

The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

No. 48.

MARCH, 1927.

8

GUARANTEED CIRCULATION, 30,000 COPIES.

HOUSEKEEPING FOR SHEFFLELDERS.

How does your wife manage on the amount you hand to her on Friday nights? Most working men would confess themselves beaten by the problem of housework finance, and agree that the family exchequer was already in the hands of a capable administrator. But you may be sure that she finds it a hard task to make cents meet.

Apart from that small household of which you are the "head," a household of perhaps three or four or even five people, we are all living together in another household. There are about 250,000 of us altogether—old and young, big and little. About half of us are grown-ups. That larger household is the City of Sheffield; the housekeeper is Alderman T. H. Watkins, and the housekeeper's headquarters are at the Town Hall. Think about Sheffield like that, and about Alderman Watkins like that, and you will be on right lines.

His Troubles.

Now whatever troubles your wife may have to make cents meet: to feed the family for the week, pay the rent, and provide you pocket money (if you haven't "stopped it" already), they are matched by those of Alderman Watkins. His work is exactly similar, except that he has to deal with a longer period than a week, and instead of finding food and rent and boots and clothing he is "finding" education, health services, and a thousand-and-one other things that are a part of Municipal Housekeeping. It is, of course, much more complex, too, for instead of the easily discovered needs of a household he has to take into consideration no end of matters expressed in figures. He has to deal with an out-of-date and unwise way of raising money (that is, by "rates"), and he is only allowed to spend in conformity with the law of the land and the disregard of the well-to-do, who object to high rates, but not to expensive motor-cars for themselves. These latter are citizens who shirk their proper responsibilities, and we had better say so plainly. We could here produce direct evidence that they get off too cheaply; but that is hardly part of our present duty.

Loans.

Now you will know the difference between buying a first-class sewing-machine and buying a pie: one can be bought out of the weekly wages and the other most decidedly cannot. Besides, when you have got a machine it will have particular value if you want to sell it again after you or your wife, (of course) have used it! A great many working men resort to the instalment system to buy a piano, or a house, or a new suite of furniture, or any similar very expensive thing, which will have not only a present use, but a permanent value that can be realised if the thing should need to be sold. Alderman Watkins has to buy—to find the money to buy—the sewing-machines (the "pies" too to speak) of Sheffield. He buys the "pie" kind of thing out of his half-yearly income, and the "sewing-machine" he buys on the instalment system. In addition, previous Chairman of the Finance Committee had agreed to pay for things by instalments, and he has to find the instalments for his purchases.

The "Pianos."

The expensive things, like pianos, to a working man are paid for by instalments, and interest is also paid on the balance which is still owing. That, of course, is true in some form or other of all instalment systems at present. Purchases of this kind, which have a permanent instead of a rapidly wearing-out nature, which have a saleable or asset value, are spoken of as Capital Expenditure. Let us here show the instalments yet to be paid for expenditure of this kind, taken on March 31st, 1926, as the date on which the calculation is made:—

Water	4,663,922
Markets and Abattoirs	475,792
Electric Supply	2,278,860
Various Housing Acts	3,251,917
Surplus Lands	72,008
Tramways	741,893
Loans to Public Bodies	163,095
Cemeteries	59,014
Allotments	17,564
	£11,710,975

This is called debt on "reproductive services." In other words, it is a paying investment. It is just like borrowing, say, £50 from a friend at 5 per cent. interest, finding a really good violin and paying £47 los. for it out of the £50, and then because of your skill obtaining fees for playing at concerts and benefit-acts. As you know, although things may be a bit tight at first, your violin will have an earning power and an asset value that on the whole makes you richer and not poorer. Sheffield has borrowed the money for the above purposes, spent it, and of course owes it.

Is It Debt?

If a limited liability company borrows money to carry on a business, for some queer reason it never speaks of its debt on reproductive services." The limited liability company calls its debt "capital," and Sheffield could with equal right call the above debt its "capital." Largely the costs of buying on instalments (or borrowing) the money to buy with, and refunding the money with interest, on instalments will be repaid in the profits of the services referred to.

At that same date there was a further debt, this time not reproductive, to the net amount of £3,445,278, but that will

not need to concern us here where we deal "in the large" with the house-keeping accounts of Sheffield.

Please observe, however, that Alderman Watkins and the present City Council has no responsibility for spending all the money so far referred to—others had decided upon it, and Alderman Watkins has to make sure that the "upkeep" goes on. He has to be responsible for interest and for instalments where those are due to be paid.

A Bit Of His Own Bat.

The new Finance Committee and Alderman Watkins saw what was



ALDERMAN T. H. WATKINS.

owing, but decided—and rightly—to borrow some more. Accordingly, on February 23rd this year, there was a printed paper sent round to banks, business houses, people with money, and people who were wrongly supposed to have money (for I got one) with a terrifying inscription on the front which reads like a Latin epiphram on an old tombstone, or a line from a text-book on zoology: "Issue of £1,500,000 5 per cent. Redeemable Stock, 1927-1957." Don't worry about that; it only means that Alderman Watkins had to say for another sewing-machine for Sheffield and wanted a million-and-a-half to do it with! It was highly efficient "finance," and none (not even our opponents in the Council) can gain-say it. It will be repaid by the last

date named, although it may possibly be repaid any time after that. The printed paper announcing all this said further that:—

The Corporation of Sheffield's assets were valued at £24,005,466 And that the outstanding liabilities ("debt," bills unpaid, &c.), amounted to 16,821,059

Showing a balance of £7,184,407 This balance is about £14 a head for the citizens. You can't have your £14—not in money—but you get it in service with full value. Without it your electric light bills, your tram fares, and certainly your rates, would be higher. And the loan for £1,500,000 is to pay off an old loan in addition to buying more assets.

