

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Mr. HERRERT SMITH: Gentlemen, I want in the first place to welcome you back to Southport after an interval of nine years since the last Annual Conference took place in 1918 here under the Presidency of Mr. Robert Smillie, M.P.

At that time a report was given that our membership had made splendid progress, having reached the figure of 761,070.

Had our Annual Conference taken place last year under normal conditions our membership would have been about 800,000, but, as you are aware, it was cancelled owing to the dispute. At the present time, however, that number has been reduced.

Since our last Annual Conference, held at Scarborough in 1925, the Federation has had some difficult problems to encounter. In 1925 we were threatened with a reduction in wages. Ultimately, however, with the assistance of the General Council, we came to an agreement with the Government for a subsidy of £23,000,000 to stabilise the then existing percentage, which was far below the cost of living, and was given by the Government ostensibly at that time to afford them an opportunity of inquiring into the industry.

A Commission was appointed, known as the "Samuel Commission," in September, 1925, whose findings were issued in February, 1926. Very early in March, as soon as copies of the report could be obtained, your Executive met to consider the proposals in the light of the conditions then prevailing in the coalfield.

At this meeting it was learnt that the Prime Minister desired to interview the coalowners and the Miners' Federation Executive. A meeting took place at Montagu House (Ministry of Labour), when Mr. Baldwin opened the proceedings by saying "I do not represent the coalowners or the miners. I am here to represent the community." He then outlined the attitude of the Government to the "Samuel Report," and asked both sides to consider the Report and let the Government have their views if possible at a further meeting.

That meeting took place on Thursday, March 24th, when the Prime Minister explained the Government's position, saying that he was prepared to carry out the proposals contained in the Report which affected the Government providing that the two other parties were willing to do the same.

It was further arranged that as soon as the owners supplied the Prime Minister with suggestions he would let the Miners' Executive have them.

The following letter was sent to me on the 30th April, 1926:—

" 10, Downing Street, London, S.W. 1,

" 30th April, 1926.

" Dear Mr. Smith,—I am communicating with you by letter because it is important to save time. I have now received from the coalowners the offer which, as I told you last night, they have been considering in conjunction with their district representatives. The offer is as follows, namely:—

" A uniform national minimum of 20 per cent. over 1914 standard on a uniform eight-hours' basis, with corresponding hours for surface men."

That meant at once that eleven districts would immediately submit to a reduction of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the wages, and to an extension from seven to eight hours.

Mr. Baldwin asked us to consider that as an offer worthy of consideration.

Before replying to it we took into consultation the General Council, and they approved of the letter which we sent and which was as follows:—

" Dear Mr. Prime Minister,—The proposals of the coalowners delivered by messenger this afternoon (April 30th) have been considered by our Executive Committee, and also by the Conference which, as you are aware, has been in London since Wednesday, to which we are empowered to send the following reply:—

" The miners note with regret that, although the report of the Coal Commission was issued on the 6th March, 1926, the mineowners have only submitted a proposal for a national wage agreement and a national uniform minimum percentage so late as April 30th, at 1-15 p.m., when at least two-thirds of the mine workers in the coalfields are already locked out by the coalowners.

" The proposals, stated briefly, provides for a reversion to the minimum percentage of 1921, i.e., 20 per cent. on 1914 standard wages, which means a uniform reduction of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the standard wages

of the miners, and, further, is conditional upon the extension of the working day for over three years, such an adjustment to be reviewed after December, 1929.

“ The reply of the miners, after considering the proposals in the light of the present situation, is, therefore, as follows:—

“ They are unanimously of the opinion that the proposals cannot be accepted, but, on the other hand, feel that the statement of proposals submitted (as enclosed) of the Trades Union Congress affords a reasonable basis of negotiations and settlement.

“ Our views on the question of extended hours are well known to you, and it is only necessary to say that the present hours—

“ (a) Are long enough to supply all the coal for which a market can be found ;

“ (b) are as long as men should be expected to pursue such a dangerous and arduous calling ; and

“ (c) that to extend hours in present circumstances is simply to swell the ranks of the unemployed ;

“ (d) that to increase hours is to invite similar measures on the part of our foreign competitors ;

“ (e) that such a proposal is contrary to the findings of the Royal Commission.

