

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The CHAIRMAN : The next item on the agenda is the President's address. This hall is rather a large one, and not a good one for speaking in, but I will endeavour to make myself heard in the few words I have to say, and I would like that we might have as much order as possible.

I would like to welcome the delegates from the various districts to this Conference. The year that has passed since our last Conference has been, I think, one of the most eventful probably in the history of the world. When we met at our Annual Conference last year we were in the throes of a fearful struggle which had been going on then for about four years. Since our Conference we have had, towards the end of the year, the Armistice, which so many of us welcomed at the time. And since then we have had the Peace negotiations, and finally the signing of Peace. You are asked, the nation will be asked to celebrate on Saturday the signing of Peace. I feel that the signing of Peace is an event with which we ought to be thankful. I am sure that the vast majority of the people of this country, and, indeed, I think the nations of Europe and the civilised peoples of the world will be thankful that Peace has at length been signed. But while this is a time for thanksgiving, I do not think it is a time for merry making. I believe the world and the country is too sad to enter into Peace celebrations with anything like light hearts. There is too much mourning by many who have been robbed of their dear ones, I think, to make our Peace celebrations much of a merry-making show, but I think that every person in this country might well go on their knees on Saturday and pray that never again will the world be plunged into such another war as that through which we have passed. I wonder how far we can make up our minds that we are going to have peace in the future? The outlook, I fear, is not at all reassuring. Already we have men in authority who are urging the country to be prepared to get ready and be prepared for the next war. We understood that this war was not merely a war to check the aggression of the Central Powers, but we were told that this was a war to end war. That this war should end militarism in all the nations, and already we are beginning to wonder when the next war will take place, and who will be fighting that. I think it is our business, representing as we do a very powerful organisation, representing as we do a very large number of individuals, it is our business, and will be our business, to use our intelligence and our earnest efforts individually and collectively as an organisation to use all our strength in preventing wars in the future. We cannot be very sanguine, however. I am afraid that the seeds of future wars may have been sown in the present Peace. It has not been a Peace that is likely to lead to reconciliation, and if there is one thing more than another, reconciliation amongst the peoples of Europe is necessary if

we are to prevent war in the future. During the war we were told that so far as this country was concerned conscription was to cease. Just prior to the war, if anyone had told us that this country within a few years would be a conscript country, we would not have believed it. We would have thought it impossible, but on account of the exigencies of the situation evidently it was necessary we should become for the time being a conscript nation, but we had good reason to think, considering the whole history of this country, and considering the pledges that were given, we had good reason to believe that by this time conscription would be a thing of the past. I sincerely hope that the efforts of this Federation will be used in the direction of killing conscription and making it impossible in this country in the future. You cannot have conscription without militarism. Imperialism and militarism follow conscription; conscription goes hand in hand with militarism and imperialism. You cannot have standing armies, and you cannot have imperialism and militarism without war. It is quite impossible, they all go together, and I feel that you cannot have a continuation of the capitalistic system without militarism and imperialism without war. I hope the efforts of this Federation will be used in the direction of killing, as far as possible, militarism and future wars. There were many professions of patriotism during the war, yet that did not prevent profiteering; that did not prevent many hundreds, nay, thousands of people who professed very loudly their patriotism, taking advantage of the nation's struggles in order to rob the people and to become millionaires; many people have become millionaires during this war. This does not merely mean that these people made their millions at the expense of the industrial classes and the people generally of this country during this war; it means more to us, it means that these millionaires will keep in slavery for generations, it may be, millions of workers, working for those who made millions during the war; that is always the result of profiteering. When you are told, as we have been told repeatedly during the past few months, that the capital which is invested in the various industries, in the mines, railways, and other industries, that that capital is the result of abstinence on the part of the people that held it, abstinence meaning that they had lived very carefully and saved up all their surplus money, and if you had followed their example you would have been in their position, as a reward of abstinence, and consequently no one would be required to work at all. Most of the capital presently invested in this country is not the reward of abstinence, it is the reward received by people who did not pay fair wages to their workers during the time they were engaged in industry; it is the reward to a very great extent of robbery in the past. Now we want to establish a state of matters in the country which will prevent this kind of robbery in the future. During the last few months there has been an agitation carried on by this Federation and their friends who make up the Triple Alliance. Rightly or wrongly the miners in certain districts of the Federation discussed the question of the situation in Russia, the question of the blockade in Germany, the question of conscription, and other matters of that kind, and they brought these questions before a miners' Conference. A miners' Conference having fully considered the propositions, decided to ask that a national conference should be convened for the purpose of discussing these questions and deciding whether or not we should use if necessary our industrial power to force the withdrawal of our troops from Russia, to force the raising of the blockade, and to force the withdrawal of conscription. Personally I think that no greater crime has stained the annals of this country than our intervention in Russia. Personally, I feel, and that has been the feeling evidently of the delegates at