The Limit.

The Finance Committee cannot please itself about borrowing. It must get the Government's sanction in every case, and must provide annually for enough to meet the debt when it becomes due. So that a definite limit is imposed on all civic borrowing, and the Government takes all necessary steps to see the conditions are properly fulfilled.

So much for the "sewing-machine." Our rates are therefore in part to pay interest on loans, in part to repay some fraction of the loan, and in part—a very important part—to buy the "pies." These are the day-to-day services of all corporation departments: to keep your streets moderately clean and well paved, your libraries going, your street lamps lit, and a host of other things.

Where the Money Comes From.

All this expenditure—instalments and interest on "pianos" and the continuous provision of "pie-dishes"—is got almost wholly from three sources:—

1. Profits of Trading Services (like Tramways and Electric Light Department).
2. Grants made by the Government (towards cost of Education and Police, in the main).
3. Rates.

What is not taken from No. 1, and received from No. 2, must therefore be made up by No. 3.

The first forecast we get of No. 3 is in the Annual Estimates, which Alderman Watkins (as Sheffield's "Chancellor") introduced in an admirable speech, which included the remark that "we shall not shrink from the financial consequences of any due development of our social or other public services."

He expects to want the sum of £3,535,000 from us as rates for the year ending March 31st, 1928. Naturally, he can hardly be certain of the exact amount, and consequently has to make an estimate. This will mean 6s. 7d. in the pound on our rateable value for each half-year—providing there is no later adjustment. To this City Rate is to be added the Poor Rate charge, and the two together make up the Consolidated Rate. That you will know about in due course when the great Rate Demand Note is pushed under your door or through your letter-box. But, cheer up! We are all with the employers who ask for co-operation. It must be the kind of co-operation that means their sharing our financial burdens, as well as our sharing theirs.

THIS SPRINGTIME
GET
INTEGRITY
BRAND
HOSIERY

and add that air of distinction.

THE RELIABLE CO-OPERATIVE MAKE.

From the Drapery and
Fitting Departments
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Made by the
Wigton Hosiery Ltd.,
Wigton.

Look for the "Beaver"
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PAINTING and DECORATING Department.

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Your Greatest Asset—
Good Health.

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glorious luxury more than to
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of its imperurities and
decorated by U.S. - It will
give a sense of new life and
vitality that cannot be obtained
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You can't do without it!

Once you have seen
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regularly.

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Because it is the
cheapest, the best
illustrated, the most
informing, the most
entertaining collection
of stories, articles, and
poems published.

What?

The "MILGROVE
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costs sixpence, and
bears the magazine at
a shilling. Order it
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store, bookseller, or
news bookseller.

THE CHINESE POINT OF VIEW.

BY RENNIE SMITH, M.P.

Our paper, the British Foreign Office (though not the War Office) has put us into the strictly correct position in this China business. The Christiana memorandum and the Foreign Secretary's speech of last Saturday are quite pat to the best traditions of the Foreign Office. "We have no imperial designs in that quarter. We do not wish to do anybody any harm. We wish the Chinese well. We even recognise the Chinese nationalist movement. We are prepared to make considerable accommodations. We will go more than halfway to meet the Chinese." Could a sweeter reasonableness and kindness of disposition go further? All that is missing is a little lyric to the Cautione. The Press is patting the whole nation on the back, and telling us what an eminently patient and just and long-suffering people we are. Our soldiers had stones and bottles thrown at them at Hankow, yet they reeled not again. What a beautiful, self-righteous mood we are in. How can the Chinks help making peace with us? Are we not simply irresistible?

If trouble comes we can only be because these low-down Chinese are not gentlemen like we are. The wild mob spirit, which obviously doesn't and can't know good things when it sees it, may break out. Or these Chinese are such a bunch of undercunning simpletons that they fall to the crafty and deep-laid plots of the enterprise. So we must send out a little ship or two as a precautionary measure to look after our 10,000 British gentlemen who may get into danger because of the simplicity and low-down qualities of these bethen Chinese.

Here we are, then: good people, good Government, dealing out even-handed justice, with the nice fair of generosity added that becomes this house of noble lineage. How good for the soul this indulgence on paper!

The poor, unhappy Chink doesn't "get" us. He doesn't even read our papers. He sticks to the Chinese vernacular. He is not taken to his history books and to his memories and to his recent experiences. What is a British Foreign Office document to him? He knows of invasions of all the foreigners, of whom the British was always the ringleader. He knows of the first opium war and of the second opium war. He knows that the cities of ancient China have been pillaged, sacked, and looted by the foreigner. He knows that China's appeal for justice has been shot down again and again by British guns and left to die, defenceless, on the official heap.

What can he not recall of the moral indignation that burst into a fury in the Boxer riots? But ever the foreigners pressed in, unbidden, unwanted guests forcing treaty rights, taking special privileges, establishing their own laws, their own courts, their own god-damned insolent ways of doing things. The Chinaman says—

"Britain despoys us. See how they treated us in Paris in 1910. They call us weak. They call us inferior. They have forced their unequal treaties on us at the point of the sword. The only justice of which they are capable is the justice that the sword can win. Look at the massacre of Wankow and of Shanghai. Thirty thousand foreigners laid it over us—a million of us. We have no voice, no rights—a servile subject race. My own citizens are shot down by the order of these foreigners. They use our workers: long hours, low wages, heavy mortality. Profits go away to the foreigners; they get control of our public finance; their syndicates exploit our natural resources, and the gains go always to the foreigners. Their traders take our wealth, and their missionaries have done their best to steal our souls. Why don't they clear out? Why don't they leave us alone? What wrong have we done?"

