

# The Wolverhampton Worker

The Organ of the Wolverhampton Trades and Labour Council.

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## JANUARY REFLECTIONS.

By "QUI VIVE."

Snow, sleet, and slush. Sleet, snow, and slush appears to be the order of the day. December and January seem to have vied with each other in attempting to wrest from their neighbour February the well-earned sobriquet "fill ditch." It was on just such a dull, damp, dismal morning early in the New Year that I came across a little optimist. I remember, quite distinctly, that I was not in the happiest of moods, for just before starting out I had been reading one or two cuttings taken from one of our local papers. The one referred to a "robin dinner" given to about 80 children in Wolverhampton, and one phrase I could not forget: "Their careworn, pinched faces were a touching sight." The other cutting was headed "Sixty Christmases Ago," and told of a Sevastopol hero who had fallen "on days of ill-health and poverty." This old veteran was in receipt of his old-age pension and a shilling a day pension from the War Office. As his wife, who is 68 years, explained to the newspaper representative, "when the rent was paid and fire and light were paid for there was very little left to live on." And we Britishers tolerate this kind of thing without a word of protest.

Let a man be in a position to extract sufficient wealth from the community to become a millionaire and he will be lauded to the skies, probably remembered in the honours list, and finally go down to his grave honoured and respected. Let a man give the best of his years in his country's service, endure hardship and face death itself on the battlefield, and a grateful country rewards him in his old age with a shilling a day—the price of one or two cigars.

I thought of our soldiers away yonder in the trenches amidst all the horrors of modern warfare. I wondered, as I tramped through the snow and slush, whether any of these children with the "careworn, pinched faces" had fathers out there fighting for their country. I was thinking these bitter thoughts when, not a stone's throw from a main thoroughfare, amidst the wet and slush, and in the semi-darkness, a little feathered songster was trilling merrily

among the trees as though there were no such a thing in the world as war, or poverty, or care, or sorrow, or little children with "careworn, pinched faces," or old veterans who have fallen on evil days.

Talk of pouring oil on troubled waters! Those rich, full notes seemed to bring with them a touch of spring. As they fell upon the ear the dull, grey light seemed to vanish, and the slush and filth seemed to melt away as with the breath of spring, and give place to warm sunshine, and green fields, and smiling hedgerows, and frisky lambs.

It was only the song of a little bird, sung under a dull, leaden, January sky, yet all unconsciously this little warbler had broken the dull routine of one life with a promise of spring.

How much of the sum total of human misery might be avoided if only the people were roused! What an awful toll of human misery the present war will exact! Without being unduly pessimistic, the unfortunate fact remains that many a widow and orphan, and many a widowed mother, already mourn the loss of the breadwinner. Many of our brave soldiers who went out strong and perfect in limb will come back, alas! totally or partially disabled.

One shrinks, naturally, from dwelling upon these possibilities, yet these facts ought to be faced and dealt with in a truly democratic spirit. Surely the finest monument which a nation can erect to her fallen heroes is to make it absolutely impossible that any one of the dependents of those who fall in battle, or the bruised and broken sons that return, shall never want for bread, or, indeed, lack any good thing. "The gods help those who help themselves," says the old adage, and if hopes are to be raised, and lives are to be brightened, and the poor and destitute and down-trodden are to be uplifted, it will be when the people—the common people if one must needs make the distinction—have been taught to recognise their responsibility in the matter. And particularly when the time comes to discuss peace proposals, the people should then make their influence felt.

## A PROGRESSIVE STEP.

### CHILDREN'S CHARTER ADOPTED BY TOWN COUNCIL.

Another step forward in the municipal life of Wolverhampton was made at the last meeting of the Town Council (the Mayor, Alderman Bantock, presiding), when a report of the Health Committee recommending the establishment of Baby Clinic Centres was adopted. The report was as follows:

The Health Committee have had under consideration the question of the provision of baby clinic centres. The Local Government Board have pressed the urgency of this matter, and have expressed their willingness to contribute 50 per cent. of the approved expenditure.

The records of infantile mortality in this borough have been viewed with gravity in the past, but it is gratifying to ascertain the material diminution in the deaths of infants, attributable in their view very largely to the combined efforts of the Midwives' Inspector and the Health Visitor. During the past eight years the infantile death rate per 1,000 births has been reduced from 150 to 100.

The opinion has been unanimously expressed that the establishment of baby clinic centres in the borough would directly result in a further favourable return in the death rate, and generally, by systematic medical advice the stamina of infant life would be enhanced. The committee accordingly recommended:

(1) That two baby clinic centres be established in parts of the borough, to be decided upon by the Health Committee.

(2) That such centres be open upon such days and during such times as may be decided upon by the Committee.

(3) That a doctor be appointed to attend the centres whilst open, and that an additional Health Visitor be also appointed.

(4) That the committee be authorised to obtain suitable premises for the purpose of establishing centres and that the Town Clerk be authorised to prepare the necessary agreement in that behalf, and that the Corporate Seal be affixed thereto.

(5) That the committee be authorised to obtain the necessary drugs and all other incidental necessities in connection with the proper maintenance of the Institutions, and also be empowered to charge the cost thereof upon the rates.

Reverting to the financial position, the probable total cost of the proper execution of the scheme beyond initial expenses, which the committee estimate at the sum of £30, would be as follows:

Superintendent of Midwives .. .. .	£ 110
Two Health Visitors .. .. .	150
Doctor .. .. .	100
Rent of Premises .. .. .	30
Printing, Drugs, and Incidentals .. .. .	50
	£470

From the sum of £470 thus arrived at must be deducted the free grant from the Local Government Board of £235, being 50 per cent. of the capital expenditure, and also a sum of £200, being the total salaries of the Midwives' Inspector and Health Visitor, which the committee are at the present time paying, and thus the actual cost to the Council of the execution of the scheme as outlined in this report, is reduced approximately to £35 per annum.

