



No. 21.

MAY, 1924.

GUARANTEED CIRCULATION, 30,000.

## THE NEW BUDGET.

BY "ECONOMIST."

AND so we have had the first "Socialist" Budget! Fire has not fallen from Heaven; the Empire does not seem to be in any special danger, and even millionaires can snatch a little sleep—if their dyspepsia will permit!

In November last, newspapers of the "patriotic" brand were warning us of all kinds of calamities that would happen should a Labour Government be put in power. They tried to make our flesh "creep," and they managed it for a mass of unintelligent (but extensively educated) Tories. The greatest of all the dangers was to be the Budget! A Labour Budget would upset trade, it would "drive capital abroad," it would be vindictive.

The people who talked and wrote that sort of "tosh" ought to have known better. About 1906, Philip Snowden wrote a small book called "A Socialist Budget," which admittedly was reasonable, business-like, statesman-like, and democratic. It so struck the fancy of Mr. Lloyd George (then in his Radical and sincere days) that it was actually used by him in the drafting of one of his Budgets! We therefore knew that Snowden would do the work, would do it well, and would get public support for his proposals.

It is a curious thing that whilst all this was well known to every economist and student of State Finance, our capitalist newspapers professed that "Socialist" finance was dangerous. Immediately the Budget speech was delivered both Asquith and Baldwin could find no words good enough to express their high opinion of Snowden's ability and the excellence of his Budget! What a charming commentary on the Churchillian fact: "Labour is not fit to govern!" Why, one thing has been made startlingly plain—the fact that "business" Governments have not proved to be anything near so business-like as the present one. The money-bags have been broken on their own ground! The fact is, of course, that "business" men very frequently have no idea of business; they are used to pursuing a particular concern in a vulgar, thumb fashion, and imagine that that qualifies them for the business of State. This is no over-statement of the case, and even Mr. J. M. Keynes (Liberal in his recent look on "Monetary Reform") says substantially the same thing about financiers. "One is often warned," says he, "that a scientific treatment of currency questions is impossible, because the banking world is intellectually incapable of understanding its own problems."

Labour has therefore compelled appreciation by its business-like Budget. But what does the new Budget do to the advantage of people in general? Certainly not what we should like, and that for many reasons, of which the most important are—

1. Labour has not a majority in Parliament.
2. Even if it had that majority, it cannot alter the finances of the country except in so far as it is supported by an educated public opinion. Groups of financiers at the present time can easily mislead vast sections of the people.
3. The whole question of our own country's financial affairs is bound

up with that of other countries. Progress to be effective must be international progress.

Notwithstanding these very substantial difficulties the Budget reduces the prices of tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, dried fruits, aerated waters, and the admission fees to entertainments. The working class in particular will benefit by this—and ought never to have been taxed so heavily upon these things. We look for the time in the near future when taxes on these shall vanish altogether.

Nobody knows better than Snowden and the Labour and Co-operative parties

that reducing the price of these things reduces the cost of living, and may tend to bring about a demand from capitalists for a reduction in the wages of workers. Forewarned is forearmed.

The middle classes and the well-to-do have by no means been overlooked either. For a century-and-a-half almost, there has been an irritating tax on all houses with a yearly rental of £20 or over. It has been comparatively expensive to collect, and only produced £2,000,000 a year. As soon as Snowden abolished it, Liberals and Tories alike were great in their praises that so trifling yet irri-

tating a tax had gone. Why didn't they abolish it; they were in power long enough? The fact is they were tied to tradition, they were not business-like; they had not enough imagination to be enterprising.

We confess that an increase in the super-tax would have met with approval throughout our movement, and regret that Snowden did not take such a step. Even the "Daily Mail" expected it, and was apparently so overcome by the reasonableness of such a proceeding that it raised no objection.