"And now they are sending out British warships again, and British troops, and British armoured cars, and British aeroplanes. And did you say the people of London and of Southampton had been cheering, and all the bands were playing?"

"Ah, Contingent! I see there is no help till we do what the Japanese have

done. We must become war-men. We must train ourselves. We must must train ourselves. We must achieve our freedom at the point of the sword. We must win our independence, we must sweep these foreigners into the sea by victorious military means."

Two points of view. As for apart, at least, as those of the people of Germany and Britain who our reverend men August, 1914, had done their work.

We can win the peace if we back the Chinese nationalist movement. We can achieve our freedom by the height of a national enthusiasm for it. We can win by backing it, by making concessions and temporary sacrifices for it. We want a British nation interlocked with a Chinese love of their own freedom. Then we shall have peace on paper, and peace indeed.

A STORM IN A TEACUP.

The furore in the Sheffield City Council and the Press against building new markets at the rear of the Brigandine and Carbrook premises is indicative of the attitude of private traders against the workers' own movement. As a matter of fact, the whole of the central sites in the city have been pre-empted by private enterprise. The Brightside and Carbrook Society bought the land for these projected premises in 1914, and both for the war the premises would have been erected long since. The society was not responsible for the war or the slump which followed it, and is perfectly within its right in erecting premises which will fulfil a long-let need.

It is no more anomalous to pass co-operative stores in order to do business with private traders than it is to pass private traders' stores to find the local or central branch of the co-operative society.

If prices, service, and general trade conditions are better in private enterprise than they are in the co-operative society, the society will suffer accordingly. If not—well, private traders must stand co-operative competition, just as they have to face up to competition amongst themselves.

POLITICS AND POLICIES.

The belief of a political party determines its policy.

The policy of a political party affects your life.

Tosyism believes in private enterprise, which means private effort for personal gain.

Labour believes in co-operation, which means collective effort for the common good.

Tosyism stands for competition, which means "workers at war."

Labour stands for co-operation, which means "comrades at work."

You have tried the Tosy plan of fighting each other for an *existence*.

Try co-operation, or working together for life.

Join the Co-operative and Labour Party, the party that believes in you as a party with a policy designed to serve you.

For direct membership apply to any of the following (membership, 6d. per annum):

Mr. J. W. Roberts, 78, Grove-street (secretary, Neepsend Ward).

Mr. E. Kelle, 238, Providence-road, Walkley (secretary, Hillsborough Parliamentary Division).

Mr. W. A. Walton, 388, Windmill-lane, Sliregreen (secretary, Brightside Division).

Mr. G. Newman, 67, Selbourne-street (secretary, Darnall Ward).

Mr. G. Longley, 7, Sanderson-street (secretary, Attercliffe Ward).

Mr. C. E. S. Gibson, 7, Arthroppe-road, Nether Green (secretary, Hallam Division).

Mrs. J. Billam, 29, Mitchell-street (secretary, Sheffield and Ecclesall Women's Section).

Mr. A. Ballard, 6, Bank-street (secretary, Slsfield Co-operative Party).

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Terms: Bed and Breakfast, 2/6. Convent.
Billiards. Near to Kenyon Golf Links.

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**LADIES', GIRLS', AND
BOYS' FOOTWEAR.**

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MADE UNDER TRADE
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STOCKED BY ALL CO-OPERATIVE
BOOT DEPARTMENTS IN SHEFFIELD.

Sheffield and Ecclesall Co-operative Society Limited.
FURNISHING AND CROCKERY DEPARTMENT.
 THE ARCADE : : : CEMETERY ROAD.

ON WITH THE NEW

The passing of time changes many things, not least among them being Furniture and Floor Coverings. The new styles, patterns and designs, for 1937 are to hand, and a visit to our showrooms would be well worth the trouble. Herewith is quoted a few lines from each of our various sections.

Basement Showroom for Hardware & Crockery.

ALUMINIUM GOODS:

Stove Kettles, 3 pints, 3/11. Set of Saucepans & Lids, 4 for 8/7½.
 Foot Bells, 2/- each.

Three Large Showrooms for Furniture.

Six-piece Oak Carver Sets, £7 19s. 6d.

British-made Pianos, 39 guineas cash, or £12 2s. 6d. per month.
 Pedestal Gramophones (for Cash or Easy Payments),
 10 Dark Oak, £7 5s.

Balcony Showroom for Carpets, Linoleums, &c.

Painted Linoleums, 3/3 square yd. Inlaid Linoleum, 4/3 square yd.
 ALL LINOLEUMS FITTED FREE.

Piano Tuning and Repairing. Estimates Given.
 Re-Upholstery Work Undertaken. Let us quote you.

Our Watch and Clock Cleaning Department is giving every attention, and we solicit a trial from you. All work is guaranteed, and prices are very moderate.

MUNICIPAL TOPICS.

BY COUNCILLOR W. G. ROBINSON.

Millions for Housing.

At the meeting of the City Council on March 3rd, at which Alderman Watkins introduced the first Labour budget, it was quite obvious that the Labour Party's choice of a "chancellor" was the right one, and I hasten to give him hearty congratulations for his lucid statement. He is unquestionably a square peg in a square hole.

In spite of the fact that no very startling changes were made, I was quite pleased to hear friend Watkins say: "The Labour Party will not shrink from the financial consequences of any due development of their social or other public services."

In introducing the Estates Committee's finances, Alderman Watkins showed that the committee estimated a total expenditure on housing up to March 31st, 1937, of £3,700,000, which includes grants to private persons amounting to £20,600. The expenditure during 1936-37 was £99,677, whilst the estimated expenditure during the financial year 1937-38 is £2,027,079. This total includes grants to private persons amounting to £95,000.

In accordance with our policy enunciated at the November elections and the subsequent by-elections, I think we can claim to be doing our best to house the workers.