the miners' Conference, I feel that we have no right to interfere with the internal matters of Russia, that the Russian people who were kept practically in slavery and serfdom for so many generations were entitled to work out their own emancipation and their own social salvation without the intervention of the Allies. I have no faith at all in Koltchak and his friends being the friends of democracy or the working classes. Some of us feel very strongly that the efforts of this kind are not being used in the interests of the people of Russia, but that they are being used in the direction of again re-establishing Tsardom and militarism in Russia. If that is so, it is a crime that our men who went out to fight on behalf of small nationalities and to make our world free for democracy; that our men, who had no desire to go to Russia, and did not enlist, generally speaking, for the purpose of going to Russia, should be sent there to keep down or prevent the raising at least of a social democracy in Russia. The question of the blockade need not perhaps now be a subject for this Conference. We understand from the Press that since the signing of peace the blockade has been raised in Germany, so that it will be unnecessary for that matter to form part of the business at any future Conference. The question of conscription is still with us, and that will be one of the things if a Conference is held that must be discussed. Personally, I have no fear at all what the voice of the people of this country will be when the matter is put before them for final decision. We failed to get the Conference which we asked for for some reason or other; the Parliamentary Committee did not think it right to convene, or necessary to convene, a Conference on the matter, consequently the Triple Alliance has been thrown back on their own resources, and we are going to hold a Joint Conference of the representatives of the three great organisations in London next week, and we sincerely hope that the Conference will have the effect of putting matters right without the necessity of taking any further action. Last year has been an historical one for our own organisation; never, I think, in the history of the Federation have we had so many important national questions to deal with as we have had in the past twelve months, and I think, and I feel, that the interest which has been aroused during the past few months will in all probability have turned the eyes of the nation upon this Conference which is being held in this hall to-day. You may remember that we made a claim a good many months ago for an increase of 30 per cent. in wages, for a reduction in the hours of labour under the Eight Hours Act down to six hours, and also for the nationalisation of mines. Some of us during the intervening months from the time that claim was first made have had to suffer a good deal of criticism in the Press—naturally the officials of an organisation have to be singled out for any blame which people may feel is attached to the organisation itself. Well, I don't complain of that. I think that the officials are always entitled to accept all the blame that may otherwise be given to a body such as the Miners' Federation itself. I only want to say that our Conferences decided step by step every step which we have taken. Our agitation for an increase in wages, our agitation for shorter hours, was not a one man show at all, it was not an Executive matter—it was a thing that the men had discussed in the districts for months and months before it finally came to be placed before the Government. Now, after all, what did we ask for? We were told that this country after the war would have to be a better country for the people to live in than it had been before and that we desired to have a higher standard of life. We found that the two increases in wages which had been given as war wages did not meet the needs of the homes of our people, that the cost of living was still

soaring and had soared beyond the wages that we had received, and consequently we put forward a claim for a higher standard of life for the homes of the miners. We claimed shorter hours of labour, and we put forward at that time a claim which had been carried again and again in Conferences during the last 20 years. We believe that the private ownership of collieries in this country was not in the best interests of the nation, and we put forward a claim that the nation should take over the mines and make them national property, and work them in the interests of the whole of the country. We were told that we could not get an increase of 30 per cent. in wages, that we could not get a substantial reduction in the hours of labour, and that the Government could not decide to nationalise the mines without full inquiry. The consequence was ultimately a Commission was set up and we agreed to take part in the work of that Commission in order that full inquiry should be made into all the circumstances. We had previously been offered an increase in wages by the Prime Minister, but that offer was not satisfactory. The Commission set to work, and I believe it will be admitted that there were many things brought out on that Commission that rather astonished the country, if not the Government itself.

