

# Mr. Nigel Nicolson M.P.

C.T. 1958

By Carl Whiteley



A family picture of Mr. Nigel Nicolson, M.P., and Mrs. Nicolson with one of their two children, four-year-old Juliet, in the grounds of their home, Shirley House, Bransgore. Photo: Frank King.

**On the third of next month, a book called "People and Parliament" will appear on the bookstalls. With this thought provoking title and Mr. Nigel Nicolson, M.P. for Bournemouth East and Christchurch, as author and publisher, it cannot fail to arouse interest.**

Mr. Nicolson discusses the question of Party discipline in British politics today and devotes a whole chapter to events in Bournemouth East and Christchurch. "My intention," he told me, "was to present as fairly as I could both sides of the controversy and to indicate that the controversy raises issues which are of much more than local importance."

The book is by no means all about the Nicolson affair, but he asks the basic question: Should a Member of Parliament be bound to follow the wishes of his Party, local or national, even

if he strongly disagrees with some particular development?

**Said Mr. Nicolson: "When the book is published I expect it will arouse a good deal of local comment, but I hope it will enable Conservatives in this constituency to see our local controversy in its rather wider perspective.**

"I put forward certain practical suggestions for solving the controversy in the fairest and cleanest manner. But what I say about that I will leave to the publication of the book."

## INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Mr. Nicolson entered politics seriously immediately after the war when he came back from the Mediterranean. At the outbreak of war he joined the Grenadier Guards and served as a platoon commander and later as Battalion Intelligence Officer in the 1st Guards Brigade.

He served throughout the Tunisian and Italian campaigns, was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the M.B.E.

In 1945 he was appointed author of the war history of the Grenadier Guards and honorary secretary of the Household Brigade magazine. The two-volume history of the Grenadier Guards was published in 1947.

**Mr. Nicolson was adopted prospective Conservative candidate for West Leicester in 1946 and nursed the constituency until the 1950 General Election. He did not win the seat from Labour and was then invited to contest the Falmouth and Camborne division of Cornwall. He was defeated again at the 1951 General Election but was immediately re-adopted for the same division.**

Within months he was invited to submit his name for the by-election at Bournemouth East in 1952. His election coincided with the death of King George VI and he became the first M.P. for the new reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

## POLITICAL FAMILY

Mr. Nicolson comes from a political family. His father, Sir Harold Nicolson, was National Labour M.P. for West Leicester, 1935-45 and became Socialist in 1947. His mother is V. Sackville-West, the famous novelist.

But he had other reasons for entering politics: "I wanted to play some part in the post-war development of the country and I wanted to have some sort of association with the events of my

time. I have always been very interested in history and to take part, however humble a part, in the making of history very much appealed to me."

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Nicolson's chief interest has always been in foreign affairs, with particular reference to the Middle East. His secondary interests cover a whole round of subjects including town and country planning. He has always had a great interest in archeology and is the only M.P. who is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries and a member of the Ancient Monuments Board. From the point of view of his constituents he takes a great interest in the hotel industry.

Keenly interested in travelling abroad, he was a member of the British delegation to the Council of Europe which involved going abroad four or five times a year and in three weeks he goes to Germany to give a series of lectures on American relations with Europe.

He will lecture in five cities on or near the Rhine during a ten day tour under the auspices of the Anglo-German Association.

**On entering politics, Mr. Nicolson simultaneously co-founded the publishing firm of Weidenfeld and Nicolson which he has continued ever since.**

Mr. Nicolson told me of his great admiration for the Prime Minister. "I first knew Mr. Mac-Millan when for a short time I served on his staff at General Eisenhower's Headquarters in Algiers in 1943. He was the British political representative at Allied H.Q. and from that moment onwards I have had increasing admiration for him."

## WRITER AND BROADCASTER

Outside his actual political and publishing life, Mr. Nicolson is a writer and broadcaster. He does book reviews for the literary weeklies, contributes a number of articles on political and literary subjects to other newspapers and broadcasts on quite a number of occasions on the same sort of subjects.

For the past four years he has been broadcasting every fortnight on the B.B.C's. overseas service to the Middle East a commentary on current affairs. His television appearances have been in connection with the Bournemouth dispute.

Born in London in 1917, he was educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. During the year between leaving Oxford and the outbreak of war he studied social and industrial conditions at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

He was married in July, 1953 to Miss Philippa Tennyson d'Eyncourt, of Burley, and they have two children, Juliet aged four and one-year-old Adam. Their family home is at Shirley House, Bransgore.

**Mr. Nicolson has a good deal of home life. He spends the Parliamentary recess at Bransgore and is home at week-ends at other times. He regularly visits Bournemouth and Christchurch to see individual constituents and for leisure enjoys television, the beach and tennis.**

While Mr. Nicolson leaves his comment on the Bournemouth dispute to the publication of "People and Parliament," he has this to say: "If a majority of Conservatives in this constituency wish me to continue to represent them in Parliament I would be very glad to do so."