The Citizens' Group Amendment.

Councillor Turner, in supporting the amendment that these estimates be referred back to the Finance Consultative Committee for them to effect further economies, directed the attention to the expenditure on housing, contending that if this be accepted the council was going to get into a financial mess. Councillor Turner said that "the Corporation was providing houses for more people than the manufacturers of the city could find employment for. The time has come, in my judgment, when Sheffield, in so far as capital expenditure on housing schemes is concerned, has gone as far as Sheffield can afford to go." Councillor Turner's words really mean—stop building houses. This policy, however, is sheer madness when there are thousands on the waiting list, huge slum areas still to clear, and building workers on the dole. In my opinion, the time is now opportune. Pay building workers for work of public utility instead of paying money out in Poor-Law relief. The Labour Party are going to consider the housing problem from a humane standpoint; our experience is that there is far from sufficient accommodation. I had a case under my notice recently of fourteen persons sleeping in two bedrooms; grown-up sons and daughters sleeping in the same bedroom as their parents. Then we are told that socialism destroys home life!

Housing Subsidy.

On the minutes of the Estates Committee, also, it was recommended that in view of the reduction of the Government grant, the subsidy allowed by the Corporation to private builders be reduced to £50 per house after October 1st, 1937. Alderman Blanchard moved an amendment that the subsidy be £75, attempting to score over the Labour Party by the statement, "Will you see the people homeless rather than sacrifice one of your socialist principles?" Councillor Turner seconded.

It is, of course, not a question of sacrificing any principle. The point is that whilst the Citizens' Group want to prevent us building houses to let to the workers, they support the building of villas and so forth for people who can afford to buy houses.

With all the subsidised, private enterprise has failed to supply an adequate number of dwellings. The Government and the Corporation having to step in to prevent absolute disaster to the home life of the people. Eventually the question was referred back for consideration. It would be interesting to have the opinions of the workers in the east end on the housing policy of the Citizens' Group.

Co-operative Party Notes. "By Co-option"

THE Co-operative Party members' syllabus for 1937 is now on sale, which includes a handbook. The handbook contains an anthology of poetry and literature on open-air life, facts about local areas, and progressivity beauty photographs of beauty spots to be visited during the year. Each year's issue received very favourable notices. Copies may be obtained from:

- Mr. A. Ballard, 6, Bank-street.
- Mr. L. E. Mitchell, 134, Fitzalan-street.
- Mr. T. Osburn, 4, Fitzalan-street, Gleadthorpe.
- Mr. D. Dobson, 5, Tramway-terrace, Castleside.
- Mr. J. H. Sharrman, 25, Litherwood, Shiregreen.
- Mr. W. S. Bennett, 420, Wladimir-lane, Shiregreen.
- Mr. J. W. Guss, 54, Skelwith-lane, Gleadthorpe.
- Mr. J. F. Sharrock, 86, Princess-avenue, Shiregreen.
- Mr. J. Hamk, 73, Northam-street, Hillsborough.
- Mr. T. Council, 33, Thornley-road, Hillsborough.
- Mr. R. Beckford, 97, Langsett-road, Hillsborough.
- Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, 41, Fickling-road, Wadley-bridge.
- Mrs. Beckford, 97, Langsett-road, Hillsborough.
- Mr. E. E. Frison, 147, Upperturpe.
- Mr. C. E. S. Gibson, 7, Armthorpe-road, Nether Green.

The Neapton Co-operative Party have set about re-organising in splendid style. They are to run a series of public meetings, socials, concerts, dances, &c., the first of which will be held at the Pleasant Motion Hall on Friday, March 12th. Mrs. and Miss Haines were giving a splendid entertainment, and their famous choir, all of whom are well known to the party, will be in evidence between Friday and 4th highly-trained children will take part. Mr. A. Alexander, M.P., is to open, and Councillor Robinson will preside. Tickets: Adults 6d., children 3d. to be obtained from Mr. J. W. Roberts (Secretary), or any member of the committee.

The Neapton Women's Section are holding a tea, social, and dance in the Pittmore Methodist every week. At seven o'clock on Friday, 5 p.m., social and dance of 7. Tickets for this may be obtained from the secretary (Mrs. Justice).

The joint party meetings to which all clerics are cordially invited, are now held in the Co-operative Institute over the branch store at Holfield-street, on Wednesday following the council meeting. An interesting meeting was held in February when reports were given by Alderman Robinson, Councillor Lepton, Messrs. and Robinson. Questions were asked and given, discussion took place. Our Neapton friends are looking forward to the time when this store will not be large enough to accommodate our ever increasing members.

The Hillsborough Co-operative Party are pushing forward with their individual membership campaign, and new members are being recruited every week. At the party social held on Monday, February 28th, there was an attendance of over 100 people, and it is anticipated that in future tickets will have to be limited not merely to supporters but to individual soliciting members of the local party funds.

Congratulations to the boards of management of the two Sheffield co-operative societies on the increase in trade, share capital, and membership. The progress during the last twelve months has been stupendous. The District Society alone has increased its membership by 5,000; whilst Brightside and Carbrook, covering a somewhat larger area has increased by 6,000. Both have done about what only a sanguine progress but prove the absolute stability of the societies, and also indicate the workers' capacity to direct and control industry.

Free membership campaign is to be conducted in a further part of the year, and our readers who has not yet joined up should visit the nearest branch immediately.

Hearty thanks to all sections of the Co-operative party and the public who has helped us so magnificently in the recent trade and membership campaign on behalf of the two societies. As a result of their voluntary and unselfish and generous work, there has been a substantial increase in both trade and membership, both of which will be published later.

