

## POLITICAL ADVENTURE

was the last person likely to tolerate interference in the conduct of his department, and Eden should have foreseen that if he wished to retain his deep interest in, and control over, foreign policy, the appointment of a highly talented and individualistic man of Macmillan's capacity and intelligence was hardly the best manner in which to accomplish this. The situation remained difficult until, to everybody's relief, Macmillan left the Foreign Office to replace Butler at the Treasury in December in the greatly delayed major reconstruction of the Cabinet, being again replaced in the office he had vacated by Selwyn Lloyd.

In April I had another experience which was very moving to me. Dornoch, the Royal Burgh in which my mother had been born, made me a Freeman. The conferring of the Freedom came in the middle of a very busy day. The Sutherland County Council had asked me to open a new school at Helmsdale in the morning, which involved two speeches – one to the infants and another to the assembled school, teachers, and County Councillors. I then drove to Dornoch and was piped into the centre of the burgh with my own music, 'Kilmuir's Return to Dornoch'. The ceremony was in the open air, in the square between the Castle and the Cathedral, on which the windows of my grandfather's house, where my mother was born, look out. I made a speech recalling that in this very spot – because Dornoch has altered very little in its 750 years of history – our forebears had heard the news of our private defeat of the Danes at Embo, seen the building of the Cathedral by our local Bishop and Saint, and then seen it burnt by the Mackays in 1570.

The Town Council then gave me lunch, and after a few reminiscences of my boyhood, I went on to Inverness.

There I was engaged in my duties as Chief of the Gaelic Society of Inverness – an office in which I had succeeded Sir Compton Mackenzie. I was met by Billy Maclean, the Member for Inverness-shire, at whose house I changed and went on to the dinner of the Society. It was a wonderful turn-out, including Allister Macdonald of the Isles, the Lord Lieutenant, and Mackintosh of Mackintosh, and the dinner continued until 12.30.

In the morning of April 16th, I performed the most moving duty of laying a wreath on the Great Grave at Culloden. My speech was half Aytoun – fortunately I know 'Prince Charles

## THE PASSING OF CHURCHILL

Edward at Versailles' almost entirely by heart – and half the effect of the 'Forty-Five' on the eighteenth century in Scotland. About 300 people, mainly in the tartan, came to listen to the piper's lament:

Phantom-like as in a mirror  
Rise the grisly scenes of death:  
'There, before me, in its bareness  
Stretches grim Culloden heath.

Eric Linklater did me the honour of attending, and we went for drinks after with Jack Macleod at Culloden House, where Prince Charles had slept the night before the battle and the Butcher Cumberland the night after. I lunched with Shimie Lovat at Beaufort, the house of his namesake, the 'auld fox' of the '45.

Prosaically, after lunch I gave a pep-talk to Billy Maclean's executive on the General Election, which had just been announced.

The General Election of 1955 was the first for twenty years at which I had not been a candidate, but the tenth in which I had spoken continuously throughout the campaign. I have, of course, spoken at innumerable by-elections. Over the years, I have come to apply a simple test of how the campaign is going. If the Labour Party have their tails up, then their supporters make a row at Conservative meetings. This was specially so in 1923, 1929, and 1945. It is all nonsense that electors sympathize with a candidate who has his meetings broken up. They don't. They think him a cissy. The quieter the campaign the better for the Conservatives. I was, therefore, relieved to find that 1955 was the quietest General Election that I had ever known. Even the once-thunderous *Daily Mirror* demonstrated none of its customary verve at election-time. The Tories were bound to win, it declared in effect, and the best Labour could do would be to keep the majority within reasonable limits. This was hardly a trumpet-call, nor was the Labour poster of Attlee, looking rather like a benign rabbit, with the legend 'You can trust Mr Attlee', particularly inspiring. The Labour effort, in brief, was feeble. After some days when I took the chair of a policy committee which dealt with problems of Government policy and answers to questions raised by various bodies, I did five main tours – East Midlands to