Councillor HENN, in moving the adoption of the report, said that the Health Committee felt that if the death rate amongst young children was to be reduced some special steps would have to be adopted. The adoption of the Notification of Births Act had been invaluable to them. The Local Government Board were constantly urging upon them the need of this kind of work and generously aided those who took it up. The

people whom they expected to visit the baby clinics would be the people who, under ordinary circumstances, would not see a doctor. There was a large mass of ignorance and prejudice which they must attempt to remove before much progress could be made along the lines suggested. The mere fact that the death rate was so much greater in the east end than in the west was a clear indication as to where they would concentrate in connection with the work. Councillor HENN stated that half of the £470 would come from the Local Government Board, and when it was taken into consideration that for the salaries of the Midwives' Inspector and Health Visitor, amounting to £200, and which the Health Committee were at the present time paying, it would be seen that the cost to the town for the establishment of this work would be approximately only £35 per annum. He urged this as a point of importance, but, he said, if the whole of the cost had to be found by the rates he would be prepared to support the scheme. There was no doubt, he continued, that the people who need the clinics most would attend them and receive benefits from them. Referring to reports which the Health Committee had received from other towns, Councillor HENN said that in the neighbouring city of Birmingham they had six of these centres in active operation, with an average attendance of 175 persons every week of the year, and he did not think that the Wolverhampton women would be any slower than women of other towns to take advantage of the institutions. The scheme was intended to correct some of the early mistakes and to give every child a good chance.

Councillor WALSH seconded the adoption of the report.

Alderman G. R. THORNE, M.P., in supporting, said that in his opinion there could be no better time for doing anything in the direction suggested than the present. When they were losing so many of the men of the country it behoved the nation to adopt means to safeguard the health of the children.

Councillor BENT congratulated the Health Committee on the manner in which they had dealt with the question. It would, he said, relieve a great deal of the worry and mental strain of the poorer mothers of the town. While supporting the scheme, he said that so long as people had to exist under the present social conditions they must expect evil consequences. He looked forward to the time when they would have a national service of doctors and when men and women, in addition to the children, would receive the assistance of the State.

Alderman JOHNSON also supported the resolution, which, as stated, was adopted.

(Other Town Council business will be found on another page.)

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AND THE NEW ARMY.

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You that are not members ask yourselves the reason why, then try to think if there is not something which would be of advantage to you in joining.

Following the crowds in many cases is no criterion, but in this particular we can prove to you the advantage.

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THE  
**Wolverhampton Worker.**

FEBRUARY, 1915.

**FOOD PRICES.**

Replying recently to a newspaper request for his views on the situation, Mr. Henry G. Wells, the well-known author, said that in his opinion what was required was the expropriation of a few millionaires and the shooting of a few contractors. Though, as a rule, we are not given to indulge in such sanguinary sentiments, lately we have been rather inclined to agree with the views set forth. When the war broke out the Trade Unions, almost without a single exception, agreed to suspend whatever movements they

had in hand for increases in wages and betterment of industrial conditions. Such action was applauded by the employers and the public generally as being truly patriotic. It is only one illustration of the manner in which the working classes have shown their regard for their country. But evidently what is patriotic for the working man becomes an entirely different thing when other classes are concerned. The great commercial classes do not consider themselves bound by the same considerations. They evidently believe that they are entitled during war time to resort to every means to inflate their incomes at the expense of the community. While it is decidedly unpatriotic for a working man to worry the powers that be with a demand that they shall be paid a wage commensurate with the labour they perform, these capitalist contractors think themselves perfectly justified in harassing a nation which is shedding its life's blood and expending its wealth to defend their interests by jumping the prices of the necessities of life. Yet apart from the protests of working-class organisations little is heard in condemnation of their action. What would have been said by the Capitalist Press had some of the Trade Unions demanded, owing to the war, that wages should be doubled—a demand which might easily be enforced at the present time, and which would only be the same in effect as the present action of the commercial "rings"? Instead, we find the *Daily Mail*, so beloved of the British public, putting forth this interesting and illuminating view: "It is difficult to blame a shipowner for taking the best bid he can get if he have many shipowners outbidding each other"—referring, of course, to the alleged shortage of shipping with which to convey wheat across the Atlantic Ocean.

**Hollow Excuses.**

The more the matter is probed the clearer becomes the need for prompt and searching Government inquiry into the exactions and "war profits" by means of which the public is now being done at every turn. Everybody in trade blames the higher prices on everybody else, and we may hunt round the whole vicious circle only to find the outward and visible signs of injured innocence living on the losses. There can be no doubt, however, that shipowners at any rate are reaping a record harvest. The facts are instructive. The cost of transport labour has gone up, taking it all round, 10 per cent. Freights, nevertheless, have gone up 300 and in some instances 400 per cent. One excuse offered is the higher cost of labour. The excuse is, on the face of it, ridiculous. Another excuse is the shortage of ships, because some 2,000 or so, it is said, have been chartered by the Government for

transport purposes. That excuse also is hollow. The real reason is that oversea transport has become a private monopoly controlled by the rings known as shipping "conferences." The conferences have got their fingers round the public throat, and there is but one way in which their greedy grip can be loosened—the fixing of maximum prices to the consumer. At the finish it is the consumer who pays for all.

**Government Action Demanded.**

The fear that supplies will not be brought oversea at paying rates, even if extortion is no longer possible, is a phantom fear. Shipowners could not afford in the circumstances to keep their shipping idle, and if they should try that on—well, the public resources of civilisation are not yet exhausted. The time calls for a bold policy. No effort should be spared to beat down every artificial inflation, and this must be done and can only be done by the nation itself. If it can be proved that any group of traders are offending against the public interest they should be dealt with without mercy and should be placed in the category of their country's enemies. The Government will fail lamentably in its duty if it does not take the most vigorous action to protect the interests of the country and the food supplies of the working people.

