

IRISH OPINION

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY.

NEW SERIES. Vol. I, No. 5.

DECEMBER 29, 1917.

ONE PENNY

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The Essays of an Ulsterman. :: By M. E.

"IF THE GERMANS CONQUERED ENGLAND, and other Essays." By Robert Lynd. Dublin: Maunsel and Co. Price 3/6 net.

The volume before us consists of twenty-five essays, almost all of which we have previously read in the "New Statesman." The author is an Ulster Protestant whose work—especially his Introduction to the Maunsel edition of James Connolly's "Labour in Ireland"—is already well known to the Irish and English public. As a writer of "middles" Mr. Lynd, as pointed out in the "Nation," takes a very high place indeed. Notwithstanding the fact that there is little in this volume, from the point of view of ideas, which has not been said before, thanks to the excellent, clear, unaffected style, one may read it with interest from the first page to the last. To our mind the most characteristic of these essays are perhaps "The Darkness," "The Ass," "Myths," and best of all, "White Citizens." In this last the author narrates his experiences while being medically re-examined in an East-London recruiting office. We have ourselves gone through a similar operation in another part of the world, and have carried away the same vividly sordid impressions.

The ass, Mr. Lynd tells us, was once an object of veneration in the Christian Church, and a festival was held in its honour on the 14th of January. During this feast "an ass, ridden by a beautiful girl carrying a baby or doll, was led into the church to hear Mass, and, as the service went on, the people honoured it by chanting 'Hee-Haw' whenever the responses should

have been given. The ass . . . was greeted, we are told, with an address, 'Up, Sir Ass, and sing! Open your pretty mouth. Hay will be yours in plenty and oats in abundance.' At the end of the service the priest brayed instead of saying 'Ite, missa est,' and the congregation responded with a triple 'Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hee-haw.'" Mr. Lynd ends up by reminding us that "On the side of asininity the gods themselves fight in vain, and though it was geese that saved the Roman Capitol, one may be quite sure that it is not asses that are going to save the imperilled freedom of Europe." Mr. Lynd might have also added that it is not asses that are going to achieve an Irish Republic. We trust that this essay has not escaped the notice of the Provost of Trinity College, whose interest in the ass is notorious.

One of Mr. Lynd's essays is entitled "Grub." Unlike a recent number of "Nationality," it is not a glorified cookery-book, but it does contain some extremely interesting considerations. "As a matter of fact, the common man has never been a miser in his appreciation of food. It is only the poets and 'genteel' persons who have pretended that eating is something which ought not to be discussed in polite society. Literature is a form of intoxication, and so men of letters, like other artists, have never tired of praising Bacchus and Venus. But the common people still march in the train of Ceres, and anthropologists tell us that even our Easter holidays are a celebration of the rebirth of the food supply. They go so far as to suggest that Christianity originated in the worship of a vegetation deity. Bethlehem, they assure us, should

be translated the House of Bread. I confess to a rooted scepticism in regard to theories which oversimplify, but it would scarcely be possible to exaggerate the part which concern for the food supply has played in the history of religion. Even the Promised Land, which is still for so many Christians the symbol of that Paradise from which we are exiles, has always been painted in terms of food, as a land flowing with milk and honey. Man in the early days was eager to eat his Eden. He was eager to "eat his god."

In "T. M. Kettle" and "Sheehy-Skeffington," we have the best tributes that have yet been paid to the memory of these men. The former is summed up as

"a soldier of the lost cause of intellect," but we are not sure that Mr. Lynd is correct when he tells us that Kettle "fought in the streets of Dublin to suppress the insurrection of Easter Week." Sheehy-Skeffington is aptly bracketed with his friend, Fred Ryan, "they were exceptional figures in the ranks of Irish Nationalism—they were Socialists, Suffragists, Anti-Clericals, and many other things that the average Nationalist is not. They had something of the Frenchman's eager scepticism and desire to see things in the light of reason." The summing up is, "He was, I think, the *honestest man in Ireland.*"

The Shop Stewards' Movement in England.

By GEORGE STANTON.

There has been a stoppage of work amongst the munition workers at Coventry. The Press, in the beginning, tried to make out that the cause of it was food supply difficulties due to the abnormal increase of the town's population. But truth will out in spite of censorship, regulations and journalistic misrepresentation; and it is now openly admitted that the dispute was the result of the engineering firms' refusal to recognise the Shop Stewards appointed by their Trade Unionists employees. The outcome has been the defeat of the employing firms—and, virtually, the Ministry of Munitions—by the men; while the issue has also resulted in a vigorous attempt to get the recognition of the Shop Stewards and Works Committees settled upon a national basis.

The significance of the Shop Stewards' movement is that it introduced a new element of industrial control into Trade Union and workshop government. The Shop Stewards represent all the workers in a particular workshop or factory, no matter what craft or industrial process they may be engaged upon. Each craft—who probably are organised in different Unions—appoints its own shop steward, and these together form a Works Committee for the whole factory; thus the Shop Stewards are not only in a position to focus the problems of their particular workshop, and to control effectively the first critical stages of collective bargaining, but they sweep clean away the old evils of trade representation.

The adaptability of the Shop Stewards' movement to meet local working conditions is demonstrated in the success it has achieved at Coventry. No Shop Steward was the representative of his particular Union. Every one of them held their card from the Joint Committee of Engineering Unions, and represented a grade of Trade Unionists, not their special craft. This assisted both in the effectiveness of the work and the elimination of friction between different craft Unions. Incidentally, it serves to show the growing industrial unity of the forces of Labour.

The rapid growth of the Shop Stewards' movement is chiefly due to the lack of faith, which, the Trade Unionists in the engineering trades anyhow, have in their official leaders. It is felt that the average official is too much immersed in the routine work of his Union to have any intimate understanding of the working problems of the rank and file in the workshops; and because of this fact, during the war, as even a Liberal leader-writer has put it, some of the more prominent amongst their number have been too ready to make terms with capitalism in the name of patriotism, and thus betray their class. Workshop organisation on the basis of the Shop Stewards' movement has arisen as a consequence; and not only is it counteracting many of the effects of the industrial reaction due to the too ready official surrender of Trade Unionist rights and customs, but it is proving that the organised workers are preparing themselves to take over full industrial control.

The success of the Shop Stewards is all the more striking, because for two years or more they have been continuously cursed, abused, misrepresented, and damned by the Press. The disorganised condition of Trade Unionism in the engineering industry, consequent upon war circumstances, also made their work more difficult. Its strength has lain, however, in the fact of it being an all-grades movement. It has united the skilled and unskilled of all crafts under the common banner of industrial unity and solidarity. It has overcome the dangers of sectional Trade Unionism, and has made inevitable a closer working policy—if not amalgamation—between the Trade Unions organising the engineering workers.

Unless this happens the recognition of the Shop Stewards and Stewardesses will create far more problems than it will solve. This fact is evidently realised by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, who have called a special delegate meeting to discuss the situation. It is important that a lead upon this question should emanate from the A.S.E., as the biggest and most powerful of the engineering Unions; but should it endeavour to follow a policy of absorption rather than of fusion, it may hold up rather than help forward the developments of the new movement. The Shop Stewards represent not only a revolt against Trade Union bureaucracy, but an attempt to set up an efficient system of Trade Union devolution along with a wider outlook and bigger policy for the whole Trade Union movement.

