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*Editorial.*

### **PLANNING AND THE STATE.**

The object of economic planning, said a recent British White Paper, is to use the National resources in the best interests of the Nation as a whole. The British Government is seeking to develop a system of economic planning, of which the following are the chief elements: Firstly, an organisation with enough knowledge and reliable information to assess the National resources and to formulate the National needs; secondly, a set of economic "budgets" which relate those needs to the Nation's resources; and thirdly, a number of methods, the combined effect of which will enable the Government to influence the use of resources in the desired direction, without, it is added, interfering with democratic freedoms. Particular stress is placed upon the essential differences between totalitarian and democratic planning. Indeed, the paper proceeds to a point where confession is made that, even with the direct controls which the Government can exercise by virtue of its expenditure, its fiscal policy, through the media of rationing, raw material controls, building licensing, production controls, import licensing, capital issues and price controls, the task of directing by democratic methods an economic system as large and as complex as that of the United Kingdom, is far beyond the powers of any Governmental machine working by itself, no matter how efficient it may be. That is itself a significant statement and one worthy of very careful analysis. It will be recalled that in the forefront of the British plan is a recognition of the need for knowledge and reliable information upon which to assess the National resources and to formulate the National needs.

In very fact, never before has the need been so vital for research, truth, dependable statistics and precise knowledge. Without such fundamentals, society is "flying blind" and the structure of the whole economic fabric is endangered. Every producer and consumer of primary products and every organisation representative of producer, consumer or marketing interests in this State can make a contribution towards the stability of the primary industries of the State by co-operation in the collation of essential data and information of basic importance to those industries. What actually constitute essential data and information of basic importance can best be determined by frank discussion and debate. A welcome awaits those organisations with views or problems to discuss in this regard.