“ As to counter proposals, we can only say that we will co-operate to the fullest extent with the Government and the owners in instituting such reorganisation as is recommended by the Commission. Until such reorganisation brings greater prosperity to the industry the miners should not be called upon to surrender any of their present inadequate wages and conditions.”

From which it will be seen that the clear intention of the owners was not the Commission's Report, but to force a reduction in wages and an extension of the hours which is contained in their letter.

It is interesting to note that the date of the above-named letter is the same date as notices expired.

It has often been said that the miners were never prepared to accept the “ Samuel Report.” One would like to ask in passing whether the owners were every prepared to carry out the provisions of the “ Samuel Report,” because on the 30th April I, on behalf of the Miners' Federation, stated before the Prime Minister, Lord Birkenhead, and other representatives of the Government, and also in the presence of the General Council and Labour Party representatives, that I was willing to take the Report and examine it from page 1 to the last page and accept its findings.

I repeated that statement at a Conference of the T.U.C. and Labour Party, along with my Executive, held on May 1st, and which was made with every desire to arrive at a settlement of the lock-out. I was told, however, by the Government representatives that I must agree on behalf of the Miners' Federation to accept at once an immediate reduction in wages. This I was not prepared to do.

The response of the Trade Union Movement on behalf of the miners on May 3rd was beyond all expectations. The call was answered day by day until the strike was declared off.

I would like to place on record the admiration which the Miners' Federation held for their fellow Trade Unionists for their loyalty to us in our hour of need.

I was sorry, after such a splendid rally, that anything should have happened on May 12th to have marred it, because I am still under the impression that victory was in sight, not a victory to regain anything, but to have made secure the miserable pittance which the mine worker was then receiving as wages, this being far below the cost of living. It is not my intention to belittle anybody, except to say that I was greatly disappointed with the results.

Onward from the 12th of May the men and women in the coalfield fought on for seven long, weary months from the commencement of the lock-out. The ultimate end is well-known to us in the mining areas.

Our people are going through dire distress owing to low wages, scarcity of employment, and debts which they have contracted during the stoppage.

We have a large number of unemployed, and to show what reliance we can place on the promises of this Government I will give you just one instance. A pledge was given that as soon as the dispute came to an end all the men who were unable to obtain employment would be paid unemployment benefits. That pledge they did not carry out. In some instances our men had to wait for weeks and months before any Unemployment Benefits were paid.

This Federation, which was built up long years ago, has during its chequered history gone through many storms and trials, but has always weathered them and been ready to stand for justice and fairplay. I appeal to my fellow Trade Unionists in the mining movement to rally round the Federation now, and be determined that the set-back given to us in 1926 by the Government, the British Federation of Industries, and the coal-owners, etc., shall be retrieved as soon as practicable, and that we shall not only take hold of the industrial side of the movement more determinedly than ever, but that we shall make greater use of our political machinery than we have done up to the present.

Many suggestions are being made with respect to rebuilding our movement. One suggestion that I want to make is that each district governed by the Miners' Federation should work diligently to build up 100 per cent. membership. We shall do this if we have less bickering and more unselfishness in our ranks than what we have displayed up to now. As one travels up and down the country amongst our people I can do nothing else but admire the courageous spirit of the men and women who are so anxious and so willing to do all they possibly can to again restore this Federation to its full activity and strength.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

In looking through the various reports in connection with workmen's compensation, and the way it is affecting our members, I see the necessity more than ever I did for political activity in this direction.

I have to remember that if there had been no political effort to get men, and, later, women, from our ranks into Parliament we would not have had a Workmen's Compensation Act at all, which has benefited the workers to the extent of over £8,000,000 per year, a sum greater than the total contributions paid annually by all the Trade Unionists in the kingdom.

In face of that, however, no Workmen's Compensation Act can be fair and equitable that does not provide for the full benefit under any Act in a much more liberal manner than at the present time. I suggest that the

terms contained in the Holman Gregory Report on Workmen's Compensation ought to have been embodied in an Act of Parliament, and operating some time ago. No Workmen's Compensation Act can be satisfactory which does not provide for a person (after being certified as fit to follow his former occupation or light employment) being found that employment or full compensation.

There is one incident which I would like to quote. We met the present Home Secretary (Sir William Joynson Hicks, M.P.) with a view to redrafting the Silicosis Act by the deletion of the 80 per cent. of silica, and provide that when any worker who was unable to follow his employment or died through contracting this disease, irrespective of the percentage of silica, compensation would be paid.