The real lesson of the Coventry dispute is that workshop organisation must be accorded its true functions as the basis of the Trade Union movement. This implies that the Trade Unions have got to build out of their existing organisations a new industrial constitution. In this new constitution it will be essential to define the position and powers of the Shop Stewards in relation to the methods and machinery of Trade Union government. The tendency is for Trade Union officials, of what may justifiably be called the old school, to look upon the leaders of the Shop Stewards' movement as usurpers of their powers, or as a sort of industrial Bolshevik movement run by clever devils who are just damned fools. The truth is that the average Trade Union official is quite out of touch with individual shop problems, and the Shop Steward is not. The man in the central office occupied with details of Trade Union administration looks upon the minor grievances of a workshop as irritating nuisances, and too often is desirous of maintaining the status quo in order to safeguard his own personal position. The Shop Steward is affected by the hundred and one little matters of workshop life that affect his mates working with him at the same bench. Usually he is chosen for the office of Shop Steward, because of his cool judgment and practical understanding of the problems needing settlement. And if the Shop Stewards have led strikes—and, as in the case of Coventry, proved the men were right—they have also been the means of preventing more strikes. They have been equally fearless in

A MORAL FOR MUDDLERS

By
R. L. S.

The following translation of a passage from Xenophon's "Memorabilia," is particularly applicable to the conditions of the present day.

"Glaucou, the son of Ariston, desiring to be a leader in the city, began to speak in public before he was twenty years of age, and amongst his friends and relatives none was able to restrain him from making a laughing-stock of himself, except Socrates, who, meeting him, began in such a way as to induce him to listen, saying:—

"Well, Glaucou, I hear you intend to become a great man in our city."

"Yes, I do, Socrates."

"That's right, it's one of the best things a man can do: for if you succeed you will not only be able to do what you like yourself, but you will be in a position to help your friends, and to raise your family, and to increase the greatness of your country; and you will be renowned first in the city, and then throughout Greece, and perhaps, even, like Themistocles, abroad; and wherever you may be you will always be a conspicuous person."

Hearing this, Glaucou was much flattered and willingly stayed to listen, so Socrates went on—

"I suppose since you are going to be so famous you mean to be very useful to the city?"

"Of course."

"Come then, don't make a mystery about it; tell us where you will begin your reforms."

Glaucou hesitated, as if just beginning to consider what he would do first, and Socrates continued—

"I suppose if you wanted to exalt a friend's household you would try to make him richer; shall you try to make the city richer?"

"Certainly."

"It will be richer if the sources of the revenue are increased?"

"I should think so."

"Tell us then, from what sources the revenues of the city are now derived, and how great they are; for you must have considered this so as to be able to increase what are deficient, and to replace any which have dropped out."

"Why, no," said Glaucou, "I have not considered this."

"Well, if you have omitted this, tell us the expenses of the city; for you will want to cut off those which are superfluous."

"Indeed," said Glaucou, "I have not yet had time to look into this either."

"Oh well," said Socrates, "we'll put off making the city richer, for how is it possible to look after her expenses and revenues unless you know what they are?"

"But Socrates," said Glaucou, "it is possible to make the city richer at the expense of her enemies."

"Why, certainly," said Socrates, "if we happen to be the stronger, but if we are weaker we should lose even what we have."

"No doubt."

"Then if you want to advise war you must know the strength of the city, and that of the hostile powers, and then if the city is stronger you may advise her to declare war, but if the enemy is stronger, you may persuade her to let it be."

"Quite right."

"Come then, tell us first what is the strength of the city by land and by sea; and then the same of the other powers."

"Indeed," said Glaucou, "I am not in a position to tell you that out of my head."

"Never mind; if you have got it written down, go and fetch it, for we should so like to hear."

"But I've not even got it written down yet."

"Then we must refrain also from giving counsel about war," said Socrates. "Perhaps the magnitude of these matters put you off undertaking them so early in your career. But I am sure you have been thinking about the defences of the country, and know how many of the forts are well placed or not, and how many are insufficiently garrisoned, and that you will advise us how to strengthen those which are well placed, and do away with those which are superfluous."

"I shall do away with all of them," said Glaucou, "for they are so badly garrisoned that the countryside is actually plundered."

"And if you take away the forts, anyone who likes will be able to plunder! But did you go and look into it yourself? or how did you know that they are badly garrisoned?"

"I imagine it to be the case."

"Might it not be better, here again," said Socrates, "to put off giving advice until we no longer imagine, but know?"

"Well, perhaps," said Glaucou.

"I suppose you have not been to the silver mines," resumed Socrates, "so as to be able to say why they are yielding less than they used to?"

"No, I haven't been there."

"Why, no indeed: the place is said to be unhealthy, and that will be quite sufficient excuse when you are called upon to speak about it."

"You are laughing at me," said Glaucou.

"One thing, at any rate, I am sure you have not neglected, and that is, how long the corn of the country suffices to feed the city, and how much it falls short in the year, so that the city may not run short without your being aware, but that you may know exactly what is necessary, and by your advice to the city may help to save it."

"You are making it out to be a tremendous affair," said Glaucou, "if I am to have to look after such things as these."

"Why," said Socrates, "no one would ever be able to manage his own household properly if he did not understand just what was needed, and if he were not careful to supply it. But since the city consists of more than ten thousand households, and it is a difficult matter to manage so many all together, why not try first to improve one, that of your uncle—it needs it. And if you find you can do this, then you may try more; but if you cannot help one, how could you help many?"

"I would certainly put my uncle's house in order," said Glaucou, "if he were willing to obey me."

"Do you really think, then," said Socrates, "that though you are unable to make your uncle obey you, you will be able to make all the Athenians, including your uncle, obey you? Take care, Glaucou; that in your eagerness for fame you do not get the opposite. Do you not see how dangerous it is for people to talk, and be busy about matters which they don't understand?"

THE SHOP STEWARDS' MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND. (Continued from page 50).

dealing with the men they represent as they have been in defying autocratic management. Indeed, it can be said for the Shop Stewards that they have not only acted as the levers which have raised wage rates, but to them is due practically all the credit for the improvement in workshop conditions that have come into operation during the last two years.

While it is true that the personnel of the Shop Stewards is made up for the most part of men with advanced political and industrial ideas; this is not the case with the rank and file whose confidence they possess. Many of the Shop Stew-

ards are relatively young men, but at Coventry, as elsewhere, the strength of the movement lay in the resoluteness of the older men; it was an instance of all ages, as well as all grades, standing together in the making of their demands.

The value of the Shop Steward to the Trade Unions is that he sees and feels things at the actual source of industrial discontent. In view of the proposal to set up Industrial Councils of employers and employed on the basis of the Whitley Report, the future of the Shop Stewards' movement is full of industrial potency to the organised workers.

HOUSING DUBLIN'S WORKERS.

COTTAGES AND ALLOTMENTS. By J. VINCENT BRADY.

"On the Statute Book to-day there are certain laws giving to the Dublin workers, through the Corporation, powers over the conditions of life in their city. These powers, if properly and relentlessly utilised, would go a long way towards remedying that fearful state of affairs already cited, and would also be in direct accord with the general movement to re-establish the true Irish nation."

—("Re-conquest of Ireland." By James Connolly.)

It has been well said that the best of laws are useless without the knowledge and public spirit that will secure their effective working and administration, and of no code of laws can this be more truly stated than of the statutes known as the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, 1890-1908. They are of vital importance to the welfare of the workers of Dublin, yet a knowledge of the powers which are given thereby to remedy existing conditions or open up new possibilities of life for our workers is sadly wanting, otherwise slum conditions would not be what they are to-day in Dublin.

