

The Wolverhampton Worker

The Organ of the Wolverhampton Trades and Labour Council.

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GOOD STABLING.

NOVEMBER 1st. REASONS WHY LABOUR REPRESENTATION IS NECESSARY SOME COUNCIL QUESTIONS.

Of all dates in the municipal calendar, November 1 is, perhaps, the most important, for not only is one-third of the governing body elected, but the burgesses by their votes have the opportunity of saying how they wish the town to be governed, whether they consider the policy pursued in the preceding twelve months shall be continued, or whether in their opinion some change in method is necessary.

In Wolverhampton the policy of the present Town Council has been subjected to much criticism during the past twelve months, and grave dissatisfaction and uneasiness is felt among a large section of the inhabitants, and it cannot be denied that there has been real cause for that dissatisfaction.

RENT JUMPING.
Perhaps the outstanding feature of the year has been the wholesale rent-jumping campaign by the landlords of the district, led by a prominent lawyer and a town councillor. Such was the indignation felt at the injustice to the tenants that a great Tenants' Defence League was formed, and by continuous agitation they at length got the Health Committee to recommend to the Council that a committee be appointed to go into the matter. That committee was formed over three months ago, and nothing more has been heard of it.

Meanwhile cases of overcrowding are reported which constitute a serious menace to the health of the borough; families are compelled to live in broken-down and insanitary property, while other families are forced to pay exorbitant rents which they can ill-afford in order that they may keep the privacy of their home-life, instead of, as has already happened in many cases, taking other people into the house to help to bear the burden of the extra rent.

It was the duty of the Town Council, who are the representatives of the people, to take action in the interests of the people, but apparently most of them appear to be under the impression that they were elected to look after the well-being of just a few, for they have done nothing—or worse than nothing—for the tenants, but instead, when the Labour councillors and the Tenants' Defence League have pointed out the gravity of the situation they have been accused of libelling the town, and practically no word was left unsaid by a section of the Council which would help them in their campaign of misrepresentation.

When we remember that the tenants are the electors, that they are the ratepayers, and that they are the people to whom these councillors will come for support on November 1 we confess to a feeling of surprise at their attitude, but no stronger emphasis could be needed of the fact that while professedly they represent the people, yet in actions, which speak far louder than words, they have toadied to that section of the community that lives on the backs of the people—the rack-renters and slum-landlords.

THE MINIMUM WAGE FRAUD.
The same spirit of rancour was exhibited on the question of the minimum wage for corporation employees. After much pressure by the Labour councillors the Town Council were prevailed upon to grant to their employees a minimum wage of 24s., which was a shilling less than was asked for. The meeting of the Town Council which passed that resolution is historic. A most amazing mis-statement was made to the effect that if it had not been for the Labour men the employees would have been getting the 24s. long ago. In this attitude the non-Labour representatives were backed by a section of the Press, but they had evidently overlooked a powerful factor for Labour, which had just about that time made its appearance in the town, and in the second issue of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER such a damning exposure of their tactics was made that they immediately had to drop their campaign of calumny, and nothing further has been heard of it.

At the succeeding meeting the Council piously put into operation their resolution that all able-bodied men should receive the minimum wage. They eulogised it, but it was with their tongues in their cheeks, for they immediately backed out of their undertaking by classing the men employed by the streets committee as inefficient. The men on the Barnhurst farm were promised

21s., in addition to which various extras which they were then receiving made up the amount to 24s. These extras have been taken away, and the authorities have got out of their contract with a slipperiness which could only be equalled by a conger eel. *And they are all, all honourable men!* Mark Antony might have used his biting satire in respect to the Wolverhampton Town Council.

The other side of the picture is that the farm bailiff received an increase of £50 per annum, and increases were granted to other officials without a murmur. And the men merely asked for a wage of 4s. per day!

THE CEMETERY QUESTION.
Other matters occur to us which also show the attitude of the present Town Council to the workers. Among these is the cemetery question. The present General Cemetery is considered by many to be a standing disgrace to the town. The provision of a Municipal Cemetery has been advocated consistently by the Labour Party, who have had the sympathy of a large section of the ratepayers on the question, yet when the Council were at length prevailed upon to go into the matter they shelved the question by appointing a committee to consider it. This committee adopted the usual course, so beloved of their kind, of saying nothing for some time, and after a wearisome wait they presented a report on one or two impossible sites, and there the matter ended so far as the Town Council was concerned. But the question is not finished with, and it will be noticed that all the Labour candidates deal with the matter in their addresses. The question of a Municipal Cemetery has got to be settled in the near future, and apparently it is the Labour Party alone who will settle it.

MUNICIPALISATION.
Municipalisation, so far as its operation in Wolverhampton is concerned, has been very successful during the past twelve months. Hand-some profits have been made on the tramways, electricity departments, water, markets, and the municipal farm. This in itself is a strong argument in favour of the extension of the principle. Yet again we find that it is the Labour Party only who advocate it. In spite of strenuous opposition the Labour Party intend to go on with their campaign, chief among their proposals being a municipal gas undertaking and a municipal milk supply.

Other matters could be dealt with had we the necessary space, but sufficient has been said to show the absolute necessity of more Labour representation on the governing body of the town. It is hardly necessary to remind working men that the men best qualified to judge on questions affecting the workers are men of their own class. The Labour Party on this occasion are putting forward four candidates, these being:

- Mr. W. SHARROCKS**
(St. Matthew's Ward),
who for twelve years has faithfully represented the ward, and has been most strenuous in his efforts to improve the conditions of the inhabitants of the district.
- Mr. ALBERT BENT**
(St. George's Ward).
Mr. Bent (N.U.R.) needs no recommendation to Trade Unionists, and in response to numerous requests he has consented to act as successor to Mr. C. Hickin, the retiring Labour councillor, who unfortunately, owing to ill-health, has been compelled to give up this work.
- Mr. FREDERIC BARKER**
(Graiseley Ward).
Mr. Barker needs no introduction to the Graiseley electors. His sympathy with, and earnestness on behalf of, the workers is well known. He has already contested the ward twice. May the third time pay for all!
- Mr. ARTHUR W. BECK**
(Dunstable Ward).
Like Mr. Bent, Mr. A. W. Beck is a member of the National Union of Railwaymen. He is no stranger to Dunstable people, many of whom are railway workers. He comes forward in response to numerous invitations, and it is to be hoped he will once more win back for Labour the seat which was so ably represented a few years ago by Mr. R. R. Millard.

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What is the use of working for and being successful in getting a 5 per cent. increase in your wages if immediately you have done this you know that it will cost you from 7½ per cent. to 10 per cent. more to live?

This is the sort of thing that has been going on now for years, and will still continue so long as working men look only at one side of present-day economics. The getting of full value for your labour is one thing and the paying of full value only for your necessities of life is another. This latter is very much bound up in the country's production and distribution, and how many working men ignore this matter altogether—result as above. Workers are the active partners in this great question, and why should they not share the full benefits of its workings? The only movement that has yet attempted, and most successfully, to tackle this matter, is the Co-operative movement. This is purely a working-class movement, which every worker ought to join. Capital and an organisation is already in existence in this town.

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FREDERIC BARKER FOR GRAISELEY WARD.

TO THE ELECTORS OF GRAISELEY WARD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—Having again been requested by numerous burgesses, the local Trades Council, and the Labour Party to allow myself to be nominated at the forthcoming election, I have consented to do so.

My views have been placed before you previously, and I am more convinced as time goes on that the Labour programme for which I stand will help in the development of the borough and the welfare of the citizens.

The acquirement of a building suitable for large meetings, concerts, etc., has now become an urgent matter, and would receive my support.

With regard to education, I believe in the equality of opportunity for every child—whether rich or poor—and disagree with the present system of restricted scholarships, etc.

I view with concern the fact that the question of open spaces in Graiseley Ward is not being entertained by the Council, and that every available yard of land is rapidly being covered with bricks and mortar, which must eventually lead to undesirable conditions.

Having been engaged in business in the ward for a period of 33 years, and a resident in the ward, I have a good knowledge of its requirements.

If returned as your representative I shall do all in my power to serve your interests.—Yours faithfully,

FREDERIC BARKER.

2, St. Paul's-terrace,
Wolverhampton.

THE CANDIDATE.

Though Mr. Barker has not been prominently before the public, he has always taken a very lively interest in all matters which affect the welfare of the workers, and for practically the whole of his life he has been working in an unassuming manner in a variety of ways, all with the same object in view.

Early in his teens he was working actively in the Sunday School of St. George's Church, of this town, at about the same time also acting as secretary to the Women's Clothing Club and doing other useful work of a similar character.

With removal of residence he served St. Paul's Parish (which is practically Graiseley Ward) in like manner. He took a very great interest in St. Paul's Men's Institute, serving in various capacities—as secretary, vice-chairman, and president. At a critical time in its history he stepped into the breach and was the means of preventing the abandoning of the good work which was being done for the youth of the district.

The Christmas treat to the poor children of the town, which was given in the Baths Assembly Rooms, received not only financial but practical help, as he always used to help personally in supplying the material things to the youngsters.

As secretary of the Wolverhampton Temperance Society he served the town in a larger sphere for some years, his work being very greatly appreciated by his committee. During his secretaryship the *Midland Temperance Witness* was first circulated in the town, and he was responsible for placing 5,000 free copies per month into the hands of the people. This work was relinquished under compulsion owing to the strain of too much work being placed (as usual) on the willing horse. He has acted upon deputations to various committees in the interests of the school children.

Mr. Barker was president of the Independent Labour Party 1912-13, in which capacity he gave the utmost satisfaction, and he now holds a responsible position as social secretary, and is a delegate to the L.R.C. for the same body. He is a member, and has served on the committee, of the Workers' Educational Association for several years, and is always prepared to render service where possible.

Having resided and been engaged in business in the ward for many years, Mr. Barker is intimately acquainted with its needs, and should be able to represent it as few others could do.

This is the third occasion on which Mr. Barker has contested the seat. This time his prospects are of the brightest, and many people have expressed their admiration at the plucky manner in which Mr. Barker is sticking to the fight. This time conditions are different, and there is no doubt that the stand Mr. Barker has made has influenced many electors in his favour.

As a business man Mr. Barker can give an effective reply to those people who, when they are putting forward vested interests, talk loudly about business men being needed on Town Councils. This business ability, coupled with an intense sympathy with the aspirations of the workers, and a strong determination to do his utmost to better the conditions under which

MUNICIPALISATION.

How it affects the Health of the People.

By FREDERIC BARKER.