We had a very interesting case in our coalfield, where a man died as a result of this silicosis disease, and, seeing there was 80 per cent. of silica in the mineral being worked, his widow and children received the prescribed amount of compensation, inadequate as it is at the present time. On the other hand, we had a man working in another part of the coalfield who died as a result of this disease, yet because there was not 80 per cent. silica contained in the mineral worked his widow and children got nothing.

When this was brought to the notice of the Home Secretary, along with other cases, he agreed it needed attention and ought to be rectified. We have, however, heard practically nothing since as to any alteration. Here, again, I think this will impress upon all of us the urgent necessity of representatives from our own ranks dealing with our political business in the House of Commons.

WAGES QUESTION.

It is not my intention at the opening of this Conference to give any lengthy résumé of the present position as it relates to wages. This, no doubt, will be dealt with by the Conference during its sitting in another direction.

Everybody knows in their respective districts the effect of short time, longer hours, and lower wages, largely brought about by the mad competition of the coalowners, regardless of the workers.

Most of the districts are on the minimum percentage, many of whom are even being bebited with losses, which have to be carried forward, and, should there be any improvement in trade conditions then for a certain period the owners would be reimbursed before any advantage to the workmen could accrue.

As a result of the unfortunate ending to the dispute of last year, we have separate agreements in each district with varying minimum percentages and periods, which are all objectionable. I have come to the conclusion that no settlement of wages rates can be satisfactory that does not apply equally to all the British mining coalfields, thus showing the necessity for our industry being nationalised. In addition to that, the mine worker has a right to participate in the profits derived from coking and by-product plants, etc., the manufactured article obtained from the raw material produced at the collieries by our workmen. While output has gone up with the degrading longer hours, wages have gone down terrifically.

An interesting situation arises from the fact that even the "Financial News," which is edited by a prominent Tory Member of Parliament (Sir E. Hilton Young), which in that issue of Wednesday, June 22nd, 1927, says:—

"Why is the coal trade never out of difficulty? The cause is the heavy total of dead weight capital and its cost."

It concludes by saying:—

"The coal trade can no longer carry tens of millions of dead weight capital; can no longer prosper with its production chopped up into a multitude of unrelated output; and can no longer digest the waste due to traffic and terminal delay. Somebody has got to be frank about the matter and remind the coalowners that they must get a move on while the opportunity offers. Amalgamation of production units, pooling of traffic, and less piecemeal marketing offered a way out. Organisation is not a fad. It is the one means of lifting off the dead weight capital incubus."

Then one sees that Lord Beaverbrook ("Daily Express") endorses the leading article on Tuesday, June 21st, by saying:—

"The stupid and short-sighted policy of the coalowners is not to be allowed to plunge the country into another ruinous coal crisis."

I notice that a Departmental Committee issued a report last December in favour of organised marketing, the setting up of selling agencies, and says:—

"Time after time the attention of the country has been drawn by experts and Commissions to the unorganised, inefficient, and wasteful method of production, distribution, and marketing in our basic industry."

One is glad to see such admissions as these by the capitalistic Press and Departmental Committees. It only goes to prove what the miners contended in 1926, that it was on account of the wasteful methods and lack of reorganisation the mining industry was in the position it was. That neither longer hours nor lower wages would solve this problem. With all these comments, I say again, the only solution is the nationalisation of the industry. I would appeal to all in the British coalfield who work in or about a mine to gather their forces together, both industrially and politically, in order to place on record what is long overdue, namely, a wage that will be commensurate at least with the cost of living, so that whether they work by hand or brain they shall be able to live a free, full, and happy life.

I am sorry that at the present moment I cannot see any brighter outlook in our industry under the existing methods.

We are already working longer hours than any of the European countries. The reduction since 1921 in the miner's standard of life has been enormous. To prove this perhaps I might give you one or two examples.

Take a worker both on the surface and underground 22 years of age must be able-bodied, with a base rate of 5s. 4d., in 1921 with the percentage applicable at that time he had a full wage of 14s. 9d. This month that wage has been reduced to 7s. 9d., and included in that amount is a subsistence wage of 6d. per day for the days worked. You will see from that there is a loss of 7s. per day between the two periods.

