



LABOUR'S MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL POLICY.

SHEFFIELD'S STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION.

FIVE YEARS' PROGRESS UNDER LABOUR CONTROL.

BY ALDERMAN T. H. WATKINS, J.P. (Chairman, Finance Committee).

Introduction.
 In response to the invitation extended to me by the editor of the "Co-operative," I am pleased to give a review of the activities of the Sheffield Corporation from a financial point of view. During the last few years the duties of local authorities have been increased by legislation, and they now have to deal with many problems involving financial responsibilities. The Housing Acts have imposed a duty upon local authorities to build houses, with the result that the debt has been increased by a substantial amount. Another important Act which has imposed additional duties is the Local Government Act, 1929. This Act abolished the Guardians and transferred their duties to county councils and county borough councils. The financial matters now under control of the municipalities are necessarily complicated, but provided the necessary safeguards are undertaken, there is no reason why local authorities should not be in a sound financial position. It is true that in a number of areas, where circumstances are severe, difficulties may have to be met, but it is encouraging to be able to state that the finances of Sheffield are in a strong position.

The following notes have been prepared to give a general review of the finances of Sheffield, from which it will be seen that although difficulties have had to be faced, the credit of the city stands high.

Rate Collection.
 In 1921 (i.e., before the Labour Group took control) the Corporation decided to levy rates directly on every household in the city. This policy may be sound in theory, but in practice it was a failure, and in 1927 the Labour Group reintroduced compounding, success, and it is now recognized that a man with a weekly budget must discharge his liabilities weekly. When the Labour Group took control it was found that rates had been levied, but, unfortunately, had not been collected, and the Labour Group found that there was a debt owing to the City Council of £419,000. This problem required immediate attention, and steps were taken at once to put the city on a sound financial basis from a rate point of view. The result of the work of the last four years is reflected in the following table, which shows at a glance how this debt has been reduced by over £250,000—

DATE.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING.
September, 1927	£419,000
March, 1928	317,000
September, 1928	268,000
March, 1929	199,000
September, 1929	177,000
March, 1930	130,000
September, 1930	105,000
March, 1931	68,000

This is a remarkable achievement, and there is every indication that within a year the whole of the debt due from the Rating Authority to the City Council will have paid off.

Current Rates.
 In addition to having collected over £350,000 of rate arrears the current rates have been collected, and current

obligations discharged in full. This is a record of which the Labour Group have every reason to be proud.

Redemption of 6 Per Cent. Stock.
 In 1920 the Corporation issued £2,000,000 6 per cent. Stock for a period of twenty years, with an option to redeem at the end of ten years. Although the money market during these last few years has been the subject of violent fluctuations, the Labour Group has repaid the whole of this Stock, and has replaced the amount by short-term mortgages, bearing a lower rate of interest, the reduction varying from 1 to 11 per cent. It is encouraging to know that the whole of this Stock has been repaid without having to issue another Stock to take its place. This is due to the strong financial position of the Corporation, and also to the increased standing of the city in financial quarters. It is also encouraging to be able to state that the loans which were raised at a reduced rate of interest have not involved underwriting expenses, and the transaction was controlled by the Corporation.

Purchase of Lands Fund.
 It is well known that local authorities have to buy land for city improvements and the extension of the various activities of their undertakings. In the past it has been the practice to charge the expenditure to capital, and borrow huge sums for the purpose. Money which is borrowed involves heavy loan charges over a long period, and in order to reduce the cost the Labour Group decided to approach Parliament to obtain the necessary power to utilize a portion of the rates each year for this particular purpose. In 1928 power was obtained in a Local Act to set aside every year the proceeds of a 2d. rate for the purchase of land. Sheffield Corporation were the pioneers of this policy, and since the power was obtained many other principal authorities in the country have obtained similar powers. It may be of interest to give an example of the effect of this policy. Assuming land is bought at a cost of £20,000, if this amount had been borrowed, the total cost to the Corporation over sixty years would have been £20,000; but by providing the money out of the rates year by year, and thereby establishing a Purchase of Lands Fund, the actual cost amounts to £30,000—a real saving of £60,000. The Labour Group intend to continue this policy, and every year the sum of £50,000 is included in the annual budget to meet similar expenditure.

Borrowing For Small Amounts.
 Another development which has taken place during the last few years is the policy of charging to the rates expenditure which, hitherto, has been paid out of capital monies. Certain classes of expenditure, such as the recurring, i.e., mechanical, nature of these vehicles have to be replaced from time to time, and instead of raising loans year after year, arrangements have been made for a fixed sum to be included in the annual budget to provide for this particular class of expenditure. It is necessary to allow that if borrowings are continued, the loan charges will rise, and eventually exceed

the actual annual cost for the replacement of these vehicles.