Alderman Watkins, the Co-operative Party representative for Neapton, and chairman of the Sheffield City Finance Committee, received communication from friends all over the country in the presentation of a municipal "budget." The wild statements on approval promises were expressed from a multitude of the co-operative movement, and we are quite certain that critics and opponents were amazed at Alderman Watkins' grasp of the city's financial position, and his sound presentation of the "budget," which means mainly consistent progress on co-operative lines.

In replying to advertisements mention the "Sheffield Co-operator."

DID YOU

Join the Co-operative
 Stores and Buy C.W.S.

Productions?



Hundreds of Thousands
 have done so.

Why Not You?

OUR LONDON LETTER.

BY A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P.

LAST month my "Letter" had reference to be largely of the nature of a forecast. Parliament has since opened with a declaration of the Government's programme (or lack of one) for the session, which has in great measure justified my forecast. The Factories Bill which the Home Secretary definitely promised this session is to be dropped until "a more convenient season." The extension of the franchise to women is to be shelved for at least this year (a violation of another categorical pledge), and amendment of the Trade Union law is to be the central feature of the session.

Trade Union Legislation.

The fight against the Government's proposals in this direction has already begun with an amendment to the Address to the Throne, and the Government came very badly out of the debate. The central Conservative theme in the discussion was that the Labour Opposition were prejudging the matter before the text of the Government's legislation had been published. That, however, was beaten from the start because the Attorney-General's speech at Farnham on January 7th, in the most carefully chosen legal phraseology, had laid down what in his view were the essential amendments required in the law. These involved an alteration in the Trades Disputes Act, which resulted at once in the famous Taff Vale and Osborne judgments, which created in the minds of the workers complete distrust of legal processes where trade union issues were concerned. The effect of such amending legislation was graphically portrayed by J. H. Thomas from his inside knowledge of the above-mentioned judgments. As to the question of deciding general

strikes to be illegal, we got no answer to the question of "What is a general strike?" but already there is a fearfulness in the Government ranks that whatever legislation is proposed will be unpopular, and that it will be impossible to harmonise such legislation with the old-repeated plea for goodwill and peace in industry. The Government's measure, when introduced, will be fought at all stages.

Factories and Franchise.

The Government's failure to implement their definite promise to introduce measures this session dealing with these two issues is a grave betrayal. They make clear, however, what is their little game. Bills will be introduced and rushed through (if their plan works) in 1928, to be used as window dressing for an election address in an appeal to the country late next year or early in 1929.

Poor-Law.

The opposition to the Government's proposals for Poor-Law reform, which I mentioned last month, has led to this Bill also being dropped, but, as I was bound to ask in the House of Commons, what is to become of the necessitous areas like Sheffield in the meantime? So far we have no indication of any help, and with the commitments heaped up in Sheffield as a result of so many urgent things being left undone creates a very serious position. Yet the Government has been forced to make a grant to Scottish authorities of 40 per cent. of the cost of relief to dependents of those affected by the industrial dispute of last year, because the relief was given illegally according to Scottish law. It is difficult, to see how they can logically

refuse to give equal relief to English authorities which had to bear just the same burden, but gave the poor relief legally instead of illegally. I shall continue to press this issue.

Unemployment.

The Government have produced no policy for dealing with this scourge, but propose legislation which will be on the lines of the recommendations of the Blanesborough Committee's report. Whilst there may, as a result, be an increase in the machinery of the Unemployment Insurance scheme, it is already fairly clear that in the long run, the chief aim is to save money at the expense of the unemployed worker, more particularly the single man and single woman, with a consequent increase of the number of young able-bodied people who will become a charge upon their working-class parents, but I shall refer to this matter again when the Government's Bill is published.

Washington Convention.

Feeling is now running high with regard to the failure of the Government to make any progress towards the ratification of the forty-eight-hour week convention, to which we were actual signatories at the Washington Conference nearly eight years ago. Year after year a decision has been put off under cover of all sorts of evasions, and we now have the spectacle of other countries resolving to ratify the convention "subject to Great Britain also agreeing to ratify." Instead therefore of being in the van of the movement for this international reform, we, as a great European Power, are at present holding it up. Yet I would ask my readers to remember that in 1924, the Labour Government actually introduced a Bill to ratify the convention, and although there were some difficulties to be adjusted, there is no doubt that if there had been no change of Government, the measure would have become

law long before now. Even Tory members are alarmed at the possible effect in the country of their Government's action, and are pressing them every week to wake from their slumber "for their own sakes." Let us not forget, however, that these reforms could not be so held up but for working-class votes given to Tory candidates!

Education.

I have only space to add that the same Tory reaction is repeated in the case of Education. The Consultative Committee of the Education Commission has produced a splendidly constructive report and recommendations on post-primary education, in which is included the definite recommendation that the school leaving age should be raised to fifteen within a limited period of years. Lord Percy rushes into print with a letter, almost before the ink is dry on the last issue, to explain that there is no possibility of the recommendation being put into early operation, and then issues yet another circular to local authorities directed to induce further objections. Thus we suffer under Tory domination. When are we going to throw it off? We must begin by winning more seats in Sheffield, and begin working now for the next election.

HELP FOR THE MINERS.

The Labour women of Sheffield worked very hard to assist the wives and families of miners who were locked out of their work, and they undertook the distribution locally of grants from the Miners' Wives and Children's Fund, and distributed £604,758, in the form of absolutely necessary things to the hardest cases. Not a penny was handed over in cash.

Help was given in 347 cases, of which 125 were nursing cases, 103 dependent mothers, and 83 invalid cases.

A large quantity of both new and second-hand clothing, leather for shoe repairs, and a number of pairs of boots and shoes were distributed. They wish to thank all those friends who helped by supplying or collecting these articles, which were so very useful to the dependents of miners.