In an article entitled "Irish Plotters' Union," appearing in "The Leader" of December 15th, entering a plea for an Allotment Act, the writer, "P. Donnelly," states:—"Twenty years ago the district served by the new church of St. Columba on Iona Road, Drumcondra, was under grass and let at £5 to £7 an acre. It is now paying to the ground landlord the same sums per backyard. Supposing that this plottolding movement had started 20 years ago, and that an Irish Allotments Act had empowered the Corporation to provide allotments in, among other places, Glasnevin and Drumcondra, the Corporation might then have taken these grass lands on a perpetuity lease of, say, £6 an acre, and have given security to allotment holders subject only to this condition, that they might at any time enter on the land for the purpose of carrying out a housing scheme. These allotments would have been worked, we shall reasonably suppose, without any expense to the rates. And supposing that six years ago when two rotten tenement houses fell in Church Street, killing a number of people, the Corporation had built on this Drumcondra land neat detached homes of 4 rooms each—8 to the acre—and invited the Church Street survivors to go out there to live. How would it have worked out? £6 per acre equal 15/- per house ground rent. The houses would have cost £250 each, which would include 'development' charges, or in plain English, the building of streets, sidewalks and sewers. Interest on capital plus sinking fund or redemption charge would have been about 5 per cent. or £12 10s. per house, making a total of £13 5s. per annum or 5/- a week for a four-roomed home with 1-16th of an acre of garden. Rates and taxes would be an addition, but the total would

be well under 7/- a week. And supposing that the number of plots had been sufficient to cover a quarter mile belt round the city, say on a semi-circle of 18 miles, 18 miles long by $\frac{1}{4}$ wide equals $4\frac{1}{2}$ square miles equals 2,880 acres equals 23,040 houses, which is about the number of one-room tenements in present-day Dublin."

Now what wants to be particularly emphasised is that powers to acquire such "virgin" sites and provide cottages with allotments within its district have been possessed by the Dublin Corporation for the past twenty-seven years, and that in addition for the past nine years it has had the powers to provide cottages with allotments on "virgin" sites without its district if necessary. That is to say, that no new Irish Allotments Act is necessary for a solution of the Housing Problem such as P. Donnelly suggests, but if the workers organise and demand such a solution, the scheme must and can be put in hands immediately, and carried through by the Dublin Corporation and the Government, as already recommended by both.

Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, 1890-1908, gives the opportunity to the Dublin Corporation to provide cottages with permanent allotments for urban workers. The following are the sections of the Acts which give the powers:—

Under Part III. of the Act of 1890.

Sec. 53 (1). The expression "lodging-houses" for the working classes when used in this part of this Act shall include separate houses or cottages for the working classes, whether containing one or several tenements, and the purposes of this part of this Act shall include the provision of such houses and cottages.

(2). The expression "cottage" in this part of this Act may include a garden of not more than half an acre, provided that the estimated annual value of such garden shall not exceed three pounds.

Sec. 57 (1). Land for the purposes of this part of this Act may be acquired by a local authority in like manner as if those purposes were purposes of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, and Sections 202-204, both inclusive, of that Act (relating to the purchase of lands) shall apply accordingly.

Sec. 59. The local authority may, on any land acquired or appropriated by them, erect any buildings suitable for lodging-houses (i.e., cottages with allotments) for the working classes and convert any buildings into lodging-houses for the working classes, and may alter, enlarge, repair and improve the same respectively, and fit up, furnish and supply the same respectively with all requisite furniture, fittings, and conveniences.

Under the Act of 1908.

Sec. 6. Where a petition is presented by a local authority to the Local Govern-

ment Board for an order authorising the acquisition of land for the purposes of Part III. of the Act of 1890, the provisions of Section 6 of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, shall, with the necessary modifications, apply in the case of the petition and the subsequent proceedings and orders thereon, in like manner as they apply in the case of an improvement scheme under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883 to 1896.

Sec. 7. Where a local authority have adopted Part III. of the Act of 1890, they may, for supplying the needs of their district, establish or acquire lodging-houses (i.e., cottages and allotments) for the working classes outside their district, and they shall have the same powers of borrowing in respect of anything done under this section as such authority have in respect of anything done for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts within their district.

Provided always that no lodging-houses (i.e., cottages and allotments) shall be established or acquired by any local authority under the provisions of this section, save with the consent of the Local Government Board, and of any Urban or Rural District Council within whose district it is proposed to establish such lodging-houses (i.e., cottages and allotments).

All expenses incurred in the execution of Part III. of the Housing Acts, 1890-1908, shall be defrayed in the case of an urban sanitary authority as part of the general expenses of their execution of the Public Health Acts, and they may borrow for the purpose of the execution of this part of the Acts in like manner and subject to the like conditions as for the purpose of defraying the above-mentioned general expenses.

(To be Continued).

RURAL WAGES.

Last week Irish Opinion published an official notice by the secretary of the Agricultural Wages Board (Ireland), which stated that it is understood that some employers are not complying with the Order fixing wages, issued on November 10th. Employers who try to evade the Order are liable to a fine of £20 in respect of each offence, with a fine of £1 per day for every day the offence is continued. Complaints should be lodged with the Secretary, Agricultural Wages Board, 14 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

That such a notice should be necessary is a sad commentary on the morality of the Irish farmer. As an employer, he acts with the same selfishness as the urban employer and he requires the same corrective, the vigilance of the Trade Union. Rural workers who desire to secure even such benefits as the miserable Wages Order confers, must join up with the Trade Unions catering for them. We shall be glad to put unorganised workers in touch with the Trade Unions operating in their district.

International Notes.

The refusal of Mr. Balfour to define the war aims of the Allies need not surprise us. His attitude is quite consistent with his well-known hatred of democracy beautifully illustrated last week by his inability to see any incongruity between the professions of the Allies and their real intentions, as revealed by the secret Treaties. Balfour, at least, was honest in his whole-hearted sympathy with the purpose of those Treaties; unlike the sanctimonious Liberals; who profess innocence whenever these unpleasant facts are brought to their notice. The day that any of the great Powers are forced to tell the truth about their war ambitions will come only when they see that the game is up. So long as lies and uplifting platitudes content the peoples of the belligerent countries, so long will their rulers conceal the truths which they know will, if revealed, put an end to the lucrative business of war. Whatever good motives may have brought the various peoples into the trenches, it is impossible to discover in the acts and plans of their governments the slightest promise for the advantage of humanity at large.

What must be called the Wilson superstition is perhaps the most amazing absurdity of a war which has produced a truly remarkable crop of incredible fruits of human imbecility. The Press comments on the war aims debate ring with tearful cries of "What will President Wilson say?" The inference is that that eminent Presbyterian will be shocked by the cynicism of English Liberalism and the disconcerting candour of Mr. Balfour. The Allied governments, we are told, are not worthy of the confidence of the innocent Mr. Wilson, and they must mend their ways if they do not wish to lose his friendship. This extraordinary dogma of American infallibility is accepted by all parties except the impenitent Prussians; who, unlike their colleagues in other countries, refuse even lip homage to the moral soothsayer. Yet Mr. Balfour seemed quite unperturbed at the prospect of incurring the righteous wrath of the President, and we suspect him of having very good reasons for this confidence. Does it never occur to Dr. Wilson's variegated devotees that America, like other capitalistic countries, has no wish nor power to disassociate herself from the group whose interests she shares? It is quite legitimate to suppose that whenever Wilson speaks on international questions affecting the Allies, he does so with the knowledge of England, France and Italy.

If the foreign policy of the United States had ever shown any differences of principle from that of the European Powers, there might be some reason for investing that country with a halo. But, as everybody knows, apart from aggressive expansion, which has not been necessary owing to geographical considerations, America has behaved exactly

like all other large Powers, and has given us no ground for believing in an altruism denied to European nations. American Imperialism has frequently substituted dollars for armies, but has succeeded in adding considerably to the territory and "spheres of influence" of American capital.