There are particular classes of expenditure which must be financed out of loan, e.g., housing and the extension of the trading services, but with regard to mechanical vehicles, &c., where the loan sanction is of short duration, the revenue method is obviously superior to the loan plan. The policy which avoids borrowing, if wisely guided, should make a material impression upon the growth of municipal indebtedness.

Insurance Funds.
 The insurance of the Corporation's premises and also to cover third party risks is a matter to which the Corporation have given serious attention, and now they control the following insurance funds:—

- (a) Fire.
- (b) Workmen's Compensation.
- (c) Third Party and Accident.
- (d) Motors.
- (e) Fidelity Guarantee.

Where a local authority has large resources, it is more economical to carry on its own insurance with outside companies. During the last few years the Corporation have extended the policy of carrying their own risks, and at the present time the Corporation have about £80,000 standing to the credit of their insurance funds. The Corporation insure in their own hands a larger number of the properties owned by them, and it is possible that within a few years the whole of the risks will be covered.

Housing.
 A few years ago housing was not regarded as a municipal service; to-day the provision of houses is a problem which affects the majority of local authorities. The Sheffield Corporation have spent large sums on this particular service, and are still building houses in order to meet the sustained demand. The total capital expenditure of the Corporation on housing is about £6,000,000, and further schemes are now under consideration. It is a huge liability. The Government give a contribution of £7. 10s. per house per annum for forty years, on condition that the loss to the local authority is less than 12s. per annum. The Corporation have built over 10,000 houses, with the result that additional money must be found out of the rates to finance construction. When the Housing Act, 1919, was passed, the Government realised that there was a real shortage of houses, and in order to encourage local authorities to build, they offered to defray the cost of all schemes which exceeded the product of a penny rate per annum. The cost on the imperial revenue was £100 per house, and after a time the Government altered the basis of the contribution, and now they give a fixed price per house, with the object of letting houses at as reasonable a rent as possible. Another Act has now been placed on

the Statute Book, known as "The Housing Act, 1930." This applies to the clearance of insanitary areas, and the Government contribution is slightly in excess of the grants given under the general Housing Acts. There is a real shortage of houses, and local authorities must build, which affects the rates of every municipality in the country. The clearance of insanitary areas is long overdue.

Abattoir.
 When the Labour Party took control in 1926 it was found that the old building used in connection with the slaughter of animals were entirely out of date and inadequate, and steps were taken immediately to remedy the defect. This particular matter and previously been considered by the Council, but unfortunately those responsible suffered from inertia. Within a few months arrangements were made for the erection of an abattoir to meet the real demand, and to-day Sheffield owns one of the finest abattoirs in the country. The Sheffield scheme has been a most successful one, and it is encouraging to know that beasts can be slaughtered under ideal conditions. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the old slaughter-houses, known as "The Shambles," have been demolished. The present abattoir is another milestone in the march of progress.

Welfare of the Blind.
 In a large number of cities the Welfare of the Blind is in the hands of voluntary agencies. In the case of Sheffield, after careful consideration, it was decided to place the matter on a satisfactory basis, and the welfare of the blind was undertaken by the Council. The old premises were obsolete, and it became necessary to erect workshops. The scheme provides for separate workshops for each class of work-undertaken, a canteen, and recreation room, the total cost amounting to £26,000. The Labour Group have been responsible for many new developments, but it is doubtful whether any scheme has received so much support as the erection of the workshops for the blind.

Education.
 The educational policy of the Labour Group has been in the forefront of their programme, and since they took control many new schools have been built, including open-air and nursery schools. It is true that the cost of education has increased during the last few years, but even penny which has been spent has been justified. New lodging estates have been built in different parts of the city, and it is only natural that a school should be regarded as a complement to each estate. In one or two cases it was found necessary to replace local authorities' schools, but these temporary schools, and after reviewing the situation, it was felt that a bold policy should be pursued. The result is, new schools have been built on the lodging estates. During the last four years £300,000 has been spent on the erection and equipment of schools, and to meet the requirements of the Board of Education.

[Continued on page two.]

LABOUR'S MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL POLICY.

(Continued from Page One.)

Guardians' Loans.