The allotment gardeners round about the city were very helpful too; many of them provided vegetables from their gardens for free distribution, and the women arranged for the collection of these. During the last three weeks of lock-out about 25 lbs. of beef were given each week, and this found its way into the homes of miners.

A number of local subscriptions in addition to the above-mentioned sum are still being received and disbursed amongst the most needy cases—some of which are heart-breaking. They are mainly victimised miners, with large families, and specially hard luck in the way of sickness. Should this reach the eye of any who have spare cash, much good could be made of it by sending it along to the editor of the paper for distribution. Many of the recipients of help have written to the women's committee very grateful letters, and the committee will be glad to hear of their detestation of private charity and desire for a legal right to work for reasonable pay. This assistance has been fully justified by results.

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FREE DELIVERY of Tons within 3 miles of our Depot,
Members are supplied with Ton Lots at 6d. above Cash Price,
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DIRECT LABOUR.

INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR
W. G. ROBINSON.

This question of direct labour has been under discussion a good deal in the Sheffield Press recently. With a view to ascertaining the opinion of a practical builder, we interviewed Councillor W. G. Robinson, who has often contributed articles on the subject to this journal.

Councillor Robinson pointed out that at the City Council meeting on February and the Labour Party's proposals to build schools by direct labour caused a fitter in the dove-cotes of the Citizen Party, and an attempt was made to refer back the minutes of the Finance Committee relating to this proposal, ostensibly for the purpose of obtaining information from other places where similar schemes have been tried. The motion was defeated by 37 votes to 27.

Councillor Robinson stated that he was very much amused with the points raised by the opposition, who revealed their lack of practical knowledge of the building trade. Councillor Robinson said that Alderman Watkins' point (in replying to the opposition) that direct labour had been one of the foremost planks in the programme of the Party during the last municipal elections was a good one, as also was Councillor Rowlinson's argument that the main opposition sprang from the fact that the Citizens' Party were afraid of the municipality's success against private enterprise. The policy of the Citizens' Party, said Rowlinson, was to resist any extension of municipal enterprise; that was the purpose for which the Citizens' Association collected their subscriptions.

Councillor Robinson himself spoke with very practical knowledge on the subject. He agreed that the prices of private enterprise compared favourably with similar work in other parts of the country, but qualified it. He asserted that some of the buildings erected in Sheffield during 1924-25-26 were a comparative disastax to the city, and that control and supervision by the City Architect was essential. In his opinion, the City Architect was most competent for the work, and Councillor Robinson was delighted to know that his own permanent official was virtually to take command. It was, in fact, a serious allegation on the part of the Citizens' Party to suggest otherwise. Councillor Robinson asserted that the average contractor adds 20 per cent. to his own estimate for private and estab-

lishment charges. Profit would be eliminated, establishment charges reduced to a minimum, and in his opinion only 5 per cent. on actual costs would be needed.

Furthermore, as a bricklayer himself, he asserted that he knew scores of bricklayers, capable of good quality work, who were at present in receipt of unemployment pay. The same applied to other building craftsmen. As a matter of fact, the average workman in the building trade would welcome the idea of direct labour, as they were tired of being hantered about from contractor to contractor. If it was possible for contractors to get men for any job they undertook, it was just as easy for the City Architect to secure men—and some of the finest craftsmen in the city.

In an interview Councillor Robinson pointed out that in dozens of municipalities Labour's policy of direct labour has saved the ratepayers thousands of pounds, and has enabled lower rents to be fixed for houses so built. Here are a few examples of savings effected by direct labour on housebuilding schemes:

Newmarket.—Contractor's price, £1,172; cost by direct labour, £761; saving per house by direct labour, £411.

Tronbridge.—Contractor's price, £1,973; cost by direct labour, £784; saving per house by direct labour, £1,189.

Newbury.—Contractor's price, £875; cost by direct labour, £684; saving per house by direct labour, £191.

Direct labour has saved the following sums per house at other places: Manchester, £50; Bradford, £45; Tyne-mouth, £100; West Hartlepool, £90; Swansea, £57.

HALLAM LABOUR PARTY.

It is with deep sympathy for the relatives who are left, and an abiding sense of loss to ourselves, that we have to record the sudden and early death of our true comrade, Charlie Widdowson. Enthusiastic for Labour, a staunch and loyal worker, a stalwart in every sense of the word, by his death the local cause has suffered a distinct loss. We can ill afford to lose him from our ranks.

Our next meeting we hope to hold in the Crookes Baptist Institute on Thursday, March 17th, when Councillor R. H. Mitchell will speak on "Prisons, Past, Present, and Future." Will our friends make a big effort to be there, and bring someone else along? We offer a hearty welcome, and a pleasant and instructive evening.

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Sheffield Cooperator.

MARCH, 1927.

AN OLD CANARD.

The recent denigration from the Associated Chambers of Commerce to the Chancellor of the Exchequer en- deavouring to broadcast still further the false notion that co-operators are not paying their fair share of taxation, this canard has been going the rounds for about forty years. Every Chancellor of the Exchequer has had the position put to him with a view to penalizing the co-operator because of the savings involved through his own thrift organization.

It would appear that if a lie is told often enough it becomes almost an accepted truth. So much so in this case that the Chancellor himself suggested to the denigration that co-operators would be well advised "to remove unfairness by expressing willingness to pay an aggregate sum," &c. The fact is that "the widespread sense of grievance" is based upon false premises. Not only is there no grievance, but the so-called "sense of grievance" is based upon the traders' jealousy of our success, and the notion put by Mr. Churchill that co-operators should pay £100,000 voluntarily is indicative of the weakness of our opponents' case.