When the Tories had had time to think (this is rather a laborious process with them) they apparently agreed to focus their opposition on the proposal to abolish the "Motor Duties" imposed during the war. At present, motor cars, cinema films, clocks, and musical instruments imported from other countries are taxed. If you buy an American alarm clock you pay about a quarter of the price as tax. It is the Government's intention to abolish these duties in August next—after the present season for motor car sales. The trade is up in arms, contending that foreign cars will then be so cheap that English cars will remain unsaleable. Observe the people who pin their faith to competition: they want competition just so far as it helps them to tie their pockets, but no competition directly it is a barrier to their own trade. They haven't even a water-tight political philosophy! You can never run trade nor anything else satisfactorily without co-operating for the common good. Sectional advantage must give way to the need of the people as a whole. Directly you subsidise any trade by means of a protective tariff, the subsidy is charged to the people who buy the goods made in that trade. When Baldwin and Company get that point home, the daylight will dawn them. What the people do not fully grasp is that it pays a Tory employer to have a tariff on the goods he makes; he is certain of profits, at the expense of those who buy his goods. If we have to tax ourselves in this fashion in order to keep Coventry employed, we might at least see that Coventry is making things of utmost need. We might keep it employed, for example, by making metal fittings of many kinds for the millions of houses much more urgently required than motor cars, if we only used the adaptive sense we used during the war for the making of munitions.

This, however, can never be while every business is playing for its own end; run in direct opposition to every other business. A vast development of constructive measures is essential unless society is to suffer continually by high prices, trade dislocations, and dislocations of employment.

Meantime, mark what Liberal and Tory financiers have done for us. Last year the cost of the National Debt—interest and sinking fund—was £150,000,000. It will be the same this year because Labour and Co-operation are not in a majority in the Commons. The one thing really necessary to enable a large surplus of funds to be available for housing and other social services is—the Capital Levy. According to an official paper published on April 29th, the total rates estimated to have been collected in the last interest-free year ending March 31st, 1924, was £161,000,000; less than half the cost of the National Debt!

The lesson is obvious: let us consolidate our ranks for the next election and make sure that we leave no stone unturned to get working men unitedly with us.

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## MUNICIPAL TOPICS.

By COUNCILLOR T. H. WATKINS.

The proceedings of the April Council Meeting were marked by a despatch of business which indicated a greater measure of discussion and agreement during the Committee stages upon the general questions submitted to the Council.

## Health—Conversion of Privies.

The Medical Officer of Health presented the following report of progress during the quarter, January to March 31st, 1924:—

Estimated number of privies at the end of 1923 ..... 9,167  
Number of privies converted or disused during the quarter referred to ..... 280  
Estimated number of privies remaining ..... 8,887

To complete the conversion within five years, as agreed upon by the Council, will necessitate the conversion of over 400 privies per quarter. Pressure must be maintained to ensure an increasing rate of progress.

This also contributes in one of the most important directions to improving the health of the city.

## Cheaper Slipper Baths.

The Council agreed to a resolution, proposed by the Labour Group, being submitted to the Health Committee to consider and report upon "provisions for slipper baths to be obtained at a charge of 2d. per person in all Corporation Baths for the same number of days, and under the same conditions, as at present provided at the Attercliffe and Corporation-street Baths."

## Markets.

The Council also agreed to a resolution, proposed by the Labour Group, being submitted to the Markets Committee for consideration and report upon "the submission of an application to Parliament for powers to exercise market rights over Exchange-street, Dixon-lane, Castlefields, and parts of Broad-street, Shude Hill, and Sheffield-street, thus to enable the Corporation to license traders in such streets, also to jerry and collect tolls."

This is a reasonable proposal, and will remove the penalties and hardships inflicted upon the street traders in the thoroughfares referred to. This course will also follow the methods adopted in other cities to meet the requirements of this particular section of the public in catering to the needs of a section of the public which would not otherwise be served.

## Housing.

It was reported that the lump sum grant, or subsidy, of £500 per house to private persons had been approved in respect to a total of 750 houses. The contribution from the ratepayers is £25 per house, and upon 750 houses the initial cost from the rates will be £18,750. Formal sanction has been obtained to the borrowing of £25,000 for this purpose, the period for repayment of the loan being twenty years. With interest charged at 5 per cent., the interest charges alone at the end of twenty years will amount to £25,000, the exact amount of the loan, and a total in repayment of the loan of £50,000.

