

# Something More Must Be Done About Holmsley

M.P. WILL MAKE ANOTHER APPROACH TO HOUSING MINISTER

C.T. Nov. 28, 1952

**MR. NIGEL NICOLSON, M.P. for Bournemouth East and Christchurch, is not satisfied with the report of Government Inspectors that there was still considerable life left in the huts at Holmsley and that no government aid could therefore be given.**

**Speaking about this matter at the opening of a Conservative Christmas Bazaar in the Selwyn Hall, Boscombe, on Saturday he said: "Something more must be done soon. The resources of the local Council are almost exhausted. Only the government can provide the necessary aid."**

Mr. Nicolson set out the reasons why Christchurch had such a difficult housing problem. "Christchurch has a long and rich history," he said. "It once had a great castle: it still has its magnificent Priory. But traditionally it was never a large town, and it is only in recent years that it has spread beyond its natural confines

"This rapid growth has partly been due to the increase in the number of retired residents and in the development of the holiday trade. But mainly it has been due to the setting up in the borough of three important establishments, all connected, directly or indirectly, with armaments. We welcome de Havilland's, M.E.X.E. and S.R.D.E., but at the same time we realise that their presence and expansion raise special problems, and among them the most difficult and urgent is the problem of the hutted camp of Holmsley South.

## INFLUX OF WORKERS.

"Holmsley might have existed even if the three establishments had never come to Christchurch. But I doubt whether it would have been necessary to keep it going quite so long if there had not been so great an influx of workers into the town. Christchurch has a building record second to none, but still it was not possible to keep pace with the demand for houses, and Holmsley has been retained as a sort of permanent reservoir for the overflow.

"In the summer of this year I called Mr. Harold MacMillan's attention to the intolerable conditions that existed at Holmsley, and asked for government aid in solving the problem. He sent down his inspectors, and after a rather cursory survey they reported that there was still considerable life left in the huts and that no government aid could be given.

## BATTERED AND LEAKING.

"I cannot accept that conclusion. After several tours of the site and many talks with the residents, I have satisfied myself that it would be very wrong to expect decent people to live for several more years in those conditions.

"The huts are in most cases battered and leaking. They are almost all overcrowded. There is no proper meeting hall, no play-ground for the children communications are bad and ordinary facilities inadequate.

Recent press reports have shown how health, and even morals, are deteriorating on the estate."

After declaring that something more must be done soon, Mr. Nicolson said he proposed, in cooperation with Christchurch Council, to make another approach to the Minister, and he was hoping to enlist the support of de Havilland's and the two Ministry of Supply establishments.

## TOWN PROBLEM.

"Many of their men are residents of Holmsley, and others of their employees are inevitably in competition with Holmsley families for new houses put up by the Council. Holmsley is a problem which directly or indirectly affects the whole town, and so long as the problem remains unsolved, it will be a blot on the town's good name."

The bazaar, organised by the Bournemouth East and Christchurch Conservative Association, was opened by Lady Patricia Lennox-Boyd, wife of the Minister of Transport. The great variety of stalls and sideshows

were run by the different branches in the constituency and the prize for the best decorated stall went to Southbourne "A". A consolation prize was awarded to Mundeford for their village stores. Mrs. G. Openshaw, of Mundeford, was chairman of the organising committee, and Mr. A. Cowley acted as secretary.