Take a youth of 14 years of age, in 1921 he received 5s. 8d. In June, 1927, that wage has slumped down to 2s. 5d., or a reduction of 3s. 3d. per day.

Take a fully qualified miner who earned, say, 7s. 6d. a shift. In 1921 his actual wage was 19s. 8d. per day. That is reduced to 10s. 9d., or a drop of 8s. 11d. per day. I think you will agree with me when I say that in face of this, one of the most important objects confronting the Miners' Federation is that we must go into this question fully and ascertain whether a uniform wage cannot be obtained for the mine worker by some other means than we have yet been able to develop. I am not satisfied with the present mode of procedure of regulating wages, as the workman has not an equal opportunity with the owners of examining the ramifications of the industry.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES.

I have to report for the year 1925, 1,136 of our fellow workers were fatally injured in and about the mines, which means 11 every 3 working days.

There were injured 177,345, or 1,705 every 3 working days.

It would take this number a whole year to march past a given point in single file at intervals of 2½ minutes.

I am giving for 1926 and 1927 all the figures I can in the columns underneath:—

Month.	No. of persons killed.	No. of persons seriously injured.	No. of persons disabled for more than 3 days.
1926—January (old hours)	87	402	15,888
February.....	113	407	15,617
March	110	432	17,751
April	98	434	17,146
Total	408	1,675	66,402
1926—December (new hours).....	98	390	11,715
Full Total	506	2,065	
1927—January (new hours)	76	416	not
February.....	94	399	yet
March	155	510	avail-
April	101	383	able.
Total	426	1,708	
1927—May	99	421	
Full Total	525	2,129	

Examining these figures one is struck by the number of fatal accidents in 4 months under 7 hours, and 4 months under 7½ and 8 hours.

Now, what we find is this, that in 1926, under 7 hours for 4 months there were 408 persons killed. In 4 months, 1927, under 7½ hours and 8 hours, 426 were killed, or 18 more in a considerably less number of days worked between 1926 and 1927.

Coming to the serious accidents we note for the corresponding months that under 7 hours 1,675 were seriously injured, and under 7½ and 8 hours, 1,708 were seriously injured, an increase of 33. There again, with less days worked in 1927 than in 1926.

This reminds me, in reviewing the whole position as to the results of hours and fatal accidents, I find that in 1910 to 1918, inclusive, under 8 hours we lost by fatal accident an average of 1,407 men and boys each year. From 1920 to 1925, under 7 hours we lost an average of 1,146 men and boys, or 261 less killed each year under 7 hours than under 8 hours.

All this goes to prove the contentions which were put up in 1926 that there was no room for reducing the miners' standard of life, or increasing his hours. The consumer generally says, that under the present system of selling, coal is dear. It is certainly too dear at the above cost of life and limb, and I would ask the British public in no uncertain voice to assist the mineworkers in every way to reduce the hours of labour to at least what they were before 1926, and be determined to raise their standard of living without having to resort to the weapon of either a strike or lock-out. I believe the time has arrived when we should use to its full extent our political machine. Let me quote the remarks of a County Court Judge relative to the non-union element. Presiding in the Mansfield County Court on May 22nd, the Judge said, when dealing with a Workman's Compensation case:—

“What earthly chance has a man who is not a member of a union in Compensation?”

I think we shall endorse those remarks and I would like to make an addition:—

“ . . . or any other industrial or political question.”

I have not particularised on any special disasters which have taken place, but I will bring to your notice the following accidents where in each case not less than seven of our fellow-workers have been killed through explosions, etc., in Great Britain.

1. GREAT BRITAIN.

Date.	Locality.	Cause.	Killed.
December 18th, 1925.	Kidsgrove, Staffs.....	Explosion of firedamp or coal dust.	7
March 1st, 1927	Bilthorpe Colliery, Notts.	A water main broke away and crashed into a hoppit which was dashed to the pit bottom.	14
March 1st, 1927	Marine No. 1 Colliery Monmouth.	Explosion	52
			Total
			73

RESEARCH.

One is glad to know that although in my opinion, it was the duty of the Government to have spent more money and time in research, the Miners' Welfare stepped into the breach and have devoted over £500,000 to build and equip a research station at Buxton, which I am satisfied has the opportunity, and the people connected with it have the desire to do all possible in this important problem of research in respect of the mine and its dangers.