The ratepayers will therefore be called upon to repay double the initial cost or outlay of the grant or subsidy of £25 per house when obtained on loan repayable at the end of twenty years at 5 per cent.

This, of course, equally applies to all loans for whatever purposes applied.

## Corporation Houses.

If £500 be obtained on loan to build Corporation houses at 5 per cent., repayable at the end of twenty years, provision must be made to repay £5,000, or double the amount of the loan. If the period of repayment of £500 be at the end of five years, the provision must be to repay £2,500, or three times the amount of the

loan. If the period of repayment of £500 be at the end of sixty years, the provision must be to repay £2,000, four times the amount of the loan.

Whether the amount of the loan be £500 or £100,000, the total repaid would be double, triple, or quadruple at the end of the periods of twenty, forty, or sixty years respectively.

## Control of Finance and Credit.

It will be observed that interest charges are equivalent in cost to all other charges, i.e., cost of materials, labour, &c., in the construction of houses financed by loans.

The question why rents are high is thus answered. How rents are reduced at all, while the high rates of interest, is by and at the risk of reducing essential public services.

The adverse past private financial control plays in the lives of the community is insufficiently realised, resulting as it does in unemployment, housing problem, restricting production and developments in that direction, including the home markets.

## Municipal Baking.

As a step in the direction of restricting the present financial monopoly and incubus of interest charges, efforts are being made throughout the country to establish municipal banks. To this end the Council passed a resolution urging His Majesty's Government to introduce legislation for the purpose of enabling large municipalities or groups of municipalities to establish municipal savings banks. This would obviate the necessity of each municipality having to promote private Bills, and thereby save the high costs of doing so.

## Street Lighting.

The Labour Group have kept this question before the Council. Adequate lighting is essential in all parts of the city, and only on the basis of "safety first" from every point of view. There is a growing demand for electric street lighting as being more effective, and to the greater extent to which it is utilised it will be less in cost.

## Electric Poles.

The method of conveying electric cables by poles is a retrograde one, being unsightly and ultimately more costly. Some of our residential districts are being made hideous by such poles, and extensions are still proceeding under the auspices of economy. Vigilance and vigorous steps will be necessary to prevent the considerable further extensions that by this means, as it appears that attempts will continue to be made to do so.

## Local Authorities (Enabling) Bill.

This Bill proposes to confer on local authorities with a population of 20,000 and over the power to purchase land and carry on undertakings of such authority and were a company with limited liability. This was too big a mouthful for those who progress by private ownership, controlled with limited competition and monopolies of the Bill. The Bill was considered to be "too wide and drastic," "in competition with and usurping the rights of private interests." Evidently the representatives who preach "competition" do not believe in competition in practice when against themselves.

The Council, being represented by a majority favourable to private interests, resolved that no action be taken at present. Parliament will be taken at future Labour and Co-operative Councils will put the powers into operation.

## Borden of Debt.

This question was again raised, and it was unanimously resolved to press the Government to assist Sheffield by offering her the financial assistance than has facility to meet the case. The chief difficulty is to meet the debt incurred by the Guardians who obtained loans owing to them not having placed the cost upon the Poor Rates as incurred.

[Continued at foot of next column.]

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QUESTIONS AND DELIVERIES AT OUR BRANCH.  
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[Continued from previous column.]

The huge sum of unpaid rates is another aspect of the difficulty, which would be larger had the Guardians placed current costs on current rates. Work at adequate maintenance must be provided. Failing the revival of home and abroad markets under the present system of financial control and monopoly, the only alternative to production for use are schemes of relief work. Even for such schemes loans have to be obtained, with their added burdens.

Sir William Clegg desired such loans without interest. Some progress, on an honest recognition of the basis of the problem.

Owing to the varied methods of the "economics" in practice at the expense of many of the unemployed, under the administration of Unemployment Insurance, Guardians, and Insurance Committee, more extensive relief work provision is imperative to relieve the situation in the interests of the employed, both physically and financially.

The Necessitous Areas are moving in the matter with the support of the Association of Municipal Corporations. Our Lord Mayor has been appointed chairman of the committee, which is well merited by reason of his knowledge of the difficulties and his abilities in dealing with them. More power to his elbow!