**A GOOD BEGINNING.**

Truly we are progressing. The Wolverhampton Town Council have commenced the New Year in a most auspicious manner by adopting a scheme for the establishment of Baby Clinic Centres. It is hardly necessary here to recount the advantages which will accrue therefrom. That the Town Council have at last been convinced of the necessity for such centres, however, is due to the unceasing agitation of bodies like the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Women's Labour League, Railway Women's Guild, and kindred organisations, and to them we extend our sincere congratulations on the success of their efforts. The necessity for the Baby Clinic Centre was never more apparent than at the present time. It is yet too early to gauge the effect which the war will have, both on the numbers and physical condition of the people. Besides the direct loss of life—drawn from the strongest members of the community—heavy additions will be made to the numbers of widows and fatherless children, and it is almost certain that after the war we shall have to face a period of trade depression which will intensify the severity of conditions among the poor and lead to increased sickness and mortality. One thing, however, is clear. It is only from the new generation that the ravages of warfare can be made good. Upon the vigour and vitality of our infants and children, more than upon any other factor, does the future of the nation depend. In this connection the work of the Baby Clinics, by reducing the all too heavy rate of infant mortality, by safe-guarding the health of our child-life, and by giving practical advice to mothers, will be invaluable.

**SIR HORATIO BREVITT.**

In these days of political preferment, it is refreshing to come across an instance of honour being given where honour is due. Though rather belated we tender our sincere congratulations to the Town Clerk of Wolverhampton on his inclusion in the list of New Year Honours. We know of no man more fitted to receive the honour of knighthood than Sir Horatio Brevitt, and it is all the more pleasing because it is a recognition of public service well and faithfully performed. Though we do not profess to claim the Town Clerk as one of our adherents we take the opportunity of acknowledging the unflinching courtesy with which he has always met the Labour representatives on our public bodies and the Trade Union and Labour organisations when it has been necessary to call upon him for information. Such information has never been withheld, and the Town Clerk has always been accessible to the humblest of the citizens of the town. Sir Horatio has held the highest municipal office for many years with a dignity that has added lustre to the position. The term "public servant" is an honour to a man who has made public service his life's aim with such success that he is recognised as one of the highest authorities on local administration in the land. Wolverhampton is proud of its Town Clerk, and we feel sure that in tendering our sincere congratulations we have behind us the whole Trade Union and Labour movement of the borough.

G.

At a special meeting of the Wolverhampton Branch of the Gasworkers' Union, held on Tuesday last, the following resolution was unanimously passed: "That this Special Meeting of the Wolverhampton No. 3 Branch of the Gasworkers, Brickmakers, and General Labourers' Society, representing 400 members, requests that Parliament be reassembled with a view to taking control of the corn, flour, and coal supplies, as the burden consequent upon the rise in commodities is extremely heavy, and is of such a character that suffering and deterioration is bound to result in our midst."

**UNDER THE SEARCHLIGHT**  
 By "C. VERE."

I am pleased to observe that passengers on our Corporation trams are now asked to deposit "spent" tickets in specially-provided boxes attached to the cars, instead of littering the streets therewith.

It would be in the interests of still further tidiness in this direction if wire baskets were fixed from point to point in the main streets, so that refuse and waste paper might be dropped therein by pedestrians.

This is done in other towns and cities, and a revenue accrues from the sale of the contents.

Appended is a copy of an advertisement which appeared in the "Wanted" column of one of the local evening papers near the end of last month:

**MECHANIC**, as working Charge Hand, used to brass and steel work; good opening for quick man who can set the pace. State wages, experience, and when free.—Address, J. 5.

The firm in question evidently felt so ashamed of themselves that, it will be noticed, they chose to hide their identity behind the newspaper advertising box "J. 5."

I have no doubt, notwithstanding, that the kind of monster required would be speedily forthcoming. It is the fault of our industrial and economic system that men can be found who will grind down their fellow-workers in order to obtain a few extra shillings a week.

Employers themselves can well afford to feign amiability towards their employees when they have imposed their nigger-driving profiteering methods to the unscrupulous charge of "pace-setting" foremen.

It is gratifying to observe how magnificently the married men in the State have arisen to the gravity of the European situation by joining the Army in such large numbers.

One platform orator considers the response of the Benedicts simply remarkable, and in attempting to account for it has declared it is evident that "the thudding bullet and the hissing shrapnel have no terrors for the man who has listened for hours to the song of the heavenly twins and heard the 'still small voice' over the banisters saying: 'Oh, you've come at last, have you!'"

This somewhat humorous orator must, I fancy, be under the spell of the lovelorn gentleman who, when the trump of war was sounding, sang:

A "peaceful home" has no charms for me  
 And a battlefield no pain.

It is good, however, to see how the vote-bearing men of our nation are shouldering this enormous responsibility, for is it not true that had the enfranchised workers of the world solidly used their power at the ballot-box peacefully a right war would have years ago been made impossible—would have been cast into the oblivion which it is hoped the German Emperor will, in the near future, be thrust by the democracy of that monarch-becured country?

The appointment of three women doctors by the Wolverhampton and Staffordshire General Hospital, to carry out the duties of the three resident medical officers serving with the Army, has met with great satisfaction among the women patients at the institution.

Those who followed the controversy which resulted in the engagement of a woman practitioner by the local Education Committee will be specially interested.

This innovation at the General Hospital is pleasing because it is a recognition of the equal capabilities of male and female doctors.

Of course, it cannot be justly contended that women who obtain the same medical degrees as the male doctors are in any sense less qualified to diagnose and treat the physical ailments of their own sex. Yet I wonder if these ladies will receive equal pay for equal work?

By the way, it may be argued that if women are capable of just as much mental development as men in this and other directions, surely they should be considered sufficiently competent to discharge the most elementary privilege of citizenship, namely, to exercise the vote—which is still denied them.

It is worthy of note, too, that a base hospital, under the entire management of women and staffed by women surgeons, was accepted by the War Office for the Expeditionary Force; and recently another women's medical organisation, the Scottish Women's Hospital, arrived in France, a second unit of which has since left England for Serbia.