The Local Government Act which abolished the Sheffield Guardians transferred their duties to the City Council. When they handed over their liabilities it was found that approximately a million pounds was outstanding in respect of loans raised for out-relief. Formerly the Guardians paid a portion of the out-relief out of the rates, but large sums were charged to capital account. The policy of charging to capital the cost of out-relief is not sound finance, and when the Labour Group took control steps were taken to put the financial arrangements upon a sound basis. The full cost of out-relief was provided for by the rate, and large sums were set aside for the repayment of the old debt. The 1929 Act provided for the balance of the loans to be spread over a period of fifteen years, with the result that no less a sum than £62,000, approximately a 6d. rate, will have to be found in the next fifteen years. These loans were the means of the logicians of the Guardians.

Local Government Act, 1929.

This Act made several important alterations in the allocation of Government grants for certain services. Formerly several of the services qualified for grants from the Government, but the Act has now consolidated all these grants, with the exception of those relating to education, police, and housing. These particular services remain on the old basis. Another important change is the relief given to manufacturers; they are now relieved of 75 per cent. of their rates, known as the "Granting of industrial hereditaments." A manufacturer who formerly paid £1,000 a year in rates now pays £250. In addition, they have been relieved by the granting of machinery, which, in Sheffield, is about £100,000. There is abundant evidence that the manufacturers appreciate the reduction in the amount now payable by them for rates, despite adverse comments by misinformed people.

Trading Undertakings.

The financial results of the three years ended March 31st, 1930, are shown in the attached table. After taking into account the ordinary working expenses and loan charges, it will be seen that the profits have been substantial. Moreover, in addition to set-

ting aside annual contributions towards redemption of debt, the undertakings (including the new Printing and Stationery Department) have been kept in a first-class state, which, must, of necessity, reflect upon the stability of the various concerns.

Assets Per Head of Population.

From time to time statements are made regarding the indebtedness of local authorities. In reviewing the debt of any local authority the question of the available assets should not be overlooked. The liabilities per head of population in Sheffield work out at about £45 8s. 9d. as compared with an asset of £25 9s. 3d. per head of population—in other words, an excess of assets over liabilities of £18 5s. 5d. per head.

Sheffield's Favourable Position.

Comparisons are always interesting, and in the attached table the rates per head of population are compared with those of other leading cities. It will be seen that for the year 1929-30, the rates per head payable in Sheffield amount to £4 2s., which is the lowest of the towns enumerated in the table.

Meeting Our Liabilities.

During the past few years the Corporation have had to meet additional duties imposed by legislation, and have also had to carry burdens of a domestic nature, but although times have been difficult, the Corporation have met their liabilities and have created reserves to meet contingent liabilities. The difficulties made by our predecessors have almost been overcome. The collection of rates has now been put upon a proper basis, provision has been made for the school children of the city, the care of the blind has been our special consideration, the high-rates streets and loans have been repaid, and houses have been erected for the people. These improvements have necessitated additional expenditure, but the rate per head is lower than that in the other principal industrial cities in the United Kingdom.

During the last four years the rates in the principal township of Sheffield have been reduced from 20s. 4d. to 17s. in the pound, a reduction of 3s. 4d. in the pound.

It is a privilege to be associated with the administration of a city which has so fine a list of achievements as a record of work during the last four years.

TRADING UNDERTAKINGS.

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS.

	Total	Worship	Gross	Less	+ Net Profit
	Revenue	Expenses	Profit	Charge	— Loss
	£	£	£	£	£
1877-78	286,671	112,028	284,143	215,558	+ 68,585
1928-29	408,840	150,094	287,646	233,016	+ 54,630
1929-30	415,400	137,575	294,533	236,280	+ 58,253
TRAMWAYS.					
1927-28	1,147,900	896,698	251,311	120,482	+ 130,829
1928-29	1,130,140	892,715	240,834	121,864	+ 118,970
1929-30	1,104,800	874,650	239,310	117,809	+ 112,504
ELECTRIC SUPPLY.					
1927-28	1,808,545	449,237	655,008	302,603	+ 352,405
1928-29	938,690	609,623	429,365	308,812	+ 120,553
1929-30	972,800	590,891	411,820	318,498	+ 93,441
MARKETS.					
1927-28	63,041	24,322	34,719	27,319	+ 7,400
1928-29	81,277	27,426	37,951	29,688	+ 8,263
1929-30	58,961	29,981	29,380	27,684	+ 1,696
ABATTOIRS.					
1927-28	237	488	(loss) 251	2,351	- 3,062
1928-29	129	639	819	8,060	+ 8,228
1929-30	21,239	18,065	(profit) 3,274	17,160	+ 13,892

SHEFFIELD'S FAVOURABLE POSITION.