It would seem that as no legal claim can be made a voluntary payment should be made to remove the supposed "grievance." This has been rightly

characterized by Mr. Alexander as a species of "blackmail"—a move which would not be tolerated for one moment by co-operators, who are already paying, in every sense of the word, their full share of taxation and in some cases a little more. As, for example, under Schedule A and B, where we pay at the highest rate without any claim for rebate although over 90 per cent. of our members are below the taxable limit.

Furthermore, the so-called profits of co-operators are not really profits at all, but savings. If a tradesman purchased requirements for himself and his household at wholesale price no one would dream of taxing him for the difference between the wholesale and retail prices, which would equal his savings. Co-operators are in exactly the same position, and although many attempts have been made no case can be made out for imposing taxation upon co-operators over and above that applied to other citizens.

Incidentally the Chancellor stated in his reply to the denigration referred to that to apply further taxation would involve "the introduction of highly controversial legislation." What a tribute to the Co-operative Party which has so organized and developed a political consciousness amongst co-operators that a Tory Chancellor has to admit, in effect, that any unfair legislation against co-operators will immediately arouse such a storm as to render the money involved not worth the attempt. Direct representation for co-operators has received still another justification, not to say a tribute, from a Tory Chancellor.

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WELLINGTON ROUGH.

THE SHEFFIELD LIBRARY SYSTEM.

By R. J. GORDON, Chief Librarian of Sheffield.

The following article by our present Chief Librarian will, we feel, be of great interest to our readers. Mr. Gordon has not been assigned Chief Librarian of Leeds, and we are glad that the best of luck in his new position. Gordon has the honour of having written a capable successor in Mr. J. P. H. Smith, his official title is, April of this year.

THE greater interest now obtaining, all over the world, in the public library movement, and which is so noticeable in our own city, is of increasing social and educational value. Public libraries, appealing as they do to all classes, sexes, and degrees of intelligence, are rapidly and clearly becoming community schools where all may increase and supplement their education. Be it remembered that the average adult who attended the ordinary primary school, could only have received the beginnings of education, and to these the public library is the main source of educational advancement. To offer on the public library is only thought and spoken of in connection with the reading of novels and with detracting in the slightest degree from the value to the people of the library's service in providing recreational reading, yet I would emphasise the contribution it offers so freely to the raising of the standard of general intelligence which is the library's greatest value to the community.

One of our leading librarians has defined the library as "books made productive," and the definition is gradually becoming more true. The modern public library does make books productive, but only in the same ratio as the people realise that books can be used as tools of intelligence, as machines of value in the progress of the world. It is impossible to stress too strongly the educational value of the library, though I admit the fullest possibilities of its function as part of the national educational structure is but, as yet, dimly recognised. The library can give, no other institution can give, what has been called the new humanism; "the appreciative selection of the best in the past to serve our present needs; the vivid realisation of the inestimable worth of the things that abide amid all changes; the tempering of the restless spirit of the age by the calm spirit of the ages."

Those of my readers who pass by the central libraries in Starburst-street may have observed the various slogans used on the publicity boards erected outside the buildings. One slogan used was: "The Library exists for Books, Information, and Services," and this is an all-sufficient epitome of the library's purpose. Under these three heads I propose to give a brief résumé of the work of the libraries.

Books.
Books are naturally the stock-in-trade of the libraries. Every endeavour is made to anticipate the reading demands of a large city; to reflect in the book stocks all the intellectual needs of the citizens. The more we read the more

we live. The better our reading is, the better our living is sure to be. Food, clothing, and shelter are requisites of life, but reading is necessary for contentment and living.

Information.
Information obtainable from books and other printed material is freely placed at the service of the public; competent counsel in the choice of books; where to look for books; information, and guidance as to the methods of selection of books is obtainable on request. The library will gladly answer queries for information received by letter or telephone, and every endeavour will be made to find satisfactory information. The service given is free to all; it is courteous, generous, and proficient.

Created in 1856, the library system of our city to-day consists of two central libraries, eight branch district libraries, and some forty unit services in various elementary schools. Naturally the central libraries are the more important and contain the largest, most varied, and recent book stocks. The reference books consist of some 60,000 volumes, covering practically all developments of human knowledge. It is particularly strong in library, historical, and art subjects. And, of course, it has a large range of books of the purely reference type, such as dictionaries, atlases, encyclopedias, bibliographies on many subjects, sets of the important learned societies' proceedings, annuals, year books, and works of a similar nature. It also contains, as is its obvious duty, the best and largest collection of books about Sheffield, or written by Sheffield people. In its Jackson Collection of local deeds, charters, court rolls, maps, &c., it has one of the finest collections of its kind in the kingdom. The city owes much to Mr. T. Walter Hall for his years of devotion to this side of our library work.

Commercial and Technical.
The commercial and technical department of the reference library is concerned solely with the more material things of life, and here business men can find and profit by a quarry of industrial worth. The commercial section of the department contains up-to-date directories of the world, many cable code books, trade publications of many kinds, Government, consular, and other official reports, modern books on business organisation, salesmanship, accountancy, and all subjects of value in commerce. The technical side contains transactions of the British and American scientific and technical societies, and an extensive range of modern books on engineering, chemistry, physics, fuels, and all branches of the building and printing industries; in fact, something on almost every trade in the city. The department's collection of books on metal-working is one of the best and most up-to-date in the country, and is of inestimable value to the industry. It

also has a regular supply of some 180 leading periodicals and technical journals. The central libraries also contain a full set of the Patent Office publications from the year 1617, and these are invaluable for inventing systems and those interested in industrial and other inventions.