Not only are women giving invaluable support in this respect, but thousands of the sex are actively and intelligently engaged in various ways helping to alleviate the misery and distress by which war is inevitably attended.

Let us not forget, therefore, amidst the tumult, the righteous demand for the suffrage—now patiently pacific—which must soon be granted.

Eight hundred more trees are to be planted in Bermondsey streets.

This will be done in order to find work for the unemployed. At the same time the district will be beautified accordingly.

There is scope for more tree-planting in Wolverhampton, and there are men without employment in the town. And we have a Distress Committee which might easily be more energetic.

The Belgian Labour Party was formed in 1895.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

By THE CHIEF.

A Chief's among ye takin' notes,  
An' faith, he'll prent 'em.

—BURNS.

A new and sinister move is being made by employers up and down the country which is causing the gravest concern. Taking advantage of the war they are endeavouring to reintroduce child labour on the plea that it is necessary in the interests of the country. Probably the worst instance that has come to light has occurred in our own neighbourhood.

At the last monthly meeting of the Staffordshire County Education Committee a Mr. Landor moved the following resolution:—

That this Committee is of opinion that owing to the national emergency it is necessary for the said committee to have the power to suspend for the period of the war the enforcement of its bye-laws, which relate to the attendance at school of boys between 13 and 14 years of age, in both the urban and rural districts; that all boys ought to be exempt from attendance at school who have attained the age of thirteen, and who can and will be beneficially employed on work for urgent naval or military purposes, which is being delayed on account of the shortage of adult and boy labour, and that this committee instructs the Director to communicate the foregoing resolutions to the Board of Education and the Home Office, together with an urgent request for permission for power to suspend the aforesaid bye-laws in accordance with the first resolution.

The arguments put forward were that if it was right to ask the men of the country to risk their lives at the war, it was also right for them to encourage boys who might wish to help their fathers and mothers to bring the war to a victorious end as soon as possible. The question was, said Mr. Landor, could these boys do anything to help? If they could be submitted that the committee ought to have the power to release them from school. Employers of labour at Darlaston were engaged in doing work for the Army and Navy, and applications had been made to the Labour Exchange for men and boys to get additional workers to take the places of those who had enlisted. There were, he was told, about 130 boys available in Darlaston, and he contended that the employment of boys would accelerate the production and dispatch of the goods which were needed for the Army and Navy.

The Real Reason.

The resolution, we are told, was carried. Whether the County Education Committee were quite sincere in adopting the motion is another matter. The people at the back of this move undoubtedly were the employers of Darlaston, and all their talk about the boys being anxious to assist their fathers was mere twaddle. If the case for the employment of boys had been honestly stated there is no doubt it would have been something to this effect: "In consequence of the war there is a dearth of a certain class of labour. We have been inundated with Government orders, and while undoubtedly there is a shortage of men, we could get the labour if we paid for it. The position is, that owing to the margin of unemployed having decreased, the working man is able to command a better price for his labour. Therefore, we ask the Education Committee to allow boys to leave school twelve months earlier in order that they may compete with their fathers and so bring down the standard of wages."

Exploiting Little Children.

The chairman of the committee read a letter from the secretary of the men's Union protesting against the employment of boys, and stating that it was their opinion that the employers could get the labour if they paid the price for it. The Government are paying the very best prices for their contracts, and the employers are in a position to pay for adult labour. But in their greed for fat profits they have persuaded the Staffordshire Education Committee to undo all their previous work in order to give them facilities to exploit little children. Surely, we in England are able to carry on our wars without the introduction of juveniles, as is alleged to be the case in Germany. Other people have said it is necessary for the children to work to keep the home going while their parents are away on service. The most sensible course would be for the Government to do the right thing and give full value for the services of our soldiers and sailors. Why should the wives and children suffer because their menfolk are doing their duty? To me this action of the Staffordshire Education Committee is the thin end of the wedge. If it is approved by the Board of Education there will be a stiff fight after the war to get back to the original position. The employers will not be so ready to forego an advantage they have gained.

Bullying Men Into The Army.

Have you heard of Dr. S. Ashley Smith, J.P., of Bilston? He is one of the latest recruits to the bullying brigade. At a recent sitting of the Bilston Police Court this gentleman said there were three or four stalwart young constables in court who, in his opinion, ought to be at the front and in the trenches. The police duties for Bilston could well be performed by others now, and thus release these well-built young constables, who he did not like to see hanging about the court. Addressing them individually, the doctor added: "You take my advice. Go and get the superintendent or the chief-constable to let you off, and go to the front." That is what I call taking a mean advantage. These policemen were not in a position to reply in court, and had to stand there to be abused by an interfering magistrate. We are not a conscriptionist nation, and Dr. Smith has no right to use his office to compel a man to join the Army. While it is desirable that young men should take up arms that fact alone gives no one the right to endeavour to bully them into doing so. At present every man is a free agent and has to settle with his own conscience whether or not he should enlist. And if, unfortunately, the time should arrive when steps will be taken to compel men to join the Army, I am quite sure it will be managed without the aid of Dr. Ashley Smith.

A RECORD YEAR.

WOLVERHAMPTON TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL'S GRATIFYING REPORT.



Photo by

TRADES COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1914.

[Langdon, Darlington Street.]

Back Row: A. W. GOULD, F. DARK, I. MEDLEY, H. ROBERTS, Mrs. J. L. ADAMSON, J. BELLIS, J. E. DIDERIDGE, E. J. NEWMAN, C. HARPER, J. WHITTAKER, J.P., A. J. WEAVER, J.P.  
Bottom Row: C. W. HILL, H. BAGLEY, J. WHITTAKER, J.P., (Secretary), (President), (Vice-President).

