

BATTLE FOR BRITAIN 1947A Critical Moment in Our Affairs

Manpower, Coal. Upon these two, the fate of industrial Britain depends. Our economy faces its most vital period since the industrial revolution. The year's most momentous Commons debate and the Government's recently published Economic Survey have crystallized the issues at stake. Questioned on the Government viewpoint Stafford Cripps puts it this way:

SOUND

"The central problem is coal and power," says the White Paper. Here, in Sheffield, coal alone supports Britain's greatest steel centre.

Light industry (here at Wolverhampton) lives by coal.

In Blackburn, all textile and engineering works depend upon coal. The great cities of Britain, are virtually built upon coal. For lack of coal the great power producing plants have failed up. Gas supplies have been - and still are - gravely restricted.

In the same field - for the same reason - every industry and every household - face renewed cuts in electricity. Coal and power - without them - we shall lack the bricks, the steel, the furnishings which our ambitious housing programme needs.

If the looms of Lancashire are idle - we shall never escape from austerity and rationed clothing. Heavy and light, all industry will stand or fall - by what we do now. We (and all industry) stand ultimately upon the shoulders of Britain's 695,000 coal miners. They claim a five day week will solve the production problem. Union President Will Lawther tells you why.

This is the miners' view. But many leaders of the country's major private industries have other opinions - among them the shipbuilders of Clydebank. One view came from Cannell Lairds. Speaking in Liverpool, Chairman Sir Robert Johnson said the five day week might mean eventual ruin.

A third opinion is advanced by the great motor and light engineering combines. They have sought a middle course, whereby shorter hours may still mean greater production.

Spokesman for industry is Huffield vice-Chairman, Miles Thomas.

Next to coal, manpower. "There are over 20,000,000 workers in this country," says the White Paper. "They produce goods and service valued at well over £8,500,000,000 a year. This is the value of the total amount

of work done by the nation." The choice lies between a rising production - and a falling standard of living. Every man and woman plays a part in this decision. In all their many jobs, they are Britain.

Public services - manual workers - cleaners - caterers - street sellers - Government workers - distributive trades - women workers - miners - transport drivers - steel men.

For seven years, we the people of Britain fought a war for mankind. Today we fight for our own survival. This battle, also, we shall win.