The narrow view which many people held in regard to municipal work, that merely such matters as streets, sewerage, lighting, etc., were the only fit subjects for Town Councils, has, with the passing of the years, been considerably modified. A much wider outlook is taking its place, and it is borne in upon the people that the municipality must keep pace with the times and continuously move forward in the direction of service for the people.

life, which undoubtedly would be the quickest way of ensuring good health. The answer to this question might possibly be, "Just so long as the workers send the present class of individual to the Council, because the interest of the majority of them is in the opposite direction."

We have taken the initial step in this direction by supplying the people with the best water obtainable. How far this wise action is responsible for our present tolerably good health standard it is very difficult to estimate, but one need not draw on the imagination very largely when one assumes that without such a supply our health conditions would not be so good by a long way.

Here again, we in Wolverhampton are very much behind the times in the matter



Photo by]

[Bennett Clark.

Recently, in our own town we have seen the futility of only engaging our Medical Officer as a part-time official, this having been remedied by the appointment of the same gentleman as a whole-time official. There is very little doubt, however, that even with this step forward we are not doing all that is necessary, but there is no doubt that it will lead to further progress. Everyone is agreed that the health of the people (ourselves) is of supreme importance, and in the battle which has daily to be waged in our desire to obtain that ideal, our Medical Officer of Health plays the most important part, and it would be a grand thing for the town were he to receive a much larger backing than he at present enjoys from the members of our Town Council.

With a knowledge that his recommendations are not all so acceptable to certain members of the Council as they should be, it goes without saying that his reports would be more useful had the whole of the Council that desire to press forward the necessary improvements which are so urgent.

In addition to the chief Medical Officer we have a full-time medical man employed by the Education Committee, but (the irony of the situation!) practically the only result has been to find out how many children suffer. Although it is within the province of the Committee, very little has been done in the way of curing the ills from which the children suffer.

We also have the Inspectors of the Health Committee daily at work, and the Inspectors of Food, all with the same object in view, namely, the preservation of the health of the people.

of housing. How much better it would be if the houses were owned by the municipality and considerations of health entered into the arrangements instead of considerations only of "profits," which at present are the only factors which enter into the calculations of the speculative builder. How can the people be healthy if they are compelled to herd in houses which are unhealthy? If we are to enjoy really good health these things must receive our attention.

Again we are informed, with regard to our milk supply, that "although the local supply is all that can be desired (I am quoting councillors' statements), and however careful the Council is in the administration of the law, outsiders do not come under their administration, and it is only indirectly that we can get at them." This means that undesirable milk does find its way into the town. Here is one of those things which appears to be necessary for the town to take up. Every individual consumes, or should consume, milk, and it is essential to child life that the milk supply should be of the purest. At the present time, without casting any reflection on the milk trade, either producer or distributor, it is certain that the children in the poorer districts (even if they obtain milk at all) are not so well served as they should be, owing no doubt to the difficulties associated with poverty. It is also certain that our health standard would be very much enhanced if the Council took control and ensured a pure milk supply. On a recent visit to New Cross Poorhouse I was told that the marked improvement in the patients at the Infirmary after the Guardians had erected the "cows' palace" and supplied them with pure milk mere

WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE.

The opening of the winter session of the league was celebrated by a Social Reunion of the members and friends in the Labour Assembly Rooms, and proved to be a very enjoyable function; a very happy time being spent preliminary to the serious work of the league. The opportunity was taken by Miss Agnes Brown, the league organiser—who was assisting in the Trade Union Mission Week—to say a few words of encouragement to the members present. The proceeds of the social were sent as a donation to the League Baby Clinic in London.

The weekly sewing meetings are now being held in the Labour Rooms, Queen's-square, every Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock, when all women who are prepared to do something to alter the system under which so many of our sisters have to toil under sweating conditions for a bare existence are earnestly invited to attend.

On Saturday, September 27, a conference was held, which was attended by about 50 members and friends, including representatives from Birmingham and Kettering. The subject for discussion—"The Medical Care of the Child"—was introduced in a very able manner by Councillor Dr. Ethel Bentham, National President of the league. Dr. Bentham emphasised the necessity of following up the work of the School Medical Officer by the establishment of School Clinics for the treatment of defects discovered by the school doctor; to allow the present lackadaisical system to continue would prove disastrous to the future welfare of the people. It behoved every man and woman to exert every ounce of energy they possessed to do all that lay in their power to alter the present conditions. We must have men and women on our Councils who are not only in sympathy with, but are enthusiastic in their determination to provide sanitary housing accommodation for the workers. Is it not ridiculous that the people who never do any dirty work, or even any work at all, are usually the people who have every facility for bathing in their homes, whilst the toilers in mill, mine, and factory are compelled to resort to all kinds of devices to secure the necessary privacy for cleansing the body? Every house should contain a bath with hot and cold water attached, and our Councillors should be pressed not to pass any plans for working-class houses unless provision is made for this necessity. Dr. Bentham then proceeded to deal more fully with the question of clinics or centres for treatment of diseases. In the whole of England there were only 56 school clinics, and they must not rest until every town had a sufficient number to enable every defective child to be carefully attended, whether it be adenoids, teeth, ears, or any other ailment. Not only were school clinics necessary, but baby clinics also, where the mother can bring the child and have it skilfully attended by the trained nurse and the doctor. Dr. Bentham spoke of the work done at the League Clinic in London, where, as a result of trained and skilful treatment, cases that took three years of hospital treatment were cured in three weeks.

At the close of Dr. Bentham's splendid address many questions were asked and answered, and a most successful conference was brought to a close with a very hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Bentham. A.D.

I.L.P. NOTES.

Now that the "Coming-of-Age" campaign is over we are free to turn our attention to the November elections. The L.R.C. are responsible for four candidates, and if the workers do their duty we shall record four successes on November 1.

Naturally, the candidate in whom we, as I.L.P.-ers, are most interested is Mr. Fred Barker, an ex-president of the local branch and one of the worthiest of members, who stands by the Party in sunshine or storm, ready always to battle, even at the point of sacrifice.

He is fighting, as twice before, in Graiseley Ward, and in my opinion the prospects of victory are distinctly bright. Let no I.L.P.-er be a laggard in the struggle. The time to be enthusiastic is now, and the place is Graiseley Ward. If every member proves a good fighter, then we shall write success at the conclusion of our endeavours. Comrades, report yourselves at once to Mr. J. Finlayson, who is again acting as agent for our candidate. "We must win this time"—make this your motto.

The I.L.P. Sunday lectures will commence shortly. Look out for further announcements. Our Saturday-night whist drives are still running. All who wish to have a good time at little cost should visit the I.L.P. Rooms, Dudley-street, in addition to which they will be assisting to improve the finances of the branch.

We are anxious to see more of our members at the branch meetings, which are held on the first and third Mondays of the month, at 8 p.m. At the November meetings business of special importance will be on tap, so don't miss them on any account. E. F.

Graiseley Committee Room:
MERRIDALE STREET,

:: A. BENT TO SUCCEED HICKIN. ::

TO THE ELECTORS OF ST. GEORGE'S WARD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have been invited by a large number of the residents in St. George's Ward and the Local Trades Council and Labour Representation Committee to offer myself as a candidate to serve as your representative on the Town Council in succession to Mr. C. Hickin.

I have been a member of the National Union of Railwaymen for 23 years, acting as the treasurer of the local branch for 16 years, and have served in their representative positions both in trade and friendly society work. As a Trade Unionist I am in favour of—

The strict observance of the Fair Wages Clause, whereby contractors and sub-contractors shall pay the whole of their workmen the standard rate of wages.

Trade Union Rates to all Corporation Employees.

Evening sittings of the Council.

Provision of Open Spaces and Recreation Grounds and Allotment Gardens.

The best facilities for Education being provided for all children, with a complete system of maintenance scholarships.

The provision of school clinics, believing the health of the child is most important. I would also advocate the Town Council putting into operation the Feeding of Necessitous School Children Act, and the provision of free medical certificates to parents whose children are unable to attend school during sickness.

The Town Council erecting suitable houses, at reasonable rents, under the Housing and Town Planning Act, and so enable the workers to live in decent and healthy homes.

Halfpenny Fares on our Trams.

The provision of a Municipal Cemetery.

The Better Lighting and Cleansing of our Streets.

The erection of a Large Hall in a central position, suitable for public meetings and concerts.

Having regard to the totally inadequate representation of Labour on the Council, I trust you will give me your support.—I am, Ladies and Gentlemen, yours sincerely,

ALBERT BENT.

18, Sherwood-street,
Wolverhampton.

THE MAN FOR ST. GEORGE'S.

Mr. ALBERT BENT is truly a son of toil. His father was a miner in the iron mines of the Forest of Dean. Being one of a family of ten, Mr. Bent had to commence work early in life, and at the age of twelve he was working half-time at the princely salary of 2s. 6d. per week. At fourteen years of age he became employed full time in the iron mines.

Three years later found him working on the Severn tunnel, he having left his home in the meantime, and at 21 years of age he entered the railway service as a platelayer. Evidently he had made up his mind that he had found the employment which suited him, for two years later we find him acting as porter at Cardiff station, and since then he has gradually worked his way up to his present position of goods guard.

It was in 1890 that Mr. Bent first seriously realised the necessity of combination for the workers, for in that year he joined the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Not only so, but ever since he has been a most consistent Trade Unionist, and has taken an active part in carrying on the society's business.

Mr. Bent came to Wolverhampton in the year 1897, and as proof of the esteem and confidence which he inspired in his fellow members it may be mentioned that he was elected treasurer of his branch (No. 1, Wolverhampton) in the same year, an office he has held ever since.

No labour has been too great for Mr. Bent so far as his Trade Union is concerned, and he has held many offices. Among his fellow members the conscientious manner in which he performs his duties is proverbial. For nine years he has held office as delegate, and for another five years as representative (elected triennially) on the G.W.R. Servants' Provident and Pension Societies.

In 1906 Mr. Bent was elected delegate to the L.R.C. Conference. He has also been selected from this district to serve on nearly all the deputations to local and head officials to deal with local and other grievances.

Mr. Bent's political creed is simple and direct. He believes that the time is past when the worker should be used merely to create profits for others to enjoy, and that the producers should receive a more equitable proportion of the wealth which they create. To this end he advocates a universal eight-hour day and a living wage for all workers, the nationalisation of the railways, mines, and land.

There is no doubt that in Mr. Bent the workers of St. George's Ward will find a man who will do his utmost to serve them faithfully and well, and who will endeavour, with all the ability he possesses, to do something to better the town in which he has so long been a resident.

THE MINIMUM WAGE.

(By ALBERT BENT.)

The minimum wage question is a matter which at the present time is very much to the fore. Practically all the industrial disputes of the last few years have centred round it, and more and more is it becoming evident that Parliament in the near future will have to take action in the matter.