MINERS' INTERNATIONAL.

Two more years have passed along since we dealt with this question. At that time we decided to have a full-time International Secretary. That is now ended for the time being, although I might say for your information we have appointed a temporary secretary to carry on the work until a review of the whole situation is undertaken. The reasons for this step I need not state here.

I am not without hope that before another Annual Conference comes round, the Miners' International will be a greater force in the affairs of the world than it has been up to now.

We have lacked cohesion. We have not had that international spirit in the movement which is so necessary, if we are going to be more effective internationally.

In passing I desire to say that I trust the miners of every country will be able to join hands under the rules and constitution of the present International, and that we shall realise the true spirit of internationalism which means, whether we are black or white we are the workers of the world, and as a result of our labours we should have such a return as would enable us to live in respectability and comfort.

 PENSIONS, ETC.

There seems now to be a keen desire, according to the agenda for this conference, for something to be done for mine workers who are designated as being passed work, not of course ignoring other workers.

In my opinion it will be well-worthy of considering any scheme which has within its scope the making of some provision from the Miners' Welfare Scheme, to levy a sufficient amount as will largely finance such a proposition.

We know that a vast amount of money has been spent in various localities in our mining villages. This we all appreciate, because it has given a higher tone and a brighter outlook in the lives of the workers, yet, we must realise the necessity for something further to be done, and done speedily and effectively for the worker who is being refused work in and about the mines at ages which one would not have thought about a few years ago.

It came under my notice a few weeks ago that certain owners were advertising at the Labour Exchange for men not to exceed the age of 47.

When a workman is deprived of work or he is passed work, then I believe there should be secured to him a sufficient income which would safeguard his remaining days being spent by his own fireside and not have the shadow of the workhouse looming before him.

 POLITICAL.

Two years ago I said that I wished other working-class constituents in the country had been as loyal to the Labour Party and had strengthened its ranks in the House of Commons to the same extent as our people have done in the mining districts. It would have been a different tale that we should have to tell, so far as our troubles of last year are concerned, if the Parliamentary strength of Labour Movement had been as representative of all the workers as it is of the miners. However, that is the handicap under which the Labour Party has had to do its work against the time when our 41 *mining* M.P.'s will be a comparatively small fraction of the Labour majority that we all hope to see at Westminster before long.

Everywhere the Party is making headway, however, and never before in our British history has there been so much regular agitation, so much real organisation on the political field, so much real success, as there is to-day.

We are told officially that if a General Election came suddenly upon the country there are even now very few constituencies that would have to seek last-minute candidates. In over 306 places Labour candidates are already adopted, which, together with those seats held by Labour Members, makes a total of 461.

The results of the By-elections show quite clearly that there is strong feeling everywhere against the Government, while the Labour Party votes steadily advance.

Another striking sign of the advance that is being made in Labour consciousness is the great successes that the Party won at the Municipal Elections last November.

To those of us who are old enough to remember the early Municipal fights and all the opposition and apathy that has had to be beaten down during the last 30 years or so, it was a great and welcome event to see the Government of many great cities pass out of the control of the older Parties and to watch their Councils become dominated by Labour Members.

These are the winning of preliminary key positions and we know from the gains that are being made in all parts of the country—in the cities, the towns, the rural districts, and the parishes as well—our movement is well on the way to administrative Government as it is to legislative power.

We have always said that the birth-rate and the death-rate are on our side.

Thanks to Labour's work in the past, more of the children who are born grow up to manhood and womanhood, and though our betters have to be fought to-day as in the past for our working-class children to have the same benefits of education as the better born, nevertheless, the advance that has been made tells in our favour. Train young minds to *think* and they will soon learn to *think* for themselves and once they do that we have nothing to fear.

As for the death rate, it is also true to say that Labour's work has helped to save many a working-class life.

When the old pioneers of Trade Unionism framed their schemes and rules for the payment of Out-of-Work Benefit, Sick Pay, and Superannuation Allowances, few of them dreamt that a time would come when the State would be wise enough to ensure, even by insurance, for the greater proportion of the workers the same sort of provision by way of Unemployment Benefit, Health Benefit, and Old Age Pensions.

Nobody who knows anything about the administration of these various social insurances would pretend for a moment that they are adequate to the needs they are supposed to satisfy.