Open Access System.
The central lending library is an open access library, and has a stock of over 30,000 books, many of them expensive, but these are as freely available to the public as the cheapest book. This, the main lending library of the city, is the library for the more advanced student and the general reader, who are the bulk of the books as published. Its stock is catholic in selection, and it contains many advanced works on science, technology, literature, and sociology. It is not for readers who require only the latest popular novel, unless it should happen to be the work of a novelist of admitted quality. In general the libraries do not provide, as new, the ordinary novel. They have not the money for the purpose, even supposing the ordinary novel was worth its price. To real readers and book-lovers I can unreservedly recommend the central lending library.

The eight branch libraries are regarded as leaders to the more inclusive stock of books available at the central library. They serve the immediate population in their areas, and pass on to the central library the reader who has advanced beyond the more elementary and popular types of books carried in the branch stocks. With the attractive method of open access to the shelves in operation our branches have attained considerable success and are worthy of support.

Children's Sections.
As other institutions have realised the need for cultivating the attention of the child, so have the libraries attracted by means of their juvenile rooms and book corners the potential adult reader of the future. Unfortunately our old buildings have prevented the facilities given being equal to those enjoyed by the children of other cities, but the juvenile library at the Walker branch is a model of its type, and as a new form of library activity in our city is worth notice. It is hoped that when our library services are expanded, as it must expand, adequate facilities will be given to the very necessary provision of children's libraries.

Our school library system consists of deposits of boxes of books in forty-four elementary schools distant from library service. It is successful, and clearly proves the need for greater facilities for libraries in our primary schools.

Central Library, London.
It is a common criticism of our public libraries that they do not possess the books a reader wants. The marvel is that these complaints are comparatively so few. A moment's thought will show that it is impossible for the libraries to have every book asked for; but concerned with libraries is the service provided by the Central Library for Students, London. If we do not have

in our Sheffield libraries any book asked for, other than fiction, it can generally be procured for the reader on loan from the excellent Central Library for Students. There are only two conditions for the price of the required book must not be less than 6s., and, secondly, the cost of carriage must not be less than 1s. Application of any library will bring the necessary details.

Advice and Assistance.
The Library Committee and the staff are anxious to supply all reasonable requests of the public, and in this connection we specially desire readers not to differ from the price of the required book. If we have not the books wanted don't hesitate to say so. If you do not tell us what you want, we are only able to guess at your requirements, and there is left a margin of uncertainty. Please do not mistake my meaning regarding this. I mean requirements of books of real value, and not merely of recreational interest.

The libraries are not only keen on possessing more and better books, but are alive to the necessity of informing the public of the books they have. They seek to attract and cultivate readers. This is attempted, with no little success, by means of special trade catalogues distributed through association societies and employers, to the workers in the trades with which they deal. Special comprehensive lists of books in the libraries on office and business organisation, amateur sports, gardening, Nature study, and other subjects have also supplied a scanning want to readers. The lecture system, with its bibliographical syllabus, is also a means to the same end.

Companions.
I would urge my readers to encourage the use of the libraries by their children, and in this connection I need not labour the point as to the value of good reading. I want the people of Sheffield to realise more completely the value to them of the libraries. Much has been done to make the libraries worthy of their name, but much more remains to be done before our libraries can rank with those in comparable cities, or can serve adequately the demand already existing here. The library service is, in my opinion, the cheapest and best value for money of all the municipal services, and is worthy of greater support. Last year it cost just over one penny per head of population. During the same period Bradford spent 2s. 8d. per head of population, Manchester 2s., Birmingham 1s., Newcastle 1s. 1d., but I must not say more on this point.

In conclusion, may I say that the great advance in the issues of books from the Sheffield libraries during the last few years has been made possible by the hard work of the staff. I should like to thank the many thousands of new readers who have utilised the libraries' service, and to invite any readers who may not use the libraries to come and investigate their possibilities.

The Atherton Labour Party Socialist Sunday School is held in the Labour Hall, Market-street, Birmingham 10, and extends a hearty welcome to all children.

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- TINNED FRUITS, every tin guaranteed. Best quality at lowest prices.
- C.W.S. JAMS, best quality:
- STRAWBERRY - - - - - 1 3/4lbs. 2/-
- RASPBERRY - - - - - 3lbs. 2/-
- STONELESS PLUM - - - - - 1 1/4
- HOUSEHOLD JAM - - - - - 3lbs. 1/3
- MARMALADE - - - - - 3lbs. 1/4

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But it Must be Pure Bread.

We claim our Milkoo Bread to be 100 per cent. PURE. Made with Top-Grade Flour, Purest Yeast, and Dairy Salt Milk and Vegetable Compound.

All our Bread is Guaranteed the most Wholesome, Nutritious, and Economical of all foods. We wish to draw your attention to the following facts:—

1. To keep young, to live long, one half your food should be bread.
2. 43,000 loaves are made weekly for our members.
3. Good Bread is turned into Energy quicker than any other food.
4. Bread gives you more Energy per pound than any other food.
5. Bread provides nine-tenths of muscle-building food.
6. In the important first years 40 per cent. of your child's food should be Bread.
7. Our advice to our members and friends is, Bread is your best food—

EAT MORE OF IT.

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The Tailor-made Costume, with the short jacket and smart vestee, will have an immediate appeal to the active ladies of 1927.

Jumper Suits will be the great vogue, the skirt of straight lines, pleated or plain, jumpers in beautiful art-silk and wool jacquard patterns.

Frocks of figured materials will again occupy an important place in the wardrobe.

Space will not allow us to describe the novelties for Spring, but all that is new will be displayed at our

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- Wednesday, March 23rd, 1927, - 3 to 4-30 p.m.
- " " 23rd, " - 6-30 to 7-30 p.m.
- Friday, " 25th, " - 3 to 4-30 p.m.
- Saturday, " 26th, " - 3 to 4-30 p.m.

We invite all our friends to come and prove that we can give them the style without paying the exorbitant prices so often demanded.