Town.	Population.	Rates per Head.		Town.	Population.	Rates per Head.	
		1929-30.	£ s. d.			1929-30.	£ s. d.
Sheffield	518,000	4	2	Birmingham	692,000	6	2
Hull	308,300	4	3	Liverpool	849,200	4	10
Nottingham	296,800	4	10	Leeds	618,500	5	13
Bradford	280,300	5	2	Manchester	713,700	5	0

WHAT YOU ARE WORTH IN SHEFFIELD.

Year.	Assets per head of Population.		Liabilities per head of Population.		Rates of Assets over Liabilities per Head.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
1925-26	46	18	2	5	13	12
1926-27	52	3	2	4	14	8
1927-28	55	19	6	2	16	17
1928-29	60	7	8	1	17	3
1929-30	65	9	2	0	18	5

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LOOK FOR THE LABEL

AN APOLOGY FROM A MARQUIS.

SHEFFIELD LABOUR COUNCIL IN THE RIGHT.

COMING TEMPERANCE DEBATE.

"The most interesting thing about the May meeting of the Sheffield City Council was the fact that a very expected debate was postponed. Alderman A. J. Binley (Labour) had given notice of his intention to move a resolution urging the Council to allow the sale of intoxicating liquor, under approved conditions, on corporation estates.

The debate was the last item on the agenda, but Alderman Binley happened to be out of the room at the time, there were cries of "Next business" from the councillors, and the Lord Mayor (Alderman Harold Jackson) passed over the item.

Alderman Binley told the "Co-operator" afterwards that he had expected the discussion in progress when he left the room would have lasted much longer, and that he intends to bring the matter up again.

Oddly enough, at the opening of the meeting a letter was read from the Grand Lodge of the Order of Good Templars congratulating local authorities who had kept the municipal housing estates free from intoxicating liquor, and hoping that this precedent would be extended to other municipal enterprises.

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When the report of the City Hall Committee, regarding the adoption of a quotation for a frieze for the main hall, was reached, Councillor W. Bennett (Progressive) said a variety of resolutions had been made in the passage chosen.

The passage, which was from Ruskin's "Unto this last," was given as follows: "There is all we need, all we have. Life, including all its powers of love, joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings."

Councillor Bennett wanted to know by what authority the committee had inserted a full stop after the word "being," instead of a semi-colon. The quotation, he informed a somewhat irritated Council, was now not Ruskin at all, but "The Grindledorf." Councillor R. H. Minshall (Labour) remarked that he would have liked to have seen the whole passage, of which this was a part, put on the agenda, "being" instead of and half a loaf was better than no bread. It was obvious, he said blandly, that a sentence must finish with a full stop.

Music in the Parks.

There was some debate on the programme of music in the parks. Councillor L. Milner (Progressive) said he wanted to see more bands of national repatriate on the programmes, and Alderman A. J. Binley (Labour) the leader of the band. Councillor R. H. Minshall (Labour) suggested that the employment of military bands savoured of militarism.

This brought up a letter from Alderman Graves (Labour) that this was the only thing left for the army to do these days.

Councillor G. H. Rowland (Labour) complained that Norfolk Park was not getting fair treatment in the music programme.

Councillor J. H. Skelton (Labour) and Alderman W. F. Berridge (Labour) stressed the importance of the courts and alleys concerts. The former, answering some criticism by Alderman J. G. Graves, said that the Weston Park was the stand-by of the Bands Committee. If they reduced the prices for the chairs they would not get enough people to make the concerts pay.

Housing Battle Coming?

The Council accepted a resolution from Councillor Marlowe (Progressive) that the Estates Committee be requested to consider and report upon the advisability or otherwise of increasing the number of houses built per acre on the corporation estates from twelve to fifteen, with a view to reduction in the cost.

In accepting it, Alderman Rowlinson (Labour) made it clear that the matter would be fully debated when the report came from the Estates Committee.

Councillor W. Bennett complained about councillors and chief officials attending conferences. He regarded this as a waste of money, but it was pointed out to him that the gatherings were of considerable importance, and that the Council was only following the traditions of a generation in sending representatives.

The Grindledorf Tip.

mis-statement about the Grindledorf rubbish dump, and will take the earliest opportunity of contradicting the statement that this dump is the property of the Sheffield Corporation, on the floor of the House of Commons. Please accept my sincere apology.

P.S.—Since dictating the above, I have consulted the Speaker, who tells me that I shall have no opportunity of making any withdrawal of the statement I made on the floor of the House until the third reading. I propose, therefore, to take the earliest opportunity of making the statement in the Committee Stage upstairs.

This, of course, did not satisfy some of the Progressive die-hards, and Councillor S. Osborn and Councillor J. Progress both contended that Sheffield Corporation was morally responsible for the tip.