The recent strikes in the Black Country revealed conditions among the great mass of unskilled labourers which, if some Trade Unionist had attempted to expose them in more normal times, would have brought upon him the charge of either deliberately attempting to deceive the public or of painting the facts in far blacker

marked, must come in after the minimum has been paid, and therefore if it be admitted that one man is worth more than another the reasonable way to deal with the matter is to raise the better qualified man instead of dropping the other man to starvation point and making him a danger to the community.

One Way of Deciding on a Minimum.

The question then arises as to what power shall operate in deciding what amount shall constitute a minimum rate of wages. The recent agitation by the Corporation employees, to my mind provides the answer. It is contended by many that public authorities should be model employers. Then how is it, one may ask, that the Town Council refused to grant the 25s. asked for by the men through the Labour councillors?



colours than were really warranted. But those strikes really did reveal conditions of so sordid a character that it became a matter for general surprise that such conditions had been tolerated so long.

At last, however, the public conscience may be said to have been awakened on this subject, and anyone who essays to speak with any knowledge of the matter is assured of respectful attention, and so I have been prevailed upon by the Editor to review the question for the benefit of the readers of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER.

The Right to Live.

In stating the case for the minimum wage I fall back on that very elementary principle of the right to live. I take the view that everyone born into this world has at least that right. I say this in answer to those people who, when the minimum wage is mentioned, are always ready to retort, "But supposing the man isn't worth it?" My reply to this would always be that if a man is on the earth at all he has at least the right to that which it costs him to live. The question of ability must come in after that. If it is found that the cost of living—the barest necessities of life—is 25s. per week (I should prefer 30s.) then I say that it is grossly immoral for any man to be paid under that amount. People underpaid, underfed, improperly clothed and housed are not likely to produce the perfect offspring which are desired for the welfare of the race, so that it cannot be denied that sweating wages are a bad business proposition for any nation, and the inevitable consequence would be that that nation would have to pay for it in some other way, in the shape of workhouses, prisons, asylums, etc.

The question of ability, as I have already re-

marked, must come in after the minimum has been paid, and therefore if it be admitted that one man is worth more than another the reasonable way to deal with the matter is to raise the better qualified man instead of dropping the other man to starvation point and making him a danger to the community.

It was surely not because the Council could not afford to pay it? There were two factors operating—firstly, the dearth of representatives of labour on the Council; secondly, because other members of the Council knew that if that minimum were granted they would in honour bound be compelled to give that rate of wages to their own employees. They would not take that action because these things reflect on other business concerns in the town. There you have the need for Labour representation in a nutshell. The Corporation should set an example to be followed by other employers, and if there had been stronger Labour representation on the Council the probabilities are that that minimum would have been granted, and very likely something more.

All honour to the three Labour representatives who, backed by the Trades Council, did succeed in establishing 24s. as a minimum, and no doubt fully expected all employees under the Corporation who were receiving less would receive that amount. But the fact is there are still those who do not get that amount, which is a point which must be carefully watched.

I am of opinion that Wolverhampton, being such a large industrial centre, ought to have at least 50 per cent. of Labour representation on all its public bodies. When that result is achieved the workers' interest will be looked after quite as well as the interests of the capitalist class are to-day. Meanwhile, I am proud to see the unrest which is now prevalent amongst the workers, and which, I hope, will continue to increase, and that in the near future the workers of this district will show that they are fully alive to the situation by placing the four Labour candidates on the Town Council by large majorities.

OUR EXPLANATION

OF THE POSITION IN ST. GEORGE'S WARD.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND LABOUR PARTY

The position in the St. George's Ward Municipal Election has been the cause of much comment, not only in the ward itself, but in all parts of the borough. Misleading statements in regard to the action of the Labour Party are going the rounds, and on account of their persistency we have considered it necessary to give the true facts of the case.

The circumstances which led up to the present position arose during the time the Labour Party were considering their plan of action in connection with the elections. It had become known that Councillor Hickin did not intend to seek re-election, and Mr. J. Whittaker, J.P., agent of the Party, was approached by Mr. Badger as representing the Friendly Societies' Council. Mr. Badger explained that the Friendly Societies were desirous of having a representative on the Town Council, and did not wish to fight a sitting member. As Mr. Hickin was retiring, he asked that the Labour Party should give them the opportunity of contesting the seat by not putting forward a Labour candidate. Mr. Badger at that interview asked that the Labour Party should receive a deputation.

Mr. Whittaker brought the matter before the Executive Committee of the Labour Representation Committee, who, recognising there was much in common between Labour and the Friendly Society movement, consented to receive a deputation, and made a proviso that the suggested candidate should be a Trade Unionist, and be approved of by them. Mr. Badger was informed that the deputation would be received, and a special meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, October 2, at 7-30—half an hour before the ordinary meeting of the L.R.C.

Neither Mr. Badger nor the deputation put in an appearance at that meeting. At the L.R.C. meeting the same evening Mr. Badger put in an appearance. He was informed that owing to his absence the Executive had referred it to the ordinary meeting then sitting, who would consider the matter. Finally, the whole question was left in the hands of the Executive, with power to act.

The constitution states that bodies affiliated shall have power to put forward a candidate for nomination, and in the meantime the secretary of the L.R.C. was informed that the N.U.R. at their meeting on September 28 had adopted the name of their treasurer, Mr. Albert Bent, to be sent forward for nomination. This reached Mr. Hill on October 6.

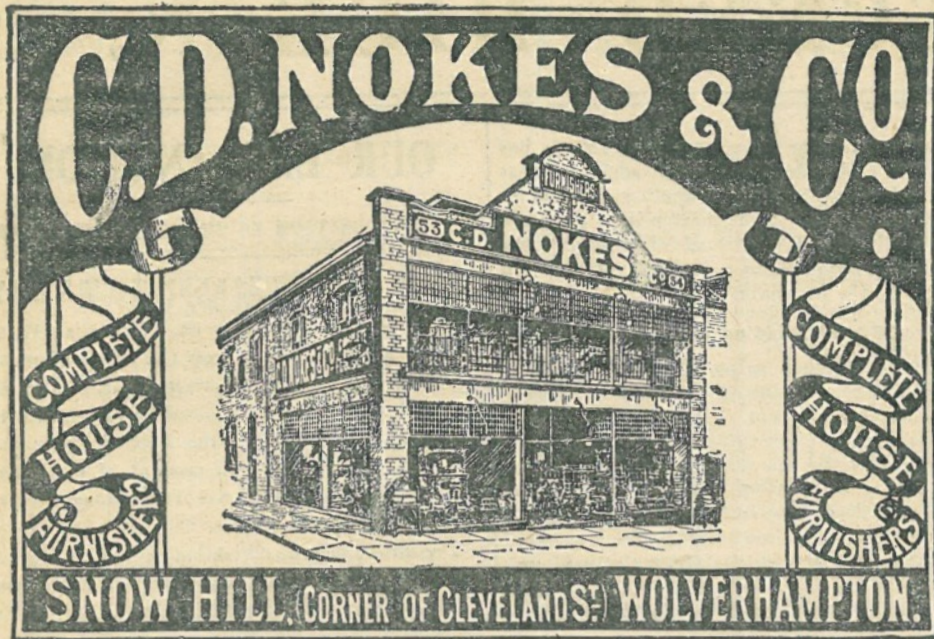
A special Executive was called for the 7th, and it was decided, having received no official intimation of the proposed Friendly Society candidate—whether he could be approved by them or not—and realising the extreme urgency of the position, that the trade union nominee should be adopted as the Labour Party official candidate. The secretary, desiring to be perfectly open in the matter, waited upon Mr. Badger the same night, and informed him of what had taken place.

Subsequently, on Wednesday, October 15, a deputation waited on the officials of the Labour Party, and at that meeting Mr. Badger himself acknowledged there was no definite promise on the part of the Labour Party.

We might again point out that the matter was only considered on the understanding that the Friendly Society candidate should be a Trade Unionist and approved by the L.R.C. In the meantime it has come to our knowledge that Mr. Badger has interviewed the other parties interested in the ward, and we do not see how, if Mr. Badger had been able to convince these bodies that it would be to their interests to give their candidate a clear run, the proposed candidate could come up to the Labour Party's requirements.

St. George's Committee Room:
127, All Saints' Road,
Where Workers will be welcomed.

It was a very hot day, and the traveller for a well-known printing ink firm rushed to Liverpool-street Station to catch the 12-20 for Stratford; he got through the gate at just 12-21, and the ensuing race was watched by the people on the station and by some of the passengers in the departing train. Failing to make up on it the knight of the road wearily sank into a seat at the end of the platform, when a young porter came up and remarked, "Mister, was you trying to catch that Stratford train?" "No, my son," replied the ink man; "No, I was merely chasing it out of the station."



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Inquiries as to advertisements should be
addressed to the Advertising Manager, at the
office of this paper.

NOVEMBER, 1913.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

The foremost event of local interest is the impending Town Council Election, and we are devoting a large portion of this issue to a descriptive account of the four champions who will enter the lists on behalf of Labour. All workers having votes in their respective Wards should make a point of plumping for the Labour men. We greatly regret that ill-health has compelled Mr. Hickin's retirement. We can ill afford to lose his services, as he had gathered valuable experience and did much useful work, especially in connection with the Minimum Wage question. Councillor Sharrocks (who, we are glad to know, is standing for re-election), has also given yeoman service in regard to that question, as well as to that of the Feeding of School Children and the Housing question. Messrs. Barker, Beck, and Bent will go fresh to the work if elected, but their wide and lengthy experience in Labour matters will be very useful, and they will be a most helpful addition to the little band of Labour representatives on the Council who have so gallantly upheld the workers' cause against enormous odds. All fair-minded citizens admit that Labour has been heavily under-represented on our Town Council, and we are confident that the beginning of a real improvement in that respect will be made when our candidates go to the Poll.

One of the worst obstacles to Municipal

We are aware that they are frequently deterred from doing so by excessive hours of labour and the difficulty of snatching time to go to the Polling Station, but it is really well worth making a sacrifice and taking a risk to help towards securing a victory for Labour in these contests. The Town Council is endowed with extensive powers for the improvement of the lot of the toiler, but those powers are rarely put into practice without the driving power of Labour representation. All slums might be abolished and good houses provided to take their place at reasonable rents. Everybody knows that hundreds of these houses are wanted in Wolverhampton to-day. The raising of the wages of Municipal employes is bound ultimately to bring about an improvement in the pay of all other workers in the Town, but unless the Corporation is made into "a model employer" the ordinary capitalist naturally keeps conditions down to the low standard that has so long disgraced the Black Country. It is the Town Council that can improve the education of the children of the workers. It can have food provided for those who need it, and can have medical inspection supplemented and made effective by medical treatment. It can also improve the facilities for secondary education and provide adequate scholarships. No less important is the fact that the Council can prevent the Police being used against strikers, and can maintain a fair and friendly public spirit in regard to all Labour questions. In fact, there is scarcely any limit to what a really progressive Town Council might do on behalf of the people, and it is of vital importance that the people themselves should see to it that their local governing body is not monopolised by tradesmen, manufacturers, and professional men.