Your members of the Commission have done their best to keep the human side of our movement before the country. We knew the conditions under which the miners and their families were living and had lived for generations. We made up our minds to keep that side of the question before the Commission and before the country. We proved, I think, that the housing conditions under which a large part of the mining community lived were a disgrace to our so-called civilisation. We proved from statistics that the children and little babies of the wives of the miners of this country were killed off before their time, not through the fault of the mothers or fathers, but because of the surroundings and because of the circumstances of their lives. The nation I think, for a few weeks were horrified at many of the revelations made as to housing conditions and the health conditions of miners' families. May I call your attention to the fact that there was not anything brought out at the Commission with regard to the living conditions of the miners engaged in many of the worst districts, with regard to the enormous death rate, the unnecessary death rate of the babies in the mining districts, there was nothing put forward or brought out there which might not have been known to the nation years and years ago. The statistics quoted were from information given to the public or had been published again and again by officers of health in this country, but the Government did not pay any attention to it, and the nation itself did not pay any attention to it, and at least the Commission has put the housing question, the question of the living conditions of miners, into such a position that it must be dealt with in the very near future. I do not want the nation or the Government to go away with the idea that this matter is going to settle down again and fizzle out; it is not. The housing conditions of the miners must be improved and improved at an early date, or we will want to know the reason why. The conditions are there and they must be removed. There must be higher idealism introduced, a higher outlook, and a higher standard of life for the families of the mining community, and it will be our duty to see that the recommendation of the Commission with regard to baths and drying accommodation at the mines and with regard to better housing of the mining community is carried out within a reasonable period. The question of shorter hours and an increase of 2s. per day, which was given to the miners, and the question of the nationalisation of the mines is causing a very considerable amount of agitation at the present time.

When the Government suggested a Commission we were told by the Prime Minister that they could not accede to our request, and they could not consider the question of nationalisation until they had first made full inquiry; but we certainly understood from the Prime Minister that if the inquiry brought forth facts to justify the majority of the Commission in recommending nationalisation of the mines the Government would consider it their duty to carry out the findings of that Royal Commission. It ought to be remembered that in the first report six Commissioners on one side reported in favour of the full claims of the miners, the full increase in wages demanded and the full reduction in the hours of labour, and in favour of the nationalisation of the mines. The Chairman and three of what are known as captains of industry, who were appointed by the Government to look after the interests of the general public at the Commission, those four reported in favour of an increase in wages and a progressive reduction in the hours of labour by law under certain conditions. They said more than that in their first report; they said that on the evidence which we have already had the present system of mining stands condemned. There was a great outcry about that, and the Chairman was told through the Press that it was unfair to have made that declaration until the fullest opportunity had been given to bring a case against nationalisation fully before the Commission. The question being considered was not merely nationalisation of the mines, it was also nationalisation of the minerals with the mines. We had further sittings of the Commission, and the mineowners and the owners of the mineral wealth of the country had an opportunity of bringing all the evidence possible and all the information possible before the Commission; but again in face of that evidence the Chairman and six of his colleagues declared in favour of nationalisation of the minerals and also of the mining industry of this country. We had a good idea that the landlords (the real owners of this country) and the mineowners would not be prepared to allow nationalisation of the mining industry and of the minerals to be carried out by the Government if they could prevent it. They immediately set about during the sittings of the Commission causing an agitation, because they evidently took it as a foregone conclusion that nationalisation would be recommended, and during the sitting of the Commission and since the findings of the Commission were issued they have set about a vigorous agitation in order to prevent the Government acting on the recommendations of the Commission. Now, you have seen a good deal of comment in the Press during the past few weeks on what is called direct action, but you are having a touch of it in the House of Commons. The possessing classes, landowners, mineowners, and all the great commercial interests of the country, who are over-represented in the House of Commons and command the vast majority of the House of Commons, are uniting together to take direct action to prevent nationalisation of the mines. They are going to use their whole political influence with the Government to get the Government to refuse to accept the findings of the Chairman. Now, it will be remembered that the Chairman was a well-known judge, one of his Majesty's judges, a man well known in mining districts to the mineowners as well as the miners. A man who is highly respected so far as I know in commercial circles, a man trusted by the Government, or they would not have appointed him to the position they did. A man whose whole life practically had been spent at the Bar, and for some years in sifting evidence and coming to conclusions. Now, that is the man who has declared with six of his colleagues that the mines of this country ought to be nationalised. He does not propose that they should be nationalised right away, and it is just as well we should explain