Councillor York (Labour) pointed out that grade refuse was tipped at that place years before Sheffield began to deposit refuse which was properly treated, and which was incapable of causing smell or flies to breed. Councillor York also made tart remarks about the tipping of refuse in the East End.

Allotments Apathy.

Councillor W. Furniss (the Labour chairman of the Allotments Sub-committee) was asked why the committee had decided not to hold any allotments competition this year, and he replied that there had not been enough entries, although it was only 6d. to join. "It is a pity the allotment-holders will not have something for nothing," he commented.

When the minutes of the Watch Committee came up for confirmation it was announced that the date of the committee not to allow the film "Outward Bound" to be shown in Sheffield, had been referred back for further consideration.

Councillor Mrs. Longden commented that the matter was one which bristled with difficulties.

Alderman A. Barton (Labour) was again able to report an immense increase in the numbers issued from the city libraries. "The libraries," he said, "are doing a very good work, and they are doing it largely because they are being made attractive. At one time a library was a forbidding institution, and no one went unless he could help. If we could only double our financial resources we could double our issues of books."

Defending the Workers.

There was a heated discussion on the wages of plasterers.

It was reported that the Investigation Section had considered a complaint made by the Sheffield branch of the

National Association of Plasterers that certain contractors on the Shiregreen Housing Estate had, without agreement from that association, reduced the wages of plasterers in their employ by 1d. per hour as from February 21, 1934.

The section had ascertained that the reduction from 1s. 7d. to 1s. 6½d. per hour had been imposed by the employers following a revision of wages made by the National Joint Council for the Building Industry, upon which council the Plasterers' Association were not represented.

The sub-committee concerned recommended that in the absence of any agreement between the Employer's Association and the operatives, union the rate of wages for plasterers for the purpose of the fair wages, clause of the City Council be 1s. 7d. per hour, and that the contractors to the corporation be required to pay this rate to all plasterers employed on contracts.

Councillor Reeves (Charlesworth (Liberal)) moved that the matter be referred back—but after speeches by Councillor T. Garnett (Labour), Councillor R. Beach (Labour), and others, the amendment was lost by 22 votes to 54. The Council adopted a resolution, proposed by Alderman E. O. Rowlinson, that with the object of encouraging craftsmen as well as designers to submit designs for the Alfred Chadburn Prize Competition and to extend the competition so that models as well as drawings may be eligible for adjudication and to remove doubts as to whether models or designs executed by more than one competitor shall be eligible for the prize, application be made to the Charity Commissioners for their approval of the scheme now submitted for the consideration of such charity, in substitution of the existing scheme.

Thank You!

At the close of the meeting, the Lord Mayor said that that was the last meeting which Mr. J. W. Dickens (chief committee clerk in the town clerk's department) would attend, as he was retiring under the superannuation scheme. The Lord Mayor paid a tribute to the courtesy and devotion always displayed by Mr. Dickens during his fifty years' services, and expressed the Council's regret in losing his services.

The Lord Mayor further suggested that an expression of the Council's appreciation of Mr. Dickens' services should be put on vellum and presented to him. Alderman Beardsley (Labour) seconded, and the resolution was heartily carried.

Mr. Dickens responded.

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THE CHALLENGE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS:

LABOUR'S WORK FOR PEACE.

FIRST LORD'S STRIKING SPEECH.

The Right Hon. A. V. Alexander, the Member of Parliament for Hillsborough and First Lord of the Admiralty, reviewed the political situation at some length at the Wylliffe Hall, Hillsborough, on Friday, May 8th. There was a large attendance, and Alderman T. H. Watkins was in the chair.

Mr. Alexander, who was warmly received, referred to the attitude of the House of Lords at some length. There was something in the nature of blackmail in the proposal Lord Halsbury, the Conservative leader in the House of Lords, had made regarding the Land Utilisation Bill, a measure to which the Government attached much importance.

Lord Halsbury had raised a constitutional issue of first-class importance. He wanted the Government to give a guarantee that certain amendments made by the House of Lords would be accepted in the House of Commons without any question being raised as to the privileges of the House of Commons.

"I regard that as a direct challenge to the privileges of the representatives of the people," said the First Lord.

WHAT LABOUR ASKS.

"We are not going to lie down to that," he said. "It was vital that the Government should have power to take control of land which was not being

properly used and secure it at a price which was not a bled price.

He declared that while there was so much urgent business to be done in these difficult times the Government had no desire to raise a constitutional issue of this kind, but if the challenge was thrown down to them they would accept it.