THE DUBLIN LOCK-OUT.

Over twenty thousand pounds have been subscribed in response to the appeal of *The Daily Citizen* for funds with which to assist our fellow-workers at Dublin in their bitter struggle to maintain the right of membership in a trade union. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress has consequently been able to despatch four "food ships" from Manchester, and to arrange for a fifth, and even a sixth ship, to go to the relief of Dublin. The employers, led by the wealthy Mr. William Murphy, not content with their cruel and barbarous method of deliberately starving the workers, are now utilising the forces of law and order to turn their victims out of their homes. They may perish in the street for aught the "Murphyites" or the authorities at Dublin Castle care. Generous friends in England are arranging to receive some of the little children who otherwise stand to be destroyed by the ruthless tyranny of the employers. The whole Labour movement is stirred to the marrow of its bones by the awful struggle now going on in Dublin, and the fight will undoubtedly be maintained until victory is assured. In the meantime not one of the statesmen who have lately been flooding the country with speeches angling for the support of the workers at the next general election has made any reference to this heroic struggle for the sacred right of combination. Even the ministers of the Christian religion are nearly all silent, although the workers of Dublin have merely sought to obtain sufficient "daily bread" and a living wage to enable them to maintain their humble homes. Surely the employers' absolute rejection of Sir George Askwith's report and recommendations for the basis of a settlement, and their recent adoption of eviction tactics, should be sufficient evidence to convince any fair-minded person of the fact that these inhuman taskmasters are deliberately prolonging the lock-out in the hope of being able to beat the workers into slavish subjection!

In our view Parliament never ought to be allowed to adjourn for such a prolonged vacation as M.P.s are now enjoying. Unexpected events of critical urgency may arise at any time, and the fact that there is no possibility of having them debated in the House of Commons gives an enormous advantage to such enemies of the human race as those who are responsible for the state of affairs now pre-

must elapse before the House of Commons again assembles, and in the meantime the report of the Board of Trade's Chief Industrial Commissioner can be flouted and the forces of the Crown can be used against the workers without the Ministers in charge being brought to book in the House of Commons. These are things to be remembered.

A REMARKABLE BALLOT.

Last month the members of the Railway Clerks' Association were balloted upon the question of instituting a new Political Fund under the provisions of the Trade Union Act, 1913. The result was very remarkable, as will be seen from a perusal of the figures given below, and it removes the risk of any financial difficulties that might otherwise have arisen in connection with Mr. Walkden's prospective candidature for West Wolverhampton:—

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Number of votes in favour | |
| of the Fund | 15,496 |
| Number of votes against..... | 1,340 |

Majority in favour 14,156

The membership of the Union is 22,832, and over 74 per cent. voted. Of these, over 91 per cent. voted in favour of the Fund. This heavy majority represents 68 per cent. of the total membership. Less than 6 per cent. recorded votes against political action on the part of the Union.

We understand these are the best percentages that have been reached in any of the ballots that have taken place since the passing of the new Act, and the R.C.A. has received many messages of congratulation from leaders and friends of the Labour movement. A letter from Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., which we print below, is typical of these:

May I heartily congratulate you upon the result of the ballot. It is most encouraging, and is a great personal triumph for yourself as well as for the cause of political action. I am delighted with it. You will now, of course, be getting ahead with your candidature, in which I wish you every success. I hope to have an opportunity of coming down to try to help you before the election.

We are sure Mr. Walkden's supporters in Wolverhampton will re-echo Mr. Snowden's breezy message and do their best to make this R.C.A. ballot but a forecast of what will happen at the Parliamentary election.

LABOUR'S REJOINER.

The principal organisation of Labour has lost no time in giving its reply to the action of the capitalists in forming an Employers' Defence Union with a war chest of £50,000,000, obviously intended to be used in an attempt to break up Trade Unionism. The Miners' Federation, whose total membership has recently risen from 550,000 to 800,000, has not only decided to spend £90,000 to maintain and develop the *Daily Citizen*, but is preparing to enter into a joint agreement with the National Union of Railwaymen and the Transport Workers' Federation, for the purpose of taking united national action whenever necessary. This is a masterly rejoinder to the organised capitalists, and will compel them to think twice before they engage upon sympathetic lockouts for the purpose of smashing Trade Unions. It will also compel the Government to discourage the nefarious Parliamentary designs of the Employers' Union, which, with the aid of such notorious enemies of Labour as Lord Claud Hamilton, Lord Robert Cecil, and Sir Frederick Banbury—seeks to strangle all Labour legislation and to bring about a repeal of the Trade Disputes Act and of other measures that were intended to make possible the legitimate organisation of the workers.

A still more emphatic reply to the Employers' Defence Union can be given by the workers themselves in the strengthening of the ranks of their Trade Unions. It is true that about a million non-Unionists have been brought into the fold within the last eighteen months, but there is room for millions more, as the Unions at present only contain about one-third of the workers, and all who are outside are helping the capitalists. In fact, it is they

THE LAND QUESTION.

The oft-deferred official pronouncement of the Liberal Party's good intentions with regard to the great land question has at last been made by a speech from Mr. Lloyd George, delivered at Bedford on the 4th instant, but so far from arousing the high enthusiasm of a generation ago it has called forth many expressions of disappointment from all sections of reformers. All the evils of our semi-feudal land system were eloquently portrayed, but there was no definite declaration of the actual policy of the Government, and no outline of the machinery or the legislative proposals that all England anticipated would be nailed to the mast by the Chancellor. Thousands of similar speeches have been delivered for years past, but what the people need is that the Government should actually grapple with the problem, and in no half-hearted manner. We have no hope that this will take place until a much larger number of truly democratic representatives of the people have been sent to Westminster. The ranks of the party in power contain far too many landlords and game preservers, some of whom have had record shootings over their estates during the present season.

Undoubtedly it was due to the absence of any real agreement or sincere support from his influential colleagues that caused Mr. Lloyd George to drift into vague generalities, although he was in possession of the detailed proposals of his own Land Inquiry Committee. Their Report was issued three days later, but it has not been endorsed by the Cabinet, and can only be regarded as an unofficial document which will never fructify in legislation unless tremendous pressure is brought to bear upon the Government by the public. *The Daily Citizen* points out that:

"The report is in many respects only another tribute to the splendid educational work done by the Labour and Socialist movement during the past twenty years. . . . Practically every sound item in the report is borrowed from the programme and policy of our movement. Not that we complain of this. We have no desire to establish a 'corner' in ideas. One part of our work at the present moment is to popularise our views and to create behind them such a volume of public opinion that other parties will be compelled to lay hold on them as the only means of saving themselves from extinction."

Of course the Tory Party in Parliament, whose ranks contain still more landlords and game preservers, cannot be expected to institute any genuine or effective reforms, and the only hope of the people lies in the return of a larger number of Labour Members.

SNOBBERY AND EXTRAVAGANCE.

The manner in which the whole of the ordinary newspapers devoted pages of their space to a description of the minutest details of the arrangements, dresses, and whatnot, for the recent Royal wedding, furnished about the most sickening exhibition of snobbery that we have seen in recent years. We often draw attention to the fact that the rich keep growing richer, while the poor become still poorer—through the increased cost of living—but when, in face of the sheer starvation of the workers of Dublin (not to mention a series of tragic disasters in train, steamship, and mine), we find the *Daily Mail* proclaiming with rapturous headlines that presents to the value of £300,000 had been bestowed upon two persons who were already sumptuously provided for, it is enough to make the blood boil. The people of England are not very liable to revolutionary tendencies, but exhibitions of this kind might well be calculated to raise the ire of the most moderate-minded men and women. What is our brave £20,000 raised with so much effort and sacrifice to save the starving women and children of Dublin, compared with this £300,000 lavished by the idle rich upon two young people who haven't the slightest need for a penny of it? THESE THINGS MUST BE REMEMBERED.

LOCAL NOTES AND COMMENTS.

By "THE CHIEL."

*A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
An', faith, he'll prent 'em.*

—BURNS.

The Elections.

With everyone's thoughts directed towards the forthcoming elections, I am informed by the blue-pencil man that I am expected to "say something" on this topic of the hour. This is all very well, but when I find "R. M." making a splash on page 1, and other colleagues all over the paper, I must confess they have left me practically nothing original to deal with. Probably not for many years have I known the November elections in Wolverhampton to excite so much interest. There is no doubt that, in view of the active work of the Labour Party in the town since the beginning of 1912, the eyes of the public have been turned towards the Party, and many have been the inquiries during the past six weeks as to what they intended to do.

The Labour Programme.

Well, this issue of THE WORKER gives full details. Four seats are being contested, and so far as Labour people are concerned these four are practically all they will be interested in. Probably the hardest fight will be in Dunstall Ward, where Mr. A. W. Beck has thrown down the gauntlet to the sitting Liberal member. This is a ward which is composed mainly of trade unionists, and a large number of them railwaymen. Mr. Beck, being the nominee of the National Union of Railwaymen, should secure strong support from his brother members, and I myself feel very confident of the result. St. George's Ward is being contested by a colleague of Mr. Beck's, in Mr. Albert Bent. He would make a worthy successor to Mr. C. Hickin, and should put up a strong fight to retain the seat for Labour. Mr. Barker again comes up smiling in Graiseley Ward. I cannot but express my admiration at the manner in which he sticks at Graiseley. This time his prospects are of the rosiest, and I am expecting great things from my Graiseley friends. Councillor W. Sharrocks needs no introduction. His genial personality is ever welcome in St. Matthew's Ward, where he is held in the highest esteem by the people he has served so well for twelve years. I do not think there is any doubt about Mr. Sharrocks's prospects.

"The Day."

Another feature is the fact that the polling day falls on a Saturday. It should be a day of record polls. There will be very few cases of working overtime until eight o'clock at night this time, and everyone who has a half-holiday should have voted long before closing time. If you leave at one o'clock, do it going home; you will have more than an hour for dinner. Or if you are in a hurry for the football match, by all means don't miss it; but this time don't get so excited as to forget all about your vote. You will have plenty of time to record it going home. Probably some of my friends will have to go shopping with the wife. Well, that will be all right—I know all about it. When the lady goes into the milliner's or the drapery emporium, and says "I shan't be more than three minutes, dear," you may rejoice in the knowledge that you will have at least half an hour to do "the needful." Whatever the circumstances, don't forget to do it! And when you are doing it remember where to put the X—right opposite the name of the Labour man.