May be bought from the  
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# **SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE.**

**NEW CO-OPERATIVE BILL  
BEFORE PARLIAMENT.**

**ADDRESS BY CO-OPERATIVE UNION  
CASHIER**

Nearly 200 delegates from the Sheffield and South Yorkshire societies attended the conference arranged by the Co-operative Union and the Sheffield Co-operative Party, on Saturday, April 26th, at the Sheffield and Ecclesall Co-operative Society's central premises, Ecclesall-road.

Mr. J. A. Longden (chairman of the Sheffield Co-operative Party) presided. Mr. R. A. Palmer (cashier to the Co-operative Union) introduced the Bill now before Parliament to amend the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts.

Mr. Palmer outlined the various clauses of the Bill and explained their effect. There had been considerable changes since the Bills of 1893 and 1913, and they were of such a character that the mere passage of time necessitated certain amendments.

Dealing with the clause concerning the word "co-operative" he stated that bogus companies had been formed and taken the name "co-operative" into their titles. The introduction of this particular clause into the Bill was not to give any privilege to co-operators, but mainly to prevent the public being deceived by spurious imitations of co-operative societies. Dealing with the increase of the maximum shareholding, penny bank deposits, and so forth, Mr. Palmer showed that the change in the value of the pound had considerably altered the situation since the last Act.

He gave a closely reasoned statement regarding every clause of the Bill. He also went on to speak of the splendid work that had been accomplished by the representatives of the co-operative movement in the House of Commons, and stated that the present Bill was unique, in that a direct co-operative representative had introduced it. Hitherto co-operators had to appeal to other parties for assistance, but in this case they had a Bill to bring about

## **THE SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR.**

a very necessary reform, introduced by a member of their own organisation.

### **Importance of Reserves.**

Quite a large number of questions were asked, which indicated that the delegates had followed Mr. Palmer very closely in his statements. He replied to questions concerning reserves, facilities for amalgamation of societies, banking, and so forth. During the discussion, Mr. Palmer spoke very strongly on the question of reserves, and advocated the steady allocation of reserves by co-operative societies, maintaining that to put a reserve amount one year and nothing another year was a wrong method. The society that was not steadily building financial policy.

Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., was present, and took part in the discussion, stating that the legislation of the whole world had been sought for the basic facts upon which this Bill was produced.

### **Letter to Prime Minister.**

On the motion of Mr. E. S. Nicholson it was resolved that a letter be sent to the Prime Minister asking the Government to give every possible facility for the passing of the Bill into law. Mr. Holmes (Shipley) moved the vote of thanks to Mr. Palmer, and asserted that the conference was one of the most business-like conferences he had ever attended.

The new brochure giving the photographs of the Co-operative representatives in Parliament, and Mr. A. Barnes' book "The Political Aspect of Co-operation," received a good sale.

## **ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING AT THE WYCLIFFE.**

The prophets shook their heads when they were informed that a meeting had been arranged at the Wycliffe Hall, Channing-street, Billingham, for a Saturday evening, and that Mr. Alexander was duly warranted to expect a big audience. On arrival, however, we found the place crowded.

The chairman of the Party (Mr. J. A. Longden) presided, and in addition to Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., Concllors Bancroft, Watkins, and Spencer were on the platform.

Mr. Alexander spoke for nearly an hour to an appreciative audience. Referring to the Liberals, he said: "These people talk to us about co-operation, they have let them come half-way," they have not come that yet." What Labour wanted, he pointed out, was to advance step by step on these matters upon which they had obtained the mandate from the electors. They did not apologise, as a party, in asking for the support of all people of goodwill towards social reform.

It was open to those Liberals who were anxious to take a step forward to give regular and continuous support to the Labour Party in its present attempt to assist the workers.

He believed that there were plenty of Liberals in Parliament who were pre-

pared to do "the square thing," but the real position in that party was revealed on a recent vote, when the Government was defeated by a vote; and in spite of the fact that Mr. Asquith had spoken twice against the proposals before the House, he came off by sitting on the fence and refusing to vote either one way or the other. Nevertheless, 42 Liberals went into the lobby with the Labour Party. That presaged, said Mr. Alexander, the kind of division which was coming in the ranks of the Liberal Party. Those who had goodwill and concern for the people would come to the Labour Party as sure as night followed day.