As far as the present war is concerned, there is equally little to justify a belief in the super-humanity of President Wilson. A glance at the Allied newspapers during the first two years of the war will show what estimate was put upon Wilson's professions of faith in the cause he has now championed. The "Irish-American" and other neutral newspapers of the same period testify to the disappointment caused by his inability to realise the service to humanity which might have been performed by the most powerful nation outside the belligerent groups. Neither from the neutral nor the Allied nor the German point of view was it possible to commend or understand the policy of President Wilson. Why, therefore, since he has at last committed himself, must we regard him as the saviour of civilisation? What has he done to earn the confidence so freely bestowed upon him by so many otherwise conflicting parties? He has prattled about the freedom of the seas, and has enforced an even stricter blockade of neutrals than England had before. He has declared that America is not making war against the German people, but has subjected the Germans in America to restrictions as harsh as any enforced in France or England. He has talked of making the world safe for democracy, while in America all freedom—industrial, political and intellectual—is being restrained in a fashion popularly supposed to be peculiarly Prussian. In a word, America is going through exactly the same experience of war fever as visited the countries of Europe in 1914. It is folly to look to that quarter for even such glimmerings of reason as are visible in the European belligerents, thanks to three years of suffering and disillusion. Distance lends enchantment to the view of Dr. Woodrow Wilson's halo.

The statement of war aims issued on behalf of the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress requires, as "The Herald" points out, "amplifying and explaining rather more fully." So far as Ireland is concerned, we note the same discreet silence as overcomes President Wilson when he envisages the world made "safe for democracy." Belgium, Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, Palestine and the Balkans all come specifically within the purview of English labour, but Ireland is relegated to the obscurity of those safe generalisations, anent the right of small nations to govern themselves, of which Woodrow Wilson has so euphonious a collection. Fortunately, at any gathering of International Labour we can count upon the presence of those who will remind our English comrades of their insu-

larity, in "reprobating" Germany for the annexation of the territory taken from the Germans by force, yet ignoring the annexation by England of a country which never belonged to her. We hope that when the National Conference meets to consider this statement of Allied Labour's war aims, the case of Ireland will be urged upon the attention of the meeting.

The frantic determination of the Allied capitalist Governments lest International Labour should meet to discuss their common aims and interests, is the most significant phenomenon of this war. The interest of Ireland in such a meeting is obvious, for no other tribunal of the nations could give so sympathetic a hearing to our claim for independence. Where the professional diplomats would see only pawns in a game, to be exchanged for other pawns, the representatives of International Labour will see fellow-human beings exploited by capitalism at home and Imperialism abroad. If the British Labour Party demands a plebiscite for Alsace-Lorraine, there can be no objection to a similar demand being made for the settlement of the Anglo-Irish question. What is sauce for the German goose will be sauce for the British gander.

As the daily press informed us, the British House of Commons recently bemused itself with the subject of the Government's "War Aims Committee," which is about to prepare an explanation—at the public expense—of the fact that the world has been in a state of chaos for the past three years. We are now about to be edified with a statement of "what we are fighting for," a point not entirely without interest in this fourth winter of hostilities. Meanwhile, as Mr. Outhwaite, M.P., informed the House, there are some people who have no doubts as to the advantages of the great triumph of European civilisation which we have been witnessing. Referring to the Italian reverses, Mr. Outhwaite said: "From evidence that I can give to the House from a very well-qualified authority, it seems that the failure on one part of the Italian front can in itself be directly traced to no pacifist movement, but to conditions brought about by famine. I am informed that when the Turin riots took place, owing to famine, certain regiments sided more or less with the people, and that those regiments were sent, as a punitive measure, to a certain part of the Italian front, and were kept in the trenches for some thirty-seven days. It was upon those men, exhausted in the front-line trenches, that the German attack was made, with the results we know."

"People could hold to economic Socialism without attaching themselves to atheistic doctrines. He was as anxious as any Socialist to see present conditions bettered, and he believed that the war would bring great changes."—Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne.

Notes and Comments.

Food Control in Ireland.

We have always been of the opinion that the so-called Irish Food Control Committee is a mockery and a sham. It is an Irish Committee certainly, but that it has had anything to do with food is questionable. It can be emphatically stated that the Committee never had and never was intended to have any control. It was appointed as an Advisory Committee to the English Food Controller. The Committee has attempted to carry out its appointed work, but its advice has always been ignored. Not only has the great millionaire coalowner, food-controlling Lord Rhondda ignored the Committee's advice, it is freely rumoured that the officials nominally subject to the Committee have flouted it also. The thing was ridiculous from the beginning. It was never intended to be real. It was to blind us to our real interest and to cover up the depredations of Rhondda and Company in Ireland. Now the Committee is burst. A short time ago Mr. Thomas Farren threatened to resign if executive power were not conceded to the Committee. Now Messrs. R. A. Anderson and Harold Barbour have actually resigned for the same reason. Messrs. Anderson and Barbour represented the Irish co-operative movement on the Committee. They are both men of experience in dealing with food production and distribution. Given a free hand they might have done excellent work, but they were always ignored, as Mr. Barbour put it, by "the men higher up." The Committee of itself could do nothing, not even control the various petty controllers now in office in Dublin. The Sugar Controller, the Tea Controller, etc., etc., took their instructions from London, as befits the imperial dignity of ex-clerks of the Land Commission. An Irish Committee was too small a thing for such great people. To take instructions from a merely Irish Committee might mean fewer visits to London at the public expense, and also less chance to thrust oneself under the notice of the mighty controller of everything, except the war, in London town. We sincerely hope that Mr. Farren will now put his threat into action and that Labour will take the extreme question of food control into its own hands. It is the only way.

The Butter Bribe.

At the annual general meeting of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, the organising centre of the Irish agricultural co-operative movement, Mr. R. A. Anderson, the secretary, and lately one of the members of the Irish Food Control Committee, made the following significant statement which we think worthy of note by Irish Labour, as it explains to some extent at least why butter is now unprocurable in this country of creameries. "Creameries had been passing resolutions," Mr. Anderson said, "asking the Food Control Com-

mittee to take steps to suspend the export of butter from Ireland. They were offered enormously high prices for butter, far in excess of the price fixed by the Order. They were being tempted to sell butter by British merchants, and they were told by the Food Controller that they were not to receive this winter any quantity of foreign or Colonial butter. They knew there was a shortage of about 30 per cent. in the usual winter butter supplies. They were to have no imports, and they were being bribed to continue exporting butter. They wanted to put a stop to that and they wanted to ask the Food Controller to prohibit the export of butter. But as the resolution was sent in and nothing heard about it, except a reply to Mr. Byrne in the House of Commons that the Irish butter producers were unpatriotic to export butter at the high prices with which they were being tempted, and there was no reason to interfere with the traffic." Co-operative conferences throughout the country, knowing the circumstances intimately, have demanded the prohibition of export till March 1st, 1918. North and South was unanimously agreeable to this course; there was no dissentient voice, and yet nothing is done. Mr. Clynes may twit our butter producers ironically on their patriotism, it is poor enough surely to deserve such irony, but his chief and his Department is still mean enough to tempt fate for a famine in Ireland. If the butter producers be not patriotic, if they still hanker after the bribes of the British munition worker and the British Food Controller, our only hope lies in prompt action by Irish transport workers. If the Department of Agriculture and the Irish Food Control Committee are powerless, Irish railway and dock workers are not. They must recognise their power and they must use it.

Recognition.