How to get to the Booth.

And, above all, walk to the polling booth. Carriages and motors are all right for invalids and those people who do so little work that they easily get tired after a little exertion. Healthy manhood is such a source of pride to the average Englishman that I cannot understand why so many of them require carrying to exercise their duties and privileges as citizens. What a contrast! Here we have the ladies clamouring for the vote, smashing windows, suffering imprisonment, and carrying on in a manner as to suggest that they would not waste a minute in using it if they had it; yet when we come to the "lord of creation," who often says the ladies wouldn't know what to do with the vote if they had it, we find him treating it with such lordly indifference that he often has to be cajoled into using it, and when he does at last, consent it is on condition that he is carried there! I do not suggest that that is true of all the electorate, or even the majority, but there is a section, and I hope they will take the hint in the spirit I give it and not accuse me of libelling the town. And, anyhow, if you can't walk it in time for goodness' sake ride! Get there somehow! And VOTE LABOUR!

Municipal Enterprise and Rates.

At least one remarkable statement was made at the last meeting of the Wolverhampton Town Council. This was uttered by Alderman L. Johnson, when he was presenting the annual abstract of accounts. Referring to the reproductive undertakings of the Corporation, Alderman Johnson said that but for these the rates of the borough would be nearly 10d. in the £ more than they are. That is to say, that if it were not for the Socialistic schemes of communal ownership the people of the town would be worse off. What would really happen if the electricity, the tramways, and the other municipal undertakings were privately owned would

be that a handful of shareholders would be pocketing the proceeds, the services would probably not be so efficient, and the people, in addition to paying for the conveniences, would also have bigger demand notes from the Rate Offices. No stronger evidence could be supplied in support of the Labour Party's advocacy of the principle, yet strange to relate, it is Alderman Johnson and his friends who oppose it. I am glad to see all the Labour candidates have got their eye on the gas supply. After this object-lesson surely there will be no objection.

More Socialism.

I cannot understand what is coming over our Town Council lately. Really, if they go on like this I shall have to send them some entrance forms for the I.L.P. At their last meeting they actually passed a resolution practically calling for the nationalisation of canals. It is really necessary that the waterways of the country should be brought up to date. To towns like this, situated in the heart of the country, that would be of immense value to the community as a set-back to the great railway combines. What the Corporation ought to do is to advocate the nationalisation of railways and canals. Surely if one is desirable the other is also.

That Public Hall.

A committee has been appointed by the General Purposes Committee of the Council to inquire and report upon available sites for a public hall. I notice that that would-be dictator of municipal rectitude—the *Midland Evening News*—has been crying out a lot recently about the proposal. This "old lady of Queen-street" is very much concerned on the grounds of expense. Personally I see no reason why, if a suitable hall is erected, it should not become a paying concern. Year by year there is a growing demand for accommodation. It is no use talking about the small rooms situated in all sorts of odd corners of the borough. A central meeting place is required, and for a town of this size to be without one is not what one might call progressive.

IS WOLVERHAMPTON DRUNKEN?

What the Rev. J. Davison Brown says.

It is a singular fact that while the Labour Party is often accused of libelling the town—on what grounds goodness only knows—when the facts are inquired into it is often found that those responsible for the charge have done quite as much of it as anyone else. For instance, only two months ago we had occasion to draw attention to the slur cast upon a great section of the people by an Alderman, who said, referring to the housing question, that not only the houses, but many of the people in them wanted condemning. That remark, we have reason to know, has caused a great deal of resentment. What will be the effect of the latest item we don't know.

This time it is that very Liberal minister, the Rev. J. Davison Brown. Speaking at a united circuit public meeting in Trinity Chapel, Wolverhampton, on October 9, in celebration of the centenary of the Wesleyan Methodist Foreign Missionary Society, he said that by celebrating the centenary it was hoped to raise the missionary spirit and also £250,000 in support of foreign missions. The Trinity Circuit had set out to raise £1,000, and largely through the efforts of Mr. Davis Green had accomplished it. £1,000 was a very large sum, and anyone present would like to possess it, yet £1,000 was spent every day in Wolverhampton in intoxicating drink, and £1,000 was only the price of a decent motor-car. The italics are ours.

WHAT IT MEANS.

Note what this means. Mr. Brown said every day, not one day, nor even a Saturday. It means, then, that Wolverhampton's drink bill is £7,000 a week, or £365,000 every year! This works out, on a population of 100,000, nearly 2½d. per day for every man, woman, and child in the borough. We suggest that this is a gross libel on the town on the part of the Rev. Davison Brown, and he ought either to prove it or withdraw it unreservedly. We do not infer that there is no drinking in the town, or even that there is not more than there should be, but we decline to believe that it is so appalling as that.

The probabilities are that the rev. gentleman used the words in an excess of zeal, but that does not mitigate the seriousness of the charge, or the effect it is likely to have on outsiders. The only construction strangers to the town could place on it is that Wolverhampton is one of the most drunken towns in the kingdom. It will be noticed that the Rev. Brown was appealing for funds on behalf of foreign missions. May we suggest, if conditions are so bad as that, that the rev. gentleman, as a Christian minister, ought to appeal for money for home missions, instead of sending it out of the country when there is so much to be done here?

LABOUR'S LOSS.

RETIREMENT OF COUNCILLOR C. HICKIN.

A USEFUL MEMBER.

All who recognise real merit and strenuous endeavour have heard with keen regret of the decision of Councillor Charles Hickin, the representative on the Town Council for the past three years for St. George's Ward not to seek re-election on that body. His intention to give up his municipal work was conveyed to the Labour Representation Committee in the following letter:

I regret to inform you that owing to a breakdown in my health, owing to my having had so many things of a worrying character to deal with, especially during this last year, I am compelled reluctantly to give up my work on the Town Council. My doctor has informed me that unless I give up some of my work the consequences may be serious for me, and I do not at present feel equal to the strain. I am exceedingly sorry that this is so, but trust that the Labour Party will be able to retain the seat. . . . I believe that with work the



ward should prove a sound seat for Labour. I hope to be all right again soon, and need scarcely say I shall do everything I can to help forward the movement, although for the moment compelled to retire from the front.—With best wishes, yours sincerely,

CHAS. HICKIN.

The L.R.C., at their meeting passed a resolution of sympathy with Councillor Hickin in his indisposition, and, knowing the reason, were reluctantly compelled to accept the resignation. Councillor Hickin's work on the Town Council is too well known to require description, but a brief survey will not be out of place.

It may be said that Councillor Hickin's main endeavours have been in the direction of improving the lot of the low-paid employees of the Corporation. In the first place he was successful, in committee, in getting them an increase of one shilling per week. Then, later on, when the "Minimum Wage" agitation came on, he it was who introduced it to the Council and did the brunt of the work in getting the Council to pass the now-famous resolution. Of course, it may be said that the 24s. resolution was not a Labour proposal, but it may be pointed out that the Labour proposal was for 25s.—one shilling more—and if it had not been for the work of Councillor Hickin and his Labour colleagues it is doubtful whether even that resolution would have gone through. The only way in which the Council could shuffle out of the minimum wage question was by granting something less than the Labour Party demanded.

In addition, Councillor Hickin was a strong advocate of the acquirement of a municipal cemetery, and the taking over of the gas supply. He has always advocated the better housing of the working class, and he worked hard to bring about the abolition of the obnoxious pan system.

The tramwaymen found in Councillor Hickin a friend when they were agitating for covered fronts to the cars, and the passengers have something to be grateful to him for in connection with the covered tops to the cars.

Trade Unionists will remember his action in causing the Fair Wages Clause to be strengthened by calling attention to the non-compliance on the part of certain contractors with its provisions.

Councillor Hickin opposed the Council giving support to the Women's Limited Franchise Bill, preferring that women should have equal treatment to men in the matter of the vote, or rather, he is a firm believer in the principle of Adult Suffrage. He also opposed the acceptance by the Council of the Parliamentary salary of the Tory member for the West Division.

No one would be prepared to say that this is not an excellent record, and the resignation is a serious loss to the Labour movement in the town. With Councillor Hickin we hope that the electors of St. George's will recognise merit by placing at the head of the poll his colleague and friend, Mr. Albert Bent, on November 1.

WM. SHARROCKS AGAIN FOR ST. MATTHEW'S

TO THE ELECTORS OF ST. MATTHEW'S WARD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The fourth time for which I have had the privilege and honour to represent you on the Town Council will shortly expire.

At the request of a large number of burgesses in the ward and the members of the Trades and Labour Council and L.R.C., I beg to offer myself as your candidate for another term.

During the time I have been on the Town Council I have advocated better sanitary conditions, brighter and healthier dwellings, improvement in the lighting and cleansing of the streets, increased wages and higher standard of living for the workers, the feeding of the hungry and destitute school children by the Council, the provision of public baths and branch reading-rooms for the East End of the town, the best possible education for the children of the working classes.

I have supported all that makes for the uplifting of the lot of the toilers, and opposed extravagance and lavish expenditure.

I am in favour of the gasworks being owned and controlled by the municipality.

I have advocated, and, if returned, shall continue to advocate, the establishment of a municipal cemetery.

I have at all times advocated the abolition of the pan system, which is so detrimental to the health of the people, and am pleased to say that the Council have decided to abolish it and substitute the water carriage system, and within the next two years I hope to see the last of this obnoxious pan system.

I beg to thank you for your confidence in the past, and again seek a renewal of your trust, confidently believing you will again return me as your representative on November 1.—I am, Ladies and Gentlemen, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM SHARROCKS.

16, Francis-street,
Wolverhampton.

SHARROCKS—TRIED AND TRUE.

WILLIAM SHARROCKS entered the society at Garton in 1871 at the age of 21 years, and is the son of one of that little band of pioneers who first formed up the society in 1834. William entered into the work of the society very early in life, filling many branch offices, and while district secretary of the Manchester District was deputed by the Executive Council upon many occasions to attend to disputes in that district, and upon other occasions deputed to assist some of the district delegates on important missions. He served on the General Council on three separate occasions, presided over their deliberations in 1885, and received practical appreciation of the respect in which he is held in the shape of testimonials from those amongst whom he has laboured. He has for many years attended the Trade Union Congress, making the question of Trade Union rates and conditions on Government and municipal work his very own. Massive in proportions, genial in manner, to be seen and heard is for him to be always remembered.