The Trades and Labour Council year just closed has, notwithstanding the war, proved a record one in the history of the Council. Among the more important items mentioned in a comprehensive and well-written report (drawn up by the secretary, Mr. H. Bagley) are the following:—"Increased membership has again to be chronicled, the following societies having joined since the last report was presented: Caretakers' Federation, Toolmakers' Society (No. 2 Branch), Musicians' Union, Postmen's Federation, Shop Assistants' Union, Builders' Labourers' Union, Women Workers' Union, The United Machine Workers.

"Financially, there is reason to be well satisfied with the position of the Council. Affiliation fees for the year show a total of £109 19s. 2d., which is again higher than on any previous occasion. The expenditure includes several items that are not likely to be repeated for a considerable period. The total income amounted to £133 16s. 5d., and there is a balance in hand at the commencement of the new session of £47 14s. 6d. Compared with recent years, the financial progress is well maintained. In 1911 the income from affiliation fees was £44 12s. 10½d., and a total made of £48 13s. 7½d.; in 1912 the fees amounted to £75 13s. 6d., and a total reached of £110 9s. 3d.; 1913 showed a net income of £110 17s. 11½d., of which £80 11s. 6d. was derived from affiliation fees, contributed by 33 societies. The year just ended, therefore, is a grand increase, the amount of £109 19s. 2d. affiliation fees being from 45 societies; and the total income a long way in front of any previous year.

"Many urgent matters have engaged the attention of the Council during the year. An unusual event was the agitation, which the Council took prominent part in, following the conviction of Mr. W. M. Adamson (an Organiser of the Workers' Union and a delegate to this Council). Mass meetings of protest were held, petitions got up and extensively signed, and the case laid fully before the Home Secretary and various Members of Parliament. Mr. Adamson had been sentenced, in the first place, to a term of imprisonment of two months' duration, which was mysteriously reduced to one month later in the day, for an alleged assault upon a person during a dispute at Walsall. Questions were asked in Parliament by Mr. G. R. Thorne, Mr. Charles Duncan, M.P., and others, and following an inquiry Mr. Adamson was liberated at the end of the first week.

"Two matters that have been continually advocated in this Council, and pressed for at the Town Council meetings, have at last become accomplished facts. School Clinics and also Baby Clinics are to be established; and it all has not been conceded with respect to the Feeding of Necessitous Children, some progress has been made when the principle has been established that the first duty of the community is to feed its children.

Proposed Trades Hall and Club.

"At the March meeting it was decided to elect a committee to draft a scheme for the erection or otherwise acquiring a suitable building to serve as a centre for the Labour forces of the town, to be called 'The Wolverhampton Trades Hall and Club.' The committee inspected many

sites and buildings, and eventually reported to a special meeting on June 30. After placing the whole matter fully before the delegates, the sub-committee were given power to proceed with the scheme suggested, issue a prospectus, etc. The plans drawn up by Messrs. C. and A. J. Manton, architects, were considered ample for the purposes of a Public Hall, and also for the primary object, that of a Labour centre. The building was intended to consist of:—Ground floor: three lock-up shops; main entrance to hall; four committee rooms, with corridors, staircase leading out of same to large hall; modern conveniences, open area, gateway, etc. First floor: Large hall, seat 870; assembly room to seat 220, convertible into one large room, with platform and seating accommodation for 1,220. Second floor: Thirteen committee rooms, each to accommodate from 30 to 42 persons; waiting rooms; conveniences and all the appurtenances to make a modern hall. An option was obtained upon the site, pending an appeal to the Unions, when the war came with a suddenness that necessitated the suspension, for the present, of the scheme.

War Relief Committees.

"Upon the outbreak of the war, your president and secretary were invited by the Mayor to act upon a Town's Relief Committee, along with the Town Councillors and other citizens. Protest was made at the inadequate representation of Labour; correspondence ensued with the Local Government Board, the Town Clerk, and the leader of the Labour Party. Eventually the strength of Trade Unionist representation was considerably increased, there now being 21 members of the ward committees, with three members on the Executive Committee.

"That this Council submit to the proper authorities that the constitution of the Grammar School be so amended as to include a direct representative from the Wolverhampton Trades Council' was not entirely successful, but the name of Councillor T. Frost was added to the Board of Governors as a Labour representative.

"As an outcome of the amount of unemployment due to the outbreak of war, the Government were asked to increase their out-of-work subsidy under Part II. of the Insurance Act from one-sixth to at least one-half, and the secretary was instructed to ask Trades Councils to press the Government on the point. The subsidy was later increased materially, and Unions will benefit considerably.

Representatives upon Public Bodies.

"The strength of Labour representation upon the Town Council is maintained, Mr. W. Sharrocks (St. Matthew's), Mr. T. Frost (Blakenhall), and Mr. A. Bent (St. George's) being the three whose direct association with this Council continues. Upon the Board of Guardians the Labour representatives—Messrs. T. Jones, J.P., H. Moreton and J. Icke—are backed by Mr. S. Tatton, who was this year returned for the Parish of Heath Town. Mr. J. Whittaker, J.P., is the co-opted member of the Council on the Education Authority; Mr. W. M. Adamson has been appointed, vice Mr. S. Albiston, upon the Distress Committee; Mr. A. J. Weaver, J.P., upon the Midland Advisory Board of the Labour Exchanges; and Mr. A. Flavell and the Secretary upon the Midland Industrial Council."

The Report, together with the balance sheet, takes the form of a handy little book of fifty pages. Other items include an interesting and instructive review of the work of the Labour Party in Parliament, contributed by Mr. A. G. Walkden, General Secretary, R.C.A., and prospective Labour candidate, of whom an excellent photo is given. Space forbids the reproduction of the article, which, however, should be read by all who can secure a copy of the Report. Mr. A. W. Gould contributes a review of 1914, and indicates the programme for 1915. In addition there is the report of the L.R.C., Wolverhampton Worker, Trade Union notes, and a host of other valuable information.

A Creditable Production.

We congratulate Mr. Bagley on the Year Book, which is by far the best he has yet compiled. A considerable amount of time and trouble must have been given to the work, but the finished production amply repays the efforts put forth.