It is apparently still possible in this country to refuse recognition to Irish Trade Unions. The Trade Union has come to stay. It is now an integral part of the industrial system in every country in the world, and whether employers like it or not they must recognise the fact. They are ready enough to enter into combination themselves to safeguard what they conceive to be their interests, though their conception may be, and is often, of the most anti-social description. They try to refuse the right of combination to the worker. Some employers in this country of ours still seem to think in terms of eighteenth-century philosophy. They have an idea that the men they employ may be ranked with their hats, their boots or their household furniture. They think the worker is part of their personal property and may be disposed of as they deem fit to dispose of him. And may an employer not do what he likes with his own? Such is apparently the viewpoint of many Irish employers even in this twentieth century. It is time they

were taught something sensible. Not only must they be taught that the worker does not belong to them; they must be taught in addition that they themselves are the servants of the community as a whole. As servants they may perhaps be tolerable, as masters they certainly are not. The Limerick Bar Association reserves to itself the right to sweat its workers and refuses to recognise any combination among them. A Portarlington saw miller when his workers join a Trade Union tries to seduce them with an increased wage to non-unionists, and some members of public boards seem to imagine that to belong to a Trade Union is a crime that ought to come within the manifold clauses of D.O.R.A. Freedom evidently is the sacred right of employers and capitalists only. The right to combine for mutual aid is theirs also. It is an understandable position, but it is quite untenable. It was smashed to smithereens a hundred years ago in England. It has evidently only been partially demolished in Ireland. We must demolish it completely and at the same time we will be doing good for ourselves and for our country.

The Shop Steward.

We publish elsewhere an article on the shop steward movement in England by an English correspondent. There has been a deal of fuss raised about this movement. It is presented to us by our prejudiced press as a revolutionary movement of the first order. It is certainly a movement of great significance to the future organisation of industry, and very fortunately it is not confined to England. "The New Statesman" of December 15 thus speaks of the movement: "The shop steward is not, as the journalists are prone to imagine, an entirely new and revolutionary development. In every printing office has been, for a couple of centuries at least, a 'Father of the Chapel,' being one of the compositors who is chosen, by common consent, to represent the whole 'Chapel' in negotiations with the management. Woe betide the management if it ventures upon any innovation without first conferring upon the subject with the 'Father of the Chapel,' or if it refuses, arbitrarily, to give due heed to the representations that he makes! In various manufacturing industries in wood and metal, such a representative of the workshop has long been known as the shop steward. Far from being in opposition to Trade Unionism, the shop steward is definitely recognised in various Trade constitutions, and the appointment may be formally ratified by the district committee of the Union. The duties of the shop steward may be (a) to see that the members pay their weekly contributions, and sometimes to collect these himself; (b) to see that newcomers join the Union; (c) to look out for violations of the conditions of employment agreed upon for the trade in the district, whether as to wages, hours, apprentices, (Continued on page 59.)

IRISH OPINION.

The organ of Industrial and Political Democracy.
Weekly, Price 1d.

Literary communications should be addressed to the Editor, and business communications to the Manager, at the Office, 27 Dawson Street, Dublin.

Matter intended for publication in the following issue must reach the Office not later than Monday afternoon.

English Labour and Ireland.

The Parliamentary Committee of the English Trade Union Congress and the Executive Committee of the Labour Party has issued a revised edition of its war aims and the basis of its Peace Programme. The proposals will be submitted to a National Conference to be held in London on Friday, 28th December, and, if approved, will be set forth to the world as British Labour's ideal of the peace to come. We have read the document with great and, we may say, with sympathetic interest. At least when we set out to read it we were sympathetically disposed, but as our reading progressed our sympathy grew gradually less and less, until by the time we had finished we had very small sympathy left. Upon the causes of the war the document reiterates the declaration unanimously agreed to by the Conference of the Socialist and Labour Parties of the Allied Nations on February 14th, 1915. "Whatever may have been the causes of the outbreak of the war," the draft says, "it is clear that the peoples of Europe, who are necessarily the chief sufferers from its horrors, had themselves no hand in it. Their common interest is now so to conduct the terrible struggle in which they find themselves engaged as to bring it, as soon as may be possible, to an issue in a secured and lasting peace for the world." With that we are in complete agreement. It is a pious generalisation with which almost any humanly minded person might agree without prejudice to his patriotic ardour. We hope, with the authors of this document, "that there shall be henceforth on earth no more war." "As a means to this end the British Labour movement relies very largely upon the complete democratisation of all countries; on the frank abandonment of every form of Imperialism; on the suppression of secret diplomacy, and on the placing of foreign policy, just as much as home policy, under the control of popularly elected legislatures." A League of Nations, "or supernatural authority," is also advocated, and an International High Court "for the settlement of all disputes that are of a judicial nature." This also has our entire sympathy and support.

Clause 3 of the draft deals with territorial adjustments,

and it is with this clause that we are most disappointed. We find herein set out a policy for Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, the Balkans, Italy, Poland, the Jews and Palestine, the Problem of the Turkish Empire, and the Colonies of tropical Africa. Belgium is to be restored to untrammelled and complete independence, and is to have compensation for damage resulting from the war. The future government of Alsace-Lorraine is to be determined, in accord with the declaration of the French Socialists, by the peoples of these territories themselves under the protection of the League of Nations. The Balkan peoples are to be free to "settle their own destinies irrespective of Turkish, Austrian, or other foreign dominion." Italy receives British Labour support to its claim to Italia Irredenta. Italian claims to be "united with those of their own race and tongue" has British Labour's "warmest sympathy." Poland is to be treated "on the application of the principle of allowing each people to settle its own destiny." The Jews are to form in Palestine, "a free state under international guarantee." The Turkish Empire evidently is anathema to British Labour just as it was to the pious Gladstone.

To read this document one would imagine that such a place as Ireland were non-existent. Yet British Labour recognises that "the only way of achieving a lasting settlement" is "on the application of the principle of allowing each people to settle its own destiny." Are we not a people? If we are, why is the principle not to apply to us? For seven centuries we have claimed national rights. Our record in this respect compares very proudly with that of Poland. Yet we are not, on the programme of British Labour, to have the right of even Alsace-Lorraine. Even in the disposition of African Colonies the wishes of the people are to be respected. And if massacre be a reason for the application of the principle we surely have a claim. Armenia, Mesopotamia and Arabia are to have "the Sultan and his Pashas" banished from control. It seems to us that the League of Nations envisaged by the framers of this so-called policy is not by any means a League of Nations, it is a League of Empires they desire. And if they are making the world safe for democracy will they begin at home? The policy of the British Labour Party as here unfolded has really a very close resemblance with the policy of British Toryism of the Lansdowne type. Many peoples are to be liberated, but they are all now subjects of the German, Austrian, or Turkish Empires. Nowhere in this draft policy is it even hinted that the British Empire is not a model to all the bold, bad Empires of the world. We would suggest to the British Labour Party that this is not a policy that will produce either democratisation or a lasting peace. This draft policy would bear re-examination by people who are genuinely interested in freedom. It should, in our opinion, be referred back with a direction that its future recommendations be based upon the principle of allowing "each people to settle its own destiny." The lurid and partial application of the principle is not worthy of its authors. It might be signed by Curzon or Milner without any violent break with their opinions or prejudices.

LABOUR IN IRELAND.

DUBLIN NOTES.

The agreements embodying the new terms of employment for dockers and coal workers were signed at the Mansion House on Tuesday last by the representatives of the Transport Union and the employers. These terms were outlined in last week's issue, and are regarded as a considerable improvement on previous conditions. The quayside labourers may congratulate themselves on reaping the fruits of their long and arduous struggles in reaching a decent level of recompense for their labour. Many people who affected to look down on them for their rough clothes and grimy faces have now to look up to them in the matter of income—that is when the work is to be had! For it must be recollected that the growing scarcity of shipping brings increasing slackness of work even while rates go up for what is available, and the necessity for economising the food of Ireland threatens, if the agitation succeeds, to contribute its share in making work scarce through lessening export traffic. So closely are the interests of all classes related that a movement in one part produces many consequences in other parts of the public concern. "Ar seath a cheile is each mairé na daicne."