The foregoing is an extract from a book, "A Historical Survey of the Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Ship Builders' Society," by D. C. Cummings (General Secretary), published in 1905. What need therefore to enlarge upon Mr. Sharrocks' work as a Trade Unionist, when we find his abilities so handsomely recognised by his own society, of which he has been delegate for the South Staffordshire District for over 20 years?

Indeed, it is almost superfluous to enter into details about Mr. Sharrocks at all. The genial councillor has ably represented St. Matthew's Ward for the past 12 years, and it can safely be said that if there is a popular man in the ward that man is Sharrocks. As a matter of fact it is almost impossible to think of the public work of the town without Mr. Sharrocks entering into one's thoughts. Mr. Sharrocks, in addition to his work on the Town Council, was also for some years a member of the old School Board up to its abolition, and to-day he continues his interest in education by his work on the Education Committee.

Twenty Years Ago.

A glance at some of his election addresses issued as far back as 1894, when he first stood for St. Mary's Ward shows that even then he was far in front of the Council in the reforms which

he advocated. In his address to the electors on that occasion occur the following points:—

"Abolition of the obnoxious pan system, firmly believing as I do that it is injurious to the health and well-being of the people, and detrimental to the interest of the town in general.

"I am in favour of Public Baths being erected in the centre and east end of the town where they are most needed, and the charges for the use of the same to be within the reach of all.

"I am in favour of the municipalising of the Gas Works and Cemetery undertakings . . . and should strongly support the fair contract clauses of the Town Council being carried out in their entirety."

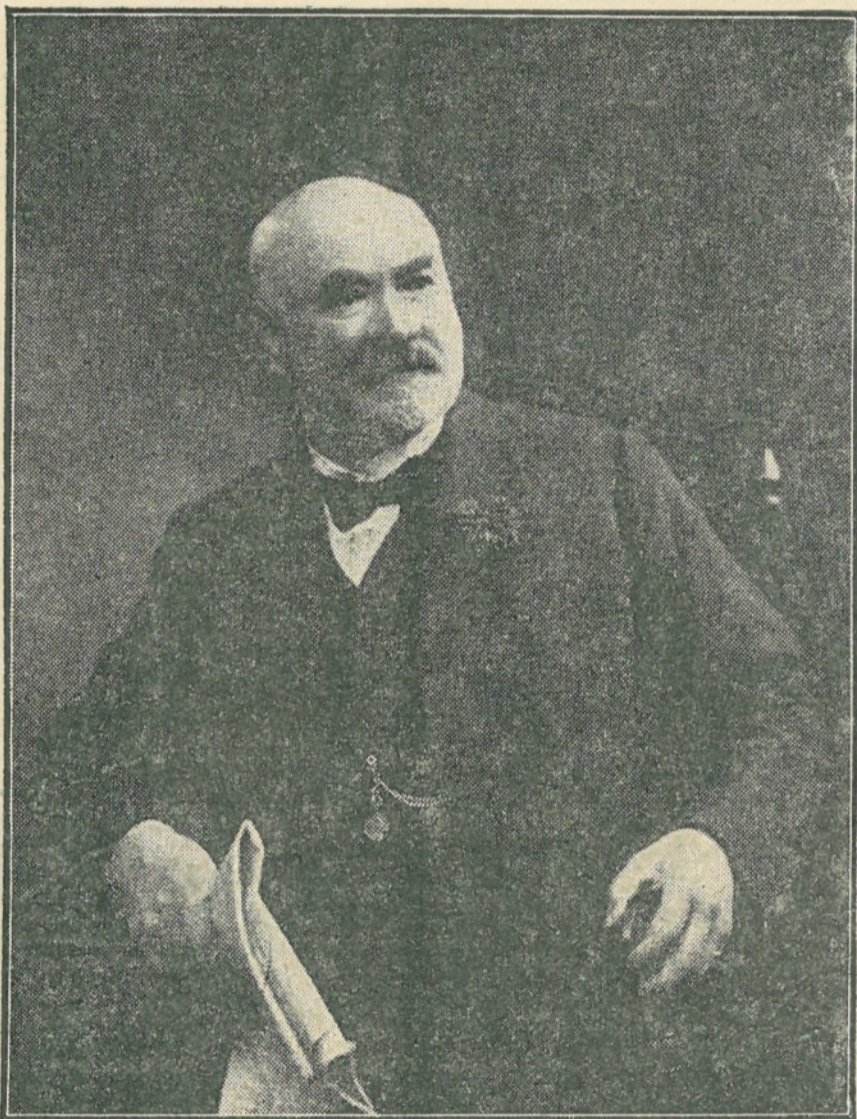
Again, in his appeal to the burgesses of St. Matthew's Ward on the occasion of his first election for the ward:—

"I would gladly support any just and reason-

Twenty years ago he advocated the erection of working class houses by the Council. How long will it be before the Council are convinced. It is one more proof of the need for more men of his type on the Council. Other things which he advocated and which have become accomplished facts are: Public baths for the East End, branch reading rooms, and the carrying out of the Fair Wages Clauses.

Mr. Sharrocks 20 years ago pressed for a municipal cemetery. It has taken the Town Council that time to decide to shelve the question. The question of the acquirement of the gas undertaking still remains to be dealt with.

The one day's rest in seven for policemen is also one of the items which received Mr. Sharrocks' whole-hearted support; as a result the police force of the town have cause to be grateful for his consistent advocacy of their cause.



able proposal for the pension or superannuation of the old and faithful servants of the Corporation, who have not received that remuneration for their labour that would allow them to provide for old age and infirmities.

"I am in favour of the appointment of a sufficient number of practical men and women as Inspectors of Factories and Workshops, in order that the Acts relating thereto may be more effectively administered in cities and boroughs.

"I am in favour of establishing Branch Libraries and Reading Rooms, and the opening of them on Sundays.

"Believing it to be the supreme right of the people to choose and elect their own representatives in all public bodies, I shall go in for the abolition of the present system of electing Aldermen, and would have them submit themselves to the votes of the ratepayers at stated periods."

A Progressive Councillor.

References to public baths, the gas works, cemetery question, and the pan system also appeared in that address. These extracts show that even 20 years ago Councillor Sharrocks was the most progressive councillor on the municipal authority.

It has taken many years for the Town Council to come to Mr. Sharrocks' point of view with regard to the pan system, and only this year has it been decided to abolish it. People of all shades of opinion condemned the insanitary system, yet it was left to a Labour man, in season and out of season, to agitate for its removal.

On the housing question he was as sound 20 years ago as he is to-day. Representing one of the poorest wards of the town, he has realised how much the abolition of insanitary dwellings means to the health of the people. There is no doubt that much that has been done in this direction can be laid to the credit of Mr. Sharrocks.

JOTTINGS.

"The beginning of all good law, and nearly the end of it, is that every man shall do good work for his bread, and that every man shall have good bread for his work."—*Ruskin.*

I notice that at the last Town Council meeting the question of inland waterways came up for discussion.

I was much amused at the published reports of the debate. Alderman Bantock took a prominent part in it. He is reported as humorously asking if he was allowed to take part in the debate.

The intelligent town fathers, after satisfying themselves that he was not a shareholder in the London and North Western Railway, gave him their heartiest permission.

He there and then took up the cudgels on behalf of the poor innocent railway companies in general.

The real humour of the matter arises in the fact that Alderman Bantock's business is solely bound up with a railway company, viz., the G.W.R.

The tragedy of the matter is, Alderman Bantock was making out that the railway companies were downtrodden corporations, and the next day after his speech a number of his men struck for a living wage.

The writer is a person who contends he has forgotten more about railways than ever Alderman Bantock knew, and I state emphatically that it will be one of the finest strokes of business ever accomplished by the State when they own the railways.

I hope you working men at the municipal elections will not forget the attitude of the Council as regards the payment of their lower paid workmen.

National and local bodies are always looked to as being model employers, everyone expecting that within reasonable limits their servants should be treated honourably and generously.

There are very few private employers that would have served their employees such a dirty trick as our local combination of all the talents have done.

They do some window-dressing and publicly pass a resolution to pay their men a minimum wage of 24s. per week, to stop the great agitation and avert a possible strike of the men.

The poor, deluded fellows thought they were going to be placed in a position to meet the demands of the local rack-renters, but many are still waiting for the minimum.

What a howl would have gone up had such a trick been played by any private employer or company.

C. VERE.

A LAND PROBLEM.

To the Editor, "Wolverhampton Worker."
Sir,—One often hears of cases in this district in which cottagers have invested all their life-savings in buying their little home, only to find that with the years it is falling into dilapidation and unfit for habitation owing to mining operations. When the matter is placed before the people responsible for those operations—that it is due to their excavations, and that the land was bought by the owner of the cottage, the invariable reply is that land, however much it is bought, only belongs to its owner on the surface, and not underneath. It gives one pause to think when one happens on a sentence like this:

"The 'Glynne Arms,' Kingswinford, is situated in the parish of Himley. Its peculiar position at the extreme edge of the estate, where it is joined by land belonging to the Earl of Dudley, causes it to be sometimes described in error as being on the estate of his lordship. This, however, is not the case, but it explains why the coal has only been mined from under one end of the house. Thus, while one end of the house is at its original level, the southern portion has sunk several feet, etc., etc.

The question at issue is this: "Has the Earl of Dudley, then, belonging to him the earth below as well as on top, for it gives a mighty puzzle why the mines should stop at the edge of his estate and yet proceed under the foundations of the poor cottagers. Any answers on this question thankfully received by one who is interested.—Yours, etc.,

B. S.

St. Matthew's Committee Room:

2, COMMERCIAL ROAD,

Where Workers will be welcomed.

A RAILWAYMAN FOR DUNSTALL WARD.

TO THE ELECTORS OF DUNSTALL WARD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—In response to the invitation of a large number of residents of Dunstall Ward, the local Trades Council and Labour Representation Committee, and believing as I do that only by increasing the number of direct Labour representatives on local governing bodies can the interests of the workers be secured, I have consented to offer myself as a candidate to represent you on the Town Council.

As a member of the National Union of Railwaymen I have for the past 17 years taken an active part in the Trades Union and Labour movement generally. I am in favour of, and would impress upon the Education Committee, the need to put into operation the Feeding of Necessitous School Children Act; also the provision of free medical certificates to parents whose children are unable to attend school during sickness.

I would strongly urge upon the Town Council the necessity for erecting suitable houses at reasonable rents under the Housing and Town Planning Act, and so enable the workers to live in decent and healthy homes. As a Trade Unionist I am in favour of the Fair Wages Clause being faithfully observed, whereby all contractors and sub-contractors shall pay to the whole of their employees the standard rate of wages and observe the hours of labour current in the district.