"We want sympathetic treatment from the House of Lords, revisionary if you like, but sympathetic," he said. "We do not seek a challenge, but if there is to be one I am sure the majority of the people will be behind us."

"There is no remedy for the workers of this country by departing from Free Trade, and we say 'Don't make it more difficult to trade with other countries by putting up tariffs,'" he said. Mr. Alexander pointed in telling fashion to the difficulties experienced by other Protectionist countries—America, Germany, Italy, and Australia. The United States had the highest tariffs in the world, and the greatest number of unemployed as well.

SIR OSWALD'S SILENCE.

Sir Oswald Mosley had said he was prepared to consider the question of tariffs without prejudice, provided that there were safeguards for the workers. "I asked him how that could be done, and I have not had an answer yet,"

commented the First Lord. Australia had tried to safeguard the workers under a system of Protection, but the effort had been a failure.

He was not afraid of the Labour Government's record in the matter of unemployment. They had done more than any other Government in the world. Labour had never said that minority Government working within the capitalist system could cure unemployment.

Referring to unemployment benefit payments, he declared that whatever improvement had taken place during the last ten years had been due to the ceaseless pressure of the Labour and Trade Unions movement.

He said they were very anxious that the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill should not be long delayed. Part of the Bill, especially that for providing more land, and the land they wanted for unemployed workers, ought to be available at once.

PREVENTION OF PROFITEERING.

The Government was also anxious to get on with the Consumers' Council Bill, as it was vital to take the earliest possible steps to prevent profiteering. There were a large number of articles, he said, which were withheld entirely from the co-operative societies unless the societies agreed to give no dividend on the purchase.

He mentioned the case of a trade paper which contained an advertisement guaranteeing the chemist a profit, with window bonus, of 70 per cent. on the selling price of a certain article, yet the co-operative societies were forbidden to sell it below the fixed price or to give a dividend.

Referring to the new land tax, he quoted the case of lands which were

valued at £120,000 for rating purposes and yet were sold at £38,000, and the London County Council had to subsidise in which they bought the land assessed at the sum of £7,000, but they had to pay £295,000 for it.

NAVAL AFFAIRS.

Nobody, he said, would contend that the Government had not laboured hard and conscientiously in the cause of peace and disarmament. "We have tried, perhaps, had all the success we deserved, but we have had a certain amount of success," he commented.

It was quite certain that the General Disarmament Conference next February would not have so fully drawn upon the technical questions had it not been for the Naval Conference last year.

ALL MUST CONTRIBUTE.

In France questions had been raised somewhat late in the day.

There would be no efforts lacking on the part of the Government, he said, which would be no essential to some progress in this direction, but there was going to be no guarantee of success merely by one country always giving way.

"If you are going to get disarmament which is a real aid to peace it must not be the disarmament of one but of all the nations concerned, and making in spirit and in fact their own contributions to the pool of effort."

"I know I am speaking for the Premier and for the Foreign Secretary when I assure you of our constant efforts in this direction. We have got to think of the general security and condition of our people," he said. At the close Mr. Alexander raised a number of questions.

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THE HOUSEWIFE'S WEEKLY BUDGET.

"£1,000,000 IS NOT A BIG SUM."

HOW TO SPEND MONEY WISELY—AND HOW TO GET A BETTER RETURN.

BY B. WILLIAMS (Honorary Member, Co-operative Union).

RECENTLY it was reported that one of the heiresses of Mr. Baker (a New York banker), to whom he had left a million pounds, said, in reply to an interviewer—
"After all, a million is not a very large sum, is it?"

If the lady had been compelled to earn the amount, at the rate of, let us say, £3 per week, it would have taken 6,110 (six-thousand-four-hundred-and-ten) years, during that time she would have had to refrain from spending any money, otherwise there would be "no million." Any comments we should make on this lady's outlook upon life would be so drastic that we refrain altogether.

Probably it is people with an earned income of from £1 to £4 per week who have the best knowledge of the value of money, and who know how to spend it wisely.

Family Budget Masters Have Much to Learn.

It seems to me, however, that many of the women who have to run a family budget on limited amounts have much to learn, just as there are many people talking of the coming of a Co-operative Commonwealth who do not quite visualise what the phrase means. The two things are much more closely connected than appears at first sight.

The total national income of Great Britain and Ireland is estimated to be four thousand million pounds; allowing one thousand for capital savings, we have three thousand million pounds left for expenditure on personal wants.