Messrs. Whitehead Bros., the printers, also deserve the thanks of the Council for the attractive manner in which the book has been produced. It is printed on good paper, and the illustrations leave nothing to be desired. It is interesting to note that the frontispiece has been designed by a young member of the Typographical Society. The design, we are told, was executed under novel and unfavourable conditions. Mr. Fred Poulson (son of the secretary of the local branch of the T.A.), who was responsible, being on active service at the time. Private Poulson's abilities do not end here, he having ably contributed on several occasions to the columns of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER.

There is no charge for the Year Book on this occasion.

FORCE.

The whole structure of modern Trade Unionism rests on the basis of force. Force in this instance being described as the strike weapon. If special pleading and sound argument, combined with a moral appeal, was all that was necessary to raise the working classes, then the working classes should be centuries nearer the millennium, for they have never lacked men of capacity to put their case. But what dominating figure in modern capitalism would admit that that alone will move him? Let, however, the fact be demonstrated that behind the arguments there is the possibility of a strike, with all that it means to the employer in dislocation of business, endless trouble, lost contracts, and reduced profits, then immediately he will begin to consider the arguments, weigh up the facts, and deliver judgment. On the face of things he is impressed by the arguments. But is he really?

The railway workers, the miners, the dockers, all have won during late years because the force behind their arguments compelled attention. In the case of some of them the Government was compelled to meet the demonstration of force by a counter demonstration, and mobilised the troops to illustrate the fact that in the last resource the arguments that uphold civilised government rests on force, and that no modern Government would last long unless it had some such ultimate appeal behind all its civil laws.

**OUR WOMEN'S CORNER.**

(By "Laurel.")

**THE FOOD PROBLEM: The Housewives' Burden.**

With the exception, probably, of increased house-keeping money—brought about on only too rare occasions by higher wages—the food question is of supreme importance to the wife and mother in the home. High food prices to the working-class household generally means either a curtailment in the usual quantities necessary or the substitution of inferior goods. Thus, tea of an uncertain quality in normal times is replaced by tea of a hitherto unknown blend; sugar, of necessity, becomes more and more of a luxury, meat joints are frequently "weighed in the balance and found wanting"—on the dinner table—while bacon, eggs, and fish are but "distant memories." Coal is now even dearer and dirtier than before. These, I may say, are only a few of the housewife's daily difficulties, but overcome they have to be; the little mouths have still to be fed, and warm clothes have to be provided to withstand our climatic conditions, yet war prices predominate—they must be paid, and the burden on the poor becomes greater—well nigh to breaking point. It is indeed the woman's cross.

Husbands and fathers talk learnedly, I know, of wheat corners, monopolising syndicates, grasping ship-owners, and unscrupulous capitalists taking advantage of their opportunity to amass fortunes; they discuss world markets, stock exchange quotations, and boldly assert that the Government must take control of all commodities. The housewife knows, however, that prices rise, rarely to fall, that a sovereign to-day does not buy the same as even a few months ago, and that wages do not increase correspondingly with the rise in prices. The women are harassed to make ends meet, while the "enemy within our gates" remains unscathed in body or conscience.

**Why Not Organise?**

Organised efforts will certainly have to be made to prevent this systematic plunder of the poor, and the matter being woman's sphere, why not a "Cheaper Food League" to focus public attention on this all-important question.

In spite of the fact that Parliament considers it convenient time to close doors and suspend their "business as usual," it is imperative that they should be made to understand our opinion on the matter, our indignation at their callous indifference of our sufferings, and that we demand immediate action to put a stop to this wholesale robbery of the people.

I appeal to every woman to bombard the M.P. for their district with a post-card of protest at once.

**Baby Clinics.**

The Health Committee are to be congratulated on their decision to establish two baby clinics within the borough. That there is a necessity for these centres is evidenced by the high infant mortality of 129 per thousand births in 1913 for Wolverhampton. As I have already stated in this column great credit is due to Dr. Malet and his staff for their energetic efforts to cope with this evil and I am convinced their work will be more effective through these baby clinics. While it cannot be said that they will solve the whole of this problem, still with the support of a sympathetic Health Committee, and I hope, the appointment of a lady doctor, this venture should not only prove beneficial to the whole community, but also indicate the direction of further developments by the adoption of the whole scheme of the Local Government Board.

We working mothers are continually being told that it is our appalling ignorance which is responsible for the high infant mortality, for the awful "slaughter of the innocents" day by day as in 1913—95,900 babies under one year of age died in England and Wales.

Possibly women are ignorant, but that is simply because opportunities have never been afforded to them to assist in dispelling it, and for this reason I most heartily welcome baby clinics in our midst because they will be a medium of conveying that education to the mothers. They will also help to draw attention to the other causes operating against child welfare, bad housing, unemployment, ill health, low wages, etc., all the evils that go to make up our great poverty problem.

The working women organisations have every reason to be proud of the result of their agitation. They with the assistance of the Trades and Labour Council, and the magnificent support of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER, aroused and educated public opinion on the whole question, and if it had not been for their activities baby clinics would still have been "a dream of the dim and distant future."

The Town Council have recently sanctioned School Clinics and the Feeding of Negligent School Children, and altogether it would seem as if a brighter day had dawned for the children of Wolverhampton.

**Workers! Buy your own Daily Paper:**

**"The Daily Citizen"**  
The Champion of Labour.

**FOOD!**

**Government Action Demanded by Trades Council.**

**PROTEST MEETING TO BE HELD**

The serious rise in the price of food was considered by the Trades Council at the last monthly meeting when they had under consideration the following resolution sent in by the Railway Clerks' Association:

That the Wolverhampton Trades Council, having regard to the present high and rapidly-increasing prices of bread, flour, coal, meat, and other necessities of daily life, which are pressing so heavily upon those whose life is already a struggle for bare subsistence, calls upon the Labour Party to demand, and upon the Prime Minister to grant, a day to debate same, in order that steps may be taken to remedy the abuse, or to take over the supplies in the same manner as the Government took over the railways and sugar, in order that the working classes may be protected against unjust and extortionate demands.

