

might be asked to teach the subject would prefer not to try? Not everywhere, to be sure, are there those who could comfortably and confidently be at it. One recalls Earl Attlee's story,²⁰ of his having suggested, when on a visit to his old school, the teaching of more social studies to the boys. The masters, it had been explained to him, themselves knew but little of things like that. Yet, whether at school or at university level, a need is not removed by the plea that it cannot in existing circumstances be met.

But in any case it surely is not as if the talent were not anywhere available. Rather it is seemingly a question of bringing it into play. Those who would hope to see the universities at least considering what they might so come to recognise as a sensible elaboration of their inherited arrangements, need to appreciate that, in dealing with a university, they are faced not just with a company of kindly, wise and forwardlooking men, but with an organisational set-up, an institution—not necessarily so constituted as easily to adapt itself in any ways, however sensible, or even to address its collective intelligence to whether if adopted a proposed adaptation might be of benefit to the students for whom it caters, let alone to the community it serves. Every going concern can in some degree be considered as governed by the hand of those, possibly no longer alive, whose arrangements were made without foreknowledge of the conditions in which they are functioning now. Of this obvious truth the British railways are an obvious illustration. How obvious an illustration of it the British universities may equally provide is at least worth asking. On the Harry Truman IN tray there once was a label THE BUCK STOPS HERE! But on a Senate House tray? There it would be more likely to read "For Committee X in accordance with the usual routine". And Committee X will hardly be packed with the exponents of such subjects as, having yet to be established, are still merely bidding for acceptance into the academic scheme. In a Kafka-type nightmare one might wander from door, even from friendly door, to friendly door, for conversations closed, if not with "Yes, but what can I do? I am not the Committee. I am not even the Vice-Chancellor", then with "Yes, but I am only the Vice-Chancellor". Even your Vice-Chancellor—at least in the nightmare context here posited—is technically only a rolesman. One does not expect a skipper, in midvoyage, to redesign his ship.

But is there breaks...? What, on January 26, 1960, do we find reported in *The Times*? "The general discussion in the Senate at Cambridge on the question of introducing sociology into the university's curriculum was more sedate than the exchanges in local periodicals have been. All the speeches were in favour and the debate was on ways and means..."

A false dawn? Or could this be the coming of the day?

²⁰ *A Prime Minister Remembers*, *The Listener*, 22nd January, 1959.