### **Budget Anticipations.**

Mr. Alexander went on to prophesy reductions in food taxation—a prophecy subsequently fulfilled by Mr. Snowden's Budget.

Dealing with the Safeguarding of Industries Act, Mr. Alexander said that he, and in fact, the Labour Party, were against restrictions on international trade by tariffs; and he proceeded to give detailed reasons why the Government were prepared to allow Part 2 of this Act to expire, as it was due to next August. It could not be demonstrated, he said, that large and important industries were in need of protection under this Act. In only one case out of fifteen was there any indication of an increase of employment as a result of the working of the Act. Furthermore, such restrictions were calculated to prevent the stabilisation of exchanges throughout Europe. The Act would also tend to call forth retaliation from France. His whole policy, he said, is to break down barriers against trade, not to create them.

Winding up with a final appeal for continued support to the Labour Party in the tremendous task it had undertaken, Mr. Alexander concluded his speech amidst thunderous applause. Afterwards he answered no less than twenty-five written and verbal questions.

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THE OFFICE STAFF will attend to all matters relating to our FREE LIFE ASSURANCE SCHEME, on behalf of relatives; and the DRAPERY, MILLINERY, and TAILORING DEPARTMENTS will give every attention to the requirements of the family.

A Staff of Fully Qualified Workmen is engaged at Broughton Lane Premises for Making and Furnishing Coffins to suit all general or special requirements.

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1. In 1907 the Board of Directors decided to supply members with milk. Milk is the life-blood of the community—a valuable and growing-up milk. It is a difficult problem to supply them with pure, clean milk. To accomplish it, it was decided that supplies should come from the Derbyshire Dales, and to build a plant which would safeguard members.

2. First comes checking for quality and sweetness. Passed by the receiving tank and then to the separator. 24 degrees, and as no milk containing disease, that and disease removed. The milk cold down is chilled by an "Esk's" Refrigerating Plant, the air being kept dry during the night, so that no point is drying. Milk is tested for bacteria, and suppliers who fail below the average are dropped.

3. Weekly output, upward of 14,000 gallons, delivered by buses and barrows. Members can secure a supply of pure milk by purchasing tins at their branch shop or paygate in the delivery, and pay no risk of sickness and ill-health. Recent experiments have succeeded in extracting two pints of skim and 1 1/2 from milk through a dairy centrifuge after one day's supply of milk had passed through.

4. Do not drink such milk with: get pure milk from the Brightside and Carbrook Co-operative Society.

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Manufactured by THE

**Midland Boot Manufacturers Ltd.**  
WELLINGBOROUGH.

**LEICESTER "SELF-HELP"  
BOOT & SHOE MANUFACTURING  
SOCIETY, 2, QUEEN'S RD., LEICESTER.**

Representatives of all kinds of  
**LADIES' & GENTS' BOOTS & SHOES.**

TRADE UNIONIST EMPLOYED. All goods  
are thoroughly tried and tested. Labour,  
Capital and Cost. — All at our Service for  
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164, INFIRMARY ROAD,  
76, SPITAL HILL, and  
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Each under the management of a qualified chemist.

Prescriptions expeditiously  
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## Vigor Tonic,

1/6 per bottle. THE thing for  
pepping up after illness, and for  
building up to prevent illness,  
invaluable for headache, loss of  
appetite, indigestion, that tired feeling,  
etc.

NOTE PRICES—

## Pure Gl. cerine,

Eight (fluid) ounce bottle (approx-  
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PARRISH'S

## Chemical Food,

Eight (fluid) ounce bottle (approx-  
imately 2 pounds). 1/1s.

BEST

## Medicinal Paraffin

Eight ounce bottle, 1/1. Bottle  
can be refilled.

## Morning Salt,

44d. per packet. Remove the  
Uric Acid from the system. A  
mild and effective stimulant for  
kidneys and liver. Specially valu-  
able for people subject to gout,  
rheumatism, lumbago, &c.