The co-operative movement's trade is £20,000,000, or only 7 per cent. of the three thousand millions. Out of this £20,000,000 only £8,000,000 is spent on goods made in co-operative factories owned by the Co-operative Wholesale Society (and therefore owned by the five million members of the retail societies). Question: How can there be a Co-operative Commonwealth if the bulk of its goods are supplied by individual firms?

It is evident that the purchases of the housewife through her weekly budget can have immense effect upon the direction of our economic life. We can either travel to or from a Commonwealth, as the housewife decides.

The First Lesson.

Before we get to such a comparatively advanced point as the purchase of co-operatively-produced goods, however, we have to find out whether the

housewife is safely negotiating the first step in her travels.

Judging from the enormous number of private shops of all kinds in Sheffield compared with the small number of co-operative stores, it is apparent that the first lesson has not yet been assimilated to anything like a degree of 100 per cent. It is probably nearer 23 per cent. only.

That is to say the average member of a Sheffield Co-operative Society is spending not more than one-third (if so much) of her money at the stores week by week.

Mr. B. Seebom Rowntree said a short time ago that an average family must spend 42s. 3d. per week on food, clothing, fuel, rent, and miscellaneous articles to maintain health and physical efficiency.

Take out 15s. for rent, and 7s. 3d. for amusements and any other articles not supplied by the co-operative society, and we have an irreducible minimum of £1 per week for bare necessities. Many families, though not so wealthy as Mr. Baker's heiress, are spending much

more than 20s. per week on household requirements. I should imagine that the majority of families in Sheffield live above the minimum line referred to by Mr. Seebom Rowntree. This fact, however, would not be disclosed by any reference to the sales of the two Sheffield Co-operative Societies. Taking the two together, the average co-operative member in Sheffield is only spending 10s. 6d. per week, and this mainly on goods produced outside the co-operative movement. The member is also spending a good deal more outside the stores altogether.

What Does Co-operative Commonwealth Mean?

Now, what is my interpretation of the phrase "Co-operative Commonwealth?" I look forward to a system of society in which the working classes will have finally become the ruling classes, and have worked out a scheme of industry by which they employ themselves, with their own capital, in their own workshops. It would be, incidentally, a solution of the problem of unemployment.

An analysis of the Sheffield position shows that co-operators are purchasing from the Co-operative Wholesale Society goods estimated to be worth 4s. per week at retail prices, of which actual C.W.S. productions account for not more than 2s. This is not the way to change the face of society.

A New Production Wanted.

We feel certain our members are spending at least 20s. per week some-

where and we should like that "some where" to be the co-operative stores. The management committee are taking steps with the actual assistance of the C.W.S. to carry out a three months' propaganda campaign to raise the average sales per member to 25s. per week from the lowly 12s. 6d. We want you to help.

Every member will receive, during the week beginning Monday, June 8th, a copy of "The Golden Book," containing an illustrated catalogue of C.W.S. goods. Members are requested to study this book, and base their weekly orders upon it. We believe they will enjoy purchasing and using the C.W.S. products.

At the end of the three months there is an easy competition in which any member can engage without paying a fee. A first prize of £20 will be given to the person who writes the best postcard containing a description of the benefits she has derived from reading the book. Full particulars are contained in each copy.

Suppose the present members of the two societies really increased their purchases to 25s. each per week. It would mean an increase of over £2,000,000 per year. As all overhead costs and expenses are already met, the increased net profit would be out of all proportion to the present rate. It would be impossible to avoid an increased dividend, unless there was a heavy reduction in prices.

Think this point over, and go in for bigger purchases at the stores. It would prove that £1,000,000 is a 'tily sum, after all.

THE NEW COMFORT UNDERWEAR

CO-OPERATIVE MAKE

From your Stores.

SHEFFIELD REPERTORY COMPANY.

PERHAPS the most interesting feature of the Repertory Company's summer season was the production, beginning May 30th, of St. John Ervine's "Jane Chigley," a powerful play which has already been given provincial presentations. Greta Burke, who made a strong impression by her fine acting in a Shaw's "Candida," was specially engaged to play the part of Jane, and gave an excellent performance.

The play was preceded by a curtain-raiser, entitled "Business Proposal," by Francis W. Taylor, produced for the first time on any stage.

Further plays to be done this season include "Badger's Green," a delightful comedy of English country life, by R. C. Sherriff, the author of "Journey's End," on June 11th; "The Rising Sun," by Herman Heijermans, a Dutch author, little known in England, but famous in his own country, on June 12th; and the most famous of Oscar Wilde's comedies, "The Importance of Being Earnest," on July 12th, this concluding the season.

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MAY 29th, 1937

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LIMITED.**
WELLINGBOROUGH.

CO-OPERATIVE PARTY NOTES.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL.