They do ease the position of many people compared to the utter neglect of 30 and 40 years ago. The work and agitation of Labour men and women have swept some of the worse brutalities of those days right out of existence, but there are still great and crying injustices to redress and which can and will only be abolished when the workers themselves, conscious of their burden, combine and capture the powers of Government, of administration, and of industry, and give their class the consideration and the care to which their usefulness to the community entitles them.

Our Trade Union Movement has been becoming more and more conscious of this need, and there has been growing up a greater common spirit of comradeship among the working class, which seemed to culminate in last year's great effort.

So full of hope for the workers was this great and growing brotherhood of Labour that it is clear that those who have most to fear from the workers gaining justice determined to use their utmost powers to destroy it.

I have already shown how the miners were singled out by the employers for the first industrial onslaught.

Those mineowners who were in Parliament, or who were able to influence their friends in Parliament, used their power to secure by foul political means an extension of working hours that will for ever disgrace the record of British Labour legislation and leave the name of Baldwin's Government as a by-word for reaction.

Added to this special and individual attack upon the miners there was the unnecessary interference with Local Governing Bodies and Boards of Guardians, whose chief sin has been a keener realisation of the real meaning of poverty than Mr. Neville Chamberlain could ever know.

These were only preliminaries, however, and safe with their swollen majority in the House of Commons and under a thin and lying pretence of legislating against the possibilities of a general strike, the Government have now put through the new Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Bill, which, as you all know, is the heaviest blow ever aimed at our industrial and political movements.

Time will not allow me to go into the details of this Bill. Most of our people are familiar with its intentions as a result of the campaign that the National Labour Committees, together with the Co-operative Movement, has been pursuing since the Bill was introduced.

All I need say here is to warn Mr. Baldwin and his Cabinet of "King Canutes" that they are altogether powerless to stay the tide of democratic and Socialist progress.

The Trade Union and Labour Movement in this country has grown and prospered in the teeth of the opposition of this kind; our industrial liberties, such as they are, have been won despite the lawyers and their parchments.

The foundations of our unions were laid by men and women who suffered poverty and prison, who dared their masters do their worst; some of them, indeed, were sent to the hulks as convicts and, as such, first helped to colonise that great Australian land where Labour now controls five Governments out of six.

That old spirit is not dead yet. These opponents of ours may seek to beat us like iron on the anvil, but we shall be all the harder, all the tougher, and all the more powerful for the process.

It is common knowledge that the Tory Party never prepared for any campaign as they did for that which they carried on while the Bill was before Parliament.

And, as many of our mining-folk are good co-operators, they should know that the Tories have also been trying to interfere with us in our co-operative business.

For many weeks before the recent Co-operative Conference, the newspapers were being worked in all sorts of ways to influence co-operators to oppose the moderate basis of an agreement that the Co-operative and the Labour Parties have come to. That campaign failed, as it deserved to fail, for it was dishonest from first to last.

I would suggest, without hesitation, that not one per cent. of the Tory wire-pullers or their friends who were responsible for the series of leading articles in the Press were members of any co-operative society, or, indeed, have the tiniest grain of sympathy with co-operative principles. Mammon and monopoly are their masters, and their interest in our concerns are only dictated by the dissension they can create in the ranks of the organised working-class, and by the profits they can secure for themselves.

I would venture to prophesy that this combined attack upon the Trade Unions, the Labour Party, and the Co-operative Movement will lead to one result that Mr. Baldwin and his friends little expect.

It is now more necessary than ever that we should all learn what I might call the new "three-card trick." The old "three-card trick" that almost everybody has heard of was a swindle for enriching rogues. The new one is a sound investment for aiding honest men. From now onward every worker should carry his three cards for himself.

1. His Trade Union card.
2. His local Labour Party card.
3. His co-operative society card.

If our people realise their duties first as *workers* to themselves and their workmates in their own and every other trade their union card is the badge of their conviction.

If they realise their duties as *citizens*, with responsibilities to themselves, their wives, their children, their old folk, and to their fellow workers in other countries they will join their Labour Party.

If they realise their needs as consumers, with responsibilities as householders and with desires to sweep away the production of shoddy goods and to assist in the making and marketing of wholesome products, they will join and promote their co-operative society.