The theatrical workers having sent in demands to all the Dublin theatres for improved conditions and pay received on Thursday an answer rejecting their demands, of course; but offering to meet two representatives from each house and the officials of their Union (Transport) in conference to discuss matters. At the time of going to press negotiations are proceeding. The most valuable part of the concessions demanded is the regulation of hours and overtime, which would give them some other standard than the will of the manager as their guide and reference. Extra money is useful only as a temporary help. Independence is better.

An Irish League of Trained Nurses has within the last few weeks been formed in the city. The many thousands of sick people who have passed under the hands of nurses from time to time must have some inkling, however faint, of the terrible demands which the requirements of their profession make on their energy and strength, and will wish, if only in the public interest, to see them well catered and provided for. Chief among the objects which the league proposes to itself as its programme of work, are the development of schemes of a provident or benevolent character to keep its weaker members free from the taint of the thing called charity, and a round of social fixtures which will provide a much-needed change from the scenes of pain and stress which form the staple of their daily environment. Should these fixtures prove popular among nurses, they will provide all branches of the profession with an opportunity of becoming acquainted, and through intercourse help them to realise

how much they have in common and how much they have to gain by organising.

The doctors' organisation is one of the strongest and closest of any profession or trade, and since "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" the sister profession should pay the medical men the graceful tribute of taking a leaf out of their book (the best one at that) so that the interests of the nurses should be properly looked after by the proper people, the nurses themselves. Such an association exists in England, with an Irish branch in Dublin, but the Nurses' League do not propose to merge their identity with the English Association. In that they are wise, for all experience shows that in the English mind Irish interests are secondary considerations; their inborn assumption of superiority clings to English bodies in all their actions. A recent successful concert held at the Grosvenor Hotel, and a leaflet explaining their objects, are the first attempts at publicity of the Irish League of Trained Nurses, to which we wish a prosperous New Year.

LIMERICK NOTES.

The doings of the Trades Council have of late assumed the character of a forward movement. This is most remarkable in the number of bodies seeking affiliation. As compared with June of this year the number of Societies affiliated has more than doubled. The pity is that all Societies have not yet done so. Limerick is too small a town, and the forces against labour there are too strong, in which to have divided forces. However, it is to be hoped that by the dawn of the New Year our friends of the Federated Labour Council will unite with their brothers of the Mechanics' Institute. By doing so, and setting our own house in order, we may be better fortified to win what we ardently desire in a much shorter time.

The Law Clerks and Typists of the city have had rather protracted negotiations with their employers relative to an increase in their wages. The Bar Association, as the employers call themselves, refused to recognise the men's grievances as a body, and their reply is that it is a matter for individual arrangement. Might not all employers say the same, and would they not pay the worker what they chose or what he might be compelled to take? Organisation has long since proven that, in dealing with employers, it is very much superior to individual "bargaining," which leaves the individual at the employer's mercy. Today it is the Employers' Union against the Workers' Union, and as time goes on this is bound to become more emphasised. Does it not seem strange that lawyers, who belong to one of the greatest and most exclusive Trade Unions in the country, should refuse recognition to a combination of their clerks? The Trades Council has now the matter in hands, and it is to be

hoped that the greater power there invoked will have the desired effect. The clerks have placed at the disposal of the Council some very interesting facts relative to wages and conditions, which will be used if and when the necessity arises.

The City Housing Association augurs well. Though formed only a short time it has at least one victory to record. It has compelled that lethargical body, the Corporation, to rouse itself, and for the first time in three years, convened a meeting of its Housing Committee. Many and various are the ruses of the slum landlord, and we have them galore in the Limerick Corporation. The Corporation was reluctant to discuss the question, but the Housing Association persevered. We were requested to "pity the poor ratepayer," but Mr. E. Stevenson, the Association Chairman, said that we did not ask the Corporation to undertake the work, the job was too big for the Corporation. Housing should be a national question. Money can be found to carry on a war and make cripples, widows, and orphans; can money not be found for decently housing our workers. "We ask but a few hours of war expenditure to satisfy our needs."

That the Trade Union movement is selfish, wages and still more wages, is a taunt that is often levelled at us. At the last meeting of the Trades Council it was decided to ask Judge Henry Neil, of Chicago, the Pioneer of Mothers' Pensions, and Councillor Kneeshaw, Labour candidate for Birmingham, to speak in Limerick. We have been informed that the services of both gentlemen had been offered to other bodies in the city, who look down upon the Trades Council, and had been refused. It shows who are the true friends of education in Limerick.

The Co-operative movement is again on the tapis; let us hope it will stay this time; several attempts have been made to place the sister movement of Trade Unionism on a footing in Limerick, but it has failed. We expect the lessons learned from the profiteer will prove effective.

Activity in Labour circles is general, but more especially amongst the semi-skilled and general workers. The I.T.W.U. has wrought wonders since its advent into this city, in some cases as many as three definite increases in wages have been gained by members of that Union without a strike, and what was at the outset the hardest job encountered, has resulted in an advance of from 5s. 6d. to 7s. per week for the men employed in O'Donnell's Tannery.

Laundry hands have also got through the Union an increase of 1s. 6d. to 3s. per week.

The dispute in the bakery trade is referred to arbitration. It is to be hoped that although Limerick enjoys day work since 1872, and, therefore, needs nothing on that score, they may turn out as well as their co-unionists in Dublin.

What the Unions are Doing.

Belfast.

The "Morning Post" and "Belfast Telegraph" have much to answer for! Some three or four months ago these papers told the world how loyal and patriotic the munition and shipyard workers of Belfast had been since the outbreak of war; how, when other centres in England and Scotland were seething with discontent and strikes occurring with lamentable frequency, the men of Belfast had shown an example of how patriots should behave, they had never once even whispered the dread word "strike."

It was not quite true, of course. There had been occasional stoppages of more or less importance, but on the whole it might be said with truth that the Belfast shipyard workers up to the appearance of those articles "boosting" Belfastmen had been content to accept whatever the efforts of their more aggressive fellow-workers across the water had succeeded in obtaining. But alas for the reputation of the Black North, and alas for the wisdom of the aforesaid newspapers! For, ever since the suggestion was made that Englishmen and Scotsmen had been doing all the fighting, strikes and stoppages have been almost of weekly occurrence.

As we write, three separate strikes are going on. About five thousand shipyard men—the black squad—platers, riveters, caulkers, smiths, etc., etc.; have stopped work as a reply to the offer of a five per cent. advance on list rates (in reality only three per cent. on current wages).

The electricians—Electrical Trades Union—employed at Harland and Wolff's are also out on strike. This time against the employment of non-unionists, or worse, of men whose membership has lapsed.

A third dispute of a serious character is being fought out at this moment. The semi-skilled and unskilled men, members of the Municipal Employees' Association, working at the Municipal Electricity Works, demand that they should participate in the 12½ per cent. recently awarded. About 150 men have ceased work, and unless a settlement is arrived at, the city may be without light or tramcars for Christmas-time.

BELFAST BARMEN'S UNION.

This Union has been discussing the possibility of becoming a branch of the National Union of Vintners and Grocers' Assistants, whose headquarters are in Dublin. Last Sunday's meeting was adjourned until December 23, 1917.

SHOP ASSISTANTS' UNION (Belfast and District).

Belfast Hairdressers' Branch has decided to apply for a reduction of working hours. The demand is being made to suit the various class of saloon. The maximum number of hours is to be from

54 for the best class of shop, to 64 in the working class districts. When this is attained it will be a reduction of an average of 8 hours in the six day week.