Mr. TALBOT (R.C.A.), in moving the resolution, said that at the beginning of the war the Government held out some hope that they would safeguard the interests of the people in regard to the food question, but lately they had seen very little in the way of control by the Government of the prices of commodities, such as was suggested at the outbreak of the war. There was more wheat in the country at the present time than ever; that being so, why was it the price of bread had risen to such an extent? Again? if the sea was clear for shipping, what reasons were there for this heavy increase? He considered that the Government should take immediate action. Resolutions alone would have but little effect. The best way to get something done was to organise meetings on the question.

**Quite as Necessary.**

Mr. DIDERIDGE (A.S.E.), seconded the resolution. The shipowners and people who at the present time owned the corn, were, he said, working for their own private gain. The Government could take the railways over when it was necessary, and they should take over the shipping in the same manner. He contended that it was quite as necessary that the food of the people should be supplied in such quantities as would prevent the exploitation of the workers by selfish capitalists as it was to move the troops from one part of the country to another.

COUNCILLOR BENT said that it was the poor people of the country who were suffering through the war. He thought the way the capitalists and monopolists were raising the prices to the poor people was abominable. Coal had risen three shillings a ton, and where on earth, he asked, were the profits going? The capitalists were doing all they could to exploit the workers. It was a question the workers would have to fight. He could not find words strong enough, he continued, to condemn those people who, after the workers had sent the best of their families to fight for their country, should perform the most despicable piece of business it was possible for any human being to sink to.

Mr. J. BELLIS (Gasworkers), also supported the resolution, and remarked that the Corporation men in his union were demanding a 20 per cent. increase in their wages in order to meet the extra cost of living.

**The "Enemy Within the Gate."**

Mr. JACKSON (Typographical Association), said he had come to the conclusion that the first essential to controlling the food supply was for the Government to take over the merchant, transport, and shipping service. They were perfectly justified in saying that the shipowners who were exploiting the poor people of England were the enemy within the gate, and that enemy, he said, was more ruthless and more to be feared than the enemy without the gate. It was up to the people of England to alter this state of things. The people, he thought, would learn a great lesson from what was taking place to-day—they would see that nationalisation was their only hope. He hoped they would hold a public meeting on this question.

The following further resolution, moved by Mr. TALBOT and seconded by Mr. ROBERTS (Boot and Shoe Operatives), was carried: "That a mass meeting be held in the Empire on Sunday, January 31, 1915, to protest against the inflated price of food stuffs, and call upon the Government to take action."

**National Relief Fund.**

Mr. J. H. JACKSON (Typographical Association), moved the following resolution: "That this Trades Council is of opinion that monthly public meetings of the Citizens' Relief Committee should be held at an hour convenient to the working class, at which the Executive Committee shall report its proceedings, believing the resultant publicity which would be given to the business transacted would be calculated to have a beneficial effect upon contributions to the fund."

He wished it to be understood, he said, that this resolution was on the lines of the very spirited editorial article, headed "The Dignity of Labour," which appeared in the current issue of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER. He felt certain that the Labour representatives on the various committees in connection with the National Relief Fund at Wolverhampton had every reason to welcome publicity being given to their views by the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER in face of the treatment they had received in other quarters in many cases, and especially in regard to that mentioned at the last Trades Council meeting. Dealing with the resolution, he said the Press were admitted to the meetings of the

other public bodies in Wolverhampton, and no one would deny that the resultant publicity had a wholesome effect upon public opinion in Wolverhampton. It was not right that the business in connection with the relief fund should be done in secret.

Mr. J. DIDERIDGE (A.S.E.), seconded the resolution, and said that since he had been a member of one of the Ward Relief Committees in connection with the National Relief Fund, his duties had been just to attend meetings for the purpose of considering cases which had been reported to the secretary. That was as much as he knew from an official source of the business of the Citizens' Committee. He thought it advisable that the various members of the Citizens' Committee should meet together as a Citizens' Committee, and not as separate Ward Committees, and that the Press and public should be admitted.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

**CO-OPERATION.**

**Wolverhampton Society's Satisfactory Progress.**

Mr. A. Fullwood presided at the quarterly general meeting of the Wolverhampton Co-operative Society which was held in the Co-operative Hall, on Tuesday, January 12, 1915, ninety-seven members being present. The committee's report, statement of accounts, and auditor's report were adopted.

The chairman drew attention to the society's sales for the past quarter, which showed the grand total of £19,894, being an increase of £3,166 on any previous record. He was sorry, said Mr. Fullwood, to find that prices of commodities were increasing, but members might rest assured they would be given every consideration and would not be charged any more than was absolutely necessary to carry on the business.

New members were coming in very rapidly, and he considered the society was in a most fortunate position to be able to offer a dividend of 1s. 9d. in the £ after all liabilities had been met and contingencies provided for.

The recommendation to pay a dividend of 1s. 9d. in the £, with £80 for the purpose of assuring members' lives under the collective scheme, grant of £40 to the educational fund, and bonus of £24, to be divided amongst the employees on their past quarter's wages, was unanimously agreed to.

The following officers were elected for the next twelve months:—President, Mr. A. Fullwood; secretary, Mr. A. Wood; auditors, Messrs. Muras, Harries, and Johnston, chartered accountants; stocktakers, Messrs. Jones, Badger, Hand, and Smith; two committee men, Messrs. Hill and Coley. Messrs. Taylor and Dean were again nominated for the committee.

Mr. J. E. Dideridge gave a report of a delegation to Rukey, and was appointed to another conference in April next.