exactly the full meaning of what he reports. He reports that the Government should now immediately pass a Bill accepting the principle of nationalisation of the mines, and that three years after this the mines should be taken over at a fair price; but in the meantime the Government should take up full control of the mines, and take them out of the hands of the present owners. I don't know what he had in his mind, but I suspect that he feels that the Government merely passing a Bill that three years from the present time the coal mines should become national property at a fair price, I think he was afraid, not having that respect for the owners' integrity one might suppose, he was afraid if the mines were allowed to remain in the hands of the present mineowners they would not be worth taking over at the end of three years.

I want to bring before you the chief argument used by the mineowners and other capitalistic interests against nationalisation of the mines. This argument will let you see to what depth we have sunk in the hunt for gold, and to what depth we have sunk in the hunt for dividends. No one outside the ranks of the capitalist classes themselves would have had the audacity to make this charge against them which they made against themselves. They say that, "if you nationalise the mines and work them on behalf of the nation the incentive will be taken away, and they will not be successful. The incentive we have now to make profits out of the mines has developed the mining industry and has kept it going, and now if that incentive for private gain is taken away you will not be able to carry them on in the interests of the nation." Now, that is the most mean and contemptible thing that could be said. My answer to that is, it is not the mineowners, it is not the people who have capital invested in mines who carry them on at all, it is the management of the mines and the workmen of the mines who carry them on, and the mines, so far as the shareholders were concerned, would have been carried on in the same way if the shareholders had been in America or Timbuctoo or anywhere else. It is an insult to the managers of the mines of this country to say that the incentive of gain is the only incentive that has carried on the mines of this country down to the present time. I expect the nation will be able to secure the services of all the best men who are now managing the mines of this country, and that the mines can be carried on in the interest of the nation far better than at the present time. Sir Richard Redmayne, who ought to know something about this thing, has said that the present system is wasteful and extravagant. I say that it is not merely wasteful and extravagant, but because of the system of privately owned mines thousands of men and boys have been sacrificed in the mining industry in the interests of gain. The mines can be carried on with greater efficiency, a higher output, and with greater safety under State ownership than is carried on under private ownership of the mines. It is said that there will be an increase in the price of coal to the consumer, that the miners' shorter hour and the miners' high wages are going to increase the price of coal to the consumer to an extraordinary extent. I hope it will not be forgotten. Mr. Hodges called attention to the matter in Northumberland last Saturday. I hope it will not be forgotten that within a period of four years the Government and the mineowners of this country between them got a profit of £162,000,000 within a period of four years—war years—or almost twice the total amount of money invested in the coal mines of this country, that is, with private interests carrying on the mines. Now it is said if the miners have shorter hours, an hour off, and decent pay we are going to ruin the mining industry.

There has been a good deal of nonsense, consciously or unconsciously, talked in the Press about the conditions under which miners are working—