I am in favour of Trade Union rate of wages and conditions for all employees of the Corporation. I am also in favour of the best facilities for education being provided, with maintenance scholarships and equal opportunity for all children; also the provision of school clinics, believing that the health of the children is of vital importance.

- I would strongly advocate—
- The provision of a large Public Hall in the town.
 - Evening sittings of the Council.
 - The provision of Open Spaces and Recreation Grounds and Allotment Gardens.
 - The Better Lighting and Cleaning of our Streets.
 - Free Bathing to all School Children.
 - The provision of a Municipal Cemetery.
 - Municipal Gas Undertaking.

I ask your support as a resident in the ward, knowing well its people and their needs, and should I be honoured with your confidence I pledge my services in the interests of Dunstall Ward in particular and the good of the town in general.—I am, Ladies and Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

ARTHUR WILLIAM BECK.

90, Lowe-street,
Wolverhampton.

MR. A. W. BECK.

Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAM BECK is no stranger to Dunstall Ward people. His advocacy of the principles of Trade Unionism have brought him into prominence on many occasions, and more recently it must be generally admitted that he was among the most effective speakers during the Trade Union weeks held during the present year, when so much was done to further the cause of the people and to assist them to organise for the benefit of that combination which alone is the best safeguard for the worker in his employment.

Mr. Beck entered the railway service as an engine cleaner in May, 1894. He became a fireman in May, 1897, that year also being memorable to him as being the year when he first became a Trade Unionist. Mr. Beck joined the No. 2 (Wolverhampton) Branch of the A.S.R.S. in the August of 1897.

Mr. Beck immediately took an intense interest in the work of his society, and having left Wolverhampton in the meantime, he became Chairman of the Paddington Branch of the A.S.R.S. While there he was elected delegate to the memorable All Grades Conference in 1906.

He returned to Wolverhampton in 1907, and in that year he was elected as Delegate to present the All Grades programme to the Great Western Railway Board. His fellow members showed their confidence in his abilities by electing him President of the No. 2 (Wolverhampton) Branch of the A.S.R.S., which office he has held for the past five years.

In addition, Mr. Beck has acted as Secretary to the West Midland District Council for the past three years—a further proof of his business ability—and has taken a prominent part in propaganda work in all towns in the district on behalf of the National Union of Railwaymen and for the benefit of Labour generally. He acted as delegate to the Annual General Meeting at Carlisle in October, 1911, and during the great strike in August of the same year occupied a seat on the strike committee and took a leading part in the campaign.

SOME OPINIONS.

Giving some of his views to a WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER representative Mr. Beck said:—

"I am of opinion that the old methods of organisation on craft lines have become out of date, and that organisation in future must take the form of general industrial combines instead of the individual Trade Unions we have to-day. The employers are already doing this in the sug-

gested Employers "Defence" Association, and I believe that the workers, to successfully combat this, must organise on the same lines."

"What are your opinions on Trade Unionism and political action, Mr. Beck?" asked our representative.

"I have long been convinced," replied Mr. Beck, "that political action by Trade Unions is absolutely essential. As the workers combine industrially against Capitalism—be it represented by Liberal or Tory—so is it necessary that they should combine politically, in order that what is gained on the industrial field should not be negated in the House of Commons. Indeed, I go further than that. I believe that the time is near when all great strikes will be settled on the floor of the House of Commons. The day of the sectional strike has gone; and when there is

and I am prepared at all times, by vote and resolution, to do all in my power to make the lives of my fellow-men better and brighter than they are to-day."

"What do you consider the most pressing problem in Wolverhampton to-day?" asked the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER representative.

A BURNING QUESTION.

"Housing," replied Mr. Beck. "That question is a burning one in this town at present. The result of the trade boom has been that people have flocked to Wolverhampton for employment, and landlords, finding that there are more would-be tenants than houses, have raised the rents of their property, knowing they have the whip-hand, and that people are compelled to pay the increase. The only way to combat this is by the Council putting up houses. The builders will certainly



a great national strike, as was proved by the railway strike and the great coal strike—Parliament will interfere. And when that does occur, it will go hard with the Trade Unionists if they have no one there to take up their case. The employers are strongly represented, and it behoves the working class, if they wish justice to be done, to send men of their own class to bring to a successful conclusion the efforts they have made on the industrial field."

"Does that apply to local bodies as well as the National Assembly?" was the next question.

LABOUR AND TOWN COUNCILS.

"Yes. Parliament more and more are conferring on Town Councils powers which vitally affect the workers. These things seem to work in circles. The effect of Labour representation in Parliament has been that more progressive legislation is being placed on the Statute Book. These are often passed on for local authorities to administer. If there are no Labour men on those authorities, then the work of Labour in Parliament is nullified. Again, local authorities may ask for powers to do certain things. If a Council largely composed of Labour sent along such a request, then the influence of Labour in Parliament is required. You see to a large extent the two are dependent on each other. Then there are vital matters such as the fair wages clause, and a host of other things which require the efforts of Labour to get the best out of them."

"Then, it is not necessary to ask your reasons for standing for Dunstall Ward?" remarked our representative.

"Those are my reasons. I have been requested by residents in the Ward, by my Union, and by the L.R.C. I consented to stand as an Independent Labour candidate. I have no interests to serve but those of the class to which I belong,

not meet the demand while they can make money without further outlay, as they do by raising rents. And while I strongly agree with the pulling down of slum property, it does seem to me to be going the wrong way about it unless houses are provided in place of those which are demolished. As I have said, the landlords won't do it, the Council will only do it when you have tenants' representatives instead of landlords, landlords' agents, and landlords' friends."

Our representative then left Mr. Beck, feeling convinced that Mr. Beck was indeed the type of man required to represent the burgesses of a ward like Dunstall.

THE LATE MARGARET MACDONALD.

The Women's Labour League announce the publication of the memoir of Margaret E. MacDonald, written by her husband, J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., in a special edition very daintily bound, and to be sold at the small cost of one shilling. The book, which is published through Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, will contain a portrait, and its form will make it very suitable for a gift book. It will be very welcome to many who knew and loved her, and to the many thousands more who know her name and have thought about her work. To read the story of her life is to understand better than in any other way the spirit of love and the glowing idealism which lie at the root of the Labour movement. This edition can only be ordered through the Women's Labour League, 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C., Mr. MacDonald has arranged that all the royalties on its sale shall go to the funds of the league, just as the royalties on former editions went to the Baby Clinic established in memory of his wife and to the memorial sculpture to be erected in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

ANOTHER RALLY.

Outspoken Labour M.P. coming to Wolverhampton

ON NOVEMBER 9.

Considerable interest has been manifested in the question as to who would be the next national speaker to address a Wolverhampton audience on behalf of the Labour Party, and we have pleasure in announcing that Mr. John Hodge, M.P., will open the Labour Party's autumn campaign at a meeting in the Empire Palace on Sunday, November 9, at 7-45 p.m.

There is no doubt that there is in Wolverhampton a deep and growing interest in Labour politics. Considerable satisfaction has been expressed at Mr. A. G. Walkden's recent announcement that it was the intention of the Labour Party to hold monthly demonstrations in the Empire, this being shown by the increasing audiences who assemble at these gatherings. Following our usual custom, we give a brief sketch of the principal speaker.

Mr. JOHN HODGE, M.P.



Born at Muirkirk, of sturdy Scotch parents, Mr. Hodge imbibed that spirit of independence of the Covenanters, many of whom sacrificed their lives for religious freedom, and when, in later years, as a young man he found himself engaged in the steel trade he was one of the first to revolt against the conditions of labour which the employers sought to impose. As a result he was blacklisted from

obtaining employment throughout the Scotch iron and steel districts.

His fellow-workmen, however, were alive to his capability, and he was made secretary of the union, which was formed as a result of a strike against a reduction of 10 per cent. in wages and the taking away of the third hand on the furnaces, in which the men were beaten. For some time the society was carried on without payment of salary, and a good deal of sacrifice of time and money was made by its pioneers until it was properly established. To-day the society extends throughout the three countries of Great Britain, and is the most powerful organisation in the iron and steel industry.

Mr. Hodge may be said to be one of the pioneers in working for independent labour representation, and was actively associated with the Labour Representation Committee from the beginning. He represented his society at the first conference, has been twice president, and has been a member of the Executive Committee continuously.

He contested the Gower division at the General Election of 1900 against a Liberal. Although no spade work had been done he came within 423 of victory in a ten days' contest. In 1903 a vacancy occurred at Preston. Everybody looked upon the contest as a forlorn hope, but, undismayed, Mr. Hodge became the Labour candidate, his opponent being a Tory. The contest was over inside a week, and a Tory majority of over 4,000 was reduced to 2,000. This undoubtedly paved the way to the Labour success in 1906.

The Gorton division was represented by a Tory. Three times previously Labour had contested it unsuccessfully. The swing of the political pendulum in 1906 combined with good organisation resulted in a remarkable Labour victory. At the two succeeding elections Labour has retained the seat. On the last occasion the electors showed their confidence in Mr. Hodge by returning him in his absence in Australia, where he had gone on the advice of his doctor.

Mr. Hodge sat on the Manchester City Council for three years, only giving this up to prepare for the wider sphere of politics. He was president of the Trade Union Congress in 1892, has served on the Parliamentary Committee, and been one of the selected fraternal delegates to the American Federation of Labour Annual Convention. Mr. Hodge is a strong Internationalist, and since 1890 has attended every International Conference. He was chairman on the British day with marked success at the stormy congress at Zurich in 1893.

While there has been a good deal of talk about an eight-hour day Mr. Hodge has been ever active and quietly persistent, with the result that the eight-hour day is almost universal in South Wales, is in operation in a number of works in England, and there is every prospect that an agreement will shortly be entered into to provide for its gradual extension to every works in the country.

Dunstall Committee Room:

4, EVANS STREET,

Where Workers will be welcomed.

BAPTIST CHURCH, WATERLOO ROAD.

BROTHERHOOD

EVERY SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT 3.

Speakers—

Oct. 26—ALDERMAN PRICE LEWIS, J.P.
Nov. 2—MR. W. S. WOLVERSON.
" 9—REV. ARTHUR B. ALNWICK, B.A., B.D.
" 16—MR. JABEZ KEAM.
" 23—COUN. BENJ. MATTHEWS, of Tipton.

We desire to make these meetings helpful.
MEN, COME AND JOIN!

AN ENGRAVING SCANDAL.

The article headed as above in the October issue of the WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER did not refer to—

RODMAN & THACKER,

Engravers & Illustrators,

Princess Street,

WOLVERHAMPTON.

P.S.A. NOTES.

The annual meeting of the Federation, held in Queen-street Congregational Church on September 21, was a great success—in fact, one of the best meetings that has been held in connection with the local movement. The large audience were treated to a very powerful address by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.P.

