

MR. HERBERT MORRISON AND BLACK MARKETEERS

Following is script of a broadcast delivered by Mr. Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, after the nine o'clock news tonight:-

Well, as you've heard, we've a stiff rod in pickle for the black marketeers. 14 years' penal servitude and thrice the price or value of the goods - it's more than the biggest penalty for sabotage. But it's no more than the situation requires. We've got to get rid of these pests. They must be scourged out of the community. And we shall be after the men behind the scenes as well as those in front.

I can think of nothing more contemptible than trafficking in the people's food and necessaries of life at such a time as this. Just now we stand or fall by keeping solidly together, being loyal to one another and keeping up a real fighting spirit. The men who would take food and goods from the common store, lining their own pockets with money wrung out of our common needs and hardships - there's nothing too bad for them.

They'll be hunted with zeal, and punished, I trust, in a way that will give any others, who may be like-minded, good cause to think again. So if you read of many cases and big penalties, don't think that the disease is spreading, but realise this means that the Government's measures are succeeding in stamping it out.

And what about the people who knowingly buy in the black market? Among them are some big people - some restaurants and hotels and some individuals with more money than decency. Every word that is true of the seller is true of these buyers also. They are a shameful blot upon the splendid wartime spirit of the great majority of their own trades, and the overwhelming bulk of the country.

But not all the offenders are big people. There are middle-sized and small caterers who had best look to themselves. Let them wake up to the real meaning of that little bit of extra advantage they get by some illegal business. It is not a small matter: it shows the same bad spirit as the big men, of trying to make a profit out of the nation's need at this hour of peril and crisis.

Food isn't the only source of trouble. The traders who deal in rationed clothes without coupons, who send their men to the back door with silk stockings "off the ration"; all the other traffickers in controlled goods - they are all of them foes of our war effort.

Thank goodness there are not many of them! But any at all is too many. The Government will do what it can to track them down and round them up. But they will never be completely stopped until the whole public thinks of them, and treats them, as the bad characters they are.

Every man and woman has three duties in this matter: First, not to play a part, however, small, in this business of beating the law and standing in the way of victory. No putting up a tale to get petrol or any other coupons you are not really entitled to; no veiled bribery of shopkeepers or their staffs; no benefiting from favouritism; no buying from back-door Quislings.

Secondly, set your faces against this kind of thing; make your opinion of it known; remember that loyalty to the country is a bigger thing than loyalty to your mates or your neighbours; let any offender who may want to boast of how clever he or she has been get from you, not envy, but the blunt condemnation he or she deserves.

And thirdly, if you come across direct evidence of theft or illegal dealing, make it known at once to the police; if somebody comes to your door with uncouped stockings or anything else, keep him there while you get a message to the police station.

The Government means to destroy the black market, and you will help. If this sort of thing were ever to become widespread - as it might do if we forgot our standards - it would go far to bring the whole country down, as the same spirit of private self-seeking has brought other great countries down in this war.

The spirit of "wangle" and the spirit of victory just won't mix.

The Government will do all it can. The rest is up to you.