The Sheffield and Ecclesall Section held a successful meeting in the guild-room on May 21st, when Councillor J. Garnett gave an interesting address on "Modern Road Transport."

Following upon the explanation of the new Transport Act, Councillor Garnett dealt with the history of transport from 1838, when the first bus was run from Birmingham to London. The address resulted in a good discussion.

At the same meeting the candidates at present on the Co-operative municipal panel were re-endorsed.

A further meeting was held on June 21st, addressed by Councillor J. W. Williams.

Every meeting this year has recorded a continuous increase in membership. The Women's Section have closed their meetings for the summer season, and are reopening on September 17th. Arrangements have been made for the annual excursion to Bridlington on Wednesday, June 3rd. Secretary, Mrs. Billam, 29, Mitchell-street, Sheffield.

HILLSBOROUGH.

A summer programme has now been arranged, including rambles and visits to various places of interest in the city. The autumn session will open with a flannel dance in the Hillsborough Institute on September 24th.

The divisional secretary has given reports of the Blackpool conference to the Neepsden, Hillsborough, Longley, and Attercliffe sections. Reports have been remarkably well received, and a good attendance at each of the meetings, always followed by interesting questions and discussion.

The ramble on Whit-Tuesday to Bradfield proved a big success. Under ideal weather conditions about 100 ideal members and children attended. Sports included wheelbarrow race, obstacle race, pony race, ladies' walking race, gents' walking race, three-legged race, and ladies' flat race, children's flat race, and prizes were presented to the winners.

The Divisional Council meeting will be held in the Institute on Thursday, June 28th. Members will receive circular in due course.

ATTERCLIFFE.

A successful meeting of the Attercliffe Divisional Council was held recently in the Attercliffe Co-operative Institute.

After the usual business of minutes and correspondence, the members listened with interest to a report of the Blackpool conference of the Co-operative Party. This was given by Mr. F. L. Dunn, of the Hillsborough Section of the party. Mr. Dunn proved himself a master of detail, and lucid and thorough in expression. That the report was highly appreciated was proved by the bent discussion which followed, especially the two questions of Disarmament and Public Assistance Committees.

Several questions were asked and ably answered. Mr. Dunn was heartily thanked. It is young men such as our speaker that give the life to some of the vapid criticism of the youth of the country.

Mrs. Barringer was unanimously nominated for inclusion on the panel of municipal candidates, it being felt that her past public work was sufficient recommendation.

Readers please note that the next meeting of the Council will be held at Monday, June 28th, at 7.30 p.m., in the Co-operative Institute, Attercliffe. Speaker: Councillor (Mrs.) Tebbutt.

NEEPSDEN.

The attendance at the Neepsden Ward meetings still taxes to the full the available accommodation at the Institute. On April 29th, Mr. F. L. Dunn, the divisional secretary, gave an excellently detailed report of the Blackpool Conference. Interesting discussion followed. Mr. Dunn is also to speak at Neepsden on "Tariffs and Free Trade" on June 17th. At the meeting held on May 11th Alderman Havant gave a report of City Council work, dealing particularly with the Housing schemes. Alderman T. H. Watkins, J.P., also spoke on "Finance" in relation to the housing of the people. The membership of the section is still increasing.

[Continued at foot of next column.]

Mrs. SNOWDEN'S MESSAGE TO CO-OPERATORS.

In a foreword to the pamphlet "Free Trade and the Consumer" by Mr. J. T. Davis (Co-operative Union, 2d.), Mrs. Philip Snowden, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, writes—

"No body of consumers knows better than co-operative consumers the supreme importance of maintaining the Free Trade policy of this country. Experience has taught us that it is to the interest of the community that there should be produced as much as possible of every useful thing and service. Abundance, not scarcity; cheapness, not dearth; promote the true welfare of a nation, and any system which restricts the output and distribution of useful things and services imperishes national life. Economic liberty is essential to the full, strong, and healthy development of a nation's wealth."

"When our Free Trade policy is made the object of attack, especially by insidious methods and under the guise of new fantastic names, such as Safeguarding, Empire Free Trade, and the like, which are, in effect, barefaced Protection, it behoves us all to be alive to the situation, and Mr. Davis has done well in his paper to expose the crushing burdens which a Protectionist system of industry inflicts on the community as a whole."

[Continued from previous column.]

Councillor J. A. Longden, who has represented the Ward for the past six years, has been re-nominated as the prospective Co-operative and Labour candidate for the November elections.

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Gents' Four-piece Suits to measure (extra pair of trousers or plus fours with each suit) 55/- and 65/-
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