some of it unconsciously, and some of it done for the purpose of deliberately misrepresenting the position. I had an opportunity last night of reading an article which appeared in the "Manchester Evening Chronicle," in which the writer—I don't know the gentleman—went down to Wales to satisfy himself as to the allegations made against the miners as to their state of living, or style of living, and found an extraordinary state of matters. He found that the miners and their families were a great deal better dressed than they used to be, that they were better fed than previously. Now I hold that it is not at all a crime for a miner and their families to be better dressed and better fed than they previously were. That is exactly what we have been aiming at in this Federation all the time, that they should have an opportunity of being better fed, better clothed, and better housed than they previously were, and I venture to say that in the past miners' families have not been better fed and better clothed than the owners' families, and I do not know why we should not claim the same. He found that in one of the homes the income was such that they would not know how to spend it. To me the greatest insult of all was contained in about one or two of the last paragraphs, and I should like to deal with men who write special articles of that kind for the Press. We are fellow workers, or at least ought to be. I have no desire to stifle the truth, but what I complain about is that we do not get the truth told about our people, and when it comes to this which is being said about the Welsh miners that they had no sympathy at all at any time with our ideals of nationalisation of mines, that they had no sympathy with Bolshevism, but that they would unite to come on strike far more readily for a larger supply of beer than anything else, that I say is an insult to our people, an unwarrantable insult to our people. I want just for a moment to deal with the question of the famous 6s. a ton. I happened, along with Mr. Hodges, to be in South Wales, down at Swansea, giving what little assistance we could to return a Labour man to the House of Commons, and we left there to do some business in London. We had to meet the Home Secretary about another matter, which I will deal with afterwards, and on Wednesday, after travelling all night from Swansea, I attended a meeting of the Coal Control Advisory Committee. Perhaps you are not aware of the fact, but there is what is called a Coal Controller in this country, and he has an Advisory Committee composed of equal numbers of mineowners and miners' representatives. The Coal Controller called us together and we attended the meeting. He brought two questions before us, the question of whether or not it would not be wise for all the mineowners to insure their workmen against accident in a common mutual organisation, and to take the business out of the hands of private insurance companies because the premiums were too large. That was the first thing; the second question on the programme was whether or not certain collieries in South Wales should not get an increase in their prices for gas coal which they sold. Now these were the two questions that seven or eight colliery owners and seven or eight miners' representatives were called to London to discuss. That night we had to meet the Home Secretary about another matter, and while we were meeting him we heard that Sir Auckland Geddes had made a statement in the House of Commons that the price of coal as from to-morrow was going to be increased by 6s. per ton. Now it struck me at once that the statement was made because the Swansea and Bothwell elections were going on at the present, and that it was for the purpose of setting the electors in these two divisions against the Nationalisation of Mines Bill. I thought it was a most remarkable thing for Sir Auckland Geddes to make that statement in the House of Commons and the Coal Controller at the Advisory Board that day in London never said a single word about it, and that convinced us that it

was a political move on the part of somebody to endeavour to turn public attention against the nationalisation of mines. We ought to have had an opportunity of going fully into that matter and finding out whether or not it is going to take 6s. to meet the position of matters caused by shorter hours and higher wages. I remember at one time 2s. 6d. being put on a ton of coal before not to meet any shorter hours and not to meet any increase in wages, and I believe it was put on against the advice of the then Controller, and it was ultimately found that it put on 25 millions of profit, which was made by the Government out of that 2s. 6d. per ton, and when we asked why it was put on some twelve months since we were coolly told by the Prime Minister of the country that the Government had to raise revenue in some way, and that was one method of raising revenue. That 2s. 6d. is still on, and it is proposed to put on this 6s. Suppose it takes 26s. to meet the just claims of the miners, that would be the real value of a ton of coal, and whatever it takes to pay a ton of coal after the reasonable claims of the workers who produce the coal have been met that ought to be the real value of a ton of coal. We don't believe it is necessary to put 6s. a ton of coal at the present time to meet the shortening of the hours of labour and the increase in wages that was given by the Government.

An appeal has been made at the present time for a larger output of coal. The Miners' Federation is as anxious as any member of the Government or any member of the public to have the fullest possible output of coal. There is no desire at all on the part of our members that the increase of coal should not be. I deny absolutely that the blame for a lower output of coal at the present time lies at the door of the miners. I want to say that before the Government or anybody makes a charge of that kind at all a full and free public inquiry into the whole of the matter should be made. Herbert Smith, Frank, and myself have had hundreds of letters from all over the country from mining districts, here and there from officials of miners' unions, from checkweighers at collieries, calling our attention to the fact of men laying in the pit all day because they had not an opportunity of getting away material. Output could be increased enormously if the men could have an opportunity of producing coal which they could produce. When we know that the output could be enormously increased if opportunity were given to the men to get it away, we asked for an inquiry. We put the facts before the Commission at colliery after colliery from which the men were willing to produce more coal and could have produced more coal, but could not get the opportunity. We believe if we were to go before an impartial body to see who is really to blame, then if they find that the miners are to blame we would undertake to do our best and use the power of the whole Federation to rectify the matter, but, on the other hand, if they found that the employers are to blame, that the owners either unconsciously or deliberately had kept down the output they ought to be punished and brought to book. That is our position now. It is said that we ought to try to get the miners if possible to do as much in seven hours as they previously did in eight hours. The reason why we asked for a shorter day was because of the strenuous nature of the miners' work, because they worked amazingly hard. We know that it is quite impossible that they can produce as much coal in seven hours as they did in eight hours, and, generally speaking, they had no right to ask the miners to work harder than they have done in the past, because they had worked in the past as no other class of worker had, and they had no right to ask them to add to that. We believe that the output can be enormously increased; we believe that only under nationalisation is it possible to get back to the previous output we had in this country. We believe with the proper development and extension of the use of