The alarming increases in the price of food were also considered, and the following resolution was passed:—

"That this quarterly general meeting of the Wolverhampton and District Co-operative Society, Limited, representing 4,000 members, urges upon the Government the necessity of taking such immediate action as will prevent the cornering of the foodstuffs of the people, and particularly wheat, by unscrupulous rings and syndicates, and thus attempt to secure to the nation the advantages claimed for our naval supremacy by keeping down the prices of all commodities required by the people to their lowest possible limits. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Board of Trade, the Prime Minister, and the local papers."

**TO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS.**

So to our younger members we say, take interest in all these things, Trade Unionism, politics, and economic struggles. Be prepared to work for them and to pay for them. It is because others in the past have done this that your conditions are better, your wages are higher, and your freedom is greater than they and it would otherwise have been. The man who suggests that you should leave any of these things to him and should not bother is an enemy desiring either to do you harm or to prevent you from doing yourself and your class some good. The awful catastrophe that has overtaken Europe would not have taken place if the workers had bothered about international relationships years ago. This war can only be the last war if the workers bother now about future international relationships. So locally, nationally, and internationally, the same principles apply. Are some New Year's resolutions on all these subjects worth considering?—D., in *The Post*.

**NATIONAL INSURANCE ARREARS.**

One of the many difficult things to grasp about the arrears regulation is the fact that, where a member whose penalty arrears exceed 20 and he is suspended from sickness or disablement benefit for the whole of the penalty year, any illness during that period is debited against him as though he had actually been paid benefit. For instance, a member has, say, 22 penalty arrears; he is ill for 25 weeks, during which time he receives no benefit. At the end of the year when fresh arrears calculations are made he has a reserve balance, and is, therefore, entitled to full benefits again. He falls ill and claims sickness benefit, when he will probably be surprised to find that he is only entitled to one week to complete his 26 weeks' sickness benefit.

**THE TOWN COUNCIL.**

Meeting held on Monday, January 11, the Mayor, Alderman A. B. Bantock, presiding.

**Sir Horatio Brevitt.**—A resolution was on the agenda congratulating the Town Clerk upon the honour of knighthood conferred upon him, but the Mayor explained that as Sir Horatio Brevitt was in London in connection with the Investiture, which was to take place the following day, he would formally propose a congratulatory resolution. He hoped they would have the resolution engrossed on vellum, placed in a suitable casket, and present it to the Town Clerk at the February meeting. He would therefore defer any further remarks which he had to make on the subject until that occasion.—Alderman J. E. THORNE, M.P., in seconding, said that Mr. John Burns, the former President of the Local Government Board, had asked him to convey to Sir Horatio Brevitt and the Town Council his warm congratulations. He also read a letter which he had received from Mr. Herbert Samuel, the President of the Local Government Board, in which the latter said that Sir Horatio Brevitt was one of the most active workers in the country for the betterment of local administration. Alderman THORNE also read a letter from Mr. Harry Pritchard (secretary of the Association of Municipal Corporations), in which mention was made of the steps which Sir Horatio Brevitt had taken to protect the interests of municipal authorities generally.—The resolution was carried unanimously.

**Insurance Committee.**—On the motion of the Mayor, Councillor Sharrocks was appointed a member of the Wolverhampton Insurance Committee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Price Lewis as a member of the Town Council.

**A Gift from New Zealand.**—A letter was read from Mr. G. W. Humphreys, of Gisborne, New Zealand, stating that he was sending through a committee set up at Gisborne, N.Z., fifty fat sheep for the express use of those who were suffering in Wolverhampton through the war.—The Mayor said that Mr. Humphreys was a native of Wolverhampton. He had pleasure in moving that a vote of thanks be accorded Mr. Humphreys for his splendid gift.—Alderman GIBBONS, in seconding, said it was a very noble act on the part of Mr. Humphreys.—Carried.

**Electricity.**—The Council adopted a recommendation from the Electricity Committee agreeing, subject to the consent of the Seisdon Rural District Council and the Board of Trade, to supply electricity to the sewage works for power purposes, and also for lighting upon the usual terms. A letter was read from the Board of Trade stating they were not prepared to entertain an application from the Council for the supply of electricity to the Barnhurst outside the area of the borough. The Board further would not entertain the Council's application for an order revoking the powers of the Staffordshire and Shropshire Electric Power Company.

**Loans For Workers' Dwellings.**—Formal sanction by the Local Government Board was reported to the borrowing by the Town Council of the sums of £1,050, £10,186, and £795 respectively for the provision of working class dwellings.

**New Streets.**—The Council approved of a proposal of the Streets Committee that notice be given of the Corporation's intention to declare Sunbeam-street and St. Mary's-terrace public highways within the meaning of the Wolverhampton Improvement Act, 1869.

**THE WORKERS' SHARE!**

I have taken the trouble (says "N.A.L." in the *Postal and Telegraphic Record*) to put into simple form some figures drawn from our national balance sheet. The following are approximations, but sufficiently exact to render sound any deductions made. The total annual income of all classes in this country is estimated at 1,500 million pounds. About one-seventh of the population receive two-thirds of this sum, or 1,000 millions. The remaining one-third of our income, or 500 millions, is divided amongst six-sevenths of the population. The income of each man, woman, and child in the lucky minority is about £184 a year. The income of each man, woman, and child in the unhappy majority, in the working classes, is about £16 a year. £15 a year! Two classes of individuals referred to approximate roughly to those who pay income tax and those who do not—they approximate, perhaps, more roughly still to those who do not drink beer and those who do.

With the new taxes in full swing the income-tax-paying one-seventh of our people will contribute an additional 45 millions. The working-class beer and tea drinkers will contribute 28 millions, including the brewers' solatium. But millions are difficult to grasp. The tax on beer alone means an additional tax of 1s. in the £ on every £1 of working-class wages. The 11,000 people who will pay the super-tax on the one-tenth of the entire national income which they appropriate are asked to pay an additional 1s. 3d. in the £! Surely point number one is clear—the working man is to pay more than his fair share.

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Noted for PURITY, :: BRILLIANCY, & QUALITY.

**FRANK MYATT'S ALES.**

On DRAUGHT and In BOTTLES.