The following questions addressed to the Minister of Labour by Mr. W. C. Anderson, M.P., with the reply, will interest our readers:—

Question 53. Mr. Anderson—To ask the Minister of Labour, whether he has had an opportunity of investigating the facts in connection with the strike of certain men and women at Messrs. Robinson and Cleaver's, of Belfast; whether he is aware that girls with two years' experience are paid 5s. a week, girls with four years' experience 6s. a week, girls with seven years' experience 9s. a week, living outdoors, and without receiving meals from the firm; and what steps his Department are taking to promote a settlement of the claim for a fair wage.

Mr. Bridgeman—Enquiries have been made into the strike referred to. The figures as stated in the question are not accepted by the firm. My right hon. friend is making further enquiries. I would take the opportunity of pointing out that the cessation of work has considerably prejudiced such services as the Department might have been able to render.

BELFAST PAWNBROKERS' ASSISTANTS.

The Pawnbrokers' Assistants in Belfast are making praiseworthy efforts to increase their membership, and to secure for themselves that recognition of their Union by which alone they will be enabled to raise themselves from their present position of a badly exploited class.

At a meeting held recently to consider the question of the Xmas holidays, Mr. Keating, the chairman of the local branch of the Union, placed before the members the result of a visit by a deputation to the employers asking for three days' holiday instead of two. It was agreed, said Mr. Keating, that such holidays be granted to the Assistants provided that the Union would undertake to picket the three shops—the proprietors of which were not affiliated to the Masters' Association—and thus to inform the public, by picketing, the facts of the situation. Mr. Nicholson, the secretary, also spoke urging the importance of such a suggestion, and it was decided unanimously to act upon the same.

Mr. R. L. Smyth then addressed the meeting on Trade Unionism and probable conditions after the war. He pointed out and emphasised the combinations and associations of employers that are now proceeding, and urged all present to face the facts. Mr. Nicholson stated that he knew, without question, that an effort would be made to introduce female labour into the business, and while he did not resent female labour as such, the

proposal, if carried into effect, would very seriously injure the prospects of male assistants. With a strong Union they could maintain their present position; and he supported the previous speaker's appeal to face the facts and "hang together, or hang separately."

SHOP ASSISTANTS' UNION.

Dublin Branch has been quite busy recently; a demand for a minimum rate of wages for the staffs in Messrs. Lipton's, Ltd., in Dublin, Kingstown, and Bray, has been placed before those in authority. The latest information is that the managing director has forwarded the demand to the Chief Inspector in Ireland for settlement.

S.

FOR LIBERTY.*

This booklet is a collection of dicta by some great men, and some very small fry, on the problems of government, law, political power, Empire, State slavery and non-governmental society. The compilers' object is to discredit the capitalist State, and indeed any conceivable system of government. They manage to put Mr. Josiah Wedgewood on a level with Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, and Machiavelli. Despite such incongruities, the selections are well made and provocative of thought, and we can wish that this booklet will be widely read in Irish Labour circles.

* "For Liberty, An Anthology of Revolt" (C. W. Daniels, Ltd., Tudor St., London, E.C.4.) Paper, 6d. net.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

IRISH OPINION.

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FIRST BRANCH MEETING.

The Irish Clerical Workers' Union held its first Branch meeting in the Grand Central Halls on Thursday, the 13th inst. Mr. D. Logue presided, and the attendance was inspiring, considering the shortness of the notice. It shows that the right temper is present amongst the rank and file.

The Secretary and Financial Secretary submitted their reports, which were considered very satisfactory, and unani- mously adopted.

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Drew) created a surprise when he stated that, although no contributions were yet paid, during the period from the 27th October to the 13th inst., roughly seven weeks, a sum of £75 was put to the credit side of the Union's funds. This money was contributed solely in Entrance Fees and private donations from members. The reasons given for the non-collection of dues was owing to the fact that membership cards were not available until the preceding week, and that the Provisional Committee would not allow contributions to be paid until each member had a card. The Financial Secretary stated that the shop stewards had informed him that all subscriptions would be cleared up by the end of the year, which will mean a very respectable balance to the credit side.

The initial expenses were heavy, as is always the case, but the members were fully satisfied that the very best possible was done.

The Right Spirit.

The case of Messrs. Bolands' Clerks was discussed at length, and it was unanimously resolved that unless a satisfactory answer was forthcoming before Monday, the 17th inst., that the joint committee delegates be instructed to urge on that body a policy of "Down Tools." That is the way to do business, and it is about time we Clerks did something drastic. If rumour be true, other Clerks have decided, if their demands are not conceded, to follow suit in Government offices and down tools. I thought we would wake up the sleeping lion right enough. Hope it is not just bluff, or intended as a set off to regain the lost redoubt. However, we shall watch with interest and genuine sympathy, and, perhaps, take a little hand in the game. The Clerks will come into their own yet, or "I am an impractical dreamer." Well done! Keep moving.

It was rather difficult to get an answer from Messrs. Boland before the 13th inst., but it was an easy matter after we demonstrated that our steel had the genuine ring. The Food Controller, now known as Lord "Rotunda," knows that such beings as Clerks "exist" in Dublin (note the inverted commas). But to our meeting. Mr. Drew proposed a scheme of organisation on industrial lines, which was seconded by Mr. Dornan and adopted. This scheme, which will

provide for Guilds, etc., will be dealt with later.

The Secretary dealt fully with the various deputations and arbitration Boards, and said that it was essential in the first instance that the Clerks should rely on their own strength, and that then only could they hope for the full-hearted support of organised labour. He also said that the Bosses had a supreme contempt for the Clerks, which organisation alone could turn into a wholesome fear and respect.

Talent.

The members present were given full scope for discussion, and splendid talent was displayed. All this must be utilised fully in the near future, and Mr. Drew's scheme affords the outlet.

Special Meeting:—A special meeting of the Clerks in the A.P.O. was held after the meeting proper, to consider their case for payment of overtime. A deputation was instructed to wait on the R.P., and the case is under negotiation presently.

Bonus.

The Arbitration and Conciliation Board has just granted a bonus to Civil Servants and Temporary Postal employees, with which I will deal later. Other temporary employees in Government service are being dealt with, and good news for these employees will soon be published.

A Misunderstanding.

Owing to the curtailment of my last notes, a false impression was given with regard to my remarks on the Trades Hall and Labour Leaders. I assure my friends that no such meaning as was interpreted was intended, as can be seen by looking up the manuscript. I will deal later with the whole matter, and, in the meantime, am no way squeamish of being present as often as possible in the Trades Hall. I think my friends should easily understand this.

Shop stewards are requested to note that Saturday afternoon is the time for giving in their returns, and members should see that their cards are duly initialled by a responsible official, otherwise payments made may not be allowed.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Irishwomen's International League,
25 Kildare St., Dublin.
December 3rd, 1917.

The Committee of the Irishwomen's International League beg to draw the attention of the leading representatives of the Protestant churches in Ireland to the following appeal:—

We find in the letter from his Eminence Cardinal Logue, issued on Sunday, November 25th, a fervent expression of the desire for peace growing in the hearts of the common people of all the nations, and it is our conviction that all Christian communities should unite in some similar effort to centre solemn

reflection upon the Pope's recent Appeal to the belligerent Powers. The admirable mingling of the ideal with the practical in this Note deepens its value by witnessing to the great truth that practical proposals, to be effective, must originate and draw their life from spiritual forces. Lord Lansdowne has re-enforced its practical elements by making them the basis of a letter which must be regarded as a very serious recommendation to the Allied Governments. We look now for some further endorsement of its ideal elements.