Mr. Horne's illustrations in dealing with the "war question," and the eloquent and convincing style in which he handled the case for "Humanity versus Property" was greatly enjoyed. His scathing remarks upon slum life were punctuated with frequent outbursts of applause.

I was unable to attend the Birmingham Conference, but from what I can learn from those who were present it is evident that the Brotherhood movement means "business" in the near future in respect to the social aspect of its work.

A book has been issued by the Birmingham and Midland Federation which should prove valuable to those who have the well-being of their fellows at heart, as it contains matters of vital interest to the lives of the masses. It has been the subject of a brief review in a recent issue of *The Daily Citizen*, and is warmly commended to all Brotherhood secretaries. Copies may be obtained, price 3s. each, post free, from the secretary of the Birmingham Federation, Mr. Archibald Fletcher.

The announcement that Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., has been selected to follow Mr. Horne as president of the National Council of Brotherhoods will, I am sure, give universal satisfaction to Wolverhampton and District P.S.A.-ers. No one has done more for the cause than Mr. Henderson, and in view of the great forward movement in social concerns that is manifesting itself in branches throughout the country we can reasonably expect that when the time arrives for Mr. Henderson to take up his presidential duties he will have the support of a magnificent army of social workers.

The Baptist Brotherhood held their opening meeting on September 28, when the Rev. J. Davison Brown delivered a very interesting address on "True Religion." About 50 members were enrolled at the close of the meeting. The programme for the ensuing months was briefly outlined by the president, Rev. A. B. Alnwick, B.A., B.D., and judging by the list of speakers announced, and also by the amount of work that is being put in by Mr. Barnett and his colleagues, the future of this Brotherhood is full of promise.

I regret to hear of the serious illness of Mr. Alnwick, and my readers will, I am sure, join with me in wishing him a speedy recovery.

At a recent meeting of the committee of The People's Class, the treasurer, Mr. C. H. Palmer, in terms of approbation drew attention to the comments (by "The Chief") in the last issue of THE WORKER respecting the class; this was endorsed by others who had seen the paragraph in question, and whoever is responsible for those words of encouragement to an organisation which is doing its level best to interpret the social as well as the spiritual gospel may derive a little pleasure in the knowledge of the fact that his kindly thought is deeply appreciated. And this is not all. Our Baptist friends and others have testified in a similar strain to THE WORKER's help to the P.S.A. and Brotherhood movement. Well, all I can say to these friends is this: "If you want to help your movement still further—advertise your Sunday afternoon meetings in THE WORKER." F. J. T.

Bobbie: "Will you send mother a leg of mutton, please Mr. Bones."

Bones: "Yes, my boy."

Bobbie: "And mother says if it's as skinny as the last the man needn't knock; he can push it through the letter-box!!!"

THE WHITE COUNTRY.

Remarkable Revelations of Police Brutality in Cornish Strike.

By JULIA VARLEY.

Thirty-seven years ago the china clay worker of Cornwall stirred in his sleep and asked for just a little of his just dues from his employer. He was beaten, and after the struggle sank down to sleep again.

The faint rumblings of the thunder of the industrial unrest again roused him from his lethargy two years ago. He turned over, then got on his knees, and again he made a little petition; once again he has been beaten—nay, not beaten, but checked just a little, and it seems that, for a time at any rate, capital has won. And for weapons they used police, starvation, and religion—surely a strong combination and a cowardly one.

Five thousand men came out on strike three months ago for (1) a minimum wage of 25s. per week, (2) fortnightly pay days, and (3) recognition of their union. And the strike was not a surprise strike; it was not an unpremeditated upheaval, but only after eight months' petitioning, which was treated with the greatest contempt, did these workers lay down their tools.

The Cornwall strike was one of the most remarkable strikes that could possibly be conceived. All the meetings, and there were often four a day, were held in the open air in the most glorious surroundings—heather and gorse-clad moorlands, glittering white sandhills, and glimpses of the sea between the hills, making a most enchanting picture. The strikers were themselves remarkable. Sturdy, brown-faced, blue-eyed men, with garments clean and well mended, the women and children who trudged along with them for miles clean and well cared for, all of them, oh, so easily affected by sorrow or joy.

One of the most weird feelings that I ever had came over me when speaking one night in complete darkness to a huge crowd. During a pause someone struck up "Lead kindly light," and that crowd sang, as only a Celtic crowd can, every word of that hymn—and they meant it too. The meetings during the five weeks often started and closed with prayers. There was not a single disturbance to the strikers' account.

But police from Bristol and Glamorgan were drafted in, and they came prepared to have trouble at any price, the men from Glamorgan bringing with them electric torches and shields. There was not, and all through the strike till then, even a whisper of a riot, but these imported police seemed to have come determined to break the strike.

The first move by these hired assassins was a proclamation by the chief constable warning the strikers of "unlawful assembly and the carrying of sticks." Then picketing was prevented by the police, and Councillor Beard, of Birmingham, who insisted on his right to picket, was brutally treated by the imported officers, who had stated they would show the local police how to deal with the leaders, and in the perfect darkness of country lanes the pickets were kicked, beaten, and then chased away. Two of the "brave" men clad in uniform, each with a baton, then held Councillor Beard while the rest of them kicked, thumped, and batoned him from the back. The accounts of the numbers vary, but the police themselves say eight. That will suffice; two to hold and six to attack a man who was unarmed and doing only what the law allowed. Protectors of the public?—forsooth!

The Battle of Bugle.

Then came the "Battle of Bugle." Twenty women, the wives and mothers of strikers, had banded together and pledged themselves to do all that was possible to persuade the blacklegs to cease work. As they started on their journey the police showed, by speech and gesture, that they were not on the workers' side. Those women were spoken to as they had never been spoken to before. Obscenities which, to the credit of the women, some of them did not understand, were shouted out to them by the officers of "law and order." Perhaps a little excuse may be gleaned from the fact that many of them were intoxicated, and had forgotten that they had wives and mothers.

It was not possible to get to speak to the blacklegs, so the women decided to wait and see them when they left work, and while waiting passed the time by singing. Then it was noticed that policemen were coming on the scene in large numbers, and at once it was realised that they meant business. The writer was roughly handled by a couple of them, and when the crowd shouted in indignation instantly, without orders (on the spot, at any rate), the police drew their batons and fell on the crowd.

Men fell bleeding from broken heads, and such was the brutality of the police, as they tried to get out of the way they received another blow.

The police kicked the men who never tried to get up, and if one went to the assistance of another he also got felled. The crowd turned and fled, pursued by the police, who hit at every head within reach. Women were knocked down and kicked, and one woman who went to the assistance of a cripple who was bleeding from a cut, received a blow intended for him, and had several ribs broken. All the way to the village, over a mile away, were pools of blood where men had fallen, and all the horse troughs were filled with bloody water where the men had stopped to bathe their wounds. One young man had to be taken away on a stretcher improvised from a door. The policeman who knocked him down kicked him and dislocated his knee cap. These incidents give but a faint idea of what it means when policemen are used in strikes.

Never was religion put to baser use than during this dispute. The Cornish men and women are deeply religious, and hold the Bible in sincere reverence, and this characteristic was taken advantage of to the last degree. Class leaders who were "captains"—or foremen—spent their Sundays in convincing men that their duty to God and their neighbour was to blackleg. The trustees of the chapels in many cases are the clay masters, and many of them used their influence in the direction of stifling the conscience of the men. Sunday was always a fateful day.

The Ghastly Weapon.

"But the greatest of these is starvation." This did its work slowly but surely. When the strike started but few were in benefit in the union, and out of the poor wages of these men little had been saved. Owing to the monthly pay-days the Cornish men live on credit, and in many cases not only was there no money, but the people were in debt to begin with. A number of the shops were kept by the relatives of the "captains," and it was often impossible to get things on credit on that account, and naturally they were unable to get things from another shopkeeper. This county, being a place of almost one industry, it was difficult to collect money, as almost everybody was concerned in the fight. Owing to its position on the map Cornwall is cut off from the rest of the Trade Union world. The newspapers are owned by the employers, and, of course, were almost mute. The Workers' Union have sent down for the benefit of the non-union element £100 per week, but little by little the men had to give way. At the end of twelve weeks still over a thousand held together. Then it was decided by the men that for the time being they must once again go down.

But the next time they will get on their feet, and break the bonds which now bind them. They have realised the fact that there is something better in life than what they have now—living by getting into debt in their youth, and spending their old age in working to pay off that debt. The spirit of divine discontent has got into their hearts; they know now that religion need not make them content, but means brotherhood, that God did not place them in the station of life where they are now, but the overwhelming greed of the employer. The fight has not been in vain; the lesson has been learned.

On we march, then, we, the workers, and the rumour that ye hear
Is the blended sound of battle and deliverance
drawing near;
For the hope of every creature is the banner
that we bear,
And the world is marching on.

GASWORKERS' UNION.

At the branch meeting of the above society a resolution was carried expressing regret at the retirement of Councillor C. Hickin from municipal work, and tendering the thanks of the branch to Mr. Hickin for the work he had done on behalf of the Corporation employees in connection with the minimum wage question, and at the meeting great regret was expressed that the condition of his health would not permit of Mr. Hickin continuing his excellent work on the Council.

A special meeting of carters was held on Saturday, October 4, at the Seven Stars to give instructions to the General Secretary (Councillor Simpson) and the Organiser, Mr. W. Davis, of Willenhall. Helpful advice was given to the men by these officers, and the following resolution was passed and ordered to be sent to the Executive Committee: "That this meeting of carters desires to send the memorial into the employers at once, and that a time limit be inserted, the length of the time limit to be left to the Executive Committee." Eighty-five per cent. of the carters of the district were represented. J. B.

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IN THE

EMPIRE THEATRE

Sunday Evening, November 9th,
1913.

SPEAKER:

Mr. JOHN HODGE, M.P.

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Mr. A. J. WEAVER
(Chairman, Wolverhampton L.R.C.)

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My wants are few, I sit serene
Upon contentment's highlands;
If I can have earth's continents
I care not for its islands,
I would not climb upon a throne
Through seas of blood and slaughter;
If I can call all lands my own,
Why, you can have the water.
And all I ask is just this earth,
To regulate and man it,
And I surrender all my claims
To every other planet.
And so you see I cut my cloth
On a contracted pattern,
Give me the earth; I drop all claim
To Uranus and Saturn.
Little I need, my wants are few,
Nor would I have them greater
I only want the land between
The poles and the equator.
Give me the earth, 'tis all I ask,
For me and my wife Sarah,
Then I'll give all my fellow-men
A house-lot in Sahara. ANON.

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