the resultant of opposite forces—political differences and the genius of the English for accommodation and compromise. Significantly, Mr. Morrison points out that the Leader of the House is responsible to the whole House, not only to his own party, and must respect the House's feelings. Above all, he says, if one is to be effective in the Commons, "one must love the place." It was part of Ramsay MacDonald's handicap that he did not.

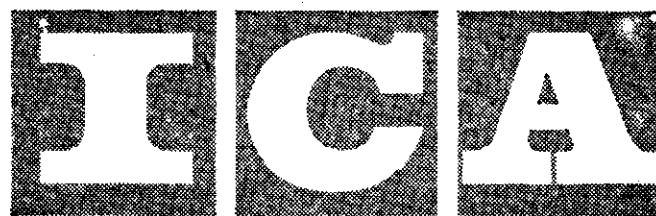
Mr. Morrison also considers the House of Lords as a working partner, and perhaps the most curious thing in this Socialist's book is his appreciation

(continued on next page)

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