machinery, work done by machinery which in many cases has been done by hand labour at the present time, the elimination of the royalty owner, the nation getting the right to work its minerals in an intelligent way instead of in the way conducted by the owners of the minerals, that we could enormously increase the output of coal. We believe that our people are willing to use every effort to keep up the output, but we do not think our people our willing to strain every nerve in the production of coal merely to build up private fortunes again for the mineowners. You are told that what we are now required to do is to go in for reconstruction, that coal is the life-blood of the nation, which it is. It is the raw material of so many other industries. We are told we must go in for reconstruction, but when Henry Dubb is told by his employer, let us act in double harness, and when Henry Dubb is put in the shafts and the other sits on the deck and takes the reins, that is not pulling together in double harness, that is not the reconstruction we desire. Then he passes another man on the road, and he tells Henry Dubb, this is another friend of mine, and he must be taken into the concern, that is not the kind of reconstruction we desire. What we want to do is reconstruction in the interests of the nation as a whole; we have no desire to do anything against the interests of the nation. We desire to do everything in our power to so reconstruct the nation in order to make it possible for the people to live a higher and nobler life than they do at the present time. We want higher ideals introduced into life, not only for our own people that will make for better and happier surroundings. We want higher ideals for the so-called upper classes than the mere idea that the be-all and end-all of life is to make fortunes and get honours. It ought to be the be-all and end-all of life to co-operate together for increasing human happiness, and not to become merely rich and outdo your fellows. We are quite prepared to enter into any combination which has that as its ultimate result.

I want to say that the capitalists are combining now to endeavour to prevent the Government carrying out the recommendation of their Commission. I want to say at this stage that this Federation is behind the Government in what I take to be their desire to carry out the implied pledge that the Report of the Commission would be acted upon. The report of the first Commission, Bonar Law said in the House of Commons, was accepted, and would be acted upon in word and deed. We want the Second Report acted upon in word and deed. When the First Report was presented we had a million mine workers on notice who had balloted to come on strike, and the Government acted within a few hours on the last report, and I want to know why the Government has not acted upon this report and given us the same pledge; perhaps they have not done because they are afraid. I want to assure them that this body is behind them in fighting any combination of mineowners, and if the Government is not strong enough single-handed to deal with it we will pledge ourselves to, if necessary, stop work to assist them. It is not often that we can be in full agreement with the Government, but we would pledge our word on this occasion that we are in hearty sympathy with them in their desire to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and that we will give them all the assistance in our power to overcome any unlawful assembly of capitalists that is breaking out in rebellion against the Government in the House of Commons. You will have a busy week this week in dealing with many subjects. Our Executive Committee has had an opportunity of dealing with the question of compensation to persons who were wholly disabled while following their employment. I think that during the last four years there is no class of the community probably that has suffered more than the victims of industry

who have been totally disabled through following their employment. The cost of living went up enormously, and we have been able, through our combination, to secure higher rates of wages for those who are able to work, but it has told very heavily against these men, who are on compensation. We requested the Home Secretary to bring in a Bill at once to increase the compensation payable to people who were wholly disabled up to a point 75 per cent. higher than it is at the present time, or making it 100 per cent. more than pre-war rates. We were told that as the House of Commons is constituted at the present time it is difficult to carry through legislation of this kind. We were warned by a previous Home Secretary that was so. I am glad to say that we have been able to get an agreement with the mineowners on this matter that they will help us in carrying a measure through the House of Commons to substantially increase the compensation of persons who are totally incapacitated and dependent wholly on their compensation for their livelihood. We have had it over with them, and the mineowners and ourselves agree in trying whether we can get a Bill carried to apply to the mining industry only. We think legislation of that kind ought to apply to every industry. We don't want on a matter of this kind class legislation for our own particular organisation. We want to endeavour to get a Bill carried through, and carried through speedily, in the House of Commons, and we are hopeful, by agreement with them, to have such a measure carried through. During this week we shall have many important questions before us on which you will be asked to decide, and we would only ask you to treat the various resolutions this week as you have done at previous Conferences, by giving them a full and free discussion, and coming finally to what you believe in the best interests of your organisation and to the nation as a whole.