This is the great industrial trinity—three in one. All the signs show that in all these three aspects of our working-class life there is going to be closer contact and better understanding. That is bound to make for sounder judgments, more scientific, industrial, political, and co-operative organisation—harder work, maybe, but nevertheless and inevitably earlier and greater successes for us all.

The Lords have delivered themselves into our hands, and now after three centuries the Plunderbund challenges the nation again.

First, they rush through a Bill to emasculate the Trade Unions and try to prevent the workers using their powers to secure redress of their grievances. Then Mr. Neville Chamberlain steps forward with his Local Government (Audit) Bill, whereby district auditors may surcharge members of English and Welsh Borough Councils and Guardians for what he terms illegal expenditure, and have them disqualified from holding public office for a period of five years. This means that the door is being partially at least barred against the improvement of workers' conditions through the agency of local authorities.

And now at the third stage in the reactionary plot comes the proposals for the perpetual Toryisation of the House of Lords, the bar against the King on the advice of a Labour Prime Minister creating peers for the passage of legislation agreed to by the people's House of Commons, and the encroachment of this strange survival of feudalism upon the rights of the House of Commons to deal with money Bills.

Down to the time when the Government's House of Lords programme is carried through reform, change, evolution by peaceful persuasion, reason, and the securing of a majority at the polls is possible. To 99 per cent. of us the way of majority verdict has appeared as the only possible, and certainly the most desirable method of securing social changes. We have never believed that poverty could be abolished by violence.

But on the day that monopolists and privilege mongers declare that the will of the nation will not be allowed to prevail, and they decree that peaceful, progressive changes are forbidden, the Britisher will be driven to look for another Cromwell.

This nation will not accept helotage or serfdom. It will not accept the insolent dictation of a gang of plutocrats nominated or hereditary privilege mongers. If plutocracy challenges the people and decrees that force is to be the arbiter, then force in the last resort will be accepted, and, whatever else betide, the challengers will be swept away like feathers in a gale.

We have always set our faces like flint against Red Guardism and violence as political methods so long as the social change desired by the majority of the nation can be peacefully secured, the whole conception and propaganda of force we regard as sheer stupidity and criminal folly.

But if monopoly and privilege declare that the essential public safeguards of the Parliament Act are to be destroyed then I mistake the temper and spirit of my fellow countrymen if we hesitate to accept boldly and at all hazards even unconstitutional methods of preserving our liberties.

CHURCHILL ON THE LORDS—WINSTON CHURCHILL'S MESSAGE
TO DUNDEE, 23RD NOVEMBER, 1910.

No one can persuade the Tory Party to give up their vote. They regard themselves as the ruling caste, exercising by right divine superior authority over the whole nation. They treat us as if we were a conquered race to be allowed by their goodwill and their condescension to air our opinions and to play at self-government only within such limits as they think fit and at such times as they shall appoint. They cannot bring themselves even in the direct straits, even in face of the most complete exposure, to part with that unfair veto upon which they have become accustomed to rely. You will have to take it from them. You will have to take it from them now. You will have to take it from them for ever. One good wrench and out it comes.

SHATTER IT TO FRAGMENTS—CHURCHILL'S VIEW IN A SPEECH
AT LAMBETH, 22ND OCTOBER, 1910.

We claim for the people who are now with us that they shall rule themselves. We demand for ourselves a fair and equal constitution, and we will shatter into fragments, so that they are dust on the ground, the harsh and cruel veto of the House of Lords.

OBITUARIES.

Once again it is my melancholy duty to have to bring to your notice that since our last Annual Conference two years ago several of our brother members have passed from us who were pioneers in our industrial and

political movement. I remember the part they played, and I should be lacking if I did not from this chair place on record how deeply I, along with you, sympathise with their relatives, and also the County Associations to which they belonged.

I refer to Messrs. John Robertson, M.P., and James Murdoch, of Scotland, Lewis Spencer, of Nottingham, James Martin, Durham, Ben Davis, South Wales, and William Weir, Northumberland. William Whitfield, Bristol. The latter gentleman retired from our movement a few years ago. Many of us still remember his work amongst the miners.

I also ought to say, in passing, that I, along with you, sincerely sympathise with our comrades W. P. Richardson and C. Thompson in the irreparable loss which they have sustained by the deaths of their wives. May God bless them and their families.