We shrink from the awful thought that motives so ignoble as pride, jealousy, ambition, or the conflicting interests of men should stand in the way of peace, or give fresh impetus to the deadly conflict. Nor can any nation prolong the war for purposes of vengeance, punishment, or military victory without irredeemable injuries to itself. A victory fraught with bitterness and anguish can bring no triumph; in so immense and terrible a conflict, vengeance and punishment pass beyond human powers.

We see all the familiar standards and values of humanity outraged or ignored; the foundations of morality shaken; Christianity losing its repute; all that made our civilisation beautiful or desirable devoted to purposes of hatred, destruction, or death; and the thought comes to us with growing strength that this generation can only be saved from despair and demoralisation by an outpouring of the spirit of charity, great enough to wipe out all offences, all wrongs, all cruelties. We appeal, therefore, to all Ministers of Christianity to follow the lead given by His Holiness the Pope, and to show themselves so imbued with Divine inspiration that standing in spirit above the battle, uninfluenced by fear, hatred, or anger, they will preach Christ the lover of man, the Friend of sinners, the gentle Advocate of the principle of fraternity.

We long to see this great war ending upon an impulse of moral greatness and courage, in a mood of compassion, of generosity of conciliation. There is no nobility which has not its roots in charity, no healing without mercy, no reformation without faith in God and man. We feel that a special responsibility rests upon the Churches to revive amongst us these qualities of charity, mercy, and faith, and thus create the atmosphere in which a just and lasting peace will live and grow. So may the earth be justified of her children and the crucified Christ restored to honour.

Signed on behalf of the Committee of the Irishwomen's International League,
LOUIS BENNETT,
(Hon. Sec.)

FOOD CONTROL.

A writer in another column says the Irish Food Control is burst. We learn now that the three representatives of Labour have resigned. Nevertheless the Committee may continue to serve Lord Rhondda's purpose. Hasn't the Board of Trade managed for long enough without the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons?

VICTORY AT KINGSTOWN FOR CORPORATION WORKERS.

By DAN MACEE, Secretary United Corporation Workmen's Trade Union.

The Executive Committee met on Friday evening, 21st December, 1917. Mr. Robert Tynan presided. The Secretary announced that the strike of the employees of the Kingstown Urban District Council who are members of the Trade Union had been settled on that day. He (the Secretary) had received a telegram on Thursday, the 20th inst., from the Town Clerk, Dr. Vaughan, intimating that the Chairman of the Council, Mr. J. J. Kennedy, would meet him at the Municipal Employees' Yard, Kingstown, at 1 o'clock p.m. on Friday, 21st inst., as he was desirous of interviewing the men. The Secretary, accompanied by the Chairman, Mr. Tynan, attended, and was very courteously received by Mr. Kennedy and the head officials of the Council, and after going into the matter very carefully an agreement was come to that the Chairman of the Council would move at the next meeting of that body that an increase of 5s. per week to all the employees be granted from January 1st, 1918. Needless to say, that if the Chair-

man had used the same tact at the meeting of the Council which was held on Wednesday evening, 19th inst., there would have been no strike, and if the motion which Councillor O'Brien had moved and Councillor Devitt seconded, and was so ably supported by half of the members present, adopted, it would have saved a lot of discontent amongst the men in so far as they were led to believe, as well as the heads of the Trades Union, that Mr. Kennedy and some other members of the Council were out to kill Trades Unionism amongst the workmen. However, all's well that ends well, and he (the Secretary) could state that in his opinion, from the statement made by Mr. Kennedy to the men, wherein he advised all of them to join the Trade Union and be loyal members of such a Union that had done so much for them. Mr. Tynan also spoke of the manner in which the deputation was treated, and he verified the statement made by the Secretary. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Councillors O'Brien and Devitt and the other members who had stood by the claims of the men; also to the Chairman (Mr. Kennedy) for the courteous manner he received the heads of the Trade Union, whereby an amicable settlement had been arrived at.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

N.B.—In most instances detail notices will be published in subsequent issues of "Irish Opinion."

MARXIAN SOCIALISM. By W. Paschal Larkin, O.S.F.C., M.A., with Introductory Essay by Prof. Alfred Rahilly. (University and Labour Series, No. 3. Purcell and Co., 124 Patrick Street, Cork. Paper, 6d.)

JOHN MITCHEL: An Appreciation. By P. S. O'Hegarty. (Maunsels, Cloth, 2/6 net.)

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COLLECTED WORKS OF P. H. PEARSE. Vol. II. Songs of the Irish Rebels. An Irish Anthology. (Maunsels, Cloth, 5/- net.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS—Continued.

or whatnot—and to report these to the district committee; and (d) to represent the workshop in any negotiations with the management as to 'shop conditions.' The shop steward is not a salaried officer, but a workman like his colleagues, who discharges his duties for love often to the impairment of his own piecework earnings." This is not by any means the entire story. It does represent the shop steward as he was known in pre-war days, but since then his functions have been enlarged. We shall have more to say about it.

Proportional Representation.

It is expected that an attempt will be made to persuade the Speaker's Conference on the question of redistribution of seats in Ireland to agree to embody the scheme of Proportional Representation proposed by Mr. Devlin in the House of Commons. We hope the effort will succeed. The Irish Trade Union Congress has on two occasions, after full discussion, resolved in favour of this method of ensuring due representation of minorities. The Belfast and Dublin Trades Councils are also in favour of the proposals. We would like to see the principle adopted for the election of Town Councils and Poor Law Boards even more than for Parliament. We believe it would ensure the election of a better type of representative than the present system. It is interesting to note that it is by this system that the Labour majority was secured for the Finnish Parliament and that the elections for the

Russian Constituent Assembly are on a system of "P.R."

Very Oily.

The British Government holds large blocks of shares in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and controls its policy through the directors it nominates. Last week, to assist the Company in the exploitation of Mesopotamia, 1,000,000 Cumulative Preference Shares of £1 each have been issued at a premium of 2s. 6d. The lucky purchasers of these shares will enjoy a dividend of 7½ per cent. on the actual cost of the shares.

As the War Bonds yield only 5 per cent. the Government, in its capacity as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, is presenting the investing public with an inducement to put their money in oil, rather than War Bonds. It will be interesting to see a list of allotments of these shares, and to note how the Burmah Oil crowd and the friends of the Cabinet get the plums of the Anglo-Persian.

But why has this issue been placed on the market at a time when every penny is needed to win the war. It would have been good business for the Treasury to have taken up the million itself with the money obtained by the sale of War Bonds, thus making a net profit of 2½ per cent. But to have done so would not have suited the oil profiteers, who despise the paltry 5 per cent. of Win the War Bonds and rush for the 8 per cent. of oil monopoly shares.

The Rising Storm.

The last two issues of the "Railway Clerk" contain bitter reference to the prevalence of favouritism in the management of the whole of the Irish railway system, including the Head Offices at Kildare Street, not merely with regard to promotion carrying with it an immediate increase in remuneration, but also in the filling of positions more privileged and more promising than pertain to ordinary routine duties. In both issues of the journal it is suggested that a Commission of Inquiry should be set up to investigate the general discontent. We are entirely in favour of this idea, but it should not be lost sight of that Commissions of this kind, unless very carefully selected, are generally no match for the sophisticated methods of bureaucratic officials, either in the railways or the Civil Service. And even the most drastic report against the companies will be of little permanent avail unless the workers of all grades are enabled to have their representatives on the Railway Executive as well as all local committees that future organisation of the railways will require. If the Railway Unions would only concentrate upon this as a first clause in their Magna Charta, it could be achieved almost immediately. Only in such a reform can railway workers hope to find any genuine security against the jealousy, tyranny, and flagrant favouritism that makes our railways so hopelessly inefficient in their management, and so unjust to those workers whose intelligence and all-round merit not only receive no personal recognition, but, saddest